

ICCF Playing Rules Guidelines

Playing Rules Guidelines **updated in January 2007**.

Exceptions: for all tournaments started before 01 January 2005, there are other regulations in the time calculation. Only for these tournaments the Exceptions to the current ICCF Playing Rules Guidelines are valid.

Important principle for all games of correspondence chess played with ICCF - what is Amici Sumus?

Amici Sumus - we are friends - is the spirit that guides the play of ICCF, its rules and their interpretation.

Amici Sumus is not a cover all excuse for failing to follow the rules nor should it outweigh the rules, rather it is a philosophy. One way to view it is to ask how you would handle a situation if it occurred in an important tournament game against your best friend. You would play hard but within both the letter and the spirit of the rules, neither asking for nor giving quarter. However, if there were a disagreement, you would assume that he is telling the truth, not automatically assume that he is lying and cheating. It is the Tournament Director's job to make sure that wherever possible games are decided by the skill of the players and not by his rulings, without of course directly contradicting the rules.

ICCF Guidelines POST Individual and Team tournament games

- 1a The FIDE rules can be found at <http://www.fide.com/official/handbook.asp>. The most important change during recent years is that there are NO exceptions to the 50 move rule concerning draws
- 1b If a game is significantly delaying a tournament, the TD is entitled to request that the game has to be continued by means of electronic transmission. (normally by eMail; only by fax or telegram if both players agree) In the case a player has no email he is requested to find a resident in the same country to act as link. Refusal to observe such a request will cause the refusing player to be defaulted.
- 1c *TEAM: Players should contact their Team Captain instead of the Tournament Director, unless the Team Captain is unavailable in a time dependent situation.*
- 2b Players may use two (or more) different notations eg. ICCF numeric and algebraic, provided they explicitly agree upon it at the start of the game.
- 2e If in a game the dates, the time used and the total time from a player are confirmed on a card (letter or eMail), they can not be changed afterwards neither by the player nor by the TD - unless a player is proven to have deceived the opponent.
- 2g The time starts counting when your opponents move is made available to you and ends when you send your reply. In the case of regular mail this is when the card is placed in a mailbox accessible to you.
- 2j If the postmark is illegible or there is no postmark, the expected postmark date should be accepted.
- 2k It is required to include the time used and total accumulated time for both players
- 2m There is no obligation to finish the game by email or fax if you decide to switch. If there is good reason to switch back to normal mail it is permissible to do so with the Tournament Directors permission. Repeated switching between email, fax, and normal mail is discouraged.
- Specifically the time control will remain at 10/30 and not switch to 10/60 or another UNLESS both players and the Tournament Director agree according to rule 6a. Whatever time control is agreed by all parties, one etl is permitted.
- Failure to do so may incur a penalty.
It is necessary to wait 16 days plus the average length of time it takes in the mail to get a move to your opponent and back. . If you know you are going to take more than 14 days over a move, please let your opponent know so that unnecessary repeats can be eliminated.
- 3a Days when the opponent is on vacation shall not be counted to calculate the time to send a reminder. A too early repeat should be avoided.
- Exception:** It is necessary to wait 14 days plus the average length of time it takes in the mail to get a move to your opponent and back. Days when the opponent is on vacation shall not be counted to calculate the time to send a reminder.
- Games MAY be scored as lost if 4 months pass without a move being played unless the Tournament Director has been informed of the delay. This does not mean that games are automatically forfeited after 4 months without a move, it is up to the Tournament Director to determine the reason for the delay and rule accordingly. Note that it is possible for the game to be forfeited by a player who is silent for more than 4 months, even if he has enough accumulated time not to have exceeded the time control.
- 3b The TD will normally record a loss against a player who has been silent for over 4 month (discounting leave periods) and who has not notified the TD and the opponent about the delay.
- TEAM: The TD will normally record a loss against a player who has been silent for over 4 month (discounting leave periods) and who's Team Captain has not notified the TD and the opposing Team Captain about the delay.*
- 4a If different moves are sent when two notations are explicitly agreed upon, the move should be treated as ambiguous and referred back to the sender for clarification.

