

# CCLA Server Chess

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## Frequently Asked Questions About Adjudication

### **What is adjudication?**

Adjudication is a formal process by which the final position of an unfinished game is analyzed by an unbiased third party, who then declares that position a win for one player or else declares the position drawn.

In some instances, this evaluation is based on specific analysis leading to a definitive conclusion, i.e., forced mate, forced draw or "won ending" whose technique is documented in the literature. In others, a definitive analysis is not possible and the adjudicator must rely on general principles. Here he will usually award a win for material advantage but not for "positional" advantage alone. See [CCLA Server Rule 14](#).

### **Why are games adjudicated? Why can't they be played to a finish?**

When an opponent dies or withdraws, and there is no replacement (as in team play,) CCLA awards an unrated win to his remaining opponents in the section. Results occurring before a death or withdrawal are not cancelled (and the reason why taking early draws is unwise.) Players have the option of seeking an

adjudicated (and rated) result, although great care should be exercised here. While he may gain some rating points, a player cannot improve his tournament standing through adjudication, and risks losing ground on both counts!

## **When will adjudication occur?**

Adjudication of a game can only occur when one of the players has requested it. An adjudication request consists of a legible gamescore, diagram of the final position and any analysis (optional) supporting a claim of win or draw. Requests are sent to the CCLA Tournament Director, who may perform the adjudication himself, or pass it on to another (high-rated) player. Server players who submit adjudication requests will receive written disposition from the CCLA Server TD via email.

## **My opponent withdrew from play. Do I need his permission to request adjudication of our game?**

No such "permission" is ever required. Usually only one player requests adjudication. Sometimes both players file requests, perhaps with conflicting claims. While it's highly unlikely both players would claim a win, one player could do so while his opponent claims a draw.

## **Why don't server events have an end date? When does play stop?**

CCLA's postal and email events are of two-year duration (some championship finals run 30 months.) Because transit time for server moves is essentially zero, a typical 40-move game played on the server will be finished in a few months. Even slower players, or players engaged in a lengthy endgame often finish under the one-year mark. For that reason, it was decided no end date would be needed for CCLA server events. Normally, CCLA server games are played to a finish. The only exceptions are when an opponent dies or withdraws from play, or forfeits due to exceeding the time limit.

## **What if I don't agree with the adjudicator's decision?**

Most adjudications are trivial (the result is obvious,) do not involve a counter-claim and are filed because an opponent has died or withdrawn. The process is administered by the CCLA T.D., and it is he who makes the final decision, even if an independent adjudicator assisted. Per **CCLA Server Rule 4**, any decision by the T.D. may be appealed to the CCLA President, whose decision is final.

## **Should I automatically request adjudication if my opponent dies or withdraws?**

Never request adjudication unless you are convinced your position on the chess board merits the result you are claiming. Adjudication requests are not some formality to gain rating points. For example, if your opponent withdrew, you have already received an unrated win toward your section total. Now if you request adjudication, and the verdict is draw or loss for you, then that +1 in the crosstable is replaced by 1/2 or 0.

Team players should give this careful thought, as they could cost their team a crucial point or half-point in the standings, chasing after rating points via adjudication. If you don't have a sure win, you're better off taking the unrated win as opposed to a rated draw or loss. Moral: do not submit frivolous adjudication requests.

## **A player forfeited all his games in this section. Must I send in my game for adjudication?**

Since you have already been awarded a +1(F) forfeit, a rated win, you may not also submit the game for adjudication. +1, +1(A) and +1(F) all mean exactly the same in terms of rating points and section scores, and you cannot get the same result rated twice. One is not "better" than another. Many players are incensed by their opponents' forfeits and withdrawals. If you want the world to know you out-played an opponent who chose to disappear, or stop answering your moves rather than resigning, then annotate your brilliant play and submit the game score to the CC editor and / or webmaster for publication!

## **Am I at a disadvantage if I make a mistake in my analysis? Will the Tournament Director send me the correct analysis?**

Submitting analysis isn't required in CCLA. Rarely does a participant submit objective analysis; he is trying to "prove" his win or draw claim and doesn't put sufficient effort into examining his opponent's resources. Experienced adjudicators largely ignore analysis submitted by the players, instead performing their own independent assessment.

Many players mistakenly believe the adjudicator will note their *superior* play or higher rating and award them a win on the assumption they'd continue to outplay the opponent. In adjudication, both sides take on the strength of a Bobby Fischer! The adjudicated result is a realistic, objective evaluation of the position, not of the players, their ratings or tournament standing. Ideally, the adjudicator works "in the blind;" he should not have

access to the tournament name, players' names or ratings. His only concern is the position to be evaluated, to determine the most likely outcome based on best play by both sides.

When he advises you of his decision, the Tournament Director may provide some brief analysis, but is not required to do so. To point out a mate-in-three or a short combination to win decisive material is easy enough, but a Rook and pawn ending could require reams of analysis. Chess instruction is not the objective of the adjudication process.

## Can I improve my chances with the adjudicator?

In otb and correspondence (ie, postal or email) chess, the length of a playing session is known at the outset and players can prepare for adjudication. In server play, if your opponent dies or withdraws unexpectedly, you're stuck with the position at hand. Players should keep this in mind when initiating gambits, combinations and "positional sacrifices." If there's a flaw in your calculations, you can be sure the adjudicator will find it!

*Note: the next paragraph was written for postal and email play. The web server does not allow illegal or ambiguous moves and maintains an exact record of moves played, to which the TD has access.*

Please make the effort to submit a legible, accurate game score and a correct chess symbol diagram, or [Forsyth notation](#) or [FEN notation](#) of the final position. It is not the Tournament Director's task to try and figure out why the diagram is wrong, why it doesn't match the game score or why the game score contains ambiguous, impossible or missing moves. If you don't provide the adjudicator with the proper materials, how can you expect a fair and impartial decision about your game?

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