

# MCC Summer Scholastic Chess Program



## 2005 HANDBOOK FOR PLAYERS AND PARENTS

Thank you for entering MCC's Summer Scholastic Chess Program. If you participated in the Program in previous years, we offer you a hearty welcome back! We are very gratified to have repeat customers. If this is your first experience with the Summer Program — maybe even with tournament chess — we want you to feel comfortable and have a great time.

To help make the Program as successful and fun as possible, we want to make sure that everyone knows and understands the rules and policies under which the Program is conducted. For that purpose we have put together this Handbook for you, which significantly expands on the information in the tournament announcement (flyer). We thought you might find it convenient to have your own copy for reference. (You veterans will be familiar with this document from earlier years, but you should look through this new edition anyway since it has been revised in many places to reflect changes that we made to the Program for this year.)

There is a lot of material here because we don't want any player to be disadvantaged by misunderstanding or not knowing the rules. The Summer Program attracts players with a wide range of experience and knowledge of tournament chess. Accordingly this Handbook not only covers the basics but also provides a more detailed explanation of some topics. Veteran tournament players, who already know the basics, will be interested in learning more of the detail, whereas players new to tournament chess will need to learn the basics and might not want to be concerned about all the details. Make use of the information as it best suits your experience level.

This handbook is available for download on the club site at [www.MetroWestChess.org](http://www.MetroWestChess.org). The full version of this handbook is also available at the same location.

If you have any questions, please email us at [Scholastics@MetroWestChess.org](mailto:Scholastics@MetroWestChess.org) or see the tournament director.

See you at the Club!

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## PROGRAM STAFF

The club and its programs including the Summer Scholastics is run as a volunteer organization with no paid positions. Club members donate their time and effort to support and assist in the running of the club and its activities.

## THE SENIOR CENTER FACILITY

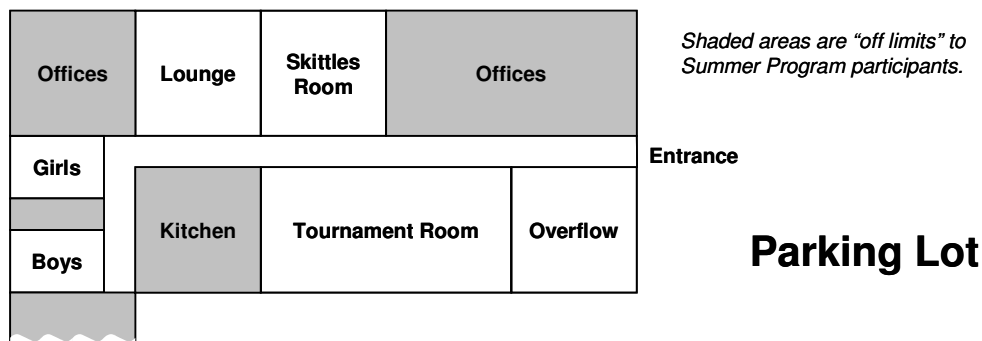
The MetroWest Chess Club meets at the Kennedy Senior Center, 117 E. Central Street (Rt. 135), Natick, Massachusetts.

The MCC is only one of many groups that use this facility. While we are privileged to enjoy such a fine venue for our tournaments, our continued use of the site depends on our “good behavior” and respect for the other user groups and the staff that manages the facility. Accordingly we ask all Summer Program participants to be careful of the building and its furnishings, and we make two requests in particular:

- **Please help clean up from each night’s play so that we leave the building as clean and neat as it was when we arrived.**
- **Please do not play pool in the lounge.**

We solicit the assistance of players, parents and other adults in helping us maintain our good relationship with the Senior Center. *Thank you in advance for your understanding and cooperation!*

To get you oriented, here is a diagram of the facility:



There is **no public telephone** at the Senior Center. There is a telephone available for emergency use; please see the tournament director if you need to use it.

Some **vending machines** (sodas and meager snacks) and drinking water are located in the hall near the lounge. You may also bring items to eat or drink into the building, but please be mindful of your trash and clean up after yourself. Be careful to take all your belongings with you when you leave.

