

ESPORTS WORLD CUP

Esports World Cup 2026

Chess

This document, hereinafter referred to as "Rulebook", outlines the rules that should at all times be followed when participating in the Chess at the Esports World Cup 2026. Compliance with this Rulebook, as well as any instructions issued by the Tournament Administration, is mandatory. Failure to adhere to these may be penalized as outlined.

It should be remembered that it is always the Tournament Administration that has the last word, and that decisions that are not specifically supported, or detailed in this Rulebook, or even go against this Rulebook may be taken in extreme cases, to preserve fair play and sportsmanship.

We hope that you as a participant, spectator, or press will have an enjoyable competition to partake in and we will do our utmost to make it a fair, fun, and exciting competition for everyone involved.

1. General

- 1.1 Rule changes
- 1.2 EWC Global Rulebook
- 1.3 Validity of the rules
- 1.4 Local laws
- 1.5 Confidentiality
- 1.6 Additional agreements
- 1.7 Match broadcasting
 - 1.7.1 Rights
 - 1.7.2 Waiving these rights
 - 1.7.3 Participant responsibility
 - 1.7.4 Photo and other media rights
- 1.8 Media obligations
 - 1.8.1. Missing media obligations
- 1.9 Communication
- 1.10 Obeying instructions
- 1.11 Tournament areas
 - 1.11.1 Food, drinks, smoking and behaviour
 - 1.11.2 Removable Media
 - 1.11.3 Electronic devices
 - 1.11.4 Unnecessary items

2. Participants

- 2.1 Age Restriction
- 2.2 Player details
- 2.3 Travel & Accommodation Coverage
- 2.4 Team logos
- 2.5 Deadlines
- 2.6 Sponsor restrictions
- 2.7 Esports World Cup Scheduling Conflict

3. Format

- 3.1 Play-in
 - 3.1.1 Play-in Seeding
- 3.2 Groupstage Format
 - 3.2.1 Groupstage Seeding
- 3.3 Playoffs Format
 - 3.3.1 Playoffs Seeding

4. Schedule

5. Game Specific Rules

- 5.1 Chess.com Client Rules
 - 5.1.1 Game Creation
 - 5.1.2 Before the Match Start
 - 5.1.2.1 Match sanctioning by the administration
 - 5.1.2.3 Player Colors
 - 5.1.3 During the Match
 - 5.1.3.1 Pauses
- 5.2 Proceedings
 - 5.2.1 Determining the "Better Seed"
 - 5.2.2 During the Matches
 - 5.2.2.1 Breaks between Games
 - 5.2.2.2 Completion of the Match
- 5.3 After the Match
 - 5.3.1 Draws
 - 5.3.2 Drawing a match

6. Misconduct

- 6.1 Sanctions
 - 6.1.1 Definitions and scope of sanctions
 - 6.1.2 Penalty points
- 6.2 Fines
- 6.3 Bans/suspensions
- 6.4 Disqualification
- 6.5 Additional methods of sanction
- 6.6 Sanctions for repeat offences
- 6.7 Cheating
 - 6.7.1 Cheat software
 - 6.7.2 Information abuse
 - 6.7.3 Sanctions for cheating
 - 6.7.4 Methods to detect cheating
- 6.8 Doping
 - 6.8.1 Refusing to be tested
 - 6.8.2 List of prohibited substances and methods
 - 6.8.3 Prescribed medication
 - 6.8.4 Sanctions for doping
- 6.9 Using alcohol or other psychoactive drugs
- 6.10 Betting
- 6.11 Competition manipulation
 - 6.11.1 Sanctions for competition manipulation
- 6.12 Match fixing

- 6.12.1 Sanctions for match fixing
- 6.13 Punctuality Penalties
 - 6.13.1 Player punctuality
 - 6.13.2 No show
- 6.14 Breaking confidentiality
- 6.15 Limitations for issuing sanctions
- 6.16 Publisher or ESIC bans
- 6.17 Unsportsmanlike behaviour
 - 6.17.1 Breach of netiquette
 - 6.17.2 Public behaviour
 - 6.17.3 Insults
 - 6.17.4 Spamming
- 6.18 Damaging or soiling
- 6.19 Misleading tournament administration or players
- 6.20 Code of conduct

7. Prize money

- 7.1 Prize Distribution
- 7.2 Prize deductions due to penalty points
- 7.3 Prize deductions due to fines
- 7.4 Withdrawal of prize money
- 7.5 Prize Money in case of ongoing investigations
- 7.6 Transfer of prize money

8. Other

- 8.1 Equipment
- 8.2 Clothing
- 8.3 Flags and country identifiers
- 8.4 Internet access

9. Club Championship

10. Privacy and Data Protection

1. General

1.1 Rule changes

EWC reserves the right to amend, remove, or otherwise change the rules, without prior notice. EWC also reserves the right to make judgments on cases not specifically covered by the rulebook in order to preserve the spirit of fair competition and sportsmanship.

