

NINE EASY STEPS TO RUNNING YOUR FIRST TOURNAMENT – IT'S EASY!

Step 1: Your Club must be an Affiliate

Only officially registered affiliates may run USCF-rated tournaments. Becoming an affiliate is easy. Your club may join the USCF for an annual fee. The Official Affiliate Applicant form can be found at:

<http://www.uschess.org/about/forms/>. In return, your club receives the following benefits:

- The right to hold USCF-rated tournaments.
- Discounts on chess merchandise.
- A one-year subscription to the bimonthly USCF rating supplement.
- A one-year subscription to Chess Life magazine.

Step 2: Become A Tournament Director

In order to run a tournament that can be rated by the USCF, you must first register with the USCF as an official tournament director. The Official Club Tournament Director Application can be found at

<http://www.uschess.org/about/forms/>. The first level of directorship is known as a Club Director.

It is simple to become a Club Director:

1. You must be a USCF member in good standing.
2. You must complete an application stating that you have read and understand the USCF Official Rules of Chess. To purchase a copy, call 1-800-388-KING or check the website at www.uschess.org click on SHOP. When your application form is processed you will become an official Club Director and may run tournaments of up to 50 players.

The USCF recognizes other advanced tournament director levels. For more information, please contact the USCF office at 931-787-1234, ext. 126 or e-mail Judy Misner at: jmisner@uschess.org

Step 3: Make Sure Your Players Are Members

In order to play in a USCF-rated tournament, a player must be a current USCF member. If someone who is not a USCF member wishes to play, he or she must first join the USCF. As an official USCF affiliate, your club can collect membership fees and submit them along with your tournament report. Players rating and membership status can be checked via a rating

supplement or online within our Membership Services Area: <http://www.uschess.org/msa/>. The online check allows the tournament director to have more up to date information to check and see if memberships are current. We offer a variety of forms within our “Brochures & Forms” area located at: <http://www.uschess.org/about/forms/>.

Step 4: Running The Tournament

Players can be arranged in rating, alphabetical, or random order. After players are arranged in an order, pairings are as follows.

In the last round, colors are determined by toss. Example: The TD hides a white and a black pawn in his hands and has a player choose which hand. He will play then with the color he chooses. The players can also do this themselves.

Note: If the tournament has unrated players, it is best that they be distributed with rated players and not have quads of all unrated players if this is possible. If the number of unrated to rated players is very high, this will not be possible in all sections.

The easiest type of tournament to run is called a QUAD (short for quadrangular). A QUAD is simply a group of four players arranged by rating. Each player in a particular QUAD plays one game against each of the other three players. The winner is the player with the best score.

For example, suppose the following four players enter your first QUAD tournament:

Pairing No.	Name	Rating
1	Richard Rook	1075
2	Paula Pawn	980
3	Bobby Bishop	920
4	Chris Castle	850

The first thing to do is to arrange the players in order of their USCF ratings. If they do not have a rating, arrange them alphabetically, or ask them for an estimated playing strength. The players above are already in rating order, so the pairings are as follows:

Round 1		Round 2		Round 3	
White	Black	White	Black	White*	Black*
1	vs 4	3	vs 1	1	vs 2
2	vs 3	4	vs 2	3	vs 4

*Colors in the 3rd round are determined by toss.

The result of each game is scored in the following manner:

WIN = 1 point

DRAW = $\frac{1}{2}$ point

LOSS = 0 points

Suppose that after all the games are over, the players scored the following number of points:

Paula Pawn: 3 points (won all her games!)

Richard Rook: 2 points (won 2, lost 1 game)

Bobby Bishop: $\frac{1}{2}$ point (lost 2, drew 1 game)

Chris Castle: $\frac{1}{2}$ point (lost 2, drew 1 game)

Paula wins the tournament (and the 1st place prize) because she scored the highest number of points.

