

WeareWoodpushers – Chess Club – Rules & Reminders

General

We're here to play chess and have fun. We also want this environment to be welcoming for newcomers. So, please:

- Be Nice
- Be a Good Sportsman
- Dress Respectably
 - While this is not a hard and fast rule, something like business casual would be nice. We don't want to see the waistband of your underwear, nor be able to learn from your attire what you had for lunch today, etc. 😊
- Please help tidy up, do not leave trash behind, etc.

Rated Game Play – Summary

As noted below, USCF rules in general apply. The list immediately below summarizes the specific reminders we think are important and is intended as a prompt for pre-play instructions by the Tournament Director (TD). See the Rule Highlights section below for additional information on each of these topics.

- USCF rules apply.
- TD rulings are final.
- No Assistance
 - No references, no notes (including during the game, including on the scoresheet).
 - Silence/shut off active electronics and stow them, or remove them from the playing hall.
 - No advice, analysis, second board, etc.
 - No headphones.
- Starting clocks
 - Start the clocks on schedule.
- Touch-move
 - One hand, for move and clock.
 - Castle and promote correctly.
 - Adjust only on your move, with advance declaration 'I adjust'.
- Scorekeeping
 - Required – do it.
 - Record move **after** you make it.
 - No extra notes on the scoresheet
- Draws
 - Offer after move, before pressing clock; repeated offers may be found to be annoying.
 - Claims – if a move is needed for the claim, record the move then state the claim. Do this while on your time. Claims constitute a draw offer, so if the opponent agrees, the game is immediately drawn.

- Claims
 - Do this on your time, stop the clock and make the claim, seeking out a TD if needed.
- Conduct
 - Remain in the venue during the game, limit conversation to that necessary for play ('I adjust', 'I offer a draw', etc.)
 - Do not engage in annoying behavior, silence & stow electronics and other personal items that may make noise.
 - Spectators should not speak or indicate judgments of the positions.

Rated Game Play – Rule Highlights

While it may seem nice to overlook minor rules violations, like adjusting pieces on your opponent's move or saying 'check', you never know what is going to actually be driving someone nuts, so we aim to follow the official USCF rules fairly strictly. Particularly if your opponent complains, and there is an actual rules violation, we will enforce the rules, imposing time penalties and/or game forfeiture if necessary.

Here are some common issues and our position on them:

- **Rules:** In general, **we strictly follow the USCF Official Rules.**
 - Online rulebook:

<https://new.uschess.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/us-chess-rule-book-online-only-edition-chapters-1-2-10-11-9-1-20.pdf>
- **TD Discretion:** **Tournament Director (TD) decisions are binding.**
- **Assistance Prohibited (20):**
 - Use of written/recorded matter/notes is prohibited (20B, C, D, E);
 - The use of headphones for music is not explicitly prohibited in the USCF rules (See 20B), but **we choose to bar this for simplicity** and under 20G as some players may find this annoying.
 - The **use of notes is prohibited**, including those a player may make during the game. Scoresheets should only record moves, times, and the general information at the top of the scoresheet (20C).
 - Other forms of assistance such as electronic resources, books, second board, analysis, third-party advice are all prohibited (20, in particular: 20B, 20C, 20D, 20E, 20F, 20N).

As a security and courtesy precaution, we ask you to turn off your phone and other personal electronics and stow them in your bag while playing or keep them out of the playing area.

Consulting a phone, tablet or other device during play (unless with permission and under TD supervision) may result in game forfeiture.

- In general, there should be no discussion in the playing area (to avoid Rule 20E2 issues).

- **Starting clocks:**

- At the time determined for the start of the game (TD discretion), the clock for White should be started.

Generally, there should be some small leeway for players to adjust their pieces, set up their scoresheet, etc.; when ready, a player may signify this by offering a handshake.

If one player is present, the board, pieces and clock setup, that player (if White) should start the clock and make their move or (if black) start the clock for White (13D, 16N).

*We know many folks are willing to wait; however, by making this a firm rule we remove the discretion, so that if someone *does* need a game to start promptly, there is no stigma attached to starting an opponent's clock.*

- **Touch-Move (10A, 10B, 10C, 10I) & Related (5, 7, 8, 9,):**

- A deliberately touched piece must be moved and/or captured (10B, 10C)
- Note that the touch-move rule (10B) uses the word, 'deliberately', meaning that obviously inadvertent touches do not count. However, we ask that you use care in this respect. Too frequent 'accidental' touches may be construed as distracting (annoying) your opponent (20G),
- When moving, first make your move, using one hand, then press the clock with the same hand.

