

A GUIDE TO SCHOLASTIC CHESS

(10th Edition)

PREFACE

Dear Administrator, Teacher, or Coach

This guide was created to help teachers and scholastic chess organizers who wish to begin, improve, or strengthen their school chess program. It covers how to organize a school chess club, run tournaments, keep interest high, and generate parental and public support.

I would like to thank the United States Chess Federation Club Development Committee, especially former Chairman Randy Siebert, for allowing us to use the framework of The Guide to a Successful Chess Club (1985) as a basis for this booklet.

In addition, I want to thank Tom Brownscombe, Director of the International Chess Institute of the Midwest, dba the Anatoly Karpov International School of Chess, and the United States Chess Federation (USCF) for their continuing help in the preparation of this publication. Scholastic chess, under the USCF's guidance, has greatly expanded and made it possible for the wide distribution of this guide. I look forward to working with them on many projects in the future.

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Finally, a special thanks to my wife, Susan, who has been patient and understanding.

Dewain R. Barber
American Chess Equipment

NOTE: For forms referenced within this book, check the "Forms" category behind the "Activities & Interests" section of <http://www.uschess.org>. Keeping the forms on the US Chess website and not in this book will ensure that you have access to the most current version!

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What is a School Chess Club?

Chess Clubs and Chess Players

The scholastic chess club combines educational and social activities. Members come to play, to learn, to teach, and to get together with old friends and make new ones. The players — no matter what their level of skill, experience, or age— speak a common language, and one that is often not understood in other areas of a person’s life. The rivalries are friendly; the friendships are competitive. A club can offer a wide variety of activities. There can be *speed chess* or *rated games*, or both. Club activities can include *simultaneous exhibitions*, lectures, and even formal classes taught by chess masters, experts or other experienced players. Some players who regularly come to a club won’t ever try weekend scholastic tournaments. These avid club players may get their fill of “serious” chess by competing in a *club ladder* or one game per lunch period club tournaments. Ideally, the club will cater to all types of players — recreational players as well as the serious tournament players. *EVERY member is important to the success of the club.*

Should I Start a Scholastic Chess Club?

Should you become involved in starting a club in your school? Yes! It’s not at all necessary for you to be an “expert” player, or even to know how the pieces move!

Every school in the country has kids who already know how to play chess, and more who would like to learn. “No one at our school plays chess” is not an acceptable excuse. Most of the time kids are interested

in learning and only need someone to organize and supervise them.

This guidebook will help you overcome many of the problems you might face in starting a club. If you have not already done so, you may want to find out the location of the nearest chess club or scholastic/school club. The United States Chess Federation (abbreviated USCF) and your state chapter are the best sources of information on officially affiliated club locations, scholastic organizers and coaches in your area. These contacts can help direct you further in your efforts to organize a club or locate other active scholastic chess programs within your area. Other information sources include local schools, school district offices, newspapers, libraries, chess and game stores, and your local recreation office. You might also consider contacting your local or state Department of Education.

By all means, you should start a club if you have some support from students and the willingness to expend the moderate amount of energy and leadership it will take to make your club a success. Gain support from the school board, parents, your principal, and other teachers as soon as possible. Their aid will be useful later as the club becomes more active.

The fact that the National Association of Secondary School Principals regularly includes the National High School Chess Championship and the National Scholastic K-12 Grade Chess Championships on its “National Advisory List of Contests and Activities” may be of value in gaining official support for your club.

Getting Ready to Start a Chess Club

Reporters know that their stories have to answer the basic questions — who? what? when? where? why? and how? These are the right questions for other projects too — including school chess clubs.

Who?

You are probably not alone in your hopes — you have a number of students who are behind your desire to have a successful school club. It's time to decide what other students you want to attract, because many of your future plans will be based on this decision. Consider involving youngsters at your school who are in special programs — people with learning, developmental, or physical challenges, as well as the gifted. Personal growth has no limit. Your school administration will be pleased to see these youngsters taking an active role in your school sponsored activity.

As noted in “Chess Clubs and Chess Players” (*see page 1*), the school chess club is both an educational and social activity. It provides those who know how to play and those interested in learning the game a place to meet, play, learn, teach, and develop friendships. However, a club should not be a place to “hang out,” “kill time,” or avoid academic work. The chess club at a school can and should be fun, but it is a learning experience above all else.

What?

Your students will help you bring in others and assist you in deciding what kinds of activities you should have, but it will be useful for you to have a plan for the first several meetings. Also, set goals with your students; decide what you and the players

wish to accomplish by the end of the school year. Before announcing the get-acquainted organizational meeting in the student bulletin and posted fliers, plan a specific agenda. Don't forget to play some chess too! Most students attracted to chess have a need for structure and rules. Experiment with various activities to determine what is successful in your club.

When and How Often?

The answer(s) to this apparently simple question can have a major effect on the success of your school club. Some school clubs have the question answered by outside forces, such as classroom or library availability. If early busses are available, your club may be able to meet before school. Otherwise, after school may be better, though some students have after-school jobs or chores and may not be able to attend in the afternoon. Keep in mind the other activities of your potential members, as well as the school bus schedule, when planning your meeting time.

You might be surprised to learn that lunch period is a good time for a meeting. The administration will appreciate seeing students using their lunch period in a supervised, productive manner. And because students can bring a sack lunch with them, they can have more time to play. In any case, you probably want to allow at least 30 minutes at lunch for a club session, or up to one hour after school. Meet at least once a week (or daily if your schedule permits).

Where?

Find a room with chairs and tables. Your classroom may be big enough for your first

organizational meeting and may become the club's permanent meeting place. If the room is not suitable, see if the library is available at the time your club meets. For example, the library may be busy with other students during lunch, so check things out. Keep storage needs in mind as you scout for a site at the school. You'll need a place to keep equipment, tournament stationery, club records, and so forth. A secure closet or the possibility of a locked cabinet is a definite advantage.

Why?

One of your reasons for starting a chess club is to have a place for students to play chess or to create an alternative to the existing activities at school. In addition, you recognize the educational value (critical and abstract thinking, planning, logic, and analysis) that comes from chess. Your students will improve their ability to concentrate, and you can teach the values of good sportsmanship. Studies have also shown that chess can help kids improve their

school grades. Whatever other reason there may be for a club, the excitement in the eyes of your students when they win their first game or team match may be reason enough.

How?

Most of the rest of this book is devoted to how to do things in a chess club. The best way to describe the non-technical side of "how" is "friendly." Treat your club members as you would guests in your home. Greet them; introduce them around; make sure they feel that this is their club too. One concrete way to get off to a good start with a newcomer is to make sure you have some extra sets and boards handy. That way, no visitor will be disappointed. Almost any set will do, but consider standardizing as soon as possible. Other very important parts of "how" are club structure and funding. These areas are so important that they are treated in separate sections elsewhere in this publication. You're now ready to get started with your club. It may require a bit of work, but it will be well worth the effort!

Getting Off to a Good Start

The First Few Meetings

Everyone is nervous at the beginning of something, and your new "members" are apt to be as apprehensive as you are! Be as friendly and relaxed as you can. Adopt just a page of club guidelines (prepared by you in advance) — something that will state the club's goals. It may be too early to elect officers, but not too early to instill the idea that there should be a division of authority. Next, be sure to get some basic information about everyone — name, grade, phone number, e-mail, and chess experience. You may want participants to fill out a simple survey or membership form before they begin to play. For the first time or two, it's probably enough to pair up people

randomly. If you're playing, you might want to abandon your seat and game to make room for the next student who walks in the door. You may have some experienced players who want to get serious right away. Don't keep them waiting too many weeks! As soon as possible, determine if you will need two or more groups (Division A, Division B, Division C, etc.). Your top division will be composed of those players with some tournament experience or those who have played in the club at school last year. You might have to keep everyone together if you lack enough experienced players to form a Division A.

One of the best early activities is a *round-robin tournament*, in which everyone plays each other. (Form is available at

uschess.org.) You might give this event an interesting name like *Pawn Pushers Special*. Division or section sizes should be from 8 to 12 players. (If the size of the division is in excess of 12, the tournament takes too long to finish. You want the tournament to last about three weeks.) After all players in each section play each other to determine the best two or three players in each section, you can organize the next tournament (*the Bishop's Bash*), in which you'll pair in Division A the top three from each section of the previous tournament. As you find new students, simply add to the bottom division and allow them to work their way up. If by chance you encounter a new student at mid-year who already has some experience, you may wish to insert him or her directly into the appropriate section.

Equipment & Supplies

Most clubs will provide equipment for members. Club-owned equipment makes the club seem more "real", and it can lend a desirable sense of uniformity and unity to the chess activities. If you haven't done so already, now is the time to contact USCF's Scholastic Director for a "scholastic packet." It's free, and it contains helpful information on scholastic chess. Right from the start, there are a few inexpensive items that are virtually essential:

☞ Chess Sets

Go for a standard size (3½" to 4" King), solid plastic set in the traditional Staunton design. For this purpose the "Club Special" set fits the bill. Stay away from cheap, hollow plastic pieces if possible — they tend to break and are simply less pleasant to handle than solid plastic pieces. Kids can sometimes be rough on equipment, so it's important to have sets which are as "kid proof" as possible. You can further protect chess pieces by placing them in a wood box

or vinyl or plastic bag. Perhaps your school's home economics class can prepare cloth bags with drawstrings or the shop class can make wooden boxes.

☞ Boards

Use boards proportioned to your pieces — or get tournament-sized boards (2" to 2½" squares). Cardboard boards may wear out too fast. Vinyl roll-up boards are excellent. Be sure to get the ones with the algebraic notation on the sides so you can teach notation faster to your students. If student desks are too small for the vinyl roll-up board, you will want to use rigid material under the roll-up board so that it can be placed on the desk or reduce the size of the board from a 20" (2 1/4 squares) to a 17" (1 7/8" squares). If there is an experienced chess teacher available or a large number of students who wish to learn, a demonstration board, an overhead projector system, or a computer hooked up to a digital projector is very handy. If you wish to purchase a demonstration chessboard for your classroom, check with the U.S. Chess Federation. Or, you can make one using felt and magnets or Velcro™.

