



2026 Chess State Tournament Terms and Conditions

I. SCHOOL CLASSIFICATION

A. Classification

1. Competition in the IESA Chess state tournament will be held for all member schools without classification.

II. DATES AND SITE

A. The IESA Chess state tournament will be held at the Peoria Civic Center (201 SW Jefferson Avenue - Peoria, Illinois). The chess calendar is as follows:

Entry Deadline	January 28, 2026
Final Entry Deadline	February 13, 2026
Online Roster Deadline	February 19, 2026
State Tournament Dates	February 27-28, 2026

III. ENTRY FEES, ONLINE ENTRY FORM, WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURES, AND ELIGIBILITY

A. Entry Fees

1. To be eligible for competition in the tournament, all member schools must enter their school into the state competition through the IESA Member Center on the IESA website at www.iesa.org. The initial entry deadline is January 28, 2026.
2. The entry fee for participation is \$15.00 per participant.
3. All entries must be submitted online through the IESA Member Center. At the completion of the registration process, an invoice will be generated. Forward the invoice and your school-issued check to the IESA office by the initial entry deadline.

B. Late Entries

1. Late entry fees will be waived for schools designated as new members or for current member schools entering an activity for the first time which petition to participate in an activity after the initial entry deadline of January 28, 2026.
2. Entry fees will be refunded only upon request prior to the initial entry deadline of January 28, 2026.
3. Entries postmarked after the initial entry deadline are double in cost.

C. Withdrawal Procedure

1. To withdraw without penalty, the Principal must notify the IESA Office, in writing, of the school's withdrawal from the activity prior to the online roster deadline listed in Section II of the Chess Terms and Conditions.
2. If a school withdraws after the online roster deadline of February 19, 2026, the school will be charged a \$50.00 penalty.

D. Online Roster Entry Form

1. Each school must complete their online roster entry form by the online roster deadline of February 19, 2026.

2. The online roster entry form is located in the IESA Member Center of the IESA website. A school may enter a team of a maximum of ten (10) students in each grade division - 6, 7 and 8. Participant information must include the name of each participant, year in school, and the coach assigned chess rank. (No alternates)

IV. ELIGIBILITY

To enter any of the IESA activities, a student must be eligible under all of the eligibility rules and conditions of competition of the IESA.

A. Attendance

1. Students must attend member schools and may only represent in competition the school they actually attend.

B. Scholastic Standing

1. All contestants shall be in grades five through eight and shall not have passed eighth grade standing.
2. A student shall be doing passing work as determined by the local school district in all school subjects and the school shall certify compliance with this by-law. Use of a player, contestant, or participant shall be deemed such certification.
3. For all IESA activities, non-athletic as well as athletic, passing work shall be checked weekly to govern eligibility for the following Monday through Saturday. For fall activities, the first eligibility check shall be made following the first full week of attendance at the beginning of the school year. During the succeeding weeks of the school year, the eligibility check shall begin the week prior to the first contest in an activity.
4. The eligibility check shall be the same day each week unless school is not in session; then, it must be taken on the last day of student attendance that week. Grades shall be cumulative for the school's grading period.

C. Age

1. For sixth grade activities, a student shall be eligible through age thirteen (13). If a student in sixth grade becomes fourteen (14) before the final day in the state chess tournament, he/she is not eligible to participate in the sixth grade chess division.
2. For seventh grade activities, a student shall be eligible through age fourteen (14). If a student in seventh grade becomes fifteen (15) before the final day in the state chess tournament, he/she is not eligible to participate in the seventh grade chess division.
3. For eighth grade activities, a student shall be eligible through age fifteen (15). If a student in eighth grade becomes sixteen (16) before the final day in the state chess tournament, he/she is not eligible to participate in the eighth grade chess division.

D. Participation

1. No student is eligible to participate at the same academic grade level for two different school years in the same activity. This is true whether the student attended a member or a non-member school. Participation in one interscholastic contest in an activity constitutes one season of eligibility in that activity.

