

US CHESS FEDERATION'S

# OFFICIAL

RULES OF CHESS

7TH EDITION

FREE DOWNLOAD VERSION: CHAPTER 1 ONLY  
Revised May 11, 2020

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US Chess National Tournament Director  
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**US CHESS**  
FEDERATION

## Summary Of Major US Chess Rules Updates In the Seventh Edition January 1, 2020

**11D:** Added wording regarding the timing of the claim and when the 2-minute penalty applies. A TD TIP was also added.

**11D1:** Deleted extraneous wording.

## Summary Of Major US Chess Rules Updates In the Seventh Edition through January 1, 2019

**5B2:** Advanced publicity time controls need to contain both the base time control and the delay/increment.

**5C1: Both players must have the same time control.** Addresses “Time odds” games not being ratable along with an additional TD TIP.

**5E: Recommended Increment or delay:** Old rule 5E is replaced with recommended increment and delay settings.

**5E1: Increment or delay with mixed time controls:** Subrule added to new rule 5E with wording addressing mixed time controls.

**5E2: Organizer fails to specify increment or delay:** Subrule added to new rule 5E with wording addressing the lack of a specified increment or delay.

**5F: Standard timer:** The entire text was replaced.

**5F1: Standard timer for increment time controls:** Defines the clock used for increment time controls.

**5F1a: Increment capable clock not available:** What to do when an increment clock is not available.

**5F1b: Setting a non-increment capable clock for use with an increment time control:** How to set non-increment clocks used in increment time control.

**5F1b1: Variation:** How the organizer may specify a different time control for Non-increment clocks.

**5F2: Standard timer for delay time controls:** Defines the clock that is used for delay time controls.

**5F2a: Delay capable clock not available:** What to do if a delay capable clock is not available for a delay time control.

**5F2a1: Variation:** How the organizer may specify a different time control for Non-DELAY clocks.

**5F3: Standard timer for time controls with neither delay nor increment:** Defines which clocks can be used when a delay clock is not available for a delay time control.

**5F4: Digital clock preferred over analog clock:** In all cases, a digital clock is preferred over an analog clock plus an added TD TIP

**5F5: Replacement of non-standard timer in increment and delay time controls:** The steps to take when a late arriving player substitutes a preferred increment or delay clock for a non-standard clock

**5F6: Same clock used for the entire game.**

**5F7: Players responsible for knowing how to set the clock.**

**9D: Pawn Promotion.** New wording makes the procedure of promoting a pawn clearer. Now the pawn is considered touched and must be promoted to the unreleased piece touching the promotion square.

**10H: Piece touched off the board.** Wording changes to be consistent with rule 9D. Once the piece off of the board touches the promotion square, the pawn must be promoted to that piece.

**10I2:** When castling, the King must be touched first.

**10I2 Variation 1:** Castling is allowed if the Rook is touched first.

**11A: Illegal move in last ten moves:** Added wording regarding time pressure and time recovered by players.

**11D1: Illegal move in time pressure:** Wording defining “time pressure” was added.

**11H: Director corrects illegal move in non sudden death.** Rule name changed (**Director corrects illegal move outside of time pressure**) along with added wording regarding non-time pressure situations.

**14G: Both flags down in sudden death:** Added wording regarding the observation of the flag fall and the game result.

**14H:** New wording eliminating insufficient losing chances.

**Variation 14H:** Old rule 14H is now an unannounced variation.

**14K (new):** Old 14K is replaced with: The TD (tournament director) can declare a draw if the same position has appeared 5 times in a row. The TD can declare a draw if 75 moves have been made without a pawn move or piece capture

**16D: Special rules for time pressure:** Deleted wording replaced with added links.

**16P1: Delay or increment not set:** A new rule dealing with how to address the situation with clocks that are not set with the proper delay or increment.

**16Q: Interruption of game:** Added wording defining “interruption.”

**16R: Illegal moves:** Rule name change with deleted wording replaced with added links.

**21L1:** The “good faith” deposit amount included when filing an appeal can be determined by the ED.

Digital versions of chapters 1, 2, and 11 from the 7.1 Edition may be downloaded at no charge at [USChess.org](http://USChess.org).

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*An additional set of [scholastic rules](#), developed by the Scholastic Committee for scholastic tournaments, may apply instead of the rules in this book. The scholastic rules are updated often and are available from [US Chess](#).*

# Chapter 1: US Chess Federation's Official Rules of Chess

US Chess Section

## 1. Introduction

### 1A. Scope.

Most problems concerning rules that may arise during a chess game are covered in this book. However, the rules of chess cannot and should not regulate all possible situations. In situations not explicitly covered, the tournament director can usually reach a fair decision by considering similar cases and applying their principles analogously. The United States Chess Federation (US Chess) presumes that its tournament directors have the competence, sound judgment, and absolute objectivity needed to arrive at fair and logical solutions to problems not specifically treated by these rules.

### 1B. Validity.

US Chess play shall be governed by these rules of chess and by all US Chess procedures and policies. World Chess Federation (Federation Internationale des Echecs, or FIDE) rules shall not be used unless specifically announced in advance. For events that use FIDE rather than US Chess rules the [International \(FIDE\) Laws of Chess](#) apply.

#### 1B1. Notification.

Any variations from these published rules, including variations discussed in this rulebook, should be posted and/or announced at the tournament prior to their use, preferably before the first round.

#### 1B2. Major variations.

A variation sufficiently major so that it might reasonably be expected to deter some players from entering should be mentioned in any *Chess Life* announcement and all other detailed pre-tournament publicity and posted and/or announced at the tournament.

## 1C. Types of events.

### 1C1. Major events.

While the basic laws of chess do not vary from event to event, some material in this book is designed principally for major tournaments and is unlikely to be relevant otherwise. For example, unethical behavior is rare in chess; many players reading this book will play virtually all their games as friendly encounters in the spirit of good sportsmanship. But there are rare occasions, especially when large prizes or important titles are at stake, when a player steps beyond the bounds of friendly competition. Rules are needed to cover these situations.

### 1C2. Director discretion.

In areas in which the director has discretion, it is appropriate to be strictest with rules enforcement and penalties in events that are stronger or offer larger prizes. Being harshly penalized over a trivial rules violation can be sufficiently upsetting to deter a beginner from future chess participation.

#### 1C2a. Standard penalty.

Except where specifically noted in the rules, the standard penalty assessed by the director is to add two minutes to the remaining time of the opponent of the player not following the rules of chess.

#### 1C2b. Non-standard penalties.

Except where specifically noted in the rules, the director may assess penalties either more or less severe than the standard penalty (1C2a). It is often more appropriate for a director to issue a warning(s) before applying 1C2a in cases involving young or inexperienced players. A director may assess a more severe penalty in cases involving players who repeatedly do not follow the rules of chess.



## 2. The Chessboard

### 2A. Explanation.

Two opponents moving pieces on a square board called a *chessboard* play the game.

### 2B. Description.

The chessboard is composed of sixty-four squares of identical size, eight squares by eight squares, alternately light and dark. The light squares are referred to as *white squares* and the dark squares *black squares*, even though other colors are frequently used. (For instance, in tournament play *black squares* are often green.)

### 2C. Placement.

The chessboard is placed between the players in such a way that the nearer corner to the right of each player is white. **For information** regarding chessboard placement for blind players see [35F1, Special chessboard](#).

### 2D. Files.

The eight vertical rows of squares are called *files*.

### 2E. Ranks.

The eight horizontal rows of squares are called *ranks*.

### 2F. Diagonals.

The lines of squares of the same color, touching at their corners only and running in a straight line from one edge of the board to another, are called *diagonals*; those running from one corner of the board to another are called *long diagonals*.

## 3. The Pieces

### 3A. Each player's pieces.

At the beginning of the game, one player (White) has sixteen light-colored pieces (the white pieces); the other (Black) has sixteen dark-colored pieces (the black pieces).

### 3B. Description of the pieces.

These pieces are as follows:

a white king, usually indicated by the symbol:



a white queen, usually indicated by the symbol:



two white rooks, usually indicated by the symbol:



two white bishops, usually indicated by the symbol:



two white knights, usually indicated by the symbol:



eight white pawns, usually indicated by the symbol:



a black king, usually indicated by the symbol:



a black queen, usually indicated by the symbol:



two black rooks, usually indicated by the symbol:



two black bishops, usually indicated by the symbol:



two black knights, usually indicated by the symbol:



eight black pawns, usually indicated by the symbol:



### 3C. Initial position.

The initial position of the pieces on the chessboard is as follows (Figure 1):

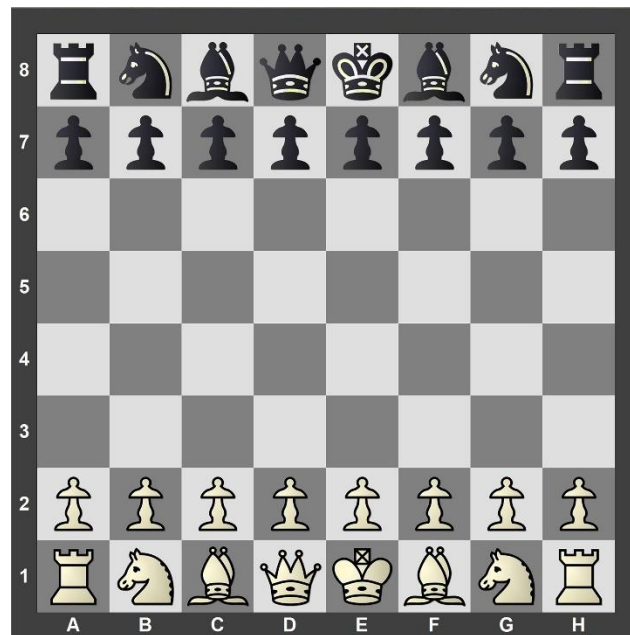


Figure 1

### 3D. Meaning of *piece*.

The word *piece* has acquired various meanings in chess jargon. When used in a rules context, a *piece* is anything on the chessboard - a king, queen, rook, bishop, knight, or pawn. This book will not subsequently use the alternate connotations of *piece*, which follow for informational purposes only.

A second meaning of *piece* excludes pawns. For instance, a chess player referring to *passive pieces* or *an attack by pieces* or *forking my pieces* is referring to pieces other than pawns.

A third and even more limited meaning: If a player is said to win, lose, or sacrifice a piece, the meaning is only bishop or knight. If a queen, rook, or pawn is won, lost, or sacrificed, it is referred to by name - *winning the queen*, *winning a pawn*, etc. A bishop or knight is also known as a *minor piece*, a queen or rook as a *major piece*.

### 3E. Other expressions involving pieces.

These are presented for informational purposes only.

#### 3E1. Castling long.

Castling on the queenside (using the rook on a1, to the left of the white king, or the rook on a8, to the right of the black king). **See also** [8A2, Castling](#).

#### 3E2. Castling short.

Castling on the kingside (using the rook on h1, to the right of the white king or the rook on h8, to the left of the black king). **See also** [8A2, Castling](#).

#### 3E3. Discovered check, double check.

See [Rule 12, Check](#).

#### 3E4. Exchange.

- a. *The Exchange* or *an Exchange* refers to the difference between one player's rook and the other's bishop or knight. A player giving up a rook for a bishop or knight is said to *lose the Exchange* and that player's opponent to *win the Exchange*.
- b. *The exchange of queens* indicates the capture of each player's queen by the other player. The same language may be used regarding rooks, bishops, knights, or pawns.

#### 3E5. Fork.

When there is a simultaneous attack on two or more pieces by one piece.

#### 3E6. Interpose.

To place a piece between one's king and an opponent's checking piece. **See also** [12A, Definition](#).

#### 3E7. Material.

Pieces other than the king.

#### 3E8. Pin.

A piece is said to be *pinned* if either it cannot legally move because such a move would expose its king to check, or moving it would be unwise because this would allow the opponent to advantageously capture a shielded piece.

#### 3E9. Sacrifice.

To deliberately allow the capture of a piece or pieces, receiving in immediate return no pieces, or a piece or pieces usually considered to have less value. The ultimate objective of a sacrifice is often to expose the opponent's king to attack, or to recover the sacrificed material and more.

#### 3E10. Zugzwang.

A situation in which moving any piece is disadvantageous. The player in *zugzwang* would be better off declining to move (passing), but this is not permitted.

## 4. Objective and Scoring

### 4A. Checkmate.

The objective of each of the two players in a game of chess is to win the game by checkmating the opponent's king. A player's king is checkmated when the square it occupies is attacked by one or more of the opponent's pieces and the player has no move that escapes such attack. **See also** [Rule 12, Check](#); [12C, Responding to check](#); and [13A, Checkmate](#).

### 4B. Other decisive outcomes.

A common way for a player to win the game is the resignation of the opponent, conceding inevitable checkmate. A player may also win in other ways, such as the opponent's exceeding of the time limit. **See also** [13, The Decisive Game](#).

### 4C. Draws.

An indecisive result or draw may be agreed upon, usually indicating that neither player expects to be able to checkmate the other. **See also** [14, The Drawn Game](#).

### 4D. Scoring.

For a won game, the winner gets one (1) point and the loser zero (0); for a draw, each player gets a half point (0.5 or ½). **See also** [22, Unplayed Games](#).

## 5. The Chess Clock

### 5A. Time controls and time limits.

Each player must make a certain number of moves, all moves, or all remaining moves in an allotted period of time, these factors being specified in advance. In a non-sudden death time control, if both players complete the required moves in the allotted time, a new period begins. Each such time period is called a *time control* or *control*.

Time controls appear in tournament publicity as number of moves (#), slash (/), time in minutes (mm): # / mm. For instance, if each player must make 40 moves in 1½ hours, this is abbreviated 40/90.

### 5B. Sudden death time controls.

For example, 40/120 SD/60 indicates 40 moves in two hours (120 minutes) followed by the rest of the game in one hour (60 minutes).

#### 5B1. Delay and increment.

**5B1a. Delay time controls.** If the time control indicates a delay (pause) time, the abbreviation d/ is used; the delay time is given in seconds.

**5B1b. Increment time controls.** If the time control indicates an incremental (added) time, the abbreviation inc/ (or +) is used, the added time is given in seconds of added time.

**5B1c. If no delay or increment is to be used** then d/0 indicates no delay or increment time.

#### 5B2. Advanced publicity required time control information.

In all advance publicity which specifies the time control, the organizer is to indicate the full time control, including the delay or increment, as minutes (mm) and seconds (ss), e.g. G/90 inc/30 (or +30); G/30 d/5; G/10 d/3; G/5 d/0. The time control must be specified in Tournament Life Announcements and should be specified in other publicity such as flyer mailings, email and on web sites. It is acceptable for abbreviated publicity to refer the reader to more complete tournament details posted elsewhere.

### 5C. Ratable time controls.

There are three rating systems: Regular (slow), Quick (fast) and Blitz. For the purposes of rating G/minutes and inc/seconds (or d/seconds), add minutes (mm) and seconds (ss) for total playing time for each player. That is, total time equals minutes plus (seconds times 60) or mm+ss; e.g.: G/60 d/5 = 60+5 = 65 minutes total playing time for each player. Multiple time controls add all mm for each control: mm = mm(1) + mm(2) + . . . .

**Regular only:** Total playing time for each player is greater than 65 minutes (mm+ss > 65).

**Dual (both regular and quick):** Total playing time for each player is from 30 to 65 minutes ( $30 \leq \text{mm}+\text{ss} \leq 65$ ).

**Quick only:** Total playing time for each player is more than 10 and less than 30 minutes ( $10 < \text{mm}+\text{ss} < 30$ )  
For Regular, Dual and Quick the primary time (mm in minutes) must be at least 5 minutes.

**Blitz:** Total playing time for each player is from 5 to 10 minutes inclusive and the primary time control must be at least 3 minutes.  $5 \leq \text{mm}+\text{ss} \leq 10$  All rounds must use the same time control.

**TD TIP:** Examples of standard time controls:

|                    |         |
|--------------------|---------|
| 40/90 SD/30 inc/30 | Regular |
| 40/120 SD/60 d/5   | Regular |
| 40/115 SD/60 d/5   | Regular |
| G/120 inc/30       | Regular |
| G/120 d/5          | Regular |
| G/115 d/5          | Regular |
| G/90 inc/30        | Regular |
| G/90 d/5           | Regular |
| G/60 inc/30        | Regular |
| G/60 d/5           | Dual    |
| 30/30 SD/30 d/5    | Dual    |
| G/30 d/5           | Dual    |
| G/25 d/5           | Dual    |
| G/25 d/3           | Quick   |
| G/15 d/3           | Quick   |
| G/10 d/3           | Quick   |
| G/10 d/0           | Blitz   |
| G/5 d/0            | Blitz   |
| G/3 inc/2          | Blitz   |

When used, standard increment is 30 seconds (Regular).

Standard delay is 5 seconds (regular or dual); and 3 seconds (quick).

Standard blitz uses no delay or increment (see chapter 11).

Although these are not all of the possible time controls, organizers are encouraged to select one of the above (or very similar) so that all participants are clear as what to expect and under which system the event will be rated.

**TD TIP:** Here is how the changes referred to in 5C will be implemented and administered:

**Quick Chess:** A Quick Chess event is for a person who wishes to play many games in one day and not have the results affect his regular rating. The time controls in a Quick Chess tournament are designed to be a single time control of more than 10 to less than 30 total playing minutes per player, one second delay or increment counting as 1 minute playing time.  $10 < \text{mm} + \text{ss} < 30$ . Sudden-death rules are used in Quick Chess events, except scorekeeping is not required.

**Dual Rating:** All events with total playing time for each player of 30 to 65 minutes inclusive ( $30 \leq mm+ss \leq 65$ ) will be dual rated, that is, rated under both the Quick and Regular rating systems.

**Blitz:** Any event that the total playing time 5 minutes or greater and is 10 minutes or less ( $5 \leq mm+ss \leq 10$ ) will be **Blitz rated**. (*Blitz rules* apply, see Chapter 11.) For clarity, it is advisable to state Blitz in the title or in the time control of the event.

**Note 1:** Game/60 d/5 is Dual Rated. If you wish for the games not to be Quick Rated, make the total basic time control at least Game in 61 minutes or longer and use a 5 second delay ( $61 + 5 = 66$ ). Game/25 d/5 is also Dual Rated ( $25 + 5 = 30$ ). If you do not want these games to be Regular Rated, make the time control Game/26 d/3 ( $26 + 3 = 29$ ) or quicker.

**Note 2:** The TD must indicate what the time control is for all sections of all events, including the delay or increment used. If submitting by disk or paper, the time control is to be indicated. If different sections have different time controls, indicate the time control for each section. If submitting the report online, the TD is to enter the time control for all sections. The time control used indicates whether the event is regular, dual, quick or blitz.

**Note 3:** If a section has different schedules that merge, the slowest control is all that is needed, provided all games meet the criteria for the slowest time control. This applies when early rounds might fall in the dual rated group (which is regular rated, and the slower time control is regular only. All rounds will then be regular rated only.

