



Rules Summary

K-8 State Scholastic Chess Championship

- 1. TEAM FORMAT.** For the **Primary (K-3)**, **Elementary (K-5)**, and **Middle School** sections, this tournament is conducted in a 5-board team format. Each school team consists of five players with up to two alternates. For the **Preprimary (K-1)** section, the tournament is conducted in a 4-board team format. Players are strictly ranked in terms of playing strength (see Coaches Guidelines for instructions in ranking players). The team coach will set the ranking as the team is registered, and this cannot change during the tournament. The rank order of the players dictates what board position they will take in each team match. The top ranked player always plays on the first board, the second strongest player on second board, and so on. In the case of substitutions or absences, a lower ranked player can never play on a higher board than a higher ranked teammate. The fairness of the ranking and board position process is critical to the team format. **Violations may result in penalties, which include, but are not limited to forfeits and possible nullification of team results.**
- 2. SWISS PAIRING SYSTEM.** This tournament will utilize the Swiss System for matching opposing teams each round. This is a standard USCF chess pairing system designed to handle a wide range of tournament situations. Basically, the system attempts to match opponents with equal scores, while also trying to ensure a balance of white and black piece pairings over the course of the tournament, preferably alternating colors each round. These objectives cannot always be met for a range of reasons, but the system helps optimize the conduct of the tournament.
- 3. AWARDS.** The top scoring school team in each section will be the official **Georgia Scholastic Chess Champion** in their section. In the case of two or more teams that have the same high score, the teams will be designated Co-Champions. All other teams in each section with 3 or more points out of the five possible will receive trophy recognition. This is a school team tournament and there are no individual awards. Ribbons will be given to each participant.
- 4. TOURNAMENT DIRECTORS (TDs).** The tournament directors are charged with formal oversight of the playing area and resolution of issues which surface during the chess games. The Chief TD is the final authority on rulings or determinations.

His/her assistant is the Chief Floor TD. These individuals are supported by the Pairings Chief and several floor TDs. Tournament Directors will respond promptly to proper claims or questions from players. Otherwise, they will generally not interfere in a game unless a situation arises which clearly involves unacceptable sportsmanship or behavior.

5. **IMPORTANT ROLE OF TEAM COACHES.** Beyond their obvious coaching role, team coaches have a critical communications responsibility at this team tournament. They are briefed at the coaches meeting in the tournament hall at 9:00 am day of tournament, and they have access to Assistant TDs and to the Chief TD to get questions answered. They must ensure that their teams, parents, and school administrators understand these standard rules as well as any special announcements. While team coaches are encouraged to make inquiries for their team's players, ultimately the players and the players' parents are responsible for any claims or appeals.
6. **TOURNAMENT ROOM.** Coaches and parents may assist players in finding their boards, resolving clock issues, and filling out the team result slip. All must leave the playing area promptly when the round begins. There is a large separate waiting area. While a round is underway, only players with games in progress and tournament staff will be allowed in the tournament hall.
7. **CLOCKS AND TIME CONTROLS.** The time control for the Preprimary, Primary, Elementary and Middle School sections is G/25;d5, meaning each player has up to 25 minutes to consider moves and complete the game with a 5 second delay. Players are encouraged to use clocks. If one of the players has a clock, and either player chooses to use it, then it must be used. The GCA does not have enough clocks to lend out to players, so any player wishing to use a clock should bring his or her own. A game may start without a clock, however the TD may choose to place a clock on a game that is proceeding too slowly. Every effort will be made to leave each player at least ten minutes if this is done. Time delay should be set on digital clocks. A time delay of 5 seconds is preferred if the clock has that capability.
8. **ROUNDS.** The Primary, Elementary and Middle School sections will feature 5 rounds of competition. The Pre-Primary section will play 4 rounds.
9. **PIECE COLOR.** In the 5-board team format of this tournament, a team is assigned white or black for a given round. The team assigned white will play the white pieces on boards "a", "c" and "e", and the black pieces on boards "b" and "d". The team assigned black will play black on "a", "c", and "e"; white on "b" and "d". This serves to equalize the colors between the two teams as much as possible.
10. **NOTATION OF GAMES.** Each player may record the moves of the game, however notation is not required for Pre-Primary (K-1) or Primary (K-3). As a USCF rated tournament, notation is required for Elementary (K-5) and Middle School. A player who chooses not to notate may give up certain rights including the right to claim a draw by triple occurrence of position, and may be assessed a time penalty if brought to the attention of a TD by his/her opponent. It is recommended that a player stop keeping score when that player has less than five minutes remaining on the clock.

