

# Rules for the Organization & Conduct of Chess Tournaments Sponsored by the Virginia Scholastic Chess Association

Published & Maintained by the Virginia Scholastic Chess Association (VSCA)

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## INTRODUCTION.

The Virginia Scholastic Chess Association (VSCA) is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with the goal of being a premier venue for promoting, organizing, and coordinating scholastic chess activities. We aim to organize high quality chess tournaments that players, parents, coaches, volunteers, organizers, and tournament directors all have fun attending. We place great value in the qualities of sportsmanship, integrity and respect for others.

**1. Scope of These Rules.** This document provides specifications for the organization and conduct of all chess tournaments sponsored by the VSCA.

**2. References.** These rules supplement *The U.S. Chess Federation's Official Rules of Chess* (the *USCF Rule Book*), currently in its 5th edition and all future editions.

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## TOURNAMENT ORGANIZATION AND PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

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### 3. Chief Tournament Director & Assistant Tournament Director

- **3.1 Chief Tournament Director (Chief TD).** The Chief TD is responsible for all aspects of chess play at the tournament to include pairing of registered players, determinations of player eligibility and ineligibility, conduct of match play, discipline of players during play, and decisions for awarding of trophies and other prizes. The Chief TD is the senior authority for these matters at the tournament site. His decisions are subject to appeal as specified in the *USCF Rule Book*. Any Chief TD of a VSCA tournament must be currently certified at least at the “Local TD” level in accordance with USCF regulations.
- **3.2 Assistant Tournament Director (Assistant TD).** When present, Assistant TDs help the Chief TD run the tournament. They are assigned various duties by the Chief TD.
  - **3.2.1** Assistant TDs shall be certified at least at the “Club” level in accordance with USCF regulations.
  - **3.2.2** A major duty the Chief TD usually assigns to an Assistant TD is the task of making the pairings for each round of play. The Assistant TD with this role tracks the progress of the tournament (usually with the help of one or more volunteer Score Keepers), prepares the pairings for each round of play, and generates post-event summaries that he or she or the Chief TD submits to the USCF for rating purposes. This Assistant TD will use a USCF-approved computer program such as Win-TD or SwissSys to generate the pairings. Manual pairings will only be used if a computer is not available or becomes inoperative. Regardless of whether pairings are done by hand or using a computer, the validity of all pairings and tournament results are the sole responsibility of the Chief TD, not the Assistant TD making the pairings or a volunteer Score Keeper.

### 4. Tournament Organizers.

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- **4.1** Creating a high quality scholastic chess tournament is a challenging, but rewarding responsibility. It requires detailed and collaborative planning by the VSCA and the event organizer to fulfill the range of tasks outlined below.
  - **4.1.1** VSCA’s Responsibilities. Unless otherwise agreed between the VSCA and the event organizer, the VSCA will provide:
    - **4.1.1.1** A sufficient number of chess sets to match or exceed the number of registered players.
    - **4.1.1.2** A Chief TD certified at the Local level or higher, an Assistant TD to generate the pairings, and one or more additional Assistant TDs when the number of expected entrants for all sections exceeds 50. For example, a tournament with 75 players would need at least two Assistant TDs in addition to the Chief TD (one Assistant TD to help run the tournament, the other Assistant TD to generate pairings). A tournament with 170 players would require a Chief TD and at least four Assistant TDs (three to help the Chief TD with running the tournament, and a fourth to generate pairings).
    - **4.1.1.3** A computer, printer, paper, and a current version of USCF-approved pairings software such as SwissSys or Win-TD. This computer will be used by one of the Assistant TDs as assigned by the Chief TD.
    - **4.1.1.4** At least one staff member to man the Registration Desk. The VSCA will ensure this staff member has tournament cash and a “cash box” for making change as players pay for their tournament entry, a list of all registered and paid/unpaid players, a Receipt Book, and entry forms for walk-in players.
    - **4.1.1.5** Pre-event publicity on the VSCA website, and in email newsletters, flyers, Tournament Life Announcements in Chess Life, etc. Preparing the Flyer is a collaborative effort between the VSCA and the event organizer. This publicity will specify the date of the event, time for the start of the first round, the physical address for the tournament facility, player eligibility and how sections will be organized, early and on-site registration fees and procedures, tournament awards, and other site-specific notes (e.g. lunch served or not served).

