

PRIMARY SCHOOLS CHESS TEAMS COMPETITION RULES AND CONDITIONS

1. GRADES

The primary schools chess teams competition is played in three separate grades:

Championship Grade – for more advanced players.

Intermediate Grade – for less experienced but competitive players. Players who have competed with reasonable success in the Intermediate Grade before should not be entered in that grade again.*

Rookies Grade – for novice players, boys and/or girls, any age. In some areas where there is sufficient demand, Rookies Grade may be subdivided by the addition of Junior Rookies (Year 3 and below). Schools are particularly asked to observe the spirit of the Rookies Grade by not entering teams of players who are not true beginners – it is not intended to be overly competitive. Players who have competed with reasonable success in the Rookies Grade before should not be entered in that grade again.*

* Exceptions may be granted upon application to the Primary Schools Coordinator where one team member is of higher standard, but team-mates would be heavily disadvantaged in a higher grade.

2. ORGANISATION

Schools are grouped in geographical Zones. For the preliminary rounds each team is placed in a Division in that Zone according to the grade entered. (In areas where there are insufficient entries in a particular grade, a Division may have mixed grades). Each Division is made up of teams in the closest geographical proximity possible, although teams from the same school are placed in different divisions where available. The winning team in the highest grade available in a Zone becomes the Zone Champion (playoffs between Divisions may be necessary), and Zone Champions go on to compete within their Region to determine Regional Champion. The Regional Champion team is then eligible to compete for the Metropolitan or Country title against other Regional Champions, and finally the NSW title. (Note: There are no finals in the Intermediate or Rookies Grades.)

3. TRAVEL

During preliminary rounds, matches take place in local divisions to minimise travel. If the travel time between schools is considered to be excessive, teams may negotiate an alternative meeting place, or if a school is more than the usual distance from the rest of the group they may be required to travel to a closer meeting place for each match. It is up to individual schools to negotiate this. Problems may be referred to the Primary Schools Coordinator.

4. TEAMS

a. Players: Matches are played between teams of four players. Each player must be a pupil at the school he represents. Championship and Intermediate teams should, where possible, field the *same regular members in every match* (subject to 4d. below). Rookies teams may consist of any number of players from whom any four are selected for each match. A PLAYER MAY NOT PLAY MORE THAN ONE GAME FOR HIS TEAM IN ANY MATCH. A PLAYER MAY NOT PLAY FOR TWO DIFFERENT TEAMS IN THE SAME ROUND (except if used as a reserve – see 4d.) If a team cannot field its regular players, it must either use a reserve (see 4d.), arrange an alternative playing time if this is acceptable to the other team, or forfeit the missing player's game.

b. Teams: Schools may field more than one team in the same grade. It is recommended that these teams be ranked so that the four players in a school's number one team are stronger than the players in the number two team, etc. (except in the Rookies Grade, where parallel teams may be fielded as long as the four team members are ranked within the team according to strength – see 4c. below).

c. Board Order: Players within each team should be *ranked in order of strength* (strongest player on Board 1) except according to 4d. below. Care should be taken in determining players' relative strengths before the competition begins. In the Championship and Intermediate grades, team membership and board order should not be changed except when a regular team member is unavailable or when a player is found to have been wrongly placed.

d. Reserves: Reserves may be used in the case of illness etc. A reserve may be a member of another team, but if so, a *lower or equal ranked team*, **not** a higher ranked team. A reserve may play in his own team in addition to the team for which he plays as reserve **ONLY IF** the matches are not scheduled to be played at the same time. If a reserve is used, he may be brought in at Board 4 and other players moved up, or may play on the board on which the absent player would have played if present. If a player is absent and a reserve is not used, the board on which that player should have played is forfeited. Players must not be moved down so that a higher board is forfeited instead. Where a reserve is used, the letter (R) should be placed after his or her name on the result card.

e. Finals: New players may not be introduced into a team after the preliminary rounds are completed, except in special circumstances and with the permission of the Primary Schools Coordinator.

5. MATCH CONDITIONS

a. Supervision: The “home” school is expected to provide a suitable quiet environment in which games can take place. Home teams are required to provide an adult to supervise the match. Note behaviour requirements below. IMPORTANT REMINDER: An adult from the visiting school is required to remain with the visiting team.

b. Colours: In the pairing tables the first numbered team is the home team and plays White on boards two and four, Black on boards one and three.

c. Starting Time: Starting time is 4.00 p.m. or earlier, unless otherwise agreed. (Play should normally commence as soon as the visitors have arrived and are ready to play.)

d. Directions: The home team must provide visitors with adequate directions to the match venue, and/or meet visiting teams at the front entrance of the school. If access to your school is difficult, or if there are known road hazards to avoid, please provide each visiting school with instructions (preferably in writing) before the date of the match.