## BEGINNING AND ENDING TIMES

Please see the description of the current year’s Summer Program for details of tournaments, round dates, and beginning times. Also, please note carefully that the tournament directors will do everything possible to ensure that tournament nights do not run inappropriately late. In particular, the tournament directors will adhere **strictly** to the start time each night. We appreciate your cooperation in helping us ensure games begin in a timely manner.

## PAIRINGS

**Once you have registered in a tournament**, you will be paired for each round that you are present to play. Because the tournament director will do the pairings for the next round based on who is present, players should check in at the Club no later than 7:20 pm for Thursday night games (see “Checking In”).

If for some reason you have played the first of two games in the evening **and you do not wish to play the second game**, please clearly notify the tournament director so you will not be paired against someone and have the child waiting with no one to play.

**If you have not yet entered the current tournament** when you arrive at the Club to play, see the tournament director immediately to register. If you have already registered, find your name on the wall chart that is posted for your section and put a check mark beside your name to indicate that you are present. (If you don’t see your name on the wall chart, see the tournament director immediately.) A few minutes before the next round is scheduled to start, the tournament director (TD) will collect the wall charts for all sections and give half-point (if eligible) or zero-point byes to all players who have not checked in (see “Byes”). The TD will then pair the remaining players for the next round (see “Pairings”). In order to ensure that you are included in the pairings for the next round, remember to check in!

**Note:** If you play in tournaments other than the MetroWest Chess Club Summer Scholastic program, remember that checking in before rounds is *not* standard tournament practice. Normally, once you enter a tournament, you are **assumed** to be present and are paired in all rounds **unless** you notify the tournament director **in advance**. (This is the case, for example, in the regular Tuesday night MetroWest Chess Club tournaments.)

## SPECTATORS

While we try to create a more relaxed chess environment in the Summer Program, it is nevertheless a USCF-sanctioned event, and that requires that we conduct it in accordance with certain standards. Moreover, we respect and will protect the principle that chess is a game between two players, and only those two players have the right of determining their game’s outcome within the rules of the game. Balancing these concerns, **we have adopted a policy of not permitting spectators to watch games in progress in the tournament room(s)**.

For this purpose spectators include other players who have completed their game. The reasons for this policy are to minimize the noise and level of distraction in the tournament room for the benefit of all players whose games are in progress, and to avoid any possibility of spectator interference, whether intended or not. (For example, some players might feel uncomfortable or intimidated to have an adult watching their game — especially if that adult is their opponent’s parent!) In addition, we encourage parents to help their children become accustomed to being on their own in the playing room because in almost any other venue, and particularly in most scholastic tournaments that your child might participate in, parents are not allowed in the playing room.

## WHO PLAYS WHOM

### *The Pairing Sheet*

In a tournament, a pairing sheet is used to let each player know (1) who her or his opponent is, (2) what color to play, and (3) at what board number to play. Boards (or, to be more precise, places on the tables in the tournament room) are numbered so that players can find their assigned places to play. The first player listed (in the left player column) is always the person playing White; the person playing Black is always listed in the second (right) player column.

A pairing sheet sometimes shows other information as well, such as ratings and pairing numbers. The ratings are as of the start of the tournament and remain the same throughout the tournament. “Unr” stands for “unrated” and indicates a player for whom the USCF has not yet calculated a rating. The pairing number simply indicates the player’s place in a list of all players in the tournament (or section) based on rating, with number 1 being the

highest-rated player. The pairing sheet is also where the players record the results of their games when they have finished playing (see “Recording Game Results”).

Below is an example of a pairing sheet when it is posted at the beginning of a round. This example also shows the players’ ratings but not their pairing numbers. Note also that because there was an odd number of players, someone had to be paired out and received a full-point bye for the round. (Alternative messages show up for a player who gets paired out. “See T.D.” and “Please Wait” are common ones.)

Getting Started Open – Pairings for Rnd 2				
Bd	Res	White Player	Res	Black Player
1		Michael Chessplayer (1855)		John Pawnpusher (2295)
2		Ross Knight (2000)		Benjamin Bishop (1937)
3		Carrie Careful (1375)		Donna Queen (1735)
4		Carlisle Castle (unr)		Tinker Thinker (1602)
5		Froggy Forfeiter (unr)		Jill Jilted (1575)
	1	Pierre d’Out (1125) – See T.D.		

