SCHOLASTIC NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS TOURNAMENT REGULATIONS SCHOOL YEAR 2026-2027

US Chess Grade (K-12) National Championships

US Chess Spring Nationals & SuperNationals

US Chess Elementary School (K-6) National Championships
US Chess Middle School (K-8) National Championships
US Chess High School (K-12) National Championships

US Chess Scholastic Online Nationals

US Chess Scholastic Online Quick National Championships

US Chess Youth Events

US Chess Youth Action National Championships
US Chess Junior Congress
US Chess Junior Open
All-Girls National Championships

Substantive changes from the School Year 2025-2026 Edition
are highlighted using ~~struck-through~~ and blue-shaded text.

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Throughout the document, ~~struck-through~~ and blue-shaded text highlight changes made since the School Year 2025-26 edition of the *Scholastic Regulations*. In the Table of Contents, blue-shaded text indicates a section that has changed significantly, been eliminated, or is new.

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A NOTE RE: THESE US CHESS SCHOLASTIC NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS TOURNAMENT REGULATIONS

Welcome to the 2026-2027 version of the *US Chess Scholastic National Championships Tournament Regulations,* which the **US Chess Executive Board approved on August 9, 2026.** For the reader's convenience, we highlight changes from the 2025-2026 version using ~~struck-through~~ and blue-shaded text.

Here is a summary of changes for 2026-2027. We've done our best to place the more significant changes first. Please note that on/about January 1, 2027, US Chess will publish on the website an updated version of the Official Rules of Chess.

1. **Significant changes in this document**:
   - Section 5.2.1 revises the definition of a school and various types of school organizations such as a public school district, private school, and charter school to clarify eligibility criteria for teams in Section 5.3.
   - Section 4.3 introduces new language on Section Eligibility for players who scored 6.0 or better in an Under section of the previous year's Spring Nationals. What's new is that a 6.0 or better score in a Spring Nationals during the current school year can affect a player's section eligibility.
   - Section 4.4 specifies how appeals of player eligibility are handled before a tournament and onsite after the tournament begins.
   - Section 4.7 revises the definition of an Unrated Player.
   - Section 4.6 updates how the Tournament Review Group examines players' current ratings, as well as their ratings over the past 12 months before a tournament. The Regulations now provide examples of how the Tournament Review Group evaluates situations when players have ratings in multiple systems.
   - Section 4.8 is a completely new section to address the Re-sectioning of players.
   - Section 10.3 eliminates the Unrated Section in the K-8 Nationals and K-6 Nationals. Unrated players will now play in the lowest Under sections of those events.
   - Section 11.1.8 specifies penalties TDs shall impose for players who violate the rules for chess notation.
   - Section 13.8 clarifies when a game result is determined and final.
   - Section 14.3 refines guidance on the number of awards (trophies and medals) US Chess should order for individual and team awards.
   - Section 3.2.2 clarifies and extends onsite registration.
2. **Other changes**:
   - Section 1.2 revises event names to improve branding for US Chess.
   - Section 4.5 identifies the US Chess Rating Supplements (RS) to be used in the Grade Nationals and Spring Nationals and the relation between the publication date of each RS and tournament early entry deadlines. The section also introduces a new table providing examples to illustrate how the players' RS ratings are examined by the Tournament Review Group.
   - Section 12.3 applies a recommendation from the Chair of the Tournament Director and Arbiter Committee to revise the sequence of tiebreaks used for individual scoring when a section does (or does not) use Accelerated Pairings.
   - Section 13.1 includes requirements to ensure DGT Boards are located away from noisy areas of the playing floor and mentions use of move delay or time delay to support fair play.
   - Section 14.2 clarifies words to be used on faceplates and/or backplates for awards in the Championship and non-Championship sections.
   - Section 2.1.2 clarifies planning guidelines for Spring Nationals.
   - Section 13.4.7 introduces some Fair Play enhancements.

Questions about the *Scholastic Regulations* should be emailed far in advance of a tournament primarily to the **US Chess Director of Events** at **NationalEvents@USChess.org** and secondarily to the **Scholastic Council**. Please do not wait until the week of a tournament to ask questions about a player's event registration, rating, individual or team eligibility, team composition, or issues that could affect the player's participation in a scholastic national event. If you have a question while onsite at an event run by US Chess, then please **go to Chess Control**.

Good Chess!

US Chess Scholastic Council

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Basic Principles

The *US Chess Scholastic National Championships Tournament Regulations* are **designed to promote, preserve, and enhance the dignity and significance of, and fair play at, US Chess scholastic national events**. The *Scholastic Regulations* contain the special rules that govern US Chess scholastic national events, as well as suggestions to help the events run smoothly. These regulations are rooted in decades of hands-on experience and carry the weight of history. (The first version was published in 1984.) These regulations are intended to fulfill the needs and seasoned expectations of players, coaches, and parents at our scholastic national events. **Our young players deserve the best!**

The *Scholastic Regulations* supplement the *US Chess Official Rules of Chess*, which govern US Chess's open tournaments (tournaments that are open to scholastic *and adult* players).

The *US Chess Safe Play Policy* also applies to every scholastic national event.

Pre-tournament questions about the *Scholastic Regulations* should be emailed far in advance primarily to the US Chess Director of Events at NationalEvents@USChess.org and secondarily to the Scholastic Council. In tournament situations where there are no applicable existing scholastic regulations (or, more broadly, rules in *US Chess Official Rules of Chess*), US Chess will apply common sense to address the situation fairly.

Proposed improvements to these regulations for consideration in the next school year's version of *Scholastic Regulations* are welcome and should be emailed to the Scholastic Council.

To promote consistency among scholastic events national and state levels, US Chess encourages state chapters to adopt these regulations for their scholastic state championships, as well as their other scholastic tournaments.

1.2 Event Names

These *Scholastic Regulations* cover several scholastic national chess events. The table below provides each event's official name, as well as other names often used in the scholastic community:

Official Event Name	Other Common Names
US Chess Grade (K-12) National Championships ~~**National K-12 Grade Championships**~~	Grade Nationals, K-12 Grades, K-12 Grade National Championships
US Chess Elementary School (K-6) National Championships ~~**National Elementary School (K-6) Championships**~~	Elementary School Nationals, Elementary School National Championships, K-6 Nationals
US Chess Middle School (K-8) National Championships ~~**National Middle School (K-8) Championships**~~	Middle School Nationals, Middle School National Championships, K-8 Nationals
US Chess High School (K-12) National Championships ~~**National High School (K-12) Championships**~~	High School Nationals, High School National Championships, K-12 Nationals
US Chess Scholastic Online Quick National Championships	Scholastic Online Quick Nationals ~~Championships~~
US Chess ~~**National**~~ **Youth Action National Championships**	~~National~~ Youth Action Nationals, Youth Action
US Chess Junior ~~**Chess**~~ **Congress**	Junior Congress, Chess Congress
US Chess Junior Open	Junior Open
All-Girls National Championships	All-Girls Nationals, ~~All-Girls Championships,~~ The All-Girls

1.3 US Chess Point of Contact

The US Chess **Director of Events** is the primary point of contact for anyone with questions about these regulations and can be reached at NationalEvents@USChess.org. While onsite at a tournament run by US Chess staff, contact the Director of Events through **Chess Control**.

2 PLANNING GUIDELINES FOR EVENT DATES

2.1 Scholastic National Events

2.1.1 Fall Nationals. Grade Nationals:

2.1.1.1 Must avoid Thanksgiving Day weekend.

2.1.1.2 Should (but are not required to) be run between November 15 - December 15.

2.1.2 Spring Nationals. When US Chess organizes the Spring Nationals as events on separate weekends (that is, not as part of SuperNationals on the same weekend every 4 years), the scheduled dates for Spring Nationals should (but are not required to):

2.1.2.1 **Start** no sooner than the 3rd full weekend of March.

2.1.2.2 **End** by 1 weekend before Memorial Day weekend (in late May).

2.1.2.3 **Avoid**:

- The first 2 full weekends of March (reserved for state championships)
- Test dates for the SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test), ACT (American College Test), and AP (Advanced Placement) exams—re: High School Nationals only (See footnote 1)
- The weekend before and the weekend after other Spring Nationals (That is, Spring Nationals should not be run on consecutive weekends)
- Major religious holidays
- Memorial Day weekend
- Weekends after Memorial Day weekend (when schools are closed or start closing)

2.1.3 SuperNationals. (Next in 2029)

2.1.3.1 SuperNationals scheduling every 4 years should follow the same guidelines for Spring Nationals scheduling annually.

2.1.4 Scholastic Online Quick Nationals.

2.1.4.1 Should be run between mid-October - mid-November (at least 3 weeks before Grade Nationals).

2.1.5 All-Girls Nationals.

2.1.5.1 Must not conflict with the Grade Nationals, Spring Nationals (including SuperNationals), or Scholastic Online Quick Nationals.

2.2 Youth National Events

2.2.1 Dates for the events below shall not conflict with any other National Tournament and, if possible, should not conflict with the North American Youth Chess Championships, the Pan-American Youth Festival, the World Youth Chess Championships, or the World Cadet Chess Championships.

2.2.2 Youth Action Nationals: Should be held between November 1 - December 1, but not during Thanksgiving weekend. US Chess will entertain other possible dates as part of bid proposals. A bidder's proposed event dates must not conflict with those of any other Scholastic National event.

2.2.3 Junior Congress: Whenever possible.

2.2.4 Junior Open: Should be held in the summer.

3 ENTRY FEES & REGISTRATION

3.1 Hotel Check-in

3.1.1 Most hotels do not allow players under the age of ~~18~~ 21 to check-in without an accompanying adult. It is the responsibility of each individual player to ensure that local hotel check-in requirements are satisfied. US Chess and the organizer assume no responsibility in this regard.

3.2 Registration, Entry Fees, Service Charges, & Refunds

3.2.1 **Online Registration.** Unless advertised otherwise in the official tournament announcements or the official tournament website, online registration for the main tournament at the National K-12 Grades, the National High School, the National Middle School, and the National Elementary School Championships **will close at 8 am on the Thursday before the main tournament begins** or earlier, based on venue capacity. After 8 am, the only way to register is onsite.

3.2.2 **Onsite Registration.** Onsite entries for the main tournament are not allowed and will not be accepted by Chess Control. US Chess will accept onsite entries for the main tournament if the playing venue has not reached seating capacity. This decision rests with the US Chess Director of Events (DoE). When the DoE authorizes onsite entries, Chess Control is the only place where onsite entries will be accepted.

[1] US Chess's contracts with venues for the dates and locations of the Spring Nationals are made 3-10 years in advance. Conversely, the dates for college entrance exams (SAT, ACT, AP, etc.) typically are published only 1-2 school years in advance. To maximize players' options for participating in the Spring Nationals, players, parents, and coaches should plan accordingly to avoid conflicts between college entrance exam dates and dates for US Chess's Spring Nationals.

3.2.2.1 **On Thursday**: Entries will be accepted at Chess Control during the hours it is open. Players entering on Thursday are allowed to play in Round 1 on Friday.

3.2.2.2 **On Friday**: Entries will be accepted at Chess Control until 3 hours before the scheduled start of Round 2 for the section into which a player is entering. These players will receive a Half-point Bye for Round 1. Entries received later than 2 hours before the scheduled start of Round 2 will receive Half-point Byes for Rounds 1 and 2 and will be paired in Round 3.

3.2.2.3 **On Saturday**: No entries will be accepted for Round 3. Players wanting to enter for the start of Round 4 must register at Chess Control no later than 2 hours before the scheduled start of Round 4. These players will receive two Half-point Byes and one Zero-point Bye for Rounds 1-3. No new entries are permitted after the entry cut-off for Round 4.

3.2.2.4 Entries only for "side events" (e.g., Blitz, Bughouse, Simuls, Family and Friends, etc.) will be taken onsite at Chess Control until the registration deadline for that event.

3.2.3 **Entry Fees, Service Charges, & Refunds**.

3.2.3.1 Main tournament:

• online 1st	by ≤6 Mondays before tournament	≤ $105
	service charge for refund requested thereafter	≤ $40
• online 2nd	by ≤4 Mondays before tournament	≤ $160
	service charge for section change requested thereafter	≤ $40
	service charge for roster change requested thereafter	≤ $40
• online 3rd	by ≤2 Mondays before tournament	≤ $235
• online 4th	by Thursday before tournament	≤ $360
• onsite	Thursday, 9 am - Sunday, 12 pm	≤ $400
	Thursday, 11 am—no refund thereafter	

3.2.3.2 Blitz:

• online 1st	≈6 weeks before tournament	≤ $55
	service charge for section change requested thereafter	≤ $40
	service charge for roster change requested thereafter	≤ $40
	service charge for refund requested thereafter	≤ $40
• online 2nd	by Thursday before tournament	≤ $85
• onsite	Thursday, 9 am - Friday, ≈7:45 pm	≤ $100
	Thursday, 11 am—no refund thereafter	

~~3.2.3.3 The Director of Events shall coordinate with the Scholastic Council before publicizing the event entry fee structures.~~

3.2.4 **Early Entry Deadline(s)**. The table below shows the early entry deadlines for events organized and hosted by US Chess.

Event	Event Dates	Early Entry
Grade Nationals	December 11-13, 2026	Monday, October 26, 2026
High School Nationals	April 2-4, 2027	Monday, February 22, 2027
Elementary School Nationals	April 30 - May 2, 2027	Monday, March 22, 2027
Middle School Nationals	May 14-16, 2027	Monday, April 5, 2027

3.2.4.1 For Spring Nationals (including SuperNationals) the Early Entry deadline will be no later than the Monday after publication of the tournament's Rating Supplement. This date can be sooner to ensure proper tournament staffing. Note that for 2027 the early entry deadline for Middle School Nationals occurs ***before*** publication of the rating supplement. (See also Section 4.5.1.)

3.2.4.2 Early entry deadlines for scholastic national events hosted by third parties will be announced separately by each organizer after discussion with the US Chess Director of Events and before advertising the dates in any pre-event publicity such as TLAs (Tournament Life Announcements), event flyers, mass emails, websites, etc.

3.3 Late Registration, Section Change Requests, Bye Requests, & Reviewing a Player's Registration

3.3.1 **Late Registration**

3.3.1.1 A player entering after the entry cut-off time for Round 1 shall receive 1 half-point bye for the round, unless the player requests to play and the request is approved by the Chief Tournament Director.

3.3.1.2 A player entering after the entry cut-off time for Round 2 shall receive 2 half-point byes for Rounds 1 and 2, unless the player requests to play in Round 2 and the request is approved by the Chief Tournament Director.

3.3.1.3 A player entering after Round 2 has begun, shall receive 2 half-point byes for Rounds 1 & 2 and 0-point byes for any subsequent rounds. The player is not eligible to request or receive additional half-point byes for the tournament.

3.3.2 **Section Change Requests (SCR).** Participant-initiated SCRs are subject to a fee and/or deadline determined by the event organizer. These fees and/or deadlines must be advertised clearly in pre-event publicity on the tournament website. Players should submit their SCR as soon as possible. All players who submit an SCR will have their eligibility for the new section screened by the tournament staff in accordance with Section 4.

To encourage teams to properly form before the tournament, the following rules apply:

3.3.2.1 The player submits the SCR **after the advertised cut-off time for Round 1 pairings** (usually 2 hours before the round's scheduled start):

- **The player cannot request a half-point bye for Round 1 and must compete in the section in which the player was paired** for Round 1. The tournament staff will honor the player's section change request starting in Round 2.
- **If the player decides to forfeit the Round 1 game, instead of competing**, then the player will be dropped from the Round 2 pairings, unless the player informs Chess Control that the player wishes to continue in the tournament. A player who does this will start Round 2 with 0 points.
- **If the player wins or draws the Round 1 game in the player's original section**, then the player's score will carry to Round 2 in the player's new section, as explained in Section 3.3.2.2 below.

3.3.2.2 The player submits the SCR **after Round 1 has started but before the cut-off time for Round 2 pairings**:

- A player moving down from a Championship Section to any other eligible section shall retain the player's Round 1 score.
- A player moving up from an Under or Unrated section to the Championship Section shall have the player's Round 1 score reduced by a half-point. Losses are not adjusted.
- A player moving from 1 Under section to another Under section shall have the player's Round 1 score adjusted as shown in the table below, based on the upper rating limit (ceiling) of the new section.

Original Section	New Section	Player's Adjusted Score
K-12 Under 1900	K-12 Under 1600	Moving down; Retain Round 1 score
K-8 Under 1400	K-8 Under 1700	Moving up; Reduce Round 1 score by 0.5 points; losses not adjusted
K-6 Under 1400	K-6 Under 1200	Movind down; Retain Round 1 score
K-6 Under 1000	K-6 Under 1200	Moving up; Reduce Round 1 score by 0.5 points; losses not adjusted
K-6 Under 1000	K-3 Under 1000	Parallel move; Retain Round 1 score
K-6 Under 800	K-3 Under 1000	Moving up; Reduce Round 1 score by 0.5 points; losses not adjusted

3.3.2.3 If a player changes sections **after Round 2**, none of the player's points carry to the new section except the player's Round 1 score adjusted in accordance with Section 3.3.2.2 above, as well as points earned due to player-requested or computer-generated byes. When byes are involved, **a player cannot carry forward more than 1 total point of byes** to the gaining section.

3.3.2.4 If a section change is caused by an error made by the Tournament Staff or US Chess, the Chief TD has the authority to decide how a player's points will carry to the new section.

3.3.2.5 In all situations, any games played will be rated by US Chess.

3.3.2.6 Tiebreak Points do not transition as part of a section change.

3.3.3 **Bye Requests**. Unless specified otherwise in the official Tournament Life Announcement and pre-Tournament information on the US Chess or the Organizer's website, **a player has the option to request up to 2 half-point byes for any 2 rounds**, subject to the following provisions:

3.3.3.1 If warranted by unusual circumstances, the Chief TD has the authority to grant a player a half-point bye **for any round, except the last round**.

3.3.3.2 Half-point byes and/or 0-point byes can be requested during pre-Tournament Registration or at the tournament site. Once Chess Control opens at the tournament site, a player must **go to Chess Control** to make a bye request or to change an existing bye.

3.3.3.3 Changes to an existing bye that a player may request include removing a scheduled bye, moving the player's bye to a different round, and changing the half-point bye to a 0-point bye. Changes to an existing bye are subject to the deadlines listed in Sections 3.3.3.4 through 3.3.3.6 below.

3.3.3.4 Deadlines for requesting half-point byes: The bye request must be received:

- **For Round 1**—Unless published otherwise, the deadline is 2 hours before the scheduled start of Round 1.
- **For all later rounds**—Unless published otherwise, the deadline is 2 hours before the scheduled start of Round 2. After this deadline passes, the only change allowed to half-point byes is to convert them to 0-point byes.

3.3.3.5 **Deadline for converting half-point byes to 0-point byes:** The deadline is before the scheduled start of the round for which the bye has been requested.

3.3.3.6 **0-point byes**: 0-point byes are **available for any round**, even when a player has already been granted 2 half-point byes. The deadline is before the scheduled start of that round.

3.3.4 **Review Your or Your Player's Registration**

3.3.4.1 **Before the tournament**, players (or their parents/coaches) are strongly advised to **review their registrations online before the tournament** to confirm their information is correct—such as section assignment, rating, entry, fees, US Chess membership, team information, bye requests, etc. If any registration data needs to be changed, contact the tournament point of contact identified on the event website as soon as possible. A complete list of the advance entries (pre-registered players) will be posted periodically on the tournament web page and will be updated regularly.

3.3.4.2 **When you arrive at the tournament**, players who have not checked their online information should go to Chess Control. If there is a problem with the registration information displayed at Chess Control or online the player (or their parents/coach) should talk with Chess Control staff as soon as possible to correct the error.

3.3.4.3 It is the responsibility of players and/or coaches to report mistakes to Chess Control in a timely manner.

3.3.5 Rules specific to the tournament and side events will be available in advance of the event.

4 PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

4.1 General Eligibility

The following players are eligible:

4.1.1 Full-time students who are enrolled in school (public, private, home, or virtual) in the United States or its territories for the entire semester in which the event is held. **US Chess strongly encourages players, parents, and coaches who have questions about eligibility to contact the US Chess Director of Events at NationalEvents@USChess.org at least 3 weeks before the tournament.** (For team-related aspects of this rule, see Section 5.2. See also footnote 2.)

4.1.2 U.S. citizens who are attending school abroad.

4.1.3 Home-schooled and virtual-schooled students who live in the United States or are U.S. citizens living abroad.

4.2 Age & Grade Eligibility

4.2.1 The ages for player age/grade eligibility shown in the table below apply **as of September 1 for the School Year** in which the tournament takes place. These age requirements specify the **upper age limit for each grade,** including students who are home-schooled or virtual-schooled. Our national events are grade-based and require all players to play in a section that allows for their current grade.