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- **4.1.1.6** Payment for use of the facilities and all awards (trophies, plaques, ribbons, medals, and cash awards).
- **4.1.2** Organizer's Responsibilities. Unless agreed otherwise between the VSCA and the tournament organizer, the organizer will provide:
  - **4.1.2.1** An appropriate facility for the tournament. "Appropriate" means the facility has sufficient space to play all games, space for skittles (e.g. player waiting area), an area for the Tournament Staff, and enough tables and chairs. The organizer will make arrangements for use of the facility in collaboration with the VSCA.
  - **4.1.2.2** Rules for tournament participants and attendees with respect to the tournament facility including off limits areas, trash procedures, and bathroom use.
  - **4.1.2.3** At least one person to assist the VSCA staff member at the Registration Desk.
  - **4.1.2.4** Two to four volunteers to: help with the setup of tables, chairs, boards and sets before the tournament; man the "Scorer's Table" where player's scores are recorded each round; help ensure all participants and attendees behave responsibly in the skittles area and on the grounds of the property being used for the event.
  - **4.1.2.5** Arrangements for the sale of food, drink, and other concessions.
  - **4.1.2.6** On-site coordination with custodians or officials who represent the property being used for the tournament.
- **4.2** Anyone who wants to organize a tournament, and to have the event sponsored by the VSCA, must seek approval from the VSCA before advertising or publicly announcing the event. This allows the prospective organizer to discuss his/her tournament ideas with the VSCA, ensures the organizer fully understands his/her responsibilities (especially "who" has responsibility to do and pay for "what"), and helps assure the event is scheduled on an appropriate date at an appropriate place.
- **4.3** While the VSCA has no authority to prevent any organizer from scheduling a tournament, the VSCA reserves the right to decide whether to sponsor an event.

### 5. Player Eligibility.

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- **5.1** Any child enrolled in and attending a public, private or home school in grades K through 12 is eligible to play in a scholastic chess tournament sponsored by the VSCA. In addition, pre-school aged children are allowed to play as kindergartners. Some sections of a tournament may require the players to be members of the US Chess Federation (USCF). A player's eligibility ends when that player:
  - **5.1.1** Completes his/her secondary education (e.g. graduates from high school)
  - **5.1.2** Is expelled from school
  - **5.1.3** Quits school
  - **5.1.4** Chooses not to renew his/her USCF membership after it has expired if USCF membership is required to participate in the section
- **5.2 Ineligibility determined after an event.** If, after a tournament has been held, a player is determined by the Chief TD to have been ineligible to participate in a tournament, the player will be asked to forfeit all awards (trophy, ribbon, plaque, etc.) won during the tournament. The Chief TD has the authority to redistribute awards based on the removal of the ineligible player. However, all games played by the ineligible player will stand and tournament results will be submitted to the USCF for rating purposes. VSCA reserves the right to take disciplinary actions on players determined to be ineligible.
- **5.3** The Chief TD is the final authority to determine whether or not a player is eligible to play. Ineligibility may be "appealed" by the player (or his/her parents) using the procedures specified in the *USCF Rule Book*.

