

SW Florida Chess Club

2013 Scholastic Handbook

For Players and Parents

Welcome to the SWFCC's Scholastic Chess Program. If this is your first experience with a Scholastic Chess Program — maybe even with tournament chess — we want you to feel comfortable and have a great time.

To help make the Program as successful and fun as possible, we want to make sure that everyone knows and understands the rules and policies under which the Program is conducted. For that purpose we have put together this Handbook for you, which significantly expands on the information in the tournament announcement (flyer). We thought you might find it convenient to have your own copy for reference.

There is a lot of material here because we don't want any player to be disadvantaged by misunderstanding or not knowing the rules. The Scholastic Program attracts players with a wide range of experience and knowledge of tournament chess. Accordingly, this Handbook not only covers the basics but also provides a more detailed explanation of some topics. Veteran tournament players, who already know the basics, will be interested in learning more of the detail, whereas players new to tournament chess will need to learn the basics and might not want to be concerned about all the details. Make use of the information as it best suits your experience level.

This handbook is available for download on the club site at www.swfloridachessclub.com.

If you have any questions, please email us at swflchess@yahoo.com or see the Tournament Director.

See you at the Club!

Table of Contents

PROGRAM STAFF	2
THE RECREATION CENTER FACILITY	2
PAIRINGS	2
SPECTATORS	2
WHO PLAYS WHOM	2
THE PAIRING SHEET	2
GETTING PAIRED OUT	3
SIDE GAMES	3
BYES	4
REQUESTING BYES	4
FORFEITS	4
RESIGNATIONS	4
SCORING	5
RECORDING GAME RESULTS	5
WALL CHART	6
TOURNAMENT ETIQUETTE	7
PRIZES	7
INFORMATION ON SWFCC'S WEBSITE	7
TIME CONTROL AND CHESS CLOCKS	8
RATINGS	8
RECORDING GAME MOVES	8

PROGRAM STAFF

The club and its programs including the Scholastics are run as a volunteer organization with no paid positions. Club members donate their time and effort to support and assist in the running of the club and its activities.

THE RECREATION CENTER FACILITY

The SW Florida Chess Club meets at the Estero Recreation Center, 9200 Corkscrew Palms Blvd. Estero FL 33928. There is a onetime fee of \$10 or \$25 family, to join. Upon arriving, go to the front desk to fill out the application. They will take a photo and give you an ID card to pass under the scanner on all future visits.

PAIRINGS

Once you have registered in a tournament, you will be paired for each of the three rounds. Because the tournament director will do the pairings for the first round based on who is present, players should check in at the Club no later than 9:45am for Saturday games (see “Checking In”).

If for some reason you have played the first of two games **and you do not wish to play the third game**, please clearly notify the tournament director so you will not be paired against someone and have that child waiting with no one to play. We strongly urge each player to commit to all three rounds so no one is left without a game.

If you have not yet entered the current tournament when you arrive at the Club to play, see the tournament director immediately to register. Once registered, find your name on the wall chart that is posted for your section and find the board number and what color pieces you will have. (If you don’t see your name on the wall chart, see the tournament director immediately.) In order to ensure that you are included in the pairings for the next round, remember to check in!

Note: Once you enter a tournament, you are **assumed** to be present and are paired in all rounds **unless** you notify the tournament director **in advance**. (This is the case, in the Saturday SWFL Chess Club tournaments.)

SPECTATORS

While we try to create a more relaxed chess environment, it is nevertheless a USCF-sanctioned event, and that requires that we conduct it in accordance with certain standards. Moreover, we respect and will protect the principle that chess is a game between two players, and only those two players have the right of determining their game’s outcome within the rules of the game. Balancing these concerns, **we have adopted a policy of not permitting spectators to watch games in progress in the tournament room(s).**

WHO PLAYS WHOM

The Pairing Sheet

In a tournament, a pairing sheet is used to let each player know (1) who her or his opponent is, (2) what color to play, and (3) at what board number to play. Boards (or, to be more precise, places on the tables in the tournament room) are numbered so that players can find their assigned places to play. The first player listed (in the left player column) is always the person playing White; the person playing Black is always listed in the second (right) player column.

