

# PAN-AMERICAN INTERCOLLEGIATE TEAM CHESS CHAMPIONSHIPS: OFFICIAL TOURNAMENT RULES

*Approved by the US Chess Executive Board on November 9, 2021*

## 1. Format & Tournament Rules:

### 1a. Tournament Format and Rules:

1. The preferred schedule is a six-round, four-day event to be held in the window that includes the last week December and first week of January. During the four days the number of rounds per day follows the formula 1-2-2-1. Changes in this format are subject to approval by the US Chess Director of Events in consultation with the College Chess Committee.
2. The tournament will be conducted using the FIDE Laws of Chess except as modified in this document. The tournament will be dual rated by US Chess and FIDE, but the FIDE Laws of Chess shall be used to govern the tournament.
3. The event is a Swiss System, paired strictly team vs. team. Board 1 of Team A plays Board 1 of Team B, through board four. (See Section 5, Rule 5j for allowable substitutions using alternates.)
4. For pairings, the TD/Arbiter uses each team's average rating as determined using Section 5, Rule 5b. Each team's average rating is used for Wall Chart ranking and class-prize eligibility.
5. A team gets one match point if the combined scores of the four players in a round is 2.5 points or more, one-half match point if the combined score is exactly 2.0, and zero match points if the combined score is 1.5 or less. Teams are grouped by their match points and then ranked within the group by their average team ratings. Byes, defaults, lateness, and so forth are treated in the same manner as in individual tournaments.
6. Each team's total match points, not total game points, determines their final standings. (See also Section 8, Tie-breaks.)
7. If a school enters multiple teams, these teams may not face one another unless the TD/Arbiter views the pairing as the best possible choice. For instance, if the A and B teams of a college are undefeated after four rounds, then they must be paired in the fifth round to avoid a sixth or last round pairing.
8. A team assigned "White" has white on Boards 1 and 3, black on Boards 2 and 4. Conversely, a team assigned "Black" has black on Boards 1 and 3, white on Boards 2 and 4.
9. The rule regarding same color in a series (e.g., "the three blacks in a row rule") is less important in team play because each team has two whites and two blacks in every round.
10. The maximum number of rounds in one day shall not exceed two (2). There will be at least seven (7) hours between the start times of two rounds scheduled on the same day. The suggested round times are:
  - Day 1: 6pm
  - Days 2 and 3: 10am and 5pm
  - Day 4: 9am
11. The time control for all rounds is G/90 with 30 seconds of time increment from move one. Each player must keep chess notation, move-by-move, throughout the entire game.
12. Late arrivals for a game have 1 hour from the scheduled start time of the round before their game shall be forfeited—not one hour from the time the round started.

### 1b. Entry Fees and Registration:

1. The advance entry fee for a team will be determined by the organizer. The late entry fee (or on-site/door entry fee) shall not be more than 25% above the advance entry fee.
2. The deadline for advance entries should be two to three weeks before the event (possibly to coincide with the date by which hotel reservations should be made).

- It is preferred that the advance entry deadline be of the type "postmarked no later than" rather than "received no later than." This prevents player/team complaints about the Organizer not receiving an entry and offers written proof of a team's entry date.
  - If a team's entry is postmarked before the deadline, but not received by the organizer (i.e., misdirected mail), the organizer has the right to require the team to pay the entry, including the late fee, at the door. Then, if the organizer receives the original advance entry, the organizer shall refund the team's door entry and late fee.
3. Door entry will be open until 5 hours before the start of Round 1. Any entries after this time shall be assigned a half-point bye by the Chief TD / Arbiter (e.g., 0.5 match points for the team). Teams registering on-site must have previously provided proof of eligibility and received approval from the eligibility committee.

## 2. Intercollegiate Eligibility Requirements:

Note: For purposes of eligibility, the words "semester" and "term" are used interchangeably and refer to colleges and universities using either a traditional semester system or a trimester system.