## 6. Tournament Format.

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- **6.1 General.** The policies in this section apply to all VSCA-sponsored tournaments unless advertised by the organizer or the VSCA in pre-tournament announcements. In addition, the Chief TD may, at his discretion, alter any of the provisions in this section because of extenuating circumstances and to ensure fair competition.
- **6.2 Rated and Not-Rated Sections.** At a minimum, all VSCA-sponsored scholastic chess tournaments will be USCF-rated events. Organizers have the option to offer Not-Rated Sections for players who are new to tournament chess or who have participated in very few tournaments (usually 3 or fewer). Organizers also may offer “Quads” for adult players and experienced scholastic players who want a greater challenge. After the tournament, the Chief TD will ensure the results of all rated games are forwarded to the USCF for rating purposes.
- **6.3 Number of Rounds.** Each section will normally play 4 or 5 rounds. Sections with a small number of players may play fewer than 5 rounds, at the discretion of the Chief TD. If the Chief TD decides to play fewer than 5 rounds, he or she will announce the decision prior to the start of the 1st round. There are at least two circumstances when the Chief TD may decide to play fewer than 5 rounds:
  - **6.3.1** When a section contains 16 to 31 players, the Chief TD may decide to play 4 rounds instead of 5. When this occurs, the Chief TD will announce his decision prior to the start of play in the 1st Round.
  - **6.3.2** When extenuating circumstances exist such as the approach of severe weather.
- **6.4 Time Controls.** All rounds for all sections will use a time control of “Game in 40” (G/40, d5). This means each player may use up to 40 minutes to make all of his/her moves and clocks with time-delay capability may include a 5-second time-delay for each move. When the Organizer offers “Quads”, the time control should be lengthened to G/60, d5 so that each player has up to 60 minutes for his/her moves. Time controls for all sections of the event shall be specified in pre-tournament announcements.
- **6.5 Exceptions.** An organizer arranging a tournament with rounds or time controls other than the “5-rounds, G/40, d5” VSCA-standard must specify the changes in all pre-tournament announcements. This rule does not restrict the Chief TD’s authority to change the number of rounds or time control due to extenuating circumstances on the day of the event.
- **6.6 Sections.** In general, the scholastic sections in VSCA events are organized in one of two ways as outlined below. This does not restrict the tournament organizer from proposing alternatives such as ‘K12 Under 1000’ or ‘Grades 4-5’. Regardless of the structure chosen for the event, it must be specified in all pre-tournament announcements.
  - **6.6.1** K3, K5, K8 and K12, with rated play in all 4 sections. K3 means players in 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade and below. K8 means players in 8<sup>th</sup> Grade and below. This structure also requires all players to be members of the USCF.
  - **6.6.2** K5 Not-Rated, K5 Rated, K12 Not-Rated, K12 Rated. The “Not Rated” sections refer to games that are not submitted to the USCF for rating purposes, meaning that players in the Not Rated sections do not need to be members of the USCF.
- **6.7 Combining Sections.** When 15 or fewer players are registered for a section at the close of Registration on the day of the tournament, the Chief TD may decide to combine that section with another section of the tournament. Combining sections is done by adding the names of players from one section to the list of players in one or more other sections. For example, if the K–12 section has only 9 players it may be combined with the K–8 section to create a larger section for pairing purposes. When this happens, the Chief TD will distribute tournament awards according to the original section in which each player registered. For instance, the highest placing K–8 player would receive the 1st place award for the K–8 section as part of the combined K-8/12 section, even if that player did not finish first among all players in the combined section.

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- **6.8 Round-Robin.** As an alternative to combining sections, whenever a section has only 5 or 6 registered players the Chief TD may decide to pair those players using a “round robin” format. When this happens, each player will play against all other players in the section. However, the more common procedure in the VSCA is to combine a small section with another section.
- **6.9 Playing Up / Playing Down.**
  - **6.9.1 Definition of Playing Up.** Often, talented young players will register to play in a section above their normal group (e.g. a 3rd grader registers to play in the K–8 section). Players do this in order to experience tougher opposition. This is called “Playing Up.”
  - **6.9.2** Playing Up is permitted in all VSCA events unless advertised in advance by the tournament organizer or specified by the Chief TD before the close of tournament registration.
  - **6.9.3** It is the position of the VSCA that the sole purpose of playing up is to give advanced players experience against stronger competition. It is inappropriate for a player to play up only to improve his/her chances of winning awards. The Chief TD is the final authority for deciding whether a player may Play Up.
  - **6.9.4** Playing Up also applies to team play. In other words, players who play up are considered part of a team as defined in Paragraph 8.2 below.
  - **6.9.5** Once a player decides to Play Up, he or she may not switch to a lower section after the first round has been paired.
  - **6.9.6** “Playing down”—the reverse of playing up—is not allowed in VSCA tournaments under any circumstances.
- **6.10 Pairings.** VSCA tournaments held during the school year (September—May) are paired as individual/team Swiss system tournaments as described in the *USCF Rule Book*. Tournaments held during the summer months, when school is not in session, are paired as individual Swiss system tournaments with no team competition. For sections with a large number of players (significantly more than 32), the Chief TD may use “accelerated pairings” for the first two rounds of the tournament.
- **6.11 Byes.** Players who intend to miss a round of the tournament may request a one-half point bye either during registration or at any time before pairing of the round to be missed. A player may receive only one bye during a tournament. No points will be given for any additional rounds missed. All bye requests are subject to the approval of the Chief TD.
- **6.12 Tie Breaks.** The VSCA uses “tie breaks” to break ties for place awards. The method for breaking ties shall follow the procedures specified in the *USCF Rule Book*.