A pairing sheet sometimes shows other information as well, such as ratings and pairing numbers. The ratings are as of the start of the tournament and remain the same throughout the tournament. “Unr” stands for “unrated” and indicates a player for whom the USCF has not yet calculated a rating. The pairing number simply indicates the player’s place in a list of all players in the tournament (or section) based on rating, with number 1 being the highest-rated player. The pairing sheet is also where the players record the results of their games when they have finished playing (see “Recording Game Results”).

Below is an example of a pairing sheet when it is posted at the beginning of a round. This example also shows the players' ratings but not their pairing numbers. *Note also that because there were an odd number of players, someone had to be paired out and received a full-point bye for the round.* (Alternative messages show up for a player who gets paired out. "See T.D." and "Please Wait" are common ones.)

Getting Started Open – Pairings for Rnd 2				
Bd	Res	White Player	Res	Black Player
1		Michael Chessplayer (1855)		John Pawnpusher (2295)
2		Ross Knight (2000)		Benjamin Bishop (1937)
3		Carrie Careful (1375)		Donna Queen (1735)
4		Carlyle Castle (unr)		Tinker Thinker (1602)
5		Froggy Forfeiter (unr)		Jill Jilted (1575)
	1	Pierre d'Out (1125) — See T.D.		

GETTING PAIRED OUT

If your section has an odd number of players for a given round, you might be "paired out" for that round (it's got to happen to someone), meaning that there is no one in the section to pair you against. The player paired out is usually the lowest-rated player in the lowest score group, but an unrated player could also be paired out. If you are paired out, you will receive a full-point bye for that round, which counts just like winning a game for purposes of scoring. No one will be paired out more than once during any single tournament. If possible, we'll give a player who is paired out the option of playing a side game (see "Side Games").

SIDE GAMES

Side games are games that do not count as part of a tournament but may count for rating. Players who may be paired in side games are those who have been paired out of a tournament round, whose opponents have not shown up, or who have completed both tournament game early (that is, before 5:00 pm). Players interested in playing a side game should notify the tournament director, who will pair them if possible. Because side games depend entirely on who happens to be available, however, rating disparities between potential opponents often must be disregarded.

The following conditions apply to side games:

- Both players must have the permission of their accompanying adult to play a side game after playing two tournament games. This is to ensure that the players are not staying out later than the adult is comfortable with.
- Both players must agree to play. Either player may decline the side game for any reason, including a disparity in ratings.
- Both players must agree, *before* starting play, that the game will be rated, and notify the tournament director accordingly. If either player does not want to play for rating, the players may choose to play a non-rated game ("just for fun").
- If the game is to be rated, the side game will be added to a tournament pairing sheet, where the players record the result. The game will be included in the tournament report to USCF and will be factored into the players' rating calculations.
- The players use some method such as flipping a coin or choosing hidden pawns to determine who plays which color. In a rated side game colors must be determined randomly, by the tournament director, so it is not acceptable for either player to "volunteer" to play White or Black, even if the other player agrees.

BYES

In tournament chess, a bye is given for any round that a player does not play, forfeits excepted. There are full-point, half-point and zero-point byes that correspond in scoring to a win (1 point), a draw (½ point), and a loss (0 point) respectively.

- *Full-point byes* are given only in the case of a player being paired out.
- *Half-point byes* are given in many tournaments (a) for rounds already played by the time a player enters a tournament, and (b) when a player requests a bye in advance. Players are usually permitted to take only a small number of half-point byes (one or two typically) in any tournament. In some tournaments no half-point byes at all are allowed. Such as a three round event.
- *Zero-point byes* are given in the following circumstances:
 - o A player is given a zero-point bye for any round for which he or she requests a bye and is not permitted to take a half-point bye, either because half-point byes were not allowed at all or because the player has already taken the maximum number allowed.
 - o A player who withdraws from a tournament or forfeits a game is given zero-point byes for all remaining rounds in that tournament (see “Forfeits”).

Requesting Byes

In most tournaments a procedure is in place for players to request byes in advance. This applies to tournaments with four or more rounds. Byes are given to all players who are not present. The SWFCC only has three rounds and therefore players should commit to all three rounds or not play. But there is one situation where a player should request a bye: if you decide to leave after playing only the early game on a Saturday, please let the tournament director know that you are leaving and that he should not pair you for the late round that day.