☞ Score sheets

Many club players like to keep a record of their games. You will, of course, have to teach your students how to take notation, but after one lesson they will probably be ready to use any score sheet or scorebook that is available. You can make your own. USCF is also an inexpensive and reliable source. From this bare minimum, the sky's the limit on equipment and supplies. Your particular needs will determine exactly what you should get — and what kind of revenue or school funding program you will need to develop.

☞ Scorebooks

A scorebook or MonRoi device is absolutely essential for any serious player of the game. A paper scorebook is a very inexpensive way to keep a record of all of

your games in one place. You should encourage each of your students to purchase one. A MonRoi device is an electronic device specifically designed to record chess games. MonRoi devices are expensive, but many serious chess players consider them worth the money. Players who have a scorebook or MonRoi device will be able to go back over past games to see errors and find improvements. A paper scorebook should contain at least one diagram on the back of each page for adjournments, with ample space for notes. It's also helpful to keep on hand some blank diagrams, in case the bell rings during the chess period. Then the students can quickly record the position of a game and be able to resume it the next day or the next time the club meets.

✍ **Notebook**

Size and style don't matter much, but you need some place to write down various notes. It's an excellent idea to keep a written record of all club proceedings, because it's easy to forget things later. Some people prefer to dispense with hand written notes and keep all of their records on a computer. Either way works.

✍ **Note cards**

You can keep the club roster in your notebook, but a card file is better (although a computer is best). Cards and computers also give you plenty of room for expanding information about your students — like all-important telephone numbers and e-mail addresses. (Phone numbers and e-mail addresses must remain confidential.)

✍ **Software**

There are two types of software that you may wish to acquire, management software and instructional software. A good software package is a valuable tool that can help you run your chess club more effectively. A complete software package includes templates for a variety of forms and certificates that you will wish to use. Your management software can also help you

establish a club rating system. Interactive instructional software is an excellent teaching tool that allows kids to learn at their own pace. Your students may resist suggestions to read chess books, but they will jump at the opportunity to use instructional software!

✍ **Chess clocks**

These are not absolutely essential, but should be considered when your club is ready to enter tournament competition or league play, where time is controlled. If you decide to supply them for student use, mark them with the school name or initials and take good care of them. Sadly, these are the items most likely to “grow legs and walk.” Caution students that clocks are delicate mechanical instruments which should NOT be pounded upon, especially during speed chess games. That fact should be emphasized or you will soon be replacing or repairing them.

✍ **Chess books and magazines**

A few inexpensive beginner's books will provide new members with a way to improve their game between club meetings. Work with your school librarian and student council to get a series of chess books for the school. Give the librarian a list of both beginner and advanced chess book titles that cover openings, middlegames, endgames, and chess tactics. The list provided on pages 29-30 is a recommended reading list. In addition, your club should have a copy of USCF's *Official Rules of Chess*. This book will reduce arguments about the rules. If your school club affiliates with USCF, it will automatically receive a monthly club copy of *Chess Life*. Affiliation offers many benefits for schools. Write, call or e-mail the USCF for more information. However, you need not affiliate in order to receive useful material. Many materials are available from USCF — free upon request to interested scholastic chess coaches and organizers or

simply available as free downloads from the USCF website.

✍ **Videos**

Many instructional chess videos are available for players of all ages. As your library of instructional chess materials grows, don't forget to include some chess videos.

✍ **Tournament supplies** (for later on)

Eventually you'll be running tournaments, so you'll probably want to get a copy of one of the two most popular tournament directing programs: WinTD or SwissSys. You may also want some paper pairing cards, wall charts, pairing sheets, score sheets, etc.

Publicity

Publicity is important to your club's success from the very start. You want your club at school to be popular, so you have to let the students know about it. Also, word of mouth is one of the best forms of publicity. Encourage students to bring a friend. Publicity is where you find it. Look everywhere!

✍ **Fliers**

These are usually the keystone of a publicity campaign. Make as many as you can possibly use. Include an attractive chess picture (like a silhouette of a knight or other chess piece) that shouts "Chess!" to a viewer. Use readable lettering and don't be afraid of white space. Post fliers on bulletin Boards, ask other teachers to put them up in their rooms, and leave some at the library and the main office. To simplify your life, USCF offers 9½" x 12" posters that show off a promotional chess design and leave you with space to advertise your club.

✍ **Website**

A website is a great way to promote your club's activities and your players' achievements. Your website can be updated after every meeting. No information is too

trivial to be included on your website. A list of players who won their games (or simply attended the last meeting) can serve as a motivational tool. Many schools already have a website, and your club website should be a part of the school website. If possible, assign one or more students to maintain your club website. These students will receive valuable computer experience while promoting the club.

✍ **Press releases**

Write a simple statement on school stationery or club stationery describing what's going to happen at your school. *Type it!* Try for a local angle and stress the "open door" nature of your school club. Especially emphasize the fact that girls as well as boys are welcome and that students may join halfway through the school year or even later. Deliver the releases in person (if possible) to your local newspapers and school publication. It will make them harder to throw away. After delivering your news releases, call the recipients to see if they will use it — and when. Then, follow up with a thank-you note or call. It will help them remember you! Local and school newspapers always like to receive news releases about kids, so don't be shy about writing them.

✍ **School Annuals**

School annuals (yearbooks) are a good source of publicity. Contact the yearbook advisor or editor and arrange at least one page showing the club. Try to have your team pictured competing against another school, playing a club tournament, posing for a group photo, or playing in a simultaneous exhibition against a master or other strong player.

✍ **Special events**

One of the most effective special events is a simultaneous exhibition — perhaps during lunch period, after school, or at a shopping mall. It doesn't have to be huge — eight or a dozen boards will do just fine,

with a new player taking over when someone else is through. You may want to do it yourself — you don't have to be a great player (but you should move quickly). Remember that your opponents like to win, and they'll be more apt to come to your school club (excepting adults at the mall) if they don't think the point is for you to clobber them. If you are not a strong enough player, then have your strongest player do it, or rotate this activity among the players. It's also a good idea for the person doing the simultaneous to dress up on that day. It lends an air of "class" to the activity. Don't forget to tell the newspaper about your event — both before and after. And put your school simul in a very visible place at lunch. Then, stand back and watch the crowd form. Hand out some inexpensive prizes (posters, chess bumper stickers, pocket magnetic sets, or copies of *Chess Life*) for those who win or draw. Students who are the last to stay in the game attract crowds, so they should be eligible to win something too! E-mail or write USCF for free materials for your special promotions.

Club Officers

Officers might not be necessary for the first couple of meetings, but a club of even 10-12 students probably needs some sort of leadership structure or assignment of duties. The club officers exist for two reasons: They represent the club at student council meetings or other activities and serve the interests and goals of the members. Some school clubs depend on one or two students to do everything, and that's not a good situation. As club advisor, you should be spreading the work around. Then, every student will feel that he or she is a part of the club. In secondary programs, student club members as well as club officers should be involved in the decision-making process of club activities. The following are the

minimum functions for club officers, though two or more are sometimes performed by one person:

✍ President

Oversees smooth functioning of the club, resolves disputes with the aid of the advisor, and is ready to take over for any other officer who is absent or negligent. This person could also be in charge of keeping contact with the student council and school activities director.

✍ Vice-President

Helps the president and assumes the job of president if the president is absent from school. This person could also work with the publicity or phone committee, or deal with the standings sheet.

✍ Secretary-Treasurer

Processes the club's bills through the required school channels and keeps financial records where appropriate. Keeps club roster (unless this duty is assigned to a separate secretary) and warns when the club is low on funds. Works with the student council in planning projected school club budgets. Depending on the age of the students, it might be necessary to omit this position and do it yourself.

✍ Tournament Director

Plans events in consultation with the advisor and sees to it that they run smoothly. This student can be in charge of the *club ladder* and the club rating system (*see glossary*).

✍ Publicity Director

Informs members of upcoming events and issues news releases concerning club news. Some kids have always wanted to be journalists. This is their chance to be your contact with the school newspaper. The school newspaper may also be willing to accept a chess column by a student. Don't forget to put a chess problem in each issue. The publicity director can also write a club newsletter which could include tournament results.

☞ **Team Captain**

Works with the advisor to help prepare the team for upcoming matches.

☞ **Webmaster**

Maintains the club website and updates it regularly. This can be a big job for young students, so you may want to assign this job to a group of students rather than just one individual. Even if your students are young, resist the urge to do this work yourself. The experience and skills that your webmasters gain will be of value to them throughout their lives.

☞ **Greeters**

One or two students who welcome new students to the club, introduce them to other club members, answer questions, and get them into a game as soon as possible. No one is more crucial to a club than its greeters. They should be friendly and not just after a new chess scalp! Select one for September and October and another for November and December. After December, you might want to handle it yourself unless you still have a large influx of new students. As advisor, you must obtain the proper information (name, address, and grade) from newcomers so you can stay in touch with

them and encourage them to return. If you wish, you can get their phone number when they first register. Otherwise, pick up that information from their school emergency card after they have established themselves as a regular member of the club. **Caution:** *All student information is confidential!*

☞ **Parent Booster Club** (later on)

You will want to consider forming a parent booster club, which can be your best friend and ally in advancing the school chess club. The parent booster club can lend support whenever you sponsor an event at your school, if you need help with transportation to other schools for matches (when permitted by the district), and when fundraising. Boosters can take registration, bring and serve refreshments, record results, assist in passing out awards, and help in countless other ways. The parent booster club can also influence the school board, your principal, other principals, and the activities director as to the importance of the club and district chess programs. Establish this group as soon as you can. Parents will usually be glad to support a positive activity for their son or daughter.

Keeping the Club Going

Building a Base: The First Few Months

You've gathered your first members and held your ice-breaker event. Now what? Keep it rolling!

Formalities

Some clubs start early with electing officers, drafting and approving bylaws and constitutions, and other such organizational matters. Your students probably just want to play chess. Many students are apt to be bored with these formalities. But do try to find volunteer helpers as soon as you can.

Get them to be greeters, or whatever you need.