**Example:** 3-day schedule is 40/120 SD/60. The 2 day schedule plays rounds 1 and 2 at game/45 and then merges with the 3-day schedule for round 3. All that needs to be reported is the 40/120 SD/60 ( $120 + 60$ ) as US Chess cannot separate the schedules at this point.

If any games in a section use a time control that is quick-ratable only (i.e. total time greater than 10 minutes but less than 30 minutes), then all games in that section must use time controls that are quick-ratable only. If any games in a section use a time control that is blitz ratable (i.e. total time between 5 and 10 minutes), then all games in that section must use time controls that are blitz ratable.

### 5C1. Both players must have the same time control.

For a game to be ratable, the same time control must apply to both players. “Time odds” games (games in which the time control assigns the two players different base times) are not ratable.

**TD TIP:** The director may apply penalties against a player’s time before the game begins, causing the players to start the game with different times on the clock. This does not affect the ratability of the game.

## 5D. Accumulation of time.

The time unused by a player during one control accumulates and is added to the player’s available time for the next control.

## 5E. Recommended increment or delay.

For a mixed or repeating time control, or for a base time of 30 minutes or more, an increment or delay in the range of 5 to 30 seconds is recommended. For a base time of more than 10 minutes and less than 30 minutes, an increment or delay of 3 seconds is recommended. For a base time of 10 minutes or less, an increment or delay of 2 seconds is recommended.

### 5E1. Increment or delay with mixed time controls.

If a mixed time control includes increment or delay, the increment or delay should apply starting with the first move of the game, and the increment or delay time should be the same for all time control segments in the game.

**5E2. Organizer fails to specify increment or delay.**

If the organizer fails to specify an increment or delay time in the time control (which may be zero to indicate no increment or delay), the minimum recommended delay specified in rule **5E** shall apply.

**5F. Standard timer.****5F1. Standard timer for increment time controls.**

An increment capable clock is the standard timer for use with an increment time control.

**5F1a. Increment capable clock not available.**

If an increment capable clock is not available, one of the following clocks, listed in order of preference from most to least preferred, may be used:

1. A delay capable clock whose delay can be set for the increment time.
2. A delay capable clock whose delay cannot be set for the increment time.
3. A digital clock that is not delay capable.
4. An analog clock.

**5F1b. Setting a non-increment capable clock for use with an increment time control.**

In all cases, each player starts with the clock set for the base time. If the clock is delay capable and the delay can be set the same as the increment time, the clock should be so configured. Otherwise, if the clock is delay capable, set the delay time to the maximum possible value that does not exceed the increment time. If the clock is not delay capable, the clock is set to the base time.

**5F1b1. Variation.**

The organizer may specify a different time control to be used with clocks that are capable of neither increment nor delay. This must be specified in all pre-tournament publicity that specifies the time control.

**5F2. Standard timer for delay time controls.**

A delay capable clock is the standard timer for use with a delay time control.

**5F2a. Delay capable clock not available.**

If a delay capable (or Bronstein capable) clock is not available, a digital clock that is not delay capable may be used. If a digital clock is not available, an analog clock may be used. In all cases, the clock is set so that each player starts with the base time.

**5F2a1. Variation.**

The organizer may specify a different time control to be used with clocks that are not delay capable. This must be specified in all pre-tournament publicity that specifies the time control.

**5F3. Standard timer for time controls with neither delay nor increment.**

The standard timer for a time control with neither delay nor increment is a digital clock. If a digital clock is not available, an analog clock may be used.

**5F4. Digital clock preferred over analog clock.**

In all cases, a digital clock is preferred over an analog clock.

*TD TIP: A digital clock operates silently. It can be set so that both players have exactly the same amount of time. Digital clocks time the game more precisely and are not subject to having the two sides of the clock run at different rates.*

**5F5. Replacement of non-standard timer in increment and delay time controls.**

If either player arrives late for the start of the game, and a clock without delay or increment has already been started the player has the right to furnish and substitute a properly set delay or increment capable clock prior to the determination of Black's first move. The player substituting the delay or increment capable clock must also transfer the elapsed times shown on the original clock to the replacement clock without any additional adjustments (except to correct any errors in the display of the elapsed time).

**5F6. Same clock used for the entire game.**

Except as provided in rules 5F5 and Variation 14H2a, once a game starts, the same clock must be used throughout the entire game. If a defective clock must be replaced as described in rule 16O, the replacement clock shall be set in the same manner as the clock being replaced. **See also** 5F5, Replacement of non-standard timer in increment and delay time controls; Variation 14H2a, The claim is unclear and a delay clock is available for the game; and 16O, Defective clocks.

**5F7. Players responsible for knowing how to set the clock.**

Players, not tournament directors, are responsible for knowing how to properly set their digital clocks. In any particular game, if the player providing the clock can not properly set the clock, the opponent may choose which legal clock is to be used. **See also** 16B, How to set clocks.

**5G. The flag.**

Monitoring of each player's time is effected by means of a clock equipped with a flag or other special device used to signal the end of a time control; the flag falls to indicate the player's time has been used up. Some digital clocks have a beep, a light, or a display of all zeros to indicate that the player's time has been exhausted. References in this book to a flag falling or being down also apply to such *flag substitutes*. **See also** 16E, When flag is considered down; 16F, Evidence provided by flag; 16G, premature flag fall; 16H, Apparent flag fall can cause forfeit; 35F5, Special clock; and 42B, Signaling devices.

**5H. Pressing the clock.**

After moving, a player presses the button on his or her side of the clock, which stops that side from running and starts the opponent's side. This book refers to such action as *pressing the clock*. **See also** 6A, The first move; 16C, Removing a player's hand from the clock; 16C1, Using the clock; 16I, Starting the clock; and 16N, Beginning the round.

**5I. Stopping the clock.**

A player who wishes to make a claim of any sort or see a director for any legitimate reason may stop both sides of the clock before claiming and/or finding a director. This book refers to such action as stopping the clock or stopping both clocks. If the opponent's clock is accidentally started when a player tries to stop both clocks, the director will determine whether the claim is still in order. **See also** 13C6, Claimant's clock; 16Q, Interruption of game; 21F, Player requests for rulings; and 21F1, Timing of requests.

*TD TIP: Players should be made aware of the fact that they should generally stop the clock on their time, not their opponent's.*

**5J. Further details.**



See [16, Use of the Chess Clock](#).

## 6. The Right to Move

### 6A. The first move.

White makes the first move. The players then alternate moves until the game is over. **See also** [5H, Pressing the clock](#); [13D, Late arrival for game](#); [16, Use of the Chess Clock](#). ; [16I, Starting the clock](#); [16J, Black not present](#); [16M, Equipment needed to start clock](#); and [16N, Beginning the round](#).

### 6B. A player on move.

A player is said to *be on move* or to *have the move* when the opponent's move has been completed. **See also** [9, Determination and Completion of the move](#).

## 7. Definition of the Move

### 7A. Basic definition.

With the exception of castling ([8A2](#)) and promotion of a pawn ([8F6](#)), a move is the transfer of a piece from one square to another square that is either vacant or occupied by an opponent's piece. **See also** [9, Determination and Completion of the move](#).

### 7B. Crossing an occupied square.

With the exception of the king and rook in castling, no piece except the knight may cross a square occupied by another piece. When castling the king and rook may also not cross an occupied square.

### 7C. Capturing.

A piece played to a square occupied by an opponent's piece captures the latter as part of the move. The player making the capture removes the captured piece immediately from the chessboard. **See also** [8F5, Capturing en passant](#) and [9B, Capturing](#).

## 8. The Moves of the Pieces

### 8A. The king.

#### 8A1. The king's move.

Except when castling, the king moves to any adjoining square that is not attacked by one or more of the opponent's pieces.

#### 8A2. Castling.

Castling is a move of the king and either rook, counting as a single move and executed as follows: the king is transferred from its original square two squares toward either rook on the same rank; then, that rook is transferred over the king to the square adjacent to the king on the same rank. **See also** [8C1, Castling](#); [9C, Castling](#); [10I1, King touched first, or king and rook simultaneously](#); and [10I2, Rook touched first](#).

#### 8A3. Castling permanently illegal.

Castling is illegal for the remainder of the game for a player:

- a. If that player's king has already moved, or
- b. With a rook of that player that has already moved.

#### 8A4. Castling temporarily illegal.

Castling is not presently possible if:

- a. An opponent's piece attacks the king's original square (12A, 12B), any square which the king must cross over (12E), or the square the king is to occupy, or
- b. There is any piece between the king and the rook with which it "is to castle."

**TD TIP:** *In other words: (1) the squares between the king and rook have to be empty; (2) the king cannot be in check, and (3) the king cannot move through or into check.*

## **8B. The queen.**

The queen moves to any square (except as limited by 7B) on the file, rank, or diagonal(s) on which it stands.

## **8C. The rook.**

The rook moves to any square (except as limited by 7B) on the file or rank on which it stands.

### **8C1. Castling.**

Several restrictions on the king in castling (8A2, 8A3, 8A4) do not apply to the rook:

- a. A player may castle with a rook whose original square is under attack.
- b. A player may castle with a rook that crosses over a square under attack by an opponent's piece. The only examples of this are the b1 or b8 squares when castling Queenside.
- c. There is no prohibition against the rook occupying a square attacked by an opponent's piece at the conclusion of castling, but this is impossible, as the king would have to illegally cross an attacked square to bring it about.

**For related information** on castling see 8A2, Castling; 9C, Castling.

## **8D. The bishop.**

The bishop moves to any square (except as limited by 7B) on the diagonal(s) on which it stands.

## **8E. The knight.**

The knight's move is composed of two different steps. First, it makes one step of one single square along the rank or file on which it stands. It does not land on that square, as its move is not complete (9A). Then, still moving away from the square of departure, it moves one step of one single square on a diagonal. It does not matter if the square of the first step is occupied.

This move is sometimes called an *L* move, as it is equivalent to moving the knight two squares vertically, then one square horizontally (or two squares horizontally, then one square vertically). Note that the knight always moves to a square different in color than that of its starting square. A knight has a maximum of eight possible moves.

## **8F. The pawn.**

### **8F1. The pawn's move.**

The pawn may only move forward (towards the opponent's side of the board).

### **8F2. The first move of each pawn.**

On its first move, a pawn advances either one or two vacant squares along its file.

### **8F3. Subsequent moves of each pawn.**

On its subsequent moves, a pawn advances one vacant square along its file.

### **8F4. Pawns move vertically but capture diagonally.**

The pawn is unique among chess pieces in that it captures (7C) and attacks differently from the way it moves. When capturing, it advances one square along either of the diagonals on which it stands; it attacks these same squares.

### **8F5. Capturing *en passant*.**

A pawn, attacking a square bypassed by an opponent's pawn, the latter having advanced two squares in one move from its original square, may capture (7C) the opponent's pawn as though the latter had moved only one square.

This capture may only be made in immediate reply to such advance and is called an *en passant* (*in passing*) capture. Note that only a pawn that has advanced a total of exactly three squares from its original square is in position to make such a capture.

#### **8F6. Pawn promotion.**

On reaching the last rank, a pawn must immediately be exchanged, as part of the same move, for the player's choice of a queen, a rook, a bishop, or a knight of the same color as the pawn. This exchange of the pawn for another piece is called *promotion*, and the effect of the new piece is immediate. For instance, it may give check or serve to block a check. The promotion piece is placed on the eighth-rank promotion square it touched to which the pawn was or will be moved. **See also** [9D, Pawn promotion](#) and [10H, Piece touched off the board](#).

*TD TIP:* Note that promotion is in no way related to other pieces remaining on the chessboard; for example, a player may have two or more queens, three or more knights, or two bishops on diagonals of the same color. The choice of the piece is not final until it has touched the promotion square on the board (See [9D](#) also [10H](#)).

#### **8F7. Promoted piece not available.**

If the desired piece is not available to replace a promoted pawn, the player may stop both clocks in order to locate that piece and place it on the board. A player who cannot quickly find such a piece may request the assistance of the director. It is common practice, however, to play using an upside-down rook for a second queen. In the absence of the player's announcement to the contrary, an upside-down rook shall be considered a queen. It is improper to press the clock to start the opponent's time with the pawn still on the last rank. If this is done, the opponent may immediately restart the player's clock without moving.

As soon as the new piece is placed on the board, either player should restart the clock.

*TD TIP:* Clocks that have a move counter may need to be readjusted if a player improperly presses the clock with a pawn still on the last rank and the opponent immediately restarts the player's clock.

## **9. Determination and Completion of the Move**

### **9A. Transfer to a vacant square.**

In the case of the legal transfer of a piece to a vacant square, the move ([7A](#), [7B](#), [7C](#)) is determined with no possibility of change when the player's hand has released the piece, and completed when that player presses the clock ([5H](#)).

### **9B. Capturing.**

In the case of a legal capture ([7C](#)), the move is determined with no possibility of change when the player has deliberately touched both his or her own piece and the opponent's piece ([10C](#)) and completed when that player presses the clock ([5H](#)). **See also** [9G, Determined moves and completed moves](#).

### **9C. Castling.**

In the case of legal castling ([8A2](#), [8C1](#), [10I1](#), [10I2](#)), the move is determined with no possibility of change when the player's hand has released the king, which has moved two squares toward a rook, and completed when that player, having legally transferred the rook to its new square, presses the clock ([5H](#)).

### **9D. Pawn promotion.**

In the case of the legal promotion of a pawn, the move is determined with no possibility of change when the pawn has been removed from the chessboard and the player's hand has released the new appropriate piece on the promotion square, and completed when that player presses the clock ([5H](#)). If the player has released the pawn on the last rank, the move is not yet determined, but the player no longer has the right to play the pawn to another square. The choice of piece is finalized when the piece has touched the square of promotion, regardless of whether the pawn has been physically touched or placed on the promotion square. Once a piece has touched the promotion square a pawn must be promoted to that piece on that square, provided that the move is legal.

**See also** [8F6, Pawn promotion](#) and [10H, Piece touched off the board](#).

***TD TIP:** Some players thinking they are being “clever” have tried to place one of their opponent’s pieces on the promotion square or inappropriately give themselves a second king; however, this is not legal, only “clever.”*

## **9E. Checkmate or stalemate.**

In the case of a legal move which produces checkmate (13A, 4A) or stalemate (14A), the move is determined with no possibility of change upon release as described in 9A, 9B, 9C, or 9D, whichever applies. The move is completed simultaneously with its determination.

***TD TIP:** If the final legal move produces checkmate or stalemate, pressing or stopping the clock, while recommended, is not required because checkmate or stalemate immediately ends the game. See also rules 13A1, The clock after checkmate and 14A1, The clock after stalemate.*

## **9F. Last move of the time control.**

When determining whether the prescribed number of legal moves has been made in the allotted time, the last move is considered complete only after the player presses the clock (5H). The player’s flag may be up after releasing the piece, it may be up while hitting the clock, but if the flag is down after the move and the opponent has not yet handled the clock, the player has failed to make the time control. **For more information** regarding analog and digital flag falls see 5G, The flag.

Except for 9E, there should never be a dispute about whether the final move of a time control or a flag fall occurred first, because a player’s task is to press the clock in time to prevent the flag fall. If the flag is down, the player has not accomplished this task, and the director must rule that the move was not completed in time. If the final move of the time control produces checkmate or stalemate, then see 9E.

## **9G. Determined moves and completed moves.**

As described in 9A through 9D above, there is a period between the release of a piece and the press of the clock during which the move is determined but not completed. The significance of this period is as follows (for information on determined moves and the visually impaired or handicapped player see 35F4, Determination of a move):

### **9G1. Player still on move for claims.**

Claims of triple occurrence of position (14C), the 50-move rule (14F), or insufficient losing chances in sudden death (Variation 14H) remain in order during the period between determination and completion of the move. As soon as the player completes the move, it is the opponent’s move, and the right to make such claims belongs exclusively to the opponent.

### **9G2. Determination irrelevant to time control.**

In the case of 9F, Last move of the time control, whether or not the player has determined the move is of no significance in deciding whether the player has made the prescribed number of moves in the allotted time. The player’s flag must remain up (5G) after the final legal move has been completed, not just determined.

### **9G3. Draw offers.**

Except for Variation 14H2, Resolution of Variation 14H claim, the interval between determination and completion of the move is the proper time to offer a draw (14B1). See also 14, The Drawn Game.

***TD TIP:** The first step in resolving a properly made draw claim, including an insufficient losing chances (Variation 14H) claim in sudden death, is to notify the opponent of the claimant that a claim is the same as offering the opponent a draw; however, the draw offer is proper even if a move has not been determined or completed. See rule 14, The Drawn Game, for more information on draw claims being considered draw offers.*

## **9H. Stopping the clock.**

If a player determines a move and then stops the clock to see a director for any reason, rather than pressing it, the determined move is not yet completed and the player is still on move for claims (9G1).

## 10. The Touched Piece

***TD TIP:** Without a neutral witness, Rule 10 depends on the reliability of both the claimant and the opponent. If they disagree then the TD should strongly consider denying the claim. In most cases, by denying the claim the TD shuts the door to all false claims. Upholding a false claim usually does more harm to more players than denying an accurate claim.*

### 10A. Adjustment of pieces.

A player who is on the move and first expresses the intention to adjust (e.g., by saying *j'adoube* or *I adjust*) may adjust one or more pieces on their squares. **See also** [10E, Accidental touch of piece](#) and [10F, appearance of adjustment](#).

### 10B. Touch-move rule.

Except for [10A](#), a player on move who deliberately touches one or more pieces, in a manner that may reasonably be interpreted as the beginning of a move, must move or capture the first piece touched that can be moved or captured. **See also** [10E, Accidental touch of piece](#); [10F, appearance of adjustment](#); and [35F3](#) (the touch-move rule for blind and disabled players).

***TD TIP:** The key word here is deliberately. Be especially thorough at scholastic events when investigating a "Touch-move rule" claim without a witness. After talking to the claimant and opponent, TDs will find that opponents often insist that they did not "deliberately" touch a piece. Often, after some further discussion, the TD will find that some of the opponents really did physically touch the piece in such a way that it appeared as if they intended to move it (not an accident); however, they will explain that they really intended to move another piece; therefore, they believe that since the "touch" was not literally "deliberate" (since they intended to move another piece), the rule was not broken. The TD will have to uphold the claim in this instance.*

### 10C. Touching pieces of both colors.

Except for [10A](#), a player on the move who deliberately touches one or more pieces of each color, or who moves the player's piece and intentionally displaces an opponent's piece with it, must capture the opponent's piece with the player's piece, or, if this is illegal, must move or capture the first piece touched that can be moved or captured. If it is impossible to establish which piece was touched first, the player's piece shall be considered the touched piece.

### 10D. Piece touched cannot move.

If no piece touched has a legal move, and no opponent's piece touched can be legally captured, the player is free to make any legal move.

