

A Beginner's Guide To Coaching Scholastic Chess

by

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Foreword

I started playing tournament Chess in 1962. I became an educator and began coaching Scholastic Chess in 1970. I became a tournament director and tournament organizer in 1982. In 1987 I was appointed to the USCF Scholastic Committee and have served each year since, for seven of those years I served as chairperson or co-chairperson. With that experience I have had many beginning coaches/parents approach me with questions about coaching this wonderful game. What is contained in this book is a compilation of the answers to those questions.

This book is designed with three types of persons in mind: 1) a teacher who has been asked to sponsor a Chess team, 2) parents who want to start a team at the school for their child and his/her friends, and 3) a Chess player who wants to help a local school but has no experience in either Scholastic Chess or working with schools. Much of the book is composed of handouts I have given to students and coaches over the years.

I have coached over 600 Chess players many of which joined the team knowing only the basics of how the pieces move. The purpose of this book is to help you to coach that type of beginning player. What is contained herein is a summary of how I run my practices and what I do with beginning players to help them enjoy Chess. This information is not intended as the one and only method of coaching.

In all of my college education classes there was only one thing that I learned that I have actually been able to use in each of those years of teaching. That was an offhand remark by a professor one day who said, "Every good teacher is a thief. They steal the best from all of the good teachers they have observed, wrap it up with a little of their own personality, and use that combination to educate kids". Steal some of these ideas, steal some ideas from other coaches, incorporate your own ideas, and you then will have the proper mix to become a successful Chess coach.

I do not coach Chess to make future Grandmasters out of my players and there is nothing in this book that will help you coach future Grandmasters. I coach Chess because it is the only activity available to K-12 students that they can do their entire life regardless of their physical condition. I coach Chess because it is an activity that helps families be together as a family. I

coach Chess because it helps my students to become better learners. Finally, I coach Chess because I love the game!

What is a “good” Chess coach? This is a person who instills a love for the game within his/her players. If you truly want to be a good coach you need to become a tournament player yourself. There are all types of little nuances to tournament play that are impossible for you to teach your players unless you have gone through them yourself. It is not necessary for you to be a good player to coach scholastic players; all you need is a little experience and a love of the game. Some of the best coaches I have known around the country knew little about the finer points of the game, but they had such a great love of both the game and working with kids and because of that they developed some wonderful programs.

Throughout this book you will see references to “USCF” and “US Chess”. This refers to the United States Chess Federation, which is the official governing body for Chess in the United States. To learn more about them visit their website at www.uschess.org. The USCF offers, at no charge, a booklet titled “A Guide to Scholastic Chess” by Dewain Barber. This book covers points not addressed within “A Guide to Scholastic Chess”.

There is very little in this book which is designed to teach you or your players how to improve their game. There are many good videotapes and books out there to help with that and some of those are mentioned in the “Instructional Materials” chapter and throughout the book.

As your players become more experienced there are some points contained in this book which will no longer be useful and others you be able to continue to use.

Steal what will work for you and then enjoy this wonderful game.

Chapter 1: General Information

This chapter contains information about many subjects that do not quite fit into the other chapters. Most of this information needs to be understood prior to going to the other chapters.

Equipment

The standard tournament set consists of a vinyl board that has letters and numbers on the sides. It is supposed to be rolled up with the squares on the outside so it will lay flat when opened. The Chess pieces are to be the “Staunton” design.. Many vendors (places which sell Chess equipment) refer to the inexpensive version of these sets as “club specials”. The board and pieces can be purchased from almost any Chess vendor for less than \$15. There are many sets of greater quality and price. Most vendors will give discounts for purchases in large volume. The player to play the Black pieces has choice of equipment in a tournament game.

If you are just starting a Scholastic Chess club, you can apply to the US Chess Trust for free sets. To inquire about this send a letter to “US Chess Trust” at USCF. The number of free sets they give out is directly related to the amount of income they receive through donations. The US Chess Trust is a 501(c)3 organization and therefore tax exempt donations are greatly appreciated, for more information look at www.uschess.org and go to Chess Trust.

Chess clocks are a necessity in tournament play. The following are the most common reasons why Chess clocks are used in Chess Tournaments: 1) many tournaments are held in facilities that have to be vacated by a certain time, or 2) many players drive a considerable distance to tournaments and need to be able to get home at a reasonable time, or 3) some players want to do their very best so they take a much longer time than a normal player and if left up to them one game might last all day, or 4) the length of each round can be controlled so the next round can begin when scheduled. The purpose of a Chess clock is to provide a method of making sure the previous situations are addressed. Most local adult and scholastic tournaments use “sudden death time controls”. This means that a player has a specific number of minutes to complete the game or they lose that game. If the tournament is advertised as “G30”, then each player has 30 minutes to make all of their moves. Thus one game could last up to one hour (30+30=60). If players use up all of their time before checkmate has been declared by the

opponent then the players with no time remaining on their clock lose that game. See Appendix E for a handout of what your players should do while their clock is running.

A Chess clock has two faces and two buttons, usually on top. The clock is used to measure “reflection time” (i.e. countdown the amount of time the player has left to think about moves in this time control/game). When players finish their move, they press the button on their side of the clock and this starts the opponent’s side of the clock. Then their opponent pushes the button on their side of the clock when they conclude their move and this repetition continues until the game is completed.

There are two types of Chess clocks: analog (normal round clock face) and digital. The player with the Black pieces chooses on which side of the board the clock will sit. The exception to this rule is that a Tournament Director may rule that all clocks are to face the same direction in order for the Tournament Director(s) to better monitor those games in time trouble.

USCF rules state that a digital clock has preference over an analog clock. By rule the player with the Black pieces has choice of equipment. If the player with the Black pieces has an analog clock and the player with the White pieces has a digital clock then the digital clock must be used. With an analog clock the clock is always set so that the first time control or sudden death time control ends at 6:00 so there will be uniformity in all games.

Analog clocks usually range in cost from \$40 to \$80. Digital clocks usually start at \$40 and go up to \$120. The difference in prices is determined by the quality and features of the clock.

Tournament Directors

A Tournament Director (TD) is the person who is in charge of the running the tournament. In a large tournament there are usually several tournament directors who fulfill specific functions such as: pairing players for rounds (Back Room TD) and for interpretation of the rules during the game (Floor TD). In a small tournament there is usually one person who fulfills both of these roles.

An opponent may not always be truthful when describing the rules. Whenever you have a question about the rules, stop the clock and raise your hand and the TD will answer your question. If the TD has left the room, then stop the clock, tell your opponent that you have a question for the TD and go find them. You can always ask questions of a TD about the rules

during your game; however, once you agree to a result and leave the table that game is over and no further claims may be made about that game.

Earning Points

When a player wins a game they earn one (1) point and the loser receives no (0) points. When the game is a draw, each player receives one-half ($1/2$ or .5) point.

Byes

A “bye” is when a player does not play in a round. The most common form of bye is when there are an odd number of players in a tournament; therefore, one player will sit out that round. The lowest rated player in the lowest score group receives the bye. This type of bye is worth one (1) point.

A requested bye is when a player has some reason that they cannot play one of the rounds and therefore requests that they not be paired for that round. The player receives one-half ($1/2$ or .5) point for this type of bye. Each tournament usually has its own set of rules for byes such as when they may be requested or used, make sure to check those instructions if you are considering a bye for one of your players. This is helpful to a player who will be arriving late to a tournament or has an appointment in the middle of the tournament so they can leave and then return to the tournament.

Since there is no opponent, a bye is harmful to tiebreaks; tiebreaks are explained later in this chapter

Forfeits

When your player’s opponent does not show for a round then that player receives a Forfeit Win. The forfeit is worth one full point with no tiebreak points. The Forfeit occurs when the opponent’s flag falls or when one hour has passed from the beginning of the round, whichever happens first. The player who did not show is then removed from the tournament. There are occasions where a player is involved in some other activity, such as talking with friends, and simply fails to hear or notice that the round has started. It is your responsibility as a coach to make sure each of your players make it to their board each round and on time.

Ratings

A rating is a number which indicates a player's ability to play Chess. The primary purpose of a rating is to assist in pairings. The rating is also an indicator of who should win a game when it is played. For example, if two players play and one is 150 or more points above the other then in theory the higher rated player should win. However, this does not always hold true; which is why we play the game.

To receive a rating a player must participate in a USCF tournament. After the tournament director sends in the results of the tournament and USCF processes the tournament then the player will have a rating. That rating may go through numerous changes until the player has finished the tournament in which their 20th rated game is played. From that point on the rating will not undergo a major change based on the results of one tournament. Your players need to understand that the Tournament Director can not tell them at the end of a round or tournament what their rating is at that time; the tournament results have to be sent in to USCF and then the new rating will be calculated. If a player is anxious to find out their new rating then they can log on to www.uschess.org and go to the "Players and Ratings" and then "Player's/Rating Lookup" to find their new rating, but they will need to wait at least one week if the tournament was sent in electronically and at least three weeks if the tournament results were mailed in to USCF.

In Scholastic Chess the rating is not that important because the players are improving at such a rapid rate that their rating is usually below their playing ability. There are many times when a scholastic player will simply let outside influences affect their play and have a bad game/tournament simply because of an inability to fully concentrate.

Ratings are divided into Rating Classes. Players with ratings above 2400 are "Senior Masters", those with ratings from 2200-2399 are "Masters", ratings from 2000-2199 are "Experts", ratings from 1800-1999 are "A" class, 1600-1799 are "B" class, 1400-1599 are "C" class, 1200-1399 are "D" class, 1199 and below are "E" class players. The titles of International Master and Grandmaster are special titles awarded by the international organization in charge of Chess--FIDE.

Pairings

Pairings are the list of who a player is to play each round. The rules for pairings are spelled out in detail in the USCF *Official Rules of Chess*. In the first round of a Swiss System tournament, the most common type, first of all players are put in numerical order based on their rating and then the top half play the bottom half. After the first round, and for all remaining rounds, the players are put into rating order within their score group and then players are paired with the bottom half against the top half within each score group.

In individual/team tournaments a player is never paired against a teammate. The exception to this rule is during the last round when all of the players in the top score group are from the same school. The purpose of this is to help find a true individual champion for the tournament. There may also be a situation in which all of the players in the lowest score group are from the same school. Rather than having to play someone who has already won one or more games, many TDs will simply ask their coach to have them play a teammate who also has no points.

Which color a player is assigned is decided at random for the first round for the top rated player and then alternates for each game afterward. A player may be the same color twice in a row, but never three times in a row. A perfect tournament, with an even number of rounds, will have every player play each color the same number of times. This rarely happens in Scholastic Chess tournaments primarily because of the fact that players are not to play teammates. Having to play teammates happens more often in small tournaments than in larger ones.

The pairings may be listed alphabetically or in board order or both at the discretion of the tournament director. The board order pairings list each board and the players to play on that board (see Appendix A for a sample). The parenthesis following the players name usually lists the number of points earned by the player followed by that player's rating. What appears within the parentheses can be changed by the tournament director. Many scholastic tournament directors feel that scholastic players are often influenced by knowing the rating of their opponent and choose to have the school code of the player appear instead of the player's rating. In the blank in front of the player's name is where each player is to mark their results (1 for win, .5 or 1/2 for draw, 0 for loss) at the conclusion of the game.

The alphabetical (alpha) pairings will have all players listed alphabetically by their last name in the left column (see Appendix B for a sample). In the alpha list the parenthetical

information only applies to the opponent and the “color” applies to the player listed in the left column. Each player is listed twice, once in the left column and once in the right column.

Realize that there are several computer pairing programs. The samples shown in the Appendices are similar to how those pages will appear in all programs, but there may be slight differences.

Tiebreaks

The purpose of tiebreaks is to decide the order of players when medals/trophies are awarded. In adult tournaments with cash prizes tiebreaks are seldom used as all players who are tied for a certain cash prize will split that prize. The order of tiebreaks listed below is what is used for National Scholastic tournaments. The order may change for local tournaments.

1. “Modified Median” adds up the final scores of all of a player’s opponents and then discards the highest and lowest scores.
2. “Solkoff” adds up the final scores of all of a player’s opponents.
3. “Cumulative” adds up the sequence of scores for the player. Example: if a player won his/her first and third round and got a draw in the fifth round of a five round tournament, his/her sequence of scores would be: 1, 1, 2, 2, 2.5 for a cumulative total of 8.5. The player won the first round so the player received 1 point. The player lost the second round so you add the 1 point for the first round and the 0 point for the second round together and that player will also have a 1 for the second round . . . and that continues for all rounds of this tournament.
4. “Cumulative of Opposition” adds up the cumulative score for each of a player’s opponents.

There are other tiebreak systems which are used far less often. They are as follows: “Median” (same as the Modified Median but discards only the low score), “Result Between Tied players” (this is used when the two players have played and the game did not end in a draw), “Most Blacks” (because it is usually considered harder to win with the Black pieces), “Kashdan” (this system gives 4 points for a win, two points for a draw, one point for a loss, and zero for an unplayed game) and “Sonneborn-Berger” (losses are not counted).

To determine the tiebreaks for your team during or after a tournament, just add up the individual tiebreaks for the top four scorers on the team.

To see how the tiebreaks would appear on the “Standings” sheet in a tournament, see Appendix C.

Point Value of Pieces

Each Chess piece is assigned a point value. The only purpose of this value is to let beginning players know the value of a piece in the game so they will be more careful with the more valuable pieces and also know whether a trade is a good one. The most common point value system is: Pawn=1, Knight=3, Bishop=3, Rook=5, Queen=9 and King=infinity. A second point value system is the same with the exception of the Knight being worth 2. I tell my teams that during the opening and early middlegame that the first point value system is the one to use and during the late middlegame and endgame, after many pieces are off the board, the second point value system is the one to use. The reasoning behind that reasoning is after several pieces/Pawns have been removed from the board the Bishop then has greater mobility and range than the Knight.

To help a player remember the value of the pieces I use the term “dollars” instead of “points”. I tell them that the Pawn is worth \$1, etc. Then if they are considering a trade that is unwise, such as a Queen for a Bishop, I ask them if they really want to give their opponent \$9 while their opponent is only giving them back \$3. Since children learn the concept of money fairly early, it is an easy method of getting them to remember the value of the pieces.

The only time a Pawn is referred to as a piece is when point values are discussed. In all other instances, such as Chess books, there are usually three divisions of terms: Pawns, minor pieces (Knights and Bishops), and major pieces (Rooks and Queen).