E. Use of Participants

1. Only students who are currently eligible under the rules and by-laws are eligible to participate.

V. TOURNAMENT STRUCTURE AND PLAYING SCHEDULES

A. Tournament Structure and Pairing Procedures

1. The tournament will be a Medley Team Swiss System format. A Swiss System variation will be used for the tournament.
2. The tournament will be composed of eight (8) rounds of play. Students will participate in all eight (8) rounds.

B. Complete Participation Requirement

1. Participants will compete in all rounds of competition unless they are officially withdrawn from the tournament by their coach or a "do not pair" or "requested bye" designation has been submitted to by the coach. Notification must be communicated to tournament staff in writing.

C. Time Schedule

<u>FRIDAY</u>			<u>SATURDAY</u>		
	8:00 am	Check-in/Skittles	8:00 am		Skittles opens
	8:30 am	Meeting of stewards	not before 9:00 am		Round 6
	8:45 am	Registration closes - rosters final	not before 10:45 am		Round 7
	9:15 am	First round pairings posted	not before 12:45 pm		Round 8
	9:40 am	Players at assigned locations	not before 2:45 pm		Awards
	9:45 am	Opening ceremony			
not before 10:00 am		Round 1			
not before 10:30 am		Coaches' Meeting			
not before 12:15 pm		Round 2			
not before 2:00 pm		Round 3			
not before 3:45 pm		Round 4			
not before 5:30 pm		Round 5			

VI. TOURNAMENT RULES

A. Playing Rules

1. The official playing rules for the IESA Chess State Tournament are those included in the IESA Chess Rules Book, these Chess Terms and Conditions, and any printed instructions distributed from the IESA Office.
2. These rules will be enforced by designated officials.
3. Final appeals on the playing rules in regard to the IESA Chess Rules Book rest with the Chief Tournament Director. The Tournament Manager enforces all elements of the IESA Chess Terms and Conditions and the IESA Handbook.

B. Coach or Official Representative

1. Activity coaches in all member schools shall be designated by their Board of Education or governing board as personnel responsible for the supervision of the school's contestants.
2. Coaches must be present at the state tournament site at all times during tournament play to assist the tournament manager if needed. If a school does not have a designated coach or school representative present at the tournament site at all times (except permitted by an IESA administrator) during tournament play, that school's competitors will not be permitted to participate. A coach or designated school representative shall be present in the facility at the beginning of each round to ensure that everything is in order prior to the start of the match.

3. Coaches or school representatives who have not officially checked in their school prior to the close of the registration/check-in time period will not have students paired for Round 1. Teams may still be paired for the remaining rounds of the tournament.
4. The online roster entry form must also include the name(s) and cell phone number(s) of the school's coach(es) or school representatives.
5. The coach is responsible for his/her players following the rules.
6. A coaches' meeting will be held on Friday by the windows outside of the competition hall. If coaches have questions during the tournament, please speak with a tournament official. Team packets will include a coach tag. Coach tags should be worn throughout both days of competition and will allow only coaches access to the competition area.

C. Uniforms

1. It is recommended that team members wear apparel or patches that display the school name.

D. Equipment

1. Each school is required to provide chess boards, Staunton design chess sets, and chess clocks that comply with the rules published by IESA. Schools are required to bring the following number of clocks based on the number of participants per division. Example chart below.

Participants per Division	Clocks
1-5	Equal to number of participants
6-7	5
8-9	6
10	7

2. A digital clock using standard time delay is the preferred clock. Digital clocks are not to be used without the time delay being correctly set (count down does not start for 5 seconds).
 - a. Analog clocks may be used if no standard time delay clock is available.
 - b. Bronstein clock settings are not to be used.
3. The player assigned the Black pieces is expected to supply the clock, board and set which comply with the rules. The equipment of the player assigned the White pieces may be used in the event Black is unable to supply the preferred equipment.
4. If the player of the Black pieces arrives after the start of the round, equipment set up by the player of the White pieces may be used.
5. Failure to provide the required equipment may result in the forfeiture of boards which are without proper equipment.

