



International Correspondence Chess Federation

ICCF Code of Conduct Guidelines

Valid from 01/01/2016

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1. Introduction and General Principles

ICCF, as the world authority for all forms of correspondence chess, has clearly defined Principles and Aims, which are described in its Statutes. These include the important concept that “ICCF ...supports and promotes close international co-operation between chess players, enthusiasts, and FIDE, thereby aiming to enhance contact and friendly harmony amongst the peoples on the world”.

In 1984, ICCF adopted the motto “Amici Sumus” (we are friends) and this is the underlying philosophy in setting behavioural standards for players, officials and member federations. This should prevail in all communications between players in a game of CC, between players and tournament directors, officials of ICCF and international contacts of member federations. Sending an abusive, obscene, or objectionable communication is not acceptable, under any circumstances.

These guidelines are to clarify the kind of behaviour that is expected, and include disciplinary and appeals procedures for dealing with instances where the principles and philosophy may not be evident in practice.

2. Guidelines for Players/Team Captains

Whether it is in games with playing partners or with tournament directors (TD), players are expected to be friendly in all communications, bearing in mind that we are playing a game and TDs are all volunteers who are trying to promote international bonds of friendship and sportsmanship.

It is recommended that friendly messages be exchanged with playing partners at the start of a game/tournament and that such friendly exchanges continue throughout, until conclusion. Being generous in defeat and modest in victory are commendable virtues!

It is expected that players will decide the moves for themselves. It is unacceptable behaviour to have someone else play your games (for instance playing “mirror games” is not acceptable).

Extremely slow play in a clearly lost position is not proper behaviour in CC play, and is subject to a warning from the TD, and will result in disciplinary action if it continuous or is repeated in other games.

The whole ICCF rating and title system relies on the assumption that games are played by the players named in the starting lists (or are approved substitutes).

Players should observe the Playing and Tournament Rules carefully. Care should be taken to observe advance notification of leave, time exceeding claims, etc.

Any disputes by a player must, in the first instance, be communicated to the official TD of the tournament (except in team events, where the team captain (TC) should be the point of contact). In postal games, player claims must also be communicated to the TC as the point of contact. The facts must be clearly reported and a player should avoid creating any unnecessary antagonism towards a partner, even when disputes occur. Abusive remarks have no place in ICCF philosophy.

Wherever possible, players should try amicably to resolve any problem quickly with a playing partner, before referring the matter to the TD (or TC).

A Team Captain is responsible for notifying his players, opponent Team Captains, and the Tournament Director when he/she goes on leave or is otherwise unable to represent his/her players.

A player or an entire team can lose its games if a Team Captain is unable to meet his/her responsibilities, especially in the reporting of time complaints.

A Tournament Director may request a federation to replace its Team Captain due to inappropriate behaviour or inability to perform his/her responsibilities.

Players should read the sections in these guidelines, which cover the responsibilities of other officials, the handling of disciplinary matters (and penalties that may be imposed) and the procedures to be followed concerning appeals.

3. Guidelines for Tournament Offices/Organisers and Tournament Directors

All ICCF tournaments and ICCF approved tournaments should be organised according to ICCF principles, philosophy, and rules, including related guidelines. It should always be remembered that “players are our customers” and it is the duty of ICCF officials and TDs to offer a good quality, fair and prompt service to players and to other officials who are also providing tournament services to players, e.g., ratings, qualifications, etc.

Although TDs are expected to exercise their initiative in resolving problems, they should observe all rules and guidelines carefully and seek experienced advice if they are unsure about the best way to handle a problem. It is far easier to deal with consequent problems, if a decision has been well thought through before action is taken, rather than trying to sort out a problem resulting from a hasty or ill-considered decision after it has been made and communicated to players, etc.

4. Guidelines for Member Federations

ICCF is composed of Member Federations and therefore, any criticism of ICCF is criticism of member federations and their delegates. We all have a collective responsibility for ensuring the high reputation and authority of ICCF and its constituent member federations are not undermined.

Of course, there are occasions, especially with more difficult or controversial issues where a decision is reached by the ICCF Congress (the voting members) which does not match the view of an individual or his/her national federation. In such an event, the correct approach is for that delegate/member federation to request that the matter should be discussed again by Congress.

ICCF is a democratic organisation and major issues are decided by Congress by the proper voting of members (ICCF officials do **not** have any voting rights) and; therefore, decisions of Congress should be accepted and respected by all of its member federations, acting in a responsible manner.

5. Disciplinary Procedures (and Penalties)

Every effort should be made to avoid disputes and the initiation of these procedures but, where unavoidable, they should be carefully followed by all ICCF officials, Zonal Offices, and member federations when dealing with international CC matters.

Types of disciplinary action available are as follows:

- (i) Formal Written Warning – for breaches in behaviour incompatible with ICCF statutes, principles, or rules. Continuing or repeated misbehaviour will result in (ii) being implemented
- (ii) Disciplinary Action with Penalty/Sanctions – for serious or recurring breaches in behaviour incompatible with ICCF statutes, principles, and/or rules. Immediate penalties/sanctions should be imposed, the degree of which should be related to the severity of the misdemeanour.

The following scale of penalties/sanctions should be used:

- (a) A serious behavioural issue, e.g. silent/unacceptable withdrawal from a tournament, unacceptable, or abusive behaviour to players/officials/ICCF as a first offence – ban from all international CC tournaments and activities for a period of 2 years, from the date of decision.
- (b) A repeated serious behavioural issue, e.g., repeated silent/unacceptable withdrawal from a tournament, repeated abusive behaviour to players/officials/ICCF – ban from all international CC tournaments and activities for a period of 5 years, from the date of the latest decision.
- (c) Outrageous behaviour or further repeated behavioural issue, e.g., theft, belligerent action towards ICCF or any of its officials, assault, etc. – ban from all international CC tournaments and activities for life duration. Appeal for remission of sentence is available after 10 years.
- (d) Extremely slow play in a clearly lost position is not proper behaviour in CC play, and is subject to a warning from the TD, and will result in disciplinary action if it continues or is repeated in other games.

When dealing with disciplinary matters and considering penalties/sanctions, care should be taken to ensure consistency and those penalties are commensurate with the “crime” committed.

In all cases of disciplinary action, an individual has a basic right to express his/her case, with reasoning, before a decision is taken by an official/tournament director or tournament office, etc.

When disciplinary action is taken, the reason must be given in writing (with a copy to the member federation), by the official responsible and any sanction or penalty imposed must be clearly stated, along with the appropriate appeals procedure, which is available, should the recipient be unwilling to accept the decision.

ICCF will maintain a database of all cases that have been the subject of disciplinary action or application of sanctions, and all appeals thereon. An ICCF officer will be given this responsibility.

6. Extent of application of these Guidelines

All international tournaments organised or approved by ICCF are subject to these guidelines, including the disciplinary and appeals procedures. Applications from ICCF Zonal TOs and member federations for approval of tournaments will imply their acceptance that these guidelines and procedures will apply to such tournaments, without exception.

However, it is important to recognise that these arrangements are intended for “international” CC matters and are not either “in place of” or related to any sanctions applied by member federations for disciplinary issues concerning domestic tournaments, national membership or their other rules.

The above guidelines are provided to give a clear framework for the behaviour of players, officials, member federations, and ICCF generally. The “Amici Sumus” philosophy should permeate throughout ICCF and the activities of all players and officials.