### 10E. Accidental touch of piece.

A director who believes a player touched a piece by accident should not require the player to move that piece. For example, a player's hand reaching across the board may inadvertently brush the top of a nearby king or queen, or a player may hit a piece with an elbow. **See also** [10 A, Adjustment of pieces](#); [10B, Touch-move rule](#); and [10F, Appearance of adjustment](#).

### 10F. Appearance of adjustment.

Sometimes it is clear that a player is adjusting, even when that player improperly fails to say *j'adoube* or *I adjust*. For instance, a player who uses one finger to slide a piece to the center of its square is not acting in a manner usual to the beginning of a move, and probably should not be required to move the piece. Players are warned, though, that it is wise to announce one is adjusting in advance, as a safeguard against being forced to make an unwanted move. **See also** [10 A, Adjustment of pieces](#); [10B, Touch-move rule](#); and [10E, Accidental touch of a piece](#).

### 10G. Accidental release of piece.

A player who deliberately touches a piece and then accidentally releases it on an unintended but legal square is required to leave it on that square.

## 10H. Piece touched off the board.

There is no penalty for touching a piece that is off the board. A player who advances a pawn to the last rank and then touches a piece off the board is not obligated to promote the pawn to the piece touched until that piece touches the promotion square. **See also** [8F6, Pawn promotion](#) and [9D, Pawn promotion](#).

## 10I. Castling.

For description and further information of castling, see [8A2, 8A3, 8A4, 8C1, and 9C](#).

### 10I1. King touched first, or king and rook simultaneously.

If a player intending to castle touches the king first, or king and rook at the same time, and then realizes that castling is illegal, the player may choose either to move the king or to castle on the other side if legal. If the king has no legal move, the player is free to choose any move.

### 10I2. Rook touched first.

If a player intending to castle touches the rook first, castling is not allowed and the player must move the rook as required by rule [10B](#).

### 10I2. (Variation I) Rook touched first.

If a player intending to castle touches the rook first, there is no penalty except if castling is illegal, the player must move the rook if legal. This variation does not need to be announced in advanced publicity but should be announced at the start of the tournament.

## 10J. When to claim touch-move.

To claim the opponent has violated [10B, Touch move rule](#), or [10C, Touching pieces of both colors](#), a player must do so before deliberately touching a piece.

# 11. Illegal Positions

## 11A. Illegal move during last ten moves.

If, during a game, it is found that one of either player's last ten moves was illegal and neither player is in time pressure ([11D1](#)), the position shall be reinstated to what it was before the illegal move. The players do not recover the time used after the illegal move. The game shall then continue by applying [Rule 10, The Touched Piece](#), to the move replacing the illegal move. If the position cannot be reinstated, then the illegal move shall stand. Move counters on clocks that have them may be readjusted. **See also** [11H, Director corrects illegal move in non-sudden death](#) and [16R, No time adjustment for reinstated position](#).

***TD TIP:** When the illegal move is a king left in check, special care should be taken by the director. All moves, not just the first move, in which a player's king remains in check should be regarded as illegal. That way, an illegal move will always have occurred within the last half-move; therefore, players cannot argue that the illegal move(s) should stand. Now, go back to the first illegal move that occurred (leaving the king in check). If the moves cannot be reconstructed, go back to a position in which the king is in check, so that the king can get out of check. In complicated cases like this the director has a lot of discretion. No player should gain an unfair advantage for deliberate illegal moves, or for inadvertent ones, which were deliberately not pointed out. Remember that the clock times will not be re-adjusted; however, move counters may need to be reset to the proper move number.*

## 11B. Illegal move prior to last ten moves.

If it is found that an illegal move was made prior to each player's last ten moves, the illegal move shall stand and the game shall continue.

***TD TIP:** When the illegal move is a king left in check see the TD TIP after rule [11A](#).*

## 11C. Accidental piece displacement.

If, during a game, one or more pieces have been accidentally displaced and incorrectly replaced, then they shall be treated as an illegal move. If, during the course of a move, a player inadvertently knocks over one or more pieces, that player must not press the clock until the position has been reestablished. The opponent may press the clock without moving, if necessary, to force the player who knocked over the piece(s) to restore the position on his or her own time. If possible, clocks with move counters should be readjusted.

***TD TIP:** If using increment time control it may not be to a player's advantage to start the opponent's clock if the opponent created an illegal position or accidentally displaced pieces. In that case the players may stop or pause the clock until the correct position is reinstated.*

### **11D. Illegal move.**

If a player completes an illegal move by pressing the clock, in addition to the usual obligation to make a legal move with the touched piece if possible, the standard penalty specified in rule 1C2a applies. If the opponent has completed a move subsequent to the illegal move, the standard penalty shall not apply. **See also** [11J, Deliberate illegal moves](#)

***TD TIP:** A player should make sure to claim an illegal move made by his opponent before completing his next move, in order to be eligible to receive the additional time.*

#### **11D1. Illegal move in time pressure.**

Time pressure is defined as a situation where either player has less than five minutes left in a time control and the time control does not include an increment or delay of 30 seconds or more. A director should not call attention to illegal moves in *time pressure*, only the players may make that claim. If, during the game, in time pressure, a player's claim that one of either player's last two moves was illegal is upheld by the TD, the position shall be reinstated to what it was before the illegal move and the procedure in rule [11A](#). **See also** [11H, Director corrects illegal move in non-sudden death](#); and [11J, Deliberate illegal moves](#).

***TD TIP:** When the illegal move is a king left in check see the TD TIP after rule [11A](#).*

### **11E. Incorrect adjourned position.**

If, after an adjournment, the position is incorrectly set up, then the position as it was at adjournment must be set up again and the game continued, subject to the provisions of [Rule 11A, Illegal move during last ten moves](#). The time on the clocks shall not be adjusted; however, move counters on clocks that have them may be readjusted. **See also** [16R, No time adjustment for reinstated position](#) and [19I, Game resumed with incorrect position](#).

### **11F. Incorrect initial position.**

If, before the completion of Black's 10th move, it is found that the initial position of the pieces was incorrect, or that the game began with the colors reversed, then the game shall be annulled and a new game played. However, the players shall begin the new game with their clocks still reflecting the elapsed time each player used in the annulled game; however, move counters on clocks that have them may be readjusted. If the error is discovered after the completion of Black's 10th move, the game shall continue. **See also** [16R, No time adjustment for reinstated position](#).

### **11G. Incorrect placement of chessboard.**

If, during a game, it is found that the board has been placed contrary to [2C, Placement](#), which requires a white square in the nearer corner to the right of each player, then the position reached shall be transferred to a board correctly placed and the game continued.

### **11H. Director corrects illegal move outside of time pressure.**

Except in a time pressure situation ([11D1](#)), a director who witnesses an illegal move being made shall require the player to replace that move with a legal one in accordance with [10B, Touch-move rule](#). The time on the clocks shall



not be adjusted; however, move counters on clocks that have them may be readjusted. See also [11J, Deliberate illegal moves](#) and [21D, Intervening in games](#).

#### **Variation 11H1. Director as witness only.**

In an event in which most games are not watched by directors, a director may refrain from correcting all illegal moves he or she may notice but simply serve as a witness should one of the players point out the illegal move before ten more moves have been made ([11A](#)).

If used, this variation must be applied consistently; i.e., a director may not require players to correct illegal moves when witnessed in some cases but not in others. This variation does not need to be announced in advance.

### **11I. Spectators.**

Spectators must not point out illegal moves ([20M5](#)), except to the director in a manner neither heard nor noticed by the players. See also [16Y, Assisting players with time management prohibited](#) and [20M, Behavior of spectators](#).

### **11J. Deliberate illegal moves.**

If a player intentionally makes illegal moves, the director may impose penalties. See also [1C2, Director discretion](#); [11D, Illegal move](#); [21F, Player requests for rulings](#); and [21K, Use of director's power](#).

## **12. Check**

### **12A. Definition.**

The king is *in check* when the square it occupies is attacked by one or more of the opponent's pieces; such pieces are said to be *checking the king*. Check is parried (a player gets out of check) by capturing a sole checking opposing piece, interposing one of the player's own pieces between a sole checking piece and the king (not possible if checking piece is a knight), or moving the king. The king cannot parry check by castling ([8A4](#)).

### **12B. Double check.**

The square occupied by the king being attacked by two opposing pieces is known as *double check*, and may be parried only by moving the king. The king cannot parry double check by castling ([8A4](#)).

### **12C. Responding to check.**

Check must be parried on the move immediately following. If a player's king is unable to escape check, it is *checkmated* and the player loses the game ([13A](#)).

### **12D. Check by interposing piece.**

A piece blocking a check to the king of its own color, commonly referred to as *interposing*, can itself give check to the enemy king.

### **12E. Moving into check.**

A player may not move the king, including castling ([8A4](#)), to a square attacked by one or more opponent's pieces. No move may be made by any piece which puts the player's own king in check. If a player does so, it is an illegal move. See also [11, Illegal Positions](#).

### **12F. Calling check not mandatory.**

Announcing check is not required, and is rare in high-level tournaments. It is the responsibility of the opponent to notice the check, and a player who does not may suffer serious consequences. A player may announce check. See also [Rule 10, The touched piece](#).

## **13. The Decisive Game**

### **13A. Checkmate.**



The player who checkmates the opponent's king, providing the mating move is legal, wins the game. This immediately ends the game. **See also** [4A, Checkmate](#); [9E, Checkmate or stalemate](#); [12C, Responding to check](#); and [15H, Reporting of results](#).

***TD TIP:** This means that anything that happens after the checkmate move has been legally determined (see rule 9, Determination and completion of the move) is irrelevant to the outcome of the game, including the player's flag falling (5G).*

### **13A1. The clock after checkmate.**

A player who checkmates the opponent is not obligated to then press ([5H](#)) or stop ([5I](#)) the clock, as checkmate takes priority over a subsequent flag fall. A player delivering checkmate may choose to press the clock to minimize the possibility of dispute. **See also** [9E, Checkmate or stalemate](#).

### **13A2. Flag fall before checkmate.**

If a player claims a win by time forfeit ([13C](#)) before the opponent determines a move delivering checkmate, the time forfeit claim is appropriate.

### **13A3. Unclear if checkmate or flag fall came first.**

After considering all available evidence, including testimony by the players and any witnesses, a director who is still unable to decide whether the claim of the flag fall occurred first shall deny the time claim and rule the checkmate valid.

## **13B. Resignation.**

The player whose opponent resigns wins the game. This immediately ends the game. Saying *I resign* or tipping over the king are relatively clear ways to resign.

Stopping both clocks does not necessarily indicate a resignation. Since a player may be making a claim or seeing a director, the opponent should not assume a player who stops both clocks has resigned without further evidence.

Likewise, the offer of a handshake is not necessarily a resignation. On occasion, one player believes the handshake agrees to a draw while the other interprets it as a resignation. **See also** [15H, Reporting of Results](#); [16S, Priority of agreed result over time-forfeit claim](#) and [19G2, Resignation and invalid move](#).

## **13C. Time forfeit.**

- a. **Non-Sudden Death:** The player who properly claims that the opponent has not completed the prescribed number of moves in the allotted time wins the game, provided that the claimant has mating material ([14E](#)) and a reasonably complete scoresheet ([13C7](#)) when the flag falls ([5G](#)). Move counters, on clocks equipped with them, may not be used as the only evidence in claiming that the prescribed number of moves were not completed in the allotted time.
- b. **Sudden Death:** The player who properly claims that the opponent has not completed the game in the allotted time, and has mating material ([14E](#)), wins the game. A scoresheet is not required to win on time in a sudden death time control ([15C](#)).

**See also** [15H, Reporting of results](#) and [19G3, Loss on time and invalid move](#).

### **13C1. Only players may call flag.**

Only the players in a game may call attention to the fall of a flag (See also [5G](#)); it is considered to have fallen only when either player points this out. A director must never initiate a time-forfeit claim.

Spectators, including players of other games, who point out the fall of a flag in any manner, may be disciplined by the tournament director to the point of expulsion from the playing room, loss of their own games, or expulsion from the tournament. The recipient of such assistance may also be penalized ([20E](#)). **See also** [16Y, Assisting players with time management prohibited](#); [20E1, Solicited advice](#); [20E2, Unsolicited advice](#); [20M, Spectators](#); and [20M5, Spectators cannot make claims](#).

**TD TIP:** The key word here is “may.” Directors must exercise extreme caution in penalizing unsolicited advice. Reviewing [Rule 20E, Soliciting or using advice prohibited](#), before making a ruling is advised. Remember in FIDE competitions the arbiter can call the flag, and should do so.

### **13C2. Player may call own flag for protection in non-sudden death.**

A player may call attention to the fall of his or her own flag. This initiates the time forfeiture procedure, the same as if the opponent had made a claim. A player will likely exercise this option in order to make it clear that any moves the opponent may subsequently fill in or correct on the scoresheet are invalid for the purpose of having an adequate score. **See also** [13C3, Filling in moves with flag down](#).

**TD TIP:** This rule was designed to protect the player who is short of time, in a non-sudden death time control, from an opponent, who has plenty of time to write down moves as they are being made, who instead “blitzes” or rushes, move after move without filling in a scoresheet contrary to [15A, Manner of keeping score](#).

### **13C3. Filling in moves with flag down.**

Once either player points out the fallen flag, neither is permitted to fill in or correct any previous moves missing from the scoresheet. It is especially important that a player who expects to win on time not fill in missing moves. Such additions or corrections are not considered for the purpose of determining whether the scoresheet is reasonably complete ([13C7](#)), and may obscure a valid claim.

**TD TIP:** Enforcement of this rule often depends on an independent witness.

### **13C4. Consequence of filling in moves.**

A player who improperly fills in missing moves after a fallen flag has been pointed out may not win by time forfeit unless the director is certain that the player’s scoresheet would have been sufficient to win on time without the improper additions. A director who is unsure on this point should give the benefit of the doubt to the opponent of the claimant.

**TD TIP:** Enforcement of this rule often depends on an independent witness.

### **13C5. How to claim.**

To claim a win by time forfeit, a player should stop both clocks ([5I](#)) and state the claim. If the opponent accepts the claim, the game is over. If the opponent does not accept the claim, the claimant must present the claim to a director.

### **13C6. Claimant’s clock.**

If a player who claims a time forfeit states the claim with claimant’s flag still up ([5G](#)), but then fails to stop the clock in time to avoid also exceeding the time limit, the claim will be void, unless the flag fall was observed by a director or independent witness. **See also** [5I, Stopping the clock](#); [13C13, Player out of time cannot claim](#); [16Q, Interruption of game](#); [21F, Player requests for rulings](#); [21F1, Timing of requests](#), and [16T, Both players exceed time control](#).

**TD TIP:** A director who is aware that a claimant has neglected to stop the clock should instruct the claimant to do so.

### **13C7. Definition of reasonably complete scoresheet.**

Unless otherwise posted or announced in advance at the site, a reasonably complete scoresheet is one that has no more than three missing or incomplete move pairs (consecutive moves, white and black or black and white). The absence of three consecutive individual moves, e.g. white-black-white, counts as two incomplete move pairs.

The move pair is considered incomplete if either side’s move is omitted or incomplete. No move pair is ever considered to be *half complete*.

Minor ambiguities in scorekeeping or errors involving no more than one symbol are of no consequence. The common error of omitting one move by one player and subsequently putting moves in the wrong columns counts as only one error. Moves that are indecipherable or recorded only with check marks are considered missing. **See also:** [15, The recording of the games](#).

***TD TIP:** An example of a minor ambiguity would be for the player of the black pieces to write Nf3 on a scoresheet in place of Nf6 in the opening when Nf3 is clearly not even possible.*

### **13C8. Use of opponent's scoresheet in non-sudden death.**

The director may use the scoresheet of the claimant's opponent to determine that the requisite number of moves has been made or that the claimant's scoresheet is in error. The director may also use the opponent's scoresheet to assist in playing over the game. No player, however, may be forfeited based solely on the evidence of his or her own scoresheet.

### **13C9. Player may demonstrate making time control in non-sudden death.**

If the opponent of the claimant demonstrates that the required number of moves must have been made in order to reach the position on the board, the director shall deny the claim.

***TD TIP:** If the opponent points out the correct number of moves have been made to reach the position on the board due to move repetitions, but does not have an accurate score or an independent witness to verify this fact, the director should rule in favor of the claimant.*

### **13C10. Director not obligated to play over game in non-sudden death.**

If the claimant's scoresheet appears to be sufficiently complete and both scoresheets appear to be substantially identical and agree on the number of moves made, the director need not play over those moves but may instead require the player whose flag has fallen (5G) to demonstrate why the opponent's scoresheet is not sufficient to win on time.

### **13C11. Time forfeit claim denied in non-sudden death.**

If a flag is down but a claimant's scoresheet is insufficient to win on time, two minutes shall be added to the claimant's opponent's remaining time and the game shall continue. No further time forfeit claims during that time control are allowed; a claim of time forfeit shall be allowed during subsequent time controls.

***TD TIP:** Example: In a 40/120 20/60 game, if a time forfeit claim for the first time control is denied on move 35, then another time forfeit claim is not available for either player (13C13) until the end of the second time control (at flag fall after three hours by one player).*

### **13C12. Both scoresheets inadequate in non-sudden death.**

If both players agree that sufficient moves have been made or that both scoresheets are inadequate for time forfeit claims, and it is impossible to establish the exact number of moves, no further claims on that time control are permitted. The subsequent time control period is in effect. The players should diagram or create a record of the position to serve as a reference point for future claims.

### **13C13. Player out of time cannot claim.**

A player whose own flag has fallen (5G) may not win on time during that control. **See also 16T, Both players exceed time control.**

### **13C14. Role of director during time trouble.**

It is beneficial for a director to be present in an area with games in which the players are in time trouble, to observe the players and safeguard against disturbance such as spectators or players talking or crowding too close to a game. However, it is not recommended that directors concentrate on watching clocks except to tell when they may go back to other duties. This would accomplish little, as only players may call flags down, and a fallen flag (5G) constitutes evidence equal in value to the witnessing of a falling flag. **See also: 13C6, Claimant's clock.**

### **13C15. Variations.**

Any variations on these procedures, such as use of FIDE methods that require a director or deputy to be present at each board and to claim time forfeits on behalf of the players, must be clearly announced before the start of the tournament.

## **13D. Late arrival for game.**

The player who arrives at the chessboard more than one hour late for the beginning of the game or arrives after the expiration of the first or only time control period, whichever comes first, loses the game. The absence countdown begins at the actual starting time of the round, which is not always the scheduled starting time. A director who learns that a player is unavoidably delayed may waive the one-hour forfeit rule. **See also** [13F, Late arrival by both players](#); [15H, Reporting of results](#); [16K, Both players late](#); [16M, Equipment needed to start clock](#); [22A, Games forfeited due to nonappearance](#); and [28P, Unplayed games](#).