### 2a. Adjudication of Team and Player Eligibility.

1. All teams are required to provide proof of player eligibility to US Chess in accordance with the Rules contained within Section 2, Rule 2b ([Specific Eligibility Rules](#)) of this document.
2. Proof of eligibility is a document on university/college letterhead, signed by an official from the Office of the Registrar (or equivalent office) containing the full names of all players and alternates on the team. One document per team is the preferred method. Team Captains or Coaches are not authorized to sign player eligibility documents.
3. For each player the eligibility document shall state or provide
  - Age as of September 1, 2021 (See Rule 1).
  - Student status—e.g., undergraduate or graduate student (See Rule 1).
  - A statement identifying whether the college or university is on a semester or trimester system along with the institution's definitions for a "full-time" undergraduate **and** graduate student (e.g., minimum number of hours per semester or term).
  - Course hours taken during the previous full semester or term at this school (See Rules 1 and 2).
  - Cumulative grade point average as of the end of the previous full semester or term (See Rules 1 and 4).
  - A statement of compliance with the residency requirements of Rule 5.
  - Each player's eligibility will be reviewed by a representative of the College Chess Committee, the Chief Tournament Director / Arbiter, and the US Chess Director of Events.
  - The Organizer's website will contain additional details about how teams shall submit their eligibility documentation and any submission deadlines.

### 2b. Specific Eligibility Rules.

**Rule 1:** Players who hold titles as FIDE International Masters (IMs) or Grand Masters (GMs) are eligible to participate if they satisfy at least one of the following stipulations: either #1 alone, or all three conditions (a, b, c) listed in #2.

1. Are less than 26 years old as undergraduate students, or under 30 years old as graduate students, as of September 1 of the academic year in which the tournament takes place.
2. Satisfy all three of the following conditions:
  - a. Are full-time, degree-seeking undergraduate or graduate students as defined by the college or university being attended.

- b. Have a grade-point average of at least B (e.g., at least 3.0 on a 4-point scale).
  - c. Have satisfied conditions 2a and 2b for at least one full semester or term at their team's college or university before the event. (Thus, note that this is an exception to **Rule 4**, below.)
3. Rule 1 applies to all college events, individual or team. There are no age restrictions on players who do not have the IM or GM titles.
  4. Titled GMs and IMs are eligible to play in a maximum of six (6) Pan-American Inter-Collegiate Team Chess Championships.

**Rule 2:** Players without GM or IM titles must be enrolled at least half-time (e.g., 6 credit hours) during the semester/term of eligibility. For the Pan-American Intercollegiate Team Championship, players must have been enrolled in their school for the fall semester or term immediately preceding the event. A player in the final semester of his/her degree program can be enrolled in fewer than 6 credit hours if the number of credits undertaken fulfills the player's degree requirements. A player whose degree requirement meets this criterion should have his/her Pan-Am eligibility documentation appropriately annotated to reflect the imminent graduation status. Players enrolled in high school, even those who are taking college courses as part of a "dual enrollment" program, are not eligible to participate in the Pan-Ams.

**Rule 3:** A player is eligible to participate for a total of six years, where a year is defined as either a traditional college academic year of a Fall term followed by a Spring term, or attendance during one Fall or one Spring term during a college academic year. Here are several illustrative examples of determining the number of eligibility years used by a player:

- Fall 1998: One year of eligibility.
- Fall 1998 and Spring 1999: One year of eligibility.
- Fall 1998 and Fall 1999: Two years.
- Fall 1998, Spring 1999, and Fall 1999: Two years.
- Fall 1998, Spring 1999, Fall 1999, and Spring 2000: Two years.
- Fall 1998 and Spring (or Fall) 2000: Two years.
- Spring 1998, Fall 1999, and Fall 2000: Three years.

**Rule 4:** A player must be enrolled in a degree-seeking program with a cumulative grade point average of at least a C. If a student is new to the institution and has no GPA, then this requirement is waived.

**Rule 6:** Players for a Pan-American team must be resident at the same geographical location, which can include multiple campuses and instructional facilities used by the same college or university the players represent. All players must live either in on-campus housing or in housing within reasonable commuting distance by car, train, or bus of the school they are representing.

**Rule 7:** Faculty and staff are not eligible to compete. In this context, the term "faculty and staff" does not include teaching assistants or student workers.

