

FOREWORD

The Official Code in French was finally passed by the Council of the F.I.D.E. at Venice in July, 1929, and the Units were requested to have the Code translated into the necessary languages in order to secure universal adoption. The B.C.F. undertook the translation into English and finally submitted to the President of the F.I.D.E. a British Edition which was passed as conforming to the arrangement and expressing the true intent and meaning of the French Official Code, a literal translation being found inadequate.

THE LAWS OF CHESS

AUTHORISED EDITION OF THE OFFICIAL CODE COMPILED BY THE
FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DES ECHECS
PUBLISHED BY THE
BRITISH CHESS FEDERATION
1931

1. DEFINITION AND OBJECT

- i. Chess, a game in the play of which there is no element of chance, is played by two persons on a square called the Chess Board and divided into 64 squares coloured light and dark alternately. Each person shall play with a series of sixteen men, one series to be light coloured and called White, and the other series to be dark coloured and called Black.
- ii. The object of the play is to checkmate the Opponent's King and the Player who checkmates thereby wins the game.

2. THE CHESS BOARD

- i. The Chess Board shall be so placed between the two persons that the nearer corner square at their respective right hands shall be light coloured.
- ii. Every vertical sequence of eight adjoining squares is termed a file.
- iii. Every horizontal sequence of eight adjoining squares is termed a rank.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE MEN

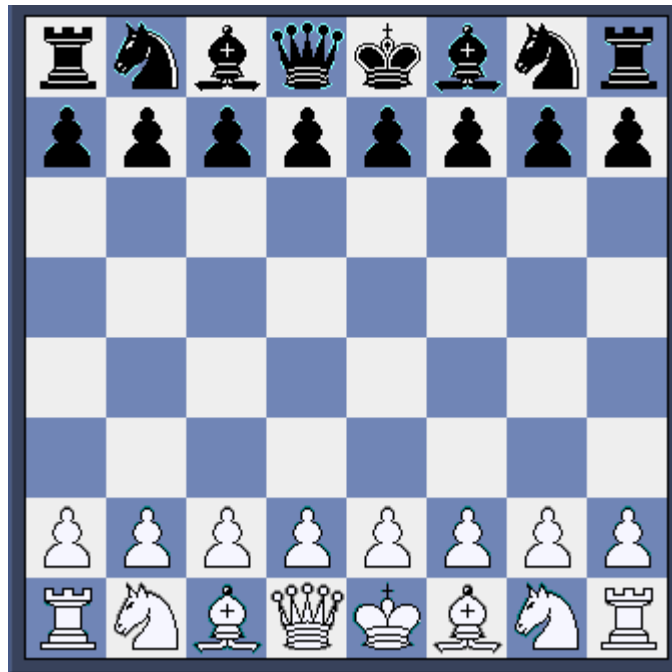
The men in each of the two series are:-

NAMES	PRINTED SYMBOLS	
	WHITE	BLACK
A KING		
A QUEEN		
TWO ROOKS		
TWO BISHOPS		
TWO KNIGHTS		
EIGHT PAWNS		

4. INITIAL POSITION OF THE MEN

i. The men shall be arranged on the chess board before the commencement of a game as shown in the diagram below: -

BLACK



WHITE

- ii. The first move in a game shall be made with a White man.
- iii. The persons shall play alternately, one move at a time.
- iv. The person whose turn it is to move is termed the Player and the other is termed the Opponent.

5. NOTATION

- i. Only the two most widely used systems of recording chess moves, namely, the Descriptive and the Algebraic, are recognised by the F.I.D.E.
- ii. Affiliated Units can select either of these two systems for their use.
- iii. The Descriptive System.

The men (except the Knight) are designated by their initials and the Knight by Kt.

The Bishop, Knight and Rook from the King's side of the chess board are, if necessary, further designated by prefixing the letter K and the corresponding men on the Queen's side by prefixing the letter Q.

The eight files counting consecutively from left to right on the side of the chess board initially occupied by the White men are designated the QR, QKt, QB, Q, K, KB, KKt and KR files respectively.

The eight ranks are numbered for the White men 1 to 8 from the side of the chess board initially occupied by them, and inversely for the Black men 1 to 8 from the side of the chess board initially occupied by them.

A move shall be recorded by the letter designating the man moved followed by the letter or letters and number designating the file and rank respectively of the square to which the man has been moved. For instance, Q.KB4 means the Q is moved to the fourth square of the file of the King's

Bishop. When two men of the same series and denomination can be moved legally to the same square, the letter or letters and number designating the file and number of the square which the moved man occupied shall be added in brackets to the letter designating the man moved. For instance R(KKt2) Kt4 means the R on the second square of the KKt file is moved to the fourth square of the same file.

