

The three most important points for new players

If you are new to over-the-board tournament play, welcome! This brochure will give you a summary of the rules you need to know. This list may seem overwhelming at first. Here are three key points:

1. If there is an issue or dispute, stop the clocks and call over a tournament director (TD). Directors do not intervene in games unless a player makes a claim.
2. You must record your moves (unless either player has less than five minutes left).
3. “Touch move” applies to tournament games.

If something happens ...

If there is a rules issue or any sort of dispute, **stop the clock and find a TD**. After the game ends, it is **too late** to claim rule violations. Also, TDs do not intervene in games unless a player makes a claim, even if the TD sees a violation.

Time Controls

All tournament chess games are played subject to time controls. A time control might require a player to make all the moves of the game within a certain period (such as “game in 60 minutes”, or “G/60”), or a particular number of moves in a specific time (such as “40 moves in 90 minutes”, or “40/90”). If there is more than one time control, the last is usually a “sudden death” time control (such as “sudden death in 30 minutes”, or “SD/30”), which requires each player to complete the game within a certain time.

Note that if there is more than one time control, any time left on your clock carries over to the next time control. For example, if the time control is 40/90 SD/30, you have 90 minutes for your first 40 moves. If you complete your first 40 moves in 70 minutes, the remaining 20 minutes carries over to the next time control, and you therefore have 50 minutes left to complete the game.

Each player’s time is measured separately. A specially designed timer (a *chess clock*) tracks each player’s time usage. If you run out of time, your opponent can claim a *win on time*.

Winning on time (time forfeit)

If your opponent oversteps the time limit, you can

claim a win. **If your opponent does not agree**, you must seek out a TD and make your claim. You need a reasonably complete and accurate score sheet to claim the win in a non-sudden-death time control (such as 40/90).

Understand how the clock works

If you are using your opponent’s clock, **ask** how the clock works. Is the clock set for delay? (A delay of five second per move is standard.) How do you stop both clocks, if necessary?

Does the clock count moves? What happens at move 40 (the end of the first time control)? Some clocks do not count moves, but just count down the first 90 minutes. After the 90 minutes runs out, the clock starts counting down from 30 minutes. This is legal behavior for the clock; you need to complete your first 40 moves before the 90 minutes runs out.

Recording moves

You must write your moves (and your opponent’s) on a score sheet (“record the game”). This is how you prove that you made the necessary number of moves or make other claims.

Exception: if **either** player has less than five minutes left in the time control, **both** players can stop recording moves. (If this happens in a non-sudden-death time control, players must resume writing moves at the start of the next time control.)

Touch move

If you touch one of your pieces, you must move it if you legally can; if you touch one of your opponent’s pieces, you must capture it if you legally can. If you touch one of your pieces to adjust its position on its square, you must say “**adjust**” (or “*j’adoube*”) while doing so.

Illegal moves

If there is no dispute, you do not need a TD. If the illegal move was made in a sudden-death time control, two minutes are added to the opponent’s clock. **No time is added in a non-sudden-death time control.**

The touch move rule still applies: the player making the illegal move must make a legal move with the touched piece if at all possible.

The proper way to offer a draw

The proper time to offer a draw is **after** you have completed your move on the board and **before** you press your clock. If you offer a draw before moving, your opponent can accept or decline the offer. Your opponent might also require you to move first. If so, you cannot take back the draw offer.

It is best to offer a draw by saying “**I offer a draw.**” It is **discourteous** to just say “draw” and stick your hand out at your opponent. Similarly, when accepting a draw, it is best to say “**I accept the draw**” to be clear about your intention. Some players will try to interpret a silent handshake as a resignation.

It is very rude to repeatedly offer a draw to your opponent. Generally, you should not repeat a draw offer unless your opponent has since offered you a draw or the position on the board has changed substantially. A player can make a claim of annoying behavior if the opponent repeatedly offers a draw.

