

US CHESS FEDERATION'S

OFFICIAL

RULES OF CHESS

7TH EDITION

FREE DOWNLOAD VERSION: CHAPTER 9 ONLY
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FIDE National Arbiter



US CHESS
FEDERATION

Chapter 9: Official US Chess Correspondence Chess Rules

US Chess Correspondence Chess Rules 2021 Revised Edition

These rules supersede previous versions and apply to all US Chess Correspondence Chess rated tournaments.

Your Pledge

I undertake to conform to the rules and objectives of US Chess Correspondence Chess (CC), to respond promptly to all chess correspondence and to maintain a high standard of courtesy, sociability, and good fellowship at all times in my contacts with other members. I also understand that I have a responsibility to complete my games.,

Your Responsibilities as a Player

1.) You must be a US Chess member for the duration of your play in any tournament. You must abide by the latest edition of the US Chess Federation's Official Rules of Chess, except when inappropriate for correspondence play. In case of conflict, correspondence rules take precedence. You are responsible for knowing the rules. By entering correspondence events, you agree to follow directions of the Tournament Director (TD), to respond to any legitimate inquiry, and to provide requested information. Players must enter tournaments only in their own names, unless approval for other action is granted by the TD. A player who withdraws may be denied entry to new events. If you withdraw without proper notice to your opponent and the TD, the TD may provide this information to the US Chess Correspondence Chess Director (CCD) who may determine whether you will be allowed to enter future US Chess CC events.

2.) You are expected to act courteously toward opponents. The TD will forfeit players who use abusive or insulting language or who are disruptive. In case of conflict, you should try to come to an agreement with your opponent.

3.) You may consult chess books and periodicals but not other players. You cannot use computer programs or chess playing algorithms to evaluate a move, but you may use computers for record keeping and databases.

4.) In case of appeals, retain all game records (move cards or emails) for at least four months after receiving notice of a game result. Otherwise, you may find yourself without a defense to an opponent's claim.

Reflection Time

5.) The following time controls are allowable for US Chess CC events:

a. 30 days reflection time for each 10 moves, with a maximum of 10 days for any one move. You may carry unused time over from one time period into the next time period.

b. A set number of days per move, with a minimum of at least 3 days.

For postal chess, reflection time is calculated from the date the move is received until the postmarked date of your response. For example, if your move is received on March 22nd and your response is postmarked on March 22nd (the

same date) you will have used zero days reflection time. However, if your response is postmarked on March 23rd, you will have used one day reflection time.

For email or correspondence chess servers, reflection time is calculated from the date and time it is received until the date and time it is emailed or sent. For example, if your move is received at 11:00AM on March 22nd and your response is sent at 10:59AM on March 23rd, you will have used zero days reflection time. However, if your response is sent at 11:00AM on March 23rd, you will have used one day reflection time. There is no transit time in email or correspondence chess server games.

6.) Every day counts for reflection time, including Sundays and holidays.

7.) You may take up to 30 days of excused time a calendar year. Additional emergency time may be granted at the discretion of the TD. You must take excused time for all games in a section. To take excused time, simply notify your opponents and the TD in advance. If you send a move, your excused time ends immediately. If your opponent takes excused time, you should respond to unanswered moves normally because your reflection time is still counted.

8.) You must advise the TD and your opponents of address changes (postal or email) in advance or at the latest within seven days of vacating previous premises. Five days will be charged as reflection time for failure to comply.

Postal or E-mail Transmission of Moves

9.) You must use English algebraic notation unless you and your opponent agree on another system. All games shall be conducted using written or typed correspondence unless otherwise indicated. Transmitted moves, including conditional moves, are binding if the moves are legal. If an illegal or ambiguous move is transmitted as part of a conditional move set, the moves immediately preceding the illegal or ambiguous move are binding. Missing or mistaken announcement of check, capture, or "e.p." does not invalidate a move. Diagrams or commentary have no significance in disputes over move legality.