1.2 EWC Global Rulebook

The Chess at 2026 Esports World Cup is under jurisdiction of the [EWC Global Rulebook](#).

1.3 Validity of the rules

If a provision of this rulebook is or becomes illegal, invalid or unenforceable in any jurisdiction, that shall not affect the validity or enforceability in that jurisdiction of any other provision of this rulebook or the validity or enforceability in other jurisdictions of that or any another provision of this rulebook.

1.4 Local laws

If any rules or procedures are in conflict with local laws, they will be adjusted to be aligned with the laws in a way that stays as close as possible to the originally intended effect.

1.5 Communication

The main communication method for the Esports World Cup event is email. When contacting participants of Esports World Cup events, the tournament administration will use contact email addresses that have been supplied to them. Alternatively, where a contact email address is not known or not working, the tournament administration may use the email addresses registered to participants on tournament platforms, including but not limited to their FACEIT profiles. Further communication channels such as discord will be used throughout the tournament.

2. Participants

2.1 Age Restriction

All participants of the Esports World Cup 2026 Chess have to be at least 13 years of age at the time of their first match of the competition.

Age requirements for the participation in other competitions contributing to the EWC will be regulated by the rulebooks of said competitions. Independent of that, players under the age of 18 that qualify to EWC or the LCQ must be accompanied by a guardian/adult.

2.2 Travel & Accommodation Coverage

EWC will cover Travel & Accommodation for up to 2 team members per team, distributed as below:

Obligatory 1 position covered

- 1 Main Player

Optional 1 position covered

- 0-1 Coach
- 0-1 Additional Staff Member

2.3 Replacements

2.3.1 Replacements

If a participant is, for any reason, unable to compete anymore in the event, a replacement will be called up. If this happens before the replacement deadline, the replacement will inherit any financial benefits like paid flights and hotels from the replaced participant.

Usually competition groups or brackets will not be reseeded if they were already publicly announced before the drop-out happened. In special cases, when the fairness of the competition is in jeopardy, the tournament administration can still change or even re-draw the competition.

2.3.2 Replacement Tiebreakers

If participants have an identical score/position on/in the relevant invite list or qualifier, the one with the smallest change in lineup since then will be preferred.

If that leaves several options, the tournament administration will make a choice based on other criteria, including potential played tiebreakers.

Replacement participants will be considered and contacted to ask whether or not they want to participate.

2.3.3 Replacement deadline

A replacement deadline will be set by the tournament administration. Its passing does not mean that there will be no further replacement, but the rules for replacing are different from that point on. If no replacement can be found, the stage may start with one less participant instead.

If no earlier deadline has been set, the public announcement of the competition drawing is usually the replacement deadline.

If a player that is qualified to the main event drops, the highest ranked CCT Leaderboards player will be called as a replacement.

If a player that is qualified to the Playin phase drops or receives an invite to the group stage due to possible changes on CCT Leaderboard, the highest ranked non-qualified Last Chance Qualifier player will be called as a replacement. If 2 or more players will be tied as highest non-qualified rank, a tie breaker matches will be played.

3. Format

3.1 Play-in

The Play-in phase comprises 1 Group of 8 Players played in a double elimination bracket, with top 2 players advancing to the group stage.

All matches are played in the mode 2 games per match following the default time control for the tournament (rapid 10+0). With all matches being eliminatory or classificatory in their nature, ties in score will lead to bidding armageddon games as tiebreakers.

3.1.1 Play-in Seeding

Players will be seeded in pairings that generate matches between those who qualified from LCQ and DH Atlanta 26 following highest seeded vs lowest seeded players, with pair rotations being deployed when possible to avoid rematches in early rounds.

3.2 Groupstage Format

The Group stage comprises 1 Group of 8 Players played in a double elimination bracket. Top 4 of each group advances to the playoffs.

All matches are played in the mode 2 games per match following the default time control for the tournament (rapid 10+0). With all matches being eliminatory or classificatory in their nature, ties in score will lead to [bidding armageddon](#) games as tiebreakers.

3.2.1 Groupstage Seeding

In the seeding process players will be granted priority following the criteria outlined below:

- Defending Champion
- Speed Chess Championship
- [Chess.com](#) Open
- CCT Leaderboard
- India Rising

- Qualified from Play-in

Players will be distributed in a snake-like pattern among the 2 groups with pair rotations towards lower seeds being used to prevent the majority of players from the same source of qualification being in the same group.

