

Differences between FIDE's Laws of Chess and USCF Rules

USCF Website (<http://main.uschess.org/content/view/11748/668/>)

With highlighting by Mike Hoffpauir, NTD, May 2013

	<u>FIDE Laws of Chess</u>	<u>USCF Rules</u>
1.	The arbiter can call fallen flags without a claim by the player or the opponent.	Only the players may call a fallen flag.
2.	The arbiter will correct all observed rules violations (such as illegal moves and "touch move" violations) even if the opponent does not make a claim. (However, the opponent may make a claim if the arbiter does not observe the violation.)	The director will correct illegal moves observed unless either player has less than five minutes remaining in the time control. (On the other hand, variation 1111 is often used, although not typically announced. Under this variation, the director does not correct illegal moves unless a player makes a claim.) Other rule violations (such as "touch move") require the opponent to make a claim.
3.	The Laws of Chess require that a player whose cell phone rings shall lose the game on the first offense. Players are forbidden to have cell phones that are not turned completely off without permission of the arbiter.	USCF rule 20N provides for a time penalty the first time a player's cell phone rings.
4.	You must make your move on the board first and only then record the move unless you are claiming a draw by triple occurrence of position or by the 50 move rule (or sealing a move).	USCF rule 15A requires the player to make the move first and only then record the move. However, a commonly used variation (often unannounced) allows a player using a paper scoresheet to write the move on the scoresheet before making the move on the board.
5.	The penalty for the first two illegal moves is to add two minutes to the opponent's time (whether or not the time control is a sudden death time control). A third illegal move results in loss of the game.	A strict reading of rule 11 indicates that two minutes are added to the opponent's clock only for an illegal move in a sudden death time control. However, a recent discussion in the rules committee has resulted in the determination that two minutes are added to the opponent's clock even in a non-sudden death time control as a result of applying the standard penalty of rule 1C2. Also, there is no limit on the number of illegal moves a player may make in a game.
6.	There is no limit how far back in the game an illegal move may be corrected.	If an illegal move is not corrected within ten moves (or within two moves in a sudden death time control in a time pressure situation, the illegal move stands.

7.	<p>If the time control has an increment of at least 30 seconds per move, both players are required to record moves at all times. If an increment of less than 30 seconds is used (or time delay), you must continue recording moves if you have at least five minutes on the clock, even if the opponent has less than five minutes remaining.</p>	<p>A player may stop recording moves for the rest of the time control if the opponent has less than five minutes remaining. If the time control has an increment of at least 30 seconds per move, both players are required to record moves at all times.</p>
8.	<p>Unless specified otherwise, a player who is late at all for the start of the round forfeits (the "zero tolerance" rule). The rules for a tournament may specify a different "default time." In this case, if both players are late, all the elapsed time comes off White's clock</p>	<p>The game is lost by a player who arrives at the chessboard more than one hour late. If both players are late, the elapsed time from the start of the round until the first player arrives is divided in half, and that time is subtracted from each player's clock. (So, for instance, if the first player is forty minutes late, twenty minutes should be subtracted from both sides of the clock.)</p>
9.	<p>It is not necessary to have a complete scoresheet to win on time in a non-sudden death time control. Calling your own flag to prevent the opponent from filling in moves on an incomplete score sheet won't help.</p>	<p>To claim a win on time in a non-sudden death time control, the opponent must have a reasonably complete scoresheet with no more than three missing or incorrect move pairs for the time control. A player may call his own flag as a means of preventing the opponent from filling in missing moves on the scoresheet. (Once the flag has been called, the opponent may not update the scoresheet.)</p>
10.	<p>When castling, the player must touch the king first (or the king and rook at the same time). If the player touches the rook first, castling with that rook is not allowed, and the touch move rule is applied to the rook.</p>	<p>When castling, the player may touch either the king or the rook first.</p>
11.	<p>When promoting a pawn, the choice of promotion piece is final as soon as the piece touches the promotion square (even if the player has not yet released the promotion piece).</p>	<p>Pawn promotion is complete only after the player releases the promotion piece on the square of promotion. The promotion piece can be replaced with a different one as long as the player has not released it.</p>