FORFEITS

A player forfeits when he or she does not show up to play a game for which he or she was paired. A player who forfeits is given a zero for a forfeit loss and is not paired in future rounds unless reinstated by the tournament director. The opponent of a player who forfeits is given one point for a forfeit win. Forfeits are rude because they leave one and sometimes two players without an opponent for a round. (If there is an odd number of players and you forfeit, then not only does your opponent not have a game but the player who was paired out also does not have a game.) Please be conscientious: don't forfeit!

Please note that a forfeit is different from a resignation. A forfeit is when the game is not played because one or both players do not show up. A resignation is when the game is played and one player decides to resign — to “give up” or quit — before either player achieves checkmate. Forfeits do not factor into a player's rating calculation (see “Ratings”); resignations do. (See also “Recording Game Results.”)

RESIGNATIONS

A player resigns when he chooses to stop playing any time after he has made at least one move in a game. Players usually resign because they come to the conclusion (rightly or wrongly) that they have little or no chance of winning or drawing the game, and they choose not to continue playing in a “lost cause”; but a player may choose to resign for any reason, regardless of what the position on the board is. To resign simply means, “I give up, you win.” Once a player has resigned, that conclusively ends the game. The opponent does not have a choice whether to accept the resignation or not, and the player who resigns may not take back his resignation if he suddenly sees a potentially saving move.

When a player resigns, the score to be recorded on the pairing sheet is a “0” for the player who resigned and a “1” for his opponent, just as if the winner had checkmated the loser (see “Recording Game Results”).

A common way to indicate that you resign is to tip over your King intentionally. (It is not a resignation if you knock your King over accidentally.) In adult tournaments, resigning players often either tip their king over, or simply stop both clocks without making a move. In any case, once you have resigned, it is customary and good sportsmanship to shake hands with your opponent.

SCORING

In chess, points are awarded for game results as follows (see also “Recording Game Results”):

- 1 for each win, forfeit win, and full-point bye for being paired out
- ½ for each draw (and each half-point bye for rounds not played, as applicable)
- 0 for each loss or forfeit, and each zero-point bye for rounds not played

RECORDING GAME RESULTS

The pairing sheet includes result columns where the players record the result of their games when they have finished playing (see “Pairing Sheet”). In a tournament both players are responsible for making sure that their result is recorded. Results are recorded as shown in the following example:

Getting Started Open -- Pairings for Rnd 2				
Bd	Res	White Player	Res	Black Player
1	0	Michael Chessplayer (1855)	1	John Pawnpusher (2295)
2	1/2	Ross Knight (2000)	1/2	Benjamin Bishop (1937)
3	1	Carrie Careful (1375)	0	Donna Queen (1735)
4		Carlyle Castle (unr)		Tinker Thinker (1602)
5	F	Froggy Forfeiter (unr)	X	Jill Jilted (1575)
	1	Pierre d’Out (1125) — See T.D.		

Bd = Board Number
Res = Result

Enter *your score* in the correct “Res” column for *your color*, as indicated by the arrows above; enter your opponent’s score in the other “Res” column.

- If you won, enter 1 for you and 0 for your opponent.
- If you lost, enter 0 for you and 1 for your opponent.
- If you and your opponent drew, enter ½ for both of you.

If your opponent forfeited, enter X for you and F for your opponent.

Note that no result has been entered for board 4, indicating that the game is still in progress, and that Pierre d’Out received 1 point because he was paired out.

When recording the game results, please remember the difference between a forfeit and a resignation (see “Forfeits” and “Resignations”). A forfeit is when the game is not played because one or both players do not show up. A resignation is when the game is played and one player decides to resign — to “give up” or quit — before either player achieves checkmate.

Whether a player lost because he got checkmated or because he resigned will not be evident from the recorded result, because he will have “0” in either case, but a “0” indicates that he played the game. A result of “F” means that the game wasn’t played at all.

WALL CHART

A wall chart shows the results of all the games in a tournament section. Players are listed on a wall chart usually in order of rating, although sometimes they are listed according to their standing (cumulative score) in the current tournament. For each player the wall chart shows:

- Name, USCF identification number, and rating
- And for each round of the tournament played (or paired) so far:
 - o Color played (W or B)
 - o Opponent (identified by pairing number)
 - o Cumulative tournament score
 - o If a bye was taken (“----“ for a zero-point bye, “bye” for a half- or full-point bye)

Because the wall chart shows cumulative scores, it takes a bit of calculation to determine the result of any particular game after round 1. To know whether a player won his or her round 2 game, you need to subtract the round 1 score shown on the wall chart from the round 2 score. If we consider the example on the next page, we see that John Pawnpusher’s round 1 score was 1 and his round 2 score was 2. This means that he scored 1 point in round 2 — which means he won his round 2 game. Michael Chessplayer’s score, however, did not change from round 1 to round 2, meaning that he scored 0 in round 2 — which means he lost his round 2 game. In other words, a player’s result from any individual game, or round, is reflected in the difference between the player’s wall chart score for that round and his or her score for the preceding round.