Within each priority pool, players will have a base seed according to their FIDE Standard Rating, tiebroken by [Chess.com](https://www.chess.com) rapid rating recorded on 2026-08-01 after FIDE's update, with randomizations being deployed within each pool.

3.3 Playoffs Format

The playoffs comprises a 8 player single elimination bracket with a third/fourth place match.

Quarter Finals (also known as Round of 8) are played in a 4 games per match format. Semifinals (aka Ro4) and the 3rd/4th place match are played in a 6 games per match format. The grand finals are played in a Best of 3 Sets, with the sets being respectively 4 games per match, 4 games per match, and 2 games per match.

All the rounds, including each of the sets in the finals can end in ties that are undone through bidding armageddon games.

3.3.1 Playoffs Seeding

There are a total of eight (8) Players advancing to Playoffs.

- Four (4) Players advancing through the Upper Bracket of their respective group
- Four (4) Players advancing through the Lower Bracket of their respective group

The four (4) Players advancing through the Upper Bracket will be ranked from 1st to 4th based on the following factors, in the exact order they are listed. Their rankings are also the seeds they will receive in the Playoff Single Elimination bracket.

- FIDE Standard Rating after Monthly update in August
- [Chess.com](https://www.chess.com) Rapid Rating

All players that qualified to the Playoffs must be present on the stage during the Playoffs Seeding Draw.

The two (2) highest ranked/seeded Players will also receive the right to select an opponent they will face in Playoff Quarter-Finals.

- 1st ranked Player makes the selection first

- 2nd ranked Player makes the selection second
- 3rd ranked Player makes the selection third (if applicable)

When making these selections, Players may only choose another Player advancing to the Playoffs through the Lower Bracket of the opposite group.

Depending on the selections, after the first two (2) or three (3) Players chose their opponents, the remaining two (2) or one (1) unseeded Player(s) will be placed into the Playoff bracket, respecting the above rule.

4. Schedule

The competition will be carried out through 5 days of games, with the following tournament phases:

- August 11th - Play-in
- August 12th and 13th - Group Stage
- August 14th and 15th - Playoffs

For the match schedules within a day, the approach used in this competition is a rolling one - matches will start as soon as the previous one is completed - no fixed start time unless specified by the tournament administration.

5. Game Specific Rules

5.1 Chess.com Client Rules

5.1.1 Game Creation

All the matches will be created by Chess.com and made available to the players in the platform.

5.1.2 Before the Match Start

5.1.2.1 Match sanctioning by the administration

Generally it is not allowed to start and play a match without an admin allowing it. In main event matches, it is not allowed to start the match without an admin, unless it is specifically permitted otherwise by the tournament administration. Ignoring this can result in penalties for both players.

5.1.2.3 Player Colors

Unless stated otherwise, it is attributed to the better seeded player the white pieces for the first game of the series. For the Swiss format, the better seeded ruling will be overridden, and colors are determined by chess.com software. For a "Best of Sets" type of match, the players will alternate

between sets on the right to start playing with the white pieces, beginning with the highest seeded contestant.

5.1.3 During the Match

5.1.3.1 Pauses

Should a pause be required, the player must inform the tournament administration immediately in the following manner:

- physically raise their hand to notify the organizers

5.2 Proceedings

5.2.1 Determining the “Better Seed”

In addition to the topic 3.2 the better seed in tournament matches follow the outlined ruleset as indicated next. Coin tosses are the last resort, so whenever a clear seeding is given, we will avoid them and declare one player the “better seed”.

- In the Swiss Group Stage, the better seeded ruling will be overridden, and colors are determined by the pairing management software
- In eliminatory stages, the initial seeding criteria will be used to determine the better seed.

If a case is not covered here or still unclear for any reasons, contact an admin.

5.2.2 During the Matches

5.2.2.1 Breaks between Games

After each game a player may take a maximum of three minutes to join the next game. This time may be spent watching the replay of the past game, but not to leave the computer.

In matches composed of 4 games, players may step away from the computer for a maximum of five minutes after the second game. In matches composed of 6 games, this is allowed after the third and sixth games.

5.2.2.2 Completion of the Match

The match as a whole has to be finished. It is not allowed to disrupt a match between games without the permission of the tournament administration. If a player refuses to start the remaining game/games, they will be counted as not having shown up and receive the corresponding penalties for a no-show.

5.3 After the Match

5.3.1 Draws

A draw on a match may occur if:

- At the end of all games that compose the match, both players earned the same number of points;

In case of a draw, the ruling applied to the competition as tiebreaker will be followed. Being it an armageddon match, or the application of tiebreaker criteria specified in the rules.

5.3.2 Drawing a match

Players cannot offer draws before each participant before each contestant has made 40 movements in the game.