Grade	Upper Age Limit	Grade	Upper Age Limit
Kindergarten	6 years old	7th Grade	13 years old
1st Grade	7 years old	8th Grade	14 years old

[2] Contact the US Chess Director of Events at NationalEvents@USChess.org. **US Chess strongly urges** contacting us **at least 3 weeks before a tournament** starts AND before players, parents, and coaches commit their financial resources toward a tournament. We advise against waiting to adjudicate a player's eligibility until onsite at a tournament.

Grade	Upper Age Limit	Grade	Upper Age Limit
2nd Grade	8 years old	9th Grade	15 years old
3rd Grade	9 years old	10th Grade	16 years old
4th Grade	10 years old	11th Grade	17 years old
5th Grade	11 years old	12th Grade	18 years old
6th Grade	12 years old		

4.2.1.1 A 5th Grader's age may not exceed 11. Similarly, a 9th Grader's age may not exceed 15.

4.2.1.2 A K-8 Championship section is open to all age-eligible players currently enrolled in Grades K-8 (and Pre-K).

4.2.1.3 A Grade 2 section or 2nd Grade section is open only to age-eligible players currently enrolled in the 2nd Grade.

4.2.1.4 Players who have skipped 1 or more grades must play in a section that supports the grade in which they are currently enrolled in school; **they may not play in the grade they skipped.**

4.2.2 A player has only 1 year of eligibility per grade level unless 1 of the following exceptions applies:

4.2.2.1 **Pre-schoolers** may play in the Kindergarten Section at the Grade Nationals or in any K-X Section in other events. Pre-schoolers may continue to play as Kindergartners or in K-X sections in subsequent years, until they start the 1st grade.

4.2.2.2 **Players who repeat a grade** in school may have a 2nd year of eligibility in that grade **only if they remain age-eligible for that grade**, in accordance with the table above.

4.2.3 Eligibility for the age-based sections at All-Girls Nationals will be determined by players' ages on January 1 of the year when the event is run.

4.3 Section Eligibility Based on Performance in a Prior Spring Nationals (including SuperNationals) *(revised)*

4.3.1 A player who **scored 6.0 or more points** in an Under Section with the same upper rating limit (ceiling) at any of the previous year's or current year's Spring Nationals (including SuperNationals), and who is otherwise age/grade eligible for the same section this year, **must play in a Section with a higher rating ceiling**. For example:

4.3.1.1 **Example 1**: A 5th grader who scored 6.0 in the K-6 Under 800 Section of last year's Elementary School Nationals, and who is age/grade eligible for the same section this school year, must compete in the K-6 Under 1000 Section or another section having a rating ceiling above 1000. If this player were to register for the Middle School Nationals, the lowest section the player could compete in is the K-8 Under 1100 Section (or the K-12 Under 1200 Section at the High School Nationals).

4.3.1.2 **Example 2**: A 7th grader who scored 6.5 points at the High School Nationals in the K-12 Under 1200 Section this school year and is registering for Middle School Nationals in the same school year must compete in a section with a rating ceiling above 1200 such as K-8 Under 1400.

4.3.2 **The rule described in Section 4.3.1 has precedence** and overrides a player's section eligibility based on the player's rating in the tournament's Rating Supplement, as well as all other reviews of a player's rating history, as described in Section 4.5 and Section 4.6.

4.4 Appeals of Player Eligibility, Team Eligibility, & Player Ratings *(re-written for 2026-27)*

The procedures outlined below cover only **challenges to player/team eligibility and player ratings**. They will not be used to appeal alleged Fair Play violations (e.g., cheating) or to appeal rulings made by Tournament Directors during a tournament such as illegal moves, check/stalemate, distracting opponent, touch-move, etc.

4.4.1 **Who Can Submit an Appeal**. Any player 15 years of age or older, or an adult acting on behalf of a player of any age, can submit an appeal as detailed in the subsections below. The appeal must be accompanied by appropriate supporting documentation. Appeals submitted by word-of-mouth will not be accepted. To deter frivolous appeals, US Chess or the event organizer:

4.4.1.1 May impose a fee to file the appeal.

4.4.1.2 Can decide to refund all or a portion of the filing fee if the appeal is adjudicated wholly or partially in favor of the appealing party.

4.4.1.3 Will retain the filing fee if the appeal is denied.

4.4.2 **Submitting an Appeal Before a Tournament Begins**.

4.4.2.1 For Grade Nationals, Online Scholastic Nationals, Youth Action Nationals, Spring Nationals (High School Nationals, Middle School Nationals, & Elementary School Nationals—including

SuperNationals), all pre-tournament appeals **must be emailed** to the Director of Events at NationalEvents@USChess.org. The Director of Events will process the appeal in collaboration with the Scholastic Council. Appeals must be accompanied by appropriate documentation describing the basis for the appeal. Appeals will be accepted **until the Monday before the start of the relevant tournament**. Thereafter, the review and adjudication of appeals will be delayed until the day Registration opens onsite at the tournament venue.

4.4.2.2 For the Junior Congress, Junior Open, and All-Girls Nationals, appeals must be sent to the event organizer using the method and deadline specified by the event organizer. Any appeals sent to US Chess for these tournaments will be referred to the applicable event organizer.

4.4.3 **Submitting an Appeal at the Tournament Venue**.

4.4.3.1 All appeals must be filed in writing at Chess Control along with appropriate documentation describing the basis for the appeal. People on the playing floor who attempt to initiate an appeal of a player's or team's eligibility, or a player's chess rating, will be referred to Chess Control.

4.4.3.2 **Appeals must be filed before the start of Round 4 (Round 3 for events with only 6 rounds) and must include supporting documentation** to support the appeal. When US Chess is the event organizer, the appealing party might ~~will~~ be charged a **good-faith deposit of $200**. This deposit shall be returned in full by US Chess unless the Director of Events determines that the complaint is frivolous.

4.4.3.3 When US Chess is the event organizer, the appeal will be reviewed and adjudicated by the Chief Tournament Director with the assistance from the other Tournament Review Group member(s) (Section 4.6.3), including the Director of Events, if necessary. Once rendered, the Chief Tournament Director's ~~Group's~~ decision is final.

4.4.3.4 When the event organizer is not US Chess, the appeal will be reviewed and adjudicated by the event organizer using the procedures established by that organizer. Once rendered, the organizer's decision is final.

4.4.4 Every reasonable effort will be made to adjudicate the complaint in a timely manner; however, on some occasions the matter might have to be resolved after the tournament is over.

4.5 Rating Supplements

4.5.1 The table below lists the US Chess Rating Supplements to be used for the Grade Nationals and 2027 Spring Nationals events:

Event	Event Dates	Rating Supplement	Publication	Early Entry
Grade Nationals	December 11-13	December	November 19	October 26
High School Nationals	April 2-4	March	February 18	February 22
Elementary School Nationals	April 30 - May 2	April	March 18	March 22
Middle School Nationals	May 14-16	May	April 16	April 5

The Director of Events uses these guidelines to determine which Rating Supplement will be used:

- The current month's Rating Supplement is used when an event begins on the **10th - 31st of the month**–or at **Grade Nationals**, regardless of when it begins;
- The previous month's Rating Supplement is used when an event begins on the **1st - 9th of the month**.

4.5.2 For the Grade Nationals, Spring Nationals (including SuperNationals), and the All-Girls Nationals, the ratings that determine section eligibility, pairings, and prizes shall conform to the examples shown in the table below to help ensure fair play. All ratings in these examples refer to players' Regular Over-the-Board (OTB) ratings and their Regular Online (ONL) ratings, including provisional ratings. (Footnote 3.) Players identified through this process will receive additional review by the

[3] An *established rating* means a player has played 26 or more rated US Chess games. A *provisional rating* means a player has only 4 - 25 OTB or ONL Regular-rated games in the player's US Chess tournament record. US Chess considers a player unrated if the player has only 1-3 rated games. An *OTB Regular rating* reflects games where the total playing time for a player was more than 65 minutes (*US Chess Official Rules of Chess*, Chapter 1, Rule 5C). An *ONL Regular rating* refers to games where the player's total time was 30 or more minutes (*US Chess Official Rules of Chess*, Chapter 10, Rule 2B).

Tournament Review Group (Section 4.6.3) to establish whether use of their higher ONL rating is justified based on each player's actual rating history and games in the past year. (Footnote 4.)

Supplement OTB Rating	Supplement ONL Rating	Rating Used	Decision Rationale
1550 Established Rating	**1430 Established Rating**	1550	OTB 1550 rating is higher than ONL 1430
1550 Established Rating, with 30 games in the past year	**1780 Established Rating, with 75 games in the past year**	1780	ONL 1780 is > 200 points above the OTB 1550 rating and is at least 2X as active in the past year compared to the OTB rating
1550 Established Rating	**1900 Provisional Rating**	1550	Established Rating has priority over the Provisional Rating
1550 Provisional Rating	**1250 Established Rating**	1250	ONL 1250 is an Established Rating
1550 Provisional Rating	**1430 Provisional Rating**	1550	The OTB provisional rating prevails
1550 Provisional Rating, 6 games	**1780 Provisional Rating, 20 games**	1780	ONL rating is > 200 points above the OTB rating, the OTB rating has < 8 games, and the ONL rating has 2X as many rated games
1550 Provisional Rating, 6 games	**1780 Provisional Rating, 10 games**	1550	ONL rating is > 200 points above the OTB rating, the OTB rating has < than 8 games, BUT the ONL rating does not have 2x as many rated games
Unrated (Player has no rating in the Supplement)	**1110 Provisional Rating**	1110	The ONL Provisional rating of 1110 is used if the TRG deems it to be relevant
Unrated (Player has no rating in the Supplement)	**1250 Established Rating**	1250	The ONL Established rating of 1250 is used if the TRG deems it to be relevant
Unrated	**Unrated**	Unrated	Player is eligible to compete as an unrated player if the player does not have a rating in another rating system recognized by US Chess. (See Section 4.6 and Section 4.7.)

4.6 Other Rating Systems

4.6.1 When the US Chess main office receives other OTB rating information from a player during the event entry process, US Chess shall seriously consider using this rating information to determine section and prize eligibility in accordance with rules 28D and 28E from *US Chess Official Rules of Chess*, in the interest of fair play and in consultation with the Scholastic Council and the Ratings Committee.

4.6.2 For Grade Nationals, Spring Nationals (including SuperNationals), and the All-Girls Nationals, players in all sections are **required to disclose at the time of registration whether they have a rating in another OTB rating system(s)**.

4.6.2.1 Examples of other OTB rating systems include, but are not limited to, FIDE (World Chess Federation), Canadian Chess Federation (CFC), the Northwest Scholastic Rating System (NWSRS), and another foreign country's rating system.

4.6.3 **Tournament Review Group (TRG)**

4.6.3.1 **Composition**. The TRG has 3 members: the US Chess Director of Events or Event Organizer, the Chief TD for the tournament, and the Scholastic Council Representative for the event. At SuperNationals there are 3 TRGs, 1 for each Division (e.g., K-6, K-8, and K-12). For each TRG at SuperNationals, the members' positions are the same—the Director of Events, the Division's Chief TD, and the Scholastic Council Representative.

4.6.3.2 A TRG decision can be appealed; however, only the TRG hears the appeal, and its decision is final.

4.6.3.3 The TRG has authority to decide whether and how ratings from another OTB rating system will be used, as well as how a player's age and level should be considered.

4.6.3.4 When necessary, the TRG shall consult with the US Chess Ratings Committee to discern whether another rating system is viable and how ratings from that system will be converted to US Chess equivalent ratings.

4.6.3.5 If the TRG rules to use a rating other than a player's actual US Chess rating, then that rating is known as the player's ***Assigned Rating***. After the Rating Supplement for the tournament is

[4] This review focuses on players' ONL and OTB Regular Ratings and their corresponding game activity. The algorithm used by the Tournament Review Group (TRG) begins by identifying all players whose ONL ratings exceed their OTB ratings **by 200 or more points**.

released, the US Chess Director of Events will publish a *Ratings Review List* containing the names of players whose ratings are under review or have been completed, as well as players being given an Assigned Rating for the tournament that might affect section and prize eligibility and will affect pairings.

4.6.3.6 After the close of online entries, or when late entries are taken on Thursday, Friday, or Saturday, and if the TRG cannot be assembled, the Chief Tournament Director ~~Director of Events~~ shall make the decision on Assigned Ratings for players.

4.6.4 For Grade Nationals, Spring Nationals (including SuperNationals), and All-Girls Nationals, the Tournament Review Group ~~tournament staff~~ applies the calculations shown below to players entering the tournament. The review procedures ~~tournament staff~~ then use the higher of the US Chess or Assigned Rating to 1) validate or revise section eligibility, 2) pair players, and 3) determine prize eligibility.

- Northwest Scholastic Rating System (NWSRS): If the player's NWSRS is:
  - 1399 or below, subtract 200 points.
  - 1400 to 1499, subtract 100 points.
  - 1500 or above, subtract 50 points.
- Other Rating Systems: Other systems brought to the attention of US Chess shall be reviewed by the Tournament Review Group using specifications in *US Chess Official Rules of Chess* (Sections 28C, 28D, and 28E) and guidance from the US Chess Ratings Committee.
- When 1 or more other OTB rating systems are compared to a player's US Chess rating, if the US Chess rating has at least 30 rated games in the past year, then the US Chess rating will be used.

4.6.5 The table below showcases how the Tournament Review Group process reviews players' ratings in US Chess and other rating systems. The table also assumes that the values shown for the US Chess Rating were determined from the relevant rating supplement in accordance with Section 4.5.

US Chess Rating	Converted NW Rating	Converted FIDE Rating	Converted CFC Rating	Guidelines Considered by the Tournament Review Group
None	None	None	None	• Player is Unrated
1547	1509	None	None	• Use US Chess 1547 rating, it is higher
1547	1610	None	None	• Use Converted NW 1610 rating if it has at least 2x more games than the US Chess rating • BUT use US Chess 1547 rating if it has at least 30 games in the past year
1547(p)	1610	None	None	• Use NW 1610 rating only if it has at least 2x more games than the provisional US Chess rating
1547	None	1705	None	• Use Converted FIDE 1705 rating only if it has at least 2x more games than the US Chess rating • BUT use US Chess 1547 rating if it has at least 30 games in the past year
None	1756	None	None	• Use Converted NW 1756 rating if it has 4 or more rated games; otherwise, the player is Unrated
None	None	1602	None	• Use Converted FIDE rating
None	None	None	1590	• Use Converted CFC rating
1547	1509	1631	1570	• Use US Chess rating if it has at least 30 games in the past year • Or use the rating that best reflects the player's strength based on the total # of games and the # of games in the past year
None	1756	1602	1570	• Use the rating that best reflects the player's strength based on the total # of games and games in the past year in each system

4.6.6 To track other OTB ratings for Grade Nationals, Spring Nationals (including SuperNationals), and All-Girls Nationals, the US Chess Scholastic Council appoints 1 person as the OTB Database (OTB DB) Lead for each tournament. The OTB DB Lead:

1) Assists the US Chess Office, Director of Events, Chief TD, and Scholastic Council Representative with tracking information on registered players.
2) Reviews other common OTB rating systems to identify players who have ratings in those systems.
3) Notifies the Tournament Review Group upon when players have OTB ratings in other systems that require review.

4) Provides recommendations to the Tournament Review Group on handling each player's case.

4.6.7 **Reviews of Players' Rating Histories and Game Activity**. In addition to reviewing players' ratings found in the Rating Supplement (RS) used for the tournament and their ratings from other OTB systems recognized by US Chess, the Tournament Review Group considers players' rating histories for the 12 months before the tournament. This process begins by reviewing the last 12 RSs starting with the RS used for the tournament. The review considers all players whose RS ratings in the past 12 months are:

4.6.7.1 75 or more points above the upper rating limit (ceiling) for the player's section for 6 or more months.

4.6.7.2 150 or more points higher for 3 or more months (See footnote 5.)

4.6.7.3 NOTE: The rating history filters described in Sections 4.6.7.1 and 4.6.7.2 do not count Rating Supplements that list the player's rating as Provisional. Months where the player is inactive only count for the first occurrence.

4.6.8 The Tournament Review Group uses this process along with consideration of the player's age and level to determine whether the player should receive an Assigned Rating and be re-sectioned if the player's performance exceeds ceilings for an Under section. To the extent practical, this process will also consider players' rating histories in other systems.

4.6.9 The database created by the OTB DB Lead will be used by the Tournament Staff (Chief TD and Back Room Chief) to ensure each player's rating is correctly listed in the pairings program for purposes of section eligibility, pairings, and prizes. For all other OTB systems referenced by the tournament staff (e.g., NWSRS, FIDE, Canadian) the OTB DB Lead creates, where feasible, a product that mimics the US Chess Rating Supplement used for the tournament. (See footnote 6.)

4.6.10 (Deleted) ~~Players who enter an Under or Unrated section, and who do not disclose that they have another OTB rating, shall have their status in the event reviewed in accordance with US Chess Rules and the procedures outlined in Section 4.6. This review can result in a broad range of actions such as: no negative action being taken because the non-disclosure was truly an oversight; adjusting the player's rating within the player's current section; adjusting the player's rating and moving the player to an appropriate section of the tournament with or without any byes or points; loss of team points; lack of eligibility for certain awards; or, expulsion from the tournament.~~

4.6.11 To ensure fair play, US Chess shall **review the ratings and rating histories for the previous 12 months** of all players entering any scholastic national events run by US Chess.

4.6.11.1 The authority to adjust a player's rating and/or move a player to a higher section resides with the Tournament Review Group as described in Section 4.6.3.

4.6.11.2 See also Section 4.3: Section Eligibility and Section 4.8: Re-Sectioning of Players.

4.6.12 When a player's US Chess Rating or Assigned Rating makes the player ineligible for the section the player has entered, the US Chess Office will notify the player, parent, or coach (e.g., the person who registered the player) by email or phone within 2 calendar weeks from the day the entry was received in complete form. Entries received in the last 2 weeks before the tournament will be reviewed as soon as possible. The notification will summarize the issue and include recommendations on what section(s) the player is eligible to compete in. Players who wait to enter the tournament the week it begins, enter onsite (when allowed), or want to change sections at the tournament should check with Chess Control if they have questions or concerns about their section eligibility.

4.7 Definition of an Unrated Player *(revised)*

4.7.1 An unrated player is a player listed as unrated in the Rating Supplement used for the tournament and who does not have a rating in any other rating system reviewed by the Tournament Review Group (see Section 4.6.). An unrated player may compete in any section of the tournament with a

[5] For example, consider a 5th grade player registered for the K-6 Under 1000 section with a rating of 929 in the Rating Supplement (RS) used for the tournament. If, in the last 12 months this player's RS rating exceeded the K-6 Under 1000 Section's rating ceiling of 999 by 50 or more points in at least 6 of the last 12 Rating Supplements, then that player would undergo further review by the TRG. Based on the review, the TRG could re-section the player to K-6 Under 1400 or another eligible section. If the player is re-sectioned, then the player will receive an assigned rating from the TRG.

[6] For example, the December, 2026 Rating Supplement will be used for the Grade Nationals. US Chess creates that Rating Supplement on/about Nov 19, 2026. In a similar way, the OTB DB Lead creates an equivalent December, 2026 Rating Supplement for each of the other OTB rating systems reviewed for the tournament. The ratings listed in these products shall reflect player ratings dated as close as possible to the cut-off date for US Chess's December, 2026 Rating Supplement.

section name containing the word *Unrated* (e.g., K-3 Under 600/Unrated) and for which the player is grade eligible, or in any Championship Section for which the player is grade eligible.

4.7.2 **Exceptions to Rule 4.7.1**: Between the date the tournament's Rating Supplement is published and **two (2) Mondays ~~the Monday~~ before the tournament begins**, an unrated player registered to play in the:

4.7.2.1 **Elementary Nationals** who earns a US Chess over-the-board rating of 800 or higher must play in any section for which they are rating-eligible, they cannot play in the K-6 Under 600/Unrated section.

4.7.2.2 **Middle School Nationals** who earns a US Chess over-the-board rating of 900 or higher must play in any section for which they are rating-eligible, they cannot play in the K-8 Under 700/Unrated section.

4.7.2.3 **High School Nationals** who earns a US Chess over-the-board rating of 1000 or higher must play in any section for which they are rating-eligible, they cannot play in the K-12 Unrated section.

4.8 Re-Sectioning of Players *(new)*

4.8.1 US Chess recognizes that decisions to re-section a player not only impact the player, but also affect how a school builds its team for a section of the tournament. Accordingly, US Chess takes re-sectioning decisions seriously and will re-section a player only when 1 or more of the following conditions are present:

- The player is Unrated and has registered for a section in which the player is not eligible to compete.
- The player's rating in the Rating Supplement used for the tournament is above the rating ceiling for the section in which the player has registered to compete.
- The player's age or grade exceeds the limits described in Section 4.2.
- The player scored 6.0 or more points in an Under Section with the same or higher rating ceiling at **any of the previous or current year's Spring Nationals** (including SuperNationals). (See Section 4.3.)
- The player has a rating in another rating system reviewed by the Tournament Review Group that makes the player ineligible for the section in which they are registered. (See Section 4.6.)
- The Tournament Review Group has ruled that the player be given an Assigned Rating that exceeds the rating ceiling of the player's current section. (See Section 4.6.)

