



# CCLA Server Chess

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1) Unless otherwise specified, the term "game" or "games" within these rules refers only to CCLA web server games.

2) Except for rules about touching pieces and others obviously not applicable to correspondence chess, all games shall be governed by the [Laws of Chess](#) (the official code of F.I.D.E. — the International Chess Federation). All players must understand the rules of chess and read/write chess notation before entering CCLA events.

3) Conduct:

a) Entering any CCLA event, whether entry fee required or free entry, constitutes a player's acceptance of and agreement to comply with all CCLA rules of play.

b) During a Traditional chess game, players may consult pgn databases and published works on chess (see 3(h) below), but in the selection of moves may not receive help from another player or any chess software ("chess engines", "table bases" etc.) that generates move recommendations.

c) The CCLA Board has created the position(s) of Games Checker. Traditional games will be randomly spot-checked for engine abuse with Top3 (Advanced Chess games are not examined.) Games will also be checked in response to specific complaints alleging engine abuse. In addition, games of anyone claiming any tmt. or section prize, Grand Prix points prize or Best Games contest prize in Traditional chess will be checked prior to awarding of prizes. Games played in Traditional chess events and found to be in violation of Rule 3(h) will not be published in Chess Correspondent magazine or on the CCLA website(s).

d) In addition to spot checks, if there is a complaint, CCLA will examine that particular game and, if it fails Top3, will examine all that player's games in that section; games may be examined retroactively, providing this does not conflict with (f) below.

e) CCLA members may report opponents' suspected engine use only to CCLA officials. In no instance shall one member directly accuse another member of engine abuse. Violation of this rule is covered under rule 4.

f) Penalties. A first exceeding of the engine-use threshold shall result in a warning and, if the game has been rated, rating points will be reversed. A second violation (any section) shall result in forfeiture of that game and any other games in the section that violate 3(f). A third violation (any section) will result in the player being withdrawn from all his remaining sections / games, and his rating / playing status transferred to the Advanced chess division. Entry fees will not be refunded. Such re-assignment is permanent for the life of the member (dropping out of CCLA and re-joining at a later date does not wipe the slate clean.) Note: this procedure has an effective date of January 1, 2020, established by the Board and will not be applied retroactively. A record of all games checked, pertinent analysis and conclusion/action taken will be maintained by the Games Checker and the TD for administrative purposes only.

g) Examination of games will be done strictly in accordance with a Board-approved methodology, as specified in (f) below. In no case shall the TD or the Games Checker reveal what computer and components were used, which chess engine(s) were used, how many ply depths/ variations were analyzed or whose game(s) were examined to reach a verdict. The TD may include Top3 analysis when communicating a decision to the player affected. Appeals are covered under CCLA Rule 4. CCLA may publish articles about, and aggregate statistics on engine detection, so long as these do not identify CCLA players by name or specific tournament sections.

h) Engine detection methodology (Top3). The traditional cc practice of following Master games in the openings is unaffected, as "book" opening moves are ignored in Top3 analysis. Players may follow any published correspondence game played prior to 1980, and any published over-the-board game.\* Following correspondence games played after 1980, or any published computer games or analysis, will drive up a Top3 score and likely result in a violation. Top3 also ignores "forced" moves, defined as (1) only legal move, (2) only move to escape checkmate, (3) moves made to avoid immediate loss of material or (4) recaptures during exchanges to maintain material equality (may be deferred one or more moves.)

The remaining moves (excluding "book" opening moves and forced moves) will be analyzed at a minimum 30-ply depth by a chess engine to determine that (1) no more than 70% of a players' moves match an engine's top recommendation, commonly referred to as T1 percentage; no more than 80% of a player's moves match an engine's top two recommendations, the T2 percentage (T1 + T2); no more than 90% of a player's moves match an engine's top three recommendations, commonly referred to as T3 percentage (T1+T2+T3); (2) a player's moves do not contain more than five T1 moves in a row (commonly called a "string,") and (3) a player's moves must contain at least one move that does not agree with an engine's Top 3 recommendations, commonly referred to as an "unranked" move. Note: A player who initiates a forced mate-in-6 or more moves, or a combination of 6 or more moves to win material, is not in violation of the string rule (2) above.