- 4e As an example, there is no need to indicate check, nor can a move be considered invalid if check is not indicated.
- 5a Unless the Tournament Director specifically states that original documents must be sent, it is recommended that copies are made and sent.
It is not necessary to notify the Tournament Director of a change in email address if no games are being played by email and you do not wish to communicate with the Tournament Director by email. It is however, highly recommended.
- 5c *TEAM: It is not necessary to notify the Team Captain of a change in email address if no games are being played by email and you do not wish to communicate with the the Team Captain by email. It is however, highly recommended.*
It is reasonable to try to sort out minor disputes without getting the Tournament Director involved. As a general guideline if a single exchange of correspondence does not solve the problem, it is time to notify the Tournament Director. Major disputes must be referred to the Tournament Director immediately.
- 5d *TEAM: It is reasonable to try to sort out minor disputes without getting the the Team Captain involved. As a general guideline if a single exchange of correspondence does not solve the problem, it is time to notify the Team Captain. Major disputes must be referred to the Team Captain immediately.*
- 6a This means that no more than 30 days reflection time can be used for the first 10 moves, 60 for the first 20 moves etc. without overstepping the time control.
- 6b For example, if a player uses 31 days for the first 9 moves, the game is not forfeited, but a new count is started with 30 days to reach the next time control which would be at 19 moves, 60 to make the second time control at 29 moves etc.
In a series of conditional moves, the time (for the recipient of conditionals) is in its entirety considered as belonging to the player REPLYING to the last ACCEPTED move.
As an example, assume that after 9 moves both players have used 28 days time. White now offers a conditional with his 10th move. Assume White uses 3 days for this, and Black accepts the conditional and uses 5 days for his reply to White's 11th move.
Then the cumulative times for the moves involved in the conditional shall be recorded like in this example:
- 6f
- | Rec. | Sent | Total | Move | White | Black | Rec. | Sent | Total |
|--------------------|-------|-------|---------|-------|-------|--------------------|-------|-------|
| 22/09 | 23/09 | 01/28 | 09 | 4152 | 6857 | 23/09 | 23/09 | 00/28 |
| 24/09 | 27/09 | 03/31 | 10 | 6141 | 5878 | 000000000000000000 | | |
| 000000000000000000 | | | 11.3234 | 4534 | 28/09 | 03/10 | 05/33 | |
- Hence, White did exceed the time limit, since all his time for moves 10-11 is added to move 10, whereas Black did NOT exceed the time limit, since all HIS time for moves 10-11 is added to move 11!
- It is recommended to claim an etl as soon as it occurs. The claim should include a complete copy of the game with all received and sent dates for both players. Even if a player acknowledges they have overstepped the time control in their correspondence it is still necessary to notify the Tournament Director so that it may be recorded. .
- 7a *TEAM: It is recommended to claim an etl. as soon as it occurs. The claim should include a complete copy of the game with all received and sent dates for both players. Even if a player acknowledges they have overstepped the time control in their correspondence it is still necessary to notify the Tournament Director through the Team Captain so that it may be recorded.*
- 7d The game should be continued while the Tournament Director is reviewing the claim and making the decision.
- 7e This means that players cannot take a large amount of time over a move when they know they have already exceeded the time control. The second time control starts as soon as the player is informed about the claim being made (see 7b).
Regular leave may be taken for any reason and in any increments not to exceed 30 days in any calendar year.
- 8a Dates given for a leave are inclusive. That is if a player's leave is from 7/7 to 13/7 the player has taken 7 days leave. A move received on 6/7 and replied to on 14/7 has a reflection time of 1 day. A move received on 6/7 and replied to on 13/7 is also 1 day, whereas a move received on 7/7 and replied to on 14/7 is 0 days. The player was not on leave on 6/7, so a move not responded to on 6/7 carries at least a 1 day reflection time, however a response on 14/7 is similar to sending your first move on the date the tournament starts, and thus no time used.
- Note that reflection time does not stop during an opponents leave.
- 8c Special leave is intended to be used primarily for unexpected events such as illnesses, natural disasters and

urgent overseas business postings. Recognizing the value of other chess activities special leave may be granted for attendance at ICCF Congress or OTB tournaments away from a player's home. Events planned in advance such as moving house or job are not valid reasons for special leave.