District/School Support

The district and principal are likely to support you when they see you adding a new activity to their extracurricular or after-school program. Consult your principal and teachers' representative about supplementary pay for the time you spend on chess team activities. The chess team coach should receive supplementary pay for time spent on chess team activities, just as other coaches or yearbook advisors. All

coaches work hard and get paid for their time, and *so should chess coaches!*

News Releases

☞ Daily Bulletin

Prepare brief releases directed at your school's daily bulletin from time to time. Announce the successful organizational meeting, accentuating the positive ("Sixteen chess players attended the first meeting.") Announce your champion(s). Announce your elections. Announce your team challenges and results, including award winners. Announce your affiliation with your state organization and USCF. Keep repeating the room number, time, and the advisor's name to remind everyone that it's *never too late to join!*

☞ Local Newspapers

You may want to get an article in your city newspaper. If you have a small-to-moderate sized club, "news release" might seem like too fancy a term for what you want to do. But it's the term your newspaper uses, so it's the one you should use too. Prepare this information on school or chess club stationery so that the newspaper will know the source. This makes the release more credible and enhances its effectiveness. A release tells the school or local newspaper, radio or TV station that you have news and that they have permission to excerpt or rewrite your presentation of that news — although your goal is to get your news presented exactly the way you want. The tactics are to write it so well that a rewrite would be a waste of time. For fundamental strategy, there is nothing better than the old ABC's of good writing: Accuracy, Brevity, and Clarity.

☞ Accuracy

It goes without saying that you should get your facts straight. You should also provide a name, telephone number and e-mail address for the paper to use if any further information is needed. You should check out your paper's particular style of reporting local news. For example, do they like to include ages and grades for all students who are prominently named? How many sentences do they typically use in a paragraph? These questions may stretch "accuracy," but they do emphasize your conformity to what this paper considers good writing. Of course, your spelling should be accurate.

☞ Brevity

Get to the point and stay there. Newspapers do not have the time, the space, or the inclination to cope with lots of background and theory. They want news. Sometimes they print "features," longer pieces that do explore the stories behind the facts, but these are most often researched and written by their own staff. (These writers will make some mistakes in chess stories, but be grateful for the ink you do get rather than frustrated by errors.) Remember that newspapers typically cut "from the bottom," so put your most critical facts and points near the beginning of your piece.

☞ Clarity

Remember the difference between English and chess terminology, and avoid words and concepts that require explanation to those who are not familiar with chess and tournaments. Write relatively short and simple sentences, being especially careful that your pronouns are not confusing.

A Sample News Release

Rook Elected Chess Club President

Joe Rook, an 11th-grade student from Madison HS, has been elected president of

his school chess club. Rook joined the chess club two years ago. “I’m not a great chess player,” said Rook, “but my goal is to show other students how much fun chess can be. Of course, winning is more fun than losing.”

The election was at the weekly club meeting last Wednesday after school in Madison’s library.

Other officers include Sam King, 10th grade, vice president, and Cathy Bishop, 9th grade, secretary-treasurer. The outgoing president was Paul Pawn, 12th grade.

The Madison High School Chess Club is open to all students and welcomes both beginners and experienced players.

Commentary

The lead (the first sentence) is pretty bland, but it’s difficult to write a great “hook” for such a story. Some newspapers are fanatical about “attribution,” meaning they want to cite a source for every fact they print. Check your paper’s style.

A brief quotation can spark up a flat report and make the piece seem more like a professional news story. You can often sneak in some promotional material through a quotation.

The club meeting time and location on campus might not make it past the editor’s red pen. But it doesn’t hurt to try. If you put this information at the very end, its odds for survival are even less.

“Names sell papers” is an old saying worth remembering. Take every opportunity to use the names of more students, stopping short of turning your release into a telephone directory. Welcoming newcomers is always a good idea; sometimes a paper will have room for such a plug.

Club Newsletter

This simple device can be a key to your club’s success. Remember, “names sell papers.” In a club newsletter, names make happy members. In its simplest form, your newsletter or bulletin is merely a listing of coming events — a chess schedule for your students. You may want to include items such as team match and weekend tournament activities.

Make sure that all students — and potential members — get a copy. Of course, they should take it home and show their parents. Remember that putting a stack on the table in the room might not be enough, because some students will be absent that day. Consider leaving them with the teacher who has them just before morning break or lunch. Then, they might bring the newsletter with them to the club. Other students will see how special your club members are and might even ask to see the information. Don’t forget to leave some in the library and front office.

Beyond the schedule, you can also report on the recent events — from tournaments and ladder standings to someone’s new rating. Find ways to include as many names as possible in a positive light. “Joe didn’t win any games, but he really scared Jim with some combinations before he lost on time.” “Last month’s visitors included Tom Knight and Jim Chessman. Both of them are very interested in speed chess.” “Pete Wilson has played the most club ladder games this year — keep it up, Pete! Bob Johnson is second in activity.” There are a lot of good ways to use names.

The next step might be to include some games from the students. Brief annotations should be permitted. Other games of an instructive nature should be printed. Also, don’t forget to include anecdotes about chess history or the local scene, news from around the country and the world, chess

problems, photos and cartoons, or anything else your imagination and energy suggest.

Instruction

Every chess club needs to consider the challenge of helping its members improve. This is particularly crucial if your club has hopes of keeping beginners and novices in your club. Without encouragement, players below 800 strength often become frustrated and lose interest — and that’s something no club wants to happen. **Note:** The above reference to player strength (“800 strength”) refers to a national rating that players receive after they have played in their first national tournament. This number can vary from beginning players (100-800) to more advanced players (1300 and above). It should be stressed to all students that only by competing against stronger players will they improve their game. The loser at chess nearly always learns more than the winner. The loser gains knowledge and even some satisfaction. Encourage younger students that patience will be rewarded. The older students will graduate and, if the younger students continue to practice, they can become one of the school’s top players.

Patience is a virtue. Absolute beginners can be taught by almost any player who is willing and interested. (Emphasize that your club plays “touch move.” It is an important rule to follow from the beginning.) Choose a good beginner’s book and simply present the material to the students. You don’t have to be original — make use of what has already been proven to work. USCF sells an excellent package of teaching materials, which it developed for young beginners. It’s called *Pawn & Queen*.

Be sure that the students are made aware that good chess books do exist. They can be read and understood by anyone who wants to learn. A list is included on pages 29-30 of this publication. You may also seek out a

master, expert, or experienced teacher of chess to ask for book recommendations.

You should also use the computers at your school to add another learning opportunity. A number of chess software programs are available from USCF sales.

Players in the 1300-1700 strength range can also be excellent teachers — not only of beginners, but also of those who have played for years without ever learning the strategies and concepts of the opening and endgame. The latter are often the most frustrated of all club players because they lose so frequently. But they can greatly improve their playing strength after taking just a few friendly, basic lessons. They will often go on to become some of the most avid supporters of your club.

Instruction need not be limited to inexperienced players. If you are blessed with one or more 1700+ players, you should be able to provide valuable assistance and guidance to those sub-1500 players who are teaching your beginners. Not surprisingly, these veteran players are often far better teachers for other tournament players than they are for beginners, because they can often express their ideas in chess “jargon” better than they can in non-chess terms. But don’t be afraid to ask a master or expert to assist in your basic instructional efforts. They might surprise you with their willingness to help.

Don’t overlook one of the simplest of all instructional tools, the *post-mortem analysis*. When you first meet a new student who claims to be a beginner, pair the visitor with a player who will be willing to go over the game after it is done. Imagine how much more welcome he will feel if he is given some tips by the player who has just played him. Finally, you should suggest to every player who plays rated games to go over every one of those games. Your students got into chess to have fun and win a few games, so give them one of the best tools for

improvement: *analysis*. In addition, try to avoid small cliques in your club. Sometimes the more experienced players tend to exclude new and novice players. Break these groups up and keep mixing the players.

Lesson Plan Ideas

Below you will find a checklist for pupils that should be reviewed with all newcomers and those who lack knowledge in certain areas of the game:

1. How to checkmate: (Have them try to do this on you — without advice first — they may already know it, or part of it ...then talk if necessary. Explain what stalemate is, giving examples.)

- a. With queen & king vs. king
- b. With two rooks & king vs. king
- c. With one rook & king vs. king
- d. Contest: Checkmate in the fewest

moves (any of above).

2. Play two or three at a time — discuss questionable moves (don't say bad moves) and good moves — praise them as often as possible.

3. Teach scorekeeping:

a. Name some squares, then point to others for them to name.

b. Place a knight on the board — have them name all possible squares for it to move to.

c. Have an experienced student show a beginner how to record a game.

4. Set up special situations such as:

a. pawn & king vs. king — how to defend; how to advance the pawn.

b. Back-rank mates.

c. Forks and skewers.

5. Teach them how to castle and why.

6. Teach general opening theory:

a. Importance of controlling the center.

b. Avoid moving the same piece over and over again.

c. Don't bring out the queen too early.

d. Castle early in the game.

e. Don't make too many pawn moves early in the game.

f. Develop knights and bishops quickly.

g. Don't make pointless moves just to put your opponent in check.

Try these in any order — review the previous week's lesson, but generally try to concentrate on one of these per week.

Summer Chess Camps

One way for students to keep in shape over the summer is to attend a chess camp. Most camps provide high-quality instruction, tournaments, and other chess-related activities. Some camps also permit teachers and coaches to attend. Current information about chess camps can be found by simply googling "chess camp".

On-line Play

Some of your students will want to play chess more often than your club meeting schedule permits. Using the Internet, these students will be able to find willing opponents from all around the world. There are many Internet sites that offer your students the opportunity to play chess on-line. Check the USCF website for possible online opponents!

Club Ladder

The club ladder is a true mainstay of many chess clubs. It takes many different forms, but all are similar in the following respects: They continue through the school year; involve some type of ranking of the students; and allow players to move "up the ladder" by defeating players whom they challenge. To avoid mismatches, allow challenges only within a certain number of available spots (3, 5, or 8) of the player being challenged.

Some ladders are USCF-rated, while other ladders have only some or perhaps none of the games rated. Some clubs calculate their own “club ratings” for ranking their players. Whether a club uses its own rating system or USCF’s, a rating system will allow players to find their skill level and identify worthy opponents. Medals, trophies, or ribbons could be awarded at the end of the school year, the end of each semester, or even the end of each month, based on the rating improvement of each player.

Club Ratings

There are several software products that can be used to maintain a club rating system, including WinTD and Chess Club Manager. If you do not have access to one of these programs, here are some suggestions for making simple rating calculations by hand or writing a simple computer algorithm:

1. If you are just starting at the beginning of the year, and no one has a club rating, everyone starts at the same rating (perhaps 1000 points).
2. In your first school tournament, a player receives 15 points for every win and loses 15 points for every loss.
3. In future tournaments, *higher-rated* players receive 10 points for every win in their section and lose 15 points for every loss. *Lower-rated* players receive 15 points for every win against a *higher-rated* player in their section, but only lose 5 points for a loss.
4. In the case of draws or stalemates, the *higher-rated* player loses 5 points and the *lower-rated* player gains 5 points.