In a similar fashion, by comparing the score for a “bye” round with the score for the preceding round, you can determine whether the bye was a full-point or half-point bye. The example wall chart below shows players listed according to rating. This wall chart is for a four-round tournament, of which two rounds have been completed. Round 3 has been paired but not completed, so colors and opponents are shown for round 3, but since the results of round 3 have not been reported yet, the round 3 column does not show a score. The first column shows the pairing numbers.

Getting Started Open – Wall Chart						
Pair.No.	Name/Rating/ID	Rnd 1	Rnd 2	Rnd 3	Rnd 4	Total
1	John Pawnpusher 2295 10000001	W 5	B 4	W 2		2.0
		1.0	2.0			
2	Ross Knight 2000 10000002	bye	W 3	B 1		1.5
		0.5	1.5			
3	Benjamin Bishop 1937 10000003	bye	B 2	W 5		0.5
		0.5	0.5			
4	Michael Chessplayer 1855 10000004	B 7	W 1	B 6		1.0
		1.0	1.0			
5	Donna Queen 1735 10000005	B 1	W 7	B 3		1.0
		0.0	1.0			
6	Irwin Eliminator 969 10000006	----	bye	W 4		0.5
		0.0	0.5			
7	Carlyle Castle Unr 10000007	W 4	B 5	bye		0.0
		0.0	0.0			

TOURNAMENT ETIQUETTE

Courtesy and good sportsmanship are the hallmarks of tournament etiquette. Here are some particular examples to illustrate etiquette:

- It is customary to shake your opponent's hand both before you start and after you finish the game.
- Please be as quiet as possible in (and near) the tournament room while any game is in progress. This refers to noise of all varieties; but especially it means that if it isn't really necessary to talk, don't talk, and if it is necessary to talk, don't talk loudly.
- You may leave the board while your game is in progress (for example, to go to the bathroom or get a drink). Remember, though, that your opponent is *not* required to wait for you to come back before making his or her move, so while you are away from the board, your clock will probably be running.
- If your opponent is away from the board when you make a move, it is courteous to indicate what your move was when he or she returns by pointing to the piece you moved.
- If your opponent forgets to press his or her clock after making a move, it is courteous to remind him or her to do so. Simply pointing at the clock usually does the trick. It is good practice never to make your next move until your opponent has pressed his or her clock.
- Compete fairly. Respect and comply with all the rules and policies regarding sportsmanship (do not behave in an annoying or distracting manner, do not either give or solicit advice on any game in progress — yours or anyone else's —, etc.)
- Be a good winner when you win. Be a good loser when you lose. Always be courteous and respectful toward your opponent.

PRIZES

Every player will have the opportunity to win one or more of several prizes in the tournament. Details of prizes are available in the description of the current tournament and can be found in the event flyer.

INFORMATION ON SWFCC'S WEBSITE

Wall charts, standings and other information for the Scholastic Section will be posted along with other sections of the tournament on SWFCC's website (<http://www.swfloridachessclub.com/>).

Each of the sections within the tournament is a Swiss-style format. A Swiss tournament is a tournament designed for a large number of players, in which each player plays some of the other players but not all of them, and no two players play each other more than once. A Swiss tournament usually has three or more rounds and may have more than one section. A section is a group of players who are all at a comparable level of ability as indicated by ratings. A rating is a numerical measure of a player's strength calculated by the United States Chess Federation (USCF) based on games the player has played against other rated players. The competition is tougher in sections with higher-rated players.