Retroactive special leave is only ever to be given when the player is unable to contact the TD or another player by some means, usually because of sudden hospitalization. Computer failure is NOT an acceptable reason for requesting a special leave in a postal tournament.

To ensure consistency in the treatment of withdrawals, the following scheme shall be used by all Tournament Directors; First, determine whether the request for a withdrawal meets the criteria for "accepted withdrawal" as laid out in Tournament Rules paragraph 6.2;

Then, if the withdrawal is considered silent or unaccepted, all open games of the withdrawing player shall be scored as losses,

- 9 However, if the withdrawal is accepted, an average of 25 or more moves have been played in the withdrawing players games, or if any of his games have already been finished, all his open games in this tournament shall be adjudicated, otherwise all his games shall be cancelled.

In case an accepted withdrawal happens early in the tournament, and hence the games should be cancelled, the tournament organiser may also decide to replace the withdrawing player.

- 9a *TEAM: The replacement player will continue the game from the position reached by the previous player.*

- 11a It is not necessary to include the dates in this report. The game score should be sent in PGN or numeric notation. Please note that BOTH players are required to report the result to the Tournament Director. It is highly recommended to send the game score in PGN and through eMail if available.

- 11b If in a game only one player reports the result and his opponent fail to do this, the TD shall record such a result!

ICCF Guidelines EMAIL Individual and Team tournament games

- 1a The FIDE rules can be found at <http://www.fide.com/official/handbook.asp>. The most important change during recent years is that there are NO exceptions to the 50 move rule concerning draws.

- 2b Players may use two (or more) different notations eg. ICCF numeric and algebraic, provided they explicitly agree upon it at the start of the game.

- 2e If in a game the dates, the time used and the total time from a player are confirmed in an email, they can not be changed afterwards neither by the player nor by the TD - unless a player is proven to have deceived the opponent.

The time starts counting when your opponents move is made available to you and ends when you send your reply. In the case of regular mail this is when the card is placed in a mailbox accessible to you. In the case of email this is when your server makes the message available for you to download. . However, if a move arrives before 8 pm in the recipient's local time then it is considered to have arrived on that day, if a move arrives after 8 pm in the recipient's local time it can be considered as arrived on the next calendar day.

- 2g **Exception:** The time starts counting when your opponents move is made available to you and ends when you send your reply. In the case of regular mail this is when the card is placed in a mailbox accessible to you. In the case of email this is when your server makes the message available for you to download. However, it is always permitted to consider the message as having been received the next day (your local time).

- 2i Except in unusual circumstances this will normally be the same dates the previous move was sent and the current one received. That is the email took 0 days to be transmitted.

- 2j The message time stamp is the time that the move was received by the senders server. This time is usually shown in the full headers for the message.

- 2k It is required to include the time used and total accumulated time for both players.

- 2l **Exception:** As stated in the guidelines for 2g it is always permitted to consider the message as having been received the following day (your local time). One aim of this ruling is to avoid players complaining to the TD about moves being sent / received shortly before / after midnight.

Failure to do so may incur a penalty.

- 3a It is necessary to wait 16 days before sending a repeat. If you know you are going to take more than 14 days over a move, please let your opponent know so that unnecessary repeats can be eliminated.

Days when the opponent is on vacation shall not be counted to calculate the time to send a reminder. A too early repeat should be avoided.

