

Players' Guide to KCCA Competitions 2026-27 (v.3)

Things to do at the beginning of the season:

- If your club has more than one team in a league, make sure that you know which team you are playing for during the Preliminary Round (group stage) of the competition.
- Check that you have a current ECF membership. You only require Bronze level to play in KCCA leagues, but you may want a higher level of membership if you expect to play in other events.
- Make sure that you have Team Captains' contact details.

Things to do in the days before a match:

- If it's an away match, make sure you know where the venue is, and what time the match starts.

Things to do just before the match:

- Take a pen with you.
- Check where the toilets are at the venue.
- Check which board you are playing on, and whether you have the black or white pieces.
- Check where the match result sheet is, so that you can fill in your result after your game.
- Check what the time control is, if it is not announced. It is usually 75 minutes for all moves, with a 15 second increment from move 1. However, just ask if you're not sure.
- Switch off your mobile phone (and any other electronic communication devices, such as smart watches) during the game and either leave it in a bag, or face-up on the table next to you.
- If you leave the room during the game, you may not take your phone with you, even if turned off.
- With the consent of the match captains (or arbiter, if present) you may leave mobiles phones or other devices turned on for medical reasons (e.g. diabetes monitoring / heart monitoring / hearing devices), or in case of emergency (e.g. you are an on-call doctor, or there is a potential family emergency). The captains / arbiter should be made aware BEFORE you start your game that your device is going to be on.

During the game:

- You must record your moves on a scoresheet until your time falls below 5 minutes. If the increments take your time above 5 minutes, you do not need to resume recording the moves.
- Try not to do anything that will distract your opponent (e.g. clicking pens, making noises, misplacing pieces on the edge of squares, talking with your team-mates).
- If your opponent plays an illegal move, pause the clock and ask the match captain / arbiter for help. An illegal move only occurs after a player has moved a piece AND pressed the clock. If the player has just touched the piece, OR has touched the piece and moved it, but NOT pressed the clock, then the captains / arbiter will give the player a warning, not a time penalty.
- If your phone or other communication device makes a noise, vibrates, or if it is clear in some other way that the phone is not turned off, you will lose the game by default (unless no warning was given at the beginning of the match).
- Do not interfere or comment on any other game in progress, even if you see an illegal move or other regularity. You may point out any potential issue to the match captains or arbiter, but do not attempt to intervene yourself.
- If your opponent is absent when the match begins, you should start their clock. If the player does not arrive after 30 minutes the game is lost by default, unless a substitute is available.
- If a substitute is used, the clocks are not reset; the substitute starts with the amount of time that is shown on the absent player's clock.
- You are not permitted to wear headphones, or wireless / Bluetooth enabled in-ear devices (such as AirPods) during the game. Ear plugs are permitted.

- You should use only the scoresheets provided by the home team, and not use scorebooks (this can count as referring to notes).
- You may ask your team captain (or arbiter, where present) what the current match score is, but you may not seek advice on whether to take a draw, or to play on for a win.
- If your game finishes, you must not use your phone in the same room as the continuing match.
- If you knock over any pieces during the game, you must replace them on the correct squares in your own time, not in your opponent's time.
- You should only adjust pieces on your own time, and must say "Adjust" or "j'adoube" before doing so. If adjusting your opponents' pieces, it would be polite to say something like "I'm just going to adjust your piece because it's not properly on its square".
- If there is a dispute during the match, the captains should seek to resolve it amicably and in accordance with the Laws of Chess and the KCCA tournament rules

After the game:

- Make sure that the match captain knows the result of your game, or if the captain is busy, put the result on the match result sheet yourself.

General notes

Offering a draw

- The correct procedure for offering a draw is; Player A makes a move on the board, then offers a draw verbally, then presses the clock. Player B then decides whether to accept the draw, or reject the offer of a draw.
- A draw offer may be rejected with a verbal response, or by playing a move on the board.
- However, any draw offer that is made outside of the correct procedure is still a valid draw offer if it is accepted by the opponent.
- When a draw has been offered this should be indicated with an 'equals' sign on the scoresheet next to the move of the player who offered the draw (e.g. 21.Nxf7=)
- Players should not repeatedly make draw offers (especially if there is nothing materially different about the position) as this can be seen as a distraction and penalised accordingly.

Miscellaneous

- Players should use only the scoresheets provided by the home team, and not use scorebooks (this can count as referring to notes).
- Players may ask their captain (or arbiter, where present) what the current match score is, but may not seek advice on whether to take a draw, or to play on for a win.
- Players whose games are finished should not use mobile phones in the same room as the continuing match.
- Players must not distract or annoy their opponent in any manner whatsoever. This includes fiddling with taken pieces, clicking pens, making noises, constantly fidgeting, and eating at the board.
- If a player knocks over their pieces, they must replace them on the correct squares on their own time, not in their opponent's time.
- Players should only adjust pieces in their own time. Only the player having the move may adjust one or more pieces of either colour, provided the player first announces their intention (for example by saying "I adjust" or "j'adoube" prior to each and every adjustment. If adjusting the opponents' pieces, it would be polite to say something like "I'm just going to adjust your piece because it is not properly on its square".
- You can find the FIDE Laws of Chess at: <https://fide.com/FIDE/handbook/LawsOfChess.pdf>
- You can find KCC Tournament Rules at: <https://kentchess.org/rules/>