

PRIMARY SCHOOLS CHESS TEAMS COMPETITION RULES

1. GRADES

The Primary Schools Chess Teams Competition is played in three separate grades:

Championship Grade – for 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 this grade again.*

Rookies Grade – for novice players in any primary year. In some areas where there is sufficient demand separate Junior Rookies divisions for students in Year 3 and below may be offered. Schools are particularly asked to observe the spirit of Rookies Grade by not entering teams of players who are not true beginners. Players who have competed with reasonable success in the Rookies Grade before should not be entered in this 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 within Regions. 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 feasible. The winning team in the highest grade available in a Zone becomes the Zone Champion (playoffs between Division winners may be necessary), and Zone Champions go on to compete within their Region to determine the Region Champion. The Region Champion team then competes against other Region Champions for the Metropolitan or Country title, and finally for the NSW title. (Note: There are no finals in the Intermediate or Rookies Grades.)

3. TRAVEL

For zones played in weekly home-and-away-format (rather than on one day at a central location), 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, and any problems should 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. It is recommended that, where possible, Championship and Intermediate teams field the same regular members in every match (subject to Rule 4d below). Rookies teams, however, 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 Rule 4d). If a team cannot field one of its regular players it may use a reserve (see Rule 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 first team are stronger than the players in the second team, etc. (except in the Rookies Grade, where parallel teams may be fielded as long as the four team members within each team are ranked according to strength – see Rule 4c below).

c. Board Order: Players within each team should be *ranked in order of playing strength* (strongest player on Board 1) except according to Rule 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 the players' relative strengths have changed (or are found to have been incorrectly determined).

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.

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 (Rule 7). **IMPORTANT REMINDER:** An adult from the visiting school is required to remain with that team.

b. Colours: In the pairing tables the first numbered team is the home team and plays White on Boards 1 and 3, Black on Boards 2 and 4. (*Note: the former colour rule was changed in 2016, for consistency with other competitions.*)

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. Results: Both teams must submit the full results as soon as possible after the match, using the online scoring system (or, for zone competitions held in one-day format, on the result sheets provided). The match may be scored 0-0 if results are not received within seven days of the due date for the match, unless an exemption is granted by the Primary Schools Coordinator.

Forfeited games (where one or both players are absent) should be indicated as such, as although wins on forfeit count towards team scores, they do not affect the players' ratings. ***Please ensure that names are spelt correctly so that the results can be processed correctly for rating.***

g. Alternative playing times: If a school has difficulty in fielding a team for a particular match it may negotiate an alternative playing time if the opposing school is agreeable (please give sufficient notice). Postponements, including the rescheduled date, must be notified via the online scoring system. All matches should be completed and the results submitted within seven days of the scheduled completion date of the preliminary rounds.

h. Forfeits: A forfeit may be claimed if an opponent has not arrived 30 minutes after the scheduled starting time. The 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. The Primary Schools Coordinator must be notified if this situation arises. Schools which have a forfeit claimed against them may appeal if it is believed there are sufficient grounds for consideration. 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 are likely to 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 the 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 a stop-watch or similar timer. 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 hope 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 encouraged to play too quickly – chess is a *thinking* game and players should generally 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 (preferably after no less than one hour of play) and a conclusion does not seem imminent, and it is not convenient to continue play, the supervisor may stop the game. See Rule 5j below regarding the action to be taken when games are unfinished.

j. Unfinished Games

Where a game is unfinished (preferably after at least one hour's play) the following options are available:

(i) **Agreement:** The players may agree to an immediate result (for example, when the outcome appears inevitable – but without pressure from observers including the supervisor).

(ii) **Adjudication:** If the players do not agree to an immediate result, the position should be recorded and forwarded to the Primary Schools Coordinator (not the zone scorer) for adjudication by an independent expert. It should not be adjudicated by the match supervisor or others present. The position **MUST** be correctly recorded on the adjudication form provided or by an equivalent method (such as a clear photograph of the position, as long as it is accompanied by the details requested in the adjudication form, including which player is to move). It is the responsibility of the host school to supply a copy of the adjudication form or appropriate substitute and to submit it for adjudication. Both players (or their representatives) should check that the position has been correctly recorded and all the required information provided. The record should be signed by both parties.

(iii) **Adjournment:** Particularly in the Championship Grade, where in many cases the standard is high and players take their game very seriously, the players may, if both agree, adjourn an unfinished game and resume it at a later date (however, adjourning is rare because of the inconvenience of arranging a resumption time). Arrangements should be made to resume the game as soon as possible. Results of other games in the match should be submitted as usual without waiting for the result of the adjourned game (and the date agreed for the resumption should be indicated). The result of the adjourned game should be submitted immediately after its conclusion.

PLEASE REMEMBER – It is always preferable for a game to reach its normal conclusion wherever possible.

6. CHAMPIONSHIP GRADE FINALS

Once the Championship division winners are known, the 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 Region Championship; Region Champions will compete for the Metropolitan and Country titles; and the Metropolitan and Country Champions will then play each other for the NSW Primary Championship. Where there is only one Championship division in a Zone and two or more teams tie for first place, they will share the Zone title but will play off for the right to progress to the Region Finals. Where there is more than one Championship division, there will not be a playoff between tied teams; instead they 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. In some cases, finals are played in 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, in consultation with the visiting team. Teams from outside the Sydney area may be required to travel to Sydney to play in the later stages of the finals. 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 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 (including other players) do not interfere or intimidate the 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 players 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 adjudication or adjournment due to the game proceeding for an excessive time;
- to invoke a time limit on moves (see Rule 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 Zone 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 over a disputed result or unacceptable behaviour, the claim must be made in writing to the Primary Schools Coordinator. This complaint will be forwarded to the school of the opposing 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. 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 email or mail as soon as possible.

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