4.8.2 US Chess will minimize re-sectioning issues as part of a player's initial registration by not allowing the player to register for a section in which the player is not eligible to compete. If, after a player has registered, any of the situations listed in Section 4.8.1 arise, then US Chess will make every effort to promptly notify the point of contact listed on the player's registration.

5 TEAM REQUIREMENTS FOR SCHOLASTIC NATIONAL EVENTS

5.1 Individual Tournament with Team Scoring

Scholastic National Events are individual Swiss System tournaments with team scoring. A student who does not qualify to represent a team according to these scholastic regulations can compete only as an individual.

5.2 Team Composition

In all US Chess Scholastic National Events covered by these regulations, ~~(i.e., Spring Nationals, K-12 Grade Nationals, All-Girls Nationals, and Online Scholastic Nationals)~~ a team is comprised of students who **attend the same school and compete in the same section of the tournament**. A school is NOT required to have a formal chess club or chess team. 2 or more players who attend the same school and are registered for the same section are considered a team automatically when they select the same school during the registration process.

5.2.1 **Key Definitions** *(revised significantly)*

5.2.1.1 **A School** is a single educational institution—public, private, or charter—that is recognized as a single school by the applicable educational authority or governing organization, serves 1 student body, operates as a single administrative unit, and provides core curricular instruction as defined by applicable state or local law or regulation. A school may operate in 1 or more buildings or on 1 or more campuses; however, when the buildings or campuses are not co-located or contiguous, the school should follow the instructions in Section 5.3.1. The existence of common ownership, governance, or administration by a public school district, private school organization, or charter school network does not, by itself, make multiple schools a single school for purposes of these regulations. ~~A school is defined as an institution which is under one Head of School and~~

~~serves one student body. A school may be part of one or more buildings, and on one or more campuses. A school must provide core curricular instruction as defined by state or local law or regulation. Schools with students on multiple campuses ***must seek prior approval from the US Chess Director of Events at least three weeks before the start date of the tournament*** to compete in a US Chess scholastic national event.~~

5.2.1.2 **A Public School District** is a governmental educational organization recognized under applicable state law and responsible for the administration and operation of 1 or more public schools within a defined geographic area or other jurisdiction. A public school district cannot, by itself, be a single school. A student's local public school is the individual public school assigned to serve the student's residence or attendance area, not the district as a whole. ~~A 'public school district' is a grouping of public schools (most usually within a city or county but maybe a single school in a small city) recognized and designated as being a public school district by that state's department of education. A 'local public school' is not the entire district but is the area that a single public school covers.~~

5.2.1.3 **A Private School Organization** is a non-governmental entity that owns, governs, or administers 1 or more private schools under common ownership or management. A private school organization may operate 1 school or multiple schools and may do so on 1 or more campuses.

5.2.1.4 **A Charter School** is an organization authorized under applicable state law to operate or manage 1 school. Conversely, a Charter School Network consists of 2 or more charter schools operating under common governance or management.

5.2.1.5 **The Local Public School** for a home schooled or virtual school student is defined as **the public school the student would attend if the student were attending public school**. This is based on the student's grade and the geographic footprint, as defined by the applicable local department of education authorities, encompassing the student's home residence address.

5.2.2 A student will be considered to attend a school if the student physically attends classes at that school and receives more than 50% of the student's core curricular instruction from that school.

5.2.2.1 **Pre-School players** are allowed to play for the school (public or private) they plan to attend once they reach Kindergarten age. Before traveling to a tournament, the parents, coach, or guardian of such a player shall obtain a Letter of Authorization signed by a senior administrator (e.g., Principal, Director, Vice-Principal, Assistant Director, School Master) of the school to document their players' eligibility to participate as part of a specific school's team. In this letter, the senior administrator shall verify that the players would attend the school if the players were old enough. The players, parents, coach, or guardian should bring this letter to the tournament and be ready to provide it to US Chess upon request by the tournament staff.

5.2.3 Each school may enter only 1 team per section.

5.3 Team Eligibility *(revised significantly)*

5.3.1 **Schools with Multiple Buildings or Campuses**. When a public, private, or charter school operates multiple buildings or campuses that are not contiguous or co-located, players from that school may register to compete as a team in a section only if the school is a single educational institution as evidenced by a charter awarded to the school by the school's state. Any school wanting to enable its players to register as 1 team, must obtain prior approval from the US Chess Director of Events, who will make the decision in consultation with the US Chess Scholastic Council. See also Section 5.2.1.

5.3.2 **Team Eligibility for Transferring Players**. For US Chess Scholastic National Events paired as individual tournaments with team scoring (e.g., Grade Nationals, all Spring Nationals [including SuperNationals], etc.), a player must meet the following eligibility criteria for the player's performance to be counted toward the player's current school's team score. The criteria below apply to students attending public, private, charter, home and virtual schools.

5.3.2.1 **In the Fall**. For events held in the Fall (August 1 - December 31), the student must have started at the new school no later than 1 week after the beginning of the new school's Fall semester. If the new school uses a Quarter-based or a Trimester system, then the effective date for the player's eligibility is the 7th calendar day of the 1st quarter or trimester occurring after August 1st.

5.3.2.2 **In the Spring**. For events held in the Spring (January 1 - June 30), the player must have started at the new school no later than 1 week after the start of the new school's Spring semester. If the new school uses a Quarter-based or Trimester system, then the effective date for the player's eligibility is the 7th calendar day of the 1st quarter or trimester occurring after January 1st. If the 1st day of the 1st quarter or trimester of the Spring begins after February 1st, then the player must have started at the new school during the previous quarter or trimester.

5.3.2.3 A student who transfers from 1 school to another after the end of the applicable eligibility period, **is not eligible to play as a member of the new school's or any other school's team. This student must ~~is eligible to~~ compete as a school-less individual**. That player's event registration shall not contain any team code, including the code of the player's previous school.

5.3.2.4 Students who change schools after the end of the applicable eligibility period because their family was moved by the US military or US State Department, should contact US Chess as instructed in Section 5.3.3 below.

5.3.3 **Questions about and Exceptions to Team Eligibility**. Players, parents, or coaches who have questions about team eligibility, or who want to request an exception, are strongly encouraged to **contact the US Chess Director of Events at NationalEvents@USChess.org at least 14 calendar days before** the tournament, so that it is clear to all parties whether a group of players is eligible to compete as a team for a US Chess Scholastic National Event. The Director of Events will make the decision in consultation with the US Chess Scholastic Council.

5.4 Home School Students

Teams may also be comprised of home-schooled students.

5.4.1 **A home-schooled student** is defined as a student who receives at least 50% of the student's curricular instruction at home, through a local home school cooperative or other methods of homeschooling allowable by state law (e.g., a microschool).

5.4.2 A home-schooled student has **3 options** for participating as part of a team in US Chess Scholastic National Event:

5.4.2.1 The student may represent the student's local public school when access to extracurricular activities at the school is permitted and **the student resides within the boundaries of the local public school** as defined in Section 5.2.1.5. Before traveling to a tournament, the parents, coach, or guardian of such a player shall **obtain a Letter of Authorization signed by a senior administrator** (e.g., Principal, Director, Vice-Principal, Assistant Director, School Master) of the school to document their players' authorization to participate as part of a specific school's team. The player, parents, coach, or guardian shall bring this letter to the tournament and be ready to provide it to US Chess upon request.

5.4.2.2 The student may join with other home-schooled students **who live within the boundary of the same local public school**.

5.4.2.3 A group of students who attend the same local home school cooperative or microschool may form a team. A home school cooperative or microschool must meet the definition of a school in Section 5.2.1.1. Most importantly, it must offer academic subjects and not be formed solely as a chess club for the purpose of competing.

5.4.3 There may be more than 1 home school team per recognized public school district.

5.5 Virtual School Students

Teams may also be comprised of virtual school students.

5.5.1 A virtual school student receives more than 50% of the student's curricular instruction on-line, but not in the school building.

5.5.2 A virtual school student has **3 options** for participating on a scholastic team in US Chess Scholastic National Events:

5.5.2.1 Play for the student's local public school in the same manner as a home school student under the provisions of Section 5.4.2.1. If the student is enrolled in a virtual option directly through the student's local public school, which keeps all administrative records on the student, then no letter of authorization is required, and that student is automatically eligible to play for the player's local public school team. A student residing in the school zone but attending a private virtual school, must receive a letter of authorization from the local public school's administration.

5.5.2.2 A group of virtual school students who are enrolled in 1 or more virtual schools that are not part of their public school system, **but who live within the boundaries of the same local public school they would attend otherwise**, may form a team in the same manner as home school students under the provisions of Section 5.4.2.2.

5.5.2.3 A student who attends virtual school but does not want to represent the student's local public school or is not allowed to do so by the local school administration, must seek approval from the US Chess Director of Events ~~Main Office~~ (as specified in Section 5.3.3) before registering to compete on another school's team. Because virtual schools can encompass students from across

different public school districts, counties, or states, simply attending the same virtual school does not guarantee US Chess acceptance as a team.

5.6 Team Size per Section

Within a Section:

5.6.1 A team must contain a minimum of 2 players to be eligible for a team prize; however, there is no maximum number of players who may be part of a team.

5.6.2 See Section 10.2 for information about how team scores are calculated. See Section 12.3.3 for information about the tiebreak systems used for team prizes.

5.7 Other Specifications

5.7.1 No club teams are allowed in scholastic national events. (See Section 6.2.)

5.7.2 Bonus points will not be added to team or individual scores. Points cannot be transferred between sections unless the player has changed sections as described in Section 3.3.2.

5.7.3 The team's coach, the assigned school official, a responsible adult acting on behalf of the team, or the 'Team Captain' is responsible for ensuring the team's players are properly registered and eligible to participate as members of the team. For teams formed below the High School level, US Chess very strongly recommends there be a responsible adult involved in player registration and eligibility.

5.7.4 US Chess Affiliate Membership is encouraged for all teams.

5.7.5 Anyone wanting to appeal the eligibility of a team's composition shall follow the procedures in Section 4.4.

6 Team Requirements for Youth National Events

This Section describes Team requirements for Youth Nationals only—e.g., the Junior Congress, Youth Action Nationals, and Junior Open. (For Team Requirements that apply to other scholastic national events, see Section 5.2.)

6.1 Basic Team Composition

Teams will represent chess clubs as defined in Section 6.2 below and consist of youth who:

6.1.1 Meet the age requirements defined in Section 4.2.

6.1.2 Are members of the club represented.

6.1.3 Are residents of the United States.

6.2 Chess Club Teams

US Chess recognizes **2 types of club teams** for Youth National events:

6.2.1 A **School Club** is a club whose team members meet in any brick-and-mortar school, home school, or virtual school. School club players shall be students who go to the same school and meet the attendance criteria of Section 6.2.4 below.

6.2.2 An **Outside Club** is a club who draws its players from different schools and whose players meet regularly as described in Section 6.2.4 below. Outside clubs may meet at any location.

6.2.3 A group of students who receive individual private lessons from the same coach **are not** a club.

6.2.4 Any student who desires to play for a School or Outside club must attend at least 6 regularly scheduled club meetings over a period of at least 3 months immediately preceding the tournament and must be verified by the club president or designated club official. A club team member cannot count more than 2 attendances for any 7 consecutive days for purposes of this regulation.

6.2.4.1 A student who attends both a School Club and an Outside Club is eligible to play for either club only in a Youth National event. However, the player may not change clubs once the tournament begins, even if the player meets all Section 6.2.4 attendance criteria for both clubs.

6.2.5 A club team must contain a minimum of 3 players to be eligible for team prizes.

6.2.6 There is no maximum number of players who may compete on a chess club team. (For details about how many team members scores count toward a team's total score, see Section 10.2: Team Scoring.)

6.2.7 Bonus points will not be added to team or individual scores. Points cannot be transferred between sections unless the player has changed sections. The section change must be authorized by the Chief TD for the tournament.

6.2.8 The Coach or designated adult accompanying the club team is responsible for ensuring that all the coach's players are properly registered and eligible to participate as members of the team.

6.2.9 US Chess encourages Club Teams to obtain Affiliate Memberships.

6.2.10 Anyone wanting to appeal the eligibility of a team's composition must follow the procedures in Section 4.4.

7 OPENING CEREMONY

7.1 Ceremony Length

7.1.1 The organizer will arrange a brief (maximum 15 minutes) but impressive Opening Ceremony, a half hour before the start of Round 1.

7.1.2 The organizer will arrange for a US Chess representative to be present who, along with the organizer, will welcome all participants and guests. Local dignitaries (mayor, county executive, congressmen, school superintendent, etc.) will be invited to attend as well as the press. Experience has shown that local officials have a strong interest in participating in such ceremonies.

7.1.3 While they might not always be able to attend, an invitation to the US Chess President and US Chess Executive Director to participate in the Opening and/or Closing Ceremonies should be formally extended.

7.1.4 Official proclamations from the mayors, county executives, and governors are often obtainable. These proclamations might welcome visiting teams and even designate a chess week. The presentation of the national anthem is strongly encouraged.

8 AWARDS CEREMONY

The organizer is responsible for 1 or more awards ceremonies in keeping with the stature of a national championship.

8.1 Ceremony Length

The ceremony should last no longer than 90 minutes.

8.2 Number of Awards Presented

8.2.1 The number of awards being presented on stage in each section shall be included in the Tournament Newsletter, and (if possible) also in the Tournament Program.

8.2.2 Place awards not being presented on stage will be announced before handing out the place awards during the ceremony. For example, if the Team awards for a section are 1^{st}-15^{th} place, but only 1^{st}-10^{th} are being presented on stage, then the Announcer shall announce the players who won the 11^{th}-15^{th} place awards before handing out the 1^{st}-10^{th} Team awards.

8.2.3 The list of prize winners should be posted as soon as possible. Award lists shall be posted sufficiently ahead of the awards ceremony to allow for errors to be brought to the attention of the Tournament Director and to allow corrections to be made. If corrections are made, the awards lists shall be re-posted as soon as possible and before the awards ceremony.

8.3 Awards Presentation

8.3.1 The order of the awards presentation should be announced at the beginning of the ceremony.

8.3.2 It is recommended that a senior representative from US Chess, the Chief Tournament Director, and/or the Scholastic Council Representative (when present) announce the prize winners. A minimum of 3 assistants should be available to hand out awards.

8.3.3 Awards should be displayed in awarding order to save time and prevent mistakes and confusion.

8.3.4 Award winners shall be called to the stage in an orderly fashion for awards presentation. Walk them across the stage and read their names.

8.3.5 The scores of winners should be mentioned, and ties acknowledged.

8.3.6 Individual and team award presentations will be from lowest to highest place.

8.3.7 A separate area for photography should be provided for players. This area should be located far enough away from the stage to not disrupt the ongoing awards presentation. If available, it is recommended that a US Chess banner be available as a background.

9 SAFE PLAY

The *US Chess Safe Play Policy* applies fully to all US Chess Scholastic National Events. (See footnote 7.)

[7] Parents, coaches, and players can read more about the *US Chess Safe Play Policy*.

10 TOURNAMENT FORMAT

Any deviations from the specifications of this section must be reviewed by the Scholastic Council Representative and approved by the US Chess Executive Board before event advertising begins.

10.1 Pairings

10.1.1 Scholastic national events are individual tournaments with team scoring. Accordingly, they are **paired as individual Swiss System tournaments**, with individual scores added to produce team scores.

10.1.1.1 If **a Championship section has more than $2^{(N+1)}$ players** (where '*N*' is the number of rounds), the Chief TD will consider using accelerated pairings (e.g., 6 rounds with more than 128 players, 7 rounds with more than 256 players, or 9 rounds with more than 1,024 players).

10.1.1.2 Accelerated pairings will not be used to pair players in Unrated or Under sections.

10.1.2 **Pairing Players from the Same State**. Pairings will NOT be adjusted in any round to prevent pairing players from the same state.

10.1.3 **Pairing Players from the Same Team**. Players from the same team will NOT be paired against one another in any round except in the following situation:

10.1.3.1 In the last 2 rounds of a scholastic national event of at least 6 rounds, players with a plus-3 score or higher may be paired against a teammate if no other reasonable pairing can be made. Examples of unreasonable pairings include, but are not limited to:

- A player receiving the same color in 3 consecutive games except in the final round.
- A player being paired outside the player's score group if a pairing within the player's score group is possible.

10.1.4 **Pairing the *Report to Section Chief for Pairing* Player.** If a player is scheduled to play in a round but cannot be paired in that round because the section has an odd number of players, then *Report to Section Chief for Pairing* will appear next to that player's name in the pairings and the player will receive a full-point (1-point) bye. However, shortly before the round, the player might be able to be paired, after all, against another player in the same section. **Playing these games is required unless the Section Chief determines otherwise**. If played, the game will be rated and counts toward the standings. These pairings will be assigned only by the Backroom Staff, not the Section TDs. That is, there will be no floor (re-)pairings. (See footnote 8 for examples.)

10.1.5 **Extra Rated Games.** An Extra Rated Game occurs when 2 players from different sections are paired against each other for a round. For example, the *Report to Section Chief for Pairing* player from the K-3 Under 1000 Section is asked to play the *Report to Section Chief for Pairing* player from the K-6 Under 1000 Section. **Playing this game is optional**. If the game is played, its result does not count toward tournament standings, but it does count toward post-tournament ratings. The Director of Events will decide whether Extra Rated Games will be permitted for each tournament.

10.1.6 **No Unrated Games.** All games played in blitz and the main event at a scholastic national tournament will be rated.

10.2 Team Scoring per Section

10.2.1 In a section, a team's final score is determined by adding the scores of its top-scoring players as follows:

- **Top 4 scores**: all Spring Nationals (including SuperNationals), Youth Action Nationals, and Scholastic Online Quick Nationals
- **Top 3 scores**: Grade Nationals, All-Girls Nationals, Junior Open, Junior Congress, and all blitz sections (even at a tournament whose main sections count the top 4 scores)

10.2.2 In a section, a team must have a minimum of 2 players to be eligible for a team prize; however, there is no maximum number of players who may be part of a team. Schools with large teams are not

[8] This rule addresses the following scenario: The next round's published pairings designate Player A as *Report to Section Chief for Pairing.* Then, after the pairings are posted but before the round begins, Player B is discovered to have been mistakenly omitted from the pairings due to an error of the tournament staff. When this occurs, the Backroom Chief has the authority to pair Player A and Player B for the round. However, if, in the judgment of the Section Chief, the 2 players being paired do not represent a pairing that is reasonable for the round, then the Section Chief can rule that the game shall not be played and both players shall receive a full-point bye. Another example of an unreasonable pairing is when the 2 players are from the same team.

allowed to field two smaller teams in the same section, but they could form another team in a different section of the tournament.

10.3 Sectioning

Sections at the Spring Nationals (including SuperNationals) shall be organized as itemized below:

10.3.1 US Chess High School (K-12) National Championships:

- Main Event Championship section: K-12 Championship
- Main Event non-championship sections: K-12 Under 1900, K-12 Under 1600, K-12 Under 1200, K-12 Under 800, and K-12 Unrated
- Blitz: K-12 Championship and K-12 Under 1800
- Bughouse: K-12

10.3.2 US Chess Middle School (K-8) National Championships:

- Main Event Championship section: K-8 Championship
- Main Event non-championship sections: K-8 Under 1700, K-8 Under 1400, K-8 Under 1100, K-8 Under 900, and K-8 Under 700/Unrated~~, and K8 Unrated~~
- Blitz: K-8 Championship and K-8 Under 1600
- Bughouse: K-8

10.3.3 US Chess Elementary School (K-6) National Championships:

- Main Event Championship sections: K-6 Championship, K-5 Championship, K-3 Championship, and K-1 Championship
- Main Event non-championship sections: K-6 Under 1400, K-6 Under 1200, K-6 Under 1000, K-6 Under 800, K-6 Under 600/Unrated, ~~K6Unrated,~~ K-3 Under 1000, K-3 Under 600/Unrated, and K-1 Under 500/Unrated
- Blitz: K-6 Championship, K-6 Under 1400, and K-3 Championship
- Bughouse: K-6

10.3.4 **Note**: In Spring Nationals (including SuperNationals), Unrated Players may play only in a Championship section or in a section containing the word *Unrated*: K-12 Unrated, K-8 Under 700/Unrated, K-6 Under 600/Unrated, K-3 Under 600/Unrated, and K-1 Under 500/Unrated. ~~The exception is the K-1 Under 500/Unrated and K-3 Under 600 & Unrated sections.~~ (For the definition of an Unrated Player, see Section 4.7.)

10.4 US Chess Grade (K-12) Chess National Championships

10.4.1 There is 1 section for each grade, Kindergarten through 12 (e.g., 13 total sections). Pre-K players must compete in the Kindergarten Section. There are no Unrated sections at the Grade Nationals. All unrated players must play in the section corresponding to their current grade in school.