## GETTING PAIRED OUT

If your section has an odd number of players for a given round, you might be “paired out” for that round (it’s got to happen to someone), meaning that there is no one in the section to pair you against. The player paired out is usually the lowest-rated player in the lowest score group, but an unrated player could also be paired out. If you are paired out, you will receive a full-point bye for that round, which counts just like winning a game for purposes of scoring. No one will be paired out more than once during any single tournament. If possible, we’ll give a player who is paired out the option of playing a side game (see “Side Games”).

## SIDE GAMES

Side games are games that do not count as part of a tournament but may count for rating. Players who may be paired in side games are those who have been paired out of a tournament round, whose opponents have not shown up, or who have completed both tournament game early (that is, before 8:30 pm). Players interested in playing a side game should notify the tournament director, who will pair them if possible. Because side games depend entirely on who happens to be available, however, rating disparities between potential opponents often must be disregarded.

The following conditions apply to side games:

- Both players must have the permission of their accompanying adult to play a side game after playing two tournament games. This is to ensure that the players are not staying out later than the adult is comfortable with.
- Both players must agree to play. Either player may decline the side game for any reason, including a disparity in ratings.
- Both players must agree, *before* starting play, that the game will be rated, and notify the tournament director accordingly. If either player does not want to play for rating, the players may choose to play a non-rated game (“just for fun”).
- If the game is to be rated, the side game will be added to a tournament pairing sheet, where the players record the result. The game will be included in the tournament report to USCF and will be factored into the players’ rating calculations.

- The players use some method such as flipping a coin or choosing hidden pawns to determine who plays which color. In a rated side game colors must be determined randomly, by the tournament director, so it is not acceptable for either player to “volunteer” to play White or Black, even if the other player agrees.

## **BYES**

In tournament chess, a bye is given for any round that a player does not play, forfeits excepted. There are full-point, half-point and zero-point byes that correspond in scoring to a win (1 point), a draw (½ point), and a loss (0 point) respectively.

- *Full-point byes* are given only in the case of a player being paired out.
- *Half-point byes* are given in many tournaments (a) for rounds already played by the time a player enters a tournament, and (b) when a player requests a bye in advance. Players are usually permitted to take only a small number of half-point byes (one or two typically) in any tournament. In some tournaments no half-point byes at all are allowed.
- *Zero-point byes* are given in the following circumstances:
  - A player is given a zero-point bye for any round for which he or she requests a bye and is not permitted to take a half-point bye, either because half-point byes were not allowed at all or because the player has already taken the maximum number allowed.
  - A player who withdraws from a tournament or forfeits a game is given zero-point byes for all remaining rounds in that tournament (see “Forfeits”).

### ***Requesting Byes***

In most tournaments a procedure is in place for players to request byes in advance. We have found this to be both cumbersome and ineffective in past Summer Programs. For that reason, we run the Summer Program differently in that we take a “roll call” each night and pair only players who are present (or have left a message as described under “Pairings (Basics)”). Byes are given to all players who are not present. But there is one situation where a player should request a bye: if you decide to leave after playing only the early game on a Thursday, please let the tournament director know that you are leaving and that he should not pair you for the late round that night.

## **FORFEITS**

A player forfeits when he or she does not show up to play a game for which he or she was paired. A player who forfeits is given a zero for a forfeit loss and is not paired in future rounds unless reinstated by the tournament director. The opponent of a player who forfeits is given one point for a forfeit win. Forfeits are rude because they leave one and sometimes two players without an opponent for a round. (If there is an odd number of players and you forfeit, then not only does your opponent not have a game but the player who was paired out also does not have a game.) Please be conscientious: don’t forfeit!

Please note that a forfeit is different from a resignation (see “Resignation”). A forfeit is when the game is not played because one or both players do not show up. A resignation is when the game is played and one player decides to resign — to “give up” or quit — before either player achieves checkmate. Forfeits do not factor into a player’s rating calculation (see “Ratings”); resignations do. (See also “Recording Game Results.”)

## **RESIGNATIONS**

A player resigns when he chooses to stop playing any time after he has made at least one move in a game. Players usually resign because they come to the conclusion (rightly or wrongly) that they have little or no chance of winning or drawing the game, and they choose not to continue playing in a “lost cause”; but a player may choose to resign for any reason, regardless of what the position on the board is. To resign simply means, “I give up, you

win.” Once a player has resigned, that conclusively ends the game. The opponent does not have a choice whether to accept the resignation or not, and the player who resigns may not take back his resignation if he suddenly sees a potentially saving move. When a player resigns, the score to be recorded on the pairing sheet is a “0” for the player who resigned and a “1” for his opponent, just as if the winner had checkmated the loser (see “Recording Game Results”).

