



Dear Parents,

If you are not familiar with chess tournaments, here are a few interesting things to know. (Click on the links below to learn even more.) One of the perks of chess club membership is that the only tournament that you have to pay for is the one here at LCA in January. The club will pay for all other tournaments that you and your child want to attend (usually costs about \$12). However, we will only pay the pre-registration price, not the ‘day of’ price (and as long as we have the money in our account!). Some special tournaments are more than \$12, so our club would reimburse you \$12, with the remaining balance up to you. One of the ways we fund these tournament “scholarships” is with the money we make at our tournament concessions. We hope to have a great tournament in January!

To register your child(ren), you will need to create an account with the [Wisconsin Scholastic Chess Federation](#) (this link will take you to the tournament list). To create an account, click [here](#). Each family needs to only create one account. Don’t forget to put Lake Country Academy on the “school” field. Once you have set up your account, you will click on the “register” link for the tournament, login, and then register each child separately, but on one registration page. If you need help, just ask! Email [Ms. Figueroa](#). You will be reimbursed at the tournament you attend (or within a day or two afterward!)

Mrs. Figueroa and Mrs. Smith

A chess tournament can be a fun and exciting experience, but there might be a few aspects that confuse you at your first event. If you’re a parent taking a child to their first [chess tournament](#), it’s likely to be a confusing experience – certainly for you, and possibly for your child as well. There’s a lot of information presented, as well as a lot that you’re [assumed to already know](#). Things can seem to move impossibly fast, or painstakingly slow, and (somehow) sometimes even both at the same time!

Here are a few tips for parents who are taking their children to their first ever chess tournament.

**The Skittles area (gym)** – this refers to the area where everyone hangs out all day between the tournament rounds.

**Pairings** - This is where you look before each round to see the # of the board you are going to and whether you are playing white or black and who your opponent is. ( these are usually taped up on a wall somewhere )

**Can you help your child find their # chess board ?** Yes, you may walk your child to the tournament room and help them find the correct board..... but you may not stay. You have to return to the Skittles area while they are playing.

**TOUCH MOVE** – Touch move means that you must move a piece that you touch. We try to practice this at chess club, but I can’t watch everyone, however at a tournament everyone is watching. So only touch a chess piece when you are ready to move it !

**Silence !** – There is **absolutely no talking** during a chess tournament round. Rather than trying to tell your opponent that that is a wrong move, you must raise your hand and let the TD (adult monitor in the room) solve the problem. **Please remind your chess player of this important rule. This rule and the Touch Move rule is the hardest for them to remember :)**

**A loss does not eliminate you from a chess tournament!** Many kids will naturally get upset to some extent when they lose their first game, but make sure your child knows that this doesn't mean the end of the tournament for them – or even the end of their chances to win a medal or trophy.

Most scholastic chess tournaments utilize [Swiss system](#) pairings, in which players are matched up with other players with the same score (or as close a score as possible) in each round. [In chess tournaments, we keep score by assigning a player one point for a win, a half-point for a draw, and zero for a loss.](#) This means that a player who has a win and a draw in their first game would have 1.5 points.

Also, at the end of a tournament – a typical scholastic tournament has 4-5 rounds – the player with the highest score is the winner. However, there are usually prizes for many of the participants, so you don't need to have a perfect score (or anywhere close) to win a trophy.

**Parents generally aren't allowed in the playing room.** Yes, it would be nice to stand over your child's shoulder and watch them compete, but most chess tournaments don't allow this for a number of reasons.

For one, it prevents any possible accusations of cheating. Most parents would never cheat, particularly in a small, local tournament without much on the line, but most tournament directors take it out of the equation entirely by separating the parents from the children entirely during play.

Many children get nervous or feel extra pressure when their parents are watching, and it's better for everyone involved if the experience is as fun as possible for the players.

**If you must leave the tournament early, please tell the tournament director!** It is critical that the tournament director knows who will be participating in the tournament going into each round. If you don't let the TD know that your child won't be able to play for the rest of the tournament, he or she will be paired with an opponent in the next round, and that will result in a forfeit victory for another child (who was probably just hoping to play a game). Worst of all, if you only had to leave to miss a single round, the director will now assume you're no longer participating; if you come back for a later round, your child will likely not be paired.

**Stick around for the awards ceremony if you can.** Your child is likely to receive something; many scholastic tournaments award medals to the players who aren't receiving trophies – and you might be surprised at just how many of the children win trophies, too. Typically, the top x players in each section are given a trophy. However, there may also be awards for the top few players below a certain [rating](#). In addition, if your child had friends from their school playing along with them, they might be eligible for a [team prize](#) as well. Team prizes are another way to keep struggling players motivated, too; if your child has lost a couple games early in a tournament, it can help them to know that their wins in later rounds can still improve their team's chance of winning a trophy.

## **Tournament Chess – rules**

Tournament chess is played mostly with the same rules as casual chess. If you're not sure how the pieces move or what the object of the game is, you should brush up on the [basic rules of chess](#).

Tournament chess is also governed by a myriad of rules and regulations. Official rule books contain hundreds of pages detailing regulations for every possible dispute or situation one might come across during a chess tournament.

Players aren't expected to memorize the entire rule book. Simply understanding some of the most important rules is more than enough to confidently play in any tournament.

- **When in doubt, ask!**

Never hesitate to ask a tournament director (TD) to clarify any confusion you may have about the rules. If you and an opponent have a disagreement, stop the clocks, find a director, and ask them to make a ruling.

- **If you touch a piece, you must move it.**

This is known as the touch-move rule, and is often a source of difficulty for players new to tournaments. It also requires you to capture an opponent's piece if you touch it. This rule only applies if you can make a legal move with the piece you touched.

There are some exceptions. If you accidentally brush a piece, you are not required to move it. If a piece is awkwardly placed, you can adjust it; simply say "I adjust" before touching the piece to make it clear to your opponent that you don't intend to move it. [More »](#)

In serious chess tournaments, players are expected to write down their moves, usually on specially designed pads or books. **This is called chess notation.**

- **Most tournaments require players to record their moves.**

This helps provide evidence of what has occurred during the game in case of a dispute. In order to record your game, you will need to learn how to read and write chess notation. [More »](#)

### **Never interfere with a game in progress.**

**After the game is over, record your result.** Win, lose, or draw, both players are required to make sure the proper result is recorded. If you're not sure where to mark down your result, ask a director for help.