Abbreviations.

Castles KR or O—O = Castles with the KR (Short Castling).

Castles QR or O—O--O = Castles with the QR (Long Castling).

X = Captures.

Ch = Check.

Mate = Check and Mate.

iv. The Algebraic System.

The men (except the Pawns, which are not specially indicated) are designated by the same letters as in the Descriptive system.

The eight files counting from the side of the board initially occupied by the White men and from left to right are lettered consecutively a to h.

The eight ranks counting from the same side of the board are numbered consecutively 1 to 8. Each square is therefore named by the combination in the following order of the letter of the file and the number of the rank in which it occurs;

A move shall be recorded by the designation of the man moved (not being a Pawn) followed by the designations respectively of the square it occupied and then the square to which it has been moved, but in abbreviated notation mention of the first-named square may be omitted unless thereby the record becomes capable of interpretation as applying to more than one man. For instance, Bcl-f4 means the Bishop on square cl is moved to square f4 and in abbreviated notation is recorded as Bf4. A move of a Pawn shall be recorded by the combination in the following order of the letter of the file and the number of the rank in which the square to which it has been moved occurs. For instance, e7-e5 means the Pawn on square e7 is moved to square e5 and in abbreviated notation is recorded e5.

Abbreviations

O-O = Castles with the KR (Short Castling).

O-O-O = castles with the QR (Long Castling).

: or x = Captures.

+ = Check.

:+ = Captures and Checks.

x = Check and Mate.

:x = Captures and Checkmates.

Commentary Signs

! = Good move.

? = Inferior move.

6. CURRENT EXPRESSIONS

Man - A term applicable to each King, Queen, Rook, Bishop, Knight and Pawn.

Piece - A term applicable to each man except a Pawn.

Pinned Man - A man that occupies at square between the King of the same colour and an opposing piece that would otherwise be giving check to the King, or a man the movement of which would expose to capture a piece of a higher value than the capturing man.

Discovered Check - Check given to the Opponent's king when the line of action of the checking piece is opened by the movement of another man of the same colour.

Double Check - Check given by the man moved in addition to the discovered check from another piece.

An Exchange - The exchange by capture of identical men, or of men of practically the same theoretical value.

Winning or Losing the Exchange - To exchange by capture a Bishop or Knight for a Rook is winning, and of a Rook for Bishop or Knight is losing, the exchange.

7. MOVEMENTS OF THE MEN IN GENERAL

i and ii. The move of a man shall be to an unoccupied square or to a square occupied by an opposing man.

iii. The move of a man shall not cause such man to pass over any occupied square, except in the case of the move of the Knight.

iv. A legal move of a man to a square occupied by an opposing man requires the removal of that opposing man by the Player from the chess board.

8. MOVEMENTS OF THE INDIVIDUAL MEN

The King can be moved to a square adjoining the square he occupies except in the case of Castling, which is a combined move of the K and the R, but counts as one move, in which first the K, occupying his own square is placed on one of the two nearest squares of the same colour as his own in the same rank and then the R, towards which the K has been moved, is placed on the next square on the further side of the moved K. Castling is not permitted (a) when either the K or R has been moved previously; (b) when any square between the K and the R is Occupied by a man; (c) if the K be in check; or (d) if Castling would cause the K to pass over, or occupy any square on which he would be in check. (See 9.)

The Queen can be moved to a square, being one of those forming the file, or the rank, or the diagonals to all of which the square the Queen occupies is common.

The Rook can be moved to a square, being one of those forming the file, or the rank, to both of which the square the R occupies is common.

The Bishop can be moved to a square, being one of those forming the diagonals to which the square the B occupies is common.

The Knight can be moved like a R one square and then like a B one square, which final square must not adjoin the square from which the Knight is moved, such movements constituting one move.

A Pawn, when not making a capture, can be moved forward on the file one or two squares on its first move, and afterwards one square only at a time.

A capture with a Pawn can be made when the opposing man occupies the nearest square forward of either of the diagonals to which the square occupied by the capturing Pawn is common.

En Passant - A Pawn which has been moved two squares on its first move is liable to be captured on the following move by a Player's Pawn that could have captured it if it had moved only one square, precisely as though it had so moved.

Promotion - Each Pawn that is moved to a square on the eighth rank must be exchanged for a Q, R, B or Kt of the same series without regard to the number of such pieces already on the board.

9. CHECK

i. and ii. The King is in "check" if the square he occupies is commanded by an opposing man whether pinned or not.

