

English Primary Schools' Chess Association

Tournament Rules Applicable to All Competitions

General

- 1 All games will qualify for English Chess Federation standard play or rapid play grading.
- 2 The FIDE laws of chess and the ECF rules apply, except where specifically modified in these rules.
- 3 Spectators must never interfere. Normally the arbiter will not interfere unless invited to do so by one of the two players involved in the game. The arbiter may point out illegal moves or flag fall.

Starting a Game

- 4 The arbiter will decide where the clock is to be placed.
- 5 Before commencing the players must inspect the positions of the chessmen and the settings on the clock. An error cannot normally be corrected after each player has made three moves.
- 6 Players are not obliged to record their moves, except in games where each player has at least one hour for all moves, or where the regulations of the competition require it. When a game is being recorded, the arbiter must have full view of the score sheet.

Use of the Clock

- 7 Only one hand shall be used to move the pieces, and the same hand must be used to operate the clock.
- 8 The clock must not be picked up by either player.
- 9 Any player using undue force on the clock after a warning by the arbiter may be penalised by the loss of the game.
- 10 The clocks must not be stopped except for a query requiring the presence of the arbiter.

Illegal Move

- 11 An illegal move suffers the normal penalties of the touch move rule. Such a move is completed once the opponent's clock has been started. If either player has less than five minutes left on the clock and an illegal move is made, the arbiter may award the opponent two minutes for the first offence, and two minutes for the second offence. Three illegal moves by the same player when either player has less than five minutes will lead to the loss of the game.

Win on Time using analogue clocks

- 12 A player will win on time if the player can stop the clocks showing that the opponents flag has fallen, and the player's own flag has not fallen unless the player cannot possibly checkmate, in which case the game is drawn. "Cannot Possibly Checkmate" is defined as there being no mating possibility even with the help of the opponent.
- 13 If both flags are down, the game is drawn irrespective of which flag fell first.

Declared Draw when digital clocks with increments are not being used

- 14 A player may claim a draw during the last two minutes on the player's clock and before the flag falls. He should offer a draw to the opponent. If the draw is refused, the player must stop the clocks and summon the arbiter. The arbiter may then or subsequently declare the game drawn if satisfied that the opponent is making no effort to win by normal means. The arbiter may declare the game drawn even after the opponent's flag has fallen. If the arbiter considers the claim invalid extra time may be awarded to the opponent.
- 15 After a draw has been claimed, the fact that the opponent has mating material, does not necessarily mean that they will be awarded a win on time.

Note on Rule 14

Players often misinterpret this rule. The onus is on the player to win within the time limit. The arbiter will normally give the advantage to the player with time left. Players who are short of time should make enough moves in their remaining time for the arbiter to judge the merits of any claim. A player with a material advantage whose flag falls first does not automatically get a draw. The arbiter will award a draw only if the player with time left does not have mating material, or is making no attempt to win, or is forced to defend with no possibility of attack, or the position is a normally accepted draw, or so blocked that whichever player tries to break out will lose. If the player with time left is able to attack, they will usually be awarded a win even if, had the game been able to continue, they could have lost.