

PAN-AMERICAN INTERCOLLEGIATE TEAM CHESS  
CHAMPIONSHIPS: OFFICIAL TOURNAMENT RULES

2015

Revision

By

USCF College Chess Committee

*10/26/2015*

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## **1. Bidding Guidelines:**

### **1a. Date of Event:**

The Pan-Am has been held every year over the Christmas vacation, December 27 (or 26) to December 30 (less frequently Dec. 29), since 1945. This is because this is the only period during which all colleges and universities are on vacation at the same time.

### **1b. Bidding overview:**

1. The bidding deadline is November 15 of the previous year. This allows for timely examination by the CCC and approval by USCF, in order to announce the site and other details at the Pan-Am one year in advance.
2. The winning bid will be announced at the previous-year's Pan-Am. Final arrangements and publicity should be completed before April. In this way, students may begin planning and fundraising in their spring semester for the fall semester of the next academic year.
3. Bids must conform to the National Bid requirements. Copies of the bids are to be sent to USCF and to the CCC Chairperson.
4. In the event that no bids are submitted, the CCC must find a willing organizer. USCF will assist in targeting possible bidders, but will play no role in organizing the tournament.
5. In the event that multiple bids are submitted, the USCF staff will make a decision based on consultation with the CCC. CCC criteria, in order of importance, include:
  - Turnout
  - Finances (profit, stability, low EF, adequate prizes)
  - Geographic accessibility
  - Playing site and accommodations (low room rates)
  - Publicity
  - Geographic rotation
  - Organizer's experience
  - Availability of backup organizers

### **1c. Site Criteria:**

1. The Pan-Am must be in a location that is geographically accessible by air and car.
2. A number of types of sites are acceptable for the Pan-Am, including hotels with convention facilities, schools, colleges, public buildings, and convention centers.
3. The site should be adequate for anticipated entries, allowing 15 to 20 square feet of useable space per player.
4. The site must have an adequate skittles area.
5. Special team areas should be available to coaches or captains who need a private area to counsel team members.
6. Toilet facilities must be adequate for large numbers of participants, and must be cleaned and maintained throughout the tournament.
7. Water must be made available in the playing hall throughout the duration of the tournament.
8. Pictures and descriptions of the tournament site, including size, lighting, available sanitary facilities, or any physical equipment available, should be included with each bid.
9. Reasonable inexpensive food should be available at or within easy walking distance of the site. Some nearby eating facilities should be open at least as late as midnight.

### **1d. Sleeping Accommodations:**

1. The primary consideration for accommodations is that they be reasonably inexpensive and accessible to the playing site.
2. A price per room, rather than per person, should be negotiated with the hotel. If this is not possible, then rates for two and four per room should be made as low as possible.
3. An agreement should be negotiated with the hotel whereby the total room-nights sold is directly related (e.g. on a sliding scale) to the costs of the playing rooms. The best contract occurs when the hotel agrees to provide the playing room free in exchange for the opportunity of hosting the event at the facility. If not, then the sliding scale should be constructed such that the hotel provides the playing room free if a certain level of total room-nights has been reached.
4. The sliding scale should be built around total number of room- nights, not nightly occupancy. Example: playing hall free above 150 room-nights. If on the three nights 51, 50, and 49 rooms are taken up, the organizer should not be penalized for falling below 50 on the third night, as the total is still 150. This method is useful as it includes people who come/leave a day early/late. Organizers should be sure the contract allows room-nights used by tournament attendees before and after the tournament to be counted toward the tournament total, and that they are available at the tournament rate.
5. Bidders should negotiate complimentary rooms (perhaps one per 25 room-nights sold, with a minimum of three) with the hotel. These are commonly used for the TDs, organizational staff, and the USCF representative.

6. The organizer and the hotel should agree upon a block of hotel rooms to be apportioned for tournament entrants. This block is reserved until filled up by those connected with the event. Estimate 50-200 blocked off rooms per night, or about two per expected team. (Of course, the sliding scale is based on a much lower figure). This prevents the hotel from selling all of its rooms to occupants who are not connected with the event. Also, the hotel should agree to increase the number as entries are received and numbers become available to the organizer, in case of overflow.
7. The organizer and the hotel should agree upon a publicized cutoff-date for reservations and an actual cutoff-date after which the special chess rates are no longer available. Ideally, the published cutoff-date is two to three weeks before the event (possibly to coincide with the deadline for early entry fees). This will give the organizer time to calculate room occupancy. The actual cutoff-date ideally should be the last date of the event; i.e. if individuals ask for the chess rate after the publicized cutoff-date they should still obtain the chess rate, based on availability.