10.) Your move card or email must contain:

- a. Names and addresses of both players.
- b. Section and game numbers.
- c. The previous move sent and your response.
- d. For conditional moves, the move sent immediately prior to the conditional move(s), all conditional moves you accept, and your response.
- e. Receipt and postmark dates of your opponent's previous move and the date of your reply.
- f. Time used on current move by you and your opponent.
- g. Current reflection time totals.

If you do not include "f." and "g." with your moves, you cannot claim a win on time.

11.) The TD may impose a five-day penalty for:

- a. Impossible, ambiguous, or illegible move(s).
- b. Failing to confirm your opponent's last move. An impossible move is a move which cannot be played as recorded. Notify your opponent immediately of your finding. An impossible move or an illegible move in no way obliges the player to move the piece in question. In a case of an ambiguous move, the ambiguous move must be clarified and executed. For example, if your opponent writes Nd2 and either Nbd2 or Nfd2 can be made, the person writing the ambiguous move must execute Nbd2 or Nfd2. Clerical errors are binding and once sent, can in no way be taken back.

12.) To offer conditional moves, send a series of consecutively numbered moves. To accept conditional moves, acknowledge them as you would other moves. You can accept a series of conditional moves in whole or in part. Conditional moves are binding only until the next reply.

Example: you are responding to your opponent's second move, 2. Nf3. You want to reply 2... Nc6 and offer two conditional moves. Your card should have the following appearance:

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
- If 3. Bb5, then 3... a6
- If 3. Bc4, then 3... Nf6

A typical opponent's reply might be:

2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Bb5 a6
4. Bxc6 ...

There is no penalty for misrecording an "if" move by the sending player.

Loss on Time/Repeats/Time Complaints

13.) If a player oversteps the time control, he or she will forfeit the game.

Variation 13a.) The TD may impose a 5-day reflection time penalty for the first occurrence of a player who oversteps the time control. If a player violates the time control a second time, they will forfeit the game.

14.) If an opponent fails to reply to a move within 14 days a player must send a repeat move. If another 14 days has elapsed without a reply to the repeat move, file a time complaint with the TD and send no more repeats. The complaint must include:

- a. The violator's name and address.
- b. The Tournament Section.
- c. Date of last move sent.
- d. Date of repeat move sent.
- e. Reflection time usage.

Once filed, a valid time complaint may not be withdrawn by a complainant and must be answered by the alleged violator. The disposition of time complaints is the responsibility of the TD, not the players. In email events, the repeat move must be sent by email.

15) Upon receipt of a time complaint, the TD shall send an official inquiry to the opponent named. Should the TD receive a valid explanation, he will order the game resumed (if needed) and no action will be taken. If the explanation is not satisfactory, the TD may impose an appropriate penalty, as provided for in Rule 20. If no answer is received by the TD within 14 days from the date the complaint was filed by him, the game(s) may be forfeited. The complainant shall, in all instances, receive written disposition of any valid time complaint filed.

Disputes

16.) Any dispute you cannot resolve or any claim of repeated or willful rule violation must be submitted to the TD. Relevant evidence must be included. Whenever possible, continue play while the complaint is being considered. Your complaint should include:

- a. Section and game numbers.
- b. Name of both players.
- c. Game score.
- d. Reflection time usage.
- e. Supporting documentation (photocopies are acceptable unless the TD asks for originals).

Any complaint must be sent within seven days of the time a person becomes aware of the alleged infraction. Failure to provide all the necessary information requested above, negates your claim.

Reporting Game Results

17.) The winner must report the result to the TD immediately upon conclusion of the game. In case of draws, White must report the result. It is a good idea for the other player to also submit the result, labeling it "duplicate report." Reports must include section and game numbers as well as the names and ID numbers of both players.