Parts of the Game

A Chess game is divided into three parts: Opening, Middlegame, and Endgame. There are many different definitions of these three terms. These are the definitions which I teach my players. The “Opening” is from the first move and continues until: 1) the King is safe (either through castling or with pieces for protection), 2) all major and minor pieces have been developed (i.e. made their first move), and 3) an attack has begun on the enemy. The “Middlegame” begins immediately after the three parts of the Opening have been accomplished and is the portion of the game where tactics become important. The “Endgame” definition is

more difficult. Some believe that the Endgame begins when the attack is started on the enemy King and others believe it is when there is a significant reduction in material (at least 15 points of pieces are off the board). I believe that when the Endgame begins is different for each game. In many games the first definition above will apply and in other games the second definition will apply.

Tactics

Tactics are the part of the game that separates the good players from the average players. The most common types of tactics are: Decoys, Forks, Pins, Sacrifices, Skewers, and Xrays. Tactics are not something that a player should be concerned with until they have mastered the endgame and the ability to concentrate during their game. When the player reaches that point then they should purchase one or more of the many fine books available on tactics.

Diet

Diet is very important for Chess players. Nutritional foods with low sugar content are best. Strongly urge players not to have a lot of sugar or soda pop. It is very difficult for a player to concentrate for several hours if their metabolism has sped up due to having a lot of sugar in their system. Never allow your players to overeat as they may become too sleepy at the board.

All meals are important. Supper gives a player energy for the morning round, breakfast gives them the energy for the afternoon round, and lunch gives them the energy for the evening round for nationals or adult tournaments which may have only three rounds in a day.

Exercise

At Nationals each game can last up to four hours. A player has to be in very good physical condition to be able to sit for up to four hours and still be able to fully concentrate on the game.

This does not mean that a player has to be a superb athlete. It means that they do get exercise, such as a little jogging or a lot of walking. This type of exercise gets the heart pumping and that will invigorate the brain.

It is also recommended for the player to occasionally, about once every 90 minutes, to get up and walk around a little. The player might check to see how their teammates are doing, get a drink of water, or go to the rest room.

Some adult tournaments can have one game last up to six hours.

Rest

Chess is an activity of the brain. The brain does not operate well without rest. It is extremely important for the player to get as much rest as possible.

My school is located in a rural area. Quite often we have to drive two or more hours to get to a tournament. Therefore, I require that there be no talking, no playing of games, no lights, etc. on our way to the tournament. Over the years the results of my players have proven that those who actually sleep on the bus do much better in the later rounds than those who do not sleep.

Internet

Young people really like the internet. There are numerous sites available on the internet to play Chess. I do not mind if my experienced older players go on the internet to test an opening. However, I am completely opposed to my beginners going on the internet for the following reasons: 1) you can never insure the quality of the opponent and 2) the time controls are usually so fast that beginning players do not have the time necessary for them to fully concentrate on applying the many things they are learning. Because of those negatives I have seen players lose interest in the game entirely.

Handicapped Players

One wonderful thing about Chess is that players with many types of handicaps may play. Special boards are available for the blind. If a player is blind or confined to a wheelchair usually there will be a special location for them to play.

Chapter 2: Chess Coaching Psychology

The key to being a successful Scholastic Chess Coach does involve a lot of psychology to motivate your players and some personal philosophical insight as well. You do not have to be a psychologist or a grandmaster to be a successful Scholastic Chess Coach.

To be successful at coaching Scholastic Chess you first need to identify your reasons for coaching Chess (i.e. your Chess philosophy). You must be able to answer several important questions, the most important of which is why are you coaching Chess? Are you coaching because of your own love of the game? Are you coaching just to be closer to your own children and their friends? Are you coaching for extra money? Are you coaching because you want to make the players on your team winners? Are you coaching to make future grandmasters? Are you coaching a team which only wants to do well in a few local tournaments? Are you coaching a team that wants to win a State Chess Championship? Are you coaching a team that wants to win National recognition? The psychology of coaching Chess players begins with first figuring out your own coaching philosophy.

Each of the above reasons to be a coach of the wonderful game of Chess is fine. The problem comes when the coach does not stay on target with their personal philosophy. Why are you coaching Chess? You will find that whatever reason you had when you began to coach will change over time. Always there will be one underlying reason for your choice to become a Chess coach. As long as you stay true to that reason, whatever it may be, you will not falter as a coach. You will need to continue to make changes as the students you work with change in age/experience/ability. However, the same basic premise will remain with you no matter how long you coach. Never forget the reason you began. Every coach needs to feel some success in what they are doing. As long as that coach has realized the reason he/she wants to coach and has stayed on track, then that coach will feel successful.

All of the coaches I have known who have coached players who have become grandmasters were at least masters themselves. So make sure you do not set your goals above your ability to deliver.

The psychology of coaching scholastic Chess players is entirely different from other types of coaching. Coaching a large multi-level group of Scholastic Chess players is especially difficult because of two reasons: differing emotional development and the differing reasons for

playing. The larger the age range of the Scholastic Chess players you are trying to coach the greater the extent of problems you will have. An easy solution is to divide practices, so as not to have high school players practicing against elementary players. The division of players at practices is based on the premise that there are at least 12 on your team. Should you have fewer than twelve players then I would not suggest dividing the team. The minimal division is K-8 and 9-12. The best division for a large group is as follows: 1) 9-12 advanced, 2) 9-12 beginners, 3) 6-8 advanced, 4) 6-8 beginners, 5) K-5 advanced and 6) K-5 beginners. If you are dealing with mostly elementary level, then you want to keep the K-2 players separate because they tend to get more intimidated than older children. However, the best division of players only works if each group has a minimum of six and an almost equal amount of the coaches' time.

How many practices should you have and how long should they be? There is no clear or definite answer, except to say that you will have to learn what works best for your team. If you hold too many practices they may get burned out or too few practices and they may lose interest. Be aware that when many players begin something new they are "gung ho" and want to do it all of the time, but they quickly get burned out. My practices are divided into two types: K-8 and high school. My high school students are usually good for a little over two hours, while the K-8 students only want the practice to be about an hour. Make sure the practices are divided with a certain amount of time for instruction and a time for actually playing. Usually instruction is best at the beginning followed by the remainder of the practice.

What are you going to teach them in those practices? That goes back to the initial philosophical question of why you are coaching Chess. If you are just coaching students to learn the love of the game, there is no need to divide practices beyond K-8 and 9-12. If you want some of those students to excel and perhaps become very good players then you need to have some separation so you can have more advanced practices with the better players.

Make sure you vary your coaching techniques. Do not be afraid to try new things. By varying how you teach you are creating continuous interest. What works for another coach may or may not work for you. Use your ingenuity and be original, you do not want the players to get bored. One method of varying instruction would be to bring in a good adult player to teach a lesson on some facet of the game that is a weakness with many of your players. If there are no experienced adults available, then you need to acquire books to learn from and teach your players yourself. Occasionally I will give a book to one of my players and tell them that next

week I want them to teach a lesson on some aspect of the game presented from one of the chapters. If asked a question never be afraid to say “I don’t know” as long as you also say “But I will find out”.

Once they begin going to tournaments I have my players turn in the scoresheet for each game they lose. It is normal for a child to want to forget bad things and throw them away. I then pick one loss per student and study that game. I will go over the game in the next practice with the player. However, some games I use as instructional material and go over with the entire team. It is recommended not to tell who’s game it is so that player does not get embarrassed and make sure the team knows that this is being shown as a learning experience for everyone to use to help them improve. No one should ever pick on a teammate for what happened in a game--especially the coach! If the player made a mistake in a game it could be that the problem may have been with your method of previously coaching that point, so try to come up with a different method of teaching that point.

Teachers know that once they start teaching a new subject they learn more about that subject than they previously knew. The same is true with your players. If your advanced players help to teach the newer players then it helps the advanced players’ progress even more. However, be very careful about your experienced players. The ego of children is very fragile. Some students can only feel good about themselves if they are dominating others. When lesser players have experienced players humiliate them by taking all of their pieces, it may disturb them so much that they don’t come back. Most of the time the only thing that the experienced player is thinking of is that it feels good to “wipe somebody off the board”. They never think about the ramifications of their action. The coach also has to be careful about not making players feel inferior. This can usually be accomplished with taking the time to explain the mistakes the player is making during the game and occasionally being vulnerable to certain traps.

The above is how to coach the entire team. Chess, more than any other type of scholastic activity, requires the coach to deal with each player psychologically. Scholastic age players continually have feelings of inadequacy, how you approach that will usually determine whether that player will continue playing Chess and improve or stop playing entirely. The first and most important point is to show that you have confidence in them to do their best. It is extremely important for beginners to not place the importance of the game on the final result, but instead on

some minor part of the game on which you have been working with them. You might have been working with them on one of the following things that are usually problems for new players:

- Not placing pieces where the opponent can capture them for free,
- Not keeping a correct scoresheet,
- Not beginning an attack prior to getting developed,
- Not checking for escape squares so the opponent is not stalemated,
- Not making sure your King has an escape square, or
- Not starting an attack with only one piece instead of a coordinated effort of several pieces, or any other areas of their game you notice as a weakness.

When their game is over, go over the points that you have been working with them on and ignore the result of the game. There are many pieces to the Chess puzzle to be worked out before the younger player may be able to play well.

There are four possible results of a Chess game: win, draw, getting beat, or loss. I tell my players that there is nothing wrong with winning, provided it is done with good sportsmanship, or taking a draw is acceptable if it was a hard fought game. If the result was not a win or a draw then the player either got beat or lost. Getting beat means that your opponent just happened to be better than you were for this particular game. Losing means you made a mistake and your opponent was able to take advantage of it. There is absolutely nothing wrong with the first three results. The problem is the last result and the player needs to concentrate on why they made that mistake so that he/she will not repeat the same mistake and this begins with your analysis of their scoresheets.

As coach it is also important that you observe some of the better players in the tournaments through watching games or going over your players scoresheets. You will soon notice that Scholastic players tend to have the same tendencies. A partial list of these tendencies includes such items as:

- has trouble with certain openings,
- tries openings with quick traps,
- falls apart after queens are traded,
- does not use minor pieces well,
- has problems with certain types of checkmates,

- does not see combinations of more than two moves, or
- is an attacking player and falls apart when he/she has to play defense.

All of these are some of the reasons why many players do not succeed. If you can give your player some insight into what the opponent may try or what their weakness' are it will give the player more confidence in you, which in turn increases their confidence in themselves.

A coach needs to understand that most players do not have the maturity to put aside any personal distractions. Some of these personal distractions may include the following:

- if their health is poor,
- if their parents are fighting,
- if there has been a death or serious injury in the family,
- if they are fighting with a friend, or did their boyfriend/girlfriend break up with them,
- if they did something that got them grounded,
- if a previous loss that was clearly their fault, etc.

Usually the player themselves will not tell you their problem, but one of their friends may if they perceive that you are a caring person.

Some individual players have problems that can be handled in unusual ways. Is a player easily distracted? One of the things that can be used to help that is by having them put on headphones and listen to a CD. However, you need to make sure that they do not have the volume high enough for anyone else to hear. It is also important to not have any music that has a real hard and fast beat if they are playing a game with a time control slower than G60. With most players instrumental music proves to be the most beneficial. There are many Chess players who believe that listening to Mozart will increase their ability to concentrate. Does the player daydream while their opponent is thinking instead of concentrating on their game? To overcome this problem a friend of mine tells his players "if you see a good move, look for a better one". A lot of players usually think that this is corny, but with many players it does work. Sometimes concentration problems can simply be handled by having them get up. They usually do not have to move far, but just look at a few other games, such as some of their teammate's games. For many players when they then return to their game they will have forgotten exactly what they were thinking of prior to leaving and will instead study the board for what is there and might see something they did not notice previously. In games with time controls of G60 or longer a players diet and rest can affect their play.

A concentration tactic that I have used with great success for elementary level players to aid them in concentrating starts before the game begins. I will tell them to circle the number of every fifth move on their scoresheet (i.e. 5, 10, 15, etc.). When they come to a circled move number they are to stop and carefully analyze each and every square on the board and where each piece can move next. Usually they will notice things that they did not see previously. Depending on the player a different number may be needed (3 or 4). This also helps keep them from playing G60 as though it were a Blitz round.

Whatever is taught must be repeated over and over until you are positive that everyone has learned that lesson. How often to repeat a lesson is directly related to the age/experience/rating of the players.

Always remember the reason(s) that you started coaching this wonderful game!

Chapter 3: Instructional Materials

The type of instructional materials you choose to use will depend on the age, experience, and abilities of your players. Most of the time the use of these materials is trial and error; what works for one player will not necessarily work for another. Materials that are easy for one coach to use may not be good for another. You will have to make those decisions for yourself. The USCF Scholastic Council is working on providing a grading for chess books aimed at scholastic players to help establish a grade/experience/playing level for each book.

Many students are very good visual learners, which is why there are so many Chess video tapes and DVDs available. The video tape that I have found to be very helpful for beginners is *Play Chess* offered by USCF, a simple 50 minute video that explains how the pieces move, has some minor strategy, and gives a brief introduction to tournaments. While it is very repetitive, I find that is what most beginners need. The following videos have been helpful to my students: Pandolfini's videos (*Openings*, *Understanding Chess*, and *Endgame*) and *Chess For Juniors*.

Numerous books have been written on every aspect of Chess. If you desire to get several books and are on a limited budget, I recommend you look at those books published by Dover (www.doverpublications.com) or Cardoza (www.cardozabooks.com); most are affordable and offer excellent information on the various facets of the game. The following is a list of books, in no particular order, that I believe every coach should own: Lev Alburt's *Comprehensive Chess Course, Vol. 1 & Vol. 2*, *An Opening Repertoire for the Attacking Player* by Keene and Levy, Pandolfini's *Opening*, *Middlegame*, and *Endgame* books, Silman's *How To Reassess Your Chess*, *Best Lessons From A Coach* by Sunil Weeramantry, Yasser Seirawan's *Winning Chess Strategies* and *Winning Chess Tactics*, *Chess Master vs Chess Amateur* by Max Euwe, *Test Your Positional Play*, Alexei Shirov's *Fire On The Board*, and *The School of Future Champions* by Mark Dvoretsky.

I strongly suggest to not having your students begin with books on "opening theory"! Once they have mastered the endgame, they need to concentrate on the middlegame (tactics). After they understand tactics is the time when they are ready to learn openings, because they will then better understand the purposes of different types of openings.