A Games Checker may analyze to any ply depth necessary to break tie rankings and/or any multi-PV setting to fully investigate suspect moves / move sequences. The Games Checker will forward any adverse findings to the appropriate TD for administration of penalties under section (g). A TD may not ignore or otherwise overrule the Games Checker's Top3 analysis and conclusion; the affected player may appeal an adverse ruling, per CCLA Rule 4. Top3 analysis is not applied to short games which do not have at least 10 rate-able moves.

\*A game between two human players, played under the auspices of a real chess organization, has a date (year) and location (or event) played, appears in a publicly available source such as commercial book, magazine, cd/dvd, website or blog, and is considered a "published game." Informal club games, "skittles" games, internet games, games between players using aliases, computer vs computer and computer vs human games, etc. do not qualify as legitimate sources in Traditional chess. For example, a player appealing the number of "book" moves identified by the Games Checker may not cite such games to improve his Top3 score.

4) If a dispute arises over comments made by one or both players, the Tournament Director may forbid both players from sending each other further comments not related to their game(s). If either player violates this directive, the Tournament Director at his discretion may forfeit that player in any or all games being played with that opponent. Unless otherwise specified below, disputes between players shall be referred to the Tournament Director. Any ruling may be appealed to the General Manager, if not the same person, but otherwise to the President. In cases of web server outage, the Tournament Director will decide if players' clocks will be adjusted accordingly.

## Chess Moves

5) Unless otherwise specified, all moves in CCLA Webserver games shall be made by committing them through the ICCF Webserver. Conditional moves are allowed when so indicated in the tournament rules listed on the tournament start sheet. The ICCF Webserver system will generate an immediate email informing the opponent of the move played and giving other relevant information. If a player disables receipt of these emails, the player is still responsible to monitor the progress and time utilization in all his games. If a player's e-mail service does not deliver mail from the ICCF Webserver, the player is still responsible to monitor the progress and time utilization in all games.

## Time Limits

6) For all sections begun after March 5, 2019, length of time to complete CCLA server events is 18 months. The time limit, typically 10 moves in 30 days, is shown at the bottom of the cross table of each event and on the start sheet issued at the beginning of each tournament. Timestamps are automatically entered by the Webserver with each move and are assumed to be correct unless the Tournament Director is told otherwise by ICCF officials.

7) Playing time is counted in days (24-hour periods). A player has 24 hours to respond to a move before a day of playing time is recorded by the Webserver. Periods of less than 24 hours between moves are disregarded. The basis for Webserver date/time is Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) or other central time defined by the location of the Webserver. All time saved is carried forward. A competitor who exceeds the time allowed forfeits the game.

8) Each player is entitled to 30 days vacation/leave in each calendar year. Players must send the information regarding leave in advance, using the Webserver facilities provided. If leave is not entered in advance by the player, the server continues to count days. Players cannot make moves during their notified periods of leave. When a player goes on vacation, his opponents do not get this time off unless they also have declared vacation during the same period.

9) If a player should lose internet access, become ill or is otherwise unable to transmit or receive moves by server, he, or a surrogate, is expected to contact the Tournament Director or the CCLA main office regarding his situation. If a player fails to communicate his situation, his games will be subject to forfeitures when time oversteps occur, and the player risks being declared a silent withdrawal by the Tournament Director with all his games closed out.

10) Any requests for more than 30 days of leave during a calendar year must be communicated to the Tournament Director. If such a request is not granted, a player may either withdraw from all his games or accept being charged with elapsed time. If he withdraws from all his games at once, the situation will be declared a mass withdrawal and his games will not be rated except by adjudication under Rule 14.

