



**NORTH AMERICAN
ISMAILI GAMES**

CHESS RULEBOOK

Introduction

The North American Ismaili Games (NAIG) is a premier regional sporting event that brings together athletes from across North America in a spirit of excellence, sportsmanship, and healthy competition, aligned with international standards.

Beyond competition, NAIG serves as a platform for unity, belonging, and shared growth—fostering meaningful connections and collective pride across regions. The Games are designed to be inclusive and accessible, enabling participation across age groups, skill levels, and regions.

NAIG also promotes lifelong active living and continuous improvement, while extending its impact through complementary programming such as development clinics, leadership forums, mentorship, and community engagement

Highlights

Games will be conducted using a timed format. Each player will have sixty (60) minutes of aggregate move time on the chess clock. One (1) match will be one-hundred-twenty (120) minutes in length.

The preliminary rounds will be formatted as a Swiss system tournament. Each match within the Swiss format will consist of one (1) game.

The top eight (8) seeds will advance to the playoffs, which will be structured as single elimination brackets, in order for a champion to be determined in a final match. Competitors will not play more than three (3) games in one (1) day, except when tiebreak rules may have to be applied.

Quarter-Finals, Semi-Finals, and Finals matches will be played on a best of two (2) games.

Chess will be an open tournament with participants of both genders and of various ages.

Matches will be governed by the Laws of Chess, as set forth by FIDE.

The chess equipment used shall be the same for all games played.

The Chessboard

The chessboard is composed of an eight-by-eight (8 x 8) grid of sixty-four (64) equal

squares alternately light (the 'white' squares) and dark (the 'black' squares)

The chessboard is placed between the players in such a way that the near corner square to the right of the player is light-coloured ('white'). At the beginning of the game one (1) player has sixteen (16) light-coloured pieces (the 'white' pieces); the other player has sixteen (16) dark-coloured pieces (the 'black' pieces).

These pieces are as follows: one (1) light-coloured king, one (1) light-coloured queen, two (2) light-coloured rooks, two (2) light-coloured bishops, two (2) light-coloured knights, eight (8) light-coloured pawns, one (1) dark-coloured king, one (1) dark-coloured queen, two (2) dark-coloured rooks, two (2) dark-coloured bishops, two (2) dark-coloured knights, eight (8) dark-coloured pawns

The eight (8) vertical columns of squares are called 'files'. The eight (8) horizontal rows of squares are called 'ranks'. A straight line of squares of the same colour, running from one edge of the board to an adjacent edge, is called a 'diagonal'.

The initial position of the pieces on the chessboard is illustrated below:



The Chess Clock

Matches will be allotted a total of one-hundred-twenty (120) minutes of total match play with each player receiving sixty (60) minutes of aggregate move time

A 'flag fall' or expiration of allotted time for a player will result in a win for the opponent

A player must stop (press) their clock with the same hand as that with which they made their move. It is forbidden for a player to keep their finger on the button or to 'hover' over it.

Method of Scoring

The game is won by the player who has checkmated the opponent's king

The game is won by the player whose opponent declares that they are resigning

The game is drawn when the player to move has no legal move and their king is not in check. The game is said to end in 'stalemate'.

The game is drawn when a position has arisen in which neither player can checkmate the opponent's king with any series of legal moves. The game is said to end in a 'dead position'.

The game may be drawn if an identical position is about to appear or has appeared on the chessboard at least three (3) times

In the event a game is drawn in the elimination round, the players shall follow the tie-break rule stated below. The game is drawn upon agreement between the two (2) players during the game only if each player has made at least the last fifty (50) consecutive moves without the movement of any pawn and without any capture, and then only a draw offer can be made through the tournament director/official. If the tournament director/official considers the position to be a draw, they will convey the offer to the opponent.

A player who wins their game, or wins by forfeit, scores one (1) point; a player who loses their game, or forfeits scores zero (0) points; and a player who draws their game scores a half (1/2) point.

Official Rules

In order to ensure equality in color assignments, these designations will be made along with the tournament draw

The player with the light-coloured pieces (white) shall make the first (1st) move, then the players move alternately, with the player with the dark-coloured pieces (black) making the next move

Players are expected to be familiar with legal moves. Players should be aware of legal maneuvers such as 'en passant', 'promotion' and 'castling'. A general description is provided below. Detailed descriptions of these are outlined in The Laws of Chess.

En Passant

Perhaps the most obscure and least used move in Chess is called en passant (pronounced "aw pawsawnt"). It can only occur when a player exercises their option to move their pawn two (2) squares on its initial movement and that move places their pawn next to the opponent's pawn. When this happens, the opposing player has the option to use their pawn to take the moved pawn "en passant" as if the pawn had only moved one (1) square. This option, though, only stays open for one (1) move.

Promotion

When a pawn reaches the opposite side of the board, it promotes. This means that the owner of the pawn can choose a queen, a rook, a knight, or a bishop (of their own colour), and put that piece instead of the pawn on the board, on the square of the pawn.