### **1e. Transportation:**

Organizers must make sure that transportation is available between the host hotel and the nearest commercial airport. The organizer must ensure transportation between the host hotel and the playing site if they are not located within walking distance of each other. Transportation arrangements should be publicized in advance.

The hotel and playing site should have adequate parking facilities nearby. Ideally, the hotel should provide either free on-site parking or parking validation stickers for free parking off-site for all those connected with the event.

### **1f. Staffing:**

National Tournament Director Certification is required of the chief TD. The chief TD should also have experience in administering (a) national events, (b) FIDE events, (c) intercollegiate events, (d) scholastic events, (e) team events, and (f) Pan-Am events, if possible.

The organizer, in consultation with the chief TD, will provide a sufficient number of certified assistant TDs to help administer the event. The TD or at least one assistant TD should be devoted exclusively to the main section.

A number of volunteers should be available to help the organizer. Their responsibilities include (a) receiving entries, (b) entering registrations (c) checking ratings, (d) checking colleges and schools of players, (e) checking in players and teams on-site, (f) setting up playing room, (g) checking wallchart area, (h) preparing a tournament information pamphlet, (i) managing publicity and promotion, (j) providing an awards ceremony, (k) assisting the TDs and organizer during their tournament duties, and (l) run Mon Roi Controller.

## **1g. Finances:**

The Pan-Am is a partnership between USCF and the local organization. USCF has veto power over major decisions. All contracts must be approved-by the USCF staff before signing.

Certain services and purchases including the book concession should normally be bid out. Vendors should receive requests for proposals. USCF must be contacted about all concession plans.

The organizer must be able to accept checks and write checks. No bid will be accepted from an individual or group without this capability. A local checking account is recommended of organizers.

Since 1989, the Pan-Am has been run with the organizer accepting 100% of all profit and 100% of all loss. Changes in this structure must be negotiated by the organizer, the CCC, USCF office, and the PB.

Entry fees are to be sent to the local organizer, and prizes must be paid out immediately after the event by the organizer.

## **1h. Publicity:**

1. Publicity is an important part of attracting new participants to the Pan-Am and attracting more colleges to chess and the USCF. Many college chess clubs are unaware of the Pan-Am, and many college students are unaware of the existence of the USCF. Organizers must include plans for publicity in their bids. Fliers should list the host and USCF as co-sponsors.
2. The Pan-Am will be announced in the TLA section of Chess Life, in at least three issues (October, November, and December).
3. Chess Life will give the CCC space for one free article announcing the upcoming Pan-Am. For the December 27-30 event, notification no later than the October issue (comes out September 1) is ideal. Since the deadline for this and the October TLA is August 10, the organizer must be prepared in his/her spring semester of the previous academic year to begin publicity.
4. The organizer must prepare a flier publicizing the event. The flier should be mailed to as many local, regional, and national college affiliates as can be budgeted, and to state and regional chess magazines in nearby states.
5. Organizers should make efforts to reach as many local colleges as possible (this includes non-USCF affiliates) . Phone and E-mail advertising are highly encouraged.
6. Organizers should arrange publicity with the local media prior to, during, and immediately after the event.

7. A press release should be prepared listing major winners after the conclusion of the tournament. This release, along with game scores, should be given to the USCF representative or emailed/faxed to the USCF immediately after the event. The USCF will send its own release to media sources.