A common way to indicate that you resign is to tip over your king intentionally. (It is not a resignation if you knock your king over accidentally.) In adult tournaments, resigning players often do not tip their king over, they simply stop both clocks without making a move. In any case, once you have resigned, it is customary and good sportsmanship to shake hands with your opponent.

Please note that a resignation is different from a forfeit (see “Forfeits”). A forfeit is when the game is not played because one or both players do not show up. A resignation is when the game is played and one player decides to resign before either player achieves checkmate. Forfeits do not factor into a player’s rating calculation (see “Ratings”); resignations do.

## SCORING

In chess, points are awarded for game results as follows (see also “Recording Game Results”):

- 1 for each win, forfeit win, and full-point bye for being paired out
- ½ for each draw (and each half-point bye for rounds not played, as applicable)
- 0 for each loss or forfeit, and each zero-point bye for rounds not played

## RECORDING GAME RESULTS

The pairing sheet includes result columns where the players record the result of their games when they have finished playing (see “Pairing Sheet”). In a tournament both players are responsible for making sure that their result is recorded. Results are recorded as shown in the following example:

Getting Started Open -- Pairings for Rnd 2				
Bd	Res	White Player	Res	Black Player
1	0	Michael Chessplayer (1855)	1	John Pawnpusher (2295)
2	1/2	Ross Knight (2000)	1/2	Benjamin Bishop (1937)
3	1	Carrie Careful (1375)	0	Donna Queen (1735)
4		Carlyle Castle (unr)		Tinker Thinker (1602)
5	F	Froggy Forfeiter (unr)	X	Jill Jilted (1575)
	1	Pierre d’Out (1125) — See T.D.		

Enter White’s score here

Bd = Board Number

Res = Result

Enter Black’s score here

Enter *your score* in the correct “Res” column for *your color*, as indicated by the arrows above; enter your opponent’s score in the other “Res” column.

- If you won, enter 1 for you and 0 for your opponent.
- If you lost, enter 0 for you and 1 for your opponent.
- If you and your opponent drew, enter ½ for both of you.

- If your opponent forfeited, enter X for you and F for your opponent. Note that no result has been entered for board 4, indicating that the game is still in progress, and that Pierre d’Out received 1 point because he was paired out.

When recording the game results, please remember the difference between a forfeit and a resignation (see “Forfeits” and “Resignations”). A forfeit is when the game is not played because one or both players do not show up. A resignation is when the game is played and one player decides to resign — to “give up” or quit — before either player achieves checkmate. Whether a player lost because he got checkmated or because he resigned will not be evident from the recorded result, because he will have “0” in either case, but a “0” indicates that he played the game. A result of “F” means that the game wasn’t played at all.

## WALL CHART

A wall chart shows the results of all the games in a tournament section. Players are listed on a wall chart usually in order of rating, although sometimes they are listed according to their standing (cumulative score) in the current tournament. For each player the wall chart shows:

- Name, USCF identification number, and rating
- And for each round of the tournament played (or paired) so far:
  - Color played (W or B)
  - Opponent (identified by pairing number)
  - Cumulative tournament score
  - If a bye was taken (“----” for a zero-point bye, “bye” for a half- or full-point bye)

Because the wall chart shows cumulative scores, it takes a bit of calculation to determine the result of any particular game after round 1. To know whether a player won his or her round 2 game, you need to subtract the round 1 score shown on the wall chart from the round 2 score. If we consider the example on the next page, we see that John Pawnpusher’s round 1 score was 1 and his round 2 score was 2. This means that he scored 1 point in round 2 — which means he won his round 2 game. Michael Chessplayer’s score, however, did not change from round 1 to round 2, meaning that he scored 0 in round 2 — which means he lost his round 2 game. In other words, a player’s result from any individual game, or round, is reflected in the difference between the player’s wall chart score for that round and his or her score for the preceding round.

In a similar fashion, by comparing the score for a “bye” round with the score for the preceding round, you can determine whether the bye was a full-point or half-point bye.