E. Pairing Procedure

1. Pairings and results will be posted outside the competition hall and will also be available online at www.iesa.org.
2. Effort will be made to avoid pairing teammates; however, teammates may be paired to avoid shifting players out of a score group.
3. A ranking process, based upon criteria and information submitted by participating schools, will provide the basis for assigning individual pairing numbers. On the online roster entry form, a school's coach will rank players in each division from 1-12 up to the number of players participating from that school; alternates must also be assigned a rank. No two (2) players entered in the same division are permitted to have the same rank number.

F. Participant Roster and Participation

1. Prior to the close of registration, the coach or official representative of a school shall submit any changes to the roster. In addition, the following rules are in place:
 - a. No player substitutions are permitted after the close of the registration period.
 - b. A "bye" designation is worth one (1) point and given when there are an odd number of students competing in a round. A person that receives a bye is considered to have competed in the round because that player was accounted for when pairings were completed.
 - c. A "do not pair" or "requested bye" designation is when a coach requests that a student not be paired for a round. The student will receive zero (0) points. The request to not pair a student must be submitted 30 minutes prior to the scheduled start time of the round and a player's status cannot be changed from "do not pair" or "requested bye" to play within 30 minutes of the scheduled start time of the round.
2. Competitor participation - a player who is absent at the start of a round:
 - a. It is the participant's responsibility to report to the playing floor when the round is scheduled to begin. All Round 1 matches are scheduled to begin at 10:00 am.
 - b. If a player arrives at a match but is disqualified because of time expiring,
 - a. the scores for that player in prior rounds shall stand.
 - b. the individual is disqualified from further participation in the tournament. Any exception is at the discretion of the IESA Administrator.

G. Notation

1. Players are required to keep notation as required in Rule 20.
2. Notation sheets will be available for participants at the competition tables.

H. Time Control

1. In the chess state tournament, each player will be granted a time control of thirty (30) minutes with a 5-second delay per player for all rounds.

I. Scoring

1. Both competitors are responsible for reporting/confirming the results of the match with the score table.
2. Team scores will be an accumulation of individual points from the top five scorers of the team.
3. Individual scores will be the sum of the wins plus half the number of draws.

J. Tie-Break System

1. Team - Total Solkoff, Total Cumulative, Total Opponents' Cumulative, Duplicate Awards

K. Score Appeals

1. Coaches are responsible for checking the previous round's results and reporting any discrepancies to tournament headquarters by the end of the following round.
2. In the event a player's score would increase as a result of correcting a mistake but the error was not brought to the attention of the tournament staff before the end of the following round it may not be corrected and the player's score will stand.
3. Coaches will have 20 minutes after the posting of final results to report any corrections to the final round.

VII. TOURNAMENT POLICIES

A. Competitor Use of Technology

1. Participants are warned before the start of each round that cell phones/smart devices must be turned off completely or placed on silent. A cell phones/smart devices that goes off in the playing area will result in the following penalties:
 - a. Player's cell phones/smart devices in use - forfeiture of game.
 - b. Player's cell phones/smart devices vibrating or ringing - loss of five minutes off clock but not to be lowered past one minute of the time remaining. A second violation would result in a forfeiture of game.
 - c. No headphones of any type may be worn in the playing area.

B. Spectators

1. Spectators will NOT be allowed in the competition/ballroom area; only coaches and student participants will be allowed in the competition area. Coaches are required to observe silence during tournament play.
2. All fans that attend IESA state series contests must wear shirts at all times.
3. Coaches may take photographs from the designated viewing area during the first ten (10) minutes of a round only.
4. Upon completion of a game, a player becomes a spectator.
5. Failure to observe proper decorum during tournament play will be considered unsportsmanlike conduct.

C. Alcohol and Tobacco Products

1. No alcoholic beverages shall be served at any IESA activity where students are participating.
2. No interscholastic tournaments may have a sponsor who is a manufacturer, distributor, or advertiser of tobacco or alcoholic beverages, political or religious groups, or of any other products or services which might reflect unfavorably upon the school or the Association.