5. When a tournament ends, *bonus points* can be awarded to the top three players in each section. The first-place finisher could receive 25 points, second place 15, and third place 10. Bonus points are usually awarded in the first few months of the chess club year, to help players find their level more quickly.

EXAMPLE: Jim is rated 1250 and loses a game to Bill, who is rated 1100. To calculate the new rating, subtract 15 points from Jim’s club rating (because he was the *higher-rated* player and he lost). Bill receives 15 points (he was the *lower-rated* player and he won). Therefore, Jim’s new club rating is 1235 and Bill’s new club rating is 1115.

This is a very simple system that takes little time to calculate new ratings for the students. Consider giving bonus points for games won at a local tournament. This rewards them for their participation. However, restrict points to no more than 10 points per won game. *Never* subtract bonus points for losses at an outside school tournament.

A variation of this is to let all players start at 1000 as before, but for each game won add 25 points plus or minus 10% of the difference in ratings, with a maximum of 50 points.

The Harkness System is another method of calculating club ratings. It is more accurate than the simple rating system described above, but the calculations take more time if you are doing them by hand.

The method is as follows:

HARKNESS SYSTEM*

Opponent Rating Difference	If High Wins Add to Winner and Deduct from Loser	If Low Wins Add to Winner and Deduct from Loser	If a Draw Add to Low Deduct High
0 to 24	16	16	0
25 to 49	15	17	1
50 to 74	14	18	2
75 to 99	13	19	3
100 to 124	12	20	4
125 to 149	11	21	5
150 to 174	10	22	6
175 to 199	9	23	7
200 to 224	8	24	8
225 to 249	7	25	9
250 to 274	6	26	10
275 to 299	5	27	11
300 or more	4	28	12

**Official Chess Handbook, p. 156*

There are many benefits to establishing a club rating system, but doing the calculations by hand can be quite tedious. You may wish to set up a spreadsheet to help you with the calculations, or you may choose to purchase chess club management software. Don't become so engrossed in the details of your rating system that you spend hours on rating updates. The three important features that your club rating system must have are:

Players gain rating points when they win games.

Players lose rating points when they lose games.

Rating calculations can be completed in a reasonable amount of time.

There are potential problems in any club ladder. What happens when players refuse challenges or don't attend? You'll have to

make that decision when the time comes. So, although there might be some minor problems, a new and growing club would do well to plan having a club ladder. It provides a "safe," easy-to-run activity that is always available, especially on those days when illness or a special school activity causes low attendance. It can work for advanced players, newcomers, club regulars, and occasional players.

Mandatory Opening, Gambit, Minor Piece Tournaments and Chess Problems

Non-rated "theme" tournaments require only one day to complete, and they provide a good change of pace. In each game, the players are required to play a certain gambit or other opening sequence with each competitor — once with white and once with black. In minor piece tournaments, knights or bishops are used, with a few

pawns added. A fast time control of 10-15 minutes per side can be used to ensure that all games are completed in one club meeting. This type of contest is designed for fun. Often, the opening is announced in advance so that players can prepare for the tournament, but sometimes the opening is “drawn from a hat” at the start of the event.

The reason to choose a gambit is to force players into a type of game different from what they normally play. Gambits tend to produce very exciting positions where imagination and natural skill can be exercised. You might precede the competition with a short lecture on the opening to make sure the event becomes not only fun, but educational too. Caution: Be certain to choose openings that are not totally unsound; nobody enjoys playing with a position that is a forced loss.

As for the minor piece tournaments, you can have fun with pawns only plus king, pawns and knight(s) plus king, or no-queen tournaments, etc. This gives students more practice with the endgame and minor pieces and reminds them that the game is more than a “queen move.” These types of tournaments should be considered for mid-year — after the students have some knowledge of the game.

Another possibility is a problem-solving contest, with mate-in-two problems from chess books. Ten problems may be an appropriate number. The object is to solve the problems correctly in the shortest amount of time. For your instructional purposes, the patterns found in actual games and chess problems are generally better for developing pattern recognition. Avoid abnormal variations on chess, as they tend to interfere with the development of normal pattern recognition. An example of an abnormal variation would be bughouse chess (*see glossary*).

Be certain that the ladder or other activities are available for those who do not want to

play in theme tournaments. Not all chess players enjoy trying a totally new and unprepared opening, even if it is just for fun.

Try Team Play!

One way to pull a club closer together is team play. Arrange matches with other schools in your town or in a nearby town. You can have the chess team ride with one of the other sports teams (i.e., football, baseball or tennis) when competing against a nearby school. Try to establish a league in your area. There are probably other chess clubs that want to play. If you do not know of any other nearby schools that are active in chess, check with your state association or the USCF. The USCF maintains a list of affiliated chess clubs in the “Clubs & Tourneys” section of the USCF website, www.uschess.org.

Matches can be played with varying numbers of players, from as few as three boards to as many as can fit into the playing site. In team play the principle “the more the merrier” truly does apply! Try to arrange a 10 to 15 board match with another school or schools, so that every club member can play. Remember that the players from the two schools are to be ranked in descending order, strongest player first. Matches can give your club a real boost. Playing with a common goal and traveling together to a match can really build club morale. Whenever possible, use school bus transportation. *Note: Each player needs a permission slip.*

Remember, you can find match opponents anywhere. You may be able to gain publicity for your club, especially if you win against a school from a rival city or town. Be sure to let your school and local newspapers know. Newspapers love stories and pictures of youngsters who can hold their own in competition.

One club member can be designated as team captain and take responsibility for some of the details concerning matches. The advisor should:

1. contact the other school;
2. arrange a mutually agreeable place, time, and time limits;
3. make sure that all the necessary equipment is available;
4. contact the students and their parents and assign the order in which the players will play.

If you are traveling to the other school, the advisor must make transportation arrangements, plus make sure that no one is left behind by mistake!

Sometimes a concern about team strength prevents some schools from being active in team play. Schools that are not blessed with a quantity of strong players tend to shy away from team competition. This is unnecessary. Team play can be designed as an enjoyable form of chess. Work with the coaches of neighboring schools to set some team competition events that maintain a balance between teams.

For instance, each team could agree in advance to have no more than two players rated over 1400, no more than four over 1200, and at least two unrated players. This type of format allows teams to be more evenly matched. It also promotes more interschool competition for the team

positions. Novice players are still important to the success of the team — in fact, they are just as important as the top two boards!

Before forming your team, decide how you choose its members. Being on the team should be an honor that can be earned by anyone. Encourage club members to try to “make the team.” Perhaps the “most improved player” on the club ladder or some of the best players can be automatically awarded a spot. This will increase interest not only in the team but also in the general club activities. A students-versus-faculty match or one in which the students choose up sides would work well.

If there are a good number of school clubs in the area, consider setting up a league with a regular schedule. Some leagues feature rated competition; others are open to non-USCF members. The latter makes it possible to get other schools involved which have very few or no rated players. Make sure that you get a responsible person as league director and that all the club advisors understand their duties.

As you progress, think about club jackets or T-shirts with the school logo on them. High-school students should be eligible for a chess letter to be worn on a collegiate-style sweater or vest. If other teams use school equipment and have club jackets, then so should your team.

Your Club as a Tournament Sponsor

Chess tournaments come in all sizes and shapes. Your experience will lead you to what is best for your students, and almost all chess players enjoy some kind of formal competition. You will find detailed instructions for pairing players, assigning colors, and so forth in USCF’s *Official Rules of Chess*. In this chapter, we are concerned with what happens before and after the games themselves.

What About Format?

You can play round robins among any number of players. “Quads” are traditional favorites, matching four players of about the same strength in a three-round event. Note that USCF ratings based on fewer than 4 games are considered unofficial. Therefore,

you would have to run two “quads” in order to get new players officially rated.

If you can handle the Swiss system (*see glossary*), you might start with a one-section Swiss, involving everyone in the same competition. If you have fewer than a dozen players, a three-rounder is probably enough. For 10 to 20 students, you probably want four or five rounds. For more than 20 players, five rounds might be best. Keep in mind that if all players are to start a round at the same time, a number of students will finish early. There should be an activity to occupy them that is quiet enough so as to not disturb the tournament games in progress.

You can also have two or more Swiss sections of any length. Three rounds guarantees no more than one perfect score among eight players, for 16 players you need four rounds.

You’ll have to decide what to do about ties. You can have co-champions with equal awards, co- champions with a trophy awarded on tie-breaks, or a winner-take-all playoff match. It’s a good idea to award something to anyone tying for first place.

While it’s possible to have a tournament with only one prize, you will be more popular if you give everyone some chance at an award. You might, for example, offer a first prize and a smaller one for the best score by someone rated under 1200. A prize for the best score by a newcomer or unrated player, an upset prize to the student who scores the biggest rating upset of the tournament, or a prize for the top scoring girl in the tournament may be a good promotion. Remember that your students joined your club to have fun and to win, so the more prize categories, the better.

One popular feature is to give your tournaments creative titles based on holidays, movies, local geography or history, or whatever else tickles you or your students.

Example: *The Snowflake Special.*

Remember that there will be students that do not want to play in any tournaments, so respect their wishes. Stay loose, experiment, listen to your students, and have fun.

The Club Tournament

Many clubs find that regular tournaments form the backbone of their activities. The typical structure is one round a week for a specified time and then a brand new tournament. These are easy events to run and are fun for everybody, but you might have to experiment before you find the best format for your students. Two major words of advice: *inexpensive* and *relaxed*.

✍ Entry fees

Entry fees should be affordable, and while prizes are not typically a big deal in school club tournaments, one or more small trophies, medals, ribbons, certificates, or book prizes may be appropriate. A prize could even be as minimal as a free entry into a future local tournament.

Caution: To maintain your scholastic standing in the eyes of some state organizations, you should *not* offer cash prizes of any type. Thus, you can get sanctioned just like the debate club, the football team, and the math club. This could come in handy later.