10.5 US Chess Youth Action National Championships

4 Sections: High School (K-12), Middle School (K-8), Elementary School (K-6), and Primary School (K-3). These sections may be changed by the Organizer when approved as part of their winning bid by the Director of National Events in consultation with the Scholastic Council.

10.6 US Chess Scholastic Online Quick National Championships

10.6.1 4 Sections: High School (K-12), Middle School (K-8), Elementary School (K-6), and Primary School (K-3).

10.6.2 These sections may be changed by the Organizer when approved as part of a winning bid by the US Chess Director of Events in consultation with the Scholastic Council.

10.7 US Chess Junior Congress

8 Sections: 6U (ages 6 and Under), 8U, 10U, 12U, 14U, 16U, 18U, and 20U. These sections may be changed by the Organizer, if the changes were included in the winning bid approved by the Director of Events, in consultation with the Scholastic Council.

10.8 All-Girls National Championships

6 Sections: U8 (Under age 8), U10, U12, U14, U16, and U18. These sections may be changed by the Organizer, if the changes were included in the winning bid approved by the Director of Events, in consultation with the Scholastic Council.

10.9 US Chess Junior Open

3 Sections: U11 (Under age 11), U15, and U21. These sections may be changed by the Organizer, if the changes were included in the winning bid approved by the Director of Events, in consultation with the

Scholastic Council.

10.10 Start Times (Round Times) & No-Show Time

10.10.1 Special circumstances might require infrequent and temporary adjustments to the tournament schedules outlined in this section. In such cases, the Director of Events, in collaboration with the Scholastic Council and the Chief Tournament Director, is empowered to **change the start times and/or time controls** (see Section 10.11.1) for any number of rounds across any sections. Additionally, **the total number of rounds might be reduced**; however, maintaining the originally scheduled number of rounds is the highest priority, and a reduction should occur only when absolutely necessary. Changes should be made first to Unrated sections, then to Under sections, and only finally to Championship sections—and secondarily to lower grade sections before higher grade sections. When any such change is required, **US Chess will disseminate the information widely and as early as possible**.

10.10.2 **Grade Nationals**:

- Rounds 1-2: Friday: 1 pm & 6 pm
- Rounds 3-4-5: Saturday: 9 am, 1:30 pm, & 6 pm
- Rounds 6-7: Sunday: 9 am & 2 pm
- The No-Show or Forfeit time is 30 minutes for each round. (See Section 13.11.1.)
- **Note: Rounds Times in the Kindergarten and 1st Grade sections may be different**.

10.10.3 **Other Events at Grade Nationals**

10.10.3.1 **Bughouse**: Thursday, 11 am with 6 rounds of 2 games (alternating colors) and all players in 1 section. The Bughouse tournament is **not a national championship event**, and the face plates on the winning team's 2 awards shall read *1st Place*.

10.10.3.2 **Blitz**: Thursday, 5 pm with 6 rounds of 2 games (alternating colors) in 2 sections—K-6 and K-12. The minimum team size is 2 players, and the maximum number of players' scores that count toward Blitz Team awards is the top 3 scores. The Blitz tournament is **not a national championship event**, and the face plate on the winning team's award shall read *1st Place*.

10.10.3.3 **Chess960**: US Chess is giving strong consideration to a possible Chess960 tournament on Thursday. If this happens, Bughouse would likely be moved to Friday morning before Round 1 of the main tournament.

10.10.4 **Spring Nationals**. Round times and the No-Show/Forfeit time for all Spring Nationals **are the same as those for the Grade Nationals** as shown above in Section 10.10.2, unless changed by the Director of Events. For Spring Nationals, round times for the K-1 sections and any other sections scheduled to play in the K-1 Room may be different from the round times in other sections. Please consult the Tournament Life Announcement and event website.

Here are the start times for Bughouse and Blitz at all Spring Nationals:

10.10.4.1 **Bughouse National Championship**

- 6 Rounds of 2 games (alternating colors), with Round 1 on Thursday, 11 am and subsequent rounds held as soon as possible after the previous round. (See Appendix B: Bughouse Rules.)

10.10.4.2 **Blitz National Championship**

- 6 Rounds of 2 games (alternating colors), with Round 1 on Thursday, 5 pm and subsequent rounds held as soon as possible after the previous round. The minimum team size is 2 players, and the maximum number of players' scores that count toward Blitz Team awards are the top 3 scores—not the top 4 scores. (See Appendix A: Blitz Rules.)

10.10.5 **US Chess SuperNationals**: The next SuperNationals (held every 4 years) is in April 2029.

10.10.6 **US Chess Scholastic Online Quick Nationals** (all times are local)

- Rounds 1-2-3-4: Saturday: 12 pm, 2 pm, 4 pm, & 6 pm
- Rounds 5-6-7: Sunday: 12 pm, 2 pm, & 4 pm

10.10.7 **US Chess Youth Action Nationals** (all times are local)

- Rounds 1-2-3-4-5: Saturday: 10 am, 12 pm, 2 pm, 3:30 pm, & 5 pm
- Rounds 6-7-8-9: Sunday: 10 am, 12 pm, 2 pm, & 3:30 pm

10.10.8 **US Chess Junior Congress** (all times are local)

- Rounds 1-2-3: Saturday: 10 am, 2 pm, & 6 pm
- Rounds 4-5: Sunday: 9 am & 1 pm
- The Organizer may propose different start times for each round when approved as part of the Organizer's winning bid by the Director of Events in consultation with the Scholastic Council.

10.10.9 **US Chess Junior Open & All-Girls Nationals**: Round times to be determined by the organizers.

10.11 Time Controls

10.11.1 For the potential need to change game time controls in special situations, see Section 10.10.1.

10.11.2 **Grade Nationals & all Spring Nationals** (including **SuperNationals)**

10.11.2.1 All Sections shall use a time control of Game/90, with a 10-second time delay: G/90 d10.

10.11.2.2 The US Chess Rule 11D (2 extra minutes awarded for an opponent's illegal move or touch-move violation) will be imposed only when the player receiving the awarded time has fewer than 60 minutes on the player's clock.

10.11.3 **Scholastic Online Quick Nationals**: All 7 rounds at Game/20, with a 5-second increment (G/20 +5).

10.11.4 **Youth Action Nationals**: All rounds at Game/30, with 5-second time delay (G/30 d5).

10.11.5 **All-Girls Nationals & Junior Congress**: Game/90, with a 10-second time delay (G/90 d10). The Organizer may propose a longer or shorter time control as part of the Organizer's bid.

10.11.6 **Junior Open**: Game/120, with 5-second time delay (G/120 d5). Organizers may propose a different time control as part of their bids.

11 CHESS NOTATION

11.1 Requirements *(changed)*

11.1.1 All players **must use the official scoresheets provided by the tournament** to record the moves during their games. Organizers will make available a downloadable version of the official scoresheet so players can practice before the tournament. Players **may not** use their personal scorebooks or other notation devices for any reason while their games are in progress, including transcription. (For authorized exceptions, see Section 11.2.)

11.1.2 The recognized forms of notation are algebraic and descriptive.

11.1.3 **Chess notation requirements** are prescribed in the table below:

Tournament	Sections	Is Notation Required?	
Grade (K-12) Nationals	Kindergarten through Grade 2		No
	Grades 3 through Grade 12	Yes	
Elementary School (K-6) Nationals	K-1 Under 500/Unrated		No
	K-1 Championship		No
	K-3 Under 600/Unrated, and K-3 Under 1000		No
	K-3 Championship	Yes	
	All K-5 and K-6 Sections~~, including K-6 Unrated~~	Yes	
Middle School (K-8) Nationals	All sections	Yes	
High School (K-12) Nationals	All sections	Yes	
Youth Action Nationals	All Sections	Yes	
All-Girls Nationals	Age Under 8		No
	Age Under 10 and up	Yes	
Junior Congress	Age 6 & under and Age 8 & under		No
	Age 10 & under, and all higher sections	Yes	
Junior Open	All Sections	Yes	

11.1.4 **Rule 15A** from *US Chess Official Rules of Chess*, requiring players to move before notating their move during over-the-board play, **will be enforced for all players** in scholastic national tournaments. This specification does not apply to any online scholastic national tournament.

11.1.4.1 **The variation to Rule 15A** from *US Chess Official Rules of Chess*, allowing players to notate their move before moving, **shall be allowed** for the following sections of scholastic national tournaments:

- Grade Nationals: Kindergarten, 1st Grade, 2nd Grade.
- Spring Nationals (including SuperNationals): All K-1 sections (including K-1 Championship) and all K-3 non-championship sections.
- All-Girls Nationals: Under 8 Section.

11.1.5 At all times during a game, both players shall keep their notation sheet on the tabletop, so their notation is clearly visible to the opponent and tournament staff.

11.1.6 In sections where notation is optional, players may notate using only the methods prescribed for the tournament or using an alternative method approved as an individual accommodation by the Director of Events. (For exceptions see Section 11.2.)

11.1.7 A section's notation requirements apply to all players within the section. For example, if a 1st Grade player chooses to play in a K-8 section, that player must abide by the notation requirements of that section, regardless of the player's age or grade.

11.1.8 *(New)* **Penalties for Violating Rule 15A when Notation is Required**. When a TD upholds a claim made against a player who has violated Rule 15A by writing the next move in advance or by not keeping notation, the TD will impose penalties as listed below:

11.1.8.1 **In Championship Sections that Require Notation**

- The **1st violation will incur a warning** from the TD, with the player instructed to discontinue writing the move in advance and/or to fill in any missing moves on the player's time.
- The penalty for **several additional violations will be 2 minutes added to the claimant's time** when the claimant has less than 2/3rd of the claimant's time remaining relative to the round's time control (e.g., fewer than 60 minutes when the base time control is 90 minutes).
- For **many additional or egregious violations, the TD has discretion to reduce the violator's time by as many as 5 minutes**; however, the violator's time will not be reduced by an amount that leaves the violator with fewer than 2.5 minutes of remaining time.

11.1.8.2 **In All Other Non-Championship Sections that Require Notation**

- The TD will **issue 2 warnings before imposing time penalties** as described in Section 11.1.8.1 above.

11.1.8.3 **Chief TD's Discretion**. The Chief TD has the authority to issue less restrictive guidance for the entire tournament and/or sections of the tournament, based on players' ages and levels. For example, the Chief TD for the Elementary School Nationals could require TDs to issue 2 warnings in all sections requiring notation before imposing a time penalty.

11.2 Exceptions to Notation Requirements

11.2.1 Players with special circumstances might be eligible to use an alternative means of chess notation. This accommodation requires prior approval from the US Chess Director of Events.

11.2.1.1 US Chess strongly encourages players seeking this accommodation to contact the Director of Events at NationalEvents@USChess.org **at least 3 weeks before the tournament**. This allows time for the request and review of supporting information by US Chess, if needed.

11.2.1.2 Late registrants seeking accommodation for their method of notation shall contact the US Chess Director of Events before the tournament or ask to see the Director of Events at Chess Control upon arrival at the site. A player who raises this issue at the board without it having been reviewed by the Director of Events, cannot assume the requested accommodation will be granted for the current round.

12 Tiebreaks & Scoring Adjustments

Tiebreaks are used to determine the order of awards among players with the same final score.

12.1 Calculating Tiebreaks

12.1.1 Computer programs are used to determine pairings, standings, and tiebreaks for all scholastic national events.

12.1.2 If tiebreaks are done by hand, they should be calculated at the end of the next-to-last-round. Careful preparation for manually calculating tiebreaks is necessary, even when using a computer.

12.2 Players Tied for 1st Place

12.2.1 *All* players tied for 1st place are considered co-winners, but awards will be presented based on tiebreaks. (See Section 12.3.)

12.2.2 At Grade Nationals, All-Girls Nationals, and Scholastic Online Quick Nationals, all section winners and co-winners shall be designated as ***National Champion***.

12.2.3 At Spring Nationals (including SuperNationals), **only the winners and co-winners** of a Championship Section shall be designated as ***National Champion***. Players who win an Under or Unrated Section are designated as *1st Place Winners*, **NOT** as *National Champions*. (See also Section 14.1.1.)

12.3 Tiebreak Systems & Order of Tiebreaks

12.3.1 When individual scores are equal, the following order of tiebreak systems will be used to determine individual awards:

1. Modified Median
2. Median
3. Solkoff
~~4. Sonnenborn-Berger~~
4. Cumulative
5. Coin Flip

12.3.2 *(New)* When individual scores are equal in a section **using Accelerated Pairings**, the following order of tiebreak systems will be used to determine individual awards:

1. Modified Median
2. Median
3. Solkoff
4. Sonnenborn-Berger
5. Cumulative
6. Coin Flip

12.3.3 When team scores are equal, the following order of tiebreak systems will be used to determine team awards:

1. Total Individual Median
2. Total Solkoff
3. Total Sonnenborn-Berger
4. Total Cumulative
5. Coin Flip

12.4 Scoring Adjustments for Opponents of a Disqualified Player

If a player is disqualified during or after an event, the results of the disqualified player's opponents will be adjusted as follows:

12.4.1 If 2 or more rounds remain, all opponents of the disqualified player will receive a win by forfeit, unless they defeated the disqualified player, in which case they will retain a rated win.

12.4.2 If there is 1 round remaining, or if the tournament has concluded:

12.4.2.1 The last opponent of the disqualified player will receive a win by forfeit.

12.4.2.2 Opponents who lost to the disqualified player will receive a half-point bye.

12.4.2.3 Opponents who drew the disqualified player will receive a win by forfeit.

12.4.2.4 Opponents who defeated the disqualified player will receive a rated win.

12.4.3 A disqualified player's score may not contribute to the player's team score.

13 Conduct of the Tournament

13.1 Playing Area Setup Considerations for Over-the-Board (OTB) Events

13.1.1 The top boards should be roped off to highlight the top contestants and to prevent congestion. Some events have highlighted these boards by isolating them in a central area. These top boards must be located away from areas prone to noise such as exits and thoroughfares to the restrooms.

13.1.2 The use of DGT boards or ~~demonstration boards,~~ internet transmission~~, or closed-circuit TV~~ to display the top boards is recommended. ~~If internet transmission closed-circuit TV is used, place the monitors in a separate room.~~ To deter fair play violations, all games ~~that are~~ broadcast~~ed~~ live ~~it is required to~~ must have a move delay or time delay (e.g., 2 moves or 15 minutes) enabled.

13.1.3 To ensure silent playing conditions, access to the tournament room(s) is limited to the players, tournament staff, and media approved by US Chess. US Chess does not allow spectators in the Playing Hall while games are in progress.

13.1.4 The K-1 section of the Elementary School Nationals must be closed to everyone except the players and tournament staff. The organizer will provide a parent waiting area immediately adjacent and connected to the K-1 Playing Room. The organizer also will enact measures to account for all K-1 players such as the use of nametags or wristbands, escorting players to/from restrooms, and handing off each player to the player's parent/guardian/coach when the player's game has ended.

13.1.5 In the interest of player security, US Chess national events with elementary sections shall have specific player exits designated and marked by the tournament staff based on the physical layout of the Playing Hall and the venue. Players are required to use these exits when leaving the playing floor. Players who use unauthorized exits are subject to questioning by tournament staff.

13.1.6 When deemed appropriate by the US Chess Director of Events or the Event Organizer, a designated **Parent Waiting Area** (PWA) might be set up in a space outside or adjacent to the Playing Room, or in a part of the Playing Room that is far away from the players. The PWA is where parents and other responsible adults can meet players who have finished their games. Adults may remain in this area from the start of the round until their players' games are completed. At US Chess scholastic national events, the K-1 Section follows its own special procedures.

13.1.6.1 The PWA is NOT a spectator area.

13.1.6.2 Parents who think they have observed a Tournament Director engage a player the TD knows shall refrain from contacting the tournament staff to inquire about the engagement, because this behavior distracts the TDs from their assigned duties.

13.1.6.3 When the PWA is inside the Playing Hall, the Chief TD and Director of Events **have the authority to forbid any use of electronic devices** (mobile phones, tablets, laptops, walkie-talkies, etc.) in the PWA. When this rule is in effect, people violating it will be warned first, and then might be asked to leave the PWA after repeated offenses during a round.

13.2 Announcements & Personal Photography

13.2.1 Except in the event of an emergency, announcements are made only before the start of each round.

13.2.2 US Chess practice is to not allow anyone other than players with active games onto the playing floor after the round begins. People wanting to take photographs of their players must do so before the start of the round and before the tournament staff asks all non-players to leave the Playing Hall.

13.3 Event Staff & Pairing Lists for Teams

13.3.1 **Event Staff**: Relatives and coaches of players are not allowed to serve as TDs or Score Keepers in sections where their players participate.

13.3.2 **Pairing Lists for Teams**: This information is available online.

13.4 Fair Play & Electronic Devices

Electronic Devices are defined as mobile phones, smart glasses, air tags, smart watches, tablets, computers, or any other device **capable of chess analysis and/or communication with another device and/or person**. 1-way wrist trackers and air tags may be worn, but players who wear them are subject to inspection by tournament staff to ensure their devices comply with the intent of this section. For rules concerning use of Electronic Notation Devices by players with special circumstances, see Section 11.2.

13.4.1 **Before the Start of the Game**. While entering the Playing Hall and checking their board numbers to find their pairings, players may use their electronic devices. However, before the start of the round, players **must turn off all their electronic devices** and either store them in a bag or place them face-up on the table. While face-up on the table, devices must be off—not on and in vibrate-only, silent, or airplane mode.

13.4.2 **When the Game Begins**. Once the round starts, players' devices must remain in their stored location or face-up on the table for the duration of the game.

13.4.3 **During the Game**. While games are in progress, players in the Playing Hall may not attempt to use their electronic devices or have them on their persons in any manner. Devices may not be taken to the restroom or outside the Playing Hall.

13.4.4 **After the Game**. When a player's game is over, the player may collect the player's device from the table or leave it in the player's bag. However, the player is **not permitted to turn on** or use the device in any manner **before the player has completely exited the Playing Hall**. Prohibited behavior includes (but is not limited to) taking photos of scoresheets, sending texts, and placing calls.

13.4.5 **Penalties for Electronic-Device Violations.**

13.4.5.1 **Behaviors Warranting Mandatory Penalties.**

13.4.5.1.1 A player who uses an electronic device to obtain information and/or communicate while the player's game is in progress shall lose the game.

13.4.5.1.2 A player who leaves the Playing Hall or enters the restroom with an electronic device on the player's person while the player's game is in progress shall lose the game—regardless of whether the device is on or off.

13.4.5.1.3 A player whose electronic device rings, vibrates, or interrupts a game in any way shall be penalized as follows:

- The player answers the device and/or processes what it is communicating: loss of game.
- The player does not answer the device and/or does not process what it is communicating: loss of 30 minutes or 50% of remaining time, whichever is less. (Turning the device off without answering it and/or without processing what it is communicating will result in this less severe penalty.) 2nd offense during the same round: loss of game.

13.4.5.1.4 Use of device after the player's game is over but before the player has exited the Playing Hall in any round before the final round:

- Loss of 30 minutes in the next round, when the behavior is clearly disruptive to another player, or
- Loss of 10 minutes in the next round, when the behavior is not substantially disruptive to another player.

13.4.5.1.5 Use of device after the player's game is over but before the player has exited the Playing Hall in the final round:

- Loss of 1 point from the 1st tiebreak in the final standings, when the behavior is clearly disruptive to other players, or
- A warning, when the behavior is not substantially disruptive to other players.

13.4.5.2 **Behaviors Warranting Discretionary Penalties.** The situation below provides the TD with a choice of 2 possible penalties to impose. When deciding how to rule in such a case, the Section Chief shall consider the details of the violation, including (but not necessarily limited to) the player's grade/age, section (Championship, Under, or Unrated), and score. Violations in a Championship Section are more likely to result in the more severe penalty.

13.4.5.2.1 While a player's game is in progress, possession of an electronic device that is on but is clearly not being used or that is off (unless, in either situation, the device is taken to the restroom or outside the Playing Hall, in which case 13.4.5.1.2 applies): 2 possible penalties:

- Loss of game, or
- Loss of 30 minutes or 50% of remaining time, whichever is less.

13.4.5.3 **Repeat Violations.** If there is sufficient concern about fair play and/or if there are repeat violations, then the player's game might be forfeited and/or the player might be disqualified.

13.4.6 **Exceptions**

13.4.6.1 If the organizer designates a specific area of the Playing Hall near the entrance/exit for players to use electronic devices, then, upon completion of their game, players may use their electronic device **only in the designated area** to contact their parent, coach, or chaperone. The communication must be limited to arranging a pickup or stating that their game is over. Loud and/or disruptive behavior in this area can warrant a penalty.

13.4.6.2 If an emergency affecting a player occurs during a round, then the player may ask a TD for permission to use the player's electronic device to contact a parent, coach, or chaperone. If the TD approves use of the electronic device to make such contact, use of the device must occur in the TD's presence.

13.4.6.3 Players with special circumstances shall follow the procedures in Section 11.2.

13.4.7 **Additional Fair Play Measures**

13.4.7.1 To protect the integrity of competition and deter fair play violations, US Chess will make every effort to secure venues with restrooms designated exclusively for players and/or venues with areas controlled exclusively by US Chess (e.g., requiring a badge to access).