### **3. Challenges to a Team's or Player's Eligibility:**

- 3a.** Any team's eligibility or standing in the Pan-Ams may be challenged through a written complaint sent to the US Chess Director of Events no later than 30 days after the end of the Pan-Am Tournament. The complaint must be filed by a player on a team that competed in the event, the team's captain, or the team's coach. It is strongly recommended that the person filing the claim be a US Chess member.
  1. The challenge must be supported by specific points of evidence based on the rules in this document, the US Chess **Official Rules of Chess**, FIDE Laws of Chess, or US Chess Code of Ethics.

2. Upon receiving the complaint, the Director of Events shall review the allegation(s) to identify whether the case is based on violations of the Pan-Am rules, the **Rules of Chess**, FIDE Laws of Chess, and/or the Code of Ethics. If the Director of Events believes:
  - The core of the complainant’s allegation contains violations of the Pan-Am rules, then the Director of Events has the authority to continue processing the case.
  - The core of the complainant’s allegation contains violations of the Rules of Chess, FIDE Laws, or US Chess Code of Ethics, then the Director of Events does not have authority to process the case. The Director of Events will consult with the US Chess Office to route the complaint to the appropriate US Chess Committee at which time the complaint is officially injected into the review and adjudication process used by the applicable US Chess committee.
3. For cases within the Director of Event’s authority to process, the Director of Events shall notify the Chair of the College Chess Committee, who will notify the school whose status has been challenged.
  - The team being challenged (the respondent) shall be instructed by the College Chess Committee to prepare its response based on the complaint and to submit it to the College Chess Committee no later than a specified date (usually 15-30 days).
  - The Director of Events shall review the complaint and the response, make a decision on the case, document the decision in writing, and transmit the decision to the complainant and the respondent through email.
4. If the US Chess ruling is against the team being challenged (the respondent), that team may appeal the Director of Event’s decision to the US Chess Executive Board. The appeal must be communicated in writing by the respondent within 30 days after the decision has been communicated to the team. The claimant has no appeal rights.

#### 4. Ratings of Players:

- 4a. The Chief TD/Arbiter is the final authority for player ratings being used in the Pan-Am tournament. The intent is to pair all players using the rating that best represents their current rating strength as revealed in the US Chess, FIDE, or Canadian rating systems, as well as ratings used in a player’s native country.
- 4b. The table below provides guidelines for the Chief TD/Arbiter. For cases not specifically addressed by this table, the Chief TD/Arbiter shall consult Rule 28 of the US Chess **Official Rules of Chess**.

Player’s Rating Situation	Rating Used
<b>Has an established US Chess regular rating.</b> ( <i>An established rating means the player has 25 or more regular rated games in the US Chess system.</i> )	The regular rating from the monthly US Chess Rating Supplement being used for the Tournament.
<b>Has a FIDE standard rating with at least twice as many rated games as the player’s US Chess regular rating or the rating from the player’s native country.</b>	Convert the FIDE rating using the formula: • Rating = 180 + 0.94 x FIDE, if FIDE 2000 or below. • Rating = 20 + 1.02 x FIDE, if FIDE is over 2000.
<b>Has a CFC regular rating, but no US Chess regular rating or FIDE standard rating.</b>	Convert the CFC rating using the formula: • Rating = CFC – 90 , if CFC is 1500 or below. • Rating = 1.1 x CFC – 240 , if CFC is over 1500.
<b>Has a rating from his/her native country.</b>	Convert the native country rating using Rule 28 in the <b>US Chess Official Rules of Chess</b> .
<b>Has a FIDE rating that reflects no rated games for the past 10 or more years and has a US Chess regular rating or native country rating that is more current.</b>	Use the more current US Chess rating, or assign a rating based on converting the player’s native country rating.

Player's Rating Situation	Rating Used
Has no rating in any recognized rating system.	Rating = 100 shall be used for the unrated player when the player's rating must factor into the average rating for the team (e.g., a 3 or 4-player team). The Wall Chart will reflect "UNR" or "Unrated" for these players.