✍ Structure

Don’t run a military boot camp. The atmosphere in a school club tournament should be friendly. Relax and let the kids enjoy it within the rules of the game. You will find that some students can’t show up for a scheduled round (game). Often they can get together with their opponents some evening or over the weekend. If it’s okay with the players involved, it should be okay with you. Also, be flexible about letting students join the tournament after the event has started.

The Tournament Director

You need someone to be in charge, whether or not your event is to be rated by USCF. In practice, the tournament director (TD) usually does everything connected with a small tournament, but for larger tournaments it's better to have at least a small team that divides the actual directing chores from the organizing ones. Be sure that the TD has a copy of USCF's *Official Rules of Chess*.

If your event is to be USCF-rated (definitely a good idea!), your TD needs to be USCF certified. Any USCF member in good standing can become a USCF certified TD by signing a form stating that he or she has read USCF's *Official Rules of Chess*, has access to a copy of these rules, understands them, and promises to uphold them fairly.

Please visit the USCF website to download forms and obtain information concerning TD certification.

The Weekend Scholastic Tournament

There are many rated and unrated weekend and scholastic events on the calendar. Look them up in *Chess Life* or in the Clubs and Tournaments section of the USCF website, or contact your local scholastic organizer. Sponsoring such an event is not difficult, as nearly everything that is true of club tournaments applies to weekend events that are open to other students as well as your own. These events, whether one day or two days in length, take more advance planning, but most of your concerns will be similar to those you encounter in planning a school club tournament.

One of the essential differences is finances. For club events, you can probably remain flexible and determine your prizes. For an open scholastic event, you should either guarantee the trophies, medals, and ribbons

(ideal) or offer a realistic estimate of these based on the number of entries.

Your tournament site is another major issue. Can you use your classroom, library or cafeteria? Clear this with your principal by getting a building use form, completing it, and sending it to the superintendent or other official of the school district who will handle the approval. Getting this approval is essential. If an accident should occur, you will be protected from liability and the school district insurance will cover all persons involved. If by chance you choose a tournament location outside of school, try to have the community center, college, or hotel donate the space and custodial services. These other sites have insurance coverage, so that should not be a problem.

Publicity is another important factor. You should plan very far in advance — as much as six months to a year. The first step is to check with your USCF regional clearinghouse or state organization to make sure that there is no significant scholastic activity already scheduled for that weekend. You can find a complete list of regional clearinghouses at the USCF website. If a major tournament, open to students and adults, is scheduled for the same date, it might cut into your attendance. Check with some of the other coaches and students to see if that's the case. A big scholastic event just before or after your tournament could affect attendance too.

Boost attendance at your event by posting and distributing fliers at other area tournaments and by mailing fliers to area players and coaches you wish to attract. USCF supplies address labels of chess players by ZIP code and rating at a nominal cost. Write, call, or e-mail the USCF for more information.

Placing Ads in Chess Life Magazine

One of the best ways to attract players to your event is to announce or advertise it in your local state chess bulletin and in the Tournament Life section of *Chess Life*. The TLA form is available from USCF's website. You may use it to submit *Chess Life* TLAs for your events. But the best way to submit a TLA is online. Visit the USCF website for more information about submitting TLAs.

Chess Life TLA Acknowledgement

All TLA fees must be paid with the return of the TLA acknowledgment form, even if there are no corrections. If you do not return your acknowledgment form with payment, your TLA will not appear. Please keep in mind that your TLA, in addition to appearing in *Chess Life*, also appears, at no extra charge, on the USCF website:

www.uschess.org.

You will find in the Appendix a "Tournament Accounting Sheet" that will help you to plan ahead. Talk this over with the other coaches in your area. They can guide your estimates so they will be very accurate.

Registration

A smooth registration process is essential to running a successful weekend rated or unrated tournament. As in all other things, planning and teamwork help enormously. Convince your club that the tournament is theirs, not yours. Everyone in the club should help out at least a little, and there are indeed lots of little chores that can be parceled out.

Advance registrations are great. You can handle them in peace and quiet and at your own pace. To encourage advance entries, offer a discount for early entries and provide

a cutoff registration form on your tournament flier. Of course, if you are running a tournament with several sections, you need a space for the section the entrant wants and maybe one for their current rating.

But it is your responsibility to check all USCF ID numbers, expiration dates, and ratings. Duplicate names for one player (Frederick W. Smith III, Fred Smith, Freddy Smith, F. W. Smith, etc.) create havoc with membership records and ratings. Avoid headaches by asking USCF members to bring their membership cards. Copy the information directly from the card. Mailing labels from their *Chess Life* magazine are also helpful in establishing accurate data.

There are two basic parts to the registration process on the day of the tournament, and they should be split between at least two people if your line is more than a few players long.

I. Fees

A. Entry fees

B. Dues (league, state association, USCF, as applicable). It's often faster to have the student fill out the forms (print please) and return them to you with the appropriate fees, at which time you should give a receipt if requested. When possible, have the coach or advisor who brought the team prepare a list in advance.

II. Player Information

A. Name

B. Address and/or e-mail address (This is important for expanding your scholastic mailing list, for providing information to the newspaper and state bulletin, for mailing prizes and crosstables, and for responding to post-tournament inquiries.)

C. USCF ID Number

D. USCF Expiration Date

E. Rating

F. Grade

G. School (If it is not a team event, you may wish to avoid pairing students who are from the same school, especially during the early rounds.)

The USCF *Rating List* is an all-in-one tool for all information except address, grade, and school. USCF certified tournament directors can download USCF rating lists from the TD/affiliate support area of the USCF website. Tournament pairing programs such as WinTD and SwissSys are designed to be used with these rating lists.

If you're running a tournament with more than one section or a team competition of any type using pairing cards, a color-coded system is helpful. Use different color pairing cards for each section or mark the corner of the pairing cards with a different color to identify each school.

You'll want to post wall charts so that the students can follow the action. Don't hold up your first round to do so, but do see that someone — whether it's you or someone else — gets to them as soon as possible. Good TDs get these charts prepared and on the wall before the end of round one. Inform the students that both players who are paired should go together to the pairing sheet or result taker to record the result of the game as soon as they finish.

REMINDER: No student or advisor is to write on a wall chart. Any corrections or changes to a wall chart are to be made by a Tournament Director!

Club Finances

Almost certainly, your club will have at least some financial concerns. They can be large or small depending on the size of your club and the nature of its activities and programs.

Below is a checklist of materials that you might want to have within easy reach during a tournament.

TD's Checklist

Official Rules of Chess, latest edition
Computer, printer and all necessary software
Pairing cards (if you are not using a computer)
Plenty of paper
USCF membership forms
Numbers for boards
Score sheets (if possible, make scorebooks available at a reasonable cost)
Writing implements
Chess clocks (including loaners)
Various supplies such as tape, thumb tacks, rubber bands, etc.
Coins and small bills to provide change
Copies of ads for this tournament (for round times, prizes, etc.)
Medical kit in case of emergency
FLIERS FOR YOUR NEXT EVENT!!

Tournament Software

If you plan to run Swiss-system tournaments, you will probably want to obtain a pairing program such as SwissSys or WinTD.

Funding

Raising money for your chess club can be very easy if you have the participation and support of students, parents, and school administration.

The school district is a primary source of funding for school activities. Some districts

have funded programs for special academic classes. Districts may fund programs for exceptional and talented students. In addition, districts usually make provisions for bus transportation to student events. Provisions for funding teacher supplementary pay are discussed on pages 10-11.

Each school's student council funds many activities. However, the student council sometimes requires funding to be budgeted a year in advance. Work closely with the activities director to recognize your chess program and team. Student councils are interested in securing equipment that will be of long-term benefit to the school. Items such as chess clocks and chess books for the library qualify. The student council will sometimes fund team entry fees to promote the school and encourage school participation.

Most school clubs have ways of raising money for their activities. Find out what they are by checking with several advisors and your school activities director. One or more of their ideas may suit your need to raise a certain amount of money. Your parent booster club will be a valuable resource. There are also community groups (e.g., Parents Association, Lions Club, Optimists, Kiwanis) that support schools and worthy scholastic projects.

There are many old reliable methods — bake sales, car washes, raffles, and chocolate sales (where permitted). PTA, student council, or even school district funds designated for “after-school activities” would be worth investigating. Spend the time looking for the money and you will have to spend less time raising it.

Banking

You don't really have to run downtown and open an account as soon as you decide to have a student chess club. First, check with your principal or activities director and see how other clubs at your school handle finances. Their system will probably work for your club too. Many districts require funds to be placed in a student club activity account.

If, however, you find that your club would be better off with its own account, then check with local banks to see which one will give you a no-charge bank account. Many banks do this for schools. If necessary, your principal could call the bank and verify your need. Remember: The bank will receive your money and not pay interest to you and you will receive all services free. It's a good trade-off for them and it's also good public relations.

You'll have to decide who signs the checks. It's best to have two signatures on file with the bank, probably those of the advisor and the vice-principal. Then, when the statement comes in each month you simply have the vice-principal initial it. When needed, you have him/her sign checks.

Taxes

Because yours is a school club organization, it is a 501(c)(3) organization. You pay no income tax on your activities. Through your district, it may be possible for your club to be exempt from sales tax on your purchases, get special postage rates, and offer donors write-offs on gifts. Check with your district business office to confirm any legal questions with regard to the above. There may be variations from state to state.

Larger Chess Organizations

Benefits of State Association

Many school clubs have found it helpful to have a good relationship with their state chess association. In some cases, these clubs can become affiliates of state associations. In return for paying little or no annual fee, your club will probably receive a copy of the state magazine and often a listing in the magazine or website citing the club's existence. You will also be able to announce any weekend tournaments that you run. Your students will benefit from having a copy of the state magazine available. They will also enjoy seeing their names featured in the scholastic events you report.

Active ties with your state chess association can benefit your club in other ways. Sometimes, a state association arranges tours by masters or the state champion — if so, your club can have a chance to be included. If a special event is coming up in your state, such as a grandmaster simul, all your students will learn of it promptly. Also, state tournament calendars are often printed far in advance of the Tournament Life listings in *Chess Life*. These calendars will help your students plan their tournament activity more efficiently.

The state association may also assist you if you have any special problems. Your state officers are usually a good source of advice on many chess-related topics. When your club embarks on its first open tournament, you may be able to count on the state association for assistance with publicity, a director, and so forth. Remember that helpfulness is a two-way street, so do support your state association when it requests your assistance.