Note: The USCF standard rules appear to be ambiguous on this point, but the USCF Blitz and FIDE rules are explicit: use the same hand to move and touch the clock. Technically, you may castle with both hands, but must touch the rook and king 'simultaneously'. To keep it clear, just use one hand (Blitz, rule 4).

We can ignore the occasional lapse (non blitz), but habitual use of one hand to play and the other to press the clock is not permitted here.

- Once a moved piece is released, it has been moved (10G).
- Castling,
 - The king must be touched first (or 'simultaneously' with the Rook).
 - If the Rook is touched first, then the rook must be moved (if legal), but castling is not permitted.
 - Players are strongly encouraged to move the king first, then the Rook (10I).
- Promotion:
 - Once a pawn is released on the 8th rank, it must be promoted; once the promotion piece touches the promotion square, it must be used (9D, 8F6).

Each of the following are acceptable promotion methods.

- *Move the pawn to the 8th rank, select the promotion piece, then replace the pawn with that piece.*
- *Pick up the promotion piece, then the pawn, and place the promotion piece on the promotion square.*
- *Place the promotion piece on the promotion square, and then remove the pawn.*

- Note: Upside down Rook OK in USCF (8F7).
- Piece not available, stop clock to find it (8F7).

○ Adjusting:

- You may only adjust pieces on your move. You are not permitted to adjust pieces when your opponent is on their move (10A).
- You must announce adjustment when doing so on your move (10A).
- Announce adjustment by quietly but clearly stating either 'J'adoube' or 'I adjust'(10A)

- Violations here must be claimed prior to touching any of your own pieces (10J)

● **Notation/Scorekeeping (15)**

- Scorekeeping **is** required, and all players regardless of rating are expected to record their moves on a suitable scoresheet (15A)—unless either player has less than 5 minutes remaining in the time control.
 - Special needs players contact the TD.
 - Please allow some leeway to beginners and young scholastic players.
- Moves are recorded **after** the piece is moved (15A).
- **Only** record moves, times and the general information at the top of the scoresheet (20C).
- You may consult your opponent's scoresheet, under specific circumstances (15D, 15E)

● **Draws(14, 9G3):**

- Stalemate is an immediate draw (14A).
- Draw by agreement is an immediate draw (14B)
- To make a draw offer, it must be your turn; the proper procedure is to make your move on the board and then offer a draw ('I offer a draw') before pressing your clock to complete your move (14B1); should a draw offer nevertheless be made before moving, it cannot be withdrawn; in this case the opponent may wait until the move is completed before deciding to accept or decline. Repeated draw offers risk being construed as annoying (14B5, 14C3, 20G).

Normal courtesy is for only the player with a stronger position (if clear) and/or higher rating to make a draw offer. However, there is no bar to either player offering a draw at

any time; particularly in an approximately equal position. That said, should a player in a losing position (or, the lower rated player in obviously/approximately equal positions) make repeated draw offers, this may be viewed as annoying behavior prohibited by Rule 20G.

- **To claim a draw** (e.g. threefold repetition, insufficient mating material, 50 move rule...) if a move is required for the claim, write the move on the scoresheet, without making it, stop the clocks, and state the claim. If the opponent agrees, the game is drawn. If not agreed, then the claimant may make the claim to a TD who will rule on it (14C3). The claim should be made while on the claimant's move.
- **Claims/Stopping the clock (5I):**
 - If you need to claim a draw that your opponent has not agreed to, or if you need to report an issue or seek a ruling from a TD, you may stop the clocks. **However, this should be done while it is your move (5I).**
 - To make a (legitimate) claim, a player may stop the clocks (while on their move) and seek out a TD (5I).
 - Claims constitute a draw offer, so if the opponent agrees, the game is immediately drawn.
- **Conduct (20):**
 - No observers in the playing area should make any comment or other indication related to ongoing game play, as this may be construed as unsolicited advice, which is prohibited (20E2).
 - **Annoying behavior is prohibited;** TD's will rule on this upon a complaint/claim by a player. See rule 20 for more information (20G). Note that this can encompass things like excessive conversation, excessive draw offers, stating 'check' when making a move, etc.
 - **Players should not leave the playing venue during a game without permission from an arbiter or TD (20N).**
 - **Rings, notifications, alarms, music, and other disturbing noise or disruption is prohibited (20N1).**

Pursuant to this, and the assistance prohibitions (20), we ask that all personal electronics be shutdown/silenced and stowed or else removed from the playing area.