## REGISTRATION AND CONDUCT OF PLAY

### 7. Registration.

There are two ways for players to register for VSCA-sponsored tournaments—online via the VSCA web site (known as Advance or Early Registration), or at the tournament site (called Late Registration).

- **7.1 Advance Registration.** The only way for a player to register in advance for VSCA-sponsored tournaments is via the VSCA’s web site. The VSCA website will be open for Advance Registration no later than 3 weeks before a tournament and it shall remain open until 7am on Thursday morning prior to the tournament. The deadline for Advance Registration will always be announced on the website and in pre-tournament publicity. After the Advance Registration period closes the only other way to enter the tournament is to register at the tournament location on the day of the event. Registering by email is done only as an exception, on a case-by-case basis.
- **7.2 Late Registration.** Any player registering after the closure of Advance Registration is considered a “Late Registration.” Players who have not registered in advance may register at the tournament, normally

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between 8 and 9 am on the day of the event. Players who do not register by 9am are not likely to be paired for the first round. The Chief TD is the final authority for pairing a player who registers late.. Any player who is not paired for the first round will be paired for the second round and receive a one-half point bye for the first round. These players will not be eligible for any other half- or full-point bye during the tournament.

- **7.3 Payment.** Players can pay before the tournament using PayPal or pay at the tournament site when they check-in at the Tournament Registration Desk. The cost of a VSCA-sponsored event may vary, so check the tournament flyer or the VSCA web site at [www.vsches.org](http://www.vsches.org) for details. .
- **7.4 Player Check-In.** On the day of the tournament all players will “check-in” at the Tournament Registration Desk when they arrive. Failing to check-in only adds confusion and delay to the start of the tournament.
- **7.5 Roll Call.** Before the start of the first round, and after the closure of the on-site registration period, one of the Assistant TDs or a Volunteer will call out the names of players whose registration “has problems.” This is known as “Roll Call.” After Roll Call is complete the first round will be paired by one of the Assistant Tournament Directors. Players who have not checked in and miss Roll Call will be removed from the draw for the first round of play. Common problems addressed during Roll Call include:
  - **7.5.1** A player did not check in at the Registration Desk.
  - **7.5.2** There appears to be a problem with a player’s entry fee or USCF membership.
  - **7.5.3** Some other problem such as a player’s school name is not recorded or is unclear (this is important for Team play), the status of a player’s USCF membership is unclear, there are uncertainties as to which section the player has registered to play in, and a host of other “administrative” issues.
- **7.6 No Shows.** VSCA expects that players who register in advance will attend the tournament. However, players are sometimes unable to come to the tournament due to illness or other unforeseen circumstances. When this happens VSCA expects players to be courteous and notify VSCA (via email, through a friend or other parent, etc.) that they cannot attend. VSCA will refund the entry fee of all players that register in advance but do not attend the event.

### 8. Team Play.

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- **8.1** VSCA tournaments held during the school year (September–May) are paired as individual / team Swiss system tournaments. This means that prizes are awarded for both individual and team competition.
- **8.2 Definition of a Team.** A team consists of at least two players from the same school playing in the same section of the tournament.
  - **8.2.1** As noted in section 6, “playing up” does apply to team play.
  - **8.2.2** Special Note for Home Schooled Children: Two or more players who are Home Schooled may form a team under three conditions.
    - If the children are members of a Home School Cooperative (“Co-op”), then they may form a team composed entirely of children from the same Home School Cooperative. A Cooperative is defined as a local organization requiring membership registration and which offers regular academic classes and/or social gatherings for Home Schooled children.
    - If the children are members of the same family and are all Home Schooled, then they may form a team consisting only of members of the same family.
    - If a Home Schooled child is a member of a chess club at the public school the child would attend based on their home address, then that player may play as a member of the public school team.
  - **8.2.3** No school is allowed to have more than one team in the same section of the tournament.