When moves are sent by Email, the failure to receive a "message undeliverable" or similar message is NOT proof that it has been delivered successfully. Email messages can and sometimes do simply vanish and in these cases neither player is at fault and neither player should be charged reflection time. However, this is an uncommon occurrence and repeated messages vanishing should be referred to the TD for investigation. **Exception:** It is necessary to wait 14 days before sending a repeat. If you know you are going to take more than 14 days over a move, please let your opponent know so that unnecessary repeats can be eliminated.

Days when the opponent is on vacation shall not be counted to calculate the time to send a reminder. A too early repeat should be avoided.

When moves are sent by Email, the failure to receive a "message undeliverable" or similar message is NOT proof that it has been delivered successfully. Email messages can and sometimes do simply vanish and in these cases neither player is at fault and neither player should be charged reflection time. However, this is an uncommon occurrence and repeated messages vanishing should be referred to the TD for investigation.

Games MAY be scored as lost if 40 days pass without a move being played unless the Tournament Director has been informed of the delay. This does not mean that games are automatically forfeited after 40 days without a move, it is up to the Tournament Director to determine the reason for the delay and rule accordingly. Note that it is possible for the game to be forfeited by a player who is silent for more than 40 days, even if he has enough accumulated time not to have exceeded the time control.

- 3b The TD will normally record a loss against a player who has been silent for over 40 days (discounting leave periods) and who has not notified the TD and the opponent about the delay.

TEAM: The TD will normally record a loss against a player who has been silent for over 40 days (discounting leave periods) and who's Team Captain has not notified the TD and the opposite Team Captain about the delay.

- 4a If different moves are sent when two notations are explicitly agreed upon, the move should be treated as ambiguous and referred back to the sender for clarification.

- 4e As an example, there is no need to indicate check, nor can a move be considered invalid if check is not indicated

- 5a If it is not possible to keep all of the records on the computer, it will be necessary to keep a copy on a floppy disk or failing that, paper.

- 5c A player sending his move from another as his permanent email address should clearly note this fact in his transmittal and indicate the preferred return address (current or permanent).

- 5d It is reasonable to try to sort out minor disputes without getting the Tournament Director involved. As a general guideline if a single exchange of correspondence does not solve the problem, it is time to notify the Tournament Director. Major disputes must be referred to the Tournament Director immediately.

- 6a This means that no more than 50 days reflection time can be used for the first 10 moves, 100 for the first 20 moves etc. without overstepping the time control.

In a series of conditional moves, the time (for the recipient of conditionals) is in its entirety considered as belonging to the player REPLYING to the last ACCEPTED move.

As an example, assume that after 9 moves both players have used 48 days time. White now offers a conditional with his 10th move. Assume White uses 3 days for this, and Black accepts the conditional and uses 5 days for his reply to White's 11th move.

Then the cumulative times for the moves involved in the conditional shall be recorded like in this example:

- 6e
- | Rec. | Sent | Total | Move | White | Black | Rec. | Sent | Total |
|--------------------|-------|-------|------|-------|-------|--------------------|-------|-------------------|
| 22/09 | 23/09 | 01/48 | 09 | 4152 | 6857 | 23/09 | 23/09 | 00/48 |
| 24/09 | 27/09 | 03/51 | 10 | 6141 | 5878 | 000000000000000000 | | |
| 000000000000000000 | | | | | | 11.3234 | 4534 | 28/09 03/10 05/53 |

Hence, White did exceed the time limit, since all his time for moves 10-11 is added to move 10, whereas Black did NOT exceed the time limit, since all HIS time for moves 10-11 is added to move 11!

- 7a It is recommended to claim an etl as soon as it occurs. The claim should include a complete copy of the game with all received and sent dates for both players. Even if a player acknowledges they have overstepped the

time control in their correspondence it is still necessary to notify the Tournament Director so that the result may be recorded.

7d The game should be suspended while the Tournament Director is reviewing the claim and making the decision.

Regular leave may be taken for any reason and in any increments not to exceed 30 days in any calendar year.