Most people believe that the more they read about a subject the more they learn, but that is not necessarily true for Chess. In Chess players need to read one book and then go to a

tournament and be able to show that they have actually used something from that book by applying it to their game. By doing this they know whether they actually understood the concepts of that book and therefore whether they need to go back and review it again. After they have mastered the concepts in one book by being able to apply them in a game, then and only then are they ready to proceed to another book.

There are several books on the topic of “opening traps” and one or more of these should be in the hands of a coach. However, NEVER teach your players to use those traps. The purpose should be for you to teach your players how to avoid those traps. If a player relies on traps then that player will usually be able to win against weak players whom they would normally be able to beat, but they will usually not be able to beat those player who are better than they. Make sure you teach your students how to stop the Scholar’s Mate (i.e. the most common variation is 1. e4 e5, 2. B-c4 N-c6, 3. Q-h5 N-f6, 4. QXP(f7)++) and also how not to fall for the Fool’s Mate (i.e. 1. f3 e5, 2. g4 Q-h4++).

The very best instructional materials are the actual games of your players, because they can more easily relate to them than to a grandmaster’s games. Going over grandmaster games can be harmful to some beginning players. The main reason is that if the game ends and it is not checkmate there could be several reasons for this: 1) the grandmasters are looking ahead and see things that the beginning player cannot see, which makes the beginning player feel inferior, 2) the game could have ended because one or both players were in time trouble so a draw was agreed because of the respect one player had for the opponent, 3) a resignation given from a winning position because of time trouble, or 4) one of the players only needed a draw to win money. When choosing a grandmaster game to go over, you want to make sure that there is a clear result (winner), and that the game has a purpose (an example of opening, tactics, strategy, endgame, etc.).

A player’s scoresheet provides the coach with their best tool to coach. Just like an athletic coach reviews film of a game to help their players improve, the Chess coach can tell what went wrong in the game by replaying the game from the scoresheet.

I strongly recommend the purchase of the “Chessbase” computer program, especially if you have a computer projection machine available. I always require each player to enter at least one game they lost at the first practice after a tournament. Once you have the complete game entered, you can then go back and analyze it with one of the built-in analysis engines, or you can

analyze the game and type in your comments or you can have the players analyze each other's games. I have found that having the players analyze a game is the best learning tool. Once they are finished I will use my own analysis and/or the analysis of one of the engines. It allows for you to keep a record of their games to later judge a player's progress. Those games also give a record of opponent's games so you can coach them to play better against that player. If there is a top player which a couple of your players have played and you have good scoresheets from those games then you can show the entire team the weakness' of that player.

One method to use during practice is to have the players analyze the game by hiding the moves on the screen and then proceeding to show the game while making frequent stops. During the stops you simply ask the players to decide what would be the best move and why. Never make fun of anyone's answer or they may lose their desire to contribute. Always encourage your players by using responses like "Your answer is okay, but Tommy's answer or move is just a little stronger". Using a diplomatic answer will help maintain the player's dignity and for young persons this is very important. When learning from their peers the players could actually learn something that they are more likely to remember and use.

With any chess program and a projection machine you can replay games one or two moves at a time and have the players analyze the game.

As stated earlier there is no all inclusive list of instructional materials. The types of instructional materials that work best for your team and are within your budget are the ones you need to concentrate on.

Chapter 4: Playing the Game

This chapter is designed to help the coach with players who know how the pieces move, but little more. There is little in this chapter that will help advanced players. The chapter covers the opening, endgame, concentration, Pawns, and some rules.

Hundreds of books have been written on different types of openings, opening theory, and opening strategy which are of NO value to a beginning player. The beginning player only needs to know enough about the opening to avoid getting in serious trouble. To teach this I place the d & e Pawns, both Bishops, and both Knights in the center of the board. I then teach them about “Attack Power” (see “Glossary of Chess Terms”). The players are told that it makes no difference what order they move those pieces, but only allow each piece one move in the first five. Let them experiment and come up with an order that is comfortable for them. After the player has mastered endgames and some middlegame tactics, they can then be taught more specific information about the opening they have chosen and others.

No Chess player wants to continually get beat. Unless they have been taught how to checkmate they will probably not be able to win and will quickly lose interest in the game. It is important for them to learn how each piece can be used to create checkmate. This endgame lesson has two parts: learning the positions necessary to create checkmate and then learning how to work an opponent into one of those positions.

The easiest way to teach how to checkmate is to empty a board of all pieces and hand the player the Black King and White King and Queen. Then tell the player to put the King and Queen down anywhere on the board so that the Black King is checkmated. Have them repeat the process until they have mastered all possible positions for the King and Queen to checkmate the lone King. Now they are ready to try to work toward getting their opponent into one of those positions. Have the Black King in the center of the board and the White King and Queen on their original squares. Have White checkmate Black in less than 20 moves.

The next two pieces to work with are the King and Rook. Continue with all possible combinations of two or three pieces until the player can easily create the positions to checkmate a lone King. Be careful not to let the Black King be the one always checkmated because that will create an impression that White is stronger. Be sure to alternate the lone King between Black and White.

A major problem that beginners have is a lack of concentration. When a clock is placed on a board, many new players panic regardless of how much time is on the clock. They usually end up moving too fast. As they speed up, they end up touching the wrong piece or moving a piece to a bad square. I have two strategies for dealing with this problem. The first is that I have the player place their hands under their thighs so they are sitting on them. They are not to remove their hands until they are sure of which piece they want to move and to what square they want to move it. The second technique is a game my team has named “Oops”. The rules are that if a player moves any piece to a square where it can be captured for free or they have checkmate in one move and miss it then the opponent says “Oops”. The opponent can take the free piece as their move plus either take any other piece of their opponent’s or take any piece of theirs that has been captured and place it back on the board on any square on their first rank. After one or two losing games the players who were not concentrating begin to concentrate. This exercise loses its value if others verbally harass the player getting “Oopsed”.

A third exercise for concentration I call “Rotation”. Have several boards, at least three, side-by-side. Have the players sit down at one of the boards. Each player makes three moves on a board. Then all players get up and move one board to their left (clockwise around the tables). The players then make three moves and again move to the next board. The rotation continues until each player is back to their original board where they finish that game or you may have them stop at any time you choose. If a game is concluded when players arrive, the players still must sit at that board until the rotation continues. The reason that this is a concentration exercise is that when each player arrives at the new board they have to pay attention to all 64 squares to determine the attacks they have and also the attacks of their opponent.

The one piece that most beginners have the most trouble with is the Pawn. The main reason they have such problems is that the Pawn is the only piece that has multiple types of moves and captures in a manner that is not legal for it normally to move. The Pawn can move only straight ahead, but on the first move it has the choice of moving one or two squares, which can sometimes be confusing to the beginner. “En Passant” is always confusing to a beginner and sometimes to experienced players. This rule was instituted to overcome the one or two square first move by Pawns. If a Pawn moves two squares on its first move and lands *beside* an opponent’s Pawn, then on the opponent’s very next move they have the option of taking that

Pawn as though it had only moved one square, so the opponent moves their Pawn to the square that was jumped over.

I have found two methods that have been successful to get a player to understand the power of Pawns. The best method is “Oops-Pawn”. While similar to the aforementioned “Oops” except the only times “Oops” can be called are:

- if a player could have legally captured a piece with a Pawn and did not or
- if the player places a piece on a square where a Pawn can capture it or
- a Pawn is moved to attack a piece and the attacked piece is not moved.

This quickly teaches the player the power of the Pawn. The second method is a computer Chess program that has a “training” feature that allows the computer to show the possible moves of all pieces. While good for a person to try, I have not found it to be as effective as “Oops-Pawn”.

The final concentration exercise is “Blind Chess”. The purpose is to teach the player to see the board and pieces in their mind. This is especially useful when planning combinations (i.e. multiple forced moves by both players). The exercise starts by dividing the players into groups of three. Then name each A, B, or C. For the first game A is White against B. A & B turn their backs to the board. C is the one who moves all of the pieces after A & B verbally tell C what their move will be. When a player verbally calls a move all C is allowed to do is to say (if the move is illegal), “That is an illegal move”. If a player makes two “illegal moves” on the same move, they lose. Each player is allowed to ask three times during the game if a move is legal and C is to answer only yes or no. At any time after move 10 either player may get two extra questions by submitting themselves to the “test”. The test is that the player has to tell C on which square each of that player’s pieces are on the board. The game continues until checkmate or until one player has no idea where his/her pieces are or where he/she can move. After the first game is concluded then B is White against C and A moves the pieces. The final game is C White against A with B moving the pieces.

Every time an opponent makes a move, the player needs to figure out why the opponent made that move. There is a definite thought/action process to follow. I give the handout in Appendix E to my players which lists the steps I recommend for this process. This is for them to use during practice to develop the skill. USCF rules prohibit a player from referring to any type of written items during a tournament game. Those procedures will take the beginner some time to think through, but as the player gains more experience it will only take seconds.

Chess uses a number of math skills. One such use is when the opponent is beginning an attack. Look at the square being attacked. If the opponent has more pieces covering that square than you do, he/she wins. If both players have the same number of pieces attacking a square, then the player who begins the attack will always lose.

Holding tournaments within your club has many benefits. Make sure your players are playing under tournament conditions so it makes them more relaxed and confident at tournaments. It gives them valuable practice at concentrating on the game, keeping score, and using the clock. If they take these games seriously they will develop stronger concentration in tournaments. The tournaments are also a method of determining which players you should take to a tournament if there is a limit placed on the number allowed by the organizer of the tournament or your school has a limit based on transportation. The easiest continuous tournament is a “Ladder Tournament” (see Appendix D for instructions).

Rules

As a coach it is your responsibility to make sure your players know the rules of the game. There are many well-intentioned people out there who think they know the rules based on the rules they used when they were playing with mom or grandpa. In many cases those “family” rules are not applicable to an actual tournament. For example, I have found many players who honestly believe that the “point value” of pieces will determine the outcome of the game if they run out of time and that is NOT correct! Before ever allowing a player to attend a tournament, you must acquire the USCF *Official Rules of Chess*, which is available from USCF, so you can make sure your players are aware of the rules. This section is NOT an all inclusive list of the rules of Chess, but covers those rules that most beginners have the greatest problem understanding.

The first important rule is “touch move”. This is required in all tournaments and it is recommended to have your players’ use it at all practices so it will become second nature. There are three parts of “touch move”: 1) if you touch one of your pieces with any portion of your hand you must move that piece, provided it is a legal move; 2) if you touch an opponent’s piece with your piece or your fingers you are required to capture that piece, provided it is a legal move; 3) if you release your piece on a square, even for a second, your move is completed and you may not move that piece again even if you have not started your opponent’s clock, provided it is a legal

move. Touching a piece with an article of clothing, such as a sleeve, or jewelry does not mean you have to move that piece. Castling is a King move; therefore, the King should always be touched first.

Players are expected to use the same hand to move their pieces and to operate the clock.

No player is to do anything that will distract another player, especially an opponent. Some examples are: making audible noises (with mouth or writing instruments), listening to music that is loud enough to be heard by others, talking to an opponent while the opponent's clock is running, adjusting pieces while the opponent's clock is running, etc.

It is the responsibility of a player to record the result of the game. Players are required to keep a record of both their moves and their opponent's moves (see Appendices F & G). If you miss moves and want to correct your scoresheet, you may ask your opponent to use their scoresheet to complete your scoresheet correctly. Your clock must be running when you do this and your opponent is not required to let you use his/her scoresheet.

When players have less than five minutes left on their clock, neither player is required to continue keeping score. If they do stop keeping score, they can no longer use their scoresheet for proof of a draw. In some scholastic tournaments, but not in USCF rated tournaments, it is allowed to have someone else to continue to keep the scoresheet for a player for the purpose of having the complete game as a learning tool; however, once someone else has marked on the scoresheet that scoresheet can no longer be used for proof of a draw.

If a player has made an illegal move, the player should correct it immediately. If they have started their opponent's clock, then their opponent is to restart their clock without making a move. When correcting an illegal move, the piece that was first moved must still be moved, provided it is a legal move; if it is not a legal move, then any other piece may be moved. If there is less than five minutes left on the clock of either player, the opponent of the player making the illegal move will have two minutes added to their clock (or the offending player may have two minutes deducted from their clock). If both players have more than five minutes, there is no penalty for the illegal move. Only the TD should make any changes to the clock.

The points in this chapter need to be repeated over and over. Beginning players and even some experienced players need to hear these points many times before they sink in. Remember that the more you play, the better you get.

The emphasis needs to be on the game, not winning. You may be the best coach in the world, but if the players are not interested in improving, if the players are not interested in giving 100%, if the players are not interested in working together as a team, then winning will not happen. If the emphasis is only on the game, then everyone ends up being a winner and desired improvement will come.

Chapter 5: Your Team's First Tournament

There is nothing more important than experience. If there are adult tournaments in your area, you need to enter. As a coach you can learn more from actually playing in a tournament than you can by reading a whole library of Chess books. By playing you will learn firsthand about all of the remaining points in this chapter and several other chapters contained in this book. To get the maximum benefit from this or any other coaching book designed to help your players, you should have some personal experience to draw upon. It is NOT important for you to be a good player, but it is extremely important for you to know how a tournament is run so you can properly prepare your players for their first tournament. Not being properly prepared for what will happen in their first tournament has been the major reason many players have been scared away from Chess after attending their first tournament.

Types of Tournaments

There are three types of tournaments: Boarded Team, Round Robin, and Swiss-system.

- The Boarded Team tournament is a “team on team” tournament. There are usually four or five players on a team. The players are arranged in rating order. The highest rated player for a team plays on Board #1, the second highest rated player plays on Board #2, the third highest rated player plays on Board #3, etc. The colors alternate, such as Board #1 White, Board #2 Black, etc. for a team. The team listed as Black on the pairings sheet will have Board #1 as Black and the colors then alternate for each other board. To win a “match” one team must score more than half of the points. If both teams tie with the same number of points then the “match” is a draw and each team receives one-half match point.
- The Round Robin tournament is an individual tournament. The players are divided into sections. The division of players usually occurs in one of two ways: 1) the top six players (as an example) are put into the first section, then the next six in the second section, etc., or 2) the average rating of each section is as close as possible. Whenever possible each section will contain the same number of players as all other sections. Each player will play all other players in that section. In the USCF *Official Rules of Chess* there are schedules which set the order in which players play each other and the color allocation.