## 5. Team Requirements:

- 5a. A team is made up of four players plus up to two optional alternates.
- 5b. At the start of the tournament, teams are ranked-ordered and sequenced according to the average rating of the four highest-rated players listed on the team's roster provided during the registration process. The team with the highest average rating is the top seed, etc. A team's average rating is a fixed value for the duration of the tournament, it is not re-calculated by round based on a team's line-up for a round.
- 5c. A team may decide to use one or both of its alternates in a round. Any regular team member may sit out when an alternate plays; other team members move up team's line-up accordingly.
- 5d. Teams must order their players in descending rating order for each round, except that 50-point transpositions are allowed. That list of players for a specific round is known as the team's "Lineup." The Lineup is not to be confused with the team's official "Roster", which is submitted as part of the registration process and lists all primary players and up to 2 alternates in descending rating sequence.
- 5e. Unrated players must be placed below rated players.
- 5f. A team must have a minimum of three players to compete for prizes. If only two players arrive from a school before round 1, they will be allowed to compete provided their teammates are expected to arrive. If these teammates do not arrive, then the two who did arrive are ineligible for all prizes.
- 5g. Mixed teams consisting of players from more than one school are not permitted. For example, if two schools arrive with only two players, those schools may not combine to form a team, even if they volunteer to forego prize eligibility.
- 5h. There is no limit to the number of teams a school can enter. When a school registers more than one team, there is no rule regarding the composition of each team except that the players on the team's official Roster must be listed in descending rating order. When there are multiple teams from the same school the Chief TD/Arbiter will designate them as "A", "B", "C", etc., with "A" used for the team with the highest average rating. (For example, Yale A and Yale B).
- 5i. The top four US based teams in the Pan-Am Final Standings are eligible to represent their school in the College Final Four Tournament ("the President's Cup"). If one of the qualifying teams cannot attend the Final Four Tournament, then the next highest finishing team shall take their place as long as that school is not already qualified. See below for possible eligibility circumstances that may affect how a school organizes their individual teams.
  - 1. When a team qualifies for the Final Four Tournament, the intent is the players on the Final Four team will be the same players shown on that team's official Roster from the Pan-Am Tournament.
  - 2. If a school has more than one team finish in the top four of the Pan-Ams, then only the school's highest finishing team shall qualify for the Final Four Tournament.

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3. If a school had multiple teams participating in the Pan-Ams and the school's Final Four team has one or more ineligible players (see #6 below), then substitute(s) for the ineligible player(s) must come first from those players who participated in the Pan-Ams as members of the school's other teams. This specification must be applied before a team can add any "new" players who did not play in the Pan-Ams.
4. If a team fielded only one team of 4 players and 2 alternates for the Pan-Am Tournament and any of those players become ineligible for the Final Four Tournament, then the school must first use one or both alternates from the team's Pan-Am official Roster before designating "new" players.
5. If a team fielded only one team of 4 or 5 players for the Pan-Am Tournament, then that team may add eligible new players to complete its Final Four Roster as long as all players on the Final Four Roster are listed in descending rating sequence.
6. A player who played for one school in the Pan-Ams and transfers to a Final Four-eligible school during the same college academic year ***is not eligible*** to play in the Final Four as part of the player's new school.
7. All Final Four Tournament teams desiring to substitute players for legitimate reasons such as graduation, illness, GPA ineligibility, family emergency, etc., must submit by email all relevant documentation to the US Chess College Chess Committee Chair ***at least thirty (30) calendar days before Day 1 of the Final Four.***
  - Relevant documentation must include the name of the player originally on the team, the reason(s) why that player is being substituted, and the name of the proposed substitute. Remember, proposed substitutes must come first from players who represented the school in the most recent Pan-Am tournament before "new" players can be added.
  - When a school's substitute is a "new" player (e.g., someone who did not represent their school in the most recent Pan-Ams), the school also must provide proof of the substitute's eligibility in accordance with the Eligibility Requirements specified in Section 2 of the Pan-Am rules. (See also #6 above.)
8. All proposed substitutions on Final Four Tournament Rosters shall be reviewed and adjudicated ***no later than twenty (20) calendar days before Day 1 of the Final Four*** tournament by a 3-person subcommittee formed from the College Chess Committee. The subcommittee shall not contain anyone associated with the schools participating in the Final Four Tournament.
9. Teams who wish to appeal the subcommittee's decision(s) must do so by email to the College Chess Committee Chair ***no later than fifteen (15) calendar days before Day 1*** of the Final Four Tournament. The College Chess Committee Chair shall forward the appeal to the US Chess Director of Events for ruling. The Director of Events shall rule ***no later than ten (10) calendar days*** before the start of the Final Four. The Director of Events ruling is final and cannot be appealed.
- 5j. All teams shall designate a Team Captain. The captain does not need to be a player, but the captain must be someone directly affiliated with the team's school (e.g., official chess coach or assistant coach, school administrator, faculty member, etc.). If a school does not designate a Team Captain during Registration, then the Chief TD/ Arbiter can automatically designate the team's highest rated player as the captain. The role of the Team Captain includes the following functions:
  1. Check player registrations and wall charts for accuracy.
  2. Turn in the Team Lineup for the next round to the Chief TD / Arbiter at least one hour before the round's scheduled start time.
  3. Ensure the team arrives on time for each scheduled round.
  4. Ensure the team members play in correct board order as shown on the Team Lineup.