The example wall chart on the next page shows players listed according to rating. This wall chart is for a four-round tournament, of which two rounds have been completed. Round 3 has been paired but not completed, so colors and opponents are shown for round 3, but since the results of round 3 have not been reported yet, the round 3 column does not show a score. The first column shows the pairing numbers.

Getting Started Open – Wall Chart						
	Name/Rating/ID	Rnd 1	Rnd 2	Rnd 3	Rnd 4	Total
1	John Pawnpusher 2295 10000001	W 5	B 4	W 2		2.0
		1.0	2.0			
2	Ross Knight 2000 10000002	bye	W 3	B 1		1.5
		0.5	1.5			



3	Benjamin Bishop 1937 10000003	bye	B 2	W 5		0.5
		0.5	0.5			
4	Michael Chessplayer 1855 10000004	B 7	W 1	B 6		1.0
		1.0	1.0			
5	Donna Queen 1735 10000005	B 1	W 7	B 3		1.0
		0.0	1.0			
6	Irwin Eliminator 969 10000006	----	bye	W 4		0.5
		0.0	0.5			
7	Carlyle Castle Unr 10000007	W 4	B 5	bye		0.0
		0.0	0.0			

## TOURNAMENT ETIQUETTE

Courtesy and good sportsmanship are the hallmarks of tournament etiquette. Here are some particular examples to illustrate etiquette:

- It is customary to shake your opponent's hand both before you start and after you finish the game.
- Please be as quiet as possible in (and near) the tournament room while any game is in progress. This refers to noise of all varieties; but especially it means that if it isn't really necessary to talk, don't talk, and if it is necessary to talk, don't talk loudly.
- You may leave the board while your game is in progress (for example, to go to the bathroom or get a drink). Remember, though, that your opponent is *not* required to wait for you to come back before making his or her move, so while you are away from the board, your clock will probably be running.
- If your opponent is away from the board when you make a move, it is courteous to indicate what your move was when he or she returns by pointing to the piece you moved.
- If your opponent forgets to press his or her clock after making a move, it is courteous to remind him or her to do so. Simply pointing at the clock usually does the trick. It is good practice never to make your next move until your opponent has pressed his or her clock.
- Compete fairly. Respect and comply with all the rules and policies regarding sportsmanship (do not behave in an annoying or distracting manner, do not either give or solicit advice on any game in progress — yours or anyone else's —, etc.)
- Be a good winner when you win. Be a good loser when you lose. Always be courteous and respectful toward your opponent.

## PRIZES

Every player will have the opportunity to win one or more of several prizes in the Summer Program. Details of prizes are available in the description of the current year's program.

## INFORMATION ON MCC'S WEBSITE

Wall charts, standings and other information for the Summer Program will be posted throughout the summer on MCC's website (<http://www.metrowestchess.org/>).

Each of the Summer Program tournaments is a Swiss-style tournament. A Swiss tournament is a tournament designed for a large number of players, in which each player plays some of the other players but not all of them, and no two players play each other more than once. A Swiss tournament usually has four or more rounds and more than one section. A section is a group of players who are all at a comparable level of ability as indicated by ratings. A rating is a numerical measure of a player's strength calculated by the United States Chess Federation (USCF) based on games the player has played against other rated players. The competition is tougher in sections with higher-rated players.

Sections are separated by break points, which are (usually) rating values decided upon by the tournament organizer. For example, a tournament organizer might set 900, 700 and 500 as break points to define Open, Under 900, Under 700 and Under 500 sections in the tournament. Note that the break point is a "floor," not a "ceiling." This means that a player rated 680 may choose to "play up" in the U900 section (or even in the Open section) but would not be permitted to play in the Under 500 section. A player rated 910 could play only in the Open section.

A player plays only other players in his or her own section. Players are "paired" — which means "matched up to play each other" — initially on the basis of their ratings and, after round 1 has been played, on the basis of both their ratings and their scores (game results). See "Ratings," "Pairings," and "Scoring" for further explanation.