Thirty-Month Limit and Adjudications

18.) A US Chess CC game must end after thirty (30) months from when the event begins. Either player may submit the game for adjudication, sent no later than one week after the tournament's end date. The player submitting the adjudication must provide the following to the TD:

- a. The score of the game.
- b. Diagram of the position before adjudication.
- c. Claim of win or draw.
- d. Any analysis to support the claim (optional).

If neither player submits the adjudication material within one week after the tournament's end date, the game is scored as a rated draw. The TD is not required to provide the basis for the adjudication result.

Withdrawals/Forfeits

19.) If a player forfeits games against two opponents in the same section, all uncompleted games in that section shall also be forfeited.

If a player goes silent in all his games, the player's remaining games will be declared a silent withdrawal by the TD. A mass withdrawal occurs when a player withdraws from all play and notifies the TD of his intentions. If a player dies, all remaining games of the deceased player will be treated as a mass withdrawal.

All uncompleted games from either a silent withdrawal or mass withdrawal are recorded as unrated forfeit losses for the withdrawing player if the game has less than 10 moves completed for both players and has been in progress for less than 6 months. However, a player may file for adjudication within 14 days of being notified of the silent withdrawal or mass withdrawal to claim a rated result by following the adjudication procedures set in [Rule 18](#).

If an uncompleted game has at least 10 moves completed by both players or has been in progress for at least 6 months, it is recorded as a rated loss for the withdrawing player.

Penalties

20.) The TD may assess penalties for violations of these rules. Penalties include, but are not limited to, informal reprimands, warnings, reflection time reduction, forfeitures, or withdrawal. Warnings are usually issued before more severe penalties, but the TD may skip this step. Smooth and timely completion of games is the main consideration.

Appeals

Any decision of the Chief TD of an event may be appealed to US Chess.

21.) Appeals in writing must be postmarked within seven days of the end of the tournament to the US Chess office. Appeals submitted after the seven-day deadline may be considered at the discretion of the committee hearing the appeal. Appeals may be submitted via e-mail, but the business office or the committee(s) hearing the appeal may require a signed statement. The office will refer an appeal to the appropriate committee(s) but may immediately reject obviously groundless appeals. A good-faith deposit must be included with the appeal. The deposit will be returned unless the ruling authority finds the appeal to be groundless and rules that the deposit is to be forfeited. US Chess reserves the right to make final decisions concerning the rules and procedures that govern its competitions.

Player Replacements

22.) A withdrawn player may be replaced at the option of the TD. There will be no replacement for a withdrawn player against whom a win, loss, or draw has been scored in actual play. A withdrawn player will not be replaced 60 days after the tournament start date.

GLOSSARY

adjudication: A judge's determination of a game's result, based on best play by both sides.

ambiguous move: A move in which two chess pieces of the same kind can be transferred to a new square and the player does not specify which chess piece. Example, knights on b1 and f3 could be moved to d2. The move "Nd2" is ambiguous because it does not specify which knight is being transferred. The correct transmission is either "Nbd2" or "Nfd2."

conditional or "if" moves: An attempt to save time and postage by offering a plausible continuation beyond the required response. Conditional moves are binding if the recipient accepts the continuations. The game must then follow the indicated continuation, or any part accepted in sequence.

English algebraic: Conventional algebraic notation with abbreviations of the English names for the pieces: for example, Nf3 or Ng1-f3 or Bc1-f4; "x" or ":" for capture is standard. A full explanation of this system is available from the US Chess office. Please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

excused time: Time-outs when play is suspended for leaves or for special circumstances with the approval of the TD.

illegal move: A move which violates the rules of chess.

impossible move: A move which cannot be played as recorded. A blank or missing move shall be treated as an impossible move.

Official Rules of Chess: 7th edition, available online at <https://new.uschess.org/news/7th-edition-rule-book-chapters-now-available-download>.

reflection time: The time between a player's receipt of a move and the postmarking or sending of his response.

transmission time: The time a move is in the custody of the Postal Service, that is, from the postmark date to date of delivery at the recipient's address. There is no transmission time in email or correspondence chess server games.