11) For all sections begun after March 5, 2019, the time limit is 10 moves in 30 days. The time limit is exceeded when more than 30 days reflection time is used for 10 or less moves, more than 60 days for 20 or less moves, etc. Notifications for exceeding the time limit are emailed automatically by the web server to the Tournament Director. Upon receipt of this overstep notification, the Tournament Director will investigate to determine if the overstepping player has gone silent in all his games. Time oversteps for non-silent players will be considered a violation of the time rules and a rated win will be automatically awarded to the player who has not exceeded the time limit. Tournament crosstables are updated automatically with each result.

12) If a player goes silent in all his games, the player's remaining games will be declared a silent withdrawal by the Tournament Director. A mass withdrawal occurs when a player withdraws from all play and notifies the Tournament Director of his intentions. All uncompleted games from either a silent withdrawal or mass withdrawal are recorded as unrated forfeit losses for the withdrawing player. The player's opponents who have favorable positions may submit their game(s) for adjudication and rating consideration.

13) If a player dies, all remaining games of the deceased player will be treated as a mass withdrawal and forfeited without rating loss. The deceased player's opponents who have favorable positions may submit their game(s) for adjudication and rating consideration.

14) A player may file for adjudication following his opponent's mass withdrawal, silent withdrawal or death. Games may be evaluated as wins, draws or losses for rating purposes and section scoring.

15) The ICCF Webserver system will automatically generate an email reminder when a player has not made a move for 14 days and another reminder after 28 days. A final reminder will also be automatically generated after 35 days of silence. If a player gets the final reminder after 35 days, he must make a move or report to the Tournament Director that he will continue the game within 5 days. If there is no such message from the player during this period, the server will notify the Tournament Director that the player has exceeded 40 days for one move. Upon receipt of this overstep notification; the Tournament Director will investigate to determine if the overstepping player has gone silent in all his games. Time oversteps for non- silent players will be considered a violation of the time rules and a rated win will be automatically awarded to the player who has not exceeded the time limit. Tourney crosstables are updated automatically with each result.

16) A player who withdraws from all CCLA games for any reason other than illness, documented by a physician's statement (if the Tournament Director so requests), or who forfeits more than one game for any reason, will not be permitted to enter any new events for one year from the withdrawal or forfeit, unless he posts a \$25.00 cash bond. Such a bond shall be credited back to the player's account if one calendar year elapses without any additional withdrawals or forfeits, but if either of these occurs, the bond is forfeited to CCLA. Any player who forfeits such a bond, and wishes to enter new events, shall have to post a \$50.00 bond, subject to the same conditions above, for a refund. Any player who forfeits two such bonds shall be automatically and irrevocably barred from CCLA play and his membership terminated.

## Game Results

17) Results of games that reach a normal conclusion (win or draw) are automatically recorded and the Tournament Director is informed by the webserver. For all other circumstances, players are responsible for communicating with the Tournament Director for timely resolution of problems or disputes.

18) All transmissions concerning the game and a record of the moves and dates will be kept by the ICCF Webserver until the end of the tournament and be available to players and to the Tournament Director. As a further safeguard, a player is recommended to keep a record of the moves and playing time used by both players until the game has been completed.

19) Changes of email address shall be made by the player under his personal settings maintained in the Webserver system. If a player does not answer inquiries from the Tournament Director because of an incorrect email address, that player may be deemed to have withdrawn from the tournament. If a player fails to keep his email address up-to-date on the Webserver and misses tournament start sheets or move notifications, this situation will be treated as in Rule 5. It is the player's responsibility to monitor the progress and time utilization in all games.

20) Players must note all game results on the server crosstable and must also note all rule changes, game results, prize awards, etc., published on CCLA's web page or in The Chess Correspondent and act responsively where mistakes occur. Once published on the web page or in The Chess Correspondent, changes in rules, regulations and procedures become official.