- The Swiss-System tournament can be an individual tournament or an individual/team tournament. This is the most common type of tournament. The pairings (who plays whom) for the first round are determined by ratings. The computer (Tournament Director if a small tournament) will put all of the players in order by rating from highest rated to lowest. Unrated players will be disbursed within the group around a given rating as established by the Tournament Director. The top half are paired against the bottom half for Round 1. For each round after the first the players are divided by score groups with all persons within the same score playing each other. Once again the top half play the bottom half within that score group. If the pairings are in Board order then the Board number is on the left. Players playing the White pieces will have their name in the left column and players playing the Black pieces will have their name in the right column. The format will be slightly different if the pairings are in alphabetical order, depending on which pairing program is being used. See Appendices A and B for examples.

Rarely will Scholastic Chess Tournaments be “Knock-out Tournaments” (i.e. single elimination). A specific number of rounds are advertised. Each player is expected to play that many rounds; especially in a Swiss-System tournament. If it is a Round Robin tournament, then players are not to leave until they have played all players in the section. There are many new players who think once they lose one game that they are finished. They have left without telling anyone, which creates a hardship on the tournament.

Number of players to take to a Tournament

In a Swiss System tournament a school may usually enter as many players as they choose. In some situations, when not many schools are expected, then a tournament may put a limit on the number of players that may be entered from one school; however, that is rare because the philosophy in Scholastic Chess is that everyone who wants to play should be able to do so. I have been to local tournaments where one school had such a large percentage of the players present that the large team was divided into two or three teams to make the pairings more fair. In boarded team tournaments a school may only be allowed to enter the number of players on the team (usually four) with one or two alternates. In some boarded team tournaments a school is allowed to enter more than one team. You will need to check the entry information for the tournament prior to deciding how many players you want to take.

One point of consideration for how many you take might be cost of entry fees or transportation. If the school is providing entry fees and/or transportation, then what is provided may be the factor limiting participation by your players. If the school is not providing transportation, then how many parents would be willing to help out with transportation?

If you are limited in the number of your players who can attend a tournament due to finances, transportation, etc., how do you choose which ones go and which ones stay? There needs to be some system established which will allow you to make that difficult choice. Some schools have “in school” tournaments, and the top students in those tournaments are the ones to attend (such as the “Ladder Tournament” listed in Appendix D). Some schools rank their players on ratings, tournament performance, practice performance, etc. and that list will determine who goes to a tournament. Some schools with one of those lists let other players challenge one of those on the list to a game for their place on the list. The coach needs to be extremely careful to always allow at least one beginner to attend each tournament. By doing so the team does not appear to be a “clique” and an impression given that your numbers are reduced because the new players do not appear to stand a chance. I have seen many players who did not win many games during their first 7 or 8 tournaments, and then later began to dominate. You always have to keep your eye on the future.

Remember that in a Swiss System team tournament, it is the top four players for a school at the end of the tournament which determine that team’s score. On numerous occasions, if I had chosen beforehand which four would be my top players, I would be wrong. Therefore, the more the better!

When Do You Allow A New Player To Attend A Tournament?

If you allow players to attend tournaments before they are ready, you might end up losing them altogether because they were disappointed in their performance. No players should be expected to go to a tournament until they can easily play a game while using a clock and scorekeeping. When players do attend their first tournament, make sure they are clear about what is expected of them. What is expected should have nothing to do with wins and losses, but instead deal with something which they can be successful at, such as having an accurate scoresheet.

Tournament Etiquette

Kibitzing

The biggest single mistake among new players at a tournament is usually kibitzing. Kibitzing is talking to a player while that player is still playing their game or about a game where the players can hear. A Chess game is only between the two players. In most instances not even a Tournament Director may interrupt or make a comment about a game in progress. All observers must remain absolutely quiet; there can be no comments about the clock, an illegal move, a bad move, or anything else within that game. If this does happen, the Tournament Director may forfeit the player who benefited from the comment. A player may request to talk to someone playing a game if it is a necessity, but the conversation must be in the presence of a Tournament Director and cannot have anything to do with the playing of the game.

Parents

Sometimes a parent can do more harm than good. It is natural for a parent to want their child to do well. But they cannot cheer them on. Many high school players have no problem with their parents observing their game; however, their opponent may think it is distracting. It is definitely a problem for an elementary player's parents to observe a game. The reason is that after every move the elementary player will usually look at the parent for their approval. If the parent would have a negative expression on their face, the entire mood of the player could change and he/she would just give up and not try as hard. It could also be tempting for a player to look at a parent before or during a move (looking subconsciously for "help"), which would be illegal.

With good parental support a program can grow quickly in both size and quality. The parents can take care of things like fund-raisers, arranging transportation when not provided by the school, getting the players fed at the tournament, and a myriad of other minor things that will increase the amount of time you have to spend with the kids.

Teammates

Other members of the team can either be helpful or a hindrance. Many children do not realize that the amount of noise they are making on one side of a door can be heard on the

other side of that door. The children do need to let off a little energy, but not near the tournament room.

Students will often pay a lot more attention to their peers. Having another member of their team go over a game with them immediately after a loss will usually help to make sure that the mistake which caused the loss does not happen again.

When your team first arrives at a tournament, they may be required to help set up equipment. If so, then after that they should play some warm up games.

Coaches

Coaches need to be aware of tournament etiquette also. Just like a parent can be very distracting to an elementary player, a coach can be very distracting to one of his/her players--the players want your approval also. It is recommended that when you want to observe one of your players games, stand behind them so they cannot see you and do not stand there very long. It is much better to make several short trips than one long one.

At many local scholastic tournaments the coaches act as the floor TDs. However, a coach should never make a decision in a game involving one of his/her players. They should bring that game to the attention of another TD.

Cell phones/pagers

Players should never have cell phones or audible pagers at the board during a game. If the player does have a cell phone or pager with them, and it goes off, the player may have their game forfeited AND be expelled from the tournament! Many phones, even after being set on vibrate, will still make an audible noise that may be heard by someone else, and a claim could be made that the player with the cell phone/pager is disturbing another player—his opponent or someone on the next board or getting an illegal code/signal from another individual.

There are *never* any circumstances when players may make a phone call from within a tournament room even if their game is finished. Several players have been expelled from a tournament for doing that.

Specific Tournament Information

As the coach you are expected to know everything about a tournament before you leave your school and preferably before you have students sign up to go.

- Where is the tournament? If you have not been there before, make sure you get specific instructions, especially if you are doing the driving.
- How far is it to the tournament? You need to know this to know what time to leave.
- How is transportation provided, who has to be contacted for transportation, and how far in advance do they need to be contacted?
- Who pays for the entry fees? How do you arrange for this? There may be a reduced entry fee for entering in advance. The cost is X amount per player. If it is a boarded team tournament, the cost is usually based on a per team basis.
- Is there a break for meals? If you are expected to go out to eat, where do you go? If the players are to bring a lunch, they need to be notified in advance. If there is food available through a concession stand, you need to tell the players about how much it will cost and what is available. When parents ask me about how much money the child needs to bring, my answer is always to tell them how many meals and/or snack breaks there will be. The parents can then decide what amount their child needs to bring based on personal appetite. I always bring extra money because there are times when a player will forget to bring lunch money or the family just doesn't have any money.
- Parents will want to know about when their child will be returning. If the children do not walk or drive themselves to school, then having a cell phone to call the parents when you are nearing home can be extremely helpful. For this reason, it is necessary to make advance preparations by getting each player's parents contact phone number (preferably home, work, and cell).
- Does your school require that there be a signed parent permission slip on record in the office? If yes, then you will need to get copies of it filled out, signed, and returned well in advance of the tournament.
- Does your school require that you have a medical form signed by the parents in your possession in case a player needs to go to the hospital? This form will give you permission to seek medical help for their child. You will definitely need a copy of that form with you at the tournament. Make sure the form states that you are empowered to seek medical assistance if necessary and various methods of contacting the parents.
- Is the child on any type of medication you need to be aware of?

- How far in advance do you have to notify the tournament that you are coming? Is this notification by phone, email, or snail mail? Are all entries taken on site? If so, then you need to plan to be there at least 30 minutes prior to the deadline.
- Just in case you are running late, is there someone you can call at the tournament to let them know you are still coming. If you don't have a number and you arrive late, you may find that your team has been withdrawn from the tournament.
- If at the last minute you find it necessary to cancel your team, then notify the tournament by phoning the appropriate person.
- Is the tournament a one-day tournament or a two-day tournament? If it is two-day, then hotel reservations, how the hotel will be paid for, along with an appropriate number of chaperones -- all need to be arranged for if the tournament is very far away.
- Is there anything different about this tournament as opposed to other tournaments that you need to inform your players about, such as time controls, special rules, etc.? Make sure your players have time to practice with those differences.
- The tournament may be divided into sections based on grade or rating. In Chess a player may play in a section for an age group older than they, but not a younger age/rating group. Example: a very good 5th grade player could play in either an elementary section, a junior high/middle school section, or a high school section in most states and all national tournaments. Chess is the one activity available to students that depends on intelligence and dedication and not age and physical abilities. This is the reason it is a lifelong activity.
- When you enter your players, you will probably be asked to provide all of the following information for each player: first name, middle initial, last name, and grade and sometimes gender--no nicknames. If it is a USCF rated tournament then you will also need the USCF ID number. If the USCF membership is not purchased in advance, but at the tournament, then you will also need to provide the player's birth date and complete mailing address.
- If the tournament has multiple sections, you must designate in which section you want each player placed.
- You will probably be asked to bring Chess equipment, such as boards, pieces, and clocks. You should attempt to bring at least one set of equipment (boards, pieces, and clock) for every two players you are entering. There is usually a lack of working clocks, so bring as many clocks as you can.

Several State Scholastic Organizations have a website that lists information for the Scholastic Tournaments in that state. Try to find out if your state has one and check it out. The website should also tell you when and where the tournaments will be held.

Sign Up

Prior to having the players sign up for a tournament you need to check with your administrator about the school's eligibility to participate requirements. Then make sure all of your players are eligible to participate. The players also need to understand exactly what is expected of them during the trip to and from the tournament, and while they are at the tournament.

Many coaches have had the problem of a player signing up to go to a tournament and then not showing up. This problem rarely happens with elementary players, a little more often with junior high/middle school players, and most often with high school players. I have solved this problem with my team by requiring them to actually sign their names on a signup sheet if they desire to go to this tournament. If an emergency comes up, they are to call me more than thirty minutes prior to the scheduled time for the bus to leave. The force behind this is that my high school players are allowed to receive a school letter in Chess. One of the requirements for the letter is that they must exhibit "good sportsmanship". Part of the definition I give them of "good sportsmanship" is that if they give their word, then they are expected to live up to their word. Also they do not get to go to Nationals if they have not met the qualifications for a letter. For non-high school players I use the rule that you are warned the first time you do not show up, and you are off of the team after the second time. As long as the players are acquainted with the boundaries, they usually have no trouble complying.

If you are in the inaugural year of coaching, your building administrator may not want to offer a school letter until he/she finds out if the program is going to be successful. In that case you will need to find another motivator such as the two miss rule.

The bottom line is that you have to arrange transportation, notification of entries, and payment of entries and you need accurate numbers to properly do so. However, if your school is not paying for the entry fees and the individual student is responsible for that expense, then require them to pay their entry fee at the time they sign up. All who do not show up forfeit their entry fee. I know one coach who had a party at the end of the year for all of the players who

showed up at every tournament they signed up for, and funded it with the forfeited money. The coach had a problem after two years. The players all showed up so he had to fund the party himself. If it creates a reliable team it is worth it.

The time listed as a time to leave is the time you need to actually leave. Doing exactly what you say you are going to do will make you more credible to parents and kids.

Scorekeeping

Scorekeeping is the process of keeping a written record of a game. This written record can provide a player with an excellent learning tool. By replaying games they have lost, players learn not to repeat their mistakes. The problem is that scholastic players only like to concentrate on games they have won. An accurate scoresheet must be provided as proof of a “draw by repetition of position” or the “50 move rule”.

Appendix F is a sample scoresheet. Appendix G is a handout I made up to give to my new players to explain scorekeeping. If you think either will be useful to your program then please photocopy them and use them. Understand that it is a violation of USCF rules for a player to consult with outside material/persons while they have a game in progress.

Questions during a Round

If a player has a question during a round, they are to stop the clock and raise their hand. When the Tournament Director (TD) arrives, the player is to quietly ask the question. Players do not have to ask permission to go to the bathroom or get a drink; however, their clock must continue to run. A player may ask the TD about any interpretation or explanation of rules during their game. But make sure the clock gets stopped and the hand goes up. Once a result is recorded for a game, that game is completed and no further claims may be made for that game.

A player is never allowed to talk to anyone else during a round. If it is necessary to talk to someone else, such as to obtain necessary medication, that conversation must be in the presence of a TD.

A coach may only talk to a player, in the presence of a TD, when it is a health issue or other type of emergency. The exception to this rule is that a coach may talk to a player, in the presence of a TD, for the purpose of notifying the player of the team status in a tournament during the last round of that tournament.

Team Score

In a Swiss-System tournament there is usually no limit on the number of players that one school may enter. In a normal Swiss-System tournament the team score is compiled by using the scores and tiebreaks of your team's top four players. This is not the four highest rated players or the players you pick as your top four, but the players who are actually doing the best in this tournament. Remember that your top four players could change with every round. Whatever tiebreaks the four players have earned individually up to that point in the tournament are added together and that comprises the team's tiebreaks.

Checking Results

At every tournament it is extremely important to make sure the tournament has the correct score listed for each of your players. This is the most important job of a coach during the tournament. You must instruct your players that regardless of a win, loss, or draw in a game it is their responsibility to make sure that the score is marked after each of their games in whatever fashion was announced and also reported to you. Listen carefully to the instructions to the players before the first round as to how they are to record their result. Even after the result of the game has been marked, it is then your responsibility, as their coach, to keep a record and then check the wall charts (i.e. individual players/team results) to make sure that each of your players has their score recorded properly. Sometimes there is a computer entry error or results are incorrectly marked by players. These corrections must be made as soon as the problem is noticed and corrected for all previous rounds before the last round begins! Once the awards are announced the tournament is over, and corrections after that are rarely made.

If there is an error in the team score for your team, then check the results for each of your players before going to the Tournament Director. It is much easier for the Tournament Director to change an error if you can tell them exactly where the error occurred. If your player is marked down as a loss for a specific round, when the player told you they won the game, then you need some proof to back up that claim. The best proof is getting your player and his/her opponent to go to the Tournament Director together. The second best proof is to have a signed scoresheet for the Tournament Director to see. Without having either of those, the Tournament Director will not change a result.

For an example of an individual standings sheet see Appendix C. Most of what appears on the Standings sheet is self-explanatory. The number in parenthesis is the pairing number (i.e. that person's rank order for ratings). The columns to the right of the score are tiebreaks (see Chapter 1).

