

# Advice for Informal clubs

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### I. Introduction

This document provides advice for informal clubs. By informal we mean clubs that do not necessarily meet on a regular basis or are focused on USCF rated play only.

## II. USCF Related

### A. The USCF site

- <https://new.uschess.org/>

### B. USCF Tournament Directors (TD) Certification

Tournament Directors ensure that events are run using USCF rules. They resolve any rules questions or issues. There are different levels of certification which correspond to the number of players in the event.

- The lowest level of certification is “Club TD”
  - Must sign a document stating you have read the rules and are ready to run an event
- Have several people get certified so you are not dependent on one person
- A TD must be present for every game played

### C. USCF Affiliate

USCF Affiliates are people or entities who register with the USCF as “organizers” who may run USCF rated events. All USCF rated events are run under the auspices of an Affiliate. Only people designated as Tournament Directors for the Affiliate may submit event to be rated.

- Has an annual fee that will need to be renewed each year

### D. USCF Collegiate Team

Have a qualifying event to select the representatives from your College.

Please check with the USCF about Collegiate play

### E. Running USCF Rated Events

We recommend you use an online registration system to manage registration for your event.

- Please refer to our FAQ area on our site:
  - [www.MetroWestChess.org](http://www.MetroWestChess.org)
    - Using Online Registration to Manage Events

### III. College Specific Advice

For this document, let's assume that only Students are involved and not dedicated Faculty members. Some of the difficulties in running a Collegiate club is that students come and go. This makes it difficult to maintain continuity.

#### A. Facilities

The following are goals that should be pursued which will benefit the ability to have club and attract players. Some of these may be achievable while others not.

- A dedicated room for the Chess club
  - Has tables and chairs suitable for playing chess
  - Has player capacity that meets expected needs
    - Tough to know what this will be in advance
  - Has restricted access such that only chess players are allowed or designated club managers
  - Does not have to be available every day but ideal if it is
- An occasional space for large turn-out events
  - Example: Boston University used to hold a yearly tournament open to the public. They used a side cafeteria room which controlled access and noise. Square tables were always present in that area.
- Storage
  - A place to secure Clocks, Boards and Pieces
    - Having Books creates other multiple logistical problems and is not recommended

#### B. Chess Gear

- Boards, Pieces, Clocks, Wall hung Demo Board
- You can apply to MACA for chess gear if you do not have a budget or want to use your budget for these items.

#### C. Online club

No discussion points here yet.

#### D. Club History

Find a way to keep an “Organizational memory” that is designed to persist over time. Not only should it exist over time, but it must also be findable by those who come later.

As part of the legacy of the club, your club history should keep a historical list of things such as:

- Members and expected Year of Graduation
- Yearly membership / participation count
- Chronological list of key events in the history of the club
- Chronological list of accomplishments

#### E. Advertising and Promotion

Since the player pool may change every quarter or semester or year, you need to make the presence of the club known on a regular basis.

- College internal site that students regularly access or search
- Student newsletter
- Run a Simul (see Simul section)
  - At least once a year

## IV. Keeping your players Interested

### A. Ratings for your Players

Most players want to know how they compare or how good they are. Ratings provide this measure. To get a USCF rating you must join the USCF and then play in USCF rated games. This may or may not be attractive to your players due to possibly cost or effort or both.

Several systems for generating ratings independent of the USCF exist. One that has been in discussion recently is the

- NWSRS Rating System
  - The Official Rating Site for Scholastic Chess in the Pacific Northwest
    - <https://ratingsnw.com/index.html>

This system is **free** and simple to use. You do however need to use

- SwissSys pairing software
  - <https://www.swissys.com/>

To use the NWSRS system you simply send by email the SwissSys files at the end of your event to them and they will post and provide ratings for all your players

### B. Chess Club Ladder

A ladder is a system of placing all the players in an initial ranking order and then providing rules where players may challenge each other to attempt to move up in the rankings.

The ladder could be initially seeded by USCF and Online ratings and then placing all others below. The initial order doesn't matter very much as over time it will sort itself out.

Rules can be any that you choose. An outline of some rules follows. Specifics are provided for example purposes.

- Lower ranked players may challenge up to 3 players ahead of them
- Once a higher ranked player is challenged, they may not accept any other challenges or challenge any other players.
- If a result is not reported within 10 days, both players drop 1 position in their ranking
- If the higher ranked player wins, the lower ranked player drops 1 position. If the lower ranked player wins, they swap places
- Time control for the ladder shall be at least G30; d5. Longer games are allowed by agreement of both players

All you need to do to run this by hand is have everyone report their challenges and results to the Ladder coordinator who then re-ranks and publishes the rankings. This could be done in a Chat Group.

This site provides an app, not free, to run a tennis ladder which could be adopted for Chess play

- <https://itennisladder.com/learn-more/tennis-ladder>

### C. Offer Group Class Lectures

Have stronger players offer classes where they walk through a game explaining what is going on and interacting with the attendees.

### D. Offer Game Review discussions

Designate a regular or occasional meeting time when higher rated or stronger players will meet to go over games with other players.

## V. Finding players

### A. Simul

A Simul is an event where a single player, often a Master or advanced player, plays all comers at the same time. Let's call this single player the Guest Star. By running a Simul, you will attract players of all levels who'd like a chance to play a Master.

The parameters of the event can be set in many ways. The "bigger the name" which generally means the "higher the rating" of the Guest Star, the bigger the draw of participants. The Guest Star usually wins almost all the games so the people who manage a win or a draw get bragging rights.

Guest Star Parameters to consider:

- May do the Simul for free
- May want a fixed fee
- May want a sliding fee, e.g. \$5 per player
- May have specific requirements about the format
  - No Masters or must be unrated or below some rating
  - Maximum number of players
- Contact MACA if you need help finding a Guest Star

Participant Parameters to consider:

- Limited to students and faculty
- Free entry
- \$5 or \$10 entry to play
  - This could be advertised as a fund raiser for the club
- Players bring on sets or sets provided by Club
- Set limit of players based on facility and equipment

## VI. External Resources

- Provide links to area chess clubs and MACA
  - MACA – <http://www.masschess.org/>
  - Area Clubs - Please refer to our FAQ area on our site:
    - [www.MetroWestChess.org](http://www.MetroWestChess.org)
      - FAQs : Clubs & Orgs
- For the Worcester, MA area there is currently unrated chess on Sundays and plans for some USCF rated "Quick" chess <https://www.yourmovechess.org/>