

# US Chess Accessibility and Special Circumstances Committee Charter

Submitted: May 3, 2018

## Background:

### BYLAWS OF THE US CHESS FEDERATION

#### Article II: Purposes

*Section 1. The purpose of the Federation ... The Federation shall encourage and support chess programs for handicapped individuals and the participation of handicapped in chess activity, including, where feasible, the expansion of opportunities for meaningful participation by handicapped individuals in all chess competition.*

The Special Needs and Circumstances Committee was approved for creation by the Executive Board in response to a motion by Steve Immitt at the delegates meeting of 2015. This motion ADM 15-27, stated that:

“Resolved: The Delegates authorize the establishment of a new committee to assist players with special needs and circumstances in overcoming barriers to participate in and enjoy USCF tournaments. This committee shall report to the executive board.”

Rationale: Players with special needs and circumstances face extra challenges to participate in tournaments, some as basic as finding a suitable space to play their games or even to move the pieces and press the clock. This would include players who may have religious objections to using delay clocks on the Sabbath, for example. Guidelines should be developed to advise tournament organizers and directors how to help these players enjoy the benefits of serious chess in a tournament environment.”

At the recommendation of the Special Needs and Circumstances Committee, the Executive Board renamed the committee to the Accessibility and Special Circumstances Committee in June of 2017.

## Mission:

The mission of this committee is the fulfillment of Article II, Section 1 of the Bylaws of US Chess in accordance with ADM 15-27. In addition, this committee takes on an outreach mission to increase the number of underrepresented players who participate in US Chess events and who have: disabilities, and/or impairments and/or who may need special and reasonable accommodations made to the mode of play so they may play a legal and fair game of chess. In order to attract more players, we resolve to educate tournament directors and event organizers how to make reasonable accommodations to the mode of play, to make the game of chess safer, more comfortable, dignified and reasonably fair for all players with impairment/disabilities within an integrated open tournament, club, school and/or match setting. We resolve to educate players also, so they may know how and when to ask for reasonable accommodations. By our efforts we hope to create a more accessible and inviting chess culture that in turn will permit an organic growth of membership and participation.

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## Objectives:

- Research credible sources for disability information and accessibility support.
- Research and develop written accessibility and inclusion policy, guidelines and procedures for review/approval by the Executive Board and/or Delegates
- Work in cooperation with other organizations as directed by the Executive Board or the Executive Director.
- Prepare approved policy and guidelines for publication in appropriate public-facing mediums to include, but not limited to written guidance to players, TDs, prospective organizers, chess coaches, websites, and articles in chess magazines.
- Work with other US Chess committees (e.g. Rules, TDCC, Scholastic, Chess in Education, Outreach, Ethics, Anti-Cheating) to:
  - 1) Develop accessibility and inclusion policies, guidelines and procedures that US Chess may use to increase participation by players with disabilities.
  - 2) Clarify and update existing policy (once it is published),
  - 3) Review and revise best practices for reasonable accommodations to the mode of play made by organizers and TD's to assure safe, comfortable, dignified and fair play for all players.
  - 4) Write *Guidelines for the Treatment of Chess Players with Disabilities* to be used to train chess officials, chess teachers, chess coaches and player aids and player advocates to make them more effective in providing a safe, comfortable, dignified and fair environment for play.
  - 5) Monitor instances of accessibility and inclusion failures or abuse of accommodations in order to improve policy and best practices for accessibility and inclusion, in anticipation of emerging issues to US Chess.

## Committee Composition:

The committee shall consist of 9 to 11 persons (an odd number is strongly preferred). The structure of the committee shall include:

- The Chair
- The Vice Chair
- At least SEVEN (7) at large members, appointed by the Executive Board, usually at the recommendation of the Chair.

## Committee Member Qualifications:

Persons appointed to the committee must be members in good standing of US Chess and remain in good standing throughout their service to the committee. Ideal members will have working knowledge or experience in at least 2 of the following fields: Tournament Direction, Tournament Event Organization, Health, Education, Special Education, Psychology, Communications, US Law and/or direct experience in, or with or in support of "The Community of Persons with Disabilities."

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## **Committee Member Duties and Expectations:**

Members must be willing to actively participate: in email discussions, in phone and/or teleconferences, in voting on matters before the committee and attend a workshop at the annual US Open (in person or by phone). Members who don't participate in at least 2 of the above activities within the year between governance meetings, may be removed from the committee by the US Chess Executive Board. Members of the Committee do not speak for or act as agents of US Chess.

## **Budget and Resources:**

This committee does not have an operating budget and committee members shall not receive financial compensation for their activities. Any requests for funds to support the committee must be submitted to and approved by the US Chess Executive Director.

## **Committee Operations:**

The US Chess Executive Board will appoint a Chair who shall serve at the pleasure of the Executive Board for an initial period of 2 years. Thereafter, the Executive Board may renew the Chair, but a Chair shall not serve in that office for more than 5 consecutive years.

The US Chess Executive Board will appoint a Vice Chair who shall serve at the pleasure of the Executive Board for an initial period of 2 years. Thereafter, the Executive Board may renew the Vice Chair, but a Vice Chair shall not serve in that office for more than 5 consecutive years.

The Chair and Vice Chair shall jointly set meeting agendas and times for committee meetings. Committee procedures shall adhere to the norms of Roberts Rules of Order, with matters for decision being voted upon by the committee. The Chair shall work with the appointed Executive Board Liaison(s) and Office Liaison to communicate accessibility and inclusions issues to the Executive Board.

The Chair shall submit an annual report to US Chess in time for publication in or distribution with the annual Delegates Call.

Submitted by:  
Janelle J. Losoff, Chair  
Sean Jordan Manross, Vice Chair  
US Chess Accessibility and Special Circumstances Committee  
May 3, 2018

END

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