As your club and league grow, you may want to bid for a state-sponsored scholastic

tournament. These events offer your students the opportunity to compete against the best players the state has to offer, while avoiding the inconveniences of traveling to another city.

USCF Club Affiliation

At the earliest opportunity, you should consider making your club a scholastic affiliate of the U.S. Chess Federation. The paperwork is minimal, and the benefits are numerous.

Here are some of the exciting, special advantages:

- ✍ A monthly copy of *Chess Life* mailed to your school.

- ✍ A listing on the USCF website. School coaches in your area looking for other school clubs will be able to find you.

- ✍ The ability to sponsor and conduct the USCF sanctioned tournaments in which your students will earn national ratings.

- ✍ Information and involvement in chess by mail with pen pals on a rated basis (correspondence chess). This could include games with students from other countries.

- ✍ Discounts on books and equipment. What you purchase can be used by your whole club, given as prizes, or even resold to your members at your cost. (Ask your school librarian to see if your library has any chess books. School libraries sometimes have money to spend, and chess books are a worthwhile investment because your club members will check out the books.)

- ✍ Free-for-the-asking materials such as membership brochures, explanations of the rating system and tournament procedures, rules booklets, posters, and even back issues of *Chess Life* for your special scholastic events. (Also, the U.S. Chess Trust, the non-

profit educational arm of the U. S. Chess Federation, provides free chess sets and boards to schools.)

✍ An experienced staff at USCF headquarters, ready to answer your questions.

Affiliating is too good a deal to pass up!

USCF-Rated Tournaments

Rated tournament competition is the driving force behind the success of the U.S. Chess Federation. Over 40,000 scholastic players participate in nationally rated chess activities every year, and the numbers are increasing rapidly.

Participating in USCF-rated events is fun and will give your players an opportunity to gauge their improvement. Also, if they are members and have high enough ratings, their names might appear on our Top 100 lists for the different age groups or on lists of top players in your state. These lists can be used to publicize the success of your club.

USCF has made the cost of holding a USCF-rated tournament very inexpensive. The only costs are an annual USCF club affiliation fee and a per-game rating fee (contact USCF for current rates). For these tournaments, USCF membership is required of all players.

So, as you can see, it is easy and inexpensive to get your players involved in our nationally rated chess tournaments. For more details on organizing rated tournaments, please request a copy of the free brochure, *Rated Chess Events*, from USCF or visit the USCF website.

USCF's Certified Chess Coach Program

USCF recognizes chess coaches as special people who are fair, positive, compassionate and caring. These coaches make a strong effort to instill in their students these same

attributes. The USCF Certified Chess Coach Program was established to recognize these special people. Different levels of certification are available based upon knowledge and experience. Please contact the USCF for more information about current requirements.

Coaching at Tournaments

One of the most exciting experiences a coach will offer his or her students is the opportunity to participate in USCF-rated tournament competition. There are weekend club events as well as state and national tournaments. Participating in the National Championships gives players, coaches, and parents the opportunity to experience scholastic chess at the championship level, as well as the chance to meet people from other parts of the country.

✍ Code of Conduct

Spectators and coaches are governed by the ground rules of the tournament organizer. These rules supersede the suggested guidelines that follow. In this discussion, 'COACH' also refers to 'PARENTS' acting as supervisors and observers at a scholastic chess tournament and other 'SPECTATORS' (other than tournament officials). Here are some of the "dos" and "don'ts" of coaches and parents on the floor:

1. Once a game is in progress, a coach can never interrupt it for any reason. Only tournament directors and their assistants may intervene.

2. If a coach notices a player playing the wrong opponent, he or she should immediately notify the tournament director (TD).

3. If a coach observes an illegal move, he or she is to say or do absolutely nothing, as it is the responsibility of the players to bring violations to the attention of the TD.

4. If a coach sees a player's hand raised, he or she should immediately summon a TD. He should *NEVER* try to directly assist any player.

5. If a coach observes that a player has overstepped his or her time limit, the coach should not say or do anything, as only the players can make time-violation claims.

6. Once a tournament game has started, a coach should talk to his or her players only in the presence of the TD.

7. In general, the coach should avoid eye contact with both his or her players and their opponents, keeping a sufficient distance from the board to avoid distracting the players.

8. Players may leave their boards for short periods. They should inform the TD if they will be gone for an extended time. While absent from his game, a player must not consult any chess books, diagrams, computer programs, or analysis. He or she should not discuss the game (while in progress) with anyone else.

9. Players, coaches, spectators, and TDs may be prohibited from bringing food or drink into the tournament rooms. All scholastic tournaments are non-smoking.

10. After the conclusion of a tournament, if a coach notices that a prize was incorrectly awarded, he or she should bring this to the attention of the TD *ONLY*.

11. WALLCHARTS usually show the ranking of the players, their ratings, their round-by-round results and other pertinent information. Only tournament officials can record information on these charts. Coaches or players should *NEVER* write on them or remove them.

12. Coaches should make sure their players' results are reported. In many individual tournaments, results are posted on *pairing sheets*. These sheets show each player's pairing and board number for a particular round, and have a space by each player's name for posting results.

At some tournaments, including most major nationals, players are required to report their results to designated officials. In most TEAM tournaments, results should be recorded on the "Team Card" at the playing table.

13. PAIRING CARDS (when used) contain tournament results used for pairing purposes. Only TDs have access to these cards.

14. OTHER coaching duties include:

a. providing instruction for their players before and after (but not during) rounds

b. helping their players find their pairings and boards

c. offering moral support to their players before and after (but not during) games

d. making sure their players stay out of trouble

e. making sure their players exhibit good sportsmanship

f. helping maintain proper order throughout the tournament site

National Programs

The U.S. Chess Trust offers several programs, including **Chess for Youth**.

Chess for Youth is a program that donates free chess sets to schools around the county. It is also known as "Kolty Chess for Youth," named for its famous founder, George Koltanowski.

Free USCF Memberships Program for Underprivileged Children — 500 kids from low-income families will receive free memberships in the United States Chess Federation through a special U.S. Chess Trust program.

Students who are on their school's free lunch program are eligible for this benefit. The memberships will be channeled through coaches and parents who coordinate and organize chess programs in the schools.

Each school program is eligible to receive a maximum of 10 free memberships.

The Free Membership Program, in addition to providing assistance to underprivileged kids, is one more incentive for coaches to generate and organize chess activities at the schools. Coaches are encouraged to send a list of qualified kids on school letterhead, with a cover letter that includes a brief description of the program.

The USCF and the U.S. Chess Trust thank Trust donors for their generosity and their support of children who could otherwise not afford to participate in tournament chess.

The **Samford Fellowship** is the richest and most important prize of its kind in the U.S. The annual fellowship offers brilliant young American masters the support and resources necessary to reach their full potential. Samford recipients must be willing to devote their efforts to studying and playing chess in an attempt to become leading grandmasters. The Fellowship rewards talent, achievement, and commitment to chess and is open to high school graduates under age 25.

The **Annual National Scholar-Chessplayer Awards** recognize and encourage high school students who promote a positive image of chess in the United States. High school juniors and seniors who are USCF members are eligible to apply. Applications must be completed and submitted to USCF along with five copies of an academic transcript, a photograph, and a letter of recommendation from an adult coach or chess organizer. The deadline is **March 1st** of each academic year.

Award winners are selected on the basis of outstanding merit in academics, chess play, and sportsmanship. The winners are announced annually at the National High School K-12 Championship. They receive scholarship prizes from the U.S. Chess Trust.

For more information on Chess Trust programs or to receive a Scholar-Chessplayer Award application, contact: Scholastic Director, USCF, PO Box 3967, Crossville, TN 38557; telephone 1-800-903-8723.

The U.S. Chess Federation annually sponsors the **National Scholastic Chess Championships** and the **All-America Chess Team**. There are several **National Scholastic Chess Championships** you should know about. The three traditional events each spring are the National Elementary (K-6), Junior High (K-9), and High School (K-12). In addition, USCF holds an annual **National Scholastic K-12 Grade Championship** (each player competes at his or her grade level). Two special competitions, the **Arnold Denker Tournament of High School Champions**, and the **Susan Polgar National Invitational Tournament for Girls**, take place every summer. In these tournaments, state champions compete for college scholarship prizes.

Only the most promising of America's young Chess players are selected for the **All-America Chess Team**. Team members must show outstanding achievement in their age group and be considered likely to distinguish themselves in the future. All candidates must have competed in at least FOUR open (non-scholastic) tournaments since July 15 of the previous year. The USCF reserves the right to discount recent rating gains earned in small, unannounced or "private" events. Each qualifying youngster will receive a certificate and a congratulatory letter. Team members will also receive a jacket prominently displaying the All-America Chess Team insignia.

For more information on USCF programs, contact the USCF office or visit the USCF website.

College Scholarships

Many colleges and universities offer full or partial scholarships for chess players. Some of these scholarships are based solely on chess achievements, and some are based on a combination of chess achievements and academic achievements. Some tournaments, particularly certain national scholastic and youth championships, offer scholarship prizes to the top finishers.

As of this writing, the two universities that offer the most extensive chess scholarship programs are the University of Texas at Dallas and the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. Please contact the college or university that you are most

interested in for information about any chess scholarships that might be available.

Yes, U.S. Chess has a Website

The USCF has a website which offers a variety of information regarding chess. The website is located at: **www.uschess.org**

On the “home page” you will see a variety of categories within the site, including “New to Chess?”, “Players & Ratings”, “Clubs & Tourneys”, “About USCF” and “Shop”.

Another section of great importance is our Scholastic/College area of the website. New information is posted daily, so we hope you’ll check the website frequently.

Suggested Books and Software for Scholastic Chess

Content of each title is in Algebraic notation unless otherwise mentioned.
Software is indicated by an (S).

NOTE: These books are recommended by chess teachers. Teacher guidance is suggested, as some books (e.g. Comprehensive Chess Course) are especially suited to a classroom setting.