The player's choice of exchange is not restricted to pieces that have been captured previously

The act of promotion may be performed in various ways:

- The pawn does not have to be placed on the square of arrival

- Removing the pawn and putting the new piece on the square of arrival may occur in any order (if an opponent's piece stands on the square of arrival, it must be captured)

Castling

Castling is a special type of chess move. When castling, you simultaneously move your king, and one (1) of your rooks. The king moves two (2) squares towards a rook, and that rook moves to the square at the other side of the king. If the king castles queen-side the rook must move four (4) squares. However on the king-side the rook only moves three (3) squares.

There are a number of cases when castling is not permitted:

- Your king has been moved earlier in the game

- The rook that castles has been moved earlier in the game

- There are pieces standing between your king and rook

- The king is in check

- The king moves through a square that is attacked by a piece of the opponent

The king would be in check after castling

Moving Pieces

Each move must be made with one (1) hand only

Provided that he/she first (1st) expresses their intention (e.g. by saying "j'adoube" or "I adjust"), only the player having the move may adjust one (1) or more pieces on their squares

If the player having the move touches on the chessboard, with the intention of moving or capturing:

One (1) or more of their own pieces, they must move the first (1st) piece touched that can be moved

One (1) or more of their opponent's pieces, they must capture the first (1st) piece touched, that can be captured or

One (1) piece of each color, they must capture the opponent's piece with their piece or, if this is illegal, move or capture the first (1st) piece touched which can be moved or captured. If it is unclear whether the player's own piece or their opponent's was touched first (1st), the player's own piece shall be considered to have been touched before their opponent's.

When, as a legal move or part of a legal move, a piece has been released on a square, it cannot then be moved to another square. In case of capture, when the captured piece has been removed from the chessboard and the player, having placed their own piece on its new square, has released this capturing piece from their hand.

If during a game it is found that an illegal move has been completed, the position immediately before the irregularity shall be reinstated. If the position immediately before the irregularity cannot be determined, the game shall continue from the last identifiable position prior to the irregularity. The game shall then continue from this reinstated position.

If a player has moved a pawn to the furthest distant rank, pressed the clock, but not replaced the pawn with a new piece, the move is illegal. The pawn shall be replaced by a queen of the same color as the pawn.

For the first (1st) completed illegal move by a player the arbiter shall give two (2) minutes extra time to their opponent; for the second (2nd) completed illegal move by the same player the arbiter shall declare the game lost by this player. However,

the game is drawn if the position is such that the opponent cannot checkmate the player's king by any possible series of legal moves.

A player forfeits their right to a claim against their opponent's violation once they touch a piece with the intention of moving or capturing it

Player Conduct

The players shall take no action that will bring the game of chess into disrepute

Mobile phones and other electronic means of communication must be switched off at the playing venue and be placed inside a bag. If it is evident that a player is carrying such a device on themselves, the arbiter may award the win to the opponent.

Only with the permission of the arbiter may a player leave the playing venue

During play the players are forbidden to use any notes, sources of information or advice, or analyze any game on another chessboard

Spectators including other players have to maintain strict silence and decorum at all times. The tournament director/official, at their discretion or at the request of any player, may ask all spectators including other players to leave the playing area and be seated.

It is forbidden to distract or annoy the opponent in any manner whatsoever. This includes unreasonable claims or unreasonable offers of a draw.

The arbiter will enforce "The Laws of Chess". This includes resolving disputes and enforcing penalties which may include:

- Warning

- Increasing the remaining time of the opponent

- Reducing the remaining time of the offending player

- Declaring the game to be lost

- Reducing the points scored in a game by the offending party

- Expulsion from the event

Tie Break

Preliminary Phase: Bucholz system will apply (sum of all opponents' scores are added up to get a player's score)

Playoffs:

Toss of coin will determine the colors before the start of the playoff phase

Fifteen (15) minutes per player (Rapid Chess)

If there is no outright winner, then five (5) minutes blitz per player to finish

If still no winner then white will be allotted six (6) minutes and black five (5) minutes and if it ends in a draw then black will be declared winner

Coaching

Coaching is considered to be communication, advice or instruction of any kind to a player.

The coach shall communicate to their players the pairings

A coach is allowed to leave or re-enter the playing venue only with the permission of the arbiter

The coach must not stand behind the opposing player during play

If the coach wishes to speak to one (1) of their players, they shall first approach the arbiter. The coach shall then speak to the player in the presence of an arbiter, using a language the arbiter can understand. The same procedure shall be followed if a player needs to speak to the coach.

A coach is entitled to advise their players to make or accept an offer of a draw. They shall not intervene in a game in any other way.

The coach or individual is responsible for signing off on the score sheet once the match is completed to validate the final score as per the official's result. Failure to sign off on the score sheet shall result in the individual losing the right to protest their resultant scores in case of discrepancy.

Where a head coach is not present or available, an assistant coach, team manager, or "team" captain may assume the role of a coach.

For all other issues not addressed in these Laws of Chess, please refer to The United States Ismaili Games General Rules and Regulations.