Note—It is customary, but not obligatory, for the Player to advise the Opponent of this fact by saying "check".

iii. and iv. The K must not be moved to a square on which he would be in "check" or to any one of the squares adjacent to the square occupied by the opposing K.

v. A checked K must be moved out of check, or the checking man captured, or the check parted by the interposition of another man in the next move after the one giving check. (See 10 (i).)

vi. A Player who makes a move which does not fulfil the conditions in (v) must retract that move and make another move which does so comply, and, if possible, with the man he has touched in making the retracted move.

10. CHECKMATE

i. Checkmate is a check from which the K cannot be relieved by any of the moves prescribed in 9 (v.) and ends the game.

ii. The fact of having announced erroneously a checkmate in an indefinite or stated number of moves shall not affect the after-course of the game.

11. THE MOVE

The choice of playing the first game with the White men or the Black men shall be determined by lot, or by agreement, and in a match of two or more games the two persons shall play with the two series alternately, irrespective of the results of the games, but games annulled according to 12 shall not be reckoned in applying this rule.

12. ANNULLED GAMES

i. If in the course of or immediately after a game it be proved that the initial position of the men on the board was incorrect, or the chess board wrongly placed initially, the game shall be annulled.

ii. If in the course of a game the number or position of the men be altered illegally the position immediately before the alteration occurred must be reinstated and the game resumed therefrom.

iii. If this position cannot be ascertained the game shall be annulled and there shall be a replay.

13. COMPLETION OF MOVE

A move is complete:

(a) In moving a man from one square to another, when the Player has quitted the man.

(b) In capturing, when the captured man has been removed from the board and the Player has quitted the man making the capture.

(c) In Castling, when the Player has quitted the Rook.

(d) In promoting a Pawn, when the Player has replaced the Pawn by the selected piece and quitted the latter. For sealed move see 21.

14. ADJUSTMENT OF THE MEN

i. The Player may adjust one or more of his men on their respective squares after giving previous notice of his intention so to do. (Note—It is customary to use the expression "I adjust".)

ii. The Player shall not adjust the Opponent's men, or the Opponent the Player's men. The Opponent, however, shall adjust the position of his men on the board if requested by the Player.

iii. If the men be disarranged accidentally, the timing clocks, if in use (see 20), must be stopped immediately and the position reinstated, and, if a Tournament game, under the direction of the controlling official in charge thereof. If, moreover, it be proved either in the course of the game, or immediately after it is finished, that the position has been incorrectly set-up, the game shall be resumed from the correct position.

15. TOUCHING MEN

If the Player touch

- (a) One of his own men he must move it.
- (b) One of the Opponent's men he must take it.
- (c) One of his own men and one of the Opponent's men, he must take the latter with the former, if such capture be a legal move. If not, the Opponent may require either that the Player shall move his man touched, or take with any one of his men at the Player's option with which the capture can be effected legally, the Opponent's man touched.

If none of the moves indicated in a, b, c can be made legally, no penalty can be exacted.

- (d) Several of his own men, the Opponent has the right to name which of these men the Player shall move.

If none of these men can be moved legally no penalty can be exacted.

- (e) Several of the Opponent's men, the Opponent has the right to name which man shall be taken. If none of these men can be taken no penalty can be exacted.

16. DRAWN GAMES

The game is drawn

- (a) When the Player cannot make a legal move and the King is not in check. This King is then said to be stalemated.
- (b) If the Player prove he can subject the Opponent's King to an endless series of checks.
- (c) By recurrence of position when the same position occurs three times in the game, and the same person is Player on each occasion, and if such Player claim the draw before the position is altered by further play, otherwise no claim can be sustained. (For the purpose of this Clause there shall be no distinction between the King and Queen's Rooks and Knights, or between the original pieces and pieces of the same denomination and colour obtained through the promotion of Pawns).
- (d) By mutual agreement, but only after 30 moves have been made with the Black men.
- (e) The game shall be declared drawn if the Player prove that 50 moves have been made on each side without checkmate having been given and without any man having been captured or Pawn moved.
- (f) Either the Player or the Opponent may at any period of the game demand that the other shall check-mate him in 50 moves (subject to the conditions attached in (e). If checkmate is not given in 50 moves, the game shall be declared drawn. Nevertheless, the count of 50 moves shall begin again after each capture of any man and after each movement of a Pawn. Exception shall be made for certain positions where theoretically more than 50 moves are necessary to force a checkmate and in this case a number of moves double the number established by theory as being necessary for this object shall be allowed in lieu of the 50. The draw must be claimed by either the Player or the Opponent immediately the stipulated number of moves in Conditions (e) and/or (f) of the particular case is completed without checkmate being given, and not at any later period.