Arriving Late or Leaving Early

If one of your players will be arriving late make sure the Tournament Director is notified in advance. If players have been entered in the tournament and do not show, without prior notification, they will forfeit the first round and be withdrawn from the tournament.

If it is necessary for any reason for one of your players not to play a round or drop out of the tournament completely after the tournament has already begun, it is imperative that you notify the Tournament Director (Chess Control at National Tournaments) as soon as you are aware of it. Players come with the expectation of playing a specific number of games. It is very disappointing for a player to have to sit there for one hour or until the clock runs out, whichever happens first. This also hurts their tiebreaks. If the Tournament Director knows far enough in advance, then the problem can be easily handled and no one is disappointed.

What Should Players Bring to a Tournament

Each player is always expected to provide a clock and a writing utensil. Many tournaments also require the player to provide a chess set. Many tournaments do not supply scoresheets; in that case it is the player's responsibility to provide a scorebook. The player will also be responsible for providing money for meals; how much depends on the number of meals and how much they eat.

What to Do at the Conclusion of a Game

When a game is concluded, it is each player's responsibility to report the results of the game. Instructions on how to report those results will be given just prior to the start of the first round. If the result of the game was a loss, then the players should go over that game to try to find out where the mistake was made and to insure an accurate scoresheet. Failure to accurately determine where a mistake was made will mean that the player is destined to repeat that mistake.

What to Do Between Rounds

Make sure the player does absolutely nothing to disturb others. Children often mistakenly assume that just because a door is closed that they cannot be heard.

It is extremely important that a player not do anything physically tiring. It is difficult enough for a player to concentrate in a chess game when full of energy, but if the player has been running or doing other exhausting activities it makes it difficult to concentrate later. The younger the player the more difficult it is to restrain from running and playing. You do want them to get a little physical activity like walking, but not enough to tire them.

Getting their minds off of Chess for a few minutes is beneficial to some players. Ask them to have a discussion about what they are learning in school now or about some other topic. You will have to evaluate your players as to what will work best for each.

After The Tournament

Does the host need help cleaning up? Are they giving out copies of the final standings? Be sure to stay for the awards ceremony. For many students watching some of their opponents or teammates winning something is a big motivating factor for them to get better.

Chapter 6: Your Team's First National Tournament

Most of the points in the previous chapter will also apply to this chapter. National Scholastic Tournaments are larger and there is a stricter application of the rules. Each player is expected to supply a clock, but boards and pieces are provided. USCF membership is required for all players.

Special Rules

Several states have their own little changes to USCF rules for Scholastic Chess. As a coach you need to find out what changes, if any, there are and instruct your players in these differences. In some states the grade divisions are set in stone, players may only play in the section for their grade level. In National Tournaments players may “play up”. For example in some state tournaments elementary players, regardless of rating, may only play in the elementary section; however, in National Tournaments they may play, based on their rating, in any section of their choice for someone of their grade level or above.

In Sudden Death time-controls when one player is under five minutes neither player is required to keep score. Some states allow another person to continue keeping score for a player; but that score sheet can no longer be used for any rules claims. The purpose of this is for educational purposes so players will have a complete record of their game to go over with their coach. This practice is NOT allowed in National Tournaments.

Some areas have very few USCF rated tournaments. These areas usually have their own rating system. USCF does not recognize “local” ratings, so make sure you explain any difference to your players.

As a coach you need to make sure which rules are allowed in your local tournaments but are not allowed in National Tournaments, and make sure your players are well aware of this. Find a coach in your area who has experience in both local and National Tournaments and ask about these differences. If your area has no coaches with this experience, then call the USCF office and the Scholastic Director will be able to put you in contact with someone in your state who can answer your questions.

Membership

If you are planning on attending a USCF National Scholastic tournament the first item you need to consider is USCF membership for each player. Check the USCF website (www.uschess.org) for more detailed information on membership types and cost. USCF membership is required for a player to participate in these tournaments. This membership should be purchased at least four months prior to the tournament. Players will then have plenty of time to receive their membership card to prove they are a current member. As the coach you are to make sure each player has a current membership card, just in case any questions are raised. It is extremely important to keep track of the membership expiration dates for your players.

Entering Your Players

You need to understand that there is a tier structure to National Tournament entry fees. The closer to the tournament you enter, the higher the entry fees. The reason for this tier structure for entry fees is so the organizer of the tournament can more accurately plan for the proper number of players.

When you send in your entries you need to make sure that you have included all necessary information: 1) complete name (as it is listed on their USCF membership card), 2) USCF ID number, 3) the section this player will play in, and 4) the school this player will be representing (include the complete name and address). You will also need to include your name and a method for USCF to contact you in case of any questions about your entries. Include both a day time or cell phone number and your email address.

The coach needs to take the responsibility of sending in the entries for the entire team. Most National Tournament entry errors are because individuals send in information that is not exactly the same (such as school name or contact or nicknames). Also many parents just forget to enter their players or put inaccurate information on the entry. If possible, put all entries for a team on *one* piece of paper and keep a copy!

All National Tournaments will list entries on the USCF website. You need to allow at least three weeks after you have mailed in the entries before you can reasonably expect to see your entries on the website. When they do appear you need to make sure that all of your players are listed and entered into the proper sections. Do not wait until you arrive at the tournament to take care of this problem. If there is still a problem with your entries at the time you leave home,

then immediately upon arriving at the tournament site you need to go to Chess Control (described later in this chapter) to get the problem fixed.

Hotel

The site hotel (hotel at the playing site) at most National Scholastic Tournaments sells out at least two months prior to the tournament. As soon as the announcement of the tournament appears in the “Tournament Life” section of *Chess Life*, you need to make your reservations. The rates listed are almost always for 1-4 in a room. Please be realistic in making reservations for the number of rooms needed. If all coaches are realistic it will make more rooms available for everyone. The hotel(s) listed are always attached to or within walking distance of the playing site. This is a tremendous advantage. The major advantage to staying on site is that it allows your players the opportunity to relax between games and thus improve their chances of doing well.

Specific National Tournaments

The main National Scholastic Tournaments are the School Grade, National High School, National Junior High/Middle School, and National Elementary. The School Grade is held in November/December. For this tournament the player’s rating is unimportant for entry purposes as players only play others who are in the same grade.

The three “Spring Nationals” (i.e. National High School, National Junior High/Middle School, and National Elementary) are held in April/May; for these tournaments, age is unimportant and they play in sections based on their rating. These tournaments are divided around the country each year to provide geographic diversity. An above average elementary player could play in all three “Spring Nationals” in the same year, but a high school student can play only in the National High School.

Every four years there is a SuperNationals tournament to replace the three “Spring Nationals”. All three tournaments are held in one location at the same time, SuperNationals I was in Knoxville in 1997, SuperNationals II was held in Kansas City in 2001 and SuperNationals III was in Nashville in 2005.

Side Events

Before a National Tournament there are termed “side events”. These may be on Thursday and Friday morning. These side events usually include “Simuls”, “Bughouse Tournament”, and “Blitz Tournament”. There is a separate cost for each of these.

A “Simul” is a “Simultaneous Exhibition”. This is where one player, usually a Grandmaster, plays up to 30 players at the same time. The Grandmaster stands inside an “open square” of tables and the players sit on the outside. The Grandmaster will always play the White pieces. The player with the Black pieces never makes a move until the Grandmaster is directly in front of them. Then the Grandmaster will make their move and go on to the next board. This process continues until all games are concluded.

“Bughouse” goes by many names around the country such as “Partner Blitz” and “Siamese Chess”. Two players on one team play two players on another team. The two most unique features of this game are that your partner may orally help you and when your partner captures a piece on their board, they give it to you to use on your board. Make sure you check out all of the specific rules on the USCF website.

“Blitz” means that players have five minutes to make all of their moves. It is run like an individual/team Swiss System tournament. A player plays each opponent twice, once as White and once as Black.

I require all of my players to play in the Blitz tournament for three reasons. The most important reason is that this will be the first time some of my players have ever been in a room this big and I want them to get over their natural uneasiness this will cause before the main tournament begins. The second reason is because many players in Blitz will play their favorite openings. My players may have an opponent that plays something that they have never seen before. This then gives me time to show them how to respond before the main tournament starts. The third reason is as a confidence booster. They discover that this tournament is run exactly like the tournaments back home and this knowledge helps them to relax.

Which Section?

In which section should you enter your players for one of the Spring Nationals? The first point of consideration is rating. The rating supplement to be used for this tournament will appear in the “Tournament Life” section of *Chess Life*. A rating supplement contains the ratings of all

players who have participated in USCF rated tournaments between the dates represented by that supplement. “Supplement” is used to refer to a hard copy of tournaments rated within a two month period of time. It still refers to tournaments rated during that two month time. However, the easiest method of checking ratings is in the Member Services Area on the USCF website. The rating on the front page (General) for a player will be their “official” rating.

If any or all of your players do not have a USCF rating prior to the cut-off date for the rating supplement used, then they must play in the Unrated section or the Championship section in that tournament. For this reason even if your state has no USCF rated Scholastic Tournaments, you should arrange for your players to play in a USCF rated tournament at least two weeks prior to Christmas if you are planning on attending a “Spring National”. This gives plenty of time for the tournament to be rated prior to the cutoff date for the supplement used for the Spring Nationals. I would strongly recommend playing in two tournaments to let the rating average out closest to the players ability.

To be eligible for team trophies your team must have at least two players playing in the same section of the tournament. A complete team is four players. Results may not be considered cross-section; you may not take the scores of two of your players in one section and two of your players in a second section and add them together for a team score. Therefore, if you have only four players and you want them to play together as a team in one of the Spring Nationals, then all four of the players must be playing in the same section as the highest rated player on your team or any section above that.

What Should A Player Bring?

Each player is expected to provide a clock and writing utensil--chess sets and scorebooks are provided. The following is a list of items that I give my players on what to bring to national tournaments:

1. Clothes should be comfortable. Make sure there is a change of clothes for each day. Sometimes the playing room is very cool, especially in the morning, so a comfortable lightweight jacket is necessary.
2. Personal items (deodorant, toothbrush, toothpaste, comb, etc.)
3. **Watch ! ! !** The rounds begin at specific times and on time; therefore it is imperative that each player know what time it is.

4. Two automatic/mechanical pencils with extra lead and good erasers.
5. Necessary Medication (if your players are subject to an upset stomach or headaches when placed in a stressful situation, then they need to provide that medication for themselves).
6. If taking more than \$30, it is recommended to take it in traveler's checks.
7. Must have a Chess clock and the player must know how to operate that chess clock.
8. Some type of small carrying case (large enough to hold scorebook, pencils, and Chess clock), a small back pack or large belly pack will work. This reduces losing items that are hand carried and might be set down.

Chess Control

Once you are at the tournament, the first place to locate is Chess Control. At Chess Control make sure your players are all entered, if you have not already done so online. If items are lost during the tournament, they can usually be reclaimed at Chess Control. Chess Control will usually have people there who can answer questions about local information, such as restaurants and things to see and do. If you have any questions you might have about the tournament, Chess Control might not have the answers, but they can direct you to who will have the answers.

Coaches/Scholastic Meeting

At all National Scholastic Chess Tournaments there is a coaches/parents meeting before the tournament begins. That meeting is at 11:00am on Friday for the Spring Nationals. This is the opportunity for you to hear firsthand any special rules/information for this tournament. This meeting is conducted by the Chief Tournament Director. It is also an opportunity for you to ask any questions about this tournament.

A second meeting that you should attend is the Scholastic Meeting usually held at 2:30pm on Saturday. The purpose of this meeting is to let you have a direct voice with your USCF representatives. This meeting will have the USCF Scholastic Director and members of the USCF Scholastic Committee in attendance. These are the people responsible for recommending policy changes to the USCF Executive Board. This meeting is your opportunity to let your opinions/suggestions known to those who are your voice within USCF.

Commemorative Items

Items are usually available for purchase that will help your players improve their game and help them to remember the experience. A bookstore will be available for the purchase of Chess books and equipment. Commemorative items (Chess boards and pieces and t-shirts) are items many of the players like to purchase to provide a memory of the event.

The tournaments always provide a Commemorative Scorebook for each player. Several years in the future the scorebook will be a wonderful keepsake for your players, especially if they write down where each of their opponents is from.

Educational Opportunities

Many National Tournaments offer special educational opportunities for the players and coaches. The opportunities can include Simuls, Lectures, and Coaches Clinics.

Lectures are usually available to the players/coaches/others on the game of Chess by noted individuals at no cost. These may be put on by a Master or Grandmaster or coach. At some of these tournaments some experienced coaches put on clinics in coaching techniques.

Please remember that these young people are not just Chess players but also students. Check into local points of interest that would enhance the educational opportunity of this trip.

Coaches/Parents Etiquette

In a National Scholastic Tournament there are special rules of etiquette that apply primarily because of the large numbers of participants. One of these rules is access to the playing room. This is one of the most highly contested points of a National Scholastic Tournament. Coaches want to be able to observe their players to make sure they are doing as they have been coached. The players usually feel extra pressure when coaches/parents are present and during those times when votes have been taken during National Scholastic tournaments the players almost always vote to not have the adults in the playing room. There are usually two reasons for limiting access to the playing room: lack of space or noise levels. When observers are allowed in the playing room, they are never allowed in the aisles. There will always be a boundary of some type around the edge of the room that observers are to stay behind.

Normally, flash photography is only allowed during the first ten minutes of a round. The photography must be from behind the boundaries.

No communication of any type is allowed between the observers and players, unless in the presence of a tournament director.

Leaving Early

If it is necessary for your team to leave early, such as Sunday as soon as the last round is over and before the awards ceremony, then it is necessary for you to discover what arrangements have to be made for mailing any individual/team awards to you. This can be done at Chess Control.

If it is necessary for any reason for one of your players not to play a round or drop out of the tournament after the tournament has already begun, it is imperative that you notify Chess Control immediately!

Closing

Attending a National Championship Chess Tournament will be an experience you and your players will never forget. How well you plan everything in advance will help determine how much your players enjoy themselves.

Chapter 7: How to Get New Players

Do you plan on coaching Chess at this location for more than one or two years? If you do, then you need to build your program--a never ending struggle.

To begin your program you need to make sure that you already have some Chess sets and preferably some clocks. Next you need to advertise (school announcements, school newspaper, and/or signs in the halls) that you are starting a Chess club with date, time, and location of the first meeting. At the first meeting don't do anything except let them play. At the end of the meeting ask if they would like to go to some Chess tournaments. If you get enough for a full team (4 or 5) you are doing fine. If not then you need to continue the advertising until you do.