## TIME CONTROL AND CHESS CLOCKS

Rated tournament games are subject to time controls. There are two types of time controls. The first type requires each player to make a specified number of moves within a given time period. For instance, a time control of 40/90 specifies that each player is given 90 minutes in which to make 40 moves. (Sometimes you may see a time control such as 40/1. This does not mean that each player is given one minute for 40 moves! Instead, this means each player is given one hour, or 60 minutes, to make 40 moves. This time control could also be written as 40/60.) The second type of time control is a "sudden death" time control, in which each player is given a specific time in which to complete the game. (For example, the regular Tuesday tournament play at the MetroWest Chess Club uses a time control of "40/90, SD/30". Each player must complete his first 40 moves in 90 minutes. After Black completes his 40<sup>th</sup> move, each player is given an additional 30 minutes in which to complete the game. Note that any leftover time from the first time control is not lost; the time for the second control is added to the leftover from the first control.)

It is increasingly common that tournaments use a "sudden death" time control as the one and only time control for the game. In this case, rather than denoting the time control as "SD/something", one writes "G/something".

The time for each player is measured separately. A chess clock is a timing device that allows tracking each player's time separately. A chess clock is actually two clocks joined in such a way that when one is running, the other is not running. A player's clock is running when it is that player's turn to move. A player completes a move by pushing down the stem on his or her clock ("pressing the clock") to stop it and to start the opponent's clock. It is possible to stop both clocks, when, for example, either player needs to get the tournament director to resolve an issue or answer a question. (Features vary on different clocks, especially digital clocks. If you are about to use a clock that you are not familiar with, make sure you understand how to "press" it and stop it before you start your game. Don't be shy about asking questions!)

If you are using an analog (or mechanical) clock — as opposed to a digital clock — make sure the clock is wound or has good batteries. You should set the clock so that a player's time expires at **6:00**. So, if the time control is G/30, you should set each side of the clock to **5:30**; if the time control is G/60, you should set each side of the clock to **5:00**.

Players who have chess clocks (and other equipment) are requested to bring them to supplement the Club's limited supply. If there are not enough chess clocks to go around, games will have to be played without a clock. (This is not a desirable situation.) In the case of two players playing without a clock, the time control is enforced according to elapsed wall-clock time. For example, a G/30 game that begins at 1:15 P.M. will end at 2:15 P.M. If the game is still in progress at 2:15, the tournament director will declare it a draw regardless of the game position or remaining material for the respective players.

**IMPORTANT:** While chess clocks are designed to be reasonably rugged, players **must** treat clocks with care and respect. The clock you are using may not be your own property; it may belong to your opponent or to the club, or it may be borrowed from another player. Do **not** slam the buttons on the clock. You are "pressing" the clock, not "punching" it. A gentle press is sufficient to stop the clock. Always handle the equipment (clock, set, and board) properly.

See "Playing Under a Time Control" under "Tournament Rules" for more information.

## RATINGS

The United States Chess Federation (USCF) calculates ratings for players who have played rated games in USCF-sanctioned tournaments. The rating is a numerical indicator of a player's playing strength (or ability) relative to other players. Most scholastic players are rated between 400 and 1100. Masters' ratings exceed 2200. The USCF publishes its official ratings every two months. "Unofficial" new ratings are continually posted on the USCF website (<http://www.uschess.org/>) more or less as tournament results are processed and will show up on the mailing address of your USCF magazine as soon as they are updated.

All games played as part of the Summer Program will be rated games, meaning that their results will be reported to the USCF, which will factor them into the calculation of the players' new ratings. For unrated players, these games will be the basis for calculating their first rating. A rating is "provisional" until the USCF has processed the results of 25 games for a player. A provisional rating is shown followed by a slash (/) and another number indicating the number of games on which the rating is based. When the rating is no longer provisional, the number of games is not shown. For example, "1150/15" indicates a provisional rating based on 15 games, whereas "1150" by itself indicates a regular (not provisional) rating. It's not unusual that a provisional rating fluctuates greatly as new results are processed, so don't be alarmed if this happens in your case. Usually by the time 25 games have been processed, your rating will be pretty stable and a reliable indicator of your playing strength.

## RECORDING GAME MOVES

Different systems have been devised for creating a record of a game as it is played by recording the moves that each player makes. While there are several advantages to recording moves, it is nevertheless true that for many beginning players, recording moves is a distraction and nuisance that detracts from their enjoyment of the game. So we want to be very clear about this: it is not necessary that players in the Summer Program record their moves, but we encourage players to do so.