e. Equipment: Home teams are required to provide STANDARD sets and boards of reasonable size for the match.

f. Result Cards: BOTH teams must post a result card to the designated scorer. The match will be scored 0-0 if results are not received **within 7 days** of the due date for the match (see 5g. below). All details must be completed. Score a win as 1; loss as 0; draw as 1/2; loss by forfeit as 0F; a win by forfeit as 1F; a postponed, adjourned or adjudicated game as X. Each pair of cards should be **compared and checked** by both team captains or supervisors of both teams prior to signing. Post results cards **AS SOON AS POSSIBLE**.

g. Alternative playing times: If a school has difficulty in fielding a team for a particular match it may negotiate an alternative playing time (giving at least two days notice, or less if the opposing school is agreeable). The Scorer **MUST** be informed of a postponement if results will be delayed past 7 days after the due date of the match. Results **MUST** be phoned in immediately after the postponed match is played, followed by the written result card. **ALL MATCHES MUST BE COMPLETED (AND RESULTS RECEIVED BY THE SCORER) WITHIN 7 DAYS OF THE COMPLETION DATE OF THE PRELIMINARY ROUNDS.**

h. Forfeits: A forfeit may be claimed if an opponent has not arrived 30 minutes after the *AGREED STARTING TIME*. The nominal starting time is 4 p.m. (unless otherwise arranged) but matches normally start earlier if both teams are present. Forfeits should be avoided wherever possible (they may lead to unrealistic results). If players fail to appear through misunderstanding or misadventure, it is hoped that schools will try to negotiate an alternative playing time rather than resort to a forfeit; however, there is no obligation to agree to another time. Any game where neither player is present is to be scored as a double forfeit (0F-0F), and NOT as a draw.

i. Time Limits

(i) Chess clocks are not used in this Competition except in games where both players have NSWJCL ratings of 400 or more and a chess clock is available. Ratings of 400 or more indicate that the players are experienced and would almost certainly be familiar with the use of chess clocks. In such cases either player may provide a chess clock and insist that it be used in the game. If either player has a rating below 400 a chess clock may only be used if that player agrees to its use. Schools are not expected to provide chess clocks for this competition as their cost would be prohibitive. Where chess clocks are used the time limit shall be 30 minutes for each player (in which case the game will last no more than one hour).

However, if more or less time is available for the game this time limit may be varied at the discretion of the match supervisor, but each player should be given at least 20 minutes.

(ii) Where chess clocks are not used a time limit per player cannot be set. However, if a supervisor feels that a player is unreasonably delaying his moves, either innocently or otherwise, then the supervisor may set a time limit on that player's moves. The player will then, for the rest of the game if necessary, be required to complete each of his moves within two minutes of his opponent having completed a move. The moves will be timed by the supervisor or his suitable appointee, using an accurate stop-watch or similar device. The supervisor or appointee must refrain from any suggestion of intimidation of the player in so timing his moves. (Note: This rule is intended to cope with situations where inexperienced players simply have no idea what to do next and are reluctant to move, or where a player appears to seek to delay the game in the hopes of a favourable adjudication (e.g. a draw when the game has made little progress). It must not be used to disadvantage players who are legitimately taking time to consider a difficult position. Players should NOT be pressured into playing too quickly – chess is a *thinking* game and players generally should be encouraged to take their time.)

(iii) Games can be expected to last up to an hour, and perhaps more between stronger players. Where a game goes on for an excessive time and a conclusion does not seem imminent, and it is not convenient to continue play, the supervisor may stop the game after at least one hour of play. (See 5j below regarding action to be taken where games are unfinished.)

j. Unfinished Games

Where a game is unfinished after at least one hour's play (see i (ii) above), if the players agree to an immediate result (for example, when the outcome appears inevitable – but without pressure from observers including the supervisor), then that result is acceptable.

(i) **Adjudications:** If the outcome is not clear, and/or the players do not agree to a result, the position must be recorded and forwarded to the Adjudicator (not the Scorer). The position **MUST** be correctly recorded on the adjudication sheet provided or otherwise according to the guidelines. It is the responsibility of the host school to submit the adjudication. They must provide an adjudication form or appropriate substitute for recording the position, which must be checked by both players or their representatives to make sure that the position has been correctly recorded and all the required information provided. The record must be signed by both parties. An adjudication form is provided to all participating schools for photocopying, and may also be downloaded from the website and printed. The Adjudicator will notify both schools of the result.

(ii) **Adjournments:** Particularly in the Championship Grade, where in many cases the standard is high and players take the match very seriously, players may wish to adjourn an unfinished game and resume it at a later date. Arrangements should be made to resume the game as soon as possible and the Scorer must be informed. Results for other games in the round should be sent in as usual without waiting for the result of the adjourned game. The result of the adjourned game should be submitted immediately after the conclusion of that game.