11. **TOUCH MOVE.** If you touch a piece in a manner that may reasonably be interpreted as the beginning of a move when it is your turn to move, that piece must be moved if you can do so legally. If you touch an enemy piece in a like manner when it is your turn to move, the enemy piece must be captured if you can do so legally. If you wish to adjust a piece, you must say “I adjust” **before** touching that piece. If you accidentally release a piece on an unintended but legal square, you must leave it on that square.
12. **INTERFERENCE.** Players must not interfere with any other game in progress. A player who suggests a move or idea to a teammate or otherwise comments on the teammate’s game or time management can be penalized. Penalties are at the discretion of the Tournament Director, and include, but are not limited to, reduction in the players remaining time, additional time given to the opponent, forfeit of the game, and reduction of the team score. **Both the giver and the recipient of the advice may be penalized. This holds even if the recipient did not solicit the advice.** Players should refrain from talking during the game, and any talking that does occur must be in English. Players who speak in a foreign language during their games will be assumed to be giving advice and will be penalized accordingly. If a player wishes to observe a teammate’s game while they are both still playing, then it must be done from behind the teammate.
13. **PLAYER CLAIMS / QUESTIONS.** **Players who wish to make a claim or who have a question about any rule or procedure should raise their hands immediately!** If there is a clock in use at the time, both sides of the clock should be stopped while awaiting resolution. It is too late to raise a claim after the game is over! The TDs will not interfere in any game unless one of the players raises his or her hand. Claims and questions after the conclusion of a round should be brought to chess control.
14. **REPORTING OF RESULTS.** When a pair of players has completed their game, they should raise their hands, leaving the final position intact on the board. A TD will come over to the board, and the players will mark the result on the result slip for the game, which will then be verified by the TD. Only then should the pieces be re-set. After this has been done, the players should then leave the playing area.
15. **CONDUCT OF PLAYERS.** **Players must be quiet, behaved and respectful at all times.** Costumes, annoying sounds or talk, movements, facial expressions or other distracting behavior during games will not be tolerated and may be grounds for forfeiture or expulsion. Good sportsmanship is expected. We are here for a challenging and enjoyable experience. Players must also be well-behaved between rounds and respectful of the property of the venue. Players must be supervised by parents between rounds.
16. **PARENT QUESTIONS.** Parents are requested to work with their coaches to help ensure that their children understand these rules, especially those relating to board order (1), player questions (13), conduct (15), and interference (12). Parents should discuss their questions, issues and complaints with their team coach before bringing them to the attention of chess control and the Chief TD.
17. **FOOD / DRINKS / BATHROOM BREAKS.** No food or drinks, with the exception of water, are allowed in the playing hall. Brief bathroom breaks are

permitted without TD permission; however talking, reading or any other consultation during such breaks is prohibited.

18. **TIE BREAKS.** Chess tournaments always require some tie break systems in order to properly determine final standings. The first tie break for this tournament will be head-to-head competition. However, if head-to-head is not conclusive the next tie break used will be the U.S. Amateur Team System, which is designed to recognize strength of performance throughout the event. If two or more teams are tied, and head-to-head will not resolve the issue, then each team's tie break score will be figured by multiplying their game points (boards) for each round times the final team score of that opponent, and then summing the results. For example, assume two teams in a given round both won their matches by a score of 5-0, but one of the two beat a team finishing 4-1 for the tournament while the other beat a team finishing 2-3 for the tournament. In this case, the first team would earn 20 tie break points (5 times 4) for the round, while the second team would get 10 (5 times 2). **This means that every board in every round counts.** Beyond these primary tie breaks, we will then use total game points, Harkness, Solkoff, Cumulative, Kashdan, Cumulative of Opposition, Opposition performance, and coin toss in that order.
19. **OTHER RULES / ISSUES.** This rules summary is not comprehensive. All other rules and decisions will be based principally (but not exclusively) upon the 6th Edition of the Official Rules of Chess as published by the U.S. Chess Federation. Penalties for rules violations are at the discretion of the Chief TD and may vary from warnings and time penalties to forfeitures and expulsion from the tournament. This is a state championship event and players, regardless of age, are expected to be familiar with the rules and etiquette of serious chess.
20. **CELL PHONE RULES.** Players are not allowed to have a cell phone on their person during an active round. Players are encouraged to leave all electronic devices, with the exception of USCF approved notation devices, with their parents in the waiting area. Players who do bring a cell phone or other electronic device into the playing hall must have it powered off (not on vibrate) and placed in a bag or underneath their chair. Players will receive penalties if they are found with an electronic device on their person during play.
21. **GOODWILL.** This tournament involves a lot of work by a very small group of volunteers. This is the one true scholastic team format tournament held in the state of Georgia, and it can at times stimulate strong competitive instincts and emotions. We are bringing school groups together from around the state. Some of the programs have different philosophies on scholastic chess, others have different levels of experience or investment. Some have traveled for several hours to participate. Please support organizer and Tournament Director motives and decisions as the tournament unfolds. We are all here for a quality competitive experience.