Discuss with the students when would be the best time for them to practice. This is extremely important in getting a new program off of the ground to let the players believe they have some ownership in what is going on. By setting up a practice schedule that fits with those players that want to go to tournaments, then those players will go out and talk to their friends. Word-of-mouth is the best form of advertising.

With other competitive events in school, should a player fail to show up at the beginning of the season chances are they can never join the team. By continuing to advertise the club meetings at least once per month you are letting them know that they can still join even if it is two or three months after you began having practices.

Another important time to advertise the Chess club is whenever one sport is ending. In doing so you might get some of those students who are not going to compete in the next sport. For example, at the end of football/volleyball season advertise and you might get some players who are not going out for basketball.

To perpetuate your club, which hopefully has become a competitive team, then you need to continually strive to get new players. The first place to start is with friends and relatives of current players who enjoy the activity. Prominently displaying any trophies which the team has won is also great for creating interest.

In elementary schools it is very easy to get players out for Chess because there are not many activities in which they can compete. Also at the elementary age the parents are extremely supportive. In junior high/middle school you will lose a few players who are going into sports as many parents just do not believe that Chess is as important as sports. In high school you will

lose even more, but the list of reasons grows: 1) participation in other activities, 2) part-time jobs, 3) dating, 4) self-conscious about being labeled as a “nerd” or “geek” or similar inappropriate term. I knew a young lady with another team who was the best female Chess player in the state while she was in junior high. In high school she lost interest because “Chess players are considered to be smart and guys do not want to date girls that are smarter than they are, especially if they show it off”. My response has always been “Date Chess players because in ten years the Chess players will probably be hiring and firing most of the athletes”.

If you want the new players to continue, you have to be very careful as to how the experienced players act around them. Some scholastic players have gotten into the practice of, in order to make themselves feel good, taking every single piece from a new player and thus humiliating them. Nothing will discourage a new player faster than being humiliated. This also includes the promotion of Pawns to get more than one Queen. You will have to come up with something that will work for you to stop this humiliation. I have chosen to use special “rewards” for players who humiliate a team member. The “reward” that I use is that the offending player cannot go to the next tournament. For repeat offenders they lose the right to “letter” which also removes the right to attend nationals. I tell them that if they already have a major piece on the board there should be no reason for them to promote unless they are in time trouble and it will make it faster to checkmate their opponent. I have seen hundreds of games where players who promote to get more than one Queen end up stalemating their opponents instead of winning.

Those are some of the special problems that you have to deal with as a Chess coach. The popularity of Chess has grown remarkably in the past decade and as a result its acceptance has grown also.

Chapter 8: Organizing Your First Tournament

Contained in this chapter is a step-by-step process to follow when organizing your first invitational tournament. My experience in this area was learned through organizing hundreds of adult/scholastic tournaments, including several adult/scholastic state championships and two National Scholastic Championships.

I would strongly recommend that you follow these two prerequisites prior to organizing a tournament for several schools. The first step is to attend a minimum of three tournaments, at least one of these as a player. The second step is to run a small tournament, just among your team as preparation. When running the tournament among your players I strongly suggest that you make the pairings manually by using USCF pairing cards or index cards. Making the pairings is carefully explained in the USCF *Official Rules of Chess*. The advantage of doing this is that it helps you to understand why pairings are done the way they are. After learning this, you will be able to explain to your players why they were paired as they were thus increasing the player's confidence in you as a coach.

After completing the above steps, you are now ready to run your first invitational tournament. I suggest you follow these guidelines in this order:

1. Space: What is the maximum number of players that you can expect to attend? You can estimate the number of tables and chairs by figuring 2 boards per 6' table or 3 boards per 8' table (but in this case there will not be enough room for scoresheets and clocks). Will there be enough room to have aisles that are a minimum of 8' from table to table? Is the lighting good enough to allow all boards to have good lighting? Are there adequate rest rooms in close proximity to the playing room? Do you have enough room for those players who are finished to go elsewhere so they do not disturb those games still in progress (i.e. Skittles Room)? Are the tournaments in your area divided into sections with different sections in different rooms and do you have these rooms? Do you have an ending time when the building and/or playing room must be vacated, and if so, then can the tournament be concluded by that time? If the answer is "no" to any of these questions then do not hold a tournament there and find another location.
2. Date: Are most of the tournaments in your area one day or two day tournaments? Do those tournaments require any loss of school time? Check with whoever is responsible for

scheduling events for your building to see what dates are available, based on the above questions? Contact the person(s) in your state who is the Clearinghouse (person responsible for making sure there are no date conflicts). Ask them if any of the possible available dates your building is open to schedule a tournament. If the answer is “no” to any of these questions, then do not hold a tournament.

Once you have selected a site and a date you are ready to proceed with the specific tournament planning. Do not do any of the following types of planning until you are assured that you are actually going to have a tournament. Then you have to consider each of these items in this order:

1. Staff: Is this tournament to be a USCF rated event. If it is, then you will need to get a USCF Certified Tournament Director. There are different levels of Tournament Directors: Club Level is to direct tournaments with less than 50 players expected, Local Level is to direct tournaments with less than 100 players expected, and Senior Level is to direct tournament with less than 300 players expected. Additional higher levels are explained in the USCF *Official Rules of Chess*, but you should have no need of them for your first tournament. Make sure that the TD you choose has the level appropriate to the number of players you are expecting. There will be a fee for this TD.

If this tournament is not a USCF rated event, it is still advisable to have a TD who knows what they are doing to oversee everything. At most local tournaments the host is responsible for taking entries and doing the pairings and the coaches present are responsible for running the floor. Usually there is no cost involved with this type of arrangement. If it is not a USCF rated event, there may be a separate area-wide rating for players. You will need to get a copy of the software used and a master list of the players with their ratings in order to make pairings easier.

2. Setup: The playing area(s) need to be set up. The tables and chairs need to be in place before players arrive. The organizer will be too busy to do this on the morning of a tournament. It should always be done the night/day before.

Another point of setup is board numbers. Each board needs a unique number. This is the number that the players look for to find out where they are to play their game. These numbers should be coordinated with the TD running the pairings computer to make sure they match.

3. Food: Will the players be leaving the playing site for a meal break? If yes, then the scheduling of rounds needs to be appropriate to give them time to eat. If food is going to be served on site, the time between rounds for the meal break(s) does not have to be so long. Many Chess Clubs have the parents of the players or groups within the school run the concession stand as a fund raiser. Usually there will be some club at school willing to do so. You will not have time to take care of concessions by yourself. That will be spreading yourself too thin.

Chess players usually like to drink water during their games. Will your facility allow you to have water in the playing room? While this is not a major point, it will make your tournament more “player friendly”.

4. Costs: It is generally the responsibility of the host school to provide scoresheets (you may photocopy the one in this book) and writing utensils (preferably pencils, if pencil sharpeners are available). Is the building you are using going to cost anything, or do you have to pay for janitorial services? How many staff will you need to pay and what are the amounts? Also it is the responsibility of the host to provide the awards (trophies and/or medals). Make sure that you do not offer fewer awards than other tournaments in your area. Check to see how far in advance you will need to order the awards? Does your district/state have any restrictions on size, type, or cost of awards?

5. Entry Fees: How much should you charge? First of all you need to ascertain exactly what all of the expenses will be. Once you know the expenses, you need to divide those expenses by the projected minimum number of players expected and this will give you the minimum entry fee. Check the entry fees charged in your area. If that amount is equal to or more than your calculated amount, then I suggest you charge the amount others are charging. If the amount you calculated is higher, then you need to reconsider whether or not to hold a tournament. Keep in mind that this is your first tournament and you are not well known at this point. Therefore, if you are charging more than those schools in your area, your attendance will probably be low.

How do you handle the entry fees? If you accept cash on site, as most do, then you need to have money available to make change. Are you going to require that entries be submitted in advance, or onsite using checks only? If allowing checks, how should they be made out? This is one of the most important reasons for attending tournaments prior to hosting one. People do not usually like changes, especially from a new coach like yourself. Make sure

your method of handling entry fees is similar to what other tournaments in your area are doing.

6. Advertising: How do schools within your area advertise their tournaments? In addition to that, send a flyer to all schools within your area, by email or snail mail. Make sure that advertisement asks coaches/players to bring equipment (sets, boards and clocks).

The check-in area should be just inside the entry door of the building. The people at this table(s) are to take money and verify entries. The people working at the checkin tables must be in communication with whoever is doing the pairings so that all forms are identical. One of the easiest methods of handling checkins is to have a preprinted list of players organized by school. The coach should checkin their entire team and note each player that is not coming; never rub out the name of a no show (circle or use a highlighter), because the TD has to read it to remove the player.

If you want your tournament to begin on time, then you need to restrict the number of entries allowed the day of the tournament. You can accomplish this by having a significant difference between the advanced entry fee and the onsite entry fee. If you receive about 100 entries onsite and accept no entries after 10:00am, you will still be very lucky if the first round starts by 11:30am.

7. Awards Ceremony: Where will it be held? Do special arrangements need to be done prior, such as setting up awards, before it can begin? Who will do the setup and when? Is a sound system needed? Who will announce the awards? Who will physically hand out the awards to the recipients? Always double check to make sure that the awards are in the proper order and the correct award is given to the correct winner.
8. Tear down: You will probably have to make sure that everything is taken care of before you leave the building. This will include, but not be limited to, picking up all trash and putting up all chairs and tables, and taking down all Chess signs. You need to arrange how this will be accomplished before the tournament begins or you may end up having to do it by yourself.

Closing

When coaching your team please remember that Chess is the only activity available for players that they can continue, regardless of health, for the remainder of their life. This is in

your hands. Please teach your players a love for the game. Remember that you have become involved in this game to help kids. Please keep your actions directed toward their behalf.

Chapter 9: Integrating Chess into the Curriculum

With the “No Child Left Behind” policy for education, the time is ripe for using Chess to help improve curricula. Many school districts are urging their teachers to try to find new methods of teaching that will better reach the students in order to raise state test scores.

The key phrase for many school administrators is “research driven”. Before most school districts will allow new ideas to be initiated building or district wide, administrators usually want to see research that proves this proposed method works. There are several studies located at www.chess.isgenius.com. Also, math teachers at Prairie View Junior High in LaCygne, Kansas, have developed and instituted an entire curriculum for integrating Chess into junior high math classes.

If you are desiring to try to develop your own research data based on your students, then follow these steps:

1. Identify the State Standards in your subject area which you believe Chess would benefit the student in better understanding those concepts.
2. Carefully plan which lesson(s) in Chess will be the most useful for a student to master one specific State Standard. Choose the proper method of presentation of that portion of Chess which would have the desired effect. Understand that while your students have different levels of knowledge in your subject area, their knowledge of Chess will also be at varying levels.
3. Pretest the students, before any Chess lessons, on that one State Standard.
4. Reteach that State Standard using Chess as a tool to better aid the students in understanding the concept of this State Standard.
5. Now give a Post-test on that State Standard.
6. Continue this process on other State Standards you feel will benefit from this exercise.

If the Post-test has the desired results, then contact your administrator about integrating Chess into the curriculum throughout the building/district. If the Post-test did not have the desired result then you might need to spend more time planning on Step 2 before you make the next attempt on a different State Standard. When you do have the positive data you hoped for, please contact Dr. Robert Ferguson at www.chess.isgenius.com with your study so others may benefit.

Glossary of Chess Terms

50 Move Rule

When Player One has only the King which can make legal moves and Player Two has several pieces. Player Two must “checkmate” Player One within 50 moves, or the game is a draw.

Action Chess

Each player has 30 minutes to make all of their moves.

Adjust (J’adoube)

When a player does not intend to move a piece, but the player does wish to slightly move the piece to center it on a square, the player first says, “I adjust”, and then adjusts that piece. It must be that player’s move when this is done.

Advantage

When a player is superior to his/her opponent in force (number of pieces), Pawn structure, space and/or time.

Attack Power

This term is used to describe the power of a piece after its first move. The Attack Power of a piece is the total of the opponent’s squares being attacked after the piece completes its first move. The square that has the largest number of the opponent’s squares being attacked is the best square for that piece on its first move.

Back Rank Mate

A mate given by a Queen or Rook along the eighth rank.

Backward Pawn

A Pawn behind the Pawns of the same color (on either side) and therefore cannot support or be supported by other Pawns.

Battery

Having two pieces attacking the same square, along the same file, rank, or diagonal (Queen and Rook, two Rooks, or Queen and Bishop).

Berserker

A player who attacks without enough pieces to either sustain (keep up) the attack or create “checkmate”.

Bind

To limit the number of squares to which an opponent can safely move their pieces.

Blitz

Each player has only five minutes to complete the game.

Blockade

Stopping the advance of an opponent’s passed Pawn by placing a piece in front of it.

Blunder

A move by one player which gives the opponent an advantage; it usually means giving away a piece for free.

Book

Different types of openings which can be found in many books on the different types of openings.

Break

The advancing of a Pawn which lets you control more space on the board.

Breakthrough

Getting more than one piece/Pawn behind the opponent's line of Pawns.

Bughouse

A two-man team type of Chess against another two-man team. Pieces captured by one player may be passed to their partner and the partner can then use that piece in their game. Each player has only five minutes. Team mates can verbally communicate. This is also known as "Partner Blitz" and "Siamese Chess".

Bye

When a player does not play in a round they receive a bye. Whenever there are an odd number of players in a tournament section, a full-point bye is given to the lowest rated player in the lowest score group. A bye which is requested by a player receives one-half point.

Capture

Your piece will move onto the square on which your opponent's piece was sitting, and then you take their piece off of the board.

Castle

Castling is when the King is moved two squares toward a Rook and then the Rook moved to the other side of the King. The King and Rook can never have been previously moved and the King may not pass through "check" and the King may not castle out of "check".

Center

The Center is composed of the squares C3, C4, C5, C6, D3, D4, D5, D6, E3, E4, E5, E6, F3, F4, F5, and F6. The *Sweet Center* consists of the squares D4, D5, E4, and E5.

Centralize

A central placing of a piece so that it controls the center and can attack numerous squares of the opponent.

Check

When a piece or Pawn is attacking the opponent's King, then that King is in Check.

Checkmate

When a player is in "check" (attacked by opponent's pieces) and has no way to escape from "check".

Classical Play

A player controls the center with Pawns.

Clearance Sacrifice

The sacrifice of one of your pieces to clear an attack by two or more of your other pieces.