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- **8.3 Registering as a Team.** During tournament registration it is important for players to ensure that the names of their schools are properly recorded. This is the responsibility of the individual player, not the tournament organizer or a TD. Except as specified in Section 6, when two or more players from the same school play in the same section of the tournament they are “by default” assumed to be a team.
- **8.4 Calculating Team Points.** A team’s points are calculated by adding together the team’s 4 best individual scores. When the final scores for two or more teams are the same, the tie is broken in accordance with the procedures specified in the *USCF Rule Book*.
- **8.5 Playing Against Teammates.** The pairing programs used by the Tournament Director make every effort to ensure teammates do not play against one another. In the first and second rounds of a tournament it is unusual for teammates to play each other—but it is not impossible. During later rounds of a tournament the probability of teammates playing head-to-head increases. Individual competition always takes precedence over team competition, and occasionally teammates will need to be paired against each other in order to ensure reasonable pairings and fair competition. This generally occurs when more than half of the players in one score group (i.e., players with the same score) are from the same team.

### 9. Pairings & Game Results.

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- **9.1 Pairings.** Pairings for VSCA tournaments are generated by USCF-approved computer software designed for this purpose (e.g. Win-TD, SwissSys). Manual pairings will be used only in the event that the pairings computer has stopped working. Manual corrections will be made to computer-generated pairings only if, in the judgment of the Chief TD, the pairings are clearly incorrect or violate USCF Rules. The computer will be operated by either the Chief TD or a designated Assistant TD who is proficient in the use of the software. The Chief TD is the final authority for the validity of the pairings and tournament results.
- **9.2 Reporting of game scores.** Each playing board in the tournament room will be furnished with a Game Result Slip. This is a form with places to record the section, round, board number, name of the player with White, name of the player with Black, and the result of the game. At the conclusion of the game, and before resetting the board, players will raise their hands and have their game result verified by a TD. The TD will ensure the Game Result Slip is correctly filled out, and the TD will initial the form. After resetting the board, both players take their completed Game Result Slip to the Scorer’s Table. Volunteers at the Scorer’s Table will transcribe the game result to the official result (pairing) sheet. Both players will verify that their game result is correctly recorded by writing their initials beside their score on the official result sheet.
- **9.3 Alternative reporting method.** If Game Result Slips are unavailable, or at the discretion of the Chief TD, the players will report the game result directly to the volunteers at the Scorer’s Table. Each player will then initial the result (pairing) sheet as above.
- **9.4 Data entry of game scores.** After all games in the round for one section are complete, a volunteer or TD brings the completed result (pairing) sheet to the Chief TD or Assistant TD responsible for pairings, along with the individual Game Result Slips for each board. Scores are then entered into the pairings computer and checked for accuracy before the next round is paired. In the event of a discrepancy between the results recorded on the pairing sheet and the Game Result Slip initialed by the TD, the Game Result Slip takes precedence. In such instances one of the TDs shall attempt to find the players to ascertain the correct result. However, the Chief TD has the authority to correct any result or Game Result Slip if, in his judgment, the score was incorrectly recorded or reported.

## RULES OF CONDUCT, VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES, AND EQUIPMENT

### 10. Player Conduct.

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- **10.1 Values.** The values of sportsmanship, integrity, and respect for other players and the tournament facilities are of the highest importance in VSCA events. The game of chess is between the two players paired against one another, and no one is authorized to interfere with their play.