13.4.7.2 Anyone suspected of committing or contributing to the commission of a fair play violation, including a player who leaves the area controlled by US Chess while the player's game is in progress, is subject to screening by US Chess.

13.4.7.3 Frivolous or malicious accusations targeting a specific person or group might incur a penalty at the discretion of the Chief Tournament Director or Director of Events.

13.5 Media

13.5.1 US Chess press has unrestricted access to the Playing Hall.

13.5.2 All other media desiring access to the Playing Hall or any aspect of the tournament must have the approval of the US Chess Director of Events. US Chess does not control media policies of the host facility.

13.5.3 Media requesting entry into the Playing Hall, but lacking appropriate access credentials, shall be sent to Chess Control by the Chief TD or Chief of the Floor.

13.6 Players Who Have Ongoing Games

13.6.1 During their games, players should remain at their boards or in the Playing Room silently observing adjacent games within their Section.

13.6.2 A player with an active game may not leave the Playing Room except to travel to and from the authorized restroom.

13.6.2.1 When going to the restroom, players must leave their official scoresheet at their board and bring their badge with them when the tournament requires player badges.

13.6.2.2 When a players-only restroom is designated by the tournament staff, it is the only restroom players can use while their games are in progress. Players who use another restroom can expect to be questioned by tournament staff, with the imposition of a penalty likely.

13.6.2.3 After a player's game ends, that player may no longer use the players-only restroom.

13.6.3 Players who need to leave the Playing Room during play for an extended period (more than 10 minutes) will inform 1 of the TDs in their Section before leaving the playing area. Players who have gone from the playing area for an unusual length of time should expect to be questioned by the tournament staff when they return to the board.

13.6.4 Exceptions include medical emergencies.

13.6.5 **Players whose games are complete are considered spectators** and must leave the tournament room immediately after their game. They are not allowed to re-enter the tournament room to check on a teammate or for any other reason without the express permission of a TD. A player who believes they forgot a chess bag, scorebook, mobile phone, coat, jacket, purse (etc.) in the Playing Hall should first go to Chess Control and get instructions from the tournament staff.

13.7 Contact between Players

13.7.1 Except for a medical emergency, a player whose game is in progress shall not have contact with anyone without first getting permission from a TD. Players have a heightened sensitivity towards any behavior that has an appearance of cheating. A good practice is for players to treat friends and teammates as strangers—avoiding any interaction while their games are in progress. Having a nearly silent Playing Hall minimizes distractions for all participants.

13.8 When a Game Result is Determined *(enhanced)*

13.8.1 The game result is determined (and cannot subsequently be changed) after both players agree on the result, regardless of the position on the board. This includes situations when:

13.8.1.1 1 of the players resigns.

13.8.1.2 The players did not notice a checkmate or stalemate position and continued their game.

13.8.1.3 The players agreed to checkmate when the actual board position is stalemate, or they agreed to stalemate when the actual board position is checkmate.

13.8.1.4 A player made an illegal move that was not claimed to a Tournament Director by the opponent at the time the illegal move was completed.

13.9 Answering Questions or Addressing Uncertainty about the Game Result

13.9.1 **Checkmate or Stalemate**. When a player asks a TD whether a position on the board is checkmate or stalemate, the TD will ensure the clock is paused and then ask both players, "***What do you think?***"

- If both players agree, then the result is confirmed regardless of the position on the board.
- If a player expresses uncertainty, then the TD will instruct the player whose turn it is to start the clock and **make a move**.
- If a move is played, then the game shall continue.
- If the players conclude that no legal move is possible, then the TD asks, "***Is the King in check?***"
- Depending on the answer, the TD rules checkmate or stalemate.

13.9.2 **Other Results**. When the players disagree about the game result, the TD will rule in accordance with *US Chess Official Rules of Chess* whether the game result is final or shall continue.

13.10 Game Result Slips

13.10.1 The organizer will provide Game Result Slips for each section in the tournament. The use of different color slips for each section (or different sections in the same room) is a preferred practice.

13.10.2 The Game Result Slip will contain spaces for both players to write their name, school, section, round of play, grade in school, indicate the result, and sign the result. It also will provide a place for the TD to sign or place the TD's initials.

13.10.3 When the players agree on the game result, they should raise their hand to summon a TD. Players should not reset their board until instructed by the TD. After the TD arrives, the players must circle the correct result and sign the Result Slip. Before releasing the players, the TD verifies the result to which the players have agreed and that each player's information has been accurately recorded on the Result Slip. The TD initials and keeps the Result Slip. A player may not exit the Playing Room with

the Game Result Slip for the player's game. A parent or coach who discovers that a player has a Result Slip in the player's possession outside of the playing room should immediately go to Chess Control and turn in that Result Slip.

13.10.4 The Chief TD and Section Chiefs will ensure all Floor TDs are briefed on the requirement to record game issues and player claims on the backside of the game result slip to support the claims process.

13.11 Penalty for Excessively Late Arrival or No-Show

13.11.1 A player who is **late by 30 or more minutes for a round (**see Section 10.10.2**) will lose the game by forfeit and will be withdrawn from the tournament**. The player will not be paired in any subsequent round of the tournament unless the Chief Tournament Director reinstates the player.

13.11.2 The 30-minute countdown for late arrival begins when the Chief TD starts the round.

13.11.3 Under these rules a player who is forfeited but wants to continue competing in the tournament, **must notify Chess Control at least 2 hours before the advertised start of the next round**.

13.11.3.1 This request may be made on behalf of the player by the player's parents, coach, legal guardian, or a responsible adult associated with the player or school.

13.12 Dealing with Annoying or Distracting Behavior

13.12.1 Section Chiefs will apply Rule 1C2 (Director Discretion), Rule 20A (Conduct of Players), and/or Rule 20G (Annoying Behavior) from *US Chess Official Rules of Chess*, as necessary, to resolve any complaints. Frivolous or malicious complaints might incur a penalty at the discretion of the director.

14 AWARDS

14.1 General Specifications & Principles

14.1.1 Only players and teams who win (or are tied for) 1st place **in a Championship Section** of the event shall be designated as *National Champion* or *National Co-Champion*. Players and teams who win 1st place in an Under section, an Under/Unrated section, or an Unrated section shall not be recognized by US Chess as National Champions. It is inappropriate for those players or teams to describe themselves as such.

14.1.2 Players can win only 1 individual award. Place awards take precedence over all other awards.

14.1.3 Award size, looks, weight, and quality should display the prestige and importance of a US Chess National Championship event.

14.1.4 The Director of Events, in consultation with the Scholastic Council, may use alternative awards (such as medals) in place of trophies for individual winners.

14.2 Award Sizes, Faceplates, & Backplates

14.2.1 **Championship Sections**. If trophies are awarded, then trophy sizes for Individuals and Teams in each Championship Section will be the same. Trophy sizes will be graduated from a **minimum** of 48" in height for 1st place down to a **minimum** of 24" for the lowest place. Trophy faceplates or backplates on awards for winning individuals and teams will use the words ***National Champion***. On a trophy's faceplate or in a medal's logo, the year should be listed at the end of the event name (or on a separate line, if necessary). For example:

Trophy Faceplate

National Champion (or 2nd Place)
K-12 Championship
US Chess High School Championships 2027

Medal Backplate (Assumes Event Name & Year in the Logo)

National Champion (or 2nd Place)
K-12 Championship

14.2.2 **Non-Championship Sections**. If trophies are awarded, then Team and Individual trophies in Non-Championship sections shall be no taller than 32" in height for 1st place down to a minimum of 14" for the lowest place.

14.2.2.1 The size of "Tied for" and rating-based class awards ~~trophies~~ will be smaller than the lowest of the place awards.~~trophies.~~ (See also Section 14.3.3.)

14.2.2.2 The faceplate or backplate for 1st-place individual and team awards in non-championship sections will use the words *1st Place*—**NOT the word *Champion* or *Champions***, which are reserved only for the top award~~trophies~~ in a Championship section. On a trophy's faceplate or in a medal's logo, the year should be listed at the end of the event name (or on a separate line, if necessary). For example:

Trophy Faceplate

1st Place (or 3rd Place Team)
K-6 Under 1400
US Chess Elementary School Championships
2027

Medal Backplate (Assumes Event Name & Year in the Logo)

1st Place (or 3rd Place Team)
K-6 Under 1400

14.3 Number of Awards

14.3.1 In the Spring Nationals (including SuperNationals) US Chess shall present awards to the Championship and Non-Championship sections as listed below, based on a section's average attendance in the previous ~~two~~ 4 years and not necessarily in multiples of 5. The Director of Events has the authority to increase the number of individual and/or team awards when participation in a section is projected to exceed the average attendance in the previous~~two~~ 4 years, with strong consideration given to historical individual and/or team attendance when the event will be held in the same location as in a previous year.

14.3.1.1 **Championship Sections**: A minimum of 1 individual award per 10 players and a team award to a minimum of 1 out of 4 teams.~~ a minimum of 1 team award per 15 players, based on average attendance in the two previous years.~~ In addition to the team award, individual plaques will be awarded to 4 players and 1 coach for each of the Top 5 teams in the Championship Section.

14.3.1.2 **Under Sections and Under/Unrated Sections**: A minimum of 1 individual award per 14~~ 15~~ players and a team award to a minimum of 1 out of 5 teams. ~~a minimum of 1 team award per 20 players., based on average attendance in the two previous years.~~ In addition to the team award, individual plaques will be awarded to 4 players and 1 coach of the 1st-place team. These plaques shall be at least 25% smaller than the plaques awarded to the players and coaches in the Championship section(s). Because the K-3 Under 600/Unrated Sections and similarly named sections are not unrated-only sections, their awards will be treated in the same manner as Under sections.

14.3.1.3 **Unrated-only Sections**: A minimum of 1 individual award per 14 ~~15~~players and a team award to a minimum of 1 out of 7 teams ~~up to (but not more than) 5 team awards, based on average attendance in the two previous years. There are no~~ Individual plaques will not be awarded to ~~for~~ team members and a coach of the 1st-place team.

14.3.1.4 When new sections are created and there is no history, the Director of Events will work with the Scholastic Council to identify appropriate quantities of individual and team awards.

14.3.2 Awards for the **top 3 places** shall be presented in each of the following classes:

14.3.2.1 US Chess High School (K-12) National Championships/SuperNationals:

- K-12 Championship Section: 1900-1999, 1800-1899, 1700-1799, 1600-1699, 1500-1599, 1400-1499, Under 1400, and Unrated

14.3.2.2 US Chess Middle School (K-8) National Championships/SuperNationals:

- K-8 Championship Section: 1700-1799, 1600-1699, 1500-1599, 1400-1499, 1300-1399, 1200-1299, Under 1200, and Unrated
- K-8 Under 700/Unrated Section: Unrated players

14.3.2.3 US Chess Elementary School (K-6) National Championships/SuperNationals:

- K-6 Championship Section: 1400-1499, 1300-1399, 1200-1299, 1100-1199, 1000-1099, Under 1000, and Unrated
- K-6 Under 600/Unrated Section: Unrated players
- K-5 Championship Section: Same class awards as the K-6 Championship Section
- K-3 Championship Section: 1100-1199, 1000-1099, 900-999, 800-899, Under 800, and Unrated
- K-3 Under 600/Unrated Section: Unrated players
- K-1 Under 500/Unrated Section: Unrated players

14.3.2.4 Bughouse National Championship at:

- High School (K-12) National Championships: K-12 section only
- Middle School (K-8) National Championships: K-8 section only
- Elementary School (K-6) National Championships: K-6 section only
- SuperNationals: K-12, K-8, and K-6 sections

14.3.2.5 Blitz National Championship at:

- High School (K-12) National Championships: K-12 section only

- Middle School (K-8) National Championships: K-8 section only
- Elementary School (K-6) National Championships: Sections for K-6 and K-3
- SuperNationals: K-12, K-8, K-6, and K-3 sections

14.3.3 **Each grade in the Grade Nationals**: A minimum of 1 individual award per 10 players and 1 team award per 5 teams, plus the class Awards listed below. ~~**Top 10 individuals** and **Top 5 teams** per 100 players in each section (averaged over the past two years),~~ The Director of Events has the authority to increase the number of individual and/or team awards in a section when participation is projected to exceed the average attendance in the previous ~~two~~ 4 years, with strong consideration given to high individual and/or team attendance when the event (or even a Spring Nationals) will be held in the same location as in a previous year.

Grades	Class Awards by Grade – Top 3 Players by Class			
9th - 12th	1600-1899	1300-1599	1000-1299	Under 1000 / Unrated
6th - 8th	1400-1699	1100-1399	800-1099	Under 800 / Unrated
4th - 5th	1100-1399	800-1099	500-799	Under 500 / Unrated
2nd - 3rd	1000-1299	700-999	400-699	Under 400 / Unrated
Pre-K, K, & 1st	800-999	600-799	400-599	Under 400 / Unrated

14.3.4 Each section of the **Youth Action Nationals**: 10 individual and 5 team awards per 100 players in each section, ~~based on the average attendance in the past two years;~~ and individual plaques for 4 players and 1 coach for each of the top 5 teams. Event organizers can propose a different award scheme in their proposal.

14.3.5 Each age group of the **Junior Congress**: Top 10 individual finishers in each section and top 5 teams.

14.3.6 **Scholastic Online Quick Nationals:** To be separately determined and published as part of the event rules.

14.4 Other Awards and Award Prohibitions

14.4.1 **"Tied For" Awards.** In each section, players who tie for the lowest-place individual award shall receive a "Tied-For" award.

14.4.2 Ribbons and certificates for each participant have been used effectively at over-the-board events. Such items need no ceremonies and shall be distributed to participants as deemed appropriate by the Chief TD or each Section Chief. Organizers should be aware that tangible awards of some nature are recommended for the enhancement of scholastic national events. Plans for such awards should be included in the bid and advance publicity for the event.

14.4.3 For Side Events held as part of a scholastic national tournament the minimum awards will be equal to the minimum offered in the Championship Section. See Appendices A and B for specific information on the Blitz and Bughouse events.

14.4.4 Special awards (gender specific awards, etc.) are prohibited. Grade-based awards are prohibited at all Spring Nationals.

14.4.5 Organizers shall not accept donations of extra awards without the approval of US Chess.

15 Scholastic Meeting & Other Meetings

15.1 Scholastic Meeting

15.1.1 The Director of Events will schedule a Scholastic Meeting at every US Chess scholastic national event. This meeting usually occurs 15-30 minutes after the start of 1 of the rounds of play and is led by the Scholastic Council Representative or the Organizer. Senior staff from US Chess frequently attend. This meeting should last no longer than 1 hour. (See footnote 9.)

15.1.2 The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the tournament and any scholastic chess topics. This meeting is not the place to raise issues about your player's game results.

[9] Please be on time for the start of this meeting, as it disrupts the meeting when someone arrives late and asks questions about topics already discussed.

15.2 Other Meetings

15.2.1 Additional meetings and seminars are common at US Chess scholastic national events. Examples include, but are not limited to: Grandmaster Simultaneous Exhibition, Book Signings, and Lectures; discussions on Women's Chess and/or International Youth Chess; US Chess Executive Director's Open Door, etc.

15.2.2 All meetings must be approved by the Director of Events or Organizer in time for them to be printed in the event Schedule or Program Book.

16 INTERNET COVERAGE & SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

16.1 Before the Tournament

16.1.1 **At least 4 months before the tournament**, US Chess or the organizer will provide a dedicated event home page for each scholastic national tournament. The page will have essential information about the event (e.g., event-specific rules, lodging instructions and locations, registration fees and instructions, sectioning, awards, etc.). The home page also will contain links to make lodging arrangements and to enter the tournament. To find the home page for a scholastic national tournament, go to www.USChess.org, then select *Play* and then *National Events* from the menu bar; US Chess's multi-year National Events Calendar will be listed.

16.1.2 The Event Home Page will have links to the list of advance entries (pre-registered players) showing each player's name, school, grade in school, section entered, and bye requests.

16.1.3 When possible, the Event Home Page will include a PDF or on-line edition of the official Event Program that participants can download or print.

16.2 During the Tournament

16.2.1 After the event begins, US Chess or the Organizer will add links on the Event Home Page enabling players easy access to the pairings, results, and standings for all sections throughout the tournament.

16.2.2 When pairings are posted on-line, players, parents and coaches must remember that the official pairings are those pairings posted near or inside the Playing Area. There are occasions when the on-line pairings are different. When this occurs, the pairings posted near or inside the Playing Hall have precedence.

16.2.3 For each round, the tournament staff shall, at a minimum, post on-line the next round's pairings and the current standings. In addition, for the last 3 rounds of the tournament, the event staff also will post a Wall Chart online, sorted in pairing number sequence and showing each player's total score, round-by-round result, and color history. Because Wall Charts for sections can be extensive, they will only be printed and posted onsite at the discretion of the Organizer or Chief Tournament Director.

16.3 After the Tournament

16.3.1 US Chess or the Organizer will update the Event Home Page and include links to pages containing the Official Results.

16.3.2 US Chess or the Organizer also may provide links to 1 or more Post-Event Surveys being used to gather information from participants.

16.4 Recommended Special Considerations

16.4.1 Provide a large map of the United States, with the number of players from each state indicated on the map.

16.4.2 Provide coaches with a copy of the US Chess tournament cross-table as soon as it is available online.

16.4.3 Organized activities for players add to the attractiveness of these events. Such activities, including simultaneous exhibitions or lectures by famous players, are recommended.

16.4.4 It is strongly recommended that side events (blitz tournaments, etc.) be completed on the day before the start of a scholastic national event.

17 SUPERNATIONALS

17.1 Definition & Specifications

17.1.1 SuperNationals is a concurrent, co-located, single tournament that includes all 3 Spring Nationals.

17.1.2 SuperNationals shall follow all specifications in the previous sections of these regulations in addition to the regulations in this section.

17.1.3 SuperNationals may be held no more frequently than every 4 years. The first SuperNationals was held in 1997. The next SuperNationals (SuperNationals IX) will be held in April, 2029 in Columbus, Ohio.

18 Regulations for Online Scholastic National Tournaments

This section of the *Scholastic Regulations* is NOT rules for the Scholastic Online Quick Nationals—those rules will be separately published. Rather, this section supplements the *Scholastic Regulations* and the 7th Edition of *US Chess Official Rules of Chess*, especially Chapter 10: Rules for Online Tournaments and Matches. This section provides rules to help organizers create online events. The regulations detailed below are based on years of experience running multiple large online scholastic tournaments at state and national levels via a variety of online chess-playing platforms—with and without the aid of remote monitoring video capabilities. Situations not covered directly by this section or other parts of the *Scholastic Regulations* or *US Chess Official Rules of Chess*, should be brought to the attention of the Scholastic Council.

18.1 Event Dates & Tournament Format

18.1.1 Scheduling Considerations.

18.1.1.1 If an online event is a replacement for an over-the-board (OTB) tournament, then the organizer should make every effort to schedule it for the same weekend when the OTB event would have been held.

18.1.1.2 The dates of the events shall be coordinated with the US Chess Office.

18.1.2 Tournament Format.

18.1.2.1 The format for an online tournament is not required to be identical to the OTB version of the event. But, in general, the number of rounds should be kept the same.

18.1.2.2 In a similar way, the time control traditionally used for the OTB version of the event can be kept the same or shortened as the organizer sees fit; however, the organizer also must consider the prestige and tradition of the OTB National Event.

18.2 Chess Platform

18.2.1 Selection.

18.2.1.1 Selecting the appropriate platform for any online scholastic national event is 1 of the most important decisions the organizer makes.

18.2.1.2 Considerations include, but are not limited to:

- Whether the platform allows the use of 'manual' pairings submitted by the tournament staff.
- The tournament staff's experience and familiarity with the chosen platform.
- What hardware is required by event participants.
- The platform's compatibility with various methods for remotely monitoring players.

18.2.2 Endorsed Fair Play Algorithm.

18.2.2.1 All online scholastic national events will be held on platforms with fair play algorithms endorsed by US Chess.

18.3 Organizers' Responsibilities

18.3.1 Requirements. All online scholastic national events must meet at least 1 of these 2 conditions:

18.3.1.1 If the event is organized directly by US Chess, the Director of Events will work with the Scholastic Council to develop and publish event-specific rules and guidelines.

18.3.1.2 If the event is organized by an organizer awarded the event through a US Chess bidding process, then the organizer shall work through the US Chess Director of Events with the Scholastic Council to set event-specific rules and guidelines.

18.3.2 Contract with the Platform Vendor.

18.3.2.1 The business contract between the organizer and the platform is the responsibility of the organizer.

18.3.2.2 When US Chess is the organizer, the US Chess Director of Events will make the contract with the platform vendor.

18.3.3 Event Name.

18.3.3.1 The proposed name of the event shall be approved by the Director of Events.

18.3.3.2 Events proposed as a national championship must be approved by the US Chess Executive Board.

18.3.4 Registration Process.

18.3.4.1 US Chess will provide the registration system for online scholastic national events that are organized directly by US Chess.