Novice Players (under 750)

Maurice Ashley Teaches Chess (S)
Beginning Chess
Bobby Fischer Teaches Chess
Comprehensive Chess Course, Vols. 1 & 2
200 Checkmates for Children
Chess Training Materials

Author

GM Maurice Ashley
Bruce Pandolfini
GM Bobby Fischer
GM Lev Alburt
Fred Wilson
Jim Mitch

Intermediate Players (under 1000)

Chess Puzzles for Children
The Chess Tactics Workbook
Chess Tactics for Students
Winning Chess Strategy for Kids

David Levin
Al Woolum
John Bain
Jeff Coakley

Advanced Players (Over 1000)

*1001 Winning Chess Sacrifices and
Combinations*
Modern Chess Openings
Understanding Pawn Play in Chess
Basic Chess Endings
How to Reassess Your Chess (3rd Edition)

Fred Reinfeld
GM Nick de Firmian
GM Drazen Marovic
GM Reuben Fine
IM Jeremy Silman

Chess Books Recommended for Parents, Teachers & Coaches

<i>Chess Club Manager(S)</i>	Dr. Stephen Lipschultz
<i>Searching for Bobby Fischer</i>	Fred Waitzkin
<i>USCF's Official Rules of Chess</i>	USCF
<i>Teaching Life Skills Through Chess</i>	Fernando Moreno
<i>101 Questions on How to Play Chess</i>	Fred Wilson
<i>Parents Guide to Chess</i>	Dan Heisman
<i>Chess for Kids and Parents</i>	Heinz Brunthaler
<i>A Beginners Guide to Coaching Scholastic Chess</i>	Ralph Bowman
<i>Children and Chess: A Guide for Educators</i>	Dr. Alexey Root, WIM
<i>Science, Math, Checkmate: 32 Chess Activities for Inquiry and Problem Solving</i>	Dr. Alexey Root, WIM
<i>Read, Write, Checkmate: Enrich Literacy with Chess Activities</i>	Dr. Alexey Root, WIM

USCF-Rated Tournaments

Many USCF members find that participation in USCF rated chess tournaments is one of their favorite benefits. Sanctioned tournaments are sponsored by the USCF or its many affiliated organizations. Players compete against other Federation members under the direction of certified tournament directors. There are tournaments everywhere. There's probably one taking place soon in your own area.

ROUND-ROBIN TOURNAMENTS

In a round robin, you play one game with every other player in the tournament. One common type of round robin is a quad, in which four players of approximately equal ability are grouped into a section. These three round tournaments are usually played in a single day.

SWISS-SYSTEM TOURNAMENTS

The Swiss is the most common tournament format in the United States. An unlimited number of competitors play a specified number of games —no one is eliminated. Normally, as you continue to win games, you face progressively stronger opposition, leaving those not so successful to play against each other. Toward the end of the event, you will probably find yourself matched against players around your own level. Many tournaments have special prizes for new players and novices.

In Swiss-system events, players are paired with each other according to the following general principles:

1. A player is not paired with any other player more than once.
2. Players with the same score are paired whenever possible.

3. Colors are assigned by the director as fairly as possible. Alternating the colors is the ideal.

For the first round, the players are ranked according to their last-published USCF rating. The top player in the upper half of the field is then paired against the top player in the lower half of the field, and so on. The top ranked player's color in the first round is randomly determined and then colors alternate.

In the second round, the director uses the same principles to pair each of the three score groups (those who won, those who drew, and those who lost). These pairing procedures will continue through the rest of the tournament. In some large tournaments, "accelerated pairings" are used in early rounds.

The wall chart is important in a Swiss tournament. This listing of players and their results allows everyone to see exactly what is happening in the event. After a wall chart is posted, players normally help the directors by proofreading the entries that interest them.

The sample wall chart at the top of the next page shows us that John F. Anderson is the top-rated player in the event (because he is ranked No. 1). Anderson's USCF identification number is 12345678; his last published rating was 1852. In round one, he had white against player 35 and won (for a total of 1 point); in round two, he had black against player 21 and won (for a cumulative total of 2); in round three, he had black against player 3 and lost (still a cumulative total of 2); and in round four, he had White against player 12 and drew (for a cumulative total of 2½).

NO.	PLAYER'S FULL NAME	RATING	ROUND 1	ROUND 2	ROUND 3	ROUND 4
1	JOHN F. ANDERSON	1852	W 35	B 21	B 3	W 12
	ID No 12345678		1	2	2	2.5

CHESSE CLOCKS

Another standard part of a sanctioned tournament is the chess clock. Usually, players must bring their own clocks. These special timers are really two separate clocks in a single case. When a player makes a move, he presses a button that stops his side of the clock and starts his opponent's side.

In tournament play, any player who has not completed the prescribed number of moves in the allotted time *loses*, unless his or her opponent has insufficient mating material. Most scholastic tournaments are played with a sudden death time control. Some typical time controls for scholastic chess tournaments are Game in 30 minutes (G/30) and Game in 60 minutes (G/60 or G/1). Sudden-death games must be completed within the prescribed time no matter how many moves it takes. If a player runs out of time, his opponent wins if he has sufficient remaining material to make checkmate possible.

RECORDING GAMES

USCF rules require that players keep a record of the game, although score keeping is not required when a player has less than five minutes left on the clock. Most players use the algebraic system of chess notation to record the moves of their games. A complete description of algebraic notation can be found in *The Official Rules of Chess*. A player's score sheet is also a useful study tool.

CONDUCT OF PLAYERS

Tournament players are not allowed to look at personal or published chess material

during a game or to receive either solicited or unsolicited advice from a third party or a computer concerning a game in progress. Players are also forbidden to distract or annoy their opponents. Conversation, blitz games, and other noisy activities should not take place in the playing room. These rules and others are in the USCF's *Official Rules of Chess*.

If you need to withdraw from an event or miss a round of play, make sure you tell the director in advance. Players who fail to do so are subject to a penalty.

RATING

USCF ratings are of special interest to many players. These numbers reflect a player's standing relative to other USCF rated players. There are two separate rating systems for over-the-board (OTB) chess (regular and "quick" ratings) and one rating system for correspondence chess. Quick ratings are used for events with time controls of Game/10 to Game/60, and regular ratings are calculated for tournaments with time controls of Game/30 or slower. Note that tournaments with a time control between G/30 and G/60, inclusive, will be rated under both systems.

A player's OTB and correspondence ratings are printed on members' *Chess Life* mailing labels. Up to date OTB rating information can also be found at www.uschess.org/msa. For more information on either rating system, contact the USCF office or visit the USCF website.

Novice OTB ratings are often 800 or less, and master ratings start at 2200. Most

serious tournament players are rated between these levels.

CORRESPONDENCE CHESS TOURNAMENTS

Many USCF members enjoy chess primarily by mail or e-mail in our various correspondence tournaments. Many others play both correspondence and OTB.

In a typical correspondence section, you play six games — three with white and three with black. Moves are exchanged on postcards or by e-mail, and play is governed by the official chess rules as specially modified for correspondence chess. Some games may take up to two years to complete, but many do not.

We have a variety of correspondence tournaments available, from the prestigious Golden Knights to the more sociable class tournaments.

If you're interested, please contact the USCF office or website for more information.

ONLINE TOURNAMENTS

Although the USCF does not currently have its own online chess server, they do work with other online chess play organizations to provide the opportunity for online chess play to USCF members. You can check out information for what is available at the USCF website, uschess.org!

TOURNAMENT ACCOUNTING SHEET

INCOME:

Advance Entry Fees	@\$	\$
Advance Special Entry Fees	@\$	\$
On-Site Entry Fees	@\$	\$
USCF Youth Memberships	@\$	\$
State or Club Dues	@\$	\$
Donations	@\$	\$
Other Income	@\$	\$

TOTAL INCOME:

EXPENSES:	\$
Prize Fund (Trophies, Ribbons, Medals, etc.)	\$
Tournament Director(s) Fee (<i>None if possible</i>)	\$
Site Rental (<i>Try to get it free</i>)	\$
USCF Dues	\$
State or Local Dues	\$
Rating Fee	\$
Printing Flyers & Postage (<i>Use school services if possible</i>)	\$
Supplies	\$

SUBTOTAL:

Other Expenses (Itemize): \$

TOTAL EXPENSES: \$

INCOME MINUS EXPENSES: \$

CHIEF TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR DATE

Sample Pairing Sheet

Round 1

Board	White	RESULT	Black	RESULT
1	Bob Bishop	1	Rachel Rook	0
2	Patty Pawn	0	Charles Check	1
3	Kim Knight	1/2	Phil File	1/2
4	Richard Rank	1F	Kathy King	0F
5	Gerald Gambit		Quentin Queen	

Pairing sheets are easy to read. In the above example, it is round 1 of a 10-player tournament. On Board 1, Bob Bishop was white. He defeated Rachel Rook, who was black. He then put a “1” by his name and a “0” by his opponent’s name. Rachel Rook, although she lost, should check that the result was posted accurately.

On Board 2, Patty Pawn lost with white against Charles Check, who was black. On Board 3, Kim Knight (white) drew Phil File (black). Note that a “1/2” appears next to each name.

On Board 4, Richard Rank was supposed to play white against Kathy King. He set up the pieces and started his clock. However, Kathy never showed up. After one hour, Richard stopped his clock and claimed a win by forfeit. Note that he wrote “1F” and “0F” to indicate the forfeited game.

Finally, Gerald Gambit is still playing Quentin Queen on Board 5. When their game is over, they should mark the result appropriately. If they forget, they may be penalized in the next round.

Coaches should make sure their players’ results are reported, both accurately and immediately. You may write your result on the pairing sheet, but coaches and players should NEVER write on wall charts.

Out-of-State Travel Permission Form

The following is a sample permission form, based on a form used by the Buena Park School District in California. Please check with your local school district and use any applicable forms. It is imperative that you obtain the permission of parents or guardians for out-of-state trips.

EXCURSION AND FIELD TRIP WAIVER (OUT-OF-STATE)

Education Code Section 35330 provides, in part, as follows:

“All persons making the field trip or excursion shall be deemed to have waived all claims against the District or the State of California for injury, accident, illness, or death occurring during or by reason of the field trip or excursion. All adults taking out-of-state field trips or excursions and all parents or guardians of students taking out-of-state field trips or excursions shall sign a statement waiving such claims.” Completion of this form, therefore, is required for ALL out-of-state field trips and tours. If the participating student is under 18 years of age, this form must be completed by the student’s legal guardian or parent.

I/We hereby grant permission for _____ to participate in the voluntary _____ field trip from _____, 20__ to _____, 20__.