***TD TIP:** Example in a single sudden death time control: if the time control is G/30 then a player who arrives 31 minutes after the start of that game will lose. A player who arrives at any time before the flag falls may play the game with whatever amount of time is left on the player's clock.*

#### **Variation 13D1. Equipment must be set up.**

To win under [13D](#), a player must set up a board, a set, and a clock, start the opponent's clock, and run the clock until the opponent has one hour of elapsed time or the first or only time control period has expired, whichever comes first. If both players are late, the first to arrive must split the elapsed time from the start of the game until the arrival time before starting the opponent's clock (see [16K, Both players late](#)).

***TD TIP:** For example, if the first player is 30 minutes late in a non-sudden death time control period of 40/120, each player would start with 15 minutes elapsed, and the second player would not lose on time, due to non-appearance, until 45 minutes later. Another example: in a G/30 single sudden death time control, or one that is less than one hour, the first player arrives 10 minutes late. Each player would start with 5 minutes elapsed. The second player would not lose on time, due to non-appearance, until 25 minutes later.*

### **13E. Late arrival for adjournment resumption.**

The player who arrives at the chessboard more than one hour late for the resumption of an adjourned game or arrives after the expiration of the existing time period, whichever comes first, loses the game. A director who learns that a player is unavoidably delayed may waive the one-hour forfeit rule. However, if the player who sealed the move is the late player, the game is decided otherwise if either of the following conditions exists:

#### **13E1. Checkmate.**

The absent player has won the game by virtue of the fact that the sealed move produces checkmate.

#### **13E2. Stalemate or insufficient material.**

The absent player has produced a drawn game by virtue of the fact that the sealed move has caused a stalemate ([14A](#)), or if one of the positions in [14D, Insufficient material to continue](#), has arisen.

### **13F. Late arrival by both players.**

If both players arrive at the chessboard more than one hour late in a non-sudden death time control period or after the flags have fallen in a single sudden-death time control, whichever comes first, the director may declare the game lost by both players. **See also** [13D, Late arrival for game](#); [15H, Reporting of results](#); [16K, Both players late](#); [22A, Games forfeited due to nonappearance](#); and [28P, Unplayed games](#).

### **13G. Players must give notice if withdrawing or skipping a round.**

A player who does not notify the tournament director well in advance of the inability to play in any round and then defaults the game under [13D, Late arrival for the game](#), may be ejected from the tournament, and may be fined a sum up to the amount of the entry fee, payable to the organizer. The player may be barred from any of the organizer's tournaments until the fine is paid. On request, the player may be retained in or readmitted to the tournament at the director's discretion. **See also** [16K, Both players late](#); [22A, Games forfeited due to nonappearance](#); and [28P, Unplayed games](#).

***TD TIP:** It is useful to have a withdrawal signup sheet available until the pairings are made for the last round. Directors are urged to check this list before making any pairings.*

### **13H. Sealing of invalid move.**

A player who has sealed a move that the director finds has no reasonable interpretation loses the game. However, a director who finds there are two or more reasonable interpretations of an ambiguous sealed move may allow sealer's opponent to choose between the possibilities. **See also** [19G, Sealed move invalid](#) and [19F, Sealed move ambiguous](#).

### 13I. Refusal to obey rules.

The director may declare a game lost by a player who refuses to comply with the rules. If both players refuse to comply with the rules, the director may declare the game lost by both players. **See also** [1C2, Director discretion](#); [21F, Player requests for rulings](#); and [21K, Use of director's power](#).

**TD TIP:** *It is often useful, but not required, to employ the following steps before applying [13I](#) or dealing with a rule that has no specific penalty:*

*Step 1: The director warns the player who does not comply with the rules.*

*Step 2: The director adds two minutes, or more if necessary, to the time of the opponent of the player who does not comply with the rules. Some TDs repeat this step more than once.*

*Step 3: The director enforces [13I](#) after steps 1 and 2 have been unsuccessful in getting a player to comply with the rules.*

## 14. The Drawn Game

All draw claims are also draw offers ([14B](#)). The player by making any draw claim (for example: triple occurrence of position ([14C](#)), insufficient material to continue ([14D](#)), insufficient material to win on time ([14E](#)), the 50-move rule ([14F](#)), both flags down in sudden death ([14G](#)), insufficient losing chances ([Variation 14H](#)), ...) is also making an implied offer of a draw to the opponent. If the opponent accepts the implied draw offer, the game is over.

1. The opponent may immediately accept the draw offer and end the game ([14B](#)), or instead
2. The opponent may ask the director to rule on the claim. If the director upholds the draw claim, the game is over.
3. If the director does not uphold the claim (does not declare the game a draw), the game continues. The implied draw offer is still in effect, and the opponent may accept it or reject it ([14B](#)).

**TD TIP:** *When a draw claim is made, the director should inform the opponent of the draw offer. The opponent need not immediately accept the draw offer. Instead, the opponent may first wait and see what the director rules. The director's ruling might or might not end the game in a draw. If the claim is denied, then the director restarts the game. In restarting the game, the director assesses penalties, if appropriate according to the rules, and starts the clock. The draw claim becomes a [14B](#) draw offer. The director should remind both players of this draw offer when starting the clock.*

### 14A. Stalemate.

The game is drawn when the king of the player to move is not in check and that player has no legal move. This type of draw is called *stalemate*. Providing that the opponent's previous move is legal, this immediately ends the game. Note that it is incorrect to refer to all drawn games as *stalemate*. The draws described in [14B](#) through [14J](#) are not stalemates. **See also** [9E, Checkmate or stalemate](#); and [15H, Reporting results](#).

**TD TIP:** *This means that anything, including the fall of the flag, which happens after the stalemate move has been legally determined (see [9, Determination and Completion of the Move](#)) is irrelevant to the outcome of the game. Also, remember a [14A](#) stalemate draw claim is a draw offer ([Rule 14, The Drawn Game](#)).*

#### 14A1. The clock after stalemate.

Just as with a checkmate, a player who stalemates the opponent is not obligated to then press ([5H](#)) or stop ([5I](#)) the clock, as stalemate takes priority over a subsequent flag fall. A player delivering stalemate may choose to press the clock to minimize the possibility of dispute. **See also** [9E, Checkmate or stalemate](#).

#### 14A2. Flag fall before stalemate.

If a player claims a win on time ([13C](#)) before the opponent releases a piece that will deliver stalemate, the time forfeit claim is appropriate.

**14A3. Unclear if stalemate or flag came first.**

After considering all available evidence, including testimony by the players and any witnesses, a director who is unable to determine whether the flag fall occurred first shall deny the time claim and uphold the stalemate.

**14B. Agreement.**

The game is drawn upon agreement between the two players. This immediately ends the game. **See also** 15H, Reporting of results; 16S, Priority of agreed result over time-forfeit claim; 19G1, Agreed draw and invalid move and 19J, Agreed result of adjourned game.

**14B1. Proper timing of draw offer.**

Except for a draw claim, which is an implicit draw offer (14), a player should make a proposal of a draw only after determining a move (9G) and before pressing the clock. The opponent may accept the proposal or may reject it either orally or by deliberately touching a piece (10B). In the interim, the player who made the offer cannot withdraw it. **See also** 9G3, Draw offers.

*TD TIP: The first step in resolving a properly made draw claim is to notify the opponent of the claimant that all draw claims are the same as offering the opponent a draw (Rule 14, The Drawn Game); however, a rule 14 draw claim is a proper (inherent) draw offer even if a move has not been determined or completed.*

**14B2. Draw offer with opponent on move.**

If a player offers a draw while the opponent's clock is running, the opponent may accept or reject the offer. A player who offers a draw in this manner may be warned or penalized for annoying the opponent (20G). **See also** 14, The Drawn Game.

**14B3. Draw offer before moving.**

A player that proposes a draw before moving must allow the offer to stand until the opponent either accepts or rejects it. Such a proposal, while unlikely to annoy the opponent, can be disadvantageous, as the player may subsequently notice a strong move and regret the inability to withdraw the offer. **See also** 14, The Drawn Game.

The opponent of a player who offered a draw in this manner has the right to require the player who offered the draw to move before deciding whether to accept the offer, and may respond, "Make your move first," or words to that effect, or remain silent. In any case, the offer may not be withdrawn.

**14B4. Flag fall during pending draw offer.**

A player who offers a draw may claim a win on time (13C) if the opponent oversteps the time limit while considering the proposal unless the offer is accepted before the flag fall (5G) is claimed. **See also** 14, The Drawn Game.

**14B5. Repeated offers.**

Repeated draw offers may be construed as annoying the opponent, and penalties are possible at the discretion of the TD (20G). If the first offer has been declined, it is improper to offer another draw unless the opponent has since offered a draw or the position has changed substantially.

*TD TIP: It is a good idea for a director to issue a warning before applying any penalties for repeated draw offers.*

**14B6. Premature or prearranged draws.**

It is unethical and unsporting to agree to a draw before a serious contest has begun. The same is true of all arrangements to prearrange game results. In case of clear violations of the moral principles of the game, penalties should be imposed at the director's discretion. **See also** 20L, Manipulating results.

*TD TIP: Trying to enforce this rule is difficult. Forcing two players to continue playing when they are resolute on obtaining a result of a draw will produce a sometimes very quick game with many moves resulting in a draw anyhow. Often last-round games may not be prearranged; however, due to prize fund distribution considerations the*



*result can be easily predicted. In cases involving prearranged draws it is wise to have clear and irrefutable evidence before imposing any penalties.*

### **14C. Triple occurrence of position.**

The game is drawn upon a correct claim by the player on the move when the same position is about to appear for at least the third time or has just appeared for at least the third time, the same player being on move each time. In both cases, the position is considered the same if pieces of the same kind and color occupy the same squares and if the possible moves of all the pieces are the same, including the right to castle (8A2, 8A3, 8A4) or to capture a pawn *en passant* (8F5). **See also** 14C8, Sudden death time pressure; 14C9, Claimant's scoresheet; and 15H, Reporting of results.

*TD TIP: Remember a triple occurrence draw claim is a draw offer (Rule 14, The Drawn Game).*

#### **14C1. No repetition of moves or perpetual check draw.**

There is no rule regarding a draw by *repetition of moves*. The draw is based on repetition of *position*. The three positions need not be consecutive, and the intervening moves do not matter. There is also no rule regarding *perpetual check*. It is irrelevant whether the claimant of 14C is delivering check or whether the thrice-repeated position involves check.

*TD TIP: "Perpetual check" and "three consecutive positions" are often-occurring special cases of 14C, Triple occurrence of position; therefore, claimants need to make a 14C claim in order to try to secure a triple occurrence of position draw when these special cases occur; however, if a player makes a "perpetual check" or "three consecutive positions" claim it is considered first a draw offer (Rule 14, The Drawn Game).*

#### **14C2. How to claim.**

If a move is required to complete the third occurrence of the position, the player claiming the draw under 14C should write this move on the scoresheet but not play the move on the board, stop both clocks (5I), and state the claim. If no move is required to complete the repetition, the player should stop both clocks without moving and state the claim.

In both cases, if the opponent agrees, the game is drawn. If the opponent does not agree, the claimant may make the claim to a director. If a director denies the claim, the claimant is still obligated to play any announced or recorded move. The director awards the opponent two extra minutes. **See also** 14C3, Player must be on move; 14C4, Claim after moving without pressing clock; and 14C7, Irrevocability of claim.

#### **14C3. Player must be on move.**

Only a player to move may claim a draw under 14C. If the opponent is on move a player may not claim, and any claim the player may have made before pressing the clock is invalid; however, the claim is then considered a draw offer (14C7). The right to claim is restored to that player if the same position appears again with the same player on move, or if any other position appears for at least the third time with the same player on move. **See also** 14B, Agreement.

#### **14C4. Claim after moving without pressing clock.**

A player who moves and then does not press the clock (5H), but allows it to run, retains the right to claim a draw under 14C. However, this procedure is not recommended. The player who moves and allows the clock to run will lose the time that elapses before a ruling if the claim is not upheld. It is preferred that the player stops both clocks (5I) in order to retain the right to claim a draw under 14C.

#### **14C5. Claimant's clock continues to run.**

If a player who claims a draw under 14C fails to stop the clocks, the director should instruct the player to stop them.

#### **14C6. Resolution of claim.**

If the claim is found to be correct, the game is drawn. If the claim is found to be incorrect, two minutes shall be added to the opponent's remaining unused time.

#### **14C7. Irrevocability of claim.**

A player who makes a draw claim under 14C cannot withdraw it; however, it is still considered a draw offer (14). If a player moves, then claims a draw and presses the clock (5H), or claims a draw, then moves and presses the clock, the move stands, and this is considered an offer of a draw (14). **See also 14B, Agreement.**

#### **14C8. Sudden death time pressure.**

In sudden death, a player with less than five minutes remaining may be awarded a draw by triple occurrence of position based on the observation of a director, deputy, or impartial witness(es). A player may stop both clocks to see a director in order to demonstrate the ability to force a triple occurrence of position. **See also 14C, Triple occurrence of position.**

#### **14C9. Claimant's scoresheet.**

Except for 14C8, the claimant must have a scoresheet adequate (13C7) to demonstrate the validity of the claim.

#### **14D. Insufficient material to continue.**

The game is drawn when one of the following endings exists as of the most recently determined legal move, in which the possibility of a win is excluded for either side (effective 1-1-19). **See also 15H, Reporting of results:**

*TD TIP: Remember a 14D draw claim is first a draw offer (Rule 14, The Drawn Game).*

##### **14D1. King vs. king.**

King vs. king.

##### **14D2. King vs. king with bishop or knight.**

King vs. king with bishop or knight.

##### **14D3. King and bishop vs. king and bishop.**

King and bishop vs. king and bishop, with both bishops on diagonals of the same color.

##### **14D4. No legal moves leading to checkmate by opponent.**

There are no legal moves that could lead to the player being checkmated by the opponent.

#### **14E. Insufficient material to win on time.**

The game is drawn even when a player exceeds the time limit if one of the following conditions exists as of the most recently determined legal move (effective 1-1-19) **See also 15H, Reporting of results:**

*TD TIP: Remember a 14E draw claim is first a draw offer (Rule 14, The Drawn Game).*

##### **14E1. Lone king.**

Opponent has only a lone king.

##### **14E2. King and bishop or king and knight.**

Opponent has only king and bishop or king and knight, and does not have a forced win.

##### **14E3. King and two knights.**

Opponent has only king and two knights, the player has no pawns, and opponent does not have a forced win.

#### **14F. The 50-move rule.**

*TD TIP: Remember a 14F draw claim is first a draw offer (Rule 14, The Drawn Game).*

*TD TIP: a 14F draw claim should only use the standards outlined in 14F. The standards for a triple occurrence of position claim, particularly Rule 13C7, Definition of reasonably complete scoresheet, do not apply here.*

##### **14F1. Explanation.**

The game is drawn when the player on move claims a draw and demonstrates that the last 50 consecutive moves have been made by each side without any capture or pawn move. If the director wishes to allow more than 50 moves



for certain positions, details must be posted at the tournament before the first round. **See also** [15H, Reporting of results](#).

#### **14F2. Resolution.**

If the claim is found to be correct, the game is drawn. If it is found to be incorrect, two minutes shall be added to the opponent's remaining unused time.

#### **14F3. Winning position irrelevant.**

If a valid claim exists, the game is drawn regardless of the position. Even if the opponent can show an immediate checkmate, the game is drawn.

#### **14F4. Director may count moves in sudden death.**

In sudden death, a player with fewer than five minutes remaining and a simplified position in which no pawn moves or captures seem likely may stop both clocks, declare to a director an intention to invoke the 50-move rule when possible, and ask for assistance in counting moves. A director who agrees this is appropriate may count moves or use a deputy or a clock with a move counter to do so.

- a. If the director or the deputy will count moves, the count should begin by crediting moves already made and listed on the scoresheet of the player intending to claim. An opponent who believes a different number of moves have been made should present this case if and when the count reaches 50.
- b. The director or deputy may either keep score, make check marks, or combine the two.
- c. After the count by the director or deputy begins, neither player has a right to know the count until 50 moves are reached. At that point the game is declared drawn unless the opponent successfully challenges the move count.
- d. The opponent may challenge either the moves on the claimant's scoresheet before the director/deputy count, the count itself, or both, but must have a scoresheet adequate ([13C7](#)) to support the challenge.
- e. If the challenge is upheld, the game shall continue with the director or deputy resuming from the corrected count. If the claimant's scoresheet is responsible for the wrong count, two minutes shall be added to the remaining unused time of the claimant's opponent. If the director/deputy count was wrong, there shall be no time adjustment.
- f. The director may insert a clock with a move counter that shows the remaining time of both players, set the move counter to zero, and order play to resume. When the clock indicates that both sides have completed 50 further moves, either player may claim a draw. If this method is used, the director should inform the players that if a move is erroneously not counted or double counted, the players should stop the clock and notify the director.

#### **14G. Both flags down in sudden death.**

The game is drawn if both flags are down in a sudden death time control and either player points this out. If a player whose flag is still up claims a win on time but does not stop the clock in time to prevent the flag from falling, the game is drawn, unless the flag fall was observed by a director or independent witness. **See also** [14G2, Players apparently unaware of situation](#); [15H, Reporting of results](#); [16T, Both players exceed time control](#); and [16Y, Assisting players with time management prohibited](#).

*TD TIP: Remember a [14G draw claim](#) is first a draw offer ([Rule 14, The Drawn Game](#)).*

*TD TIP: An increment time control of 30 seconds or more is not considered sudden death; therefore, [14G](#) does not apply.*

#### **14G1. Checkmate and both flags down.**

In a sudden death control, if a player points out that both flags are down prior to a checkmate, the game is drawn. After considering all available evidence, including testimony by the players and any witnesses, a director who is unable to determine whether the claim of both flags down occurred first shall deny the time claim and rule the checkmate valid.

**14G2. Players apparently unaware of situation.**

If a sudden death game continues with both flags down, the director may rule it a draw. This exception to the standard rule that only players may call flags down is justified by the need to avoid delaying the tournament. See also [14J, Draw declared by director](#); [16T, Both players exceed time control](#); [16Y, Assisting players with time management prohibited](#); [18G, Adjudications](#); and [21D, Intervening in games](#).

*TD TIP: An increment time control of 30 seconds or more is not considered sudden death; therefore, 14G does not apply.*

**14H. Claim of insufficient losing chances in sudden death.**

No claim of insufficient losing chances in sudden death will be allowed.

**Variation 14H. Claim of insufficient losing chances in sudden death.**

This variation need not be announced in advance publicity.

**14H1. Explanation.**

This procedure is not available for games in which a clock is being used with either the time delay or the increment properly set, whether the game begins with such a clock or one is added during the game ([14H2a](#)). If such a clock is not being used, or such a clock is being used without the time delay or increment feature in operation, the following procedure is available.