18.3.4.2 For events awarded to an organizer external to US Chess the organizer is responsible for the event registration process unless the terms of the awarded bid state otherwise.

18.3.4.3 Organizers should require players to certify that all information presented on their entry form is true and correct. Incorrect or false information might result in a player being ruled ineligible to play.

18.3.5 Event Rules. The rules to be used for the tournament shall be published no later than the date registration opens for the event. This includes rules governing start times (round times), time controls, permitted playing devices.

18.3.6 Player Usernames and Passwords.

18.3.6.1 Players are required to use the username they provided during registration or as assigned by the tournament.

18.3.6.2 Players who change or forget their username and/or password might not be able to play in the tournament.

18.3.6.3 The organizer should maintain a list of all authorized usernames and provide a process for players to recover their password.

18.3.7 Optional Opening Ceremony. The organizer may choose to have an online opening ceremony. Such a ceremony, however, is not designed to answer questions or address technical issues—the priority is to begin Round 1 on time.

18.4 Organizing Team/Staffing

18.4.1 Chief Tournament Director. The Chief TD must:

18.4.1.1 Be acceptable to US Chess.

18.4.1.2 Be certified as a National Tournament Director.

18.4.1.3 Have strong experience:

- Directing online events.
- Using the platform chosen for the tournament.
- In fair play methods for reviewing games and the overall event's results.

18.4.2 Number of TDs. The ratio of players to TDs will greatly depend on the event requirements (e.g., camera monitoring, chat platform, etc.). In general, every 25-30 camera views require 1 online TD.

18.5 Player Eligibility

18.5.1 US Chess and Platform Membership.

18.5.1.1 Players must be members in good standing with US Chess.

18.5.1.2 Players also must be in good standing with the platform vendor contracted for the tournament. US Chess cannot mandate that a player be allowed to play on a platform if the player has been banned by the platform vendor.

18.5.2 Organizer's and/or Chief TD's Rights. The organizer and/or Chief TD reserve the right to rule a player as ineligible or disqualified if:

18.5.2.1 A player has a fair play violation on any platform endorsed by US Chess.

18.5.2.2 The platform vendor for the tournament informs the organizer or Chief TD during the event that a player has committed a fair play violation.

18.5.2.3 A player is determined by the organizer / chief TD to have violated fair play after completion of post-event analysis in accordance with Chapter 10 of *US Chess Official Rules of Chess* and the specific rules for the tournament.

18.6 Players' Equipment to Play in the Event

All aspects of the player's technical setup are the responsibility of the player, not of US Chess.

18.6.1 Computer or Tablet.

18.6.1.1 Some platforms do not allow players to use a tablet computer.

18.6.1.2 When the event rules specify remote monitoring by video camera or screen sharing, the player's computer shall be capable of fulfilling the camera and/or screen sharing requirements without interrupting the player's game screen.

18.6.1.3 Use of any additional electronic device is prohibited except for webcam monitoring. Special considerations, such as dual monitors, physical chessboards, headphones, or headsets (etc.) must be approved by the Chief TD or the conditions for their use specified in the instructions for the tournament.

18.6.1.4 Once a player starts the player's game on 1 device, the player should NOT try to open the game on a 2nd window or on another electronic device. These activities risk confusing the chess platform, are likely to disrupt play, and usually trigger the chess platform's fair play detection procedures (because the platform senses the 2nd device and interprets it as a violation of fair play).

18.6.1.5 While a player's game is in progress, no other electronic devices may be used by the player that can calculate moves, receive moves, or send moves. This rule does not apply to a player's mobile phone when it is being used solely as 1 of the tournament's required remote monitoring devices.

18.6.1.6 Mobile phones are not authorized as playing devices—no exceptions.

18.6.2 Internet Connection.

18.6.2.1 All players need a reliable internet connection. US Chess recommends a high-speed internet connection with an upload capability of at least 2 megabits per second (Mbps).

18.6.2.2 An unreliable or slow internet connection and/or technical setup errors might result in a loss or forfeit loss of a game.

18.6.2.3 The tournament instructions shall provide clear guidance:

- On the most likely platform and internet glitches that might affect a player. For example, what to do if a player experiences an unintentional interruption in a game.
- For players who fail to log in to the playing and/or game monitoring platform in a timely manner.
- On the consequences of disconnections from the playing and/or game monitoring platform that cannot be attributed to a fault of the platform or player's internet service (e.g., intentional disconnections).

18.6.2.4 Players who lose a rated game by disconnection are deemed to have withdrawn from the tournament.

18.7 Team Requirements for Online Scholastic National Events

18.7.1 The organizer shall work with the chess platform vendor to implement the same team pairing restrictions specified in Section 10.

18.8 Communications with Event Participants

18.8.1 Before the Event.

18.8.1.1 Organizers are strongly encouraged to hold several town-hall meetings to inform players, parents, responsible adults, and coaches about the specifics of the tournament—and to give attendees opportunities for Q&A.

18.8.1.2 The organizer must provide rules, setup specifications, guidelines, and directions to players in advance.

18.8.2 During the Event.

18.8.2.1 The organizer shall arrange for and provide a clear means of communication between players and TDs throughout the tournament.

18.8.2.2 The organizer shall have a separate line of communication between parents and Chess Control or a Help Desk to handle any requests during the event.

18.8.2.3 Live streaming and/or online coverage of the tournament are great ways to get the general public interested in and involved with national chess championships. However, when these options are used the organizer and Chief TD need to integrate measures in their event rules that prohibit players from viewing these streams while their games are in progress.

18.9 Ratings for Sectioning, Pairings, & Prize Eligibility

18.9.1 Ratings to Use.

18.9.1.1 US Chess Ratings must be used for pairing purposes except as specified in Section 4.6 (Other Rating Systems). Any pairing method that does not use these ratings is not acceptable to be used at a National Online Youth/Scholastic Event.

18.9.1.2 Organizers are encouraged to use the highest of a player's over-the-board Regular, Quick, Online Regular, and Online Quick rating. The time control being used for the tournament will dictate whether to use regular, quick, or both.

18.9.1.3 For players without US Chess ratings, or whose US Chess ratings reflect prolonged periods of inactivity, ratings from other rating systems may be used as described in Section 4.6. A more current US Chess rating is preferred except in cases where the number of games in the other rating system is a far better indicator of the player's current strength.

18.9.2 Unrated Players. (See Section 4.7.)

18.9.3 Bye Requests & Withdrawals.

18.9.3.1 Organizers shall carefully consider and outline the player's ability to request byes during the tournament. This should be clearly written into the rules for the event along with the deadlines for requesting byes.

18.9.3.2 Clear instructions are needed on what channel and notification method players should use if/when they want to withdraw.

18.10 Chess Notation

18.10.1 Notation is not required for online tournaments because all platforms record both players' moves.

18.10.2 Players are allowed to write their moves (to stay in shape for over-the-board play). If the players are monitored via webcam, then the notation sheet must be visible on the camera and tournament directors must have a clear view of what the player is doing.

18.10.3 The moves given by the platform are the official moves made by the player. A player cannot use the player's notation sheet to initiate a claim.

18.11 Tiebreaks

18.11.1 Tiebreaks will be determined in accordance with Section 12 or the separate rules published for the tournament.

18.12 Playing Conditions for the Players

18.12.1 During their games, players must be alone in a quiet room with no background noise. Players may be penalized for violating this rule.

18.12.2 Before games begin, players and parents shall remove all other electronic devices from the Playing Room.

18.13 Scoring of Forfeited or Disconnected Games

18.13.1 When a Player Fails to Log-In.

18.13.1.1 A player who does not log-in for a scheduled round within the specified minutes after the start of the round shall lose the game by forfeit. Event instructions shall specify the length of the forfeit time.

18.13.1.2 A player forfeited due to failure to log-in will be dropped from the remainder of the tournament unless the player notifies the tournament staff (in accordance with the event instructions) and expresses a desire to stay in the tournament.

18.13.2 When Neither Player Makes a Move.

18.13.2.1 If both players are logged-in but have not made at least 1 move, the game will be declared a forfeit loss for the absent player. Ratings will not be impacted.

18.13.2.2 The absent player will be dropped from the remainder of the tournament unless the player notifies the tournament staff (in accordance with the event instructions) and expresses a desire to stay in the tournament.

18.13.3 When Both Players Have Made At Least 1 Move.

18.13.3.1 If both players have made at least 1 move and the game ends because of a disconnection, then the game will be rated.

18.13.3.2 The disconnected player will be removed from the remainder of the tournament unless the player notifies the tournament staff (in accordance with the event instructions) and expresses a desire to stay in the tournament.

18.13.4 Event organizers shall provide instructions on what players removed from the tournament should do if they wish to be paired for subsequent rounds.

18.14 Fair Play Monitoring

18.14.1 Organizers must have a complete fair play monitoring process in place during and after their event. The procedures chosen may be a function of the size of the event and the number of tournament directors required to implement the procedures.

18.14.1.1 During play, the ideal process is to integrate capabilities for remote monitoring of all players by the tournament staff (e.g., Zoom). In addition, most game platform vendors can provide fair play analysis during games. The Chief TD and/or organizer shall meet with the platform vendor before the tournament to understand and discuss the procedures the platform uses to detect fair play issues during games-in-progress. This group also shall discuss how issues will be brought to the attention of the tournament staff and how the tournament staff shall handle them.

18.14.1.2 After the tournament the Chief TD or organizer can work with the platform vendor to perform a more thorough analysis of all games as well as any suspect games. Refer to Chapter 10 in *US Chess Official Rules of Chess* for more guidance.

18.14.2 Remote Monitoring Using Video Technology.

18.14.2.1 When the tournament plans to use remote monitoring capabilities, the event instructions or rules must clearly **specify the minimum hardware and software requirements of all players**. These instructions might include:

- Name of the video platform (e.g., Zoom or a similar capability).
- Required camera views (e.g., a facial view and a 2nd view of the player and the player's device from a 45-degree angle behind the player).
- Audio settings (e.g., should players be muted or unmuted while playing their games).
- How to communicate with or respond to the tournament staff.
- How to share screen.
- Any breakout room scenarios.
- Procedures players must follow for use of the restroom.

18.14.3 Recommended Video Monitoring Requirements. Experience has shown that the following 2-camera setup works well.

18.14.3.1 **Side-view or Rear-view Camera**. This camera is positioned to provide a view of the player and the player's playing device. The camera is placed at approximately a 45-degree angle to the left or right rear of the player and elevated to at least the same height as the player's desktop. The view must show the player's upper body, arms, head, and playing device's screen. All these elements must be visible simultaneously in the video stream. Players may use a mobile phone or a separate webcam to provide this view. Players should ensure this camera uses a continuous source of power and does not rely on battery power alone, to avoid interruptions in the camera's video feed, resulting from a loss of battery power.

18.14.3.2 **Front-view Camera**. Provides a head-on view of the player and enables easier communication between the player and the TD. The view of the player must include the player's chest from the armpits to the top of the head.

- If the player's computer has a built-in webcam, it should be used.
- A separate webcam is an acceptable option if the computer does not have a built-in camera, or it does not work.
- A tablet can be used as a front-view camera only if the player is playing on a separate device (a computer or an additional tablet).

18.15 Penalties during the Event

18.15.1 A start-of-the-round forfeit/no-show time must be specified in the rules for the tournament. This can be shorter than in a traditional over-the-board (OTB) tournament (e.g., 15 or 20 minutes in a Game/45 or Game/60 online event). For time controls shorter than Game/20 (increment or delay), US Chess does not recommend a forfeit time or no-show time.

18.15.2 The Chief TD may impose penalties for prolonged or repeated disconnections. These penalties should be made clear in the rules for the event.

18.15.3 The organizer and Chief TD reserve the right to remove a player from the tournament and make an adjustment to the scores of the player and the player's opponents. For the proper adjustment of scores, refer to Section 12.4.

18.16 Trophies & Awards

18.16.1 Results are not official until the fair play process has been completed, which might take up to several weeks.

18.16.2 In lieu of an official Awards Ceremony, Organizers should consider a post-event celebration of all the individual and team accomplishments. This also can showcase the Sponsors, Tournament Directors, and volunteers who made the event possible.

18.16.3 The organizer should offer awards similar to those at OTB Scholastic National / Youth Events. In addition, the organizer should arrange for any awards earned to be shipped directly to the players.

———————— End of the main text. Appendices begin on next page. ————————

APPENDIX A: US CHESS SCHOLASTIC BLITZ REGULATIONS

(Most recent revision: August 2026)

A1.0 It is highly encouraged to have a Blitz Tournament as a side event at all scholastic national events. However, **the only sections of Blitz Tournaments that will be designated as *National Championships* are the Championship Sections at the Spring Nationals (including SuperNationals)**.

A2.0 The rules to be used for a Scholastic Blitz National event (Appendix A-1) shall be displayed on the US Chess website with a link to the Blitz Rules on the home page for the main tournament.

A3.0 Tournament Format

A3.1 Sections will be divided as follows:

A3.1.1 **High School (K-12) Nationals**: K-12 Championship and K-12 Under 1800.

A3.1.2 **Middle School (K-8) Nationals**: K-8 Championship and K-8 Under 1600.

A3.1.3 **Elementary School (K-6) Nationals**: K-6 Championship, K-6 Under 1400, and K-3 Championship.

A3.1.4 **SuperNationals**: Same sections shown in A3.1.1 through A3.1.3.

A3.1.5 **Grade (K-12) Nationals:** K-12 Championship and K-6 Championship (these are not national championship side events).

A3.2 **Pairings will be made using the higher of each player's over-the-board (OTB) US Chess Regular or Blitz rating**, as listed in the Rating Supplement used for the main tournament. Established OTB ratings take precedence over provisional ratings. If a player has neither a US Chess Regular rating, nor a US Chess Blitz rating, but has a rating in another OTB rating system or the US Chess Online Rating system, then the Chief TD has the option to follow procedures specified in 28D and 28E of *US Chess Official Rules of Chess* to assign the player a rating. If a player receives an assigned rating, it will be used for pairings and prize eligibility. See *Scholastic Regulations* 12.4-5 for full details.

A3.3 Unrated Players can compete in any section. Rated players whose ratings are below the section upper limit (ceiling) for an Under Section may play up to compete in a higher section, including a Championship Section.

A3.4 The tournament will be a **6-round, double-Swiss** tournament (6-DSS). Round 1 shall begin on Thursday, 5 pm, with subsequent rounds held as soon as possible after the end of the previous round. However, no round shall begin after 9:30 pm.

A3.5 The time control is **Game/3, increment 2** (G/3 +2), unless specified otherwise in pre-event publicity and announcements.

A3.6 Registration will occur online and close at the time announced in pre-event publicity. Onsite registration will be allowed up to 4 pm local time on the tournament day. Players in line at 4 pm will be allowed to register. Additional entrants might be allowed at the discretion of the Chief TD and Tournament Organizer.

A3.7 A player who forfeits a round will be withdrawn from the tournament but may be re-entered for future rounds at the Chief TD's discretion.

A3.8 A player who was not present (forfeited) for Round 1 and who shows up, may not be paired until Round 3 unless it is possible to put the player in the tournament for Round 2 without delaying the next round. This applies to all future rounds.

A4.0 **Individual and Team Awards**. US Chess shall present awards to the Championship and Non-Championship sections as listed below, based on a section's average attendance in the previous 4 years. The Director of Events has the authority to increase the number of individual and/or team awards when participation is projected to exceed the average attendance in the previous 4 years, with strong consideration given to historical attendance when the event will be held in the same location as a previous year.

A4.1 Championship Sections: 1 award per 10 players and 1 award per 6 teams.

A4.2 Under Sections: 1 award per 12 players and 1 award per 8 teams.

~~A4.0 The individual and team awards for the Championship Section, as explained in A3.1 above, shall be the same as in the Championship Section for that Spring National. Other sections will have the number of awards that are deemed necessary, based on projected attendance.~~

APPENDIX A-1: US CHESS SCHOLASTIC BLITZ RULES

(Most recent revision: August 2026)

1. Format: 6-round, double-Swiss tournament (6-DSS). However, when play occurs in the evening, no round shall begin after 9:30 pm (see Appendix A A3.8). The time control is Game/3, increment 2 (G/3 +2), unless specified otherwise in pre-event publicity and announcements.
   a. Each round of Blitz chess consists of 2 games: 1 played with the White pieces, the other played with the Black pieces (and vice-versa for the opponent). In the 1st game, White shall be played by the player listed as WHITE on the pairing sheet.
   b. Each player must complete all the player's moves within the specified time control.
2. **Blitz is played using Touch-Move rules**, not Clock-Move. Therefore, if a player touches 1 piece, then moves another and presses the clock, the opponent may press the player's clock to force the player to move the piece touched or may stop the clock to claim a violation. The TD may assess penalty.
3. The current edition of *US Chess Official Rules of Chess* (see *Chapter 1, 2, 9, 10, and 11 Combined*) shall be used to resolve situations not covered by these Scholastic Blitz Rules. Scholastic Blitz National tournaments will use Chapter 11 (Blitz Rules) of *US Chess Official Rules of Chess* except when:
   a. Each player is responsible to bring a chess clock to the game. If neither player has a clock, then both players will receive a forfeit loss for both games. Players are required to know how to operate their clock and how to make any changes to the clock that might be necessary during a game.
   b. Only a TD may determine if a clock is defective and change the clock once the game begins.
   c. Each player must press the clock button with the same hand used to move the pieces. This rule also applies to castling and capturing. Moving with 1 hand and pressing the clock with the other hand is not allowed and might subject the offending player to warnings and penalties.
   d. At the start of the event, the TD may state the direction the clocks are to face. The player with the Black pieces then chooses which side of the table on which to sit.
   e. Pressing the clock:
      1) Except for pressing the clock button or straightening the clock, neither player should touch the clock.
      2) If a player knocks over the clock, the TD will add 1 minute added to the opponent's clock.
      3) If a player's clock does not start, the opponent may try to start it by pressing the player's clock button. However, if this procedure is unsuccessful, the opponent should signal for a TD.
      4) After moving, each player must always be allowed to press the player's clock. Players who move before their opponent presses the clock are subject to warnings and penalties.
      5) Neither player may keep a hand on (or hovering over) the clock.
   f. Knocking over a piece:
      1) It is unsportsmanlike conduct to knock over a piece and then press the clock.
      2) The 1st offense will result in a warning from the TD. A 2nd offense will result in 1 minute being added to the opponent's clock. A 3rd offense will result in the loss of the game.
      3) A player will not lose a game on time if the player's opponent knocks over a piece and presses the clock without picking it up. The offended player will receive an additional minute to continue the game.
   g. In case of a dispute, either player may stop the clock to summon a TD. In any unclear situation, the TD will consider the testimony of both players and any reliable witnesses before the TD renders a decision. If a player wishes to appeal the decision of a TD, the player must first appeal to the Section Chief. If necessary, the player may then appeal to the Floor and the Chief TD. When the Chief TD renders a decision, it is final. ~~, whose decision in all cases is final.~~
   h. Excessive banging of pieces or clocks will not be tolerated. Players who continually ignore this rule might be penalized with a loss of time.

APPENDIX B: US CHESS SCHOLASTIC BUGHOUSE REGULATIONS

(Most recent revision: August 2025)

B1.0 It is highly encouraged to have a Bughouse Tournament as a side event at all scholastic national events. However, **the only Bughouse Tournaments that will be designated as *National Championships* are the tournaments at the Spring Nationals (including SuperNationals)**.

B2.0 Tournament Format

B2.1 Bughouse Rules. See Appendix B-1 on the next page.

B2.2 Unless announced otherwise in the Tournament Announcement, the Bughouse tournament will begin on Thursday, 11 am (local time) and consist of 5 or 6 double rounds, based on the number of teams in the section. Subsequent rounds will be held as soon as possible after the previous round ends. Please refer to the official tournament announcement for the cut-off time for Bughouse entries.

B2.3 All entries are to be onsite on Wednesday evening and Thursday morning, with registration stopping at 10 am. Contestants in line at 10 am will be allowed to register. Additional entrants may be allowed at the discretion of the Chief TD and Tournament Organizer. Please refer to the official tournament announcement for the Round 1 start time.

B2.4 The rules to be followed for a Scholastic Bughouse National tournament (Appendix B-1) shall be displayed at an appropriate easy-to-find location on the US Chess website.

B3.0 **Team Awards**. US Chess shall present awards to the Championship section as listed below, based on the section's average attendance in the 4 previous years. The Director of Events has the authority to increase the number of team awards when participation is projected to exceed the average attendance in the previous 4 years, with strong consideration given to high team attendance when the event (or even a Spring Nationals for a different grade range) will be held in the same location as in a previous year.

B3.1 Championship Section: 1 award (for each player) per 6 teams.

