



Tournament Chess Etiquette: General Guidelines

1. The rules give the player with the Black pieces the right to use their equipment (chess set and clock, as well as the side of the board the clock will sit on). If you have White, wait at your board until Black gets there to set up, unless it is start time for the round and Black has still not arrived.
2. Remain quiet during the game; no loud eating of food, slurping of water, clicking of a ballpoint pen, humming, playing with captured pieces, or practicing your chair-dance moves ;) If you feel the need to move around, get up quietly and walk around quietly in the tournament room.
3. You can adjust pieces on the board only when it is your turn to move. Be sure to say “I adjust” or “j’adoube” **before** making the adjustment. Otherwise, if you touch a piece, you must move it if it has a legal move. Once you release the piece, the move is final and cannot be undone.
4. After you make your move, press the clock with the same hand with which you made your move.
5. The proper way to make a draw offer is this sequence:
 - a. Make your move
 - b. Verbally offer a draw (**without** extending your hand to shake or bump fists)
 - c. Press your clock

Your opponent may verbally acknowledge your draw offer by saying “I’ll think about it” or similar, but they are under no obligation to do so.

6. Your opponent may respond to your draw in any of the following ways:
 - a. *Verbally accept your offer.* The game is over; it’s a draw.
 - b. *Verbally decline your offer.* The game continues.
 - c. *Play their next move.* This means your draw offer has been declined. The game continues. Remember, your opponent is not obligated to verbally respond to your draw offer.

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7. Do not annoy your opponent with repeated draw offers. If your opponent has declined three of your offers during the course of the game, don't offer again. They already know you want a draw.
8. You may ask to see your opponent's scoresheet or scorebook when it's *your* move.
9. You are welcome to walk (**not** run) around the tournament room and watch other games, but do so unobtrusively. Don't come so close to the board that the players at the board are distracted by your presence.
10. The proper way to resign is to say, "I resign." You can also tip over your king.
11. No talking in the tournament room while games are being played. If you want to analyze with your opponent when the game is over, go to the skittles room.
12. Be respectful to your opponent. Remember, their goal is the same as yours: to win.
13. Outside interference during games is prohibited. You must not discuss any ongoing games with anyone else, consult any chess books or magazines, or refer to scoresheets or use your phone (see next item).
14. Before your game starts, cell phones should be turned off, stowed away (not kept on your person), and not be taken away from the board; for example, to the rest room. Doing so can result in a penalty that may include forfeiture of your game.
15. Speak with the tournament director (TD) in advance if you need an accommodation to allow your phone to remain on in case you have to respond to an emergency call (inform your opponent of the possibility of a call before your game starts as well).
16. If a phone is left on, it must be set to silent or a time penalty could be assessed to your current game in progress, or to your next game if your game has been completed. Harsher penalties may possibly be enforced by the TD.
17. If you have a dispute with your opponent during a game:
 - a. Pause the clock, generally by pressing the middle button.
 - b. Raise your hand to get the TD's attention (do not shout for the TD).
 - c. Wait patiently for the TD to reach your board.
 - d. Calmly explain your dispute to the TD.
 - e. If you do not report an issue and continue playing, the TD cannot be responsible for any disputes later.

Special thanks to the [Wachusett Chess Club](#) for providing Mass Chess with their rules of chess etiquette, presented here with minor edits and additions. This document provides general guidance on chess player conduct while noting some related rules. You can access the USCF Official Rules of Chess [here](#).