



CHESS

COMPETITION RULEBOOK

This rulebook sets out the competition format and operating rules for the Chess Competition at the Maccabi Junior Games 2026. All players, parents/guardians, coaches and spectators are expected to familiarise themselves with these rules before the event.

1. COMPETITION & AGE CATEGORIES

- Chess is an individual, mixed-gender competition. Boys and girls compete together within the applicable age category.
- Age is determined by the age the participant turns at any point during the 2026 calendar year.
- Players may play up an age category with approval but may not play down.

CATEGORY	AGES IN 2026
U12	10,11 & 12
U14	13 & 14
U16	15 & 16
U18	17 & 18

- Proof of age may be requested.
- The Tournament Director has the final decision on eligibility disputes.

2. MINIMUM ENTRIES & TOURNAMENT FORMAT

- A minimum of 4 registered players is required for an age category to run independently.
- If fewer than 4 players enter a category, Maccabi may combine adjacent age categories, amend the format or, where appropriate, refund the affected entry.
- Where categories are combined for playing purposes, age-specific medals may still be awarded where practical and where the competition structure allows.
- Final divisions will be confirmed after entries close.

- The tournament will be played using the Swiss System. Players are not eliminated after a loss.
- All players will play the scheduled number of rounds, subject to withdrawals, byes and operational circumstances.
- The number of rounds will be determined by final entry numbers and available tournament time.
- Players will generally be paired against opponents on the same or a similar score as the event progresses.
- Players should not normally play the same opponent twice.
- Where there is an odd number of players, a bye may be allocated. A player should not normally receive more than one pairing-allocated bye.
- A pairing-allocated bye will score 1 point unless otherwise announced by the Chief Arbiter.
- Official Swiss pairings may be computer-generated. Once published, pairings may only be altered by the Chief Arbiter/Tournament Director where a genuine error or exceptional circumstance exists.

3. SCORING & TIME CONTROL

WIN= 1 | DRAW = ½ | LOSS= 0

- Final ranking is determined first by total points.
- If players are tied, the intended tie-break order is: Buchholz; Median/Adjusted Buchholz; Direct Encounter where applicable; then Number of Wins.
- If a medal position remains inseparable, the Chief Arbiter/Tournament Director may prescribe an additional tie-break or play-off.
- The official tournament software/arbiter standings will constitute the final standings.
- Preferred time control is 10 minutes plus a 5-second increment per move, per player.
- If suitable increment clocks are unavailable, 15 minutes per player may be used.
- The final time control will be communicated before the competition begins and will apply consistently to the relevant division.
- When a player's time expires, the normal chess rules relating to a loss on time and the opponent's ability to checkmate will apply.

4. GENERAL LAWS, EQUIPMENT & ARBITER INTERVENTION

- Standard recognised laws of chess apply, subject to these tournament-specific rules.
- Touch-move applies: a deliberately touched own piece must be moved if it can legally move; a deliberately touched opponent's piece must be captured if legally possible.
- A player wishing only to adjust a piece should clearly indicate this before touching it.

- A move is completed after the piece has been moved and the player has pressed their clock.
- A player must use the same hand to move a piece and operate the clock.
- Players may agree to a draw in the normal manner. Repeated draw offers intended to distract an opponent are prohibited.
- Players must not analyse games on another board in the playing area while other competition games remain in progress.
- An illegal move or rules issue must be referred to the Chess Arbiter immediately.
- Players should stop or pause the clock where appropriate and wait for the arbiter rather than attempting to resolve a dispute themselves.
- The arbiter may correct the position and apply an appropriate time penalty, warning or other sanction.
- Repeated illegal moves may result in loss of the game at the arbiter's discretion, taking account of the competition format and age of the players.
- Maccabi will provide competition boards, pieces and clocks unless participants are advised otherwise.
- Players may not substitute their own board, pieces or clock without the approval of the Chess Arbiter.
- All equipment must be treated with care. Deliberate damage may result in disciplinary action and responsibility for replacement costs.