Perpetual check

Although chess players will use the term “draw by perpetual check,” there is no such rule. Usually, the relevant rule is “**triple occurrence of position.**” That is, if the same position occurs three times with the same player having the move each time, the player can claim a draw. **Note that the repetition does not have to occur on three consecutive moves.**

If you are about to make a move that causes the same position to occur for the third time, do not make the move on the board. Write the move on your score sheet, stop the clock, and make a claim to a TD.

The fifty-move rule

A player can claim a draw if both players have made **fifty moves without a pawn move or a capture**. If you are in time pressure and think the fifty-move rule will apply, **find a TD**, state your intention to invoke the fifty-move rule, and **ask the TD to count moves**.

If your opponent is late

If your opponent is not present at the start of the round, set up your board, set, and clock. If you have white, start your own clock, make your move, and then press your clock to start the opponent’s. If you have black, just start your opponent’s clock.

If you arrive late and there is no board set up

If both players are late, the first player to arrive should set up a board, set, and clock. The time since the start of the round must be **divided equally** and subtracted from **both** players' clocks. For instance, if you arrive twenty minutes late, you must subtract ten minutes from **each** player's clock. Then, if you have white, start your clock, make your move, and press your clock; otherwise, start your opponent's clock.

Forfeit (no-show opponent)

You must wait **one hour** before you can claim a forfeit against a "no-show" opponent.

On the pairing chart, mark your result with a **1F** for your score and a **0F** for your opponent. Be sure to circle both your score and your opponent's:

Your Score (1F) Opponent's Score (0F)

Please do not be a "no-show" player! If you are entered in the current month's tournament and you are unable to attend a round, please request a bye in advance so you will not be paired and cause a forfeit. If you are playing in a non-MCC tournament and you must withdraw from the tournament or miss a round, be sure to **notify a TD**.

While You Are Playing

You must write down your moves and your opponent's moves (record the game).

The "**touch-move**" rule applies: if you touch one of your pieces, you must move it if you legally can; if you touch one of your opponent's pieces, you must capture it if you legally can. If you touch one of your pieces to adjust its position on its square, you must clearly say "**adjust**" (or "*j'adoube*") **before** doing so. You are allowed to adjust pieces **only** when it is your turn to move. If it not your move, you **must** leave the pieces alone.

It is illegal to discuss a game in progress, regardless of whether it is your game or someone else's.

If you have a question about the rules or any problems, seek out one of the club's TDs **even if he is playing** a game.

At the MetroWest Chess Club, **no food or snacks** are allowed in the playing room while games are in progress. Drinks are allowed, but please remember to be courteous to the players around you.

After Your Game

Both players are responsible to make sure that their game result is recorded on the pairing sheet. If we do not have your result, you might not be paired the next round

At the end of your game, do not discuss your game in the playing room. Take your belongings, mark your result on the pairing sheet, and leave the room. We have a skittles room across the hall available for you to go over your game and talk.

Please pick up after yourself. Do not leave trash behind.

Courtesy

Please refrain from talking while games are in progress. If you must say something to your opponent, the TD, or anyone else, please do so as quietly as possible so as not to disturb the players around you.

Please remember that the club is run by volunteers. Try to not create work for others. Do what you can to help out, even if it's just a little thing.

We are guests of the facility so please keep the facility safe and clean.

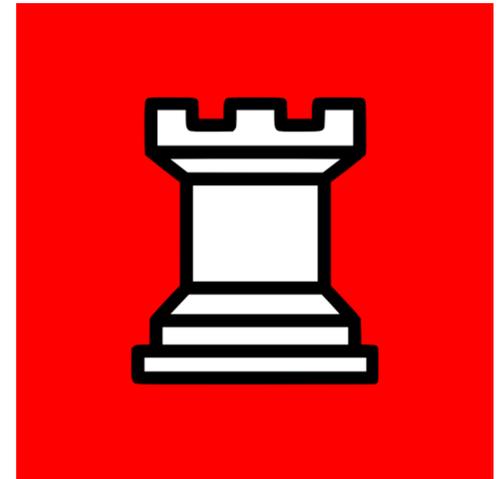


MetroWest Chess Club

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Common Tournament Rules



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