6. Misconduct

6.1 Punctuality Penalties

6.1.1 Player punctuality

For delays with players being ready at the start of a match, or between maps or breaks, participants will be sanctioned with 2 penalty points for every ten minutes after the deadline. From 25 minutes onwards, a no show will be awarded.

6.1.2 No show

Participants that won't be ready to play their match until 15 minutes after the scheduled start of the match, will lose it with the worst score possible and receive 10 penalty points.

7. Last Chance Qualifier

7.1 Basic Last Chance Qualifier Information

7.1.1 Definition and Purpose of the Last Chance Qualifier

Last Chance Qualifier (hereinafter referred to as LCQ) is a competition separate from the Tournament. Its purpose is to provide Players with an additional opportunity to earn their invitation to the Tournament.

7.1.2 LCQ Location

LCQ will take place at the following location:

- Paris Expo Port de Versailles, 1 Pl. de la Prte de Versailles, 75015 Paris, France.

7.1.3 LCQ Schedule

The LCQ will take place between 4th and 6th of August, 2026.

Detailed schedule of the LCQ will be announced by the Tournament Organizer at a later date.

7.2 LCQ Registration

7.2.1 LCQ Participation Eligibility

Everyone who meets the eligibility criteria of the Tournament as outlined in section 2. Participants may register and participate in the LCQ.

Players that already received an invitation to the Tournament may not sign up or participate in the LCQ.

7.2.2 LCQ Entrants Limitation

Participation in the LCQ is limited to 256 entrants and will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.

7.3 LCQ Format & Gameplay Rules

The LCQ comprises 8 Group of 32 Players played in, up to, 7 swiss rounds, with top 2 players advancing to an elimination phase. All matches in the swiss phase are played in the mode 1 games per match following the default time control for the tournament (rapid 10+0). The 1st place of each group will be directly seeded in to the Upper Bracket of the Playoffs, while the second place will be seeded into the lower bracket.

The LCQ playoffs is a 16 players, double elimination bracket, with 2 games per match in the early rounds and 4 games per match in the qualifying matches. The Top4 will advance to the EWC main event Play-ins phase. Since this stage is an eliminatory one, matches that end in a draw will be tiebroken by a single game of bidding armageddon.

8. Prize distribution

Main Event Prize Money		Last Chance Qualifier Prize Money	
#	Prize	#	Prize
Total:	\$1,500,000	Total:	\$50,000
1	\$250,000	1-5	0
2	\$190,000	1-5	0
3	\$145,000	1-5	0
4	\$100,000	1-5	0
5-8	\$75,000	1-5	0
5-8	\$75,000	6	\$8,000
5-8	\$75,000	7-8	\$5,000

5-8	\$75,000
9-12	\$55,000
9-12	\$55,000
9-12	\$55,000
9-12	\$55,000
13-16	\$40,000
13-16	\$40,000
13-16	\$40,000
13-16	\$40,000
17	\$30,000
18-19	\$27,500
18-19	\$27,500
20-21	\$25,000
20-21	\$25,000

7-8	\$5,000
9-12	\$3,250
9-12	\$3,250
9-12	\$3,250
9-12	\$3,250
13-16	\$2,250
13-16	\$2,250
13-16	\$2,250
13-16	\$2,250
17-20	\$1,500
17-20	\$1,500
17-20	\$1,500
17-20	\$1,500
21-24	\$1,000
21-24	\$1,000
21-24	\$1,000
21-24	\$1,000

9. Other

9.1 Equipment

EWC always provides monitors, computers, SSDs and noise-cancelling headphones. Participants have to bring their own peripherals (in particular: keyboard, mouse, mousepad, in-ear headphones with long enough cables, sound cards if needed). Our machines do not support PS2-keyboards. All player equipment is subject to the approval of the tournament administration. EWC reserves the right to deny the use of any equipment and/or device if they deem it to be providing an unfair competitive advantage. Participants might be asked to hand in their equipment for additional checks. Participants who want to use more than one piece of the same equipment need to ask the tournament administration for approval.

Where not provided, competitors are responsible for their personal hardware device, where personal hardware is permitted during the competition. Competitors are furthermore responsible to maintain a set of replacement hardware in the instance that their primary device(s) fail.

9.2 Flags and country identifiers

No flags and country identifiers are allowed to be present as part of player apparel or individual items during the tournament.

9.3 Internet access

Internet access on tournament computers might be restricted to the tools required for tournament play.

10. Privacy and Data Protection

By participating in the Event, each Participant acknowledges that EWCF and/or the Tournament Organizer may process personal data as needed for the administration, operation, integrity, and enforcement of the Event and these Rules. Further information is set out in the applicable [Privacy Policy](#) made available on the EWC event website or otherwise provided to Participants.