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- **10.2 Recording of Moves** (Also called “taking chess notation” or “keeping score”). The standards outlined below parallel the standards used by the USCF at national-level scholastic tournaments. See also Paragraph 13.3, Score Sheets.
  - **10.2.1 Notation Required.** Except as noted below, players are required to record their moves (keep score, take notation) during play in accordance with the *USCF Rule Book*.
    - **10.2.1.1 K–3 Exception.** Notation is not mandatory for players in any section which normally includes players in grades K-3. If the section also includes older players (grades 4-5, for example), those older players are not required to take notation, although it is highly recommended that they do. However, a K–3 aged player who “plays up” into a higher section of the tournament is expected to take chess notation as a competitor in that section. The Chief TD may alter this specification on an individual basis, but the Chief TD also will ensure that such a decision does not confer any advantage upon either player.
    - **10.2.1.2 Not-Rated Exception.** Notation is not mandatory for players in any section designated as Not-Rated. However, a player who does not yet have an official USCF rating is required to take notation if he/she plays in a Rated section of the tournament, except as noted under 10.2.1.1, K-3 Exception.
  - **10.2.2 Notation Strongly Encouraged.** The VSCA very strongly encourages players in all sections to learn notation and to record each game, even in sections where it is not required by these VSCA Tournament Rules. Players should think of notation not as an added burden that detracts from their games, but rather as a normal part of the game to be learned along with moves and strategy. In addition to protecting a player’s rights in case of certain rules claims, taking notation allows a player to learn from his/her game by reviewing the moves afterwards with a coach, instructor, parent, etc.
  - **10.2.3 Refusal to Take Notation.** When a player refuses to take notation, tournament directors enforce discipline through the use of warnings and penalties in accordance with guidelines contained in the *USCF Rule Book*.
  - **10.2.4 Handicapped Players.** Rules for handicapped players and other exceptions are specified in the *USCF Rule Book*.
  - **10.2.5 Electronic Notation Devices.** Players may use USCF-approved electronic recording devices such as the MonRoi, e-Notate, or Plycount. “Chess Notation” apps on cell phones are not authorized. A player using an electronic recording device must make his/her move on the board first, then enter it into their device. Players may not “check out variations” on their device. Parents, coaches or players should check with the Chief TD on whether one of their player’s electronic recording devices is allowed to be used.
- **10.3 Observing Games.** Spectators are not allowed in the playing room during play. Players currently engaged in a game may watch other games in the playing room, but they must leave the room once their game is complete. Players with ongoing games who are watching other games may not comment on another, provide advice to a game in progress, or speak to anyone else about games in progress. This not only is unsportsmanlike, but also can result in serious penalties to include forfeiture of the offending player’s game or expulsion from the tournament.
- **10.4 Behavior During Play.** Players will not talk to one another or argue during play. Any player with a complaint or a matter to discuss will stop the game clock and raise his/her hand in order to call the attention of a TD. Players do not need to ask permission to use the bathroom, and players will not stop their clocks if they use the bathroom.
- **10.5 Behavior in-between Rounds.** Players will behave responsibly in between rounds. Excessive noise outside the playing room disturbs other players. Stay out of any area of the Tournament Site that is designated as off-limits. Throw away trash in a proper garbage can.



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- **10.6 Cell phones.** Players' cell phones must be turned off at all times while their games are in progress. They distract other players when they ring. The tournament director may penalize offenders in accordance with guidelines contained in the *USCF Rule Book*.
- **10.7** The Chief TD has the authority to take appropriate action to ensure players adhere to the rules of player conduct. The Chief TD may take action ranging from simple warnings, time penalties, forfeiture of game, expulsion from the tournament, and barring from playing in future VSCA-sponsored tournaments.

### 11. Conduct of Parents, Coaches & Bystanders.

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- **11.1** As a general rule, parents, coaches, or other bystanders are not allowed in the tournament room once play begins. Anyone allowed in the tournament room will respect the players. The players will not be distracted or otherwise interfered with in any manner. Failure to obey this rule may result in the offender being asked to leave the tournament room, and possibly being told to leave the tournament.
- **11.2** It is completely acceptable for parents or coaches to escort players to the tournament hall and help them find the right place for their game. In the K-3 section and for first-time players this helps the tournament director begin the round in an orderly manner and is greatly appreciated.
- **11.3 Disabled Players.** Rules governing assistance to disabled players are specified in the *USCF Rule Book*.
- **11.4 Photographs.** During the first few minutes of a tournament, the Chief TD may authorize parents, coaches, or other interested individuals to take photographs. However, because some parents are very sensitive to their children being photographed, if someone objects to photography the Chief TD may decide against photographs in the best interest of the smooth conduct of the tournament.
- **11.5 Reporting Misconduct or Misbehavior.** Parents and Coaches are responsible for the behavior of their children or children they brought with them to the tournament. Any person observing misconduct or misbehavior that they are unable to handle in a reasonable and responsible manner shall report it to one of the TDs or to a designated Tournament Volunteer. The Chief TD will take appropriate steps to prevent misconduct or misbehavior from re-occurring.