## **2. Format & tournament rules:**

### **2a. Tournament Format and Rules:**

1. The preferred schedule is a six-game, four-day event, (December 27-30), with the number of rounds per day 1-2-2-1. Changes in this format must be negotiated by the organizer, the CCC, and the USCF staff.
2. The tournament will be conducted using USCF rules for all players (including non-U.S. participants), except as modified in this document.
3. The event is a Swiss System, paired strictly team vs. team. Board one of team A plays board one of team B, through board four (see IX.3 for substitution practice of alternates).
4. Pairings are done by considering each team an individual entity. Each team gets one match point if the combined scores of the four players in a round is 2 1/2 or greater, one-half match point if the combined score is 2, and zero match points if the combined score is 1 1/2 or less. Teams are grouped by their match points and then ranked within the group by their ratings. Byes, defaults, lateness, and so forth are treated as in individual tournaments.
5. The number of match points (not total game points) determines the final standings. (Note: In Europe and in the Olympiad, game points are used to determine standings. In America and throughout most of the history of the Pan-Am, match points were and are used.)
6. If a school enters multiple teams, these teams may not face one another unless the TD views the pairing as the best possible choice. For instance, if the A and B teams of a college are undefeated after four rounds, then they must be paired in the fifth round to avoid a sixth or last round pairing.
7. A team that is assigned "white" has white on boards 1 and 3, black on 2 and 4; conversely, a team that is assigned "black" has black on boards 1 and 3, white on 2 and 4.
8. The rule regarding color in a series (popularly known as "the three blacks in a row rule") is less important in team play, because each team has two whites and two blacks per round.
9. There may be no more than two rounds per day. At least seven hours must be placed between the start of each round. The suggested round times are 6pm, 10am, 5pm, 10am, 5pm, and 9am, respectively.
10. The primary time control may be no faster than G/90 with 30 second increment. Sudden death time controls may not be used. Games may be adjourned at the TD's discretion. If provided for both players, Mon Roi units must be used.

## **2b. Entry Fees and Registration:**

1. The advance team entry for the intercollegiate section will be determined by the organizer. In each section, the late fee (or on-site entry) should be no more than 25% above the advance entry fee.
2. The deadline for early entry should be two to three weeks before the event (possibly to coincide with the date by which hotel reservations should be made). It is preferred that the deadline be of the type "postmarked no later than" rather than "received no later than." This prevents hostility by players to the organizer for not getting the mail, and offers written proof of dates. In the event that a team's entry is postmarked before the deadline yet not received until after the start of the event (i.e. misdirected mail), the organizer may require the team to pay the entry, including the late fee, at the door. When the early entry is then received, the door entry and late fee would then be refunded.
3. Door entries must be permitted up to a certain cutoff time before the first round (generally 1-2 hours, enough to allow for first round pairings). Any entry after this cutoff time may be required to take a bye or play against a specially paired group of other late entrants.

## **2c. Intercollegiate Eligibility Requirements:**

### **Rule 1**

For college and university teams, titled players (International Masters, International Grandmasters, International Woman Masters and International Woman Grandmasters) are eligible to participate if they satisfy at least one of the following stipulations: #1 or all three conditions listed in #2.

1. Are less than 26 years old as undergraduate students, or under 30 years old as graduate students, as of September 1 of the academic year in which the tournament takes place.
2. Satisfy all of the following three conditions:
  - a) Are full-time, degree-seeking students (e.g., at least 12 semester credit hours for undergraduate students and 9 semester credit hours for graduate students)
  - b) Have a grade-point average of at least B (e.g., at least 3.0 on a 4-point scale)
  - c) Have satisfied conditions 1 and 2 for at least one full semester at their team's college or university prior to the event.

Rule 1 applies to all college events — individual or team. There are no age restrictions on players not having the four above-mentioned international titles.

## **Rule 2**

College and University players shall be enrolled at least half-time (e.g. 6 semester credit hours) during the semester of eligibility. For the Pan American Intercollegiate Team Championship, traditionally held between Christmas and New Year's each year, players must be enrolled in the fall semester preceding the event. A player must not be enrolled in high school.

## **Rule 3**

College and university players shall be eligible to play for a total of six years, where a year is defined as being either a traditional academic year of a fall and spring term or a fall term or a spring term, e.g., a player enrolled in spring of 1998, spring of 1999 and fall of 1999 is considered enrolled for three years under this rule.

## **Rule 4**

College and university players shall be enrolled in a degree-seeking program with a cumulative grade point average of at least a C.

## **Rule 5**

College and university players for a Pan-American team must all be resident at the same geographical location, which can include multiple campuses and instructional facilities used by the same college or university the players represent. All players must live either in on-campus housing or in housing within reasonable commuting distance of each other and the college or university they are representing.