5. Report game results to the Chief TD / Arbiter.
6. Ensure game results and standings are accurate.
7. Team Captains are not allowed to communicate with players while their games are in progress.

5k. "Package deals" such as offering draws on boards 1 and 4 are not permitted.

## **6. Conduct of the Pan-Am Tournament:**

- 6a. A team may not change its official roster after the end of the Pan-Am Registration period without the approval of the Chief TD/ Arbiter in consultation with the College Chess Committee. Such changes will invoke requirements to prove player eligibility that may be too difficult for a school to fulfill in time for the Pan-Am Tournament.
- 6b. If, during a round, players were placed out of order due to the TD's error, then the proper order will be re-established for the next round. When this occurs the previous results will stand for the team and for individual games.
- 6c. If, during a round, players were placed or played out of order due to an error by the team, then the team may face disciplinary actions as determined by the Chief TD / Arbiter up to and including forfeiture of one or more board results and disqualification from the remainder of the tournament.
- 6d. To the extent possible, the organizer shall rope-off the top teams to highlight the top contestants and prevent congestion.
- 6e. Announcements by the organizer or Chief TD/Arbiter shall be made before the start of each round.

## **7. Electronic Devices in the Pan-Am Tournament:**

- 7a. Any electronic device capable of transmitting or receiving information related to chess, calculating potential moves, or looking-up moves from a database, is not allowed in the tournament playing area. This restriction applies to players and all other personnel in the playing area except the TD/Arbiter the event support staff.
- 7b. No electronic devices shall be in the possession of a player, regardless of the player's location, while that player's game is in progress.
- 7c. Prohibited devices include, but are not limited to, cell or smart phones, tablets, computers, and Apple or Android watches.
- 7d. Unless approved by the Chief TD/Arbiter as part of the pre-event instructions, players are not allowed to use electronic notation devices such as the Monroi, ChessNoteR, or PlyCount. This restriction does not apply to Monroi or DGT (or similar) devices provided by the event organizer or Chief TD/Arbiter.
- 7e. Violation of these electronic device rules by a player or member of their school may result in the immediate forfeiture of game(s), eviction from the tournament, and/or banishment from the tournament playing area.

## **8. Tie-breaks:**

- 8a. Tie-breaks are used only to award places and trophies.
- 8b. If two or more teams tie for first place, they are designated "Pan-Am Co-Champions." The Chief TD / Arbiter will use tie-breaks to determine place and class awards, as well as what teams qualify for the Final Four Tournament. When two teams or players tie for a prize other than first place team, the Chief TD / Arbiter uses tie-breaks to clarify place prizes and trophy allocation.