In a sudden death time control, a player on the move with two minutes or less of remaining time may stop the clock and may make a claim of insufficient losing chances.

**14H2. Resolution of Variation 14H claim.**

When ruling, the director should not consider the ratings of those playing. A low-rated player who claims a draw vs. a Master should obtain the same ruling as a Master with the same position who claims a draw vs. a low-rated player. The director should also not consider the times on the clocks. See also [14H3, Conferring with players](#).

The director has four possible ways to resolve the claim.

*TD TIP: Except for rule [5F5](#) there is no rule allowing players to ask for a properly set delay clock to be placed on their game, which would replace an analog clock or a non-delay digital clock. For delay capable clocks not set with delay, see rule [16P1](#). Only the TD can initiate placing a clock with time delay capabilities on a game after a Variation 14H claim has been made and the steps of 14H2 have been applied. As a result, the player wishing to place a time delay clock on the game must first make a Variation 14H claim.*

*TD TIP: Remember a Variation 14H draw claim is first a draw offer ([Rule 14, The Drawn Game](#)).*

**14H2a. The claim is unclear and a delay clock is available for the game.**

A director who believes the claim is neither clearly correct ([14H2c](#)) nor clearly incorrect ([14H2d](#)), but is instead uncertain as to the correctness of the claim, may place a delay clock on the game, setting it as follows: The claimant gets half of the claimant's remaining time (rounded to the nearest second); the opponent's time is unadjusted; the time delay is set for the standard delay announced at the start of the tournament. After the claimant's clock is started, the Variation 14H draw request by the claimant becomes a draw offer under [14B3, Draw offer before moving](#). Penalties for rule infractions remain standard. The claimant may win, lose, or draw the game.

**14H2b. The claim is unclear and a delay clock is not available for the game.**

A director who believes the claim is neither clearly correct ([14H2c](#)) nor clearly incorrect ([14H2c](#)), but is uncertain as to the correctness of the claim, and does not have a delay clock available, may:

1. Deny the claim while inviting a later re-claim. There is no adjustment of either player's time. After the claimant's clock is started, the Variation 14H draw request by the claimant becomes a draw offer under [14B3, Draw offer before moving](#). Penalties for rule infractions remain standard. The claimant may win, lose, or draw the game.

2. Watch the game while reserving judgment on the claim. The director should make every effort to resolve the claim before the flag of either player falls ([5G](#)). There is no adjustment of either player's time. After the claimant's clock is started, the Variation 14H draw request by the claimant also becomes a draw offer under [14B3, Draw offer before moving](#). Penalties for rule infractions remain standard. The claimant may win, lose, or draw the game.

#### **14H2c. The claim is clearly correct.**

A director who believes the claim is clearly correct should declare the game drawn. The draw shall be awarded if the director believes that a Class C player would have little chance to lose the position against a Master with both players having ample time. The exact losing chances of any position cannot be calculated, but a director wishing a more precise standard may consider little to mean less than 10 percent. A director unsure whether a position meets the above standard should use option [14H2a](#) or [14H2b](#). **See also** [14I, Advice on claims of insufficient losing chances in sudden death under rule Variation 14H](#).

#### **14H2d. The claim is clearly incorrect.**

A director who believes the claim is clearly incorrect should deny the claim and may subtract up to one minute from the claimant's remaining time. After the claimant's clock is started, the Variation 14H draw request by the claimant also becomes a draw offer under [14B3, Draw offer before moving](#). Penalties for rule infractions remain standard. The claimant may win, lose, or draw the game. **See also** [14I, Advice on claims of insufficient losing chances in sudden death under rule Variation 14H](#).

***TD TIP:** If a director chooses to resolve the claim by enforcing [14H2a, The claim is unclear, a delay clock is available for the game](#), or [14H2b, The claim is unclear, a delay clock is not available for the game](#), then the director should inform the claimant and opponent that when the claimant's clock is started that rule [14B3, Draw offer before moving](#), is in effect. The opponent has the right to ask the claimant to make a move before the draw offer is rejected or accepted by the opponent; however, if the claimant makes a checkmating ([13A](#)) or stalemating ([14A](#)) move, the game is over.*

***TD TIP:** Applying rule [14H2a, The claim is unclear, a delay clock is available for the game](#), is the preferred method of resolving a Variation 14H claim for directors who wish to ensure the result of the game is determined by the players, rather than any outside influence.*

#### **14H3. Conferring with players.**

A director who is unsure how to rule may confer privately with either player or with both players separately regarding the player's plans. The director should be careful not to say anything that might assist the player if the game is resumed.

#### **14H4. Player with fallen flag may not claim.**

A player whose flag is down ([5G](#)) may not claim insufficient losing chances.

#### **14H5. Delay Clock, a clock with time delay capabilities, or Increment clock, a clock with increment capabilities.**

If either a properly set Delay Clock ([5F](#)) or a properly set Increment Clock is used, [Variation 14H](#) and [14I](#) are not in effect; i.e., no claim of insufficient losing chances may be made. The reaction time provided for by the delay or the added increment time for each move is likely to be sufficient for a player with insufficient losing chances to hold the position.

### **14I. Advice on claims of insufficient losing chances in sudden death under Rule Variation 14H.**

#### **14I1. Consulting strong players.**

If the director is unsure about how to rule on a [Variation 14H](#) claim, the director may consult a Master or near-Master who has no stake in the outcome of the game in question. The director should be careful to explain the conditions of [Variation 14H](#) to such a player.

#### **14I2. Types of positions.**

In complex positions often neither side has a valid claim, while in simple positions both sides may have one. For instance, with much material on the board a Master may be down a piece without compensation but still has better than a small chance to beat a C player. But in endings such as described in [14I3](#), even a player behind in material should sometimes be awarded the draw.

#### **14I3. Opposite-colored bishop endings.**

In some opposite-colored bishop endings (one player having a light-squared bishop and the other player a dark-squared bishop) with most or all pawns fixed, a Master, even if a pawn or two ahead, may have little chance to outplay a C-player; these positions should be ruled draws.

#### **14I4. Queen vs. queen, rook vs. rook.**

With no pawns and queen vs. queen or rook vs. rook, the draw should be awarded unless it is one of the rare positions in which there is a quick forced win. If the claimant has additional material and the opponent does not, the ruling should still ordinarily be a draw.

#### **14I5. Bishop or knight vs. rook, rook vs. rook and knight, queen vs. queen and bishop or knight.**

With no pawns the player behind in material should not be awarded a draw, but it may be appropriate for the director to apply [Variation 14H2a](#) or [Variation 14H2b](#).

#### **14I6. King vs. king, rook pawn, and possibly bishop.**

A player with a lone king should be awarded a draw vs. king and rook pawn, or king, rook pawn, and bishop controlling squares of the opposite color than the promotion square, if the claimant's king can stop the pawn from promoting. As in [14I4](#) and all other such cases, if the claimant has additional material, the ruling should still ordinarily be a draw.

#### **14I7. Rook vs. rook and bishop.**

With no pawns, unless there is an immediate win of material or an unusual problem position, a draw claim with a rook vs. opponent's rook and bishop should be denied in accordance with [Variation 14H2d](#). The claim is clearly incorrect.

#### **14J. Draw declared by director.**

On rare occasions the director may encounter a situation in which a ruling is required and a decision in favor of either player would be unfair to the opponent (for examples see [20E2d](#) and [20E2h](#)). In such situations the director may rule a draw on the grounds that this is more equitable (i.e., less inequitable) than any other ruling. A draw may also be ruled in cases like [19E](#), [Sealed move envelope missing](#), if the director recalls that the position was about equal but does not remember the exact position or clock times. **See also** [1C2](#), [Director discretion](#); [14G2](#), [Players apparently unaware of situation](#); [16T](#), [Both players exceed time control](#); [16Y](#), [Assisting players with time management prohibited](#); [18G](#), [Adjudications](#), [21D](#), [Intervening in games](#); and [21K](#), [Use of director's power](#).

#### **14K. Director declares draw for lack of progress.**

If one or both of the following occur(s) then the TD may declare the game drawn:

1. The same position has appeared, as in [14C](#), for at least five consecutive alternate moves by each player.
2. Any consecutive series of 75 moves have been completed by each player without the movement of any pawn and without any capture. If the last move resulted in checkmate, that shall take precedence

## 15. The Recording of Games

### 15A. Manner of keeping score.

In the course of play each player is required to record the game (both the player's and the opponent's moves), move after move, as clearly and legibly as possible, on the scoresheet prescribed for the competition. Algebraic notation is standard, but descriptive or computer notation is permitted. The player must first make the move, and then record it on the scoresheet. The scoresheet shall be visible to the arbiter (tournament directors) and the opponent throughout the game. **See also** Chapter 3, Chess Notation; 13C3, Filling in moves with flag down; 13I, Refusal to obey rules; 35F6, Scorekeeping options; and 43, Scoresheets.

***TD TIP:** While the rule's wording indicates making the move first and keeping the scoresheet (paper or electronic) visible at all times, it brings US Chess in alignment with FIDE procedures and soothes many of the fears surrounding electronic scoresheets—see Rule 43—it is a huge change for many players. TDs are advised to first (and possibly second and third) issue warnings to players that do not comply with this revised rule before enforcing any time penalties (1C2a. prescribes adding two minutes to the opponent's unused time).*

#### 15A. (Variation I) Paper scoresheet variation.

The player using a paper scoresheet may first make the move, and then write it on the scoresheet, or vice versa. This variation does not need to be advertised in advance. The scoresheet shall be visible to the arbiter (tournament directors) and the opponent throughout the game.

***TD TIP:** TDs may penalize a player that is in violation of 20C, Use of notes prohibited if the player is first writing the move and repeatedly altering that move on their scoresheet before completing a move on the board.*

***TD TIP:** When TDs enforce the "visible scoresheet" portion of this rule they are advised to first warn players that do not make their scoresheet (or score keeping device) visible to the TD and their opponent.*

#### 15A1. Players unable to keep score.

- a. Players determined by the director to be unable to keep score due to physical handicaps may have assistance in scorekeeping as described in 35F, Rules for visually impaired and disabled players, and should be excused from scorekeeping if such assistance is unavailable.
- b. Players determined by the director to be unable to keep score for religious reasons may be excused from scorekeeping or permitted to have assistance as in 35F, Rules for visually impaired and disabled players, at the director's discretion.
- c. Beginners who have not learned to keep score may be excused from scorekeeping, at the director's discretion.

Players excused from scorekeeping are not entitled to make claims that require scoresheets; those who have assistance retain such rights.

***TD TIP:** Directors often deduct time from the clocks of players at the start of the game whom they excuse from keeping score (the most common example would be that of a player excused from keeping score for genuine religious reasons). Their opponents will need to give up thinking time in order to keep score, which the excused player need not do. A good rule of thumb is to deduct 5% of the total game time allotted for each individual player, up to 10 minutes, from the player's clock that is excused from keeping score. Unless a clock is being used that can be set with seconds as well as minutes and hours (usually a digital clock), partial minutes should be rounded to the nearest minute. For example, in a 20/60 SD/30 contest the player excused from keeping score would lose 5 minutes (5%×90 minutes = 4.5 minutes, rounded to 5 minutes) on an analog clock and 4.5 minutes on a digital clock with that capability. In a 30/60 SD/60 game that same player would lose 6 minutes (5%×120 minutes = 6 minutes) on both an analog and digital clock. In a G/45 contest that same player would lose 2 minutes (5%×45 minutes = 2.25 minutes, rounded to 2 minutes) on an analog clock and 2.25 minutes on a digital clock with that capability. A 40/120 20/60 game can exceed 200 minutes of playing time, as long as 20 moves are made every hour after the first*

*time control; therefore, that same player would lose no more than 10 minutes ( $5\% \times 200 \text{ minutes} = 10 \text{ minutes}$  or  $5\% \times 300 \text{ minutes} = 15 \text{ minutes}$ , which is rounded to 10 minutes because it exceeds the 10 minute maximum limit).*

### **15B. Scorekeeping in time pressure, non-sudden death time control.**

If either player has less than five minutes remaining in a non-sudden death time control and does not have additional time (increment) of 30 seconds or more added with each move, both players are excused from the obligation to keep score until the end of the time control period. Doing so, however, may make it impossible to claim a draw by triple occurrence of position (14C) or the 50-move rule (14F) or a win on time forfeit (13C). Scorekeeping by both players must resume with the start of the next time control period, and missing moves should be filled in (15F).

***TD TIP:** Only players in games with increment time controls of 30 seconds or more and using properly set increment capable clocks are required to keep score at all times, even in the last five minutes of any time control period. Players using improperly set increment clocks or non-increment capable clocks, even those clocks adjusted for an increment time control, are regulated by Rule 15B*

### **15C. Scorekeeping in time pressure, sudden death time control.**

If either player has less than five minutes remaining in a sudden death time control and does not have additional time (increment) of 30 seconds or more added with each move, both players are excused from the obligation to keep score. A scoresheet is not required to win on time in a sudden death control (13C).

***TD TIP:** Only players in games with increment time controls of 30 seconds or more and using properly set increment capable clocks are required to keep score at all times, even in the last five minutes of any time control period. Players using improperly set increment clocks or non-increment capable clocks, even those clocks adjusted for an increment time control, are regulated by Rule 15C.*

### **15D. Use of opponent's scoresheet for assistance.**

A player who has an incomplete scoresheet (13C7) and wishes to consult the opponent's scoresheet for assistance may ask to borrow it from the opponent under the following conditions:

#### **15D1. Clock times.**

Both players have at least five minutes remaining in the current time control.

#### **15D2. Borrower's clock runs.**

The clock of the player making such a request is running and shall continue to run until the scoresheet has been returned.

#### **15D3. Compliance.**

The opponent is urged to comply with such a request, but this is not mandatory. If the opponent denies the request, the player may stop both clocks and see a director. A director who agrees that the request is appropriate shall instruct the opponent to lend the player the scoresheet. The opponent may not refuse as all scoresheets belong to the organizers. **See also 15G, Ownership of scoresheets.**

#### **15D4. Excessive requests.**

Repeated requests of this type may be deemed by the director to be inappropriate, and the offender may be penalized under 20G, **Annoying behavior prohibited.**

### **15E. Borrowing not needed.**

A player who is able to read the opponent's scoresheet without borrowing it is free to use the information gained for assistance in keeping score.

### **15F. Reconstruction after time control.**



After the end of a time control, if the next control is not sudden-death, each player must make all efforts to fill in any missing moves on that player's scoresheet.

#### **15F1. Reconstruction of scoresheet by one player.**

After the completion of a time control, a player who alone has to complete the scoresheet must do so before making another move, and with that player's clock running if the opponent has made a move. An additional set and board may be used.

#### **15F2. Reconstruction of scoresheets by both players.**

After the completion of a time control, if both players need to complete their scoresheets, the clocks should be stopped until they are completed. Additional chess sets and boards may be used. This does not apply if the director rules that it is unnecessary. See also 15F4, [Reconstruction when the next time control is sudden death](#).

#### **15F3. Reconstruction impossible or unnecessary.**

If it is impossible or unnecessary to reconstruct the moves as prescribed above, the game shall continue. The players should make a clear diagram of the position reached, and the next move played will be considered the first one of the following time control unless the players agree that a later move number has been reached.

***TD TIP:** For example: in a 40/90 20/30 game both players were in time trouble in the first time control and blitzed off many moves. Both players agree that they made time control but cannot reconstruct the game to reach the current board position. The position is diagrammed and the players continue from that position with the next move by White being move number 41 (or another move number greater than 40 if both players agree). The scoresheet from that point forward is considered complete (13C7) in order to make any claim including a draw by triple occurrence of position (14C) or the 50-move rule (14F) or a win on time forfeit (13C).*

#### **15F4. Reconstruction when the next time control is sudden death.**

Upon making the time control, if the next control is sudden death, it is less important to fill in the missing moves. The director has the option of waiving the requirement of reconstructing.

#### **15G. Ownership of scoresheets.**

The scoresheets of all games in a tournament are the property of the sponsoring organization(s). If the organizer requires that a copy of each game score be submitted by the players, duplicate scoresheets must be provided, and players who fail to submit scoresheets may be penalized.

#### **15H. Reporting of results.**

When a game is completed, the result must be immediately reported in the manner required by the director. Both players, not just the winner, are responsible for registering the result. If they do not do so, they may each be penalized. See also 29H, [Unreported results](#).

#### **15I. Results reported incorrectly.**

If the director learns of the correct result for any just-completed round either before or just after pairings have been made for the next round, the director should correct the pairings if this can be done without disturbing too many games already in progress. The correction may either be based on the correct result or on treating the incorrectly reported result as an unreported result (29H), at the director's discretion. Whichever of these is chosen, the result must be corrected before pairing subsequent rounds, if any, and the corrected result shall be used for prize purposes.

If the error occurred in an earlier round, other than the round described above, the director shall still proceed as above, but has discretion as to whether to use the correct result or the incorrect result for prize purposes. This decision should be based on how much earlier in the tournament the error occurred and how many pairings were affected.

***TD TIP:** Sometimes errors occur in the reporting of game results. Those errors need to be corrected immediately. Fortunately the same methods used to correct unreported game results also work very well for incorrectly reported game results. The difficulty arises when incorrectly reported results do not come to the director's attention until after several rounds, or even the end of the tournament. As long as there is no chance of a prize being involved, correcting the results is easy. When prizes or a chance to win a prize are involved the director should take care.*

*Correcting incorrectly reported results that cause a player, paired in easier score groups for many rounds, to suddenly qualify for a prize seems unfair. It is the player's responsibility to check the wall charts for errors. While there is no question that such an incorrect result should be rated, the director needs to decide on a case-by-case basis whether or not to allow the new correct results to affect the awarding of prizes.*

## 16. The Use of the Chess Clock

### 16A. Allowable time controls.

The US Chess office maintains a list, available on request, directly from the US Chess office or at [www.uschess.org](http://www.uschess.org), of the currently allowable time limits for different types of tournaments. **See also** [5C](#), [Ratable time controls](#).

### 16B. How to set clocks.

#### 16B1. Analog clocks.

Clocks should be set so that each unit will register six o'clock when the first time-control period expires. If there is a second time control of any length of one hour or less it should expire at seven o'clock (even if that requires that the clocks be reset), a third such control at eight o'clock, etc. **See also** [5F1a](#), [Increment capable clock not available](#); [5F2a](#), [Delay capable clock not available](#); [35F5](#), [Special Clock](#).

#### 16B2. Digital clocks.

Time delay or increment clocks should be set according to the manufacturer's directions so that any visual device used to indicate that a player's time has been exhausted for all time control periods is activated. Such mechanisms may include one or more of a light, a display of all zeros, or a display of a flag. Players should explain the flag fall mechanism and the clock's operation to their opponents. The time delay or increment should be set according to the director's instructions, with the time delay or increment in force starting at move one ([SE1](#)) unless the time control specifies otherwise. Clocks equipped to do so should be set for a Bronstein or a delay mode for delay controls or for Fischer, added time, or increment mode for increment time controls.

