

NSSCA tournaments are played according to the FIDE (World Chess Federation) laws of chess for rapidplay games (<https://www.fide.com/FIDE/handbook/LawsOfChess.pdf>), unless specifically noted below.

TOUCH MOVE

- The touch move rule applies to all groups.
- When castling, the king shall be touched and moved first. Players will receive a warning for the first violation of this rule. Thereafter, if the rook is touched before the king, castling is not allowed and the rook must move (if legally possible).

CLOCKS

- For groups using chess clocks, the time control will be announced at the beginning of the tournament. Time controls are either 20 minutes with 5 second delay, or 25 minutes with 5 second delay.
- For groups that are not using clocks, clocks are added if necessary, after 35 minutes of play. The clocks are then set for 10 minutes with no delay.
- The tournament director may, at his discretion, put a clock on a game at any time if it appears that either player is stalling or using an excessive amount of time.
- Players must make their move and press the clock with the same hand. Clocks may not be picked up or moved during the game.

WON GAMES

- A game is won:
 - 1) By checkmate;
 - 2) If the opponent resigns;
 - 3) If the opponent runs out of time, provided the following conditions are met: To claim a win on time, a player must notify a tournament official and have mating material. Claiming a win on time is invalid after a checkmate or stalemate has been played, or after a player has resigned or agreed to a draw.

DRAWN GAMES

- A game is drawn:
 - 1) By stalemate;
 - 2) By agreement of the players during the game;
 - 3) By three-fold repetition (see section below);
 - 4) By fifty move rule (see section below);
 - 5) If a player has insufficient mating material (lone K, only K+B, or only K+N) and the opponent runs out of time.
- Claiming a draw in a position that “cannot be won by normal means” is not allowed with the 5 second delay time control.

THREE-FOLD REPETITION

- A player may claim a draw if an identical position has appeared on the chessboard at least three times. A game score or the witness of a tournament official is required if there is a disagreement about the claim.
- There is no penalty for an incorrect claim of three-fold repetition and a tournament official will observe the next 6 moves of the game.
- A tournament official will declare the game a draw if they witness an identical position has appeared on the chessboard at least five times.

FIFTY MOVE RULE

- A player may claim a draw if 50 moves of any player has been made without a capture and without a pawn move. A game score or the witness of a tournament official is required if there is a disagreement about the claim.
- A tournament official who observes that a game is not making progress or is asked by a player to count for the fifty move rule, shall start counting the moves.
- The tournament official will count the moves silently.
- The tournament official must advise the players of the current move count if asked.
- A tournament official shall declare the game drawn if 50 moves of any player has been made without a capture and without a pawn move.

OTHER RULES

- Players are not required to write down their moves.
- Players are responsible to be ready to play at the beginning of a round and are expected to be within a reasonable range of the playing area and pay attention for when their group is called to play.
- Players who are not present at the start of around may have their chess clocks started.
- If a player has any questions concerning the rules, they may raise their hand and talk to a tournament official. In case of any dispute or claim, stop the clocks and summon a tournament official. Any decision by a tournament official may be appealed, if done immediately.
- Only the two players in a game may make claims concerning their game. For example, players may not call touch move or indicate that time has expired in someone else's game. One exception to this rule is that tournament officials may point out illegal moves, but only when both players have at least 5 minutes remaining (Referees may not call touch move or indicate that time has expired).
- It is forbidden to distract or annoy the opponent in any way whatsoever. This includes talking and repeatedly offering a draw.
- Spectators (including parents and coaches) are not allowed in the playing area. Players may only leave the playing area during a game with the permission of a tournament official. Players may not speak with spectators during their game, even if they are permitted to leave the playing area. When a game is completed, the players become spectators and must leave the playing area. Spectators will remain quiet and not interfere in any game.

- It is forbidden for players to have cell phones, or other electronic communication, computer, or media devices in the playing area (even if turned off). Spectators will have their electronic devices on silent.
- Good sportsmanship is expected of all players and will make the event a more enjoyable experience for everyone involved. Shaking hands with your opponent before and after a game is customary.

DISPUTES AND IRREGULARITIES

- In case of a dispute, any violation of the rules or any irregularity (illegal move, illegal position), players should stop the clock and raise their hand to notify a tournament official immediately. Do not make another move or wait until after the game to make a claim. Once the game continues, most claims are invalid.
- The penalty for illegal moves varies depending on the situation. In games with clocks, the penalty for illegal moves is adding two minutes to the opponent's clock. Forfeiture of the game is not a penalty of making illegal moves. In games without clocks, there is no penalty for illegal moves. After a clock is added, the penalties are the same as in games that start with a clock.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION AND APPEALS

- Scorers, arbiters and the tournament director are tournament officials and may make any rules claims as stated above.
- Tournament officials may seek guidance or advice from other tournament officials.
- Appeals made by a player against a decision of a scorer must be made immediately at the time of decision. The scorer will get an arbiter (or tournament director if an arbiter is not available) to make a decision.
- Appeals made by a player against a decision of an arbiter must be made immediately at the time of decision. The scorer will get the tournament director to make a decision.
- The decision of the tournament director is final.
- Scorers and arbiters are assigned to groups to reduce potential conflict or bias (such as family or students) as best as possible.
- The tournament director shall defer their power of final decision to another knowledgeable chess player, board member or arbiter if a potential conflict or bias (such as family or students) exists, to the best of their ability.