- 8c. When team match points are equal (e.g., two or more teams are tied), the Chief TD / Arbiter will use the following order of tie-break systems:
1. U.S. Amateur Team System. In this system, the tiebreak points are the final score of the opposing team multiplied by the number of points scored against that team. For example, if Webster A scored 2.5-1.5 against UTDallas B, which finished the tournament with 3 match points, Webster A's tiebreak for that round is  $2.5 \times 3 = 7.5$ . (See Rule 34G2 in the US Chess *Official Rules of Chess*.)
  2. Game points.
  3. Direct encounter.
  4. Buchholz Cut 1.
  5. Buchholz.
  6. Sonneborn-Berger.
- 8d. For individual board prize determinations, the tie-break procedure is total game points, then:
1. Win percentage.
  2. Median.
  3. Solkoff.
  4. Sonneborn-Berger.
  5. Cumulative.
  6. Kashdan.
  7. Head-to-head result between tied players.
  8. Most Blacks.
  9. Result between teams of tied players.
  10. Coin flip.

## 9. Ceremonies:

### 9a. Pan-Am Opening Ceremony:

1. The organizer is encouraged to arrange a brief opening ceremony an hour or so before the start of the Round 1. All costs for opening ceremonies or any pre-event receptions/activities are the sole responsibility of the organizer, not US Chess.
2. Local dignitaries, Deans or faculty from the host school, and the press should be invited to participate in opening ceremonies and pre-event activities. Experience has shown that local officials have great interest in participating in such ceremonies. Proclamations from a host college, mayor, county executive, and governor might be available upon request from their respective offices.

### 9b. Pan-Am Awards Ceremony & Prizes:

1. The organizer is responsible for an awards ceremony representative of a national championship.
2. The Chief TD / Arbiter shall post a list of prize winners as soon as possible. The awards presentation order should be announced at the start of the ceremony.
3. Impressive trophies shall be awarded to each of the following finishers. Organizers may add other awards with the approval of the US Chess College Chess Committee Chair.
  - 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> Place Teams overall
  - Top Division II Team (average rating 2000-2199)
  - Top Division III Team (average rating 1800-1999)
  - Top Division IV Team (average rating 1600-1799)



- Top Division V Team (average rating 1400-1599)
  - (Optional) Top Division VI Team (average rating under 1400)
  - Top International Team (team from a school outside of the U.S.)
  - Top Community College (awarding no baccalaureate degree). Teams must declare their eligibility for this award before the start of the tournament after which they are no longer eligible for any of the Top Division awards.
  - Top Four-Year Small College (under 5,000 enrollment). Teams must declare their eligibility for this award before the start of the tournament after which they are no longer eligible for any of the Top Division awards.
  - Top All-Female Team
  - Best Mixed Doubles Team (at least 2 males and 2 females)
  - The following prizes can be clocks, trophies, or plaques:
    - ♦ Top Individual Boards 1-4
    - ♦ Top Alternate
    - ♦ Biggest Team Upset
    - ♦ Biggest Individual Upset
4. If a team wins first place in two categories—e.g., Top Division *and* a special award (Top International, Top Small College etc.)—then that team shall select which award they prefer to receive; but they cannot receive both awards. If, for example, a team decides to receive the Top Community College award, then the second place team in that rating division would win the Top Division award. Awards for "Biggest Team Upset" and "Biggest Individual Upset" can be presented to a team or player who won another award.

## 10. Miscellaneous:

### 10a. Chess Notation:

1. Chess notation is required by all players, move-by-move, for the duration of all games.
2. The organizer should provide carbon scoresheets for all games. These are the property of the organizer, and clean copies must be turned in.
3. Side events add to the attractiveness of the Pan-Am. Such activities traditionally include the Pan-Am Speed Chess Championship. A Pan-Am Open (a regular, open event), and simuls or lectures by famous players are highly recommended.

**10b. Questions:** Anyone with questions about these rules should direct them to the Chair of the US Chess College Chess Committee, GM Alexander Onischuk, [gmonischuk@gmail.com](mailto:gmonischuk@gmail.com).

**10c.** A copy of these Pan-Am Rules shall be posted on the College Chess Website.