

USCF Correspondence Chess Rules

2004 Revised Edition

These rules superseded previous versions and apply to all Correspondence Chess tournaments and matches starting after December 31, 1991.

Your Pledge

"I undertake to conform to the rules and objectives of USCF Correspondence Chess, to respond promptly to all chess correspondence and to maintain a high standard of courtesy, sociability, and good fellowship at all times in my contacts with other members. I also understand that I have a responsibility to complete my games."

Your Responsibilities as a Player

1. You must be a USCF member for the duration of your play in any tournament. You must abide by the latest edition of the U.S. Chess Federation's Official Rules of Chess, except when inappropriate for correspondence play. In case of conflict, correspondence rules take precedence. You are responsible for knowing the rules. By entering correspondence events, you agree to follow directions of the correspondence chess director (CCD), to respond to any legitimate inquiry, and to provide requested information. Players must enter tournaments only in their own names, unless approval for other action is granted by the CCD. A player who withdraws may be denied entry to new events. If you withdraw without proper notice to your opponent and the CCD, you must post a \$50 bond before playing in another event (with CCD approval). This bond is returned upon completion of your games in the new event.

2. You are expected to act courteously toward opponents. The CCD will forfeit players who use abusive or insulting language or who are disruptive. In case of conflict, you should try to come to an agreement with your opponent.

3. You may consult chess books and periodicals but not other players. You cannot use a computer or computer program (chessplaying algorithms) to evaluate a game, but you may use computers for record keeping and databases.

4. In case of appeals, retain all game records (including move cards) for at least four months after receiving notice of a game result. Otherwise, you may find yourself without a defense to an opponent's claim.

Reflection Time

5. Every day counts as reflection time including Sundays and holidays. For each 10 moves (1-10, 11-20,...) you have 30 days of reflection time. You may carry unused time over into the next 10-move series. Reflection time is calculated from the day after you receive a move to the day you reply is postmarked. If you receive your opponent's move on the 19th and your reply is postmarked on the 22nd, you have used three days of reflection time — the 20th, 21st, and 22nd. If your reply is postmarked on the 19th, you have used no reflection time.

6. You must advise the CCD and your opponents of address changes in advance or at the latest within seven days of vacating previous premises. Also email address changes. If you don't, five days will be charged as reflection time.

Transmitting Moves

7. You must use English algebraic notation unless you and your opponent agree on another system. All games shall be conducted using written or typed correspondence unless oth-

erwise indicated. Transmitted moves, including conditional moves, are binding if the moves are legal. If an illegal or ambiguous move is transmitted as part of a conditional move set, the moves immediately preceding the illegal or ambiguous move are binding. Missing or mistaken announcement of check, capture, or "e.p." does not invalidate a move. Diagrams or commentary have no significance in disputes over move legality.

8. The USCF sells convenient postcards for sending moves but you may use something else. Your move card must contain:

- Names and addresses of both players;
- Section and game numbers;
- The previous move sent and your response;
- For conditional moves, the move sent immediately prior to the conditional move(s), all conditional moves you accept, and your response;
- Receipt and postmark dates of your opponents previous move and the date of your reply;
- Time used on current move by you and your opponent;
- Current reflection time totals.

If you do not include "f." and "g." with your moves, you cannot claim a win on time.

In the Golden Knights Finals, Absolute Championship, and other events deemed appropriate by the USCF, there is also a five-day penalty for:

- Impossible, ambiguous or illegible move(s);
- Failing to confirm your opponent's last move.

An impossible move is a move which cannot be played as recorded. Notify your opponent immediately of your finding. An impossible move or an illegible move in no way obliges the player to move the piece in question. In a case of an ambiguous move, the ambiguous move must be clarified and executed. For example, if your opponent writes Nd2 and either Nbd2 or Nfd2 can be made, the person writing the ambiguous move must execute Nbd2 or Nfd2. Clerical errors are binding and once posted, can in no way be taken back.

9. To offer conditional moves, send them as a series of consecutively numbered moves. To accept conditional moves, acknowledge them as you would other moves. You can accept a series of conditional moves in whole or in part. Conditional moves are binding only until the next reply.

Example: you are responding to your opponent's second move, 2. Nf3. You want to reply 2. ... Nc6 and offer two conditional moves. Your card should have the following appearance:

- e4 e5
- Nf3 Nc6
- If 3. Bb5, then 3. ... a6
- If 3. Bc4, then 3. ... Nf6

A typical opponent's reply might be:

- Nf3 Nc6
- Bb5 a6
- Bxc6 ...
- (or 4. Bc6 ...
- or 4. B:c6 ...)

There is no penalty for misrecording an "if" move by the sending player.

10. If you intend to use more than 10 days on a single move, you must tell your opponent within one week of receiving his move. If you don't receive your opponent's reply within normal transmission time plus 10 days, send a repeat. Repeat moves must be labeled as such and must include all information from the original move. If no reply after one repeat see Rule 13.