~~The team awards for the Championship Section, as explained in B2.1 above, shall be the same as in the Championship Section for that Spring National. Other sections will have the number of awards that are deemed necessary, based on projected attendance.~~

APPENDIX B-1: US CHESS SCHOLASTIC BUGHOUSE RULES

(Most recent revision: August 2025)

1. Teams are composed of 2 players. No substitutions are allowed.
2. Each round of Bughouse consists of 2 games (e.g., Team A and Team B play 2 games per round).
3. Each team decides which player is to play white and which player is to play black in each game of the 2-game match.
4. The time control is Game in 5 minutes, with no delay (G/5 d/0).
5. Each player is responsible for providing a clock (e.g., 2 clocks per team). If players in an individual game do not have a clock, both players receive a forfeit loss for that game.
6. **The game is clock-move**. A move is not completed until the opponent's clock has started.
7. Each game in the 2-game match is concluded as soon as 1 of the players on a team wins.
8. **Illegal moves lose if they are properly claimed**.
   a. To claim an illegal move, the claimant must make the claim before completing the claimant's move.
   b. Before play begins, both players should inspect the position of the pieces and the setting of the clock—since once each side has made a move, any claim to correct either the position of the pieces or the setting of the clock is null and void. The only exception is if a clock is set for more than 5 minutes, then the tournament director (TD) may reduce the time, accordingly.
   c. Illegal moves unnoticed by both players can neither be corrected afterwards, nor become the basis for making an illegal move claim. If the King and Queen are set up incorrectly when the game begins, then the player may castle short on the Queen side and long on the King side. Once each side has made a move, incorrect setups must stay as is.
9. When a piece is captured, it is passed to the partner only after the move has been completed.
10. A player has the option of either moving 1 of the pieces on the player's board or placing on the board a piece received from the player's partner.
    a. A captured piece may be placed on any unoccupied square on the board, but a pawn may not be placed on the first or last rank.
    b. Pieces may be placed to create check (drop check) or checkmate (drop mate). Pieces may not be placed to capture a piece on the same move (drop capture).
    c. If a player promotes a pawn, the pawn must be left on the board, and the player must clearly indicate to the opponent to what piece the pawn is being promoted. The promoted pawn will be laid on its side to indicate that it is a promoted pawn. After a promoted pawn has been captured, it reverts to a pawn—not to the promoted piece.
11. A player may not attempt to hide pieces captured by either player in the team. The 1st attempt will result in a warning, and the 2nd attempt will result in forfeiture of the game.
12. **Partners may communicate verbally and via hand gestures throughout the game**. It is legal to make move suggestions to partners.
13. **Players may not touch their Partner's pieces or board**. Players who touch their partner's active pieces, touch a square on the board, or place a captured piece on the board for their partner are subject to a penalty when the opposing team claims this offense to a TD. When a claim is made, both game clocks are paused while the TD addresses the claim. If the TD upholds the claim, the offending player (the 1 who touched the player's partner's pieces or board) shall be penalized **by subtracting 1 minute** off the player's clock **or half of the player's remaining time** when the player has less than 2 minutes remaining. **A 2nd offense by the same player that is upheld by the TD shall result in a loss of the current game** for that player's team; it is not an automatic loss of the 2-game match.
14. Each player must press the clock button with the same hand used to move the pieces, except that a player may use both hands during castling. When capturing, only 1 hand may be used. The 1st infraction will result in a warning, the 2nd in a 1-minute penalty or half the remaining time (subtracted time from the offending player's clock), and the 3rd in forfeiture of the current game.

15. A player may touch the clock only to start the opponent's time (at the beginning of the game or after having made a move) or to straighten the clock.
    a. If a player knocks the clock over, the TD will add 1 minute to the opponent's clock.
    b. If the opponent's clock does not start, a player may try to start it by restarting the player's clock and then restarting the opponent's time. Call the TD if this procedure is unsatisfactory.
    c. Each player must always be allowed to press the clock after a move is made. A player who moves before the opponent starts the player's clock is subject to penalties.
    d. Players may not keep their hands on or hover over the clock.
16. **Defining a win**. A game is won by the player:
    a. Who has checkmated the opponent's king. When on move, a player may wait until the player's partner supplies a piece that accomplishes checkmate, provided the player's time has not expired.
    b. Whose opponent resigns.
    c. Whose opponent's time expires (whose flag falls) at any time before the game has otherwise ended, provided the player points it out and stops the player's clock before the player's time expires (while the player's flag is still up). An illegal move does not negate a player's right to claim a win on time, provided the player makes the time claim before the opponent makes the illegal-move claim. If the claims are simultaneous, the player who made the illegal move loses.
    d. Who, after an illegal move by the opponent, captures the king or stops the clock and makes the illegal-move claim.
17. **Defining a draw**. A game is a draw:
    a. By agreement between the teams only during the game.
    b. If both opponents' time has expired (both players' flags are down) and no win-on-time claim has been made, unless either side delivers checkmate before the time expiration (before a player's flag falls) has been noticed. Announcing an accurate checkmate nullifies any subsequent time-expiration claim.
18. If a player displaces a piece, the player must replace the piece on the player's time. If necessary, the opponent may start the player's clock without/before making a move to ensure the player replaces the piece on the player's time. It is unsportsmanlike to knock over a piece and press the clock before resetting the piece. The 1st offense will result in a warning, unless the offense caused the opponent's time to expire (the opponent's flag fell)—in which case the opponent will have 1 extra minute added to the opponent's time. The 2nd offense will result in the opponent having 1 extra minute added to the opponent's time. The 3rd offense will result in the player forfeiting the game. The TD may administer other penalties (including expulsion from the tournament) for subsequent similar infractions at any point during the tournament.
19. In case of a dispute, either player may stop the clock and summon a TD. Before rendering a decision in an unclear situation, the TD will consider the testimony of both players and the testimony of any unbiased and reliable witnesses. A player may appeal a TD's decision to the Section Chief and, in turn, to the Floor Chief, whose decision will be final.
20. The TD shall not pick up a clock, except in case of a dispute.
21. Anyone not involved in a team's match may not speak about or otherwise interfere in either of the 2 games. If someone (a spectator or player in another match) does interfere (e.g., by pointing out a time expiration [flag fall] or illegal move), then the TD may cancel the games and rule that a new match be played. Furthermore, the TD may expel the offending person(s) from the Playing Room. Calling a time expiration (flag fall), illegal move, etc., is the responsibility of the players. TDs will not do so.
22. Only a TD may rule that a clock is defective and authorize a clock change.
23. Excessive banging of pieces or clock will not be tolerated, and the offending player might be penalized with loss of time.
24. Insufficient losing chances claims may not be made and will not be upheld.
25. The current edition of *US Chess Official Rules of Chess* (see *Chapter 1, 2, 9, 10, and 11 Combined*) shall be used to resolve any situation not covered by these Scholastic Bughouse Rules.

APPENDIX C: FAMILY & FRIENDS TOURNAMENT

(Most recent revision: August 2022)

To incorporate families (including siblings) and friends into side events at the Scholastic National Championships, the Organizer is encouraged to conduct a Family and Friends Tournament (F&F). The F&F event is open to anyone not participating in the Scholastic National Championships. The format, schedule and prize fund shall be at the discretion of the Organizer. Entry fee, prize fund, and start times (round times) should be published in the TLA, tournament webpage, and tournament program booklet. Prizes in the F&F tournament shall not be more valuable than prizes in the main event.

APPENDIX D: GUIDE FOR SPECTATOR CONDUCT

(Most recent revision: September 2021)

NOTE: **Current US Chess practice is NOT to allow spectators to observe games in progress at over-the-board scholastic national events** organized by US Chess. However, if a scholastic national event is awarded by bid to an organizer who wishes to permit spectators, this exception must be highlighted on the site evaluation checklist for the bid or in the bidder's narrative. This appendix is retained to provide guidance to such organizers, as well as others.

1. **Who is a spectator?** A Spectator is anyone **inside the Playing Room who is observing the games in progress or who is waiting in the authorized Spectator Area or Seating Area** for a game to finish. Coaches and event participants whose games are finished also are spectators.
2. **Unacceptable Conduct.** Spectators **WILL NOT**:
   a) Stand in front of or make eye contact with the player whose game you are observing.
   b) **Use or talk on a mobile phone, laptop computer, tablet, walkie-talkie, or any electronic communication device anywhere in the Playing Room**. This prohibition includes the Spectator Area and the Seating Area. (See Appendix G.)
   c) Camp out at 1 game.
   d) Make faces, gestures, or convey in any visible way your opinion of a game you are watching.
   e) Discuss opinions of a game being observed, not even if you are whispering.
   f) **Speak with any player at or away from the board while the player's game is in progress**.
   g) Assume the role of Tournament Director (TD) and intervene for any reason such as pointing out illegal moves, etc.
   h) Make any noise, such as opening a bag of potato chips, within earshot of a game in progress.
   i) Discuss a game at its conclusion if other games are being played in the vicinity, and do NOT analyze a game at a board in the tournament room.
   j) Take pictures after the initial 10 minutes when using flash or a camera with an audible shutter.
   k) Take pictures at any time from a location which makes you an obvious distraction to the players.
   l) Attempt to enforce rules yourself.
   m) Discuss instances of cheating or rules violations with the perpetrators.
   n) **Stand in front of the doors** to the Playing Hall or open them to look inside. During times when the Chief TD has asked for the doors to be closed, PLEASE HELP US KEEP THEM CLOSED.
   o) Criticize a player, team, or persons involved with the tournament at any time or in any manner that can be interpreted as disruptive, unsportsmanlike, or hostile.
3. **Permissible Conduct.** Spectators shall:
   a) Report instances of cheating or rule violations by players or other spectators to the TD staff, **as long as this process does not disrupt the conduct of the tournament**.
   b) Comply with any requests or instructions issued by members of the tournament staff.

Spectators who abuse this guide for conduct may be told by the Tournament Staff to leave the Playing Hall for at least 15 minutes during the current round or longer for repeat offenses.

This guide shall be prominently posted at multiple locations in the venue.

APPENDIX E: APPROVED ELECTRONIC NOTATION DEVICES

(Most recent revision: August 2025)

Introduction:
This Appendix applies to **players with special circumstances** who are approved by the Director of Events or Chief Tournament Director to use an electronic notation device (END) as an alternate means of score keeping during over-the-board events. **The only ENDs allowed** are those certified by US Chess for tournament use or a device provided by the Tournament Staff. See the US Chess List of Approved Electronic Notation Devices.

A player authorized to use an END is responsible for setting and operating the device according to the instructions below.

END Owners Will:
1. Set the device in the appropriate mode for recording moves.
2. Turn off or disable any setting(s) that could alert the player to any illegal moves.
3. **Make the move on the board before recording the move on the device**.
4. Keep the END **on the table in plain view** of the opponent at all times during the game. A player will not at any time hold the player's END below the level of the tabletop or in the player's lap.
5. Touch the END only when recording moves.
6. Never input variations in the END at any time during a game.
7. If asked by the opponent to see the END for the purpose of entering missing moves on the opponent's official scoresheet, the player will set the player's END mode to algebraic (or the appropriate mode that allows the opponent to see all previous moves) and turn the END around so the opponent can view the display screen. The END will remain on the table at all times.
8. Never take the END with them if they leave the board while the game is still in progress, including trips to the restroom.
9. Be ready to take written notation if the END malfunctions (if notation is required during game play in this section). If the END malfunctions, the player shall begin notation with the next move and fill-in missing moves when the player is on move by borrowing the opponent's scoresheet or END.
10. Summon a TD when questions arise.

Opponents:
1. May ask the player who owns the END to show them the device, explain its use, and ensure it is correctly set for game play for this tournament.
2. May not ask the device owner to take written notation instead of using the opponent's END.
3. May ask to see the other player's END for the purpose of entering missing moves on the opponent's scoresheet. When this occurs, the END will remain on the table.
4. Shall summon a TD when questions arise.

Coaches/Parents:
1. Are strongly encouraged to assist their players in understanding proper tournament etiquette regarding ENDs before tournament play begins.
2. Should, before the start of a game, summon a TD when questions arise.

Tournament Directors:
1. Should check a player's END to verify it is correctly set when requested to do so by either player.

APPENDIX F: THE NATIONAL STATE INVITATIONAL TOURNAMENTS

(Most recent revision: August 2024)

US Chess typically schedules the National State Invitationals concurrently with the start of the U.S. Open each year (e.g., a window spanning the last quarter of July through August 15th). These events usually last 3 days. Each of the 52 State Chapters may nominate 1 player to participate in each Invitational, with the state playing host to the US Open being offered 1 additional nominee to help address any Invitationals with an otherwise odd number of players.

The National State Invitationals fall within the purview of the National State Invitationals Committee, not the Scholastic Council. However, to benefit the scholastic audience reading these *Scholastic Regulations*, the Scholastic Council uses this Appendix to call attention to the significance of the Invitationals to the scholastic national community. Most, but not all, of the Invitationals are scholastic national championships.

Below are links to the Information and Rules pages for each of the National State Invitationals (via www.USChess.org: Play: National State Invitationals: Denker: HS [9-12], etc.: Information & Rules):

- John T. Irwin National Tournament of Senior (50+) State Champions
- GM Arnold Denker National Tournament of High School (9-12) State Champions
- WIM Ruth Haring National Tournament of Girls (K-12) State Champions
- Dewain Barber National Tournament of Middle School (6-8) State Champions
- John D. Rockefeller III National Tournament of Elementary School (K-5) State Champions
- GM Maurice Ashley National Tournament of K-3 State Champions
- Paul Morphy National Tournament of K-1 State Champions (no later than 2030)

APPENDIX G-1: TOURNAMENT PROPOSALS, SITE SELECTION, LOGISTICS, FINANCES, & OTHER PLANNING FACTORS

(Most recent revision: August 2026)

1. **Tournament Proposals.** US Chess has 2 options for organizing tournaments:
   a. **Option 1: US Chess openly Solicits an Event**. US Chess routinely solicits organizers to bid for specific tournaments.
      i. When an event covered by these *Scholastic Regulations* is released for open solicitation, US Chess and the Scholastic Council will review the proposals with agreements in place to prevent conflicts of interest and disclosure of any offeror's sensitive information.
      ii. US Chess will negotiate with the local organizer details of the proposed tournament.
      iii. Expressions of interest by US Chess affiliates are welcome, as US Chess wishes to partner with local organizers for local arrangements (e.g., securing local TDs), in coordination (and agreement) with US Chess.
      iv. Final selection of the awardee, event location, and all contracting for solicited events will be made by US Chess.
      v. When US Chess releases an event for open solicitation, members of the Scholastic Council and Committee are prohibited from answering questions raised by prospective offerors. Such questions may be answered only by the Director of Events or a designated representative.
   b. **Option 2: US Chess is the Organizer**. When US Chess is the organizer the US Chess main office will be responsible for all details listed herein as the organizer.
   c. **Note**: Many chess tournaments and chess activities are organized under the name *US Chess* but are managed fully by other organizations and/or individuals. Such organizations may enter into contracts for facilities, goods, services, etc., though US Chess must approve these contracts first. Such organizations are not representatives of US Chess management; instead, they are independent contractors.
2. **Quality and Site Selection**
   a. Our primary concern is ensuring the quality of all scholastic national events.
   b. US Chess will make every reasonable effort to rotate these events geographically from year to year.
   c. Acceptable sites include, but are not limited to, hotels with convention facilities, schools, colleges, and convention centers.
   d. All tournament-related playing and meeting space proposals must be approved by US Chess before they are signed.
3. **Site Characteristics**
   a. The Playing Hall must allow for a minimum of 25 sq. ft. of usable space per player. The top 20 boards of all Championship sections, except for primary grades, should have no more than 2 boards per 6-foot or 8-foot table. Bids must include a Playing Area able to accommodate the maximum number of expected players.
   b. Rows of tables shall be separated by at least 66 inches (5.5 feet) of open space measured from the nearest edge of any adjacent rows; 72 inches or more is strongly preferred. This spacing allows players to sit comfortably and TDs to easily walk between rows of tables during a round. Use of row spacing less than 66 inches requires discussion with the Scholastic Council Representative for the tournament.
   c. At Grade Nationals if registration would be restricted because there is not enough space in the main Tournament Room(s) for players in Grades 3-12, but there is sufficient space in the K-1 Tournament Room to accommodate all players in Grade 2, then players in Grade 2 may be moved to the K-1 Room to mitigate the registration restriction problem.
   d. US Chess practice is to strongly discourage spectators at scholastic national events. US Chess does NOT allow spectators in the Playing Hall while games are in progress.
   e. The site should have a large Skittles Area that is at least half the size of the Playing Hall(s). The Skittles Area should be in the immediate vicinity of the playing site, indoors, and easily accessible from the Playing Room.
   f. Team Rooms (especially for the Elementary School (K-6) and Middle School (K-8) nationals) should be available for teams needing a more private area to instruct, counsel and control their players. Teams

should expect to pay reasonable charges for the use of such space. When possible, Team Rooms should be under the same roof as the Playing Hall or in a building connected directly to it. The US Chess Main Office or the Event Organizer will advertise Team Room availability, pricing, request, and allocation procedures well in advance of the event.

g. Toilet facilities must be adequate for large numbers of youngsters and must be inspected, cleaned and maintained every hour during rounds. To facilitate Fair Play, venues that allow US Chess to create player-only restrooms are strongly preferred.
h. Water should be provided in the Playing Area(s), monitored by the tournament staff, and maintained periodically during rounds by facility staff.
i. Pictures and descriptions of the tournament site, including size, lighting, available sanitary facilities, or any physical equipment available should be included with each contract.
j. A map of the area should be available showing inexpensive restaurants and attractions near the site. This should be done on the website and available on paper at Chess Control.
k. For the National Middle School (K-8) and National Elementary School (K-6) tournaments, a play area should be provided that allows the young children an acceptable area to play safely under the supervision of the adults responsible for each child.
l. A centrally located information booth (Chess Control) shall be provided near the Playing Area, or on the primary route players will take to and from the Playing Area. Chess Control shall:
    i. Be a 1-stop shop where players, coaches and parents can enter the tournament, change sections, check the status of their registration, and ask general questions about the event.
    ii. Provide participants with directions to local restaurants, transportation, interesting sites, and other non-tournament information.
    iii. Provide a message center where families and players can receive emergency information. This message center should have a pre-advertised phone number and/or email address.
    iv. Serve as the central location for Lost and Found.
m. There should be food available on site that is priced comparably to fast food. There should be ample food services available so participants can be fed within a 2-hour period. Food vendors should be open at least 60 minutes before the first round starts each day and close no earlier than 60 minutes before the last round is scheduled to end.
n. The site must be handicapped accessible.
o. It is recommended that a photographer be available throughout the tournament.
p. Ample signage should be on display at numerous locations throughout the facility a minimum of 12 hours prior to the first scheduled event of the tournament.

4. **Site Security**
    a. The organizer should work with the host facility staff to ensure appropriate security arrangements are in place for the event. This includes delineation of areas that will be under US Chess's control—especially when US Chess will issue badges to players, accompanying persons, and event staff.
    b. If the host facility does not get involved in security matters, the organizer needs to contact the local police department and discuss the event with them.
5. **Health Matters**
    a. All teams should be encouraged to leave a local phone number and/or hotel room number with tournament personnel, so they can be contacted in case of emergency.
    b. No alcohol or tobacco products are to be allowed in any hotel or convention space which is contracted for the event.
    c. For all tournaments where the anticipated attendance is above 1,000 the organizer must supply trained medical personnel on site.
6. **Lodging**
    a. Cost
        i. Lodging should be inexpensive and accessible to the playing site.
        ii. A single price for 1-4 people per room should be negotiated.

iii. If the hotel(s) is providing the playing site, the cost of meeting space should be directly related to the total number of room-nights sold (such as on a sliding scale). Free meeting space is generally negotiable with most hotels.

iv. If the hotel(s) is not providing the playing site, the hotel(s) contract(s) may be structured to provide the tournament a rebate of $3 to $10 per room night sold to help defray playing site and other tournament costs. Rebates are considered tournament income. When US Chess is not the organizer, any amount higher than $10 per night may not be accepted without the prior written consent of the US Chess main office.

v. The organizer should provide, at least 6 months before the start of the event, a list of all recommended hotels, rates, addresses, phone numbers, distance from playing site, and contact information on the US Chess website.

7. **Transportation**

Organizers should ensure the availability of transportation between the headquarters hotel and nearest commercial airport, railroad, and bus terminals and shuttle service between playing site and headquarters hotel if they are beyond walking distance of each other. All such travel arrangements should be publicized at least 6 months in advance for the benefit of players, coaches, and parents.

8. **Contracts and Finances**

a. Contracts

i. All contracts must be approved and signed by US Chess when US Chess is undertaking full management responsibility for the event.

ii. When a local organizer is undertaking full management responsibility, US Chess need only review and approve the contract, though it need not be a signatory thereon, as the local organizer is acting as an independent contractor and is fully responsible and liable for all activities or actions pursuant to the contract.

b. Responsibilities

i. When US Chess is not the principal organizer, the local organizer is contractually responsible for the execution of these regulations (with US Chess oversight) before, during and after the tournament.

ii. US Chess will provide financial statements from previous events to the organizer upon request.

iii. US Chess's share of the profits from scholastic national events will go to US Chess. Tournament income includes, but is not limited to, entry fees, book and equipment sales, food and beverage sales, sale of chess pieces and boards used in the tournament, advertising income, fees paid by promoters and exhibitors, hotel room night rebates, team room rentals, rebates, etc.

iv. US Chess will negotiate an agreement with the local organizer, which will define roles, responsibilities, and the financial arrangements between the 2 parties. The financial arrangements may be a share of the profits, a per-head fee, or some combination thereof.