PLEASE REMEMBER – IT IS ALWAYS PREFERABLE FOR A GAME TO REACH ITS NORMAL CONCLUSION WHEREVER POSSIBLE.

6. CHAMPIONSHIP GRADE FINALS

As soon as necessary results are in, teams going into the finals will be notified of their following matches. Championship division winners will proceed into the finals rounds starting at Zone level, Zone Champions will compete for the Regional Championship, Regional Champions will contest Metropolitan and Country titles, and Metropolitan and Country Champions will compete for the NSW Primary Championship. Where there is only one Championship division in a Zone, teams that tie for first place in the preliminary rounds will not play off for the Zone title, which will be shared, but *will* play off for the right to progress to the Regional Finals. Where there is more than one Championship division, there will not be a playoff between the tied teams, and *both* will progress equally into the pool of teams competing for the Zone title. If a team's position is adversely affected by forfeits by other teams in the preliminary rounds, the Primary Schools Coordinator may, where appropriate, include that team in the finals rounds. Please note that in the finals rounds, there is not always an even number of teams involved competing for any particular title (e.g. Zone Champion or Regional Champion) and it is therefore inevitable that some teams may potentially play more matches than others. In some cases, zone finals are played in a round robin format, but in general finals are played as knockout matches, with two games played by each team member – one as White, one as Black. Finals matches may involve greater travel time and longer playing time, and are therefore often played

during school hours. If excessive travel is involved, it is expected that teams should meet at a half-way point accessible to both teams. The venue will be organised by the designated home team, with the agreement of the visiting team. Teams from outside the Sydney area may be required to travel to Sydney to play in some of the later finals matches. The Primary Schools Coordinator may require teams playing in the finals to use chess clocks.

7. BEHAVIOUR

Players are expected to display courteous behaviour towards each other and to supervisors at all times. Players are also expected to be fully aware of all the chess and conduct rules that apply to the tournament. Players have the right to, and should, complain to the supervisor, in the event of any infringement. The complaint must be made at the time of the infringement; it is too late once the game has finished.

Supervisors must ensure that the players' rights are respected and that observers (or opponents) do not interfere with or intimidate players in any way.

Failure to abide by the rules may be reported to the Primary Schools Coordinator who may consider deducting points from the team or player in question.

The laws of chess provide that infractions of the rules relating to the behaviour of players may incur penalties even to the extent of the loss of the game.

- a. Players are forbidden to distract or annoy their opponent in any way.
- b. Players and spectators must remain silent during play. Players are forbidden to have recourse to the opinion of a third party whether asked for or not.
- c. Spectators must not touch the board, pieces or table where a game is being played.
- d. Spectators must stand at least 1.5 metres away from a game in progress. Players have the right to ask the supervisor to remove spectators who are distracting them or standing too close.
- e. "Friendly" games may not be played within close proximity of match games.

It is responsibility of the supervisor to control the behaviour of players and observers and enforce compliance with the above rules, and the **responsibility of the player** to bring to the attention of the supervisor any incident or situation that is in contravention of the rules.

It is essential that all spectators including supervisors refrain from making comment on a game in progress or interfering in any way, except that the supervisor may intervene:

- where an illegal move has occurred;
- where there is insufficient material for a checkmate and both players are playing on (the game is drawn);
- where it is necessary to suggest an adjournment or adjudication due to the game proceeding for an excessive time;
- to invoke a time limit on moves (see 5i. above); or
- to deal with behavioural problems.

8. DISPUTES AND PROBLEMS

The home school should always have a copy of these rules available at every match. All complaints/disputes are to be directed to the Primary Schools Coordinator (not to the Scorer). An informal complaint regarding behaviour of players or observers may be brought to the attention of the Primary Schools Coordinator verbally, which may then be dealt with in a general way – e.g. a comment in a general letter to schools. Where the complaining school is asking for action to be taken against the alleged offender, a claim concerning a disputed result or unacceptable behaviour must be made in writing to the Primary Schools Coordinator. This complaint will be forwarded to the school of the team or player involved for their comment before a judgement is made by the Primary Schools Coordinator.

If a dispute arises during a game that cannot be resolved at once to the satisfaction of both players, their game should be stopped immediately and the position recorded. If a player continues the game when a dispute has not been resolved, then he loses the right to have his claim considered. The details of the dispute and the position should be forwarded at once to the Primary Schools Coordinator. It may be possible to resolve the matter immediately by phoning the Primary Schools Coordinator, but if not then the details of the dispute and the position reached should be forwarded to him by fax, mail or email as soon as possible.

The Primary Schools Coordinator is empowered to vary the rules under special circumstances when deemed appropriate.