Loss on Time Overstep

11. In Golden Knights Finals, the Absolute Championship, and other events deemed appropriate by the USCF, if a player oversteps the time control (rule #5), he or she will forfeit the game. In Golden Knights Preliminary and Semi-final rounds

and all other USCF Correspondence Chess events (excluding the Golden Knights Finals, the Absolute Championship, and other events deemed appropriate by the USCF), a player who oversteps the time control on the first occurrence will be given a warning and penalized five days reflection time on the succeeding 10 moves/30 day time control. If a player violates the time control the second time, he or she will forfeit the game.

The following is an example of calculating a player's reflection time after a time control overstep: A player has 30 days to make moves 1-10 inclusive, 60 days to complete moves 11-20, 90 days to complete moves 21-30. A player makes move 18 but uses 61 days, thus overstepping the second time control. He or she is penalized five days reflection time. The five days are added to the reflection time he or she has used (61+5) and the player has 24 days to make moves 19-30.

Excused Time

12. You may take up to 30 days of excused time a calendar year. Additional emergency time may be granted at the discretion of the CCD. You must take excused time for all games in a section. To take excused time, simply notify your opponents and the CCD in advance. If you send a move, your excused time ends immediately. If your opponent takes excused time, you should respond to unanswered moves normally because your reflection time is still counted.

Submitting Time Complaints

13. You may submit a time complaint when your opponent has exceeded his or her allotted reflection time or has failed to respond to a repeat move within 10 days, excluding transmission time. Time complaints should include a full explanation of the facts.

14. Any dispute you cannot resolve or any claim of repeated or willful rule violation must be submitted to the CCD. Relevant evidence must be included. Whenever possible, continue play while the complaint is being considered. Your complaint should include:

- a. Section and game numbers;
- b. Names, ID numbers, and addresses of both players;
- c. Game score;
- d. Supporting documentation (photocopies are acceptable unless the CCD asks for originals).

Any complaint must be postmarked within seven days of the time a person becomes aware of the alleged infraction. Failure to comply with the above, including "a", "b", "c", and "d", negates your claim.

Reporting Game Results

15. The winner must report the result to the CCD. In case of draws, White must report result. It is a good idea for the other player to submit the result, labeling it "duplicate report." If you do not receive an acknowledgement from the CCD within 30 days, send another report. Reports must include section and game numbers as well as names and ID numbers of both players.

Thirty-Month Limit and Adjudications

16. A USCF correspondence game must end after thirty (30) months from when the event begins. Either player may submit the game for adjudication postmarked one week after the tournament's end date. The player submitting the adjudication must provide the following to the CCD:

- a. The score of the game;
- b. Diagram of the position before adjudication;
- c. Claim of win or draw;
- d. Any analysis to support claim (optional).

If neither player submits the adjudication material within one week after the tournament's end date, the game is scored as a ratable draw.

The CCD is not required to provide the basis for the adjudication result.

Ratings

17. Once play begins, games are rated whether they conclude normally or by forfeit. If your rating decreases by one or more rating classes as a result of forfeits or withdrawals, you will be required to enter prize tournaments in the rating class you occupied before the forfeits.

Penalties

18. The CCD may assess penalties for violations of these rules. Penalties include, but are not limited to, informal reprimands, warnings, reflection time reduction, forfeitures, or withdrawal. Warnings are usually issued before more severe penalties but the CCD may skip this step. Smooth and timely completion of games is the main consideration. Penalties will be assessed as necessary to accomplish this purpose.

Appeals

19. You may appeal the CCD's ruling to the Executive Director. Your appeal must be made in writing within seven days of the ruling.

Player Replacements

20. A withdrawn player may be replaced at the option of the CCD. There will be no replacement for a withdrawn player against whom a win, loss, or draw has been scored in actual play. A withdrawn player will not be replaced 60 days after the tournament start date.

GLOSSARY

adjudication: A judge's determination of a game's result, based on best play by both sides.

ambiguous move: A move in which two chess pieces of the same kind can be transferred to a new square and the player does not specify which chess piece. Example, knights on b1 and f3 can be moved to d2. The move "Nd2" is ambiguous because it does not specify which knight is being transferred. The correct transmission is either "Nbd2" or "Nfd2."

conditional or "if" moves: An attempt to save time and postage by offering a plausible continuation beyond the required response. Conditional moves are binding if the recipient accepts the continuations. The game must then follow the indicated continuation or any part accepted in sequence.

correspondence chess director (CCD): Official responsible for the supervision and direction of a correspondence chess tournament.

English algebraic: Conventional algebraic notation with abbreviations of the English names for the pieces — for example, Nf3 or Ng1-f3 or Bc1-f4; "x" or ":" for capture is standard. A full explanation of this system is available from the USCF office. Please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

excused time: Time-outs when play is suspended for leaves or for special circumstances with the approval of the CCD.

illegal move: A move which violates the rules of chess.

impossible move: A move which cannot be played as recorded.

Official Rules of Chess: fifth edition, Chief Editor: Tim Just, Editor: Daniel B. Burg reflection time: The time between a player's receipt of a move and the postmarking of his response.

time control: Each player must make 10 moves in 30 days of reflection time. Time saved in a control carries forward. Unusual delays within this limit warrant advanced notice to the opponent(s).

transmission time: The time a move is in the custody of the Postal Service, that is, from the postmark date to date of delivery at the recipient's address.