5. SCHEDULING, LATE ARRIVAL & RESULTS

- Players must check the official pairing and board allocation before every round.
- Participants must report to the playing area and be ready to play at least 10 minutes before their scheduled round.
- There is no guaranteed grace period after the official start time.
- A player who is not present and ready when a round starts may have their clock started and may ultimately forfeit the game.
- A player arriving more than 10 minutes late will ordinarily forfeit unless exceptional circumstances are accepted.
- Any event-wide late-arrival or shortage ruling will be determined by the Maccabi Executive/Tournament Director.
- Players must remain aware of announcements and revised round times.
- At the conclusion of each game, both players are responsible for ensuring that the correct result is reported to the designated results official.
- Players must not leave the chess area until their result has been submitted or recorded as instructed.
- Any incorrectly recorded result must be reported immediately. Once the next round has been paired, changes may only be made at the Chief Arbiter's discretion.

6. COACHING, SPECTATORS, ELECTRONIC DEVICES & CONDUCT

- No coaching, prompting, signalling, tactical advice or other assistance may be given once a game has started.
- Parents and spectators must remain in designated areas and maintain silence around games in progress.
- Spectators may not point out a clock issue, illegal move, check, checkmate or any feature of the position to a player.
- Any concern must be raised privately with an official and never directly with the players during a game.
- Mobile phones, smartwatches, headphones and other electronic communication or chess-assistance devices may not be used during play.
- Devices must be switched off and stored as directed by officials.
- Use of an electronic device to obtain chess assistance is considered serious misconduct and may result in loss of the game or disqualification.
- Players must behave respectfully toward opponents, officials, volunteers and fellow participants.
- Abusive language, intimidation, cheating, deliberate distraction, unsporting conduct or refusal to comply with an official's reasonable instruction will not be tolerated.
- Sanctions may include a warning, time penalty, game loss, suspension from a round, removal from the venue or disqualification, depending on severity.
- No parent, coach or spectator may intervene directly in a game.
- Officials' decisions during play are final, subject to any applicable tournament review.

7. INJURY, WITHDRAWALS & TOURNAMENT ADMINISTRATION

- Safety and player welfare take priority over competition.
- A player who becomes unwell or is injured must notify an official immediately. The arbiter may pause a clock or game where reasonably necessary for an urgent medical issue.
- Medical stoppages and any return to play will be managed by the event medical team together with tournament officials.
- Officials may stop or discontinue participation where they believe continuing would be unsafe.
- A participant who withdraws before the event should notify Maccabi as soon as possible.
- Any pre-event replacement must be formally notified to and approved by Maccabi and must satisfy the relevant age and registration requirements.
- Once the chess competition has begun, players may not be substituted into another player's Swiss score or position.

- A player withdrawing during the tournament must inform the Chess Arbiter so that future pairings can be adjusted. Completed results remain part of the official competition record.
- Chess is an individual sport for registration purposes.
- A participant may enter one team sport plus one individual sport under the standard Games entry structure.
- An additional individual sport may be permitted at the applicable additional fee of R500, subject to scheduling feasibility.
- Golf cannot be combined with a team sport because it is held at a separate venue.
- Dancers may participate in a team sport where they remain within the three dance entries included in their registration; additional Dance entries are governed by the Dance participation rules.
- Exact sport days, round times and fixtures will be issued after final entries are known.
- Maccabi will make reasonable efforts to minimise clashes, but participation in multiple sports does not guarantee that every potential clash can be accommodated. Tournament scheduling takes precedence.

8. MEDALS & FINAL AUTHORITY

- Gold, silver and bronze medals will be awarded according to the final placings in each eligible age category under the approved competition structure.
- Medal positions are determined by total Swiss points followed by the published tie-break procedure.
- Where divisions have been combined, medal arrangements will be confirmed by the organisers in accordance with the final competition structure.
- Any board-level rules concern must first be referred promptly to the Chess Arbiter.
- Parents, coaches and players may not disrupt a game or argue with an official while play is continuing.
- Administrative concerns involving eligibility, scheduling, discipline, safety or tournament structure may be referred to the Tournament Director.
- The Chess Arbiter's in-play chess rulings are final, subject to any specific review the Tournament Director considers necessary for tournament administration.
- The Tournament Director has final authority over scheduling, eligibility, competition format, discipline, safety and any matter not specifically covered by these rules.
- Maccabi reserves the right to adjust round times, the number of rounds, pairing procedures, time controls or division structures where entry numbers, delays, safety or unforeseen circumstances require it.
- Any material change will be communicated as soon as reasonably possible.