I/We, the undersigned, hereby release and discharge the Buena Park School District, its officers, employees, and servants (herein collectively referred to as “District”) from all liability arising out of, or in connection with, the above described field trip. For the purposes of this agreement, liability means all claims, demands, losses, causes of action, suits, or judgments of any and every kind that I, my heirs, executors, administrators or assignees may have against the District, or that any other person or entity may have against the District because of any death, personal injury or illness, or because of any loss or damage to property that occurs during the above described field trip and that results from any cause other than the negligence of the District. All participants are to abide by all rules and regulations. There is to be full cooperation with supervisory and volunteer personnel. Any violation or unfulfilling of behavior standards will result in that individual being sent home at his/her and/or parent’s expense. It is further understood that the District cannot and will not be held responsible for needs or well-being when not under the direct supervision of designated supervisory personnel. In the event of illness or injury, I/we hereby consent to whatever X-ray, examination, anesthetic, medical, dental or surgical diagnosis or treatment and hospital care from a licensed physician deemed necessary for the safety and welfare of the participant. It is understood that the resulting expenses will be the responsibility of the parent(s) or participant.

_____/_____/_____/_____
Signature of Parent/Guardian Date Address Phone

_____/_____
Signature of Student Date

Health Insurance Company: _____ **Policy #:** _____

In the event of illness or accident and if different from above, please contact:

_____/_____/_____
Name Address Phone

Special Note to Parents/Guardian: (1) All medications and prescription drugs must be registered on this form; (2) All medications and prescription drugs, excepting those which must be kept on the student person for emergency use, must be kept and distributed by staff; (3) If any medication or drugs are to be taken by student, list them here: (Name of drug and reason)

 If there is any medical problem(s), attach a description of same to this sheet. (4) Check here ___ if there are NO special problems. (5) Check here ___ if NO medications/prescription drugs are required on the trip.

GLOSSARY

☞ **action chess** — Tournament chess in which each player has 30 minutes on his or her side of the clock to complete the entire game.

☞ **affiliate** — An affiliated chess club, one that is a member of the U.S. Chess Federation and is permitted to sponsor nationally rated tournaments.

☞ **algebraic notation** — The most popular method of recording a chess game. In algebraic notation, each square on the board has a letter and number; e.g., a1. An explanation of this system of notation can be found in the USCF's *Official Rules of Chess*.

☞ **blitz** — Another name for speed chess (also called five-minute chess), in which each player is given five minutes on his side of the clock to complete the entire game.

☞ **board** — A word used to designate places in a tournament. Games are numbered consecutively from the top-ranked player down. It is used similarly in team competition. "Board 1" is usually played by the strongest player on a team.

☞ **bughouse** — Also called Siamese chess. A variation of chess involving two players who play as a team and pass chess pieces to each other while they are playing two other opponents. The pieces are then placed on the board and become active.

☞ **Certified Chess Coaches** — Individuals officially certified by USCF to coach chess at the scholastic level.

☞ **Chess for Youth** — A U. S. Chess Trust program that donates free chess materials to schools around the country. It is also known as "Kolty Chess for Youth" in honor of its famous founder, George Koltanowski.

☞ **Chess in the Schools** — A master/expert visitation program, sponsored by the U. S. Chess Trust, which provides

strong players for free one day chess workshops in schools.

☞ **Chess Life** — The monthly magazine published by the U.S. Chess Federation for its members. It contains information about international, national and local chess, including a section on tournaments available in your local area.

☞ **Chess master** — A player with a national rating of 2200 or greater. Only about 3% of rated chess players reach this level of performance.

☞ **chess notation** — A method of recording chess moves. (*See algebraic notation and descriptive notation.*)

☞ **chess tutorial** — Interactive software that teaches chess.

☞ **club ladder** — A list of the members of the club in the order of their chess playing ability (usually the strongest player down to the beginner). Often used for challenges and placement on the team.

☞ **club rating** — A point system used to determine the approximate strength of club members. This is a separate rating system, not to be confused with national rating.

☞ **club tournament** — This is a tournament that is held within the school that is open to all students.

☞ **demonstration board** — Often referred to as a "demo board." It is a large two-dimensional representation of a chess board and pieces. The board is generally three feet square or larger, and is used by teachers and lecturers. It is also used by organizers to show spectators the progress of an important game while keeping a crowd away from the players.

☞ **descriptive notation** — A method of recording a chess game. In descriptive notation, the files are named for the pieces that stand on them at the beginning of the game, while the ranks are numbered; e.g., a1 in algebraic would be QR1 for white (and

QR8 for black) in descriptive. This is an older system of notation rarely used by modern players.

☞ **double round-robin** — A tournament in which each player plays two games (one with white, one with black) against each of the other participants in his or her section.

☞ **gambit** — An opening in chess that gives up a pawn or piece for an advantage in development or space.

☞ **Harkness System** — A rating system that awards rating points based on the rating differential between the two players. (*See page 11.*)

☞ **Kolty Chess for Youth** — (*See Chess for Youth.*)

☞ **ladder** — A ranking of players from strongest to weakest.

☞ **MonRoi device** — An electronic device for recording the moves of a chess game. A MonRoi device can be used instead of a paper score sheet.

☞ **national rating** — A number assigned to a player after he or she has played in a nationally rated event. A player's rating is based on his or her number of wins, draws, and losses and the ratings of the player's opponents.

☞ **national chess tournament** — A tournament of national scope that is sponsored in whole or in part by the U. S. Chess Federation.

☞ **on-line play** — Chess play over the Internet.

☞ **pairing card** — A card, usually about 3" x 5", that contains player information and the results of tournament games played.

☞ **pairing program** — Software, such as SwissSys or WinTD, that determines which players should play against each other in a tournament.

☞ **pairing sheet** — Usually a piece of lined paper showing the pairing of tournament players and the board at which they are assigned to play. Results should be recorded on this piece of paper after the

game is over unless the tournament director specifies another method of reporting results.

☞ **post-mortem analysis** — A time after the game when players replay their games with their opponent or coach, discuss their strategies, evaluate various tactics, and try out alternative moves.

☞ **All-America Chess Team** — A team named annually by the U.S. Chess Federation. It is made up of the most promising young chess players of the year, based on age and rating. Team members receive a personalized jacket and certificate.

☞ **quad** — A round-robin tournament with exactly four players.

☞ **rated game** — A tournament game that is submitted to the U. S. Chess Federation for a national rating. You must play at least four rated games to have an official USCF rating.

☞ **Regional Clearinghouse** — A person or organization appointed to help coordinate tournaments within a specific geographic area so as to avoid conflicts.

☞ **Round-Robin tournament** — A tournament in which all of the players play one game against each other.

☞ **sanctioned tournament** — A tournament — sponsored by an organization affiliated with the U.S. Chess Federation and under the control of a certified Tournament Director — that meets certain standards for time controls and pairing procedures and is played to determine new or revised national ratings for the participants.

☞ **Scholar-Chessplayer Awards** — An annual presentation by the U. S. Chess Trust to recognize high school juniors and seniors who are members of USCF and who excel in academics, chess play, and sportsmanship. The six most qualified recipients also receive college scholarships. Applicants are required to complete an application form and provide an academic transcript, with a

letter of recommendation from an adult coach or organizer.

☞ **scholastic chess** — Chess in which all participants are school age students, usually from grades K-12.

☞ **scorebooks** — Booklets containing pages of score sheets used to record a game of chess. They usually contain a diagram on the back and a place for information about the two players.

☞ **score sheets** — Single sheets of lined paper, containing columns that are used to record moves in a chess game.

☞ **sealed move envelope** — A small envelope used to seal a move in a game when there is not enough time to complete it during that round or day. The outside of the envelope should contain information about the position on the board, the two players involved, and the amount of time used.

☞ **simultaneous exhibition** — Sometimes called a “simul.” A type of chess exhibition in which one player will play two or more players at the same time, going from one board to the next making one move and returning.

☞ **skittles** — Chess for fun with no prizes or ratings at stake. This type of recreational chess allows the players to experiment and try out various tactics and strategies.

☞ **speed chess** — Another name for blitz chess, in which each player is typically given five minutes to complete a game.

☞ **Swiss system** — The most common system for pairing players in a large chess tournament. (See *USCF’s Official Rules of Chess* for a complete description.)

☞ **time control** — 1) The amount of time each player has to complete a game. In cases in which a clock is used, the amount of time for the game is divided between the two players and the time spent on any individual move is a matter of personal choice. A player must make the required

number of moves in the specified time or lose the game.

2) Also, the point when a player runs out of time on their clock.

☞ **Top 100 Lists** — A series of USCF lists, based on age, in which the strongest players in the country are ranked using official national ratings.

☞ **tournament chess** — Games played for a national rating or club tournament activities within a school, league or chess association.

☞ **Tournament Director (TD)** — The person responsible for conducting a tournament, enforcing the rules of chess, determining the pairings for each round, resolving disputes, and — usually — figuring the prize distribution, submitting the rating report, and processing the new and renewed memberships. TDs are certified by the United States Chess Federation.

☞ **Tournament Life Announcement (TLA)** — A brief description of an upcoming tournament printed in a special section of *Chess Life*.

☞ **USCF** — Abbreviation for United States Chess Federation, the governing body for chess in the United States.

☞ **USCF Identification Number** — A unique number given to all players who compete in rated tournament chess and used to report results.

☞ **U.S. Chess Trust** — A nonprofit organization that is the charitable arm of the U. S. Chess Federation. Its mission is to promote and encourage the study of chess through such programs as Chess for Youth and Chess in the Schools. The Trust also supports various chess championships.

☞ **wall chart** — The Tournament “scoreboard” that lists all of the players, their ratings, their opponents, their color assignments, and their round-by-round results. No one is allowed to mark this sheet except the TD.

About the Editor

This edition of *The Guide to Scholastic Chess* was edited by Tom Brownscombe. Mr. Brownscombe is a FIDE master and a USCF Life Master. He has won state chess championships in Maryland, Nevada, and Kansas. He is a former USCF scholastic and technical director, and he is currently the director of the International Chess Institute of the Midwest, dba the Anatoly Karpov International School of Chess, located in Lindsborg, KS. He is a USCF certified senior tournament director and a member of the USCF Scholastic Council. He has also edited the 2008 National Open tournament bulletin and the 2008 US Open tournament bulletin.