17. ILLEGAL MOVES

If a Player make an illegal move and the Opponent draw attention to the fact before touching any of his own men, the illegal move must be retracted, and the game shall be continued as follows:—

- (a) When a capture has not been made, the Player shall make a legal move with the man he moved illegally, but if no such legal move can be made no penalty can be exacted.
- (b) If a capture has been made, the Player must either take the Opponent's man by a legal move, or make a legal move with his own man touched at the option of the Opponent, but if no such legal move can be made no penalty can be exacted.
- (c) When the illegal move is a sealed move and the mistake cannot be rectified with absolute certainty by the official in charge of the game, it shall be scored as lost by the Player who sealed the illegal move.

(d) If in the course of a game it is proved that an illegal move has been made and not retracted, the position existing immediately before the illegal move was made shall be reinstated and the game shall be continued from that position. If the position cannot be reinstated the game shall be annulled.

18. PENALTIES

- i. The Opponent can exact a penalty for an infraction of these laws only if he has not touched one of his own men alter the infraction occurred.
- ii. Castling cannot be exacted as a penalty move.
- iii. If the Opponent names as penalty a move which is illegal, his right to exact a penalty for the illegality committed by the Player shall be abrogated.
- iv. Before enforcing any penalty the position which existed before the illegality occurred shall be reinstated.

19. GAMES FORFEITED

The game shall be declared forfeited by the Player or the Opponent:

- i. Who wilfully upsets the board or disarranges the
 - ii. Who refuses to resume an adjourned game within a reasonable time and in accordance with the usual regulations of Tournaments and matches.
 - iii. Who refuses to comply with a legal requirement under these laws.
 - iv. Who in the course of the game refuses to obey the rules and conform to the arrangements made for the conduct of the game.
 - v. Who whether present or absent exceeds any time limit fixed for the consideration of his moves.
- Note - Except when unavoidably prevented the competitors in a Tournament shall conform to the directions of the official in charge.

20. THE USE OF THE CLOCK

- i. If the game be played with a time limit, the following rules shall apply:
 - (a) Each competitor shall make at least 30 moves in the first two hours of his own time, 45 moves by the end of the first three similar hours, and a proportionate number of moves by the end of each successive similar hour.
 - (b) This time limit may be modified in the regulations framed for any match or Tournament.
 - (c) When it is proved there has been a mistake not caused by negligence in the recording of the time occupied, the mistake shall be rectified.
 - (d) The Player is forbidden to stop his clock before completing his move except in the cases detailed in this Law.
 - (e) When there are grounds for a claim under this Law the two clocks shall be stopped and as soon as the official in charge of the Tournament has given his decision in respect to the claim shall, if necessary, be set going again by him.
- ii. If the Player exceed the time allowed for the consideration of his moves, the official in charge shall declare without making any exception the game lost by the Player (even if he and the Opponent object).
- iii. If the Opponent's clock be allowed to go on, the person who notices the occurrence may not inform the Player or the Opponent but shall inform the official in charge, who shall take the necessary steps to deal with the occurrence.
- iv. If a competitor in a match or a Tournament be absent at the time fixed for commencement or resumption of play, his clock shall be set going as soon as he becomes the Player, and the time which elapses until he has made his move shall count as time for the consideration of his move.

- v. The competitor who without valid reason arrives at the place of meeting more than one hour late loses the game.
- vi. If both competitors without valid reason arrive at the place of meeting more than an hour late the game shall be declared lost by both.

21. ADJOURNED GAMES

- i. When a game played with or without time limit is adjourned the Player at the moment of adjournment has the right to record his move in writing.
- ii. The Player must record the move himself and place it in an envelope, which he shall then seal. After affixing his signature he shall hand the envelope at once to the official in charge of the Tournament. The Player's clock, if one be in use, shall not be stopped until the record of the move is sealed.
- iii. So long as the game stands adjourned neither the Player nor the Opponent shall be allowed access to the envelope containing the sealed move.
- iv. At the adjournment it shall be the duty of the Player and the Opponent to make sure that a correct record of the position as well as the time indicated as elapsed by each of the two clocks, if in use, has been recorded on the envelope.
- v. On resumption of the game it shall be the duty of the Opponent to reinstate the position on the board, set the clocks to the correct times, open the envelope, make the sealed move on the board, and finally set the Player's clock in motion.
- vi. The envelope containing the sealed move shall not be opened in the absence of the Player, but the official in charge shall set the Player's clock in motion at the time fixed for resumption of the game.
- vii. If the position or (in the case of a game played under the time limit) the times that have elapsed at the adjournment cannot be correctly ascertained, the game shall be annulled.
- viii. If the position be reinstated incorrectly all the subsequent moves, if any, shall be annulled and the game resumed from the correct position. If the correct position cannot be ascertained, the game shall be annulled.
- vi. The envelope containing the sealed move shall not be opened in the absence of the Player, but the official in charge shall set the Player's clock in motion at the time fixed for resumption of the game.
- vii. If the position or (in the case of a game played under the time limit) the times that have elapsed at the adjournment cannot be correctly ascertained, the game shall be annulled.
- viii. If the position be reinstated incorrectly all the subsequent moves, if any, shall be annulled and the game resumed from the correct position. If the correct position cannot be ascertained, the game shall be annulled.