***TD TIP:** Not all digital clocks correctly give the increment for move one when you set increment on the clock. For clocks that don't, the increment time in seconds should be added manually to the base time, if possible, so each player gets the increment for move one. For example, for G/3;inc2, each player gets 3.02 (three minutes and two seconds) to complete move one. If the clock only gives 3.00 for each player's first move when the clock is set—with a base time of three minutes and increment of two seconds—then, if possible, two seconds should be added to each player's base time when setting the clock. If a game is started without the increment applied for move one, it is recommended that the TD not allow the clock to be subsequently adjusted to add the increment for move one. This failure to adjust the clock initially should not be allowed as grounds to contest a later time forfeit claim.*

#### 16B2a. Sound.

Digital clocks must be set to produce no sound. This includes, but is not limited to: beeping when a player has run out of time in the final time control; beeping when a player reaches the end of any time control; warning beeps to indicate a player is approaching the end of a time control; and beeping when a player presses the clock. A digital clock that can be set to produce no sound is preferable to a clock that cannot.

#### 16B2b.

**Clock of player not out of time continues to run.** If possible, digital clocks must be set so that when one player runs out of time in a time control, the opponent's clock continues to run normally. This capability is variously called "halt on end," "claim mode," or "freeze." A digital clock that can be set to satisfy the requirement of this rule is preferable to a clock that cannot.

#### 16B2c.

**Players are responsible for setting clock correctly.** Players are responsible for knowing how to set their own clocks to conform to rule [16B2](#). Players should be prepared to explain the clock's operation to the opponent before



the start of the game. This includes how the clock indicates a player has run out of time and how to pause both clocks if necessary to summon a director. **See also** [5F7, Players responsible for knowing how to set the clock](#).

For more information on delay or increment clocks see [Chapter 4, Equipment Standards; 5F, Standard Timer; 35F5, Special clock; 42B, Digital clocks; 42D, Delay clock preferable in sudden death](#); and [42E, Increment clock preferable in increment time controls](#).

**TD TIP:** *Directors are not expected to know how to set all digital clocks (5F).*

**TD TIP:** *Some players due to incapacity or due to religious reasons cannot use some types of clocks such as electric, electronic or with digital displays. After a director determines that such conditions are genuine, an analog clock is permissible. Some players for the same reasons cannot use a clock at all. In such cases, the opponent may be asked, but not required, to press the clock on behalf of both players, a method that some TDs report has worked well. The TD may also require such a player to provide an assistant, or may help such a player find an assistant among spectators or players with byes. Directors often deduct time from the clocks of players excused from setting and pressing the clock. See also the TD TIP after 15A1, Players unable to keep score.*

## **16C. Removing a player's hand from clock.**

Players must remove their hands from the clock button after depressing the button and must keep their hands off and away from the clock until it is time to press it again. **See also** [5H, Pressing the clock](#).

### **16C1. Using the clock.**

Each player must operate the clock with the same hand that moves the pieces.

### **16C2. Picking up clock.**

Each player is forbidden to pick up the clock.

## **16D. Special rules for time pressure.**

**See** [11D1, Illegal move in time pressure; 15B, Scorekeeping in time pressure, non-sudden death time control](#) and [15C, Scorekeeping in time pressure, sudden death](#).

## **16E. When flag is considered down.**

The flag is considered to have fallen when either player points this out. **See also** [5G, The flag](#) and [13C1, Only players may call flag](#).

## **16F. Evidence provided by flag.**

In the absence of an evident defect in the clock or flag mechanism, the fallen flag ([5G](#)) is considered as proof that the time-control period has ended or that time has run out for that time period. **See also** [16G, Premature flag fall](#) and [16H, Apparent flag fall can cause forfeit](#).

## **16G. Premature flag fall.**

- a. With an analog clock, if a clear white space shows between the right side of the minute hand of the clock and the left side of the 12 marker on the clock's face, the flag is considered to have fallen prematurely.
- b. With a delay clock, if the device used to indicate that a player's time is exhausted is activated, due to an incorrect or defective move counter, an incorrect setting, or a defect ([16O](#)) of any kind, the flag is considered to have fallen prematurely. Since the move counters, on clocks equipped with them, may not be used as the only evidence in claiming that the prescribed number of moves were not completed in the allotted time ([13C](#)), both players' scoresheets may be used as evidence of an incorrect or defective delay clock.

If either 16Ga or 16Gb occurs, the director should deny the claim of a time forfeit (13C) and the game is continued, with a different clock, if possible. A later time-forfeit claim (13C) in that control by either player is still allowed.

### 16H. Apparent flag fall can cause forfeit.

- a. Analog clock: even though it may seem that the flag (5G) fell early, if the clear white space described in 16Ga is not apparent, the player's time has expired.

*TD TIP: For instance, if the right side of the minute hand is touching the left side of the hour marker, even though it may not reach to the center of that marker, the time has been used up. Players should realize that this possibility exists and should refrain from using all their apparent time if not essential.*

- b. Delay clock: because each delay clock manufacturer applies the delay and flag fall procedures in slightly different ways, it may then appear that the flag fell early as described in 16Gb; however, the player's time has expired.

### 16I. Starting the clock.

At the time determined for the start of the game, after the board and pieces are set up, the clock of the player with the white pieces is started. During the game, each of the players, having moved, stops the player's clock and starts that of the opponent. See also 5H, [Pressing the clock](#) and 16N, [Beginning the round](#).

### 16J. Black not present.

If Black is not present for the start of the game, White shall start his own clock, make his move on the board, and start Black's clock.

*TD TIP: If a director observes that White has started Black's clock without moving, the director should remind White to make a move immediately. If, upon arriving, Black observes that White has started Black's clock without moving, Black may immediately start White's clock or stop the clock and make a claim. Either way, if the clock has a move counter, it may be necessary to adjust it before the game commences. The director may assess the standard penalty (1C2A), or other penalties if appropriate, against the player who improperly started Black's clock without moving.*

*If White makes a move before the clock is started, the move counter may be off by a half-move. If White starts Black's clock without moving, the counter may be off by a half-move or a full move. The director should, at an early stage in the game, verify the setting of the move counter, and ask the players to correct it if necessary.*

### 16K. Both players late.

If both players arrive late, the first to arrive must split the elapsed time before starting the opponent's clock. For example, if the first player to arrive is 40 minutes late, the clocks should be set to reflect 20 minutes of elapsed time on each side. See also 13F, [Late arrival by both players](#); and 13D, [Late arrival for game](#).

#### 16K1. Elapsed time not reflected.

If the first late player to arrive fails to do this and instead sets the clocks to reflect no elapsed time on either side, this setting stands unless corrected by a director or changed by agreement between the two players.

#### 16K2. Elapsed time incorrectly reflected.

If the first late player to arrive sets the clocks to give the opponent a disadvantage, such as charging the opponent with all the elapsed time, and this is noticed by or pointed out to the director, the improper times shall be corrected and the player responsible for them penalized at the director's discretion.

### 16L. Possible stipulations.

The director may require that clocks face a certain direction or that Black or White sit on a particular side of the table. In the absence of such a requirement, unless Black is late arriving for the start of the game (39A1), Black determines which side of the board the clock is on, and the player arriving at the chessboard first may choose either side of the table to sit on. See also 39A1, [Black player late](#).

### **16M. Equipment needed to start clock.**

Except for splitting the elapsed time if both players are late or lack equipment, no player may subtract time from a late opponent except by starting a clock. A late opponent's clock may not be started until the board and pieces are in place. If equipment becomes available only after the round has started, the elapsed time from the beginning shall be divided equally between the two players. **See also** 13F, [Late arrival by both players](#) and 13D, [Late arrival for game](#).

### **16N. Beginning the round.**

With the exception of games rescheduled by the director, all clocks should start promptly at the time specified for the round. If feasible, the director should give a warning and then announce that play must begin. In a tournament where it is impractical for the director to announce that play should start, players should be urged in advance to begin games promptly and informed that no permission is needed to start clocks at the specified time if the pairings are posted. **See also** 5H, [Pressing the clock](#); 6A, [The first move](#); and 16I, [Starting the clock](#).

### **16O. Defective clocks.**

Every indication given by a clock is considered to be conclusive in the absence of evident defects. A player who wishes to claim any such defect must do so as soon as aware of it. A clock with an obvious defect should be replaced, and the time used by each player up to that time should be indicated on the new clock as accurately as possible.

The director should use judgment in determining what times shall be shown on the new clock. A director who decides to subtract time from one or both players shall leave that player(s) with the greater of either five minutes to the time control or at least one minute for each move the player still needs to meet the time control.

### **16P. Erroneously set clocks.**

An erroneously set clock should be handled in the same fashion as a defective clock. As in 16O, the director should use judgment in deciding whether to make time adjustments. The most common situation of this type involves an analog clock set to expire at 7:00 rather than the correct 6:00. This is best handled by pointing out to both players that the time control expires at 7:00. Clocks can also be reset for the correct time controls and the correct elapsed time for each player.

Sometimes this hour difference is not pointed out and there is an eventual time claim. Even though the clock may show 6:00 with a flag down, or the signaling device on a delay or digital clock indicates a flag fall, if the total elapsed time shown for both players is about an hour more than possible, considering when the game started, the player should not be forfeited, and should be given the hour in question.

***TD TIP:** Often digital and delay clocks are a challenge to set properly. The director should use judgment in deciding if a digital or delay clock was set improperly deliberately, or inadvertently. Adding two minutes to the injured player's unused time should penalize deliberate incorrect settings. In either case the error(s) should be corrected. If the players cannot adjust the digital or delay clock properly then an analog clock with the proper settings may be used instead. A few common errors in setting digital and delay clocks: (1) using the "Fischer" instead of the proper "Bronstein" setting, (2) secondary sudden death time controls that are set improperly or not at all, and (3) inaccurate move counters.*

***TD TIP:** Directors are encouraged to intervene in the game to correct an incorrectly set clock without requiring a player to make a claim first. Incorrectly set clocks can cause multiple problems for the entire tournament. This intervention is best done early in the game.*

### **16P1. Delay or increment not set.**

If a delay- or increment-capable clock is used at an event with a delay or increment time control and the delay or increment is not set, this is handled in the same fashion as an erroneously set clock. The delay or increment should

be set for the remainder of the game. The director should use his or her best judgement when determining the clock settings.

### **16Q. Interruption of game.**

If the game is to be interrupted for some reason beyond the control of the players, such as a defective clock, disruption of the pieces, re-establishing the position after an illegal move, making the claim of a draw or win or a rules violation, or for any other reason that assistance by the tournament director may be required both clocks should be stopped by one of the players. When doing so, the player must state the reason for stopping the clocks, and see the director if necessary to resolve the situation. **See also** [5I, Stopping the clock](#); [13C6, Claimant's clock](#); [21F, Player requests for rulings](#); and [21F1, Timing of requests](#).

### **16R. Illegal Moves**

**See** [11A, Illegal move during last 10 moves](#); [11D, Illegal move](#); and [16Q, Interruption of game](#).

### **16S. Priority of agreed result over time-forfeit claim.**

A resignation or an agreement to draw remains valid even when it is found later that the flag of one side had fallen. **See also** [13B, Resignation](#); [14B, Agreement](#); and [19G1, Agreed draw and invalid move](#).

### **16T. Both players exceed time control.**

If both players exceed the time control, no claim of time forfeit is possible. In a non-sudden death control, the game continues. In a sudden death control, the game is drawn. **See also** [13C6, Claimants clock](#); [13C13, Player out of time cannot claim](#); [14G, Both flags down in sudden death](#); [14G2, Players apparently unaware of situation](#); and [16Y, Assisting players with time management prohibited](#).

***TD TIP:** An increment time control of 30 seconds or more is not considered sudden death, therefore if both players should exceed time control, the clocks should be reset to the "next" time control of the time increment (e.g. 30 seconds) per move.*

### **16U. Avoiding the need to reset clocks.**

It is recommended for analog clocks that secondary and subsequent time controls allow one hour per player so that the minute hand will be at twelve (12:00) and the flag will fall when the player's time expires. This avoids the need to reset clocks and the problems sometimes caused by resetting. The latter include questions or disputes about player resetting, directors being diverted from other duties to reset, time shortage situations with no flags when players forget to reset, and players whose flags have just fallen resetting the clock before the opponent claims a forfeit win. Check the manufacture's manual for instructions on properly setting a delay clock to reset automatically after the end of the first time control. **See also** [16B, How to set clocks](#) and [16W, resetting clocks when necessary](#).

### **16V. One vs. two controls when time is limited.**

If there is not enough time for a second control of an hour per player, it is recommended the tournament have only one control unless the organizer believes the players would prefer otherwise. For instance, if games must end in two hours, G/60 should be preferred to 30/30 followed by SD/30 unless players have indicated a preference for the latter.

### **16W. Resetting clocks when necessary.**

When using an analog clock, if a period of less than one hour is used for a second or later control period, when both players complete the number of moves required of the previous time-control period, the players should reset both clocks by moving them forward one hour minus the length of the next time-control period. The director may specify alternate procedures. With a few exceptions, properly set digital clocks usually reset automatically. **See also** [16B, How to set clocks](#) and [16U, Avoiding the need to reset clocks](#).

### **16X. Extra minute not added.**

The old rule permitting an extra minute on each side of a mechanical (analog) clock to compensate for possible inaccuracies is no longer in effect.

### **16Y. Assisting players with time management prohibited.**

No one, except a player's opponent, may call that player's attention to the fact that a flag is down, the opponent has moved, or the player has forgotten to press the clock after moving. These prohibitions also apply to the director. For a rare exception regarding calling flags in sudden death, see [14G2, Players apparently unaware of situation](#). **See also** [1C2, Director discretion](#); [11I, Spectators](#); [13CI, Only players may call flag](#); [14J, Draw declared by director](#); [18G2, Director declares game over](#); [20E2, Unsolicited advice](#); [20M5, Spectators cannot make claims](#); [21D, Intervening in games](#); and [21K, Use of director's power](#).

## **17. Scheduling**

### **17A. Determination of game times.**

All games must be played in the tournament rooms at the times designated by the organizers unless the director specifies otherwise. For example, a player whose game ends late or is adjourned may be granted additional time to eat or rest (a half hour is common), or a first-round game may be scheduled for play before the start of the tournament. **See also** [23B, Determination of game times](#).

### **17B. Delayed games.**

If the director grants a player a late start, the opponent may not start the player's clock until the time specified by the director.

#### **17B1. Informing opponent of new time.**

The director should inform the opponent of a player allowed a delayed start of the revised starting time, either by writing the new time on the pairing sheet or by telling the player involved.

#### **17B2. Opponent not informed of new time.**

If the director fails to provide the notice described in [17B1](#), the opponent presumably will start the player's clock at the originally scheduled time. In such cases, the opponent will eventually be required to reset the clocks to reflect the revised starting time and grant the player the time promised by the director.

### **17C. Changes in round times.**

Changes in starting times of rounds should be made only in the event of an emergency. It is especially undesirable to make rounds earlier than previously scheduled, as players may forfeit or lose time as a result.

## **18. The Adjournment of the Game**

### **18A. Description.**

If a game is not finished at the end of the time prescribed for play, the director may indicate that it is time for adjournment or accept the request of either player to adjourn. At that point the player on move, after deciding which move to make, does not play that move on the board but instead writes it in unambiguous notation on the scoresheet, puts the scoresheet and that of the opponent in the sealed move envelope ([18D](#)), seals the envelope, stops both clocks, and then records the remaining time on the outside of the envelope.

Until stopping both clocks the player retains the right to change the sealed move. If the player who is told to adjourn makes a move on the chessboard, for whatever reason, that move becomes the sealed move and cannot be changed. **See also** [9A, Transfer to a vacant square](#).

If either player is recording the game in a scorebook, the director may take possession of the entire score book or allow the sealed move to be written on a separate piece of paper and sealed in the envelope.

### **18B. Sealing a move early.**

In tournaments in which the adjournment time is fixed beforehand, normally after the full period of the first time control, a player who has completed the number of moves required may ask the director for permission to seal early. Such a player absorbs the time remaining before the scheduled adjournment by having his or her remaining time decreased by the amount of time remaining in the session. Such requests are ordinarily granted during the last hour of the session.

### **18C. When to adjourn.**

Unless announcing in advance that all games will adjourn at a specific time, the director has discretion as to when to adjourn any game after the first time control. The wall clock shall control the duration of all playing sessions, but the director should refrain from adjourning a game in which one or both players are in serious time trouble. This situation could arise, for example, if the game was started late and half the elapsed time before the start was not deducted from each clock.

#### **18C1. Adjournment despite time pressure.**

If it is necessary for the start of the next round, a game may be adjourned in a secondary time-control period in which one player is short of time but the other has a large amount. The director should be aware that despite the time pressure of one player, the game might not end soon, delaying the start of the next round.

#### **18C2. Allowing breaks.**

In tournaments with more than one round per day, it is customary to allow a player whose game has just been adjourned a standard amount of time to eat or rest (a half hour is common) before beginning the next game. On occasion, this may require the next round opponent to start that game after the regularly scheduled starting time. **See also** [17A, Determination of game times](#).

### **18D. The sealed move envelope.**

The following should be indicated on the sealed move envelope: names and colors of the players, position immediately before the sealed move, time used by each player, name or color of the player who sealed the move and number of that move, date and time for resumption, and the signatures of both players, indicating they verify and understand the information written on the envelope.

**18E. Custody of sealed move envelope.**

The director is responsible for custody of the envelope.

**18F. Problems of the next-to-last round.**

Substantial effort should be made to complete all unfinished games, especially those involving prize contenders, from previous rounds before the last round begins. This must, however, be balanced by the need to start the final round as close to the scheduled time as possible.

**18F1. Considerations.**

When deciding whether to adjourn games in such cases, the director must weigh the harm to other contenders that might ensue if one of the players loses the final game and then decides to resign the adjourned game, either because a long delay in resumption seems likely or for unethical reasons. On the other hand, delaying the last round for many hours can cause immense player dissatisfaction; some in contention may even withdraw rather than wait.

**18F2. Pairing players unaffected by result.**

A director who does not wish to adjourn a long game may seek private assurances from both players that they will not withdraw and will play the last round regardless of the result of the long game. This would allow all players to be paired except those whose pairings would be affected by the result of that game.

**18F3. Sudden-death.**

Widespread use of sudden-death time controls has minimized the problems associated with last-round pairings. **See also** [28Q, Pairing unfinished games](#) and [29F, Last-round pairings with unfinished games](#).

**18G. Adjudications.**

Only under emergency circumstances may a director permanently adjudicate a game; that is, declare a result based upon best play by both sides. When used in other than emergency situations, this fact must be clearly specified in all tournament publicity and posted and announced at the site. **See also** [14G2, Players apparently unaware of situation](#); [14J, Draw declared by director](#); [16Y, Assisting players with time management prohibited](#); and [21D, Intervening in games](#).