Sections are separated by break points, which are (usually) rating values decided upon by the tournament organizer. Multiple sections usually occur in events with a large number of players. For example, a tournament organizer might set 900, 700 and 500 as break points to define; Open, Under 900, Under 700 and Under 500 sections in the tournament. Note that the break point is a "floor," not a "ceiling." This means that a player rated 680 may choose to "play up" in the U900 section (or even in the Open section) but would not be permitted to play in the Under 500 section. A player rated 910 could play only in the Open section. A player plays only other players in his or her own section. Players are "paired" — which means "matched up to play each other" — initially on the basis of their ratings and, after round 1 has been played, on the basis of both their ratings and their scores (game results). See "Ratings," "Pairings," and "Scoring" for further explanation.

The SWFCC's current format sets the Scholastic Section to include all children rated Under 900. Once a child's rating goes above USCF 900 he/she will play in a regular section.

TIME CONTROL AND CHESS CLOCKS

The time for each player is measured separately. A chess clock is a timing device that allows tracking each player's time separately. A chess clock is actually two clocks joined in such a way that when one is running, the other is not running. A player's clock is running when it is that player's turn to move. A player completes a move by pushing down the stem on his or her clock ("pressing the clock") to stop it and to start the opponent's clock. It is possible to stop both clocks, when, for example, either player needs to get the tournament director to resolve an issue or answer a question. (Features vary on different clocks, especially digital clocks. If you are about to use a clock that you are not familiar with, make sure you understand how to "press" it and stop it before you start your game. Don't be shy about asking questions!)

If you are using an analog (or mechanical) clock — as opposed to a digital clock — make sure the clock is wound or has good batteries. You should set the clock so that a player's time expires at **6:00**. So, if the time control is G/30, you should set each side of the clock to **5:30**; if the time control is G/60, you should set each side of the clock to **5:00**.

Players who have chess clocks (and other equipment) are requested to bring them to supplement the Club's limited supply. If there are not enough chess clocks to go around, games will have to be played without a clock. (This is not a desirable situation.) In the case of two players playing without a clock, the time control is enforced according to elapsed wall-clock time. For example, a G/30 game that begins at 1:15 P.M. will end at 2:15 P.M. If the game is still in progress at 2:15, the tournament director will declare it a draw regardless of the game position or remaining material for the respective players.

IMPORTANT: While chess clocks are designed to be reasonably rugged, players **must** treat clocks with care and respect. The clock you are using may not be your own property; it may belong to your opponent or to the club, or it may be borrowed from another player. Do **not** slam the buttons on the clock. You are "pressing" the clock, not "punching" it. A gentle press is sufficient to stop the clock. Always handle the equipment (clock, set, and board) properly.

See "Playing Under a Time Control" under "Tournament Rules" for more information.

RATINGS

The United States Chess Federation (USCF) calculates ratings for players who have played rated games in USCF-sanctioned tournaments. The rating is a numerical indicator of a player's playing strength (or ability) relative to other players. Most scholastic players are rated between 200 and 1100. Masters' ratings exceed 2200. The USCF publishes its official ratings every two months. "Unofficial" new ratings are continually posted on the USCF website (<http://www.uschess.org/>) more or less as tournament results are processed and will show up on the mailing address of your USCF magazine as soon as they are updated.

All games played as part of the Scholastic Section of a SWFCC tournament will be rated games, meaning that their results will be reported to the USCF, which will factor them into the calculation of the players' new ratings. For unrated players, these games will be the basis for calculating their first rating. A rating is "provisional" until the USCF has processed the results of 25 games for a player. A provisional rating is shown followed by a slash (/) or small case "p" and another number indicating the number of games on which the rating is based. When the rating is no longer provisional, the number of games is not shown. For example, "1150/15" or 1150 p15, indicates a provisional rating based on 15 games, whereas "1150" by itself indicates a regular (not provisional) rating. It's not unusual that a provisional rating fluctuates greatly as new results are processed, so don't be alarmed if this happens in your case. Usually by the time 25 games have been processed, your rating will be pretty stable and a reliable indicator of your playing strength.

RECORDING GAME MOVES

The algebraic system is the best system for creating a record of game as it is played by writing the moves that each player makes according to the grid around the board. Tournaments require the recording of moves made by each player. And while it nevertheless may be true, that for many beginning players, recording moves is a distraction and nuisance that detracts from their enjoyment of the game, we strongly urge scholastics to learn how to record their moves and use a clock. It is not necessary that players in the Scholastic Section in their first or second events record their moves, but we encourage players to do so if they know how. All Scholastic players must learn to record their moves.