

Minnesota State Chess Association
Electronic Device and Fair Play Policy
(Adopted April 9, 2025)

I. Introduction

The integrity of our chess events is essential to the mission of the Minnesota State Chess Association. This Electronic Device and Fair Play Policy is intended to foster confidence in the fairness and legitimacy of all tournament games played in our events. In an era of rapid technological advancement, even the appearance of unfair play can cast doubt on legitimate results.

This policy is therefore designed not only to prevent cheating, but also to avoid situations that might reasonably raise concerns about the possibility of cheating. Players should understand that violations of this policy may be penalized even in the absence of cheating or intent to cheat. A player's assertion that they did not use unauthorized assistance will not serve as a defense to violations of this policy.

II. Electronic Devices

- 1. Definition.** As used in this policy, an "electronic device" means any cell phone, smart watch, tablet, laptop, or other device capable of communication or chess analysis, regardless of whether or not chess software is installed on the device.
- 2. Possession and/or Use Prohibited.**
 - (a) Players.** A player with a tournament game in progress may not possess or use an electronic device. A player will not be deemed to "possess" an electronic device if it is turned off (not placed into "silent" or "airplane" mode) and stored in compliance with Section II(3) of this policy, below.
 - (b) Spectators.** A spectator may not use an electronic device to analyze any chess position while in the playing hall if one or more tournament games are in progress. While in the playing hall, spectators must ensure that their electronic devices are either turned off or placed into "silent" or "airplane" mode. Spectators may only take photos in the playing hall during the first five minutes of a round.
- 3. Acceptable Storage Options.** To ensure compliance with this policy and avoid even the appearance of impropriety, the MSCA recommends that players simply not bring electronic devices into the playing hall (e.g., electronic devices could be left in a player's vehicle or hotel room, etc.). However, the MSCA understands that this will not always be possible. A player may therefore bring an electronic device into the playing hall if it is turned off (not placed into "silent" or "airplane" mode) and it is either (i) stored in a bag, container, or article of clothing that is placed under the player's chair or otherwise away from the player, or (ii) placed face-up on the table where the player has a game in progress. A player may not store an electronic device in the pocket of an article of

clothing they are wearing or otherwise on their person during play, even if the device is turned off.

- 4. Exceptions.** Tournament directors may, at their discretion, grant exceptions to the rules regarding electronic devices on a case-by-case basis. To request an exception (including, without limitation, to request permission to use a US Chess-approved or FIDE-approved electronic notation device or game broadcasting device), players and spectators should contact the tournament director on site or send an email to msca.board@gmail.com.

III. Fair Play

- 1. No Outside Assistance During Game Play.** In addition to the prohibition against possessing and/or using an electronic device (see Section II(2)(a) of this policy, above) a player with a tournament game in progress may not (i) solicit or utilize the assistance of any other person (e.g., a parent, friend, coach, or another player) or (ii) refer to a chess book or similar resource.
- 2. No Departing Tournament Area During Game Play.** A player with a tournament game in progress may not leave the tournament area without first obtaining the permission of the tournament director. As used in this policy, except as otherwise announced by the tournament director, the “tournament area” means the playing hall (which may include multiple rooms) and adjacent hallways and nearby restrooms. Examples of prohibited behaviors under this provision include accessing a hotel room, stepping outside to a vehicle or otherwise leaving the building, or visiting a restroom that is unnecessarily far away when a nearer restroom is available.
- 3. Leaving Board During Own Move Discouraged.** Players are discouraged from repeatedly leaving the board while it is their move, as doing so may raise fair play concerns. Tournament directors may, at their discretion, penalize players who repeatedly leave the board while it is their move. When done sparingly, the following actions will not generally raise fair play concerns, even if it is the player’s move: standing up to stretch, visiting the rest room, moving away from the board to eat or drink without disturbing other players, etc.
- 4. No Intentional Manipulation of Game Results.** Intentional manipulation of game results (e.g., prearranged draws, throwing games, etc.) or soliciting another player to manipulate game results is prohibited.

IV. Penalties for Violation. Tournament directors and the MSCA will have broad discretion in determining the penalty or penalties for violations of this policy, taking into consideration the details of the offense. Tournament directors must notify the MSCA’s board of directors as soon as practicable upon: (i) becoming aware of a violation or suspected violation of this policy, or (ii) imposing a penalty under this policy. Any penalty extending beyond the tournament in question (e.g., a ban from future events) must be approved by the MSCA’s board of directors.

- 1. Players.** The penalty for a player’s violation of these rules may be any of the following:

- (a) A verbal or written warning.
 - (b) 30 minutes or 50% of the remaining time, whichever is less, may be deducted from the player's clock.
 - (c) The player may be forfeited.
 - (d) The player may be ejected from the tournament and, in extreme cases, banned from future MSCA events for a period of one year.
 - (e) The player may be reported to US Chess for further disciplinary action.
2. **Spectators.** The penalty for a spectator's violation of these rules may be any of the following:
- (a) A verbal or written warning.
 - (b) The spectator may be ejected from the tournament and, in extreme cases, banned from future MSCA events for a period of one year.