D. Food and Drink

1. Except for bottled water (which may be consumed but not placed on the playing table), food or drink will not be permitted in the playing area at any time during the tournament.
2. No coolers or outside food of any kind will be allowed into the Peoria Civic Center by spectators, coaches, or players. This is a Peoria Civic Center policy.
3. Food and drinks will be available for purchase at various concession areas throughout the Peoria Civic Center.

E. Sportsmanship

1. If players or representatives of any school entered in an IESA state series tournament are found guilty of carelessly or maliciously breaking, damaging, or destroying property or equipment belonging to the host school or other visiting schools, such school shall be held responsible for costs incurred in repairing or replacing such property or equipment.
2. It is the clear obligation of students, school, staff, boards of education, and all other official representatives of member schools in all interscholastic relationship to practice and promote the highest principles of sportsmanship and the ethics of competition, and it is the obligation of the member school to maintain proper crowd control at all interscholastic activities. The Association shall have no responsibility for crowd control or for the actions of school representatives. The Board of Directors shall have full authority to penalize any member school,

any of whose representatives or spectators may be adjudged upon competent evidence to have violated these obligations.

VIII. AWARDS

A. Awards

1. An awards ceremony will take place as soon as possible following the posting of the results after the conclusion of the final round.
2. Team trophies will be presented to the teams in each division winning first, second, third, and fourth places. Medallions will be presented to the members and head coach of the first four placing teams.
3. Individual awards will be presented to players scoring 6.0 or more points.
 - a. Individuals scoring 8.0 points or next highest score will receive gold medallions.
 - b. Individuals scoring 7.0-7.5 points will receive silver medallions.
 - c. Individuals scoring 6.0-6.5 points will receive bronze medallions.

IX. OFFICIALS

A. Tournament Manager

1. The Tournament Manager is responsible for the general conduct of the tournament. The IESA Administrator acts as the Tournament Manager for the State Tournament.
2. A Tournament Manager does not make decisions concerning rules during a tournament unless he/she also is a Floor Official.
3. The Tournament Manager, with the approval of the IESA Office, shall secure the services of Pairing Directors, Chief Tournament Director, Scorers, and approximately 6 Stewards. A person may serve in more than one of these capacities.
4. The Tournament Manager shall have power to impose penalties relative to player conduct. Such conduct and penalties shall be announced at the meeting of players and coaches.

B. Chief Tournament Director

1. The Chief Tournament Director, designated by the IESA, will supervise the operations of the Tournament and all Stewards and the Scorers.
2. The Chief Tournament Director is in charge of the Stewards.
 - i. The Chief Tournament Director shall conduct a meeting with the Floor Officials to review rules, assignments, and duties.
3. The Chief Tournament Director is authorized to rule on matters not specifically covered by the playing rules but is to file a written report of such occurrences that includes the action taken to enable rule changes to be made as needed.
 - i. The decision of the Chief Tournament Director is final on all rule appeals.

C. Chief Pairings Director

1. The Chief Pairings Director, designated by the IESA, will supervise the Pairing Directors for each section.

D. Section Chief

1. The Section Chief is responsible for supervising the stewards and ensuring the consistency of their rulings throughout the tournament.
2. The Section Chief is responsible for hearing disputes on ruling made by the stewards and for

rendering judgement on such disputes.

3. The Section Chief is responsible for keeping track of infractions of the Rules and assigning penalties when appropriate.

E. Stewards

1. Stewards are assigned to matches to ensure adherence to the rules and to provide availability of an official.
2. Stewards shall enforce the rules on any violation they witness as provided in the rules.
3. Stewards shall rule on matters brought to their attention by the players of a game in progress or a coach.
 - i. Stewards will be on the tournament floor at all times to assist players in the event of problems or questions. The player should raise and keep hand up to summon a Steward.
4. A ruling by a Steward may be appealed in writing according to Rule 19.
5. In the event of a game not making progress, Stewards may advise players as to applicable rules.

F. Pairings Directors

1. Pairings Directors will be assigned for each Section.
2. Pairings Directors will be responsible for making the pairings of each round and keeping track of and verifying the results of each round.

G. Scorers

1. The Scorers are charged with recording results of individual matches on suitable display sheets.
2. A Scorer does not make decisions concerning rules during a tournament.