## Other Information

21) CCLA Bylaw VII requires all players to keep a current membership in CCLA at all times, unless participating in a special event where the membership requirement has been waived. Failure to renew membership within 90 days of the expiration date is grounds for termination of membership, which results in forfeiture of all CCLA games in progress and any prizes or advancements earned.

22) The Chess Correspondent and web page announcements of what event will state the number of players that will form a round one section, the prizes that will be awarded for each round, what qualifications are needed to advance to subsequent rounds (if any), the deadline for entry and the entry fee per section. All tournaments with specific start dates will be advertised in The Chess Correspondent or web page prior to the entry deadline.

23) The number of players in any one section of a semi-final or a final round will depend on the number of winners in preliminary rounds, and such sections will be established upon completion of all relevant preliminary rounds.

24) Team matches will be played in accordance with the special team rules below.

## — Supplement —

### Special Team Championship Rules

- Except as outlined below, the normal CCLA Rules of Play for Webserver chess, listed above, will govern.
- All game reports, time complaints, rules disputes and other tournament matters must be taken up directly with the Tournament Director. Email and permanent addresses shall only be disclosed to the team captain and tournament director. Other than the functions described in supplemental server team rule 5 below, team captains have no official function in CCLA.
- No player may play for more than one team in a division, and no team may include more than two players who are participating on more than one team (this restriction also applies to substitute players.)
- The rating list for board order of team rosters will be the most recent one on the CCLA website. The rating list used to determine the eligibility of a substitute player will also be the most recent one on the CCLA website.
- The Team Captain's role is to: a) find suitable players for his team at the start of the tournament; b) find a suitable substitute should one of his players withdraw; c) provide a team name to the tournament organizer; d) provide team members' names and email addresses to the tournament organizer; e) answer the tournament organizer's email in a timely fashion during the organization phase of this tournament and f) once the tournament begins, forward communication from the Tournament Director to his team members when asked to do so by the Tournament Director. These communications contain organizational and important tournament details. Players who fail to follow any rule changes or important communication that the Team Captain fails to forward when asked to do so by the Tournament Director will not be given any special consideration should a rule violation occur.

6) Substitutions:  
Substitutions may be made only during the first month of play, with the games starting over, for the Postal Team Championships; and during the first 6 months of play, with the original games being continued, for the Server Team Championships.

No more than one substitution per game is permitted. In the event of withdrawal or death, the Tournament Director shall call upon a team captain to replace this player within 30 days.

Substitutions must be cleared with the Tournament Director, who will notify all captains and players concerned when a substitution has been approved. The Tournament Director will put all games on hold involving the player to be substituted until the substitution process is complete.

If a withdrawing player is rated less than 1600 on the CCLA rating scale, the substitute's rating must be less than or equal to the withdrawing player. If a withdrawing player is rated higher than 1600, the substitute must be either (i) at least 100 rating points below the withdrawing player or (ii) no higher than 1600.

A substitute assumes games in progress as if he started them, with the same clock time as the withdrawing player had in each game and with higher points and team results dependent on the outcome. If the new player is left with less than 30 days to make moves up to the next move ending in zero (10, 20, 30, etc.), his time will be adjusted to 30 days to give him time to catch up. From that point forward, thirty more days will be added each time an additional ten move increment is reached. No adjustments in leave time will be made for the new player. The new player will assume the leave time left by the withdrawing player.

The substitute will be given an opportunity, time limit determined by the Tournament Director, to examine all games of the withdrawing player and determine if he is willing to take responsibility for all games. Any game a substitute chooses not to assume will be forfeited and a loss will be charged to the withdrawing player and his team.

If the Tournament Director determines that a player's death, mass resignation or silent withdrawal has occurred, the Tournament Director will notify the team captain immediately. The Team Captain with help from the Tournament Director and tournament organizers will make an immediate attempt to find an appropriate substitute, providing the time limit for making substitutions has not passed.

If no substitute player is available, the Tournament Director will forfeit all the withdrawing player's remaining games. These games will be rated and/or subject to adjudication according to the same rules as non-team events.

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