21. GAMES AT ODDS

- i. In a set of games, a person may give odds in all the games to the other person by giving up the right to move first.
- ii. The person who receives the odds of two or more moves must make them all at the beginning of a game in his first turn to play.
- iii. If the odds consist of several moves they shall count for that number of moves in all calculations of time-limit. Similarly the first move of the person who gives the odds shall count as the same number of moves as those made by the receiver of the odds.
- iv. The person who receives odds of two or more moves must not move any man beyond his fourth rank until the other person has made one move.
- v. The person who gives the odds of a man or men shall have the right to move first unless such right to move is also granted.

- vi. If the odds of a Pawn be given, or of a Pawn and one or more moves, the King's Bishop's Pawn shall be the Pawn removed from the board.
- vii. At odds of a Rook, or a Bishop, or a Knight, the piece given is usually, and in the absence of an agreement to the contrary shall be, the Queen's piece.
- viii. The person who gives the odds of a Rook may Castle as though this Rook were on the board, on the side from which the Rook has been removed, subject to the condition that this Rook's square is not occupied by any other man of either series.

23. RECORDING OF GAMES

- i. Each competitor in a match or Tournament shall record all the moves in his games in a clear and intelligible manner.
- ii. In case of discrepancy between the number of moves recorded in any game by the two competitors they may stop the clocks while they are engaged in rectifying the mistake. In order to avail themselves of this right each competitor must have recorded his last move.
- iii. The winner of a game shall give to the official in charge a correct and legible record of the game immediately on completion, and in the case of a drawn game, both players shall give in such record.

24. SUBMISSION OF DISPUTES

- i. A dispute on a question of fact may be submitted by agreement of the Player and Opponent to the decision of an disinterested spectator, in which case his decision shall be binding without right of appeal.
- ii. Any question of a special nature in connection with a game, and not provided for in these Laws, or any disagreement between a Player and his Opponent as to the interpretation, or application of any of these Rules shall be submitted without delay (a) to an Umpire whose decision shall be given at once; (b) if the game is being played in a Tournament, to the governing committee. In both cases the game shall be adjourned until the decision is given, which decision shall be binding without right of appeal.

25. DECISION OF F.I.D.E.

The Bureau of the F.I.D.E. shall have the right to give an official, final and binding decision in any case referred to it of general doubt as to the interpretation or application of any of these Laws.

ANNEXE

CONDUCT OF PLAYER AND OPPONENT

- i. Written or printed notes (except the record of moves made) dealing with or having any bearing on a game in progress shall not be referred to or utilised by the Player or his Opponent, and neither of them shall have recourse to any extraneous advice or information.
- ii. No analysis of games shall be allowed in the Tournament Rooms.
- iii. Neither Player nor Opponent shall make any comments on any of the moves in the game in progress between them.
- iv. Neither Player nor Opponent shall touch or point to any square on the board for the purpose of facilitating reckoning possible moves.
- v. A legal move shall not be retracted.
- vi. A move shall be made by transferring the man touched directly towards the square to be occupied, and the man must be quitted immediately it has been placed on that square. In Castling the King shall first be moved and afterwards the Rook.

In promoting a Pawn the Player shall immediately remove the Pawn from the Board and place the substituted piece on the vacated square.

In Capturing, the Player shall immediately remove the captured man from the board.

vii. No comments of any kind, or suggestions as to drawing or abandoning the game shall be added to a sealed move.

viii. The Player who perceives that his Opponent's clock is going should call his attention to the fact.

ix. Neither Player nor Opponent shall in any way whatsoever distract the attention of, or cause annoyance to, the other.

CERTIFICATE

The Undersigned, instructed by the General Assembly of the F.I.D.E. for the publication of Laws, declares the present text to agree with the final draft approved by the General Assembly of the VIth Congress of Venice.

(Signed) A. RUEB,
President.

THE HAGUE,
31st March, 1931.