

English Chess Federation Tournament Rules

This document is effective from March 2020

These Competition Rules will be used in conjunction with the FIDE Laws of Chess.

The requirements of this document must be complied with in order for an event to be accepted for ECF grading. Please note that the word “event” is used as a catch-all word to cover congresses, leagues, matches, and any other formats in which ECF graded chess is played. It also includes Blitz Chess competitions, even though the ECF do not currently grade games in this format.

Section A – Compulsory Rules

1. The organiser must specify a time control within the limits specified by the Laws of Chess. The ECF strongly recommends organisers to use incremental time controls wherever possible.
2. When the time limit is Rapid Chess or Blitz, as defined in Appendices A.1/B.1 of the FIDE Laws of Chess, then, in accordance with Appendices A.5/B.5, the regulations of an event shall specify if the entire event shall be played according to the Competition Rules (all appendices from 6 to the 12 of the FIDE Laws of Chess) or with some exceptions as described in Appendices A.4/B.4.
3. When a non-incremental time limit is used the regulation of the event shall specify whether the game is played according to Guidelines III (Quickplay Finishes), as described in Guidelines III.2.1. If yes, then the regulations of an event shall specify the procedure for the player having the move and less than two minutes left on his clock for a draw claim. There are two options: according to Guideline III.4 of the FIDE Laws of Chess, an increment of an extra five seconds shall be introduced for both players or according to Guideline III.5 of the FIDE Laws of Chess, a draw claim procedure shall follow. If these matters are not specified, then, for example, king and knight v king and knight can be played on until one flag falls.
4. According to Article 6.7.1 of the FIDE Laws of Chess, the regulations of an event shall specify a default time on the entry form. Should the organizer fail to do so, the default time shall be 30 minutes for a Standard-play game and 10 minutes for a Rapid Chess game. Blitz games shall have no default time – the time shall just be allowed to expire.
5. The ECF Guidelines on treatment of disabled players will apply —
<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/guidelines-on-treatment-of-chess-players-with-impairments/>

6. GDPR

GDPR requires tournament controllers to be more careful with the data they collect and how they use it. ECF guidelines on GDPR and other privacy issues can be found at <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/update-ecf-privacy-policy/>

7. Safeguarding

The ECF has published policy documents on safeguarding and anti-bullying. Tournament organisers and arbiters shall comply with these policies. The documents can be found at <http://www.englishchess.org.uk/safeguarding-children-policy/> and <http://www.englishchess.org.uk/anti-bullying-policy/>

8. Cheating

In the event of a case of cheating being detected, the ECF has published guidelines on how to proceed. The guidelines can be found at <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Anti-Cheating-Document.pdf>

Section B – Recommended Rules

1. According to Article 9.1.1 of the FIDE Laws of Chess, the regulations of an event may specify that players cannot offer or agree to a draw, whether in less than a specified number of moves or at all, without the consent of the arbiter. If the draw condition is not specified then, according to article 5.3.2 of the FIDE Laws of Chess, players can offer or agree to a draw when both have made at least one move.
2. According to Article 11.3.2.1 of the FIDE Laws of Chess, the regulations of an event may allow the player to have an electronic device not specifically approved by the arbiter in the playing venue, provided that this device is stored in a player's bag and the device is completely switched off. This bag must be placed as agreed with the arbiter. Neither player is allowed to open or carry this bag without permission of the arbiter. If this approval is not given, then it is forbidden to have any electronic device in the playing venue.

Section C – Optional Rules

1. According to Article 10.1 of the FIDE Laws of Chess, the regulations of an event may specify a different scoring system. For example a player who wins his game, or wins by forfeit, scores three points (3), a player who draws his game scores two points (2), a player who loses his game scores one point (1), a player who loses by default scores zero points (0). If not specified, normal scoring is used (1, ½, 0).
2. Leaving the playing area:- According to Article 11.2.4 of the FIDE Laws of Chess, the regulations of an event may specify that the opponent of the player having the move must report to the arbiter when he wishes to leave the playing area. If this is not specified, there is no obligation for the opponent to communicate his intention to leave.
3. According to Article 11.10 of the FIDE Laws of Chess, the regulations of an event may specify that a player cannot appeal against any decision of the arbiter, if he has signed the scoresheet. If not specified, the player may appeal even after signing the scoresheet. It is strongly recommended that an Appeal Committee should be set up in advance.

Section D – Optional rules for events that are not FIDE-rated

1. FIDE recognises for its own events and matches only one system of notation, the Algebraic System. For events that are not FIDE-rated, organisers may permit the use of descriptive notation.
2. For events that are not FIDE-rated, organisers may permit the use of adjudication.
3. For Under 11 Rapid Chess events that are not FIDE-rated – i.e. those restricted to players who are under the age of 11, defined by either the calendar year or the academic year – the number of illegal moves that results in the loss of a game may be increased from two so long as it is prescribed in advance in the regulations of the event.
4. Where no arbiter is appointed, e.g. in an evening league match, then the organiser is empowered to make decisions otherwise the responsibility of the arbiter with respect to Article 11.3.2.1. In the case of a team match, the organiser is also empowered to delegate this responsibility to the match captains.

Miscellaneous

Request to use alternative rules not covered above

If an event organiser wants to use rule variations not covered above, then the event may apply to the Director of Home Chess for a dispensation to use those rules, which will be communicated to the director responsible for grading. Reasonable requests will not be rejected and may find their way into future revisions of this document.

Questions

If you have any questions you wish to raise, please contact Adrian Elwin, the Director of Home Chess, at [**director.homechess@englishchess.org.uk**](mailto:director.homechess@englishchess.org.uk)

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