

2019 Grade Level Tournament FAQ

REGISTRATION QUESTIONS:

1. How will I know that the GCA has received my registration and payment?

You will get a confirmation email when you register and pay for your child on the GCA website. Please open the email and make sure it confirms that your payment went through. You can also log back in to the GCA website and check the status of your registration. Before the tournament, you should also check the registration list posted on the Grade Level tournament webpage. This will be updated periodically until the registration deadline. If your child is not on this list or any of the information is incorrect, please contact us immediately. Final registration will be posted at the site tournament day. Inquiries may be made at: gradelevels@georgiachess.org

2. Is there on-site registration?

No. There is no on-site registration. All entries must be submitted online by 12:00 midnight on Thursday November 14th.

3. What if my registration information is incorrect?

If your info is incorrect, please notify us as soon as possible.

**** Send changes to gradelevels@georgiachess.org as early as possible. No changes will be accepted after 8 am on Saturday November 16th, the morning of the tournament. ****

It is the parents' and coaches' responsibility to make sure that player information is correct. We will update a registered player list on the website periodically. Please make sure that your child's information (particularly section and byes) is accurate. There will also be a registration list posted at the venue on tournament day. Please check it to make sure all information is correct. If an issue is not brought to the attention of chess control or the Chief Tournament Director before 8:00 am, that player may miss the first round.

4. Do I need a USCF membership to play in the Grade Level tournament? Will I have a rating after this tournament?

This is a RATED TOURNAMENT, so all players **MUST** have an up-to-date USCF membership prior to registering. To join the US Chess Federation, go to their website, <http://www.uschess.org>. By playing at least four rated games, you will obtain an official USCF rating. If a player has entered without a **current** USCF membership, there will be a significant delay in rating the tournament for all players – meaning one player has held up the ratings for everyone. Please make sure your child has a current USCF membership when registering for this tournament.

5. What if I fall ill before the tournament and cannot attend?

If your child becomes ill and cannot attend, you should notify us of the withdrawal as soon as possible. To receive a refund of the entry fee, we must be notified and confirm your withdrawal before 8:00 AM November 16th. To withdraw from the tournament, please email (gradelevels@georgiachess.org).

6. What is a “bye?” Do I need one?

A bye is requested when a player will not be playing a round because of a conflict, such as a basketball game or a piano recital. You do not need to request a bye unless your child has to miss a round of the tournament. Students in grades K-8 may request two byes. Students in grades 9-12 may request one bye. All these requested byes will be counted as half a point. Any requested byes in excess of two in grades K-8, or one in grades 9-12 will count as zero points. (See #20 for more information on points.) **We strongly encourage players not to request byes unless absolutely necessary.**

****No bye changes will be accepted after 8 am on Saturday, November 16th, the morning of the tournament. Send bye changes to gradelevels@georgiachess.org ****

An unrequested bye happens if there are an odd number of players in a section, and so one player is not assigned an opponent. Since this bye was forced upon the player, that player will be given a full point for that round as if they had won the game. Players with an unrequested bye should wait at the scorekeepers table at the beginning of the round. No player may be assigned more than one unrequested bye in the tournament.

GENERAL QUESTIONS:

7. How much chess should my child know before participating?

Your child should know how the pieces move, including castling, checking the king, promoting a pawn, and capturing “en passant.” It is important that players be able to recognize an illegal move, as well as checkmate and stalemate. USCF “touch move” and “touch-capture” rules will be enforced.

8. My child knows basic chess but is just a beginner. Should he/she play in a rated tournament?

If a child wants to play and is prepared for the possibility that he or she could possibly lose most or all of his/her games, it is fine to enter. Most players who become strong have very modest beginnings, and everyone starts out as a beginner. Rated tournaments draw both beginner and experienced players and often have stronger competition. Unrated tournaments typically draw more beginner players. The Grade Level tournament is a rated tournament, and a USCF membership is required.

9. Will there be anyone available to watch my child at the tournament?

No. It is the responsibility of every parent to designate a responsible adult (other than a chess coach) to watch their children. Please do not expect a chess coach to be responsible for an entire team as most coaches are involved with teaching teams from several schools. Children who are not adequately supervised could get lost, hurt or be involved with property damage. When property damage occurs, the GCA is usually not invited back to that venue. Good venues are not easy to find! Please help us keep our venues happy. Your child must have an adult chaperone.

10. Is this a knockout tournament? Do I go home if I lose a game?

No. Each participant will play all rounds unless he/she has a requested or unrequested a bye (see #6 above for the definition of a bye).

TOURNAMENT PLAY AND MECHANICS:

11. What if I need to leave the tournament early?

If you decide to leave the tournament early (called “withdrawing”), you must notify Chess Control as outlined in the US Chess Code of Player Conduct. This will prevent players from being paired with a child who has left. It’s not fun to sit alone and quiet, waiting for half an hour for an opponent who never appears. We all want as many people as possible to play a game every round!

12. How do you match up players? What is meant by “Swiss System pairings?”

The Swiss System is the pairing system used almost exclusively to pair large chess tournaments where the number of players per section is much greater than the number of rounds. It attempts to pair players with equal scores when possible, and to equalize color allocations. The precise rules are complicated, but those interested can consult the “US Chess Federation’s Official Rules of Chess, 6th Edition,” starting on page 111.