## **Rule 6**

Colleges and universities offering chess-related scholarships shall maintain records about the individuals awarded such scholarships, their time of attendance, the degrees received if any, and the grade point average attained.

## **Rule 7**

Faculty, staff and alumni are not eligible to compete in the National Collegiate Chess League Team Championship conducted over the internet each spring.

The following are suggestions offered for guidance:

Faculty conflicts. A faculty member serving as a consultant or director to a university or college chess program should adhere to the following guidelines:

- To admit no player to their program who does not, in their judgment, demonstrate a serious likelihood of achieving a degree.
- To not offer independent study courses to members of the chess team.
- To not recruit players from other chess programs.
- To scrutinize carefully undergraduate students applying for a second baccalaureate.

## Non-compliance:

1. Winning teams should file a report to document compliance with these regulations with the USCF.
2. Any team's standing may be challenged for non-compliance by a competing team through a written complaint sent within 30 days to the Executive Director or the Scholastic Director of the U.S. Chess Federation. That official shall gather the relevant documentation of the complaint, make a recommendation as to disposition, and send it to the USCF Executive Board for resolution.

## **2d. Team Requirement:**

1. The Pan-Am Intercollegiate Team event is a strict team-on-team competition. Pairings are done by considering each team an individual entity.
2. A team is made up of four players plus up to two optional alternates.
3. When alternates play, they must do so starting on the lowest boards. Any regular team member may sit out when an alternate plays; other team members move up accordingly.
4. Teammates must play in descending rating order, except that 50-point transpositions are allowed. Board order must remain the same throughout the event. Each team must submit a roster before the close of registration indicating the fixed lineup.
5. Teams are ranked in order of the average of four highest individual ratings – this includes the alternates. The team average rating is used for wall chart ranking and class-prize eligibility.
6. Unrated players must be placed below rated players.
7. A team must have a minimum of three players to compete for prizes. In the event that only two players arrive from a school before round 1, they will be allowed to compete provided their teammates are expected to arrive. If these teammates do not arrive, then the two who did arrive are ineligible for all prizes.
8. There may be no mixed teams. For example, if two schools arrive with only two players, the four may not form a team, even if they volunteer to forego prize eligibility.
9. A school may send an unlimited number of teams. There is no rule regarding the composition of multiple teams (e.g. they may be balanced or in order from highest to lowest rated), only that individual members of each team must be in strict descending rating order. Multiple teams will be designated as "A," "B," "C," etc., with "A" designating the team with the highest average rating.
10. All teams must designate a coach or captain (he/she need not be a competitor, just affiliated with the team's school). The role of the coach/captain is:
11. To turn in his team line-up to the TD at least one hour before the round begins.
  - To see that his/her team arrives on time for each match.
  - To see that his/her team plays in correct board order.
  - To advise his/her players whether or not to accept or offer a draw.
  - To report the result of the match to the TD.
  - To check the wall charts for accuracy.

Note: "Package deals," such as offering draws on boards 1 and 4 to the opposing team captain, are not permitted.

## **2e. Ratings of Players:**

1. American players use their USCF ratings reflected in the December Rating Supplement, which is made available before the Pan-Am. TDs should have access to the online USCF rating supplements.
2. Unrated players do not affect the team average.
3. Foreign players who have national or FIDE ratings must present evidence of this rating, and then the rating will be converted. The conversion table is as follows:
  - Canada (CFC): Add 50
  - Quebec (FQE): Add 100
  - Most other nations: Add 200
  - New USCF/FIDE conversion formulas:
    - FIDE Under 2000,  $USCF = FIDE \text{ rating} \times 5/8 + 720$
    - FIDE 2000 and above =  $FIDE \text{ rating} \times 1.16 - 350$
4. If a foreign player has two or more ratings (USCF, FIDE, national, etc.), the highest rating after conversion will be chosen. There is no rule that states a team must use the same rating system on each board (e.g. all FIDE or all national).

## **2f. Conduct of the Tournament:**

A team may not deviate from its given roster after sign-up. If it is found that players were placed out of order, and the error was the TD's, the proper order will be established in the next round. In this case, previous results will count, both for the team and for individuals. If players were placed, or played out of order, and the error was the team's, then the team may face forfeiture.

To the extent possible, the top boards should be roped off to highlight the top contestants and also to prevent congestion. Some events have highlighted these boards by isolating them in a central area.