8a Dates given for a leave are inclusive. That is if a player's leave is from 7/7 to 13/7 the player has taken 7 days leave. A move received on 6/7 and replied to on 14/7 has a reflection time of 1 day. A move received on 6/7 and replied to on 13/7 is also 1 day, whereas a move received on 7/7 and replied to on 14/7 is 0 days. The player was not on leave on 6/7, so a move not responded to on 6/7 carries at least a 1 day reflection time, however a response on 14/7 is similar to sending your first move on the date the tournament starts, and thus no time used.

Note that reflection time does not stop during an opponents leave.

8c Special leave is intended to be used primarily for unexpected events such as illnesses, natural disasters and urgent overseas business postings. Recognizing the value of other chess activities special leave may be granted for attendance at ICCF Congress or OTB tournaments away from a player's home. In the event of a computer malfunction a special leave of up to 10 days is permissible, but should only be used once per tournament. Events planned in advance such as moving house or job are not valid reasons for special leave.

Retroactive special leave is only ever to be given when the player is unable to contact the TD or another player by some means, usually because of sudden hospitalization. Computer failure is NOT an acceptable reason for requesting a retroactive special leave.

To ensure consistency in the treatment of withdrawals, the following scheme shall be used by all Tournament Directors; First, determine whether the request for a withdrawal meets the criteria for "accepted withdrawal" as laid out in Tournament Rules paragraph 6.2;

Then, if the withdrawal is considered silent or unaccepted, all open games of the withdrawing player shall be scored as losses,

9 However, if the withdrawal is accepted, an average of 25 or more moves have been played in the withdrawing players games, or if any of his games have already been finished, all his open games in this tournament shall be adjudicated, otherwise all his games shall be cancelled.

In case an accepted withdrawal happens early in the tournament, and hence the games should be cancelled, the tournament organiser may also decide to replace the withdrawing player.

9a *TEAM: The replacement player will continue the game from the position reached by the previous player.*

Both players shall submit to the Tournament Director within 30 days the final position with a record of the moves played, and a statement claiming either a win or a draw.

Failure to submit a claim shall result in a loss except as noted below. Claims of a win shall not be accepted for consideration without supporting analysis; such claims shall be treated as claims of a draw instead. Analysis does not necessarily mean possible variations; it also includes general plans where appropriate.

In the event of withdrawal due to death, or an accepted withdrawal on the basis of extreme illness preventing the player from submitting a claim and analysis, the Tournament Director shall handle the game as if that player claimed a draw and submitted no analysis, with the following exceptions:

10 All Title Tournaments

All Tournaments with norms available, unless the result will have no effect on

norms awarded

All Tournaments with prize money, unless the result will have no effect on prize

award.

Any other tournament as determined by the WTD or as announced by the

Tournament Director prior to the start of play.

In the event that both players claim a draw, the Tournament Director shall declare the game a draw. The adjudicator should begin with the assumption that the position is a draw and only determine if the analysis of the player(s) claiming a win has presented his case and has relied on general chess principles to claim a win (e.g. extra material; exchange, typical endgame patterns, etc). In those cases where both players have submitted analysis that does not diverge for several moves, the adjudicator shall accept these moves as if played and start the adjudication at the new position reached.

The adjudicator need not provide any specific reason for the decision provided. The name of the adjudicator shall not be released without the prior consent of the adjudicator.

Any appeal against the adjudicator's decision must be sent to the Tournament Director *[through the team captain]* within 14 days of receiving the notification of the decision. No additional analysis may be submitted by either player for this appeal.

The Tournament Director shall then obtain a ruling from another adjudicator and notify the result to both players. The ruling is final and no further appeal shall be accepted from either player. The name of the appeal adjudicator shall not be released with prior consent from the appeal adjudicator.

- 11a It is not necessary to include the dates in this report. Please note that BOTH players are required to report the result to the Tournament Director.
- 11b If in a game only one player reports the result and his opponent fail to do this, the TD shall record such a result!