**18G1. Example of emergency.**

An *emergency* situation could arise, for example, if a player with substantial time remaining and a poor position disappears for more than 15 minutes or is present but shows little interest in considering the position. Such behavior is unsportsmanlike and the director is encouraged to adjudicate, possibly after a warning. **See also** [1C2, Director discretion](#); [20H, Long absence during play](#); [21F, Player requests for rulings](#); and [21K, Use of director's power](#).

**18G2. Director declares game over.**

[18G](#) does not prevent a director from declaring the result of a game that has ended without the players noticing this. For example, if the game has been decided by checkmate ([13A](#)), late arrival for game ([13D](#)), late arrival for adjournment resumption ([13E](#)), stalemate ([14A](#)), or insufficient material to continue ([14D](#)), the director may declare the game over. **See also** [1C2, Director discretion](#); [13C1, Only players may call flag](#); [14G2, Players apparently unaware of situation](#); [14J, Draw declared by director](#); [16Y, Assisting players with time management prohibited](#); [21D, Intervening in games](#); [21F, Player requests for rulings](#); and [21K, Use of director's power](#).

**19. Resumption of the Adjourned Game****19A. Setup.**

When the game is resumed, the position immediately before the sealed move shall be set up on the chessboard, and the times at adjournment shall be indicated on the clocks.

**19B. Opening the envelope.**

The envelope ([18D](#)) shall be opened only when the player who must reply to the sealed move is present. The director then opens the envelope, makes the sealed move on the chessboard, and starts the player's clock.



**19C. Opponent of sealing player absent.**

The clock of an absent player who must respond to the sealed move shall be started at the beginning of the adjournment session, but the envelope containing the sealed move shall be opened only when the player arrives.

**19D. Sealing player absent.**

If the player who has sealed the move is absent, the player responding to the sealed move is not obliged to play a move on the chessboard. Such a player has the right to record the move in reply on the scoresheet, seal it in an envelope, and press the clock (5H). The envelope should then be given to the director and opened on the opponent's arrival.

**19E. Sealed move envelope missing.**

If the envelope (18D) containing the move recorded in accordance with 18A has disappeared, the game shall be resumed from the position at the time of adjournment with the clock times as they were at the time of adjournment.

If it is impossible to reestablish the position, the game is annulled, and a new game must be played unless the director determines either that it is impractical to do so or another solution offers greater equity. If the time used cannot be reestablished, the director must decide how to reset the clocks. **See also** 1C2, [Director Discretion](#); 14J, [Draw declared by director](#); and 21K, [Use of director's power](#).

**19F. Sealed move ambiguous.**

A director who feels an ambiguous sealed move has two or more reasonable interpretations may allow the sealer's opponent to choose among the possibilities. The sealer's opponent's clock will run while considering which to choose. **See also** 13H, [Sealing of invalid move](#).

**19G. Sealed move invalid.**

If the envelope contains no sealed move or the sealed move is illegal and the director finds there is no reasonable interpretation of it, the player who sealed the move loses the game. **See also** 13H, [Sealing of invalid move](#).

**19G1. Agreed draw and invalid move.**

If the players agree to draw and then find that an invalid move was sealed, the draw stands. **See** 14B, [Agreement](#).

*TD TIP: In the cases of an agreed draw or resignation, both players should notify the director. The director should be alert to the possibility that players may have reached agreement without notifying the director.*

**19G2. Resignation and invalid move.**

If a player resigns (see 19J) and then finds that the opponent sealed an invalid move, the resignation stands. **See also** 13B, [Resignation](#).

**19G3. Loss on time and invalid move.**

If the opponent of the player who sealed loses the game due to failure to appear in time for its resumption and then finds that the sealed move was invalid, the loss on time stands. **See** 13C, [Time forfeit](#).

**19H. Game resumed with wrong times on clock.**

If, upon resumption, the times have been incorrectly indicated on either clock, the error must be corrected if either player points this out before making a move. If the error is not so established, the game continues without any correction, unless the director determines that another solution offers greater equity.

**19I. Game resumed with incorrect position.**

If, upon resumption, the position is set up incorrectly, this is considered an illegal move. If discovered within ten moves of resumption, the position must be corrected. The clock times are not adjusted. **See also** 11E, [Incorrect adjourned position](#).



## 19J. Agreed result of adjourned game.

If both players agree on the result of an adjourned game before resumption, both players must notify the director. **See also** [14B, Agreement](#).

*TD TIP: Sometimes the sealed move is mate or stalemate, so the sealed move ends the game; however, this is considered unsportsmanlike behavior on the part of the player that knowingly sealed such a move. This kind of behavior may be fined or punished.*

## 20. Conduct of Players and Spectators

### 20A. Conduct of players.

Players shall participate in the spirit of fair play and good sportsmanship, and must observe the US Chess Code of Ethics. **See also** Chapter 6: [US Chess Code of Ethics](#).

### 20B. Use of recorded matter prohibited.

During play, players are forbidden to make use of handwritten, printed, or otherwise recorded matter. While the penalty is at the discretion of the director, a forfeit loss is usually ruled if the material is relevant to the game, while a lesser penalty or warning is common otherwise. For example, a player on move five of a King's Indian Defense would usually be forfeited for reading a book on the King's Indian but given a warning or time penalty for reading one on rook endings. **See also** [1C2, Director discretion](#) and [21K, Use of director's power](#).

*TD TIP: Often players will use headphones to listen to material unrelated to the game. This is not a violation of Rule 20B; however, a director may inspect the listening device(s) used to make sure that the material is indeed unrelated to the game.*

### 20C. Use of notes prohibited.

The use of notes made during the game as an aid to memory is forbidden, aside from the actual recording of the moves, draw offers, and clock times, and the header information normally found on a scoresheet. This is a much less serious offense than [20B](#); a warning or minor time penalty is common, with more severe punishment if the offense is repeated. **See also** [1C2, Director discretion](#); [15, The Recording of Games](#); and [21K, Use of director's power](#).

### 20D. Use of additional chessboard or computer prohibited.

A player who analyzes a game in progress on another chessboard or consults a computer about the position is guilty of a serious violation of the rules. Though the director still has discretion, the usual penalty is loss of the game. **See also** [1C2, Director discretion](#); [21K, Use of director's power](#); and [36H, Consultation](#).

### 20E. Soliciting or using advice prohibited.

During play the players are forbidden to make use of any notes, sources of information or advice (solicited or not), or analyze on another chessboard. **See also** [1C2, Director discretion](#); [20N, Electronic communication devices](#); and [21K, Use of director's power](#).

#### 20E1. Solicited advice.

This is a serious violation and a forfeit loss is often ruled. **See also** [1C2, Director discretion](#) and [21K, Use of director's power](#).

*TD TIP: The director has the right to require that cell phones and other communication devices be turned off in the tournament room.*

#### 20E2. Unsolicited advice.

Ruling on unsolicited advice can be difficult. The giver deserves a penalty, but what of the recipient? The director's task is to prevent a player from benefiting from advice but also not unduly penalize the player for another's offense. There is sometimes no good solution to this problem, but here are a few examples of possible rulings.

- a. A Class D player suggests a winning move to a Master. If, as is likely, the director feels the Master would probably find the move without recourse to the advice, no penalty should be imposed.
- b. A Master suggests a winning move to a Class D player. If the director feels the D player would probably not find the move without help, the ruling may be that the D player is prohibited from making the move.
- c. A move is suggested, and the director is not sure if it is a good one. The recipient seems to have other acceptable moves. The ruling might be that the player must play a different move, as this seems least likely to cause injustice.
- d. A winning move is suggested. All other moves seem to lose and the director believes it unclear whether the player would have likely found the move without help. This situation is especially difficult. If the move is allowed, the opponent will feel cheated by the spectator. If it is not permitted, the player will feel cheated, claiming he or she would have found it without help.

Neither ruling is incorrect, but perhaps fairer would be to rule the game a draw (see 14J) or to show the position to several players of similar rating to the one involved, who are unaware of and have no stake in the dispute, to help determine whether a player of that strength is likely to find the move.

- e. A weak move is suggested. No need to penalize the recipient.
- f. A player with five moves to make in ten minutes and an unclear position forgets to press the clock and this is pointed out by a spectator 30 seconds later. The director may only guess whether the player would have noticed the clock before the flag fell, and if so, how much time would have elapsed. A time penalty of a few minutes might be appropriate.
- g. The situation is identical to f above except that nine of the ten minutes have elapsed before the spectator's intervention. The director must consider that having not noticed for nine minutes, the player may well not have pressed the clock in the last minute either. A forfeit is unfair as the player might have noticed in the final minute, but not taking strong action may be even more unfair to the opponent. Imposing a time penalty on a player already surprised to have only a minute left may be reasonable. It is unclear whether the player would be helped or hurt by the spectator's intervention and a subsequent decision by the director to take away most of the last minute.
- h. The situation is the same as g above except that the player who forgot to press the clock has an easy win and will have no problem making the last five moves in a few seconds if necessary. To give the player even a few seconds would mean defeat for an opponent who had good chances to win on time before the spectator interfered.

Leaving any time for the negligent player would be unfair to the opponent, but ruling a time forfeit would be unfair to the negligent player. The *lesser of evils* solution might be to declare the game a draw in accordance with 14J.

- i. In all such situations, if the unsolicited advice comes from a relative, close friend, teammate, or coach, the director may impose a more severe penalty than otherwise and may consider the advice solicited.
- j. In a team or individual/team event, if unsolicited advice is given by a teammate or coach, the director has the option of forfeiting the game for team purposes but allowing it to continue for individual purposes and US Chess rating, possibly with a further penalty.

**See also** 1C2, Director discretion; 11I, Spectators; 13CI, Only players may call flag; 14G2, Players apparently unaware of situation; 16Y, Assisting players with time management prohibited; 20M5, Spectators cannot make claims; 21D, Intervening in games; and 21K, Use of director's power.

## **20F. Analysis in the playing room prohibited.**

No analysis is permitted in the playing room during play or during adjourned sessions. **See also** 1C2, Director discretion; 21F, Player requests for rulings; and 21K, Use of director's power.

### **20F1. Adjournment help outside playing room allowed.**

While a game is adjourned, a player may receive help outside the playing room from any source, including other players, books, or computers. A prohibition on such help would be unenforceable and would penalize only those honest enough to observe it.

## **20G. Annoying behavior prohibited.**

It is forbidden to distract or annoy the opponent in any manner whatsoever. A director, upon a complaint by the opponent, has discretion to determine whether any particular behavior is in violation of this rule and to impose penalties. **See also** [1C2, Director discretion](#); [21F, Player requests for rulings](#); and [21K, Use of director's power](#).

### **20G1. Inadvertent annoying behavior.**

Sometimes a player's actions, though annoying to the opponent and possibly others, are clearly unintentional. For instance, a player may occasionally cough. While the director has the right to invoke rule [20G](#), this is quite harsh if the player's actions are involuntary. A partial solution is to assign such a player to a board in another room or far away from other games.

***TD TIP:** What is annoying to one person is perfectly acceptable to another. That is why the director decides what is and is not annoying. Uncommon and obtrusive activity is more likely to also be annoying activity. Often if a director just makes players aware that their activity is annoying, the activity stops; however, if that and a warning do not prevent the annoying activity, then stronger penalties can be imposed at the discretion of the director.*

## **20H. Long absence during play.**

Players with games in progress should not leave the playing room for more than 15 minutes without permission from the director. A first offense usually does not warrant a forfeit unless there is additional evidence suggesting a further rules violation during the absence. **For further information** see [20N, Electronic communication devices](#) and [18G1, Example of emergency](#).

### **20H1. Quitting without resigning.**

It is rude and unsportsmanlike to abandon a lost position without resigning. Any player with a bad position who is absent without permission for over 15 minutes risks having the game adjudicated. **See also** [18G1, Example of emergency](#) and [20H, Long absence during play](#).

## **20I. Discussion of games.**

Players should not discuss their games in progress with anyone; this may lead to penalties under [20E, Soliciting or using advice prohibited](#). The director has the option of banning all talking in the tournament room, even if not loud enough to be disturbing. **See also** [1C2, Director discretion](#); [20K, Penalties](#); [21F2, Facts are agreed upon](#); and [21K, Use of director's power](#).

### **20J. Last round discussion.**

Especially in the last round, it is improper for contenders paired against each other to engage in discussions about the game or its outcome before or during the game. **See also** [1C2, Director discretion](#); [20K, Penalties](#); [21F, Player requests for rulings](#); and [21K, Use of director's power](#).

## **20K. Penalties.**

Infractions of these rules may incur penalties, including time penalties, loss of the game, expulsion from the tournament, or other penalties or combinations of penalties. **See also** [1C2, Director discretion](#); [13I, Refusal to obey rules](#); [21F, Player requests for rulings](#); and [21K, Use of director's power](#).

## **20L. Manipulating results.**

Collusion to fix or throw games, whether before or during the game, in order to manipulate prize money, title norms, ratings, or for any other purpose is illegal and may result in severe sanctions, including revocation of US Chess membership. Such agreements include arrangements to split prize money no matter what the result of the game. **See also** [US Chess Code of Ethics](#).

## **20M. Behavior of spectators.**

### **20M1. Spectators have no special privileges.**

Spectators not playing in the tournament have no special privileges. For instance, if a player complains that a particular spectator's presence near his or her game is disturbing, rather than investigate the complaint to determine its validity, it may be correct for the director to simply require the spectator to move away from that game. If more complaints are received about the same person, the director may ask that spectator to leave the premises. If the spectator has paid an admission fee, it may be appropriate to refund this fee.

If a player repeatedly complains about various spectators for no apparent reason, the director may choose to disregard such complaints, informing the player that spectators are allowed at the tournament.

### **20M2. Spectator is player with game in progress.**

If the offending spectator is a player in the tournament, especially one with a game in progress close to the complaining player, the situation is less clear. More consideration should now be given to the merits of the complaint, as it is reasonable for an entrant to expect to be able to watch nearby games while playing his or her own game, and this may be impossible without provoking the complaint. But if in doubt, the director should still consider the rights of players to be preeminent over those of spectators.

### **20M3. Ongoing problems.**

Occasionally there may be an ongoing situation in which a player complains that another player's presence is disturbing, or each complains that the other is disturbing. One way to deal with this problem in future rounds is to assign the players to special boards far away from each other or in different rooms. **See also** 1C2, Director discretion; 21F, Player requests for rulings; and 21K, Use of director's power.

### **20M4. Prohibitions.**

It is highly improper, and warrants ejection from the premises, for any spectator to discuss a player's position or time management with that player, to point out that it is the player's move, or to talk in a loud enough voice to be heard by a player with a game in progress. **See also** 1C2, Director discretion; 21F, Player requests for rulings; and 21K, Use of director's power.

### **20M5. Spectators cannot make claims.**

Spectators, including parents and coaches, may point out irregularities to the director in a manner neither heard nor noticed by the players, but have no right to make claims of any kind on behalf of players. If a problem arises during play, a player of any age should understand that he or she should promptly stop both clocks and see a director. A spectator who makes a claim may be ejected. **See also** 1C2, Director discretion; 11I, Spectators; 13C1, Only players may call flag; 14G2, Players apparently unaware of situation; 16Y, Assisting players with time management prohibited; 20E2, Unsolicited advice; and 21K, Use of director's power.

### **20M6. Spectator visibility.**

To minimize claims of illegal assistance, if a relative, close friend, or coach of a player is permitted to stand near that player during play, that spectator should stand behind that player rather than in front, so the spectator is not visible to the player. **See also** 1C2, Director discretion; 21F, Player requests for rulings; and 21K, Use of director's power.

## **20N. Electronic communication devices.**

Players are not allowed to leave the playing venue without permission from the arbiter. The playing venue is defined as the playing area, rest rooms, refreshment and smoking area, adjacent hallways and other places as designated by the arbiter/TD. **See also** 20H, Long absence during play.

Without the permission of the arbiter/TD a player is forbidden to have a mobile phone or other electronic means of communication in the playing venue, unless they are completely switched off.

**TD TIP:** "Permission of the director" allows for maximum flexibility. No specific penalty is prescribed. In the absence of announced rules for a specific event, the standard penalties apply (see 20N1). Organizers are free to announce whatever penalty is appropriate for their event. This rule addresses possession of a communications

*device. In practice, the device ringing or making some other sound may be the only practical way to detect a cell phone—but this rule is not aimed at penalizing the noise; it is aimed at penalizing the possession of a communications device.*

### **20N1. Disturbing noise or disruption of games.**

Audible disruptive noises such as a cell phone ring tone, pager beep, alarms and other noises cause a disruption in the playing hall. These noises are often very loud and disturb the entire room. The following are guidelines for penalizing such disturbances:

- a. First offense standard penalty is to subtract 10 minutes or half the remaining time from a player's clock, whichever is less. *Variant: Depending on the importance of the event the standard penalty may be up to immediate loss of the game in progress. If a variant is used, it must be announced at the opening remarks for the event and posted prominently in the playing hall and at all entrances.*
- b. Second (and subsequent) offense for the same player during the same event is loss of the game currently in progress.
- c. If the incident occurs in the playing hall, but after the offender's game for the round is completed while other games are still in progress, then the above penalties apply to the subsequent round. In the case of a loss (e.g. second offense), that player is not paired for the next round.
- d. If the incident occurs after the game for the last round is complete while other games are still in progress, the offender is treated like a non-participating spectator and is ejected from the playing hall. *Variant: Depending on the importance of the event and the disturbance created, the player may receive a ½ point total score penalty for prize distribution.*

## **21. The Tournament Director**

### **21A. The chief tournament director.**

Responsible for all play, the tournament director must see that the rules are observed. The director is bound by the official rules of chess, by US Chess tournament rules and code of ethics, and by all US Chess procedures and policies.

### **21B. Duties and powers.**

The chief tournament director's duties and powers normally include the following: to appoint assistants as required to help in the performance of his or her duties; to accept and list entries; to provide suitable conditions of play; to familiarize players with the playing facility and other tournament conditions; to prepare pairings; to display wall charts; to rule on disputes and enforce such rulings; and to collect scores, report results, and forward US Chess and membership applications, tournament results and fees to the sponsoring organization and for the official record. **See also 1C2, Director discretion; 21F, Player requests for rulings; and 21K, Use of director's power.**

### **21C. Delegation of duties.**

The chief director may delegate any duties to assistants, but is not thereby relieved of responsibility for performance of these duties.

### **21D. Intervening in games.**

The director's intervention in a chess game shall generally be limited to the following:

#### **21D1. Answering rules questions.**

Answering rules and procedural questions.

#### **21D2. Correcting illegal moves observed.**

Correcting any illegal moves observed, unless time pressure exists (11D1) or Variation 11H1 is used (the director does not correct illegal moves unless asked by a player).