If two or more players tie (i.e., score the same number of points), there are procedures for breaking the tie in order to award any non-cash prizes (see the Official Rules of Chess). In general, ties are resolved only for non-cash prizes (e.g., trophies). Cash awards are divided equally among all tied players.

If more than four players enter your first QUAD tournament, simply arrange the players by rating order and divide them into groups of four. If the number of players is not evenly divisible by four, treat the bottom section as a Swiss. Treat each four-player section as a separate event for pairing and prize purposes. The methods for running a Swiss are found in the official rulebook.

Step 5: Entry Fees

Scholastic Tournament: At in-house, school tournaments held during the school day, organizers may choose not to charge an entry fee.

Non-scholastic Tournament: In general, the organizer is free to charge whatever entry fees and offer whatever prizes he or she wishes. Here are some sample entry fees and prize structures for QUAD tournaments:

Entry Fee	Prize (per quad)
\$5	\$10 to 1st

\$5	Trophy to 1st
\$10	\$24 to 1st
\$10	Trophy to 1st
\$20	\$50 to 1 st

Step 6: Make Your Tournament Appealing

If you advertise, please mention in all fliers that the tournament is USCF rated and membership is required. It is OK to have unrated sections for beginners to introduce them to tournament chess before introducing them to rated chess. These sections should be advertised as such. This can be very helpful in the low grades when chess is being introduced into the after school program.

In general, the players are responsible for bringing their own sets, boards, clocks, and writing instruments.

With scholastic beginners: Clocks are not necessary, since the games usually finish quickly. You also may not have a sufficient number of clocks on hand. With all others: There are several advantages to using chess clocks at your tournaments. First, it allows the organizer to guarantee that the games will finish in a timely manner, so as to allow the next round to start on time. Second, most players expect the organizers to set the rules on things such as the amount of time a particular game may last. Finally, for any new players, using a chess clock will prepare them for other tournaments they may wish to enter.

Some common time controls are Game/30, Game/60, and Game/90. At these time controls, each player must complete all moves in the time allotted — 30, 60, or 90 minutes, respectively. If a player's time expires before the game is over, that player is said to "lose on time." (Note: A G/30 time-control game actually lasts one hour, because each player has 30 minutes.) Some tournaments will feature time controls that require a player to make a certain number of moves in a given unit of time — for example, 40 moves in 80 minutes, followed by 30 moves in 60 minutes. In this time control, each player must reach Move 40 before the initial 80 minutes expire. Failure to reach Move 40 results in a time forfeit. Assuming each player does reach Move 40 with time remaining on his or her clock, the players are given an additional 60 minutes apiece (plus any unused time from the first time control) to make 30 more moves.

Step 7: Using Your Chess Clocks

In general, the organizer is free to set the time control. To obtain regular USCF ratings, the time control must be 30 minutes or greater. Games with time controls between 10-29 minutes inclusive are considered to be “Quick Chess,” and are treated as a separate entity by the USCF. They are rated under a different system.

Step 8: Your Results

Tournament pairing programs are also available. They offer the following advantages:

A. The USCF database is downloadable into the program. This allows you to look up players instantly, have their rating available, and see that their membership is current. As supplements are available, they can be downloaded.

B. Tournaments with more than a handful of players can be managed efficiently, even with multiple sections.

C. Pairings can be made by the computer.

D. Printed standings, crosstables, pairings are available.

E. Prize lists can be determined in several ways.

F. Tournament reports can be made by the computer. This will cut the cost of rating a tournament in half.

G. As a tournament director with an affiliate, you can download memberships on line saving you money and receiving the new ID's for new memberships very quickly. You can also download the tournament which is an even lower rating fee and have it rated within hours.

The Official Tournament Report Form can be found at:

<http://www.uschess.org/about/forms/00tmtrep.PDF> and it states the various rating fees.

Step 9: Contact The USCF If You Have Any Questions

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Fax: 931-787-1200

E-mail: jmisner@uschess.org

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