9. **Food & Equipment Vendors**

US Chess has the right of first refusal to sell chess books, chess equipment, T-shirts, commemorative boards and sets and other chess paraphernalia at any US Chess national event. All outside vendors must be approved by US Chess, including concessions.

10. **Event Staffing** *(contains changes for 2026-27)*

a. The following staffing requirements apply to all scholastic national events and are based on expected attendance. If attendance is greater or less than expected, the Director of Events has the authority to adjust these staffing requirements.

b. **Chief Tournament Director**. The Chief TD for all scholastic national events must be certified at the National Tournament Director level. Additionally, the Chief TD must have strong experience in administering large scholastic events, especially those using computer pairing programs. The Chief TD must be acceptable to US Chess.

c. **Number of Floor TDs**. The Chief TD and/or organizer is responsible for appointing an adequate number of certified assistant TDs to help administer each event. The organizer should not serve on the directing staff.

i. A minimum of 4 TDs, including the Chief TD should be on staff. These TDs should have strong knowledge of computers and computer pairings, as they are expected to generate pairings, standings, team results, etc., round by round, as well as handling inevitable problems.

ii. Each event must have a Chief Floor TD (Floor Chief) with enough assistants.

iii. The minimum ratio of TDs to players at over-the-board events:
- Grades 9-12: 1 TD per 125 players
- Grades 7-8: 1 TD per 80 players
- Grades K-6: 1 TD per 40 players
- Grades K-1: 1 TD per 20 players

iv. The minimum TD-player ratios above must be maintained for every round of the tournament. TDs may not be reassigned for any round (or part of a round) from the main tournament to a side event. Side events requiring certified TDs must be assigned using appropriately qualified TDs who are not assigned to the main tournament, unless the player ratios can be maintained. Events not requiring a certified TD shall be staffed by US Chess from outside the certified TDs on the tournament staff.

v. As long as a good-faith effort was made in a timely manner to hire enough TDs to fulfill the minimum TD-player ratios above, registration for a section in a particular grade range will not be restricted if its minimum TD-player ratio can be met by only 75+%.

vi. Each Floor TD should begin the tournament by having responsibility to support 1 specific Section Chief. As the round progresses, the Section Chief or Floor Chief may re-assign Floor TDs to other sections of the main tournament based on the number of remaining games. Floor TDs will not be released from the Playing Hall until they have been relieved of their responsibilities for the round by their Section Chief or the Floor Chief.

vii. Floor TDs will handle disputes and make rulings. Players are allowed to appeal rulings under the specifications of US Chess Rule 21H. **The best time for a player to appeal a ruling is immediately after the TD makes the initial ruling**. Waiting for several more moves, or until after the game ends, tends to complicate the appeals process. Appeals are to be made first to the Section Chief TD, then to the Chief Floor TD, and then to the Chief TD. The decision of the Chief TD is final for the event. Appeals above the Chief TD will be made after the tournament to US Chess in accordance with US Chess Rule 21L. ~~to a Special Referee appointed to cover the tournament by the Director of Events. If a Special Referee is consulted, the decision of the Special Referee is final for the purpose of the event but may be overruled later if the player appeals to the US Chess Federation under US Chess Rule 21L.~~

viii. During play, a minimum of 2 experienced Floor TDs should be present in large tournament rooms and 1 Floor TD in small tournament rooms.

ix. All staff should wear identification stating their name and duty. The TD certification level should be listed on the nametag.

x. For scholastic national events organized and run by US Chess, all tournament staff shall receive a Background Check before hiring. Persons who refuse this check will not be hired by US Chess.

d. **Backroom Staff Requirements.**

i. **1 Backroom Chief**. An NTD who has been a Backroom TD (Pairing Chief) at least 3 times for a scholastic national tournament.

ii. **Pairing Chiefs**.

1. There should be at least 1 Pairing Chief for every 500 expected players in the tournament with the understanding that a section cannot be divided among more than 1 Pairing Chief.
2. A Pairing Chiefs should be limited to no more than 3 sections. A 4th section may be added if there is a small section, provided the combined total does not exceed 550 players if it helps limit the other Pairing Chiefs to around 500 players.
3. If any 1 section has more than 500 players, the Pairing Chief assigned to this section should be limited to this 1 section. An exception may be made if there is a small section, and it better balances the players/sections among the remaining available Pairing Chiefs. The combined total of the 2 sections should not exceed 600 players.
4. For Grade Nationals, the minimum number of Pairing Chiefs is 5. The minimum increases to 6 if the event has more than 2,000 players.
5. For Elementary School Nationals, a minimum of 5 Pairing Chiefs. The minimum increases to 6 if the event has more than 2,000 players.
6. For Middle School Nationals, a minimum of 3 Pairing Chiefs. The minimum increases to 4 if the event has more than 1,400 players.
7. For High School Nationals, a minimum of 3 Pairing Chiefs. The minimum increases to 4 if the event has more than 1,400 players.

8. For SuperNationals, a minimum of 13 Pairing Chiefs. The minimum increases to 14 if the event has more than 5,000 players.
9. The minimums in 4-8 above increase by 1 Pairing Chief for every 500 players.

iii. The ratios of Pairing Chiefs listed above ensures Awards Ceremonies start on time. The Backroom Chief should inform the Director of Events if more or fewer staff are needed to ensure smooth functioning of all phases of the event.

iv. At least 1 member of the Backroom staff (the Backroom Chief or a Pairing Chief) should be proficient with computer technology to assist with any technical issues that might occur.

e. **Badging** *(new)*. When an organizer intends to use badging to help control players, supporting personnel, vendors, and other event staff, the following questions should be carefully considered as part of the Badging Plan:

i. How will badges be issued at the event? Where and when will badges be issued?
ii. How many badges will be issued per player to cover parents, coaches, siblings, etc.?
iii. What equipment and how much equipment is needed to support badge preparation, badge printing, and badge scanning?
iv. How will the badges be worn (e.g., lanyard and badge holder, or another method)?
v. What information is encoded and not encoded in a badge?
vi. What are the personnel requirements needed to support the badging plan?
vii. How are lost badges and replacements handled?
viii. At what locations will badges be checked as players enter the area controlled by the event organizer? Who checks them?
ix. Are badges checked when players exit the playing area (e.g., so that the process auto-notifies parents)?
x. What training is needed for people who prepare badges and those who check badges?
xi. How are the costs for badging integrated into the overall financial plan for the event?

f. **Electronic Screening** *(new)*. When an organizer intends to use electronic screening to enhance fair play and protect event integrity, the following questions should be carefully considered as part of the Electronic Screening Plan:

i. What equipment and how much equipment is needed to support electronic screening?
ii. What performs the screening? How many screeners are needed? What training is needed for the screeners?
iii. How should the screeners be compensated for their work, even if they are volunteers?
iv. Who will be scanned, how frequently, and where?
v. Will screening be "layered" (e.g., a quick scan when entering the playing hall, followed by detailed screening of random players after their games)? If so, what actions occur when the process identifies a potential problem?
vi. Does any screening equipment need to be periodically re-calibrated or re-charged?
vii. Should event participants (anyone being screened) sign a waiver of some type as part of the event registration process?
viii. How are the costs for electronic screening integrated into the overall financial plan for the event?

g. **Volunteers** *(new)*. Volunteers can make important contributions to the flow of an event. When an organizer intends to solicit and use volunteers, the following questions should be considered when building the Volunteer Plan:

i. How will volunteers be solicited? How soon before the event?
ii. What tasks will the volunteers perform?
iii. Will volunteers wear special vests or shirts that identify them as part of the event staff?
iv. How many volunteers are needed to address all planned tasks? Do any of the tasks require more than 1 volunteer at a location (e.g., at 1 badge station or 1 screening station)?
v. Should volunteers be organized into teams responsible for different tasks with team leaders overseeing those teams, or teams based on the hours when they are present?
vi. How frequently will volunteers be replaced or rotated to different volunteer activities?

vii. Who will serve as the organizer's primary point of contact for controlling the volunteers at the event? Is an event pre-meeting (preparatory meeting) needed for the volunteers?

viii. Can the volunteers be 'compensated' in some manner by the event organizer (e.g., reduced entry fee for their children or players, Chess Store gift certificates, etc.)?

ix. What training is needed to ensure all volunteers are ready to perform their tasks? Is *US Chess Safe Play Policy* training required?

11. **Compensation.** The event staff is expected to be appropriately compensated. Such compensation should include, but is not limited to, lodging and per diem. Each TD should be compensated enough to at least cover any reasonable transportation costs. Compensation also can take other forms such as Chess Store gift certificates, reduced or free entry for a TD's children, US Chess membership extensions, meal vouchers for hotel or other local restaurants, etc.

12. **Pre-Tournament TD Meetings**

a. Meeting 1: Approximately 2-4 weeks before the tournament, the Scholastic Council Representative will run a private, online meeting to review the summary of changes to this year's *Scholastic Regulations*, as well as recurring points of emphasis. Other attendees: the Chief TD, the Floor Chief, BackRoom Chief, and other members of the Scholastic Council—as well as the SuperNationals Chief TD every 4 years.

b. Meeting 2: Approximately 1-3 weeks before the tournament (but after Meeting 1), the Chief TD will run a private, online meeting to review the summary of changes to this year's *Scholastic Regulations*, as well as recurring points of emphasis. Other attendees: the Floor Chief TD, the BackRoom Chief TD, all Section Chief TDs, the Scholastic Council Representative, and other members of the Scholastic Council—as well as the SuperNationals Chief TD every 4 years.

c. Meeting 3: The night before the main tournament begins, the Chief TD typically will run a private, in-person meeting to review the summary of changes to this year's *Scholastic Regulations*, as well as recurring points of emphasis. Other attendees: the Floor Chief TD, all Section Chief TDs, all Floor TDs, and the Scholastic Council Representative—as well as the SuperNationals Chief TD every 4 years.

d. Meetings 1-3 will be held for only the following scholastic nationals run by US Chess during the school year: Grade Nationals and the Spring Nationals (including SuperNationals).

13. **Back Room & Automation Requirements**

a. Back Room. The computer room (the Back Room) should be assembled at least 1 day before the tournament to make sure there are no problems.

b. Printers.

i. Fast inkjet or laser printers are preferred.

ii. At least 1 computer and printer shall be available for non-pairing/technical purposes by authorized staff.

c. Computers.

i. The large size of these events necessitates pairing by computer. A list of approved computer programs can be obtained from US Chess.

ii. If any computer equipment is acquired or donated for the tournament, such equipment will be considered assets of the tournament. Assets may not be disposed of without the express consent of US Chess.

14. **Publicity**

Publicity is an important part of attracting new participants to scholastic national events. Many scholastic chess programs are not aware of the existence of US Chess's slate of scholastic national chess championship events. Organizers should include plans for publicity in their proposals. The organizer should coordinate with the US Chess main office to produce press releases and publicity for the event.

a. Announcements / Press Releases

i. These events will be announced in *Chess Life*, *Chess Life Kids*, and online TLAs (Tournament Life Announcements).

ii. Flyers advertising scholastic national and youth events will be mailed to all US Chess affiliates except prison affiliates.

iii. Organizers should arrange publicity with local news media, prior to, during, and immediately after these events.

iv. The organizer should prepare a press release listing major winners immediately upon conclusion of the tournament. Ideally, this release should be available during the awards ceremony.

b. Program Book. A tournament program book should be prepared with the following components:
   i. Schedule of events (e.g., the start times [round times] for each round and for side events such as Blitz, Bughouse, etc.)
   ii. Specific rules for the tournament (e.g., rules that supplement *US Chess Official Rules of Chess* and these *Scholastic Regulations*)
   iii. List of past winners
   iv. List of Prizes and Awards
   v. List of tournament directors and key event staff
   vi. Information about local restaurants and attractions.
   vii. The location, time, and sequence of events for the Awards Ceremony.
   viii. Instructions for early pickup of awards after the last round.
   ix. Player procedures and acceptable conduct for players, coaches, and parents.
   x. *(Optional)* Scoresheets for each round of play

APPENDIX G-2: FORMS

(Most recent revision: August, 2026)

Scholastic National Tournament Proposal

Note: The Grade (K-12) Nationals and Spring Nationals (High School [K-12] Nationals, Middle School [K-8] Nationals, and Elementary School [K-6] Nationals—including SuperNationals) are organized by the US Chess Director of Events and are not bid out to other organizers.

Tournament Name:				Start Date:	
				End Date:	
Sponsoring Affiliate Name:				Affiliate ID:	
Name of Organizer:				US Chess ID:	
Organizer's POC Info.	Home:	Work:		Email:	
Chief Tournament Director:				US Chess ID:	
Chief TD's POC Info.	Home:	Work:		Email	
Name of Venue (site):				Sq. Ft. (Playing + Skittles):	
City & State:				Phone:	
Name of Venue POC:				Email:	
Venue Costs:	All Playing Rooms: $		All Skittles Areas: $		
	All Team Rooms: $		Tournament Office(s): $		
	Chess Control: $		All Tables & Chairs: $		
	All Staging: $		All Audio/Visual: $		
	Other: $		Other: $		
Name of Primary Lodging Hotel:				Phone:	
Primary Hotel Room Rates:	Single: $	Double: $	Triple: $	Quadruple: $	
Cancellation fees or clauses in the contract:					
Name of Primary Hotel POC:				Email:	
Name of Secondary Lodging Hotel #1:				Phone:	
Secondary Hotel #1 Rates:	Single: $	Double: $	Triple: $	Quadruple: $	
Cancellation fees or clauses in the contract:					
Name of Secondary Hotel #1 POC:				Email:	
Name of Secondary Lodging Hotel #2:				Phone:	
Secondary Hotel #2 Rates:	Single: $	Double: $	Triple: $	Quadruple: $	
Cancellation fees or clauses in the contract:					
Name of Secondary Hotel #2 POC:				Email:	
Name of Secondary Lodging Hotel #3:				Phone:	
Secondary Hotel #3 Rates:	Single: $	Double: $	Triple: $	Quadruple: $	
Cancellation fees or clauses in the contract:					
Name of Secondary Hotel #3 POC:				Email:	

Event History & Experience of Organizer & Chief TD

Area History of National & Large Non-National Events		
Event Name:	Year:	Total # Players:
Event Name:	Year:	Total # Players:
Event Name:	Year:	Total # Players:
Event Name:	Year:	Total # Players:

Organizer's Experience Organizing Events of Similar Size & Format (at least 3 preferred)		
Event Name:	Year:	Total # Players:
Event Name:	Year:	Total # Players:
Event Name:	Year:	Total # Players:
Event Name:	Year:	Total # Players:

Chief TD's Experience as Chief for Events of Similar Size & Format (at least 3 preferred)		
Event Name:	Year:	Total # Players:
Event Name:	Year:	Total # Players:
Event Name:	Year:	Total # Players:
Event Name:	Year:	Total # Players:

Prize Distribution: List and describe any prizes to be awarded other than those listed in these *Scholastic Regulations*.

PLANNING BUDGET

Projected Expenses Worksheet

Category	Remarks	Projected Cost
Administrative Supplies		$
Advertising		$
Audio Visual Equipment		$
Badging Equipment (when used)		$
Commemorative boards & sets		$
Computer / printer rental		$
Computer / printer supplies		$
Event Insurance		$
Event T-Shirts for Staff		$
Food or per diem for Staff		$
Photocopier rental & supplies		$
Room Requirements for Staff		$
Air Fare for Staff		$
Ground Transport for Staff		$
Playing Site / Venue Rental Costs		$
Water for players		$
Phones / Internet / WiFi for Staff		$
WiFi for participants/attendees		$
Staging / Lighting		$
Tables & Chairs		$
Stanchions		$
Paramedic / Medical Staff		$
Security Personnel		$
Electronic Screening/Wanding Equipment		$
All Taxes charged by Venue		$
Postage		$
Shipping costs		$
Program for the Event		$
Score Sheets (if provided)		$
Organizer's Fee		$
Total TD Fees		$
Scorekeepers Fees		$
Side Event Fees		$
Trophies/Awards (Main Event)		$
Trophies/Awards (all Side Events)		$
US Chess Rating Fees		$
FIDE Rating Fees		$
		$
	TOTAL Projected Expenses:	**$**

Projected Income Worksheet

Category	Remarks		Projected Cost
Sale of Commemorative Sets/Boards			$
Tournament Program Advertising			$
Revenue-share with Chess Store			$
Revenue share with Equipment Vendor			$
Revenue share with Food vendor(s)			$
Revenue share with T-Shirt vendor			$
Revenue share with Side-Event vendor(s)			$
Other Revenue sharing			$
Other Revenue sharing			$
Event Sponsorships			$
All Donations			$
Other Income			$
Other Income			$
Other Income			$
Other Income			$
Entry Fee (Early #1, Main Tournament)	Cost Per:	# entries:	$
Entry Fee (Early #2, Main Tournament)	Cost Per:	# entries:	$
Entry Fee (Onsite, Main Tournament)	Cost Per:	# entries:	$
Entry Fee (Early #1, All Side Events)	Cost Per:	# entries:	$
Entry Fee (Early #2, All Side Events)	Cost Per:	# entries:	$
Entry Fee (Onsite, All Side Events)	Cost Per:	# entries:	$
		TOTAL Projected Income:	**$**

Budget Summary

Category	Remarks	Amount
Expenses		$
Income		$
Profit / Loss	Income minus expenses	$

SITE EVALUATION CHECKLIST *(page 1 of 2)*

Criteria	Remarks	Yes	No
Location			
In a safe area			
Accessible to public transportation			
Accessible to people with special circumstances			
Adequate places for patrons to eat outside the playing site/location			
Playing Site			
No cost for playing site, based on hotel occupancy			
Available 24-hours a day			
Has minimum required sq. ft. per player			
Adequate lighting throughout Playing Rooms			
Adequate sound system for making announcements throughout the event			
Enough tables & chairs			
Adequate climate control for the season			
Playing Floor carpeted or there is other sound cushioning material			
Facilitates clear delineation of areas to be controlled by US Chess (or Organizer) to enable effectiveness of badging & security screening			
Frequent water service provided; how provided			
Room setup is free or included in site fees			
Venue capable of feeding players on site at times that support the event schedule			
Adequate number of restrooms for number of players & event attendees			
Player-only restrooms available			
Large Skittles area(s) available			
US Chess Safe Play Policy Training for TDs & Volunteers			
Securable room for use as Event Main Office			
Separate Analysis Room available			
Separate Room available to host other meetings that are part of this event			
Securable Room(s) for vendors			
Large & accessible Registration area to use as Chess Control			
Photocopier available			
Union-affiliated staff imposes limitations on adjusting tables/chairs &/or are Outside contractors allowed			
Spectators allowed access to the Floor			
Adequate area for spectators (only when spectators are allowed access to the Floor)			
Medical staff (provided by hotel or from an outside vendor)			
Free Internet Access for attendees			

SITE EVALUATION CHECKLIST *(page 2 of 2)*

Criteria	Remarks	Yes	No
Playing Site Arrangements			
Venue staff easily accessible during event			
Venue staff can provide a post-event report			
Venue contract enclosed			
Hotel Guest Rooms (Primary Hotel)			
At or near the playing site			
Adequate block of rooms available			
Adequate block of rooms reserved			
Reduced room rates for attendees			
Hotel rebates per room night area available			
Guests responsible for own room charges			
Hotel's room cancellation policy for Guests or Your Organization			
Complimentary Rooms available			
Complimentary Suites available			
Recreational facilities available			
Free WiFi for hotel guests			
Hotel contract enclosed, if separate from Venue contract			
Hotel Guest Rooms (Secondary Hotel #1)			
Near the playing site	Walking Distance: Walking Time:		
Shuttle service to/from Venue			
Adequate block of rooms available			
Adequate block of rooms reserved			
Reduced room rates for attendees			
Hotel rebates per room night area available			
Guests responsible for own room charges			
Complimentary Rooms available			
Complimentary Suites available			
Recreational facilities available			
Free WiFi for hotel guests			
Hotel contract enclosed, if separate from Venue contract			

Continues on next page…

PROPOSAL AGREEMENT WITH US CHESS

I _____ agree to fulfill the terms of this proposal and to abide by the current *US Chess Scholastic National Championships Tournament Regulations*. As the organizer, I will make every effort to ensure the integrity and success of this event:

[ ]	We request that US Chess provide concessions for this event.
[ ]	We request that other concessionaire options be discussed.

Signature:		Date:

[ ]	Playing site agreement included.
[ ]	Hotel agreement(s) included.
[ ]	Hotel brochure(s) included.
[ ]	Draft playing area diagram included.