### 12. Tournament Volunteers.

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- **12.1** If tournament directors and the organizer are the backbone of a tournament, then volunteers at the tournament site are the muscle that makes a tournament successful. Whether parents, other adults, or mature adolescents, volunteers are a blessing and will never be turned away. Their help with numerous tasks (especially setting up and tear down of tables, chairs and boards at the facility; registration; and, helping track the recording of game results) is indispensable. It is almost impossible to organize a high quality tournament without the personal time and effort donated by volunteers. Every VSCA event needs great volunteers!

### 13. Chess Equipment.

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- **13.1 Boards and Pieces.** In VSCA tournaments, the VSCA provides USCF tournament standard chess boards and pieces for use by all players in the Scholastic Sections. Players who play in the "Quads" may use their own chess pieces and boards as long as they comply with USCF Rules for standard tournament equipment. If the VSCA does not intend to provide pieces and boards for a tournament, this information will be announced prominently in pre-tournament advertisements. The Chief TD is the final authority on whether a player's set meets the specifications of the *USCF Rulebook*.
- **13.2 Chess Clocks.**
  - **13.2.1** Clocks are not mandatory equipment in the Scholastic Sections at VSCA events; however, it is in the best interest of any chess player to learn to use a clock, as opponents often have them. When "Quads" are offered at a VSCA event, clocks are mandatory.

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- **13.2.2** In accordance with USCF rules, if either player has a clock, it must be used for tournament play—players cannot “agree” to not use a clock when one is present.
- **13.2.3** Players are responsible for bringing their own clocks. VSCA organizers do not provide clocks for player use.
- **13.2.4** Rules regarding matters such as proper setting of the clock, where to place the clock, and use of digital or analog clocks are covered in the *USCF Rule Book*. The Chief TD is the final authority for determining whether a player’s clock meets USCF specifications.
- **13.2.5** In accordance with USCF tournament rules, tournament directors may at their own discretion “place a clock on a game” that appears to be proceeding at an unusually slow pace.
- **13.3 Score Sheets.** The VSCA will provide score sheets for players to record their games. A limited supply of pencils may be available, but every chess player should bring a pen or pencil.

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### **14. Changes to These Rules.**

The VSCA welcomes comments and suggestions to improve these rules. Suggestions should be sent by email to a member of the Board of Directors.

### **HISTORY OF REVISIONS:**

*Most recent changes shown at the top of this list*

- **Version 3.0**, 1 September 2014: A significant revision to align these rules with current practice at VSCA tournaments. The major changes impact the following areas: 1) home-schooled players, 2) responsibilities for the VSCA and tournament organizers, 3) the sectioning used at VSCA tournaments, 4) registration procedures, and 5) player’s use of electronic notation devices
- **Version 2.0**, 30 January 2007: Substantive changes were made to several sections:
  - 1. Paragraphs 6 and 8: To allow players “playing up” to be part of a school team.
  - 2. Paragraph 7: To provide more options for the date when the Advance Registration (online registration) ends, and to give to Late Registrations (e.g. walk-ins) a half-point bye instead of a zero-point bye.
  - 3. Paragraph 6.6: To increase flexibility for the way tournaments are sectioned.
  - 4. Paragraph 10.2: To better describe the requirements and exceptions for taking chess notation.
  - 5. Additionally the HTML content of this page was updated to conform to current W3C XHTML standards.
- **Version 1.01b**, 6 June 2005: Modified the web version to create a separate page containing just the Index and the Introduction. Contains exactly the same text as Version 1.01 of 18 May 2004.
- **Version 1.01**, 18 May 2004: Corrected grammatical and phrasing errors in paragraphs 3.2.2, 4.1.4, 4.1.7 and 7.2. No substantive changes.
- **Version 1.0**, 15 May 2004: Voted upon and adopted by the VSCA Board of Directors.