More Obscure differences

	FIDE Laws of Chess	USCF Rules
<u>Draws & Draw Situations</u>		
1.	The penalty for an incorrect draw claim is to add three minutes to the opponent's time.	The penalty for an incorrect draw claim is to add two minutes to the opponent's time.
2.	If claiming a draw by triple occurrence of position or the 50 move rule, you must write your move on the score sheet without making the move on the board . If you make the move on the board, you are no longer considered to be "on the move" (even if your clock is still running), and a draw claim will be rejected.	If claiming a draw by triple occurrence of position and the player's next move would cause the third occurrence, the correct procedure is to write the move on the scoresheet but not to execute the move on the board. However, under USCF rules, a player is considered to be "on the move" until the player presses the clock. So, if the player (incorrectly) makes the move on the board but does not press the clock, the player does not lose the right to claim the draw. Also, to claim a draw by the 50 move rule, the player should make the move on the board (if needed to reach the count of 50 moves by both sides) and must claim the draw before pressing the clock.
3.	A player with less than two minutes remaining on the clock may claim a draw under Article 10.2, even if there is a delay or increment. The player may claim a draw based on the opponent not making any attempt to win the game by normal means. The arbiter's ruling on such a claim is final and is not subject to appeal.	USCF rule 14H (insufficient losing chances) does not apply if the game is played with a properly set delay or increment capable clock .
4.	It is possible to lose on time in situations that are a draw under USCF rules. For instance, GM Nakamura lost on time with a king and rook vs. king and knight. Under the FIDE laws of chess, the game is drawn when one player runs out of time only if there is no legal sequence of moves by which the opponent could checkmate the player. Since there is a helpmate that allows a king and one knight to checkmate a player with a king and rook, GM Nakamura lost.	USCF rule 14E (insufficient material to win on time) specifies cases where the game is drawn even if one player runs out of time. One of the cases listed in rule 14E is the opponent having only a king and knight (<u>and not having a forced win</u>).

Pawn Promotion

5.	When promoting a pawn, the choice of promotion piece is final as soon as the piece touches the promotion square (even if the player has not yet released the promotion piece).	When promoting a pawn, the choice of promotion piece is final when the player releases the promotion piece from his hand.
6.	It is illegal to use an inverted rook to mean "queen" when promoting a pawn. If a promotion piece is not readily available, the player must stop the clocks and ask the arbiter for assistance. (An arbiter would be within his rights to rule that the player had promoted to a rook.)	The USCF rules explicitly state that, when promoting a pawn, an upside-down rook is to be considered to be a queen.
7.	It is an illegal move to leave a pawn on the last rank and then to press the clock without replacing the pawn with the intended promotion piece. The opponent will be awarded an additional two minutes in this case.	It is incorrect, but not considered an illegal move, to leave a pawn on the last rank and then to press the clock without replacing the pawn with the intended promotion piece. In this case, the opponent may immediately press the clock to compel the player to replace the pawn with the promotion piece on his own time.

Actual or Potential Illegal Move Situations

8.	When correcting illegal moves, the arbiter may use his best judgment to determine the time on each clock.	In the case of an illegal move, there is no adjustment of the times shown on the clock.
9.	If the players start the game with the colors reversed, the game continues unless the arbiter rules otherwise. If the game started with the pieces incorrectly set up, the game is canceled and a new game played in its place. (It is incorrect to fix a reversed king and queen, the most common case of an incorrect initial position, by switching the king and queen to their correct squares.)	Starting the game with the colors reversed is treated as an illegal move at the start of the game, as is starting the game with the pieces set up incorrectly. In both cases, the mistake must be corrected within the first ten moves by both players, or the game will continue as is. (While it is a common fix, it is incorrect to fix a reversed king and queen [the most common case of an incorrect initial position] by just swapping the king and queen back to their correct squares.)