Clock

A type of clock which has two faces. Each face shows the amount of time one player has left in the game. A digital clock (numbers) does have preference over an analog clock (normal clock face).

Closed Game

A game in which six or more files contain Pawns of both colors.

Combination

A series of two or more moves, each of which require your opponent to make a specific response.

Compensation

An equal advantage in points when trading pieces. Example: trading three Pawns for a Bishop, or a Bishop and Knight for a Rook and Pawn.

Connected Passed Pawns

Two or more of one player's passed Pawns that are on adjacent files.

Counterplay

When a player who has been making mostly defensive moves starts making offensive moves.

Cramped

Lack of mobility (i.e. no good squares to move your pieces).

Critical Position

The one important move in a game which from that move forward in the game should decide the result of the game.

Decoy

A tactic that lures an opponent's piece to a square that is bad.

Defense

Placing your pieces in positions on the board which will make it hard for your opponent to attack your King.

Deflection

A tactic that involves luring the opponent's main defending piece away from what is being defended.

Desperado

A threatened or trapped piece sacrificed for the most it can get or to inflict the most damage on the opponent.

Development

The process of moving pieces from their starting positions to a position where they can defend and start an attack on the opponent..

Diagonal

Connected squares which are neither vertical nor horizontal and are of the same color, such as A1 to H8.

Discovered Attack

One piece/Pawn is moved revealing an attack on an opponent's piece by a piece behind the piece that was moved.

Double Attack

A single move that results in two pieces attacking one piece.

Doubled Pawns

Two Pawns of the same color on the same file.

Draw

A game in which neither player wins and both players receive 1/2 point. Types of draws include: 1) agreement between the two players, 2) stalemate, 3) three-position repetition, and 4) the 50 move rule. The last two must be proved with an accurate scoresheet.

En Passant

A French term meaning "in passing". When a Pawn advances two squares and ends up next to an enemy Pawn, it can be captured as though the Pawn had only moved one square.

En Prise

A term used to describe a piece that is under attack. (pronounced "on pree")

Endgame

The third and final phase of a Chess game. Beginning when just a few pieces are left on the board or a winning attack begins on the opponent's King.

Exchange

The trading of pieces.

Expert

A player with a USCF rating between 2000 and 2199.

Fianchetto

An Italian term to describe a Bishop that is developed within a triangle of Pawns. Example: Pawns on F2, G3, and H2 with a Bishop on G2.

FIDE

“Federation Internationale des Echecs” (i.e. International Chess Federation)

File

A vertical column of eight squares, signified by a letter (A through H).

Flag

The part of the analog clock that is pushed up when the minute hand approaches the hour (i.e. 12). When the flag falls, that player has run out of time. If the game is in the final time control, then that player loses the game.

Flank

The A, B, C files on the queenside and the F, G, H files on the kingside.

Fool's Mate

The shortest possible game which is as follows: 1. f3 e5, 2. g4 Q-h5++.

Force

An advantage in Force arises when one player has more material (i.e. Pawns and pieces) than his/her opponent.

Forced

A move or series of moves which must be played if “checkmate” is to be avoided.

Forfeit

When one player does not show up for a game in a tournament which that player has been assigned to play, then the player who does show up for the game receives a forfeit win.

Fork

One piece/Pawn attacks two enemy pieces/Pawns at the same time. (aka double attack) The fork of a King and Queen is a *Royal Fork*. The fork of a King, Queen, and Rook is a *Family Fork*.

Gambit

The voluntary sacrifice of a Pawn in the opening moves in order to get a compensating advantage in development.

Ghosts

Potential threats against your pieces which exist only in your own mind.

Grande Combo

A forced combination of at least five moves.

Grandmaster (GM)

The highest title awarded by FIDE to a player.

Half-Open File

A file that contains none of one player's Pawns, but does contain one or more of the opponent's Pawns.

Hanging

Placing a piece/Pawn on a square where it can be captured without compensation.

Hanging Pawns

These are Pawns that cannot be protected by other Pawns.

Hold

A move that was missed during the game that would have stopped the opponent's winning attack.

Hole

Any square which cannot be defended by a Pawn.

Hypermodern

A school of thought that believes the center should be controlled with pieces instead of Pawns.

Illegal Move

Moving a piece to a square to which that piece is not supposed to move.

Imbalance

Any difference between White and Black: position, material, Pawn structure, space, development.

Initiative

When your pieces make threats which force a reaction by the opponent.

Interference

Reducing the power of an enemy piece by forcing the opponent to put a piece of lesser value in the way, often with a time-gaining attack.

International Master (IM)

A title awarded by FIDE to a player. This level is above Master and below Grandmaster.

Interpose

To place a piece/Pawn in between an enemy attacking piece and the attacked piece.

Isolated Pawn

A Pawn that has no Pawns of the same color on adjacent files (aka *isolani*).

Jettison

Forcing your opponent to sacrifice material to save the King or avoid loss of more important pieces.

Kibitzer

A term describing a spectator who offers unsolicited advice about a game in progress which can be heard by the players in that game.

King Hunt

A series of moves that chase the enemy King all over the board until it is mated.

Kingside

The half of the board made up of the E, F, G, H files.

Legal Move

Moving a piece in the manner in which it is supposed to move to a square to which it can move when moved correctly.

Liquidation

Capturing pieces to make it easier to "checkmate" the opponent.

Luft

A German term which means to give the King breathing room. Example: moving a Pawn forward one square in a castled position.

Major Pieces

Queens and Rooks (aka *Heavy Pieces*)

Maneuver

A series of “quiet moves” with the aim of placing one or more pieces on better or stronger squares.

Master

A player with a USCF rating between 2200 and 2399.

Mating Attack

An attack against an opponent’s King that leads to “checkmate”.

Mating Net

A forced “checkmate” in three or more moves by using multiple pieces.

Middlegame

The phase of the game between the Opening and Endgame.

Minor Pieces

Bishops and Knights

Minority Attack

An attack of two or more connected Pawns against more of the opponent’s connected Pawns.

Notation

The recording of each move by both players in a Chess game.

Occupation

When a Queen or Rook controls a File or Rank.

Open File

A vertical column of eight squares that is free of Pawns.

Open Game

A game in which four or more files are free of Pawns.

Opening

The beginning of a game. The basic goals are to develop pieces quickly and control as much of the center as possible.

Openings

An established sequence of moves that lead to the purpose for that opening.

Opposite-colored Bishops

When each player has Pawns and has as their only piece a Bishop, and the Bishops are not operating on the same colored squares. This type of endgame usually ends in a draw.

Opposition

An endgame term which relates to the relationship of one King to the other.

Outpost

A square on your opponent’s side of the board in which a piece could be placed and protected by your Pawn and the opponent cannot attack that square with a Pawn.

Overextended

A player begins an attack which leaves himself with several weaknesses in his/her own position.

Overextension

When a player pushes his/her Pawns too far forward and is unable to protect the squares behind them.

Overprotection

Using too many pieces for the protection of one square.

Over-the-board (OTB) Chess

Chess played face-to-face.

Overworked Piece

A piece which is required to defend too many other pieces/squares.

Passed Pawn

A Pawn which has no Pawn in front of it or on an adjacent file.

Patzer

A weak player.

Pawn Chain

Three or more Pawns in a diagonal line with each protected by a Pawn behind it on an adjacent file.

Pawn Structure

All aspects of Pawn setup.

Petite Combo

A forced combination of two or three moves.

Piling On

Adding more pieces than are needed to an attack.

Pin

When a piece is attacked and cannot move without losing a piece of greater value. When the piece of greater value is the King it is an *absolute pin*, when it is a piece other than the King it is called a *relative pin*.

Ply

One-half of a move (i.e. the move of one of the players). Example: White has made move #9, but Black has not yet made move #9.

Point Count

A system that gives the pieces the following numeric values: Queen = 9, Rook = 5, Bishop = 3, Knight = 3, and Pawn = 1. Some believe that in the endgame the Bishop is worth 3 and the Knight worth 2.

Poisoned Pawn/Piece

A Pawn/piece that, if captured, would lead to a serious disadvantage for the player capturing the Pawn/piece.

Position

Moving your pieces onto squares which are helpful to your attack and/or defense.

Positional

A style of play that is based on long-range planning of which are the best squares for placing your pieces. It is usually a slow build-up of pieces which are attacking/defending specific portions of the board.

Post Mortem

The process of analyzing why a game was lost.

Problem Child

A Pawn which has made its first move and blocks a piece, usually a Bishop, from developing.

Promotion

When a Pawn reaches the 8th rank, it can be promoted to a Knight, Bishop, Rook or Queen of the same color. The player must say out loud what the Pawn is being promoted to, or exchange the Pawn for a piece already captured. Laying the Pawn on its side designates that the Pawn is being promoted to a Queen, if no captured Queen is available.

Prophylaxis

A move that stops the opponent from making a move they were planning.

Protected Passed Pawn

A passed Pawn that is protected by another Pawn.

Queenside

The half of the board that includes the A, B, C, D files.

Quiet Move

Any move that is not the first move of a piece, a capture, a check, or a direct threat.

Rank

A horizontal row of eight squares, signified by a number (1 through 8).

Rating

A number that tries to show a player's ability to play Chess.

Resign

A player who feels the game is hopeless and gives up prior to "checkmate".

Romantic

A player who usually sacrifices a piece in each game played.

Rook Lift

The process of the moving of a Rook from the first Rank to a square in front of his/her line of Pawns. The Rook can then be transferred (moved left or right) to any open square along that rank (row).

Round

A round is when one player plays another player in a tournament. There will be a series of rounds in the tournament (4, 5, 6, or 7 are the most common).

Sacrifice

Giving up pieces for better space, time, Pawn structure, or force.

Senior Master

A player with a USCF rating of 2400 and above.

Sharp

A bold and aggressive move.

Shot

A strong move that the opponent did not expect.

Shouldering

Using your King to keep the opponent's King out of the action.

Simplify

To trade off pieces equally to try and get fewer pieces on the board. A player who has an advantage (more or stronger pieces) on the board will usually want to do this.

Simul

A “simultaneous exhibition” is when one player, usually a Master or above, plays multiple (many) opponents at the same time.

Skewer

A threat against a valuable piece that forces that piece to move, allowing the capture of a piece behind it.

Skittles

Non-tournament Chess games. Also a room (i.e. Skittles Room) where players gather between rounds to play games for fun or to analyze games.

Smothered Mate

When a King is completely surrounded by his/her own pieces gets a “check” from the enemy (usually a Knight) and can do nothing about it.

Space

The number of squares controlled by each player.

Stalemate

When it is a player’s move and he/she has no legal moves and is not in check.

Strategy

The reasoning behind a move, plan, or idea.

Swindle

A trick from an inferior or losing position.

Tactics

One or two moves which end up giving the player an advantage in pieces or position. Some tactics are decoys, deflections, pins, sacrifices, and skewers.

Tempo

One move. If a piece can reach a useful square in one move, but takes two moves to get there, it has lost a tempo. If a piece moves to a square that causes the opponent to make a move they would not usually make for their next move, then they have gained a tempo.

Three-Fold repetition of position

This is a type of draw. It occurs when all of the pieces of both players have been in the same position at three times during the game. From the first occurrence of this position to the last, no pieces can have been captured and there must be an accurate scoresheet proving the repetition. The repetition does not have to be in consecutive moves (one after the other).

Tie-breaks

A method that helps decide which player has finished the best in a tournament.

Time

Tempo

Time Control

The amount of time each player has to play the game or make a specified number of moves.

Time Pressure

When a player has several moves left before reaching a time control or there are less than five minutes left in a sudden-death game.

Touch Move Rule

The rule that if a player touches a piece then that piece must be moved, if moving that piece is a legal move. If a player touches an opponent's piece then that piece must be captured, if it is a legal move. If a player places a piece on a square and removes his/her fingers then that piece must remain, if it is a legal move.

Tournament

A competition between Chess players which is divided up into rounds.

Trap

Luring an opponent into making a poor move.

Undermining

Capturing or driving away a piece that is protecting another (aka *Removing the Defender* and *Removing the Guard*).

Underpromotion

When a Pawn reaches the last rank and promotes to any piece other than a Queen.

Unpin

A counterattack that breaks a pin, gains time to break a pin, or ends a pin by eliminating (takes) or diverting (forcing to move) a pinning unit.

Variation

One line of analysis (i.e. a different move) for any move of a game.

Weakness

A Pawn or square that is easily attacked and hard to defend.

Windmill

The opponent's King is either trapped in a corner or trapped by his/her own pieces. The attack on the King is by a Rook and Bishop. The Rook will begin by checking the King and the King will then move to a square where there will be a discovered "check" by the Bishop once the Rook has moved. The position is repeated several times, and with each discovered "check" the Rook takes another piece/Pawn.

Winning the Exchange

Trading a piece/Pawn for an opponent's piece of greater point value.

Xray

Two friendly pieces attacking along the same file, rank, or diagonal which are separated from each other by an enemy piece.

Zugzwang

A situation in which a player has no good moves, but is forced to move something.

Zwischenzug

An in-between move. A move that has no specific purpose in directly attacking the opponent or providing defense.

