

# English Chess Federation Tournament Rules

## This document is effective from August 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.

## **Section E – Guidelines for games played under Social Distancing conditions using 2 boards**

(These guidelines are adapted from the rules for games involving visually handicapped players, where moves are announced by both players. For these, socially distanced, matches, the moves will be announced because of the physical separation of the players.)

### **Supplement to the FIDE Rules of Play for use while Social Distancing conditions apply**

These guidelines should be used when the government advice allows people to meet but sets a limit on how close they can be and the clubs and players involved have agreed that play is possible. They must not be used to force people to play when they consider the conditions to be unsafe.

Competition controllers shall have the power to adapt the following rules according to local circumstances. In competitive chess under socially distanced conditions, either player may demand the use of two boards, one player using a 'master' board, the other player using a 'subsidiary' board. Both boards should conform to the usual standards for competition play and both should be of the same design. Sets should be of the same size and a standard Staunton pattern.

One player shall be designated as the 'operator' and shall use the master board. The opponent shall be designated 'subsidiary' and shall play at the 'subsidiary' board. The clock shall be the responsibility of the 'operator' on the 'master' board. Which player takes the role of 'operator' may be decided by agreement between the players. If no agreement can be reached by the players, then the player that did not demand the use of two boards shall decide whether he or she takes the role of 'operator' or 'subsidiary' player.

### **The following guidelines shall govern play:**

1	<p>The moves shall be announced clearly, repeated by the opponent and executed on his or her board. To make the announcement as clear as possible, the use of the following names is suggested instead of the corresponding letters, algebraic notation to be used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A-Alpha</li><li>B-Bravo</li><li>C-Charlie</li><li>D-Delta</li><li>E-Echo</li><li>F-Foxtrot</li><li>G-Golf</li><li>H-Hotel</li></ul> <p>When promoting a pawn, the player must announce which piece is chosen.</p>
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2	The normal touch-move applies when the piece is touched on the board of the player whose turn it is to move.
3	A move shall be considered "made" when either: the player releases the piece on the board of the player whose turn it is to move; the move has been announced. Only then shall the opponent's clock be started and the move completed.
4	A slip of the tongue in the announcement of a move must be corrected immediately and before the clock of the opponent is started.
5	If during a game different positions should arise on the two boards, the incorrect one must be corrected by consulting both players' game scores. If the two game scores correspond with each other, the player who has written the correct move but executed the wrong one must adjust his position to correspond with the move on the game scores.
6	If, when such differences occur and the two game scores are found to differ, the moves shall be retraced to the point where the two scores agree. The clocks may be set to a mutually agreeable time by the 'operator'. A note of the times made on the scoresheet can be used in this determination. If there is a failure to agree times the clocks should be left at the times shown when the error was discovered with the addition of 30 seconds to a clock for each move retracted.

## **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)

Adrian Elwin, Director of Home Chess

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August 2020