### **21D3. Warning players.**

Warning players about or penalizing players for disruptive, unethical, or unsportsmanlike behavior. **See also** [1C2, Director discretion](#); [13I, Refusal to obey rules](#); [21F, Player requests for rulings](#); and [21K, Use of director's power](#).

### **21D4. Settling disputes.**

Settling disputes, including those regarding time forfeits and claims of draws.

### **21D5. Informing players.**

Informing players about opponents' late arrivals or about opponents' leaving the room for an extended period.

### **21D6. Fees.**

Collecting fees.

**See also** [1C2, Director discretion](#); [11I, Spectators](#); [11J, Deliberate illegal moves](#); [13C1, Only players may call flag](#); [14G2, Players apparently unaware of situation](#); [14J, Draw declared by director](#); [16Y, Assisting players with time management prohibited](#); [18G, Adjudications](#); [18G1, Example of emergency](#); [18G2, Director declares game over](#); [20E2, Unsolicited advice](#); [20M5, Spectators cannot make claims](#); [21F, Player requests for rulings](#); and [21K, Use of director's power](#).

## **21E. The playing director.**

A tournament director must not only be absolutely objective, but must also be able to devote full attention to directing duties; for this reason, a director, on principle, should not direct and play in the same tournament. In US Chess National Events, the director cannot be a playing director.

However, in club events and others that do not involve substantial prizes, it is common practice for the director to play. A director may also serve as a house player ([28M1](#)). Those who choose this double role should be especially careful to maintain objectivity. If possible, a playing director should appoint another director to make rulings involving his or her own games.

A playing director who must devote time to a dispute in another game may stop his or her own clock during this period. While the clock is stopped, the director should not look at the position of his or her own game, but the director's opponent is permitted to do so.

## **21F. Player requests for rulings.**

A player has the right to stop both clocks to ask the director to rule upon a point of law, procedure, or conduct. The director must first establish the facts without disturbing other games. Extended discussions between director and player(s) is inappropriate in the tournament room; a hallway or headquarters room is more desirable. **See also** [5I, Stopping the clock](#); [13C6, Claimant's clock](#); and [16Q, Interruption of game](#).

### **21F1. Timing of requests.**

A player with a valid claim or complaint of any type should immediately stop both clocks ([5I](#)) and see a director. In most cases, the player who defers such a claim waives the right to make the claim. However, a delayed claim may still be in order if it is based on evidence not previously available, such as the testimony of a witness, or if the situation causing the claim remains in existence. **See also** [13C6, Claimant's clock](#) and [16Q, Interruption of game](#).

### **21F2. Facts are agreed upon.**

If the facts are agreed upon, the director should rule as follows:

- a. If no penalty is prescribed by the rules and there is no occasion to exercise the director's discretionary power to penalize, the players should be directed to proceed with play.



- b. If a case is clearly covered by a rule that specifies a penalty, the director should enforce that penalty. **See also** [1C2, Director discretion](#); [13I, Refusal to obey rules](#); and [21K, Use of director's power](#).
- c. If an infraction has occurred for which no penalty is prescribed, the director's discretionary power to penalize may be exercised. **See also** [1C2, Director discretion](#); [1C2a, Standard penalty](#); [13I, Refusal to obey rules](#); and [21K, Use of director's power](#).

### **21F3. Facts are not agreed upon.**

If the facts are not agreed upon, the director should proceed as follows:

- a. A director who is satisfied that the facts have been ascertained should rule accordingly.
- b. A director who is unable to satisfactorily determine the facts must make a ruling that will permit play to continue.

**See also** [1C2, Director discretion](#); [11I, Spectators](#); [11J, Deliberate illegal moves](#); [13C1, Only players may call flag](#); [13I, Refusal to obey rules](#); [14G2, Players apparently unaware of situation](#); [14J, Draw declared by director](#); [16Y, Assisting players with time management prohibited](#); [18G2, Director declares game over](#); [20, Conduct of players and spectators](#); [20E2, Unsolicited advice](#); [20M5, Spectators cannot make claims](#); [21D, Intervening in games](#); [21F2, Facts are agreed upon](#); and [21K, Use of director's power](#)

### **21G. Evidence.**

Unbiased evidence is required to support any claim by a player that the opponent violated a rule.

### **21H. Appeals.**

A director who believes that an appeal of a ruling on a point of fact or the exercise of a discretionary power to penalize might be in order should advise the player of the right to appeal.

#### **21H1. How to appeal.**

A player may appeal any ruling made by the chief director or an assistant director, provided that the appeal is made within one-half hour and before the player resumes play, unless additional time is granted by the director. The director may require that the appeal be made in writing. The appeals committee may penalize frivolous appeals. **See also** [21I7, Groundless appeals](#).

#### **21H2. Director may reserve decision.**

The director may reserve a decision temporarily and direct that play continues before the appeal is heard. In this case, the appellant must continue play *under protest*, that is, without prejudice to the appeal, regardless of the outcome of further play. If the appellant wins that game, the appeal will be considered moot.

#### **21H3. Response of chief director.**

A chief tournament director who believes that the appeal is justified may reverse or modify any decision made by the chief tournament director or another director. A chief director, who believes that the appeal has some merit, but not enough to be upheld, should advise the appellant of the right to pursue the appeal further.

#### **21H4. Appointment of committee or referee.**

If a player notifies the director of intent to pursue the appeal further, the director shall appoint a committee (21I) or a special referee (21J) to hear the appeal, unless the orderly progress of the tournament would be disturbed by such action. If the director determines that either appointment would be disruptive, the player may reserve the right to share in the prize fund by requesting to be paired for future rounds as if the appeal were upheld. The player has the same right in the case of intending to appeal a local decision to US Chess.

### **21I. Appeals committee.**

#### **21I1. Composition.**

An appeals committee should consist of at least three persons, preferably US Chess-certified tournament directors. A committee of two is sufficient if both are certified at the senior director level or higher. Every attempt should be made to appoint individuals to the appeals committee who have tournament director's certification level equal to or higher than that of the chief tournament director of the tournament. To ensure impartiality a special referee ([21J](#)) is preferred over an appeals committee.



**21I2. Procedure.**

When a committee hears an appeal, all persons except committee members, the director, and both players shall be excluded from the hearing. Witnesses may be called, but only to answer questions from the parties concerned, after which they will be dismissed. The director shall furnish the committee with the current edition of the *Official Rules of Chess* and shall call attention to the rules applicable to the dispute.

**21I3. Witnesses.**

The committee shall elicit the testimony of witnesses as it sees fit. In hearing the appeal, the committee must give preeminent weight to the director's testimony as to anything said or done in his or her presence.

**21I4. Consultation.**

The committee may consult a special referee (21J) by phone for advice, or may vote to refer the dispute to a special referee.

**21I5. Function of committee (standard of review).**

The function of an appeals committee is not to substitute its judgment for that of the director, but rather to overrule the director only if it is clear the latter's ruling is incorrect. The committee should not overrule a proper decision simply because it prefers an alternate proper decision.

**21I6. Decision.**

After hearing the testimony, the committee members shall deliberate among themselves to reach a decision, which shall be put in writing, signed by all the members (even if one or more members voted against the decision), and given to the chief director. In the event of a tie vote, the director's decision shall stand.

**21I7. Groundless appeals.**

If the committee finds that the appeal is clearly groundless, it may penalize the player for that reason, or leave the penalty to the director's discretion. In ruling on an appeal, the committee may exercise all powers accorded to the chief director by the rules and other US Chess procedures.

**21J. The Special Referee.**

A special referee is a director with substantial experience who is available to provide advice or make a ruling by telephone. Phone numbers of special referees can be found currently on the US Chess web page using the TD/Affiliate page and are also occasionally printed in *Chess Life*. To ensure impartiality a special referee is preferred over an appeals committee (21I).

**21J1. Usage.**

The director may refer any appeal to a special referee, but should keep in mind that unless the facts are agreed upon, or the players' differences easily summarized, substantial delay and phone cost may result. Use of a special referee is most appropriate when the tournament director is certified at a lower level than the referee, and when a director of comparable certification to the referee is not immediately available to serve on an appeals committee.

**21J2. Selection.**

When selecting the referee to call, and the alternates to call if the original selection cannot be promptly reached, the director should be sensitive to any reasonable objection by either player against the use of a particular referee.

**21J3. The phone call.**

When placing any call to the referee, the director should invite both players to be present. The director should not inform the referee of the players' names, but refer to them as *White* and *Black*.

**21J4. Player contact with referee.**

Neither player has an automatic right to speak to the referee. A director who finds such discussion unnecessary may choose not to allow it. It is desirable that both players know in advance what the director will say and agree that it will correctly reflect their viewpoints.

**21J5. Validity of referee's decision.**

The decision of a special referee carries weight equal to that of an appeals committee. No decision of a special referee may be appealed to an appeals committee, nor may any decision of an appeals committee be appealed to a special referee. However, a special referee who believes the dispute can best be settled on-site may refer it to an appeals committee, which then should be appointed.

**21K. Use of director's power.****21K1. Conciliation.**

The director should make every effort to resolve a dispute by informal, conciliatory means before resorting to the exercise of the director's formal discretionary power to penalize. **See also** [1C2, Director discretion](#) and [13I, Refusal to obey rules](#).

**21K2. Beware abuse of power.**

Tournament directors should realize that the powers given to them under these rules should be used sparingly, to restore equity or to penalize a serious infraction so as to discourage its recurrence. No one's interests are served by what appears to be the arbitrary or high-handed exercise of authority. **See also** [1C2, Director discretion](#) and [13I, Refusal to obey rules](#).

**21L. Appeal to US Chess.**

Any decision of an appeals committee or special referee, or of the director when an appeals committee or special referee is not appointed, may be appealed to US Chess. **See also** [24B, Appeals to US Chess](#).

**21L1. Procedure.**

Appeals in writing must be postmarked within seven days of the end of the tournament to the US Chess office. Appeals submitted after the seven-day deadline may be considered at the discretion of the committee hearing the appeal. Appeals may be submitted via e-mail, but the business office or the committee(s) hearing the appeal may require a signed statement. The office will refer an appeal to the appropriate committee(s) but may immediately reject obviously groundless appeals. Most appeals will be referred to the Rules Committee, but some appeals may be more appropriate for the Tournament Director Certification Committee or the Ethics Committee. A good-faith deposit must be included with the appeal. The executive director shall from time to time review and set the required deposit amount in consultation with those committees that handle appeals. The deposit will be returned unless the ruling authority finds the appeal to be groundless and rules that the deposit is to be forfeited. US Chess reserves the right to make final decisions concerning the rules and procedures that govern its competitions. **See also** [24A, Rules Committee](#); and [24B, Appeals to US Chess](#).

***TD TIP:** In rare cases a committee(s) ruling is appealed to the US Chess Executive Board. Even more rare would be an appeal of any US Chess Executive Board decision directly to the US Chess Delegates at the annual delegates convention. In order for an appeal to be considered by the delegates many exact rules and regulations must be followed. Contacting an experienced delegate would be advisable if an appeal to the delegates at the convention is to be pursued.*

**22. Unplayed Games****22A. Games forfeited due to nonappearance.**

A player who does not appear for the game, or appears too late, is given zero points and the opponent is given one point. On pairing sheets ([28J](#)) and wall charts ([28O](#)), the forfeit is circled or indicated by an *F*. Computer wall charts may use the symbol *X* for the winner and *F* for the loser of an unplayed game. **See also** [13D, Late arrival for game](#); [13F, Late arrival by both players](#); and [28P, Unplayed games](#).

**22B. Full-point byes.**

If there is an odd number of players for a round, and a suitable house player ([28M1](#)) not in the event cannot be found to fill in, one player will receive a full-point (1) bye. **See also** [27A3, Upper half vs. lower half](#); [28A, Pairing cards or program](#); [28J, The first round](#); [28K, Late entrants](#); [28L, Full-point byes](#); [28L4, Full-point byes after half-point byes](#);

28L5, New players in four-round event; 28M, Alternative to byes; 28S, Reentries; and 29C1, Upper half vs. lower half.

## **22C. Half-point byes.**

For the convenience of players, the director may allow half-point (0.5 or ½) byes for missed rounds. **See also** 27A3, Upper half vs. lower half; 28A, Pairing cards or program; 28J, The first round; 28K, Late entrants; 28L, Full-point byes; 28L4, Full-point byes after half-point byes; 28L5, New players in four-round event; 28L, Full point byes; 28M, Alternative to byes; 28S, Reentries; and 29C1, Upper half vs. lower half.

***TD TIP:** It is useful to have a bye signup sheet available until the announced cut off time for requesting byes ends. Directors are urged to check this list before making any pairings.*

### **22C1. Availability.**

Half-point byes may be offered during the first half of a tournament or the middle round of a tournament with an odd number of rounds, with or without advance notice. If pre-tournament publicity does not address this subject, players may contact the organizer to inquire about availability.

If half-point byes are allowed for any rounds during the second half of a tournament, they should be mentioned in pre-tournament publicity. An exception may be made in the event of emergency.

### **22C2. Deadline for bye requests.**

All requests for half-point byes should be made at least an hour before the bye round unless the director requires otherwise.

### **22C3. Byes and class prizes.**

It is recommended that if class prizes are likely to be won with even or minus scores, half-point byes should be unavailable or limited to one per player in such classes.

### **22C4. Irrevocable byes.**

If half-point byes are allowed for the final round, players must give irrevocable notice of such byes before beginning their first game, or if the organizer so announces, their second game. The deadline for claiming such byes should appear in pre-tournament publicity. It is recommended that other byes in the second half of the tournament be treated similarly and that notice of all scheduled irrevocable byes be posted on or near the wall charts (28O).

***TD TIP:** It is useful for directors to note on bye signup sheets the latest time players can request last round byes. Directors concerned about awarding unearned prize money need to be very careful in allowing players to sign up for half-point byes in the last half of the tournament, especially the last round; therefore, it is common that those bye requests be made well in advance of the start of the second half of the event, especially for the last round.*

### **22C5. Cancellation of irrevocable byes.**

If the director agrees, a player may cancel an irrevocable half-point bye under the condition that if the player wins, the result will be treated as a draw for prize purposes.

### **22C6. Full-point byes after half-point byes.**

A full-point bye should not be assigned to a player who has previously taken or committed to a half-point bye unless all others in the score group have already had a bye or a no-show forfeit win. **See also** 28L, Full-point byes.

***TD TIP:** If a director is using a pairings program then it is wise to check the pairings after they have been made to ensure that Rule 22C6 has been applied properly, especially in the case where a player has requested a bye in a future round.*

## 23. Organization and Membership

### 23A. Responsibilities of organizer.

Tournaments rated by US Chess must be organized by a US Chess affiliate or by US Chess itself. This organizer is responsible for all financial matters related to the tournament and may select an individual or a committee to handle the physical and financial arrangements. These include finding a playing site, setting a date and the times of the rounds, determining the entry fees and prizes, hiring tournament directors, and advertising the event.

The organizing affiliate must select a chief tournament director (also referred to as *director*, *TD*, or *arbiter*) whose US Chess certification level is appropriate for the type of tournament anticipated. The tournament director is responsible for all decisions in the tournament regarding rules.

#### 23A1. Obligation to pay guaranteed prizes.

An affiliate that guarantees prize money but fails to pay it in full may have its US Chess affiliation revoked, and the individual(s) responsible for that affiliate may be denied the right to affiliate under a different name. **See also** [32, Prizes](#).

If extraordinary circumstances such as extreme weather conditions or civil unrest prevent most potential entrants from playing in a tournament, the organizer may appeal to the US Chess executive director for permission to limit the prizes to 100 percent of entry fees collected.

#### 23A2. Tournament cancellations.

Tournaments announced in *Chess Life* may be canceled only if one of the following conditions exists:

- a. A timely cancellation notice appears in an appropriate issue of *Chess Life*.
- b. Physical conditions, such as closure of site or extremely inclement weather, render the site unusable.

A disappointing number of advance entries is never a valid reason for cancellation. Organizers who cancel a tournament in a non-emergency situation without proper notice will be prohibited from announcing tournaments in *Tournament Life* or elsewhere in *Chess Life* for three years. (Additional penalties are also possible.)

#### 23A3. Advance entry refunds.

Unless otherwise stated in all advance publicity, advance entry fees are refundable to players who give notice of withdrawal before the close of registration for round one.

#### 23A4. No refunds once event starts.

A player who begins play in the first round is not entitled to a refund of the entry fee or any portion of it, even if forced to miss most games due to a medical or other emergency. Variations of this policy are at the discretion of the organizer.

### 23B. Determination of game times.

The organizer determines game times unless the director makes or accepts other arrangements. **See also** [Rule 17, Scheduling](#).

### 23C. US Chess membership requirement.

For the inclusive dates of the tournament, each player must be a member in good standing of US Chess, unless US Chess regulations waive this requirement.

**TD TIP:** *This is a tricky task. Often players at registration say they have joined US Chess via various methods that do not produce a receipt such as paying recently by check or credit card (on the phone or web). Sometimes they have a receipt from an organizer or another TD that is unfamiliar to the person processing the registration. Some directors decide on a case-by-case basis whether or not they are convinced of the validity of the renewal.*

**TD TIP:** *Some directors strictly enforce [Rule 23C](#) by making all players pay a US Chess membership fee if the player's membership cannot be verified with a membership card, in a hard copy or disk rating supplement, or online at the US Chess website. This last approach may upset some players who have recently renewed but cannot verify*

*the renewal; however, the funds collected at registration for those US Chess memberships extend those memberships for an extra year.*

**TD TIP:** *Another approach would be for the director to collect a membership fee from players whose memberships are not verifiable and hold onto those funds in escrow until US Chess rates the tournament. If at that point the director is notified by US Chess that those players are not members, then the director can pass along the membership fees being held in escrow directly on to US Chess. A copy of the US Chess non-member notice can be passed along to the players with their membership receipts. All other escrow US Chess membership fees should then be returned to the players that US Chess did not identify to the director as non-members.*

## **24. Interpretation of the Rules**

### **24A. Rules Committee.**

US Chess maintains a standing Rules Committee to review questions pertaining to the rules of play. In case of doubt as to the application or interpretation of these rules, the US Chess Rules Committee will examine the case in point and render an official decision.

### **24B. Appeals to US Chess.**

All proper appeals made to the US Chess National Office shall be referred to the appropriate committee(s), which in most cases is the Rules Committee. Occasionally appeals are more appropriate for other committees. A copy of any appeal considered by the committee shall first be furnished to the chief tournament director plus any other appropriate director(s) of the tournament involved, who should respond with a written statement of his or her own position and any other pertinent documentation. Failure to respond may result in disciplinary action. A copy of the decision(s) of the committee(s) shall be sent to all interested parties. **See also** [21L, Appeal to US Chess](#); [21L1, Procedure](#); and Certification Restrictions ([48, Restrictions](#); [49, Due Process](#); [50, Penalties](#); [51, Appeals](#); and [54, Professional Misconduct](#)).