13. Will US Chess rules be enforced?

Yes, we will enforce all US Chess rules. It is a player’s duty to be aware of his rights and responsibilities under these rules. “Touch move, touch capture” will be enforced in all sections; this means that if you touch a piece in a manner that can reasonably be interpreted as the beginning of a move, then you must move it if it is legally possible to do so. Similarly, if you touch an opponent’s piece in a like manner, you must capture it if you have a legal way of doing so. However, it is up to the player to “call” touch move and to claim it by raising his/her hand to notify the tournament director if there is a disagreement between players. **A good tip: don’t hover over a piece – it may look like you are touching it from your opponent’s perspective.**

14. Is my child going to be required to write down moves (also referred to as taking notation or keeping score)?

Recording of moves is required for students in grades 4 through 12. Those students competing in kindergarten through third grade are encouraged, but not required, to take notation. Having a written record of the game helps tremendously to sort out problems in the event of an issue. It also allows your game to be analyzed by a coach later – a great learning experience and the path to becoming a strong chess player.

15. Will my child have to use a clock for his/her game?

If either player has a clock and wants to use it, then that clock will be used even if the opponent would prefer not to. If neither player has a clock, then the game will begin without one. Tournament directors may place a clock on any game that is proceeding too slowly, or in which one player is using an inordinate amount of time. In such a case, the directors will attempt to leave each player with at least 5-10 minutes for the remainder of the game.

16. What should I do if my child has a problem, or he/she doesn’t understand something?

If your child has a problem or a question, he or she should summon a TD by **raising his/her hand**. This cannot be stressed enough. One should not take an opponent’s word for anything. An opponent may sound convincing but may not know the rules.

However, Tournament Directors (TDs) will not intervene in games unless asked! A player must raise his or her hand to call the TD.

If called upon, a TD can answer factual questions when players don't agree (e.g., is this an illegal move, can I move en passant, etc.) The tournament directors are here to answer questions and to solve problems, so players should not hesitate to get them involved. One will never be penalized for asking a question. Once the players agree on a checkmate, stalemate, draw or resignation, the game is over (whether or not those positions were actually on the board). Once a game is over, the result generally stands, and it is too late for the tournament directors to do anything.

17. What if someone displays poor sportsmanship or is annoying?

Learning good sportsmanship is one of the benefits of chess tournaments. Poor sportsmanship may result in warnings, time penalties, and possible forfeiture of the game. Annoying behavior will not be tolerated. **Raise your hand to report behavior issues to a tournament director.**

18. What if my child notices suspicious activity during the tournament?

While we generally don't have problems with cheating, the subject does come up. During a round, players should not say more than necessary to play a game – check, checkmate, adjust, draw offers, etc. While his or her game is ongoing, a player should try not to speak to anyone other than the opponent and the TD's to avoid the appearance of cheating. No one should comment on another player's ongoing game. Electronic devices for keeping score must be on the US Chess's approved list, and all cell phones should be off. Players should report any suspicious activity to a Tournament Director by **raising their hand**. Players caught cheating risk forfeiting a game, being expelled from the tournament entirely or even being banned from future US Chess competition.

19. How are game results reported?

It is not at all uncommon to have a game in which both players declare to their coaches/parents that they won. Therefore, game results are recorded at the board with both players present and witnessed by a Tournament Director. The TD makes sure that both players agree on the result of the game as they record them. This procedure is used to lessen the chance for errors and to provide written evidence that a player agreed on the result of the game.

20. How are the scores determined?

A player gets one point for every win, a half point for a draw, and zero points for a loss. In addition, a player gets half a point for a requested bye in the and one point for an unrequested bye. A player's score for the tournament is found by summing that player's points from all rounds. Thus, a K-8 player who wins two games, draws one game, loses one game, and requested a bye in round 1 will end with 3 points out of a possible five.

AWARDS

21. What do I have to do to win a trophy? What is the stipend for?

All players will receive a participation ribbon. All players with plus scores (at least 3 points for K-8 and 2.5 points for 9-12) will receive a plus-score medal.

At least the top 3 individual scores in each K-8 section will win a place trophy and the top winner in each grade 9-12 will receive a plaque. Since we cannot divide trophies or plaques in case of a tie or ties, we will use tie breaks to determine awards.

A \$100 stipend will be given to the 1st place winner in each section to attend the National Grade Level Championship in Florida, December 13-15. You must register and play in the National Grade Level Championship tournament to receive the stipend, which will be mailed after the GCA is notified by email (treasurer@goergiachess.org) that the student competed in Nationals. Please include student name, grade, and mailing address.

Requests for reimbursement must be made by January 19th.

22. What is the order of tie break systems that will be used?

For the individual awards the order of tie break systems will be:

Head-to-head (if applicable)

Modified Median

Solkoff

Cumulative

Cumulative of Opposition

Coin Toss

More information on these tie break systems can be found in the "US Chess Federation's Official Rules of Chess," 6th edition.

23. When will all the trophies and prizes be awarded?

The awards ceremony will begin as soon as possible after the last game is completed and results are tabulated, which will be between 5:30 and 6:30 pm. Everyone should be headed home before 7:00 pm. Plus score prizes will be distributed on a section by section basis in the tournament hall or just outside the hall as each section's results come in.