

2025 U.S. Masters Chess Championship – Event Regulations

Updated November 2, 2025

The official contact email of the organizers is: [**events@charlottechesscenter.org**](mailto:events@charlottechesscenter.org).

1. **Information** - For full event information about the 2025 U.S. Masters Chess Championship ("USM") venue, eligibility, prizes, schedule, and more, see the [event website](https://charlottechesscenter.org/events/usmasters), [**charlottechesscenter.org/events/usmasters**](https://charlottechesscenter.org/events/usmasters).

2. Rules and Regulations

- a. [FIDE Laws of Chess](#)
- b. [FIDE Title Regulations](#)
- c. [FIDE Anti-cheating Regulations](#)
- d. [FIDE Ethics Code](#)
- e. [FIDE Appeals Committee Procedural Rules](#)
- f. [US Chess Safe Play Guidelines](#)
- g. [US Chess Code of Ethics](#)
- h. [CCC Terms and Conditions](#)
- i. [CCC Fair Play Policy](#)
- j. Event Spectator Policy and more – see [event website](#)
- k. The Chief Arbiter, in cooperation with the organizers, has the ultimate authority to clarify, interpret, determine, or adjust these regulations.

3. **System of Play** – 9 round Swiss system. FIDE Dutch pairings used through the SwissSys pairing program.

4. **Default Time** – the forfeit time is 60 minutes after the round begins. Players who forfeit a round are subject to a financial penalty of up to \$200.

5. **Eligibility** – in addition to the specific rating and title-based eligibility requirements as listed on the [website](#), players must be members of US Chess and FIDE in good standing.

6. **Venue and Playing Area** – Hilton Charlotte University Place Hotel, 8629 JM Keynes Drive, Charlotte, NC. During play, players may only use the players-only bathrooms and may not exit the playing area (defined as the playing hall and immediate hallway/corridors) without the accompaniment of an arbiter.

7. Awards and Prizes

- a. The USM is US Chess and FIDE-rated, and awards FIDE title norms.
- b. Prize money is generally split equally among tied players with the same number of points. US Chess rules are used for prize distribution.
- c. Female and senior bonus prizes may be won in addition to other prizes.
- d. Prizes, player conditions, and stipends are subject to [CCC Tournament Terms and Conditions](#), as well as taxes under US tax law.
- e. The USM also awards [USCF Grand Prix](#) points and [FIDE Circuit](#) points.

8. Tiebreaks/Playoff

- a. In case of a tie for first place, the top two players on “average rating of opposition, cut one” (AROC 1) tiebreaks will contest an over-the-board playoff.
- b. Unplayed games (such as forfeits and byes) are removed from the AROC 1 calculation.
- c. If one or more of the qualified players declines or is unavailable for the playoff, the next player(s) in line within the same tied group will play.
- d. The playoff will take place on Sunday, November 30, at 9:00pm unless it must be delayed by one or more of the classical games from the event.
- e. Playoff Stage 1: 2 blitz games (1 white, 1 black): 5 minutes plus 2 second increment. The player with the higher mathematical tiebreaks shall choose the color in the first game. Games will be US Chess and FIDE blitz rated. If tied 1-1, advance to Playoff Stage 2.
- f. Playoff Stage 2: Armageddon. Both sides have 1 second increment from move 1. White has 5 minutes. Players bid their desired time (low bid wins) for Black and draw odds. In the case of a tie, there shall be additional bidding rounds following the same process.
- g. The FIDE [Competitive Rules of Play for Blitz](#), B.2 apply to the playoff.
- h. The playoff winner shall be declared the 2025 US Masters Champion, and will win the \$500 bonus prize, US Masters trophy, and title.
- i. Aside from the results of a first-place playoff, tied participants share the same place in the standings. Mathematical tiebreaks will not determine any places, prizes, or designations such as FIDE Circuit points.

9. Appeals

- a. Appeals against a decision of the Chief Arbiter must be submitted in writing within 30 minutes after completion of the relevant game.
- b. Appeals shall be accompanied by a \$100 fee, which may be returned in case of a successful appeal or by decision of the Appeals Committee. The Chief Arbiter or Organizer may decide to waive the fee at the time of acceptance.
- c. Appeals shall be lodged by the affected player – no third party appeals.
- d. Decisions of the Appeals Committee are final.
- e. Appeals Committee Members are listed below.

10. Principals

- a. Sponsoring Affiliate: Charlotte Chess Center
- b. Chief Organizer: IA/IO Peter Giannatos
- c. Deputy Organizer: NA Dr. Walter High
- d. Chief Arbiter: IA/IO Grant Oen
- e. Deputy Arbiters:
 - IA/IO Aris Marghetis (CAN) - Floor
 - FA Ali Thompson - Backroom
- f. Arbiters:
 - IA Rudy Abate
 - IA Rob Getty
 - IA Peter Giannatos
 - IA Maya Myers
 - FA Sarah Brauner
 - NA Walter High
- g. Appeals Committee
 - Chair: NA Kevin Hyde
 - GM Kayden Troff
 - IM Gauri Shankar (IND)