Organizational announcements should be made just prior to the beginning of each round.

## **2g. Electronic Devices**

Any electronic device that could be used to transmit or receive information related to chess or to calculate potential moves is not allowed in the tournament playing area. This restriction applies to players and all other personnel in the playing area except the tournament director and TD's support staff. Further, no such devices can be in the immediate possession of a player, regardless of the player's location, during a game that is in progress. Prohibited devices include, but are not limited to, cell or smart phones, tablets, computers and Apple

or Android watches. (Nothing in this rule prohibits the use of Monroi or DGT devices at the discretion of the tournament director.) Violation of this rule by a player may result in the player's immediate forfeit of a game in progress. Violations by a non-player may result in banishment from the tournament playing area.

## **2h. Tie-breaks:**

Tie-breaks are used to award places and trophies only. Cash prizes are divided equally in any tie.

If two teams are tied for first, they are considered co- champions. Tie-breaks are used to determine which team name "goes first" in articles, and which team gets the larger trophy. The recipient of the second place trophy can have it send it for a new engraving declaring that team "co- champion." If three or more teams tie, tie-breaks are used to determine first, second, third, etc. places. If two teams or individuals tie for a prize other than first place team, tie-breaks are used for place plus trophy allocation (no new engraving need be sent).

When team match points are equal, the following order of tie-break systems will be used:

- U.S. Amateur Team East (USATE). In the USATE system, you multiple your wins against each individual opponent's final score. Thus, if you defeated a 1st round opponent by a 3-1 score and they ultimately scored 2-4 in the Pan-Am, your team would then get 6 tie-break points (3x2). If you drew 2-2 in round two against a team that would ultimately score 5.5-.5, then you get 11 tie-break points (2x5.5).
- Game points
- Direct encounter
- Bucholz Cut 1
- Bucholz
- Sonneborn-Berger

For individual board prize determinations, the tie-break procedure is total points scored, then

- Winning percentage
- Median
- Solkoff
- Sonnenborn-Berger
- Cumulative
- Kashdan
- Result between tied players
- Most Blacks
- Result between teams of tied players
- Coin flip

### **3. Ceremonies:**

#### **3a. Opening Ceremony:**

The organizer is encouraged to arrange a brief opening ceremony an hour prior to the start of the first round. A reception should be prior to the opening ceremony. A minimum of \$1000 is required to fund this function.

Local dignitaries, deans or faculty from the host school, and the press should be invited. Past experience has shown that local officials have great interest in participating in such ceremonies. Proclamations from a host college, mayor, county executive, and governor might be available upon request from their respective offices.

#### **3b. Awards Ceremony & Prizes:**

The organizer is responsible for an awards ceremony in keeping with the stature of a national championship.

The list of prize winners must be posted as soon as possible. The awards presentation order should be announced at the start of the ceremony.

Money prizes shall be given out in the form of checks by the organizer to the proper team recipient (or affiliate) at the awards ceremony if the winner is present. Prizes may be awarded early if the winner has to leave before the awards ceremony. In the event that prize winners have to leave and games are still in progress affecting the prize, the organizer may choose to send all or part of the prize by mail.

The recommended minimum prize fund in the intercollegiate section is \$4,000. Division prizes are based on average team rating. Guaranteed prizes are preferred, though based-on prizes are acceptable. Division ratings are as follows:

Division I	2200 and above	Division III	1800-1999
Division II	2000-2199	Division IV	Under 1800

Trophies, plaques, or clocks should be given out in addition to all cash prizes for top board scores and top foreign teams (non-USA).

An additional prize for each of boards 1-4, called "class board prizes," should be awarded. Prizes are determined by the highest number of points scored.

### **4. Miscellaneous:**

#### **4a. Chess Notation:**

Chess notation (or use of a Mon Roi unit) must be kept consistently and legible by all players.

The organizer should provide carbon scoresheets for all games. These are the property of the organizer, and clean copies must be turned in.

Organized side events add to the attractiveness of the Pan-Am. Such activities traditionally include the Pan-Am Speed, Chess Championship. A Pan-Am Open (a regular, open event), and simuls or lectures by famous players are highly recommended.

#### **4b. Posting of rules:**

A copy of the Pan-Am Rules should be posted on the College Chess Website.