

Judging Philosophy: The Principle of Non-Interference

In general, the judge should let the players play their game. For example, flag falls, checkmate/stalemate claims, illegal moves, or touch move violation claims may only be made by the player, not the judge, coaches, spectators, teammates, etc. Players will raise their hands to call a judge when they wish to make claims or declare the end of the game.

OPTIONAL: If this is the first tournament of the year, this philosophy may be slightly modified. If in the judgment of the judges, a player seems to be making a large number of illegal moves, the judge may ask the players if they wish a judge to watch for illegal moves. Make sure that if the offer is accepted that the judge watching has no conflict of interest. Likewise, if the judge witnesses a touch move violation, the judge may not claim the violation, but may remind both players about the touch move rules. Finally, the judges may ask the TD to intervene when a game is going on and on with no closure in sight (e.g., neither player has mating material, or an obvious situation where the leading player does not know how to mate with the remaining material and his opponent does not have mating material).

Appropriate Times to Intervene:

1. Spectators or other players may be banished from the play area.
2. A player is disrupting play by talking or other such behavior.
3. Players on a clock are abusing the clock or knocking down pieces and not resetting them.

Clocks:

1. Depending on the section/event, players may start on a clock either by individual choice or agreement. The following rules will apply to this tournament:
 - K – 3: Both players will have to agree for a clock to be used.
 - 4 – 6: Either player can require that clocks be used.

OPTIONAL: In Rounds 1 through 3, both players will have to agree for a clock to be used. In Rounds 4 and 5 for the top 4 boards, either player can require that a clock is used. The remaining boards require both players' agreement.

 - 7 – 12: Either player can require that clock is used for any round.
2. The players play Game/30 minutes (a.k.a. 30 minute Sudden Death). Set digital clocks at 30 minutes; set analog clocks at 5:29. After 40 minutes of play, judges may place clocks on remaining games. Digital clocks will be set at 10 minutes; analog clocks will be set at 5:50.

Touch Move Rules:

1. A touched piece must be moved if legally possible.
2. A touched opponent's piece must be captured if legally possible.
3. No penalty for touching a piece which cannot be moved (but warn the player if obviously deliberate).
4. Only the players may make touch move claims.
5. If the players do not agree that a piece was touched, the judge may enforce the rule **only** if the action was observed by a judge. Do not rely on the testimony of coaches, spectators, or other players who might have a stake in the outcome of the game. Feel free to give a little lecture on honesty even if no touch move can be enforced.

Illegal Moves:

1. Only the players may make illegal move claims.
2. If an illegal move occurs, attempt to restore the game to the position prior to the illegal move. If necessary, use players' scoresheets when available.
3. In extreme cases (when no scoresheets are available and players cannot agree on a previous position), the game may have to restart.
4. If players are on clocks, add one minute to the time of the player whose opponent made the illegal move.

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Procedure for Ending a Game:

1. One or both players will raise a hand to signal the judge.
2. When the judge arrives at the board, if the players do not volunteer a result, use a non-committal phrase such as “Yes?” or “May I help you?”
3. One player will make a claim such as “It’s checkmate!” or “I won!”
4. Restate the result to the other player in a noncommittal way such as “Your opponent thinks that Black wins by checkmate. What do you think?” When using terms such as “checkmate” or “stalemate,” be sure to clarify that checkmate is a win (and for whom) and that stalemate is a draw/tie.
5. In K-6, after both players have stated they agree, ask the loser one more time “Is that your final answer” to make them think about the position and re-evaluate it. You must be consistent in asking this question.
6. After the result is clarified and agreed, have both players report to a scorers’ table. Be sure you know the procedure and watch to see that the players are following it.

Ways to Win:

1. The player’s opponent does not show up by the forfeit time (10 minutes). Record as a forfeit (unplayed) win.
2. Both players agree that the position is checkmate.
 - a. Even if it isn’t, by agreeing the player is resigning the game.
 - b. If it IS checkmate but the other player doesn’t immediately agree, give the player time to realize it. The position isn’t going anywhere.
3. Both players agree that one player resigned.
4. One player runs out of time.
 - a. The other player must make the claim, not a judge or spectator.
 - b. The other player must have time remaining (if not, see “Ways to Draw”).
 - c. The other player must have “sufficient mating material” (NOT a lone K or K + B or K + N). Even a P vs. a whole team could mate (unlikely, but possible).

Ways to Draw:

1. Both players agree that the position is stalemate.
 - a. Even if it isn’t, by agreeing the players are agreeing to a draw.
 - b. If it IS stalemate but the other player doesn’t immediately agree, give the player time to realize it. The position isn’t going anywhere.
2. One player makes a verifiable claim to three-time repetition of position.
 - a. The player must have a complete scoresheet to demonstrate this OR
 - b. The judge may be asked to observe an ongoing repetition of moves.
 - c. The POSITION must be exactly the same for both players with the same player to move each time. The MOVES that repeated the position may be different.
3. One player makes a verifiable claim to 50 moves without capture or P-move.
 - a. The player must have a complete scoresheet to demonstrate this OR
 - b. The judge may be asked to count 50 moves by a player. Restart the count if a capture or P-move occurs.
 - c. This usually happens when one player is trying to force checkmate but is unfamiliar with how to mate with a R or Q alone.
4. Both players agree to a draw (one player offered; the other accepted).
5. Both players run out of time (regardless of which player makes first claim, it’s a draw).
6. One player makes a justifiable claim to “Insufficient Losing Chances.”
 - a. Players must be on a clock and the claimant must have less than 5 minutes remaining.
 - b. Player making claim is often significantly ahead in material but afraid of losing on time. The claim amounts to a draw offer, so the first step is to see whether the opponent would agree to a draw.
 - c. A claim is valid if the position is such that a much weaker player would not lose it most of the time even against a much stronger player. Hence, most valid claims are simplified positions (for example, R vs. R with no P’s, opposite color B’s with no passed P’s or blocked P’s, etc.).
 - d. Because evaluating a claim may involve chess skill, in most cases, you should refer such claims to one of the chief judges.**
 - e. In many cases, the best resolution is either to tell the players to play on or to put the claimant on a time-delay clock set for 5 second delay and either half the player’s remaining time or 1 minute, whichever is less, on the clock. This avoids the necessity of evaluating marginal claims.