Appendix A: Board Order Pairing Sheet

SAMPLE TOURNAMENT OPEN SECTION - Round 4 Pairing Sheet, Page 1

Board	White	Black
1.	___ JONES, SAM (3.0,1590)	___ SMITH, JANE (3.0,1580)
2.	___ DOE, CAROL (3.0,1570)	___ DOE, XAVIER (2.5,1595)
3.	___ DOE, JANE (2.0,1600)	___ SMITH, JACK (2.0,1910)
4.	___ SMITH, LUCRETIA (2.0,1800)	___ DOE, JOHN (2.0,1560)
5.	___ DOE, MARK (2.0,1640)	___ SMITH, XAVIER (2.0,1775)
6.	___ JONES, JACK (2.0,1640)	___ JONES, ANN (2.0,1540)
7.	___ JONES, CAROL (1.5,1530)	___ SMITH, JOHN (2.0, 1540)
8.	___ DOE, SAM (1.5,1520)	___ JONES, SUSIE (1.5,1500)
9.	___ JONES, MARK (1.0,1515)	___ DOE, ANN (1.0,1470)
10.	___ SMITH, SUSIE (1.0,1460)	___ SMITH, SAM (1.0,1500)
11.	___ JONES, JANE (1.0,1410)	___ JONES, LUCRETIA (1.0,1495)
12.	___ DOE, SUSIE (1.0,1480)	___ SMITH, CAROL (1.0,1375)
13.	___ JONES, XAVIER (0.5, 990)	___ DOE, JACK (0.5,1380)
14.	___ DOE, LUCRETIA (0.5,1200)	___ SMITH, ANN (0.5,1000)
15.	___ SMITH, MARK (0.5,1175)	___ JONES, JOHN (0.5,1190)

Appendix B: Alphabetical Pairing Sheet

SAMPLE TOURNAMENT OPEN SECTION - Round 4

Pairing List, Page 1

Player	Color / Board	Opponent
DOE, ANN.....	B 9	JONES, MARK (1.0,1515)
DOE, CAROL.....	W 2	DOE, XAVIER (2.5,1595)
DOE, JACK.....	B 13	JONES, XAVIER (0.5,990)
DOE, JANE.....	W 3	SMITH, JACK (2.0,1910)
DOE, JOHN.....	B 4	SMITH, LUCRETIA (2.0,1800)
DOE, LUCRETIA.....	W 14	SMITH, ANN (0.5,1000)
DOE, MARK.....	W 5	SMITH, XAVIER (2.0,1775)
DOE, SAM.....	W 8	JONES, SUSIE (1.5,1500)
DOE, SUSIE.....	W 12	SMITH, CAROL (1.0,1570)
DOE, XAVIER.....	B 2	DOE, CAROL (3.0,1570)
JONES, ANN.....	B 6	JONES, JACK (2.0,1640)
JONES, CAROL.....	W 7	SMITH, JOHN (2.0,1540)
JONES, JACK.....	W 6	JONES, ANN (2.0,1620)
JONES, JANE.....	W 11	JONES, LUCRETIA (1.0,1495)
JONES, JOHN.....	B 15	SMITH, MARK (0.5,1175)
JONES, LUCRETIA.....	B 11	JONES, JANE (3.0,1580)
JONES, MARK.....	W 9	DOE, ANN (1.0,1470)
JONES, SAM.....	W 1	SMITH, JANE (3.0,1580)
JONES, SUSIE.....	B 8	DOE, SAM (1.5,1520)
JONES, XAVIER.....	W 13	DOE, JACK (0.5,1380)
SMITH, ANN.....	B 14	DOE, LUCRETIA (0.5,1200)
SMITH, CAROL.....	B 12	DOE, SUSIE (1.0,1480)
SMITH, JACK.....	B 3	DOE, JANE (2.0,1600)
SMITH, JANE.....	B 1	JONES, SAM (3.0,1590)
SMITH, JOHN.....	B 7	JONES, CAROL (1.5,1530)
SMITH, LUCRETIA.....	W 4	DOE, JOHN (2.0,1560)
SMITH, MARK.....	W 15	JONES, JOHN (0.5,1190)
SMITH, SAM.....	B 10	SMITH, SUSIE (1.0,1460)
SMITH, SUSIE.....	W 10	SMITH, SAM (1.0,1500)
SMITH, XAVIER.....	B 5	DOE, MARK (2.0,1550)

Appendix C: Standings

SAMPLE TOURNAMENT - - OPEN SECTION

Standings, Page 1

Place	Name/Pair No.	Rate	Score	MMed	Solk	Cum	CumOp
1	JONES, SAM (8)	1590	3.0	4.0	5.0	6.0	11.0
2	DOE, CAROL (10)	1570	3.0	4.0	5.0	6.0	10.5
3	SMITH, JANE (9)	1580	3.0	4.0	4.5	6.0	10.0
4	DOE, XAVIER (7)	1595	2.5	3.0	4.0	5.0	10.0
5	DOE, JOHN (11)	1560	2.0	5.0	5.5	5.0	10.5
&6	DOE, MARK (12)	1550	2.0	5.0	5.5	5.0	10.5
&7	SMITH, JOHN (13)	1540	2.0	5.0	5.5	5.0	10.5
8	SMITH, JACK (1)	1900	2.0	4.5	5.5	4.0	11.5
9	SMITH, XAVIER (3)	1775	2.0	4.5	5.5	4.0	10.0
10	SMITH, LUCRETIA (2)	1800	2.0	4.0	5.0	4.0	9.5
11	JONES, JACK (4)	1640	2.0	3.0	4.0	4.0	9.0
&12	JONES, ANN (5)	1620	2.0	3.0	4.0	4.0	9.0
&13	DOE, JANE (6)	1600	2.0	3.0	4.0	4.0	9.0
14	JONES, CAROL (14)	1530	1.5	2.0	5.0	4.0	9.5
15	DOE, SAM (15)	1520	1.5	1.0	4.0	4.0	7.0
16	JONES, SUSIE (17)	1500	1.5	1.0	3.5	2.0	6.5
17	JONES, JANE (23)	1410	1.0	2.5	5.5	2.0	10.5
18	SMITH, SUSIE ((22)	1460	1.0	2.5	5.0	2.0	9.5
19	JONES, LUCRETIA (19)	1495	1.0	2.5	4.5	2.0	8.5
&20	DOE, SUSIE (20)	1480	1.0	2.5	4.5	2.0	8.5
&21	DOE, ANN (21)	1470	1.0	2.5	4.5	2.0	8.5
22	JONES, MARK (16)	1515	1.0	2.5	4.5	1.5	9.5
23	SMITH, CAROL (25)	1375	1.0	2.0	5.0	1.5	8.5
24	SMITH, SAM (18)	1500	1.0	1.5	3.5	1.5	6.5
25	DOE, JACK (24)	1380	0.5	2.5	5.5	1.0	9.5
26	DOE, LUCRETIA (26)	1200	0.5	2.0	4.0	0.5	8.5
27	JONES, JOHN (27)	1190	0.5	1.5	3.5	0.5	7.5
&28	SMITH, MARK (28)	1175	0.5	1.5	3.5	0.5	7.5
29	SMITH, ANN (29)	1000	0.5	1.5	3.0	0.5	6.5
&30	JONES, XAVIER (30)	990	0.5	1.5	3.0	0.5	6.5

Appendix D: Ladder Tournament Rules

1. The length of time for each tournament will be approximately 9 weeks.
2. A player who enters the Ladder Tournament will begin on the bottom rung. The exception would be a transfer student who has tournament experience and a rating, then this student would enter at the appropriate place on the ladder.
3. The only games played which will count for the Ladder Tournament are those games which fit the following conditions:
 - A. A player may challenge another player who is either one or two steps above them on the ladder.
 - B. A challenge may only be made after the announced starting time of a practice session. The game must be played during that practice session, unless otherwise agreed to by both players and notification to the coach. This exception also allows games to be played outside of school and practice sessions.
 - C. If a player is challenged at the beginning of a practice session and is not present at any time from the start of practice to the beginning of the last hour of the practice session, then that player forfeits the match if the player has not previously notified the coach that the player will not be there due to another school activity.
 - D. If the challenger wins the game then he/she exchanges places on the ladder with the person challenged.
 - E. If the challenger loses, nothing happens the first or second time. However, if the challenger loses three consecutive challenges to the same person, during the same ladder tournament, then the challenger will go down the ladder one rung below from where he/she began.
 - F. All tournament rules, such as touch move, keeping a scoresheet, using a clock, will apply.
 - G. A player may not challenge more than twice in one week and/or play a challenge game only once during each practice.
 - H. The player who is challenged will have choice of color.
 - I. All challenge games must be played under the time controls of the next tournament.
 - J. The coach shall be the final arbiter.
 - K. At the beginning of the next tournament the positions are reversed with the player finishing last at the top of the ladder and the player finishing first at the bottom of the ladder and all others appropriately ranked.

Appendix E: It's Your Move

When your opponent has made a move and started your clock you are to do the following, in this order:

1. Write down your opponent's move.
2. Figure out why your opponent made that move.
 - a. Is the piece/Pawn moved threatening or dangerous to one of your pieces?
 - b. Did moving that piece/Pawn open up a way to attack from another of your opponent's pieces (a “discovered attack”*)?
 - c. Is this piece/Pawn now in a position (square) that will give them a discovered attack on the next move?
 - d. Does your opponent now have more pieces attacking one of your pieces than you have defending (guarding) that piece?
 - e. Does your opponent have a valuable piece of yours “pinned”*?
 - f. Where can the piece/Pawn that was moved go on his/her next move?
 - g. Did your opponent put you in a “fork”*?
3. Figure out what is your best move.
 - a. Remember that whenever your opponent is in check, the opponent cannot “attack” you!
 - b. Never move a piece/Pawn to a square that stops one of your own pieces from retreating (getting away), especially the King.
 - c. Never move a piece to a square where it can be chased back to its original (starting) square by a Pawn, unless your plan was to make him move that Pawn.
 - d. Never trade an “attacking” piece for a “defending” piece, unless that trade has a special reason in your plan.
 - e. Never move into a “pin”*.
 - f. Always move out of a “pin”* as soon as you can.
 - g. If your opponent put you in a “fork”, make sure you move the most important piece if you can.
4. Make your move.
5. Start your opponent's clock.
6. Write down your move.
7. While your opponent's clock is running, try to figure out what their best move would be and what you should do about it. If you use your opponent's time well, you will end up using less of your own time!

Note: It is illegal to refer to this sheet during a tournament game.

Appendix F: Scholastic Scoresheet

Tournament: _____ Date: _____ Round #: _____ Board #: _____

White: _____ School: _____

Black: _____ School: _____

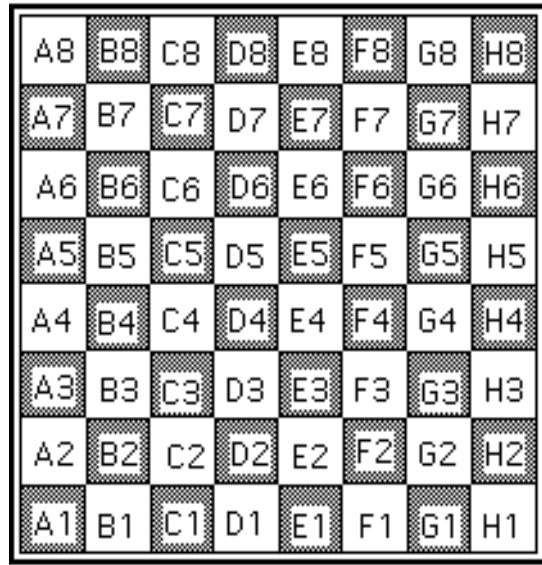
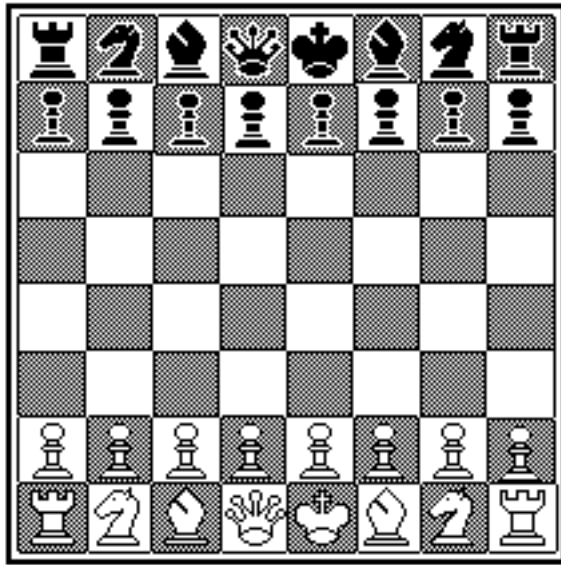
	WHITE	BLACK		WHITE	BLACK		WHITE	BLACK
1	_____	_____	31	_____	_____	61	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	32	_____	_____	62	_____	_____
3	_____	_____	33	_____	_____	63	_____	_____
4	_____	_____	34	_____	_____	64	_____	_____
5	_____	_____	35	_____	_____	65	_____	_____
6	_____	_____	36	_____	_____	66	_____	_____
7	_____	_____	37	_____	_____	67	_____	_____
8	_____	_____	38	_____	_____	68	_____	_____
9	_____	_____	39	_____	_____	69	_____	_____
10	_____	_____	40	_____	_____	70	_____	_____
11	_____	_____	41	_____	_____	71	_____	_____
12	_____	_____	42	_____	_____	72	_____	_____
13	_____	_____	43	_____	_____	73	_____	_____
14	_____	_____	44	_____	_____	74	_____	_____
15	_____	_____	45	_____	_____	75	_____	_____
16	_____	_____	46	_____	_____	76	_____	_____
17	_____	_____	47	_____	_____	77	_____	_____
18	_____	_____	48	_____	_____	78	_____	_____
19	_____	_____	49	_____	_____	79	_____	_____
20	_____	_____	50	_____	_____	80	_____	_____
21	_____	_____	51	_____	_____	81	_____	_____
22	_____	_____	52	_____	_____	82	_____	_____
23	_____	_____	53	_____	_____	83	_____	_____
24	_____	_____	54	_____	_____	84	_____	_____
25	_____	_____	55	_____	_____	85	_____	_____
26	_____	_____	56	_____	_____	86	_____	_____
27	_____	_____	57	_____	_____	87	_____	_____
28	_____	_____	58	_____	_____	88	_____	_____
29	_____	_____	59	_____	_____	89	_____	_____
30	_____	_____	60	_____	_____	90	_____	_____

Game Result (Circle one): White Won Draw Black Won

White: _____ Black: _____

(Both players should sign in the correct blank above after agreeing on the result)

Appendix G: Chess Setup & Scorekeeping



The picture at the left above is how the Chess board should be set up before the game begins. The picture at the right above is the name for each of the 64 squares on a Chess board.

You must record (write) all moves made in the game, this means both your moves and your opponent's moves. For the purposes of keeping score the names of the pieces and important moves are abbreviated as follows:

K = King
Q = Queen
N = kNight
B = Bishop
P = Pawn
- = moves to

x = Captures (takes)
ep = En Passant
✓ = Check
✓ ✓ = Checkmate
0-0 = Castle kingside
0-0-0 = Castle queenside

To write down a move the first move might be **P-e4**, which would move the Pawn in front of the King to the e4 square. When two identical pieces, Knights or Rooks, can both move to the same square, it is important to name which square the piece is starting from. Example: if there were Knights on B1 and F3 either one could move to D2, and this would be written **N(b)-d2**. For "En Passant" an example would be: **P(C)-D6ep** to show the Pawn on C5 "captured" the Pawn on D5 "En Passant" after that Pawn had moved from D7-D5.

Always sign your opponent's scoresheet at the end of the game. Always record your result (win, lose, or draw) where and how the TD tells you

You are not to have this sheet with you when you are actually playing in a tournament.