

GUIDELINES FOR EVENTS FOR INEXPERIENCED PLAYERS

One should never lose sight of the prime objective of organizing all chess events. This is that everybody involved enjoys the event as much as possible, given that one player may win and the other may lose. This applies to players, arbiters, organizers, and so on.

- Defaulting or forfeiting players is thus undesirable, except when it is a forced variation.
- Most players want to play, not win by default. Providing a filler or house player for somebody who would otherwise win by default is desirable.
- It should be made clear that, if the event is a Swiss, nobody is knocked out. All players play all rounds.
- For a Swiss, allowing ½ point byes so that a player can miss a round can be highly effective.
- There is little point in scoring the games 3/1/0. (Article 11)
- There is little point in having rules about no draws in less than a certain number of moves. (Article 9.1)
- Because a player has infringed a rule does not mean they have to be defaulted. There are lesser penalties. A warning is often sufficient. (Article 13.4)

Most events are for people, irrespective of their age, sex, etc. Events for very young children have their own very special problems. Chess education often goes hand in hand with the actual play.

- Sometimes children need cushions on their chair in order to be comfortable.
- Often there is no point in using clocks; we have all had events where the first game is completed before all the games have started. Children sometimes concentrate on the clock to the exclusion of all else.
- A round robin is often to be preferred over a Swiss. Sometimes the people in charge do not understand the system. That children may have to stand around waiting for the draw to be made is highly undesirable. The noise level rises inexorably and the children get bored.
- It is very useful to discuss the games after play, but children usually keep score extremely badly. It is better to wander around and make notes of interesting situations during play.
- Provision of some form of coaching adds greatly to any chess event.
- In the UK Chess Challenge, 0 points are awarded for a defaulted game, 1 for a loss, 2 for a draw and 3 for a draw. This is an identical scoring system to the more familiar 0, ½, 1. It has the advantage that every child gets some points.
- It is highly desirable that each child gets something to take away. This might be a certificate, pen, button badge or magazine.
- Players of all ages also like prize money. It lends validity to the competitive nature of the event.
- Children readily adapt to the idea that, if they need a controller, they put up their hand. Adults would not.
- It is best if the result is handed in using either a scoresheet or result slip. Relying on word of mouth is fraught with problems; it is not unknown for 8 year olds to falsify the result.
- It is desirable to have a separate safe area where children can play and run around.
- The whole matter of refreshments must be considered in depth.
- The toilet facilities should be inspected at any event, but it is vital for a children's event.
- The events are often started in a separate area and then the children led into the room playing room separated from their parents. Chess teaches children independence at a very

early age. One of its benefits is that they learn to be responsible for their own decisions, which is unusual in modern society.

- Parents need to be educated. The film 'Searching for Bobby Fischer' ('Innocent Moves' in the UK) should be required viewing. It explores the relationship between a young chessplayer and his father.
- In the UK people working with children other than privately are required to have police clearance.
- In the UK and USA there is a thriving industry teaching children the rudiments of chess. Unfortunately they then often stop playing by the age of nine. Education is never wasted and they may return to the game later. But it is highly desirable they learn beyond simply pushing the pieces around and, without a guiding adult, this is unlikely to happen. Competitive events are required and a relationship established with competitive events for more mature players.