

ICCF Code of Conduct Guidelines

(approved at the ICCF Congress 2004 in Mumbai, India)

1. Introduction and General Principles

ICCF, as the world authority for all forms of correspondence chess, has clearly defined Principles and Aims, which are described in its Statutes. These include the important concept that "ICCF ... supports and promotes close international co-operation between chess players, enthusiasts and FIDE, thereby aiming to enhance contact and friendly harmony amongst the peoples on the world"

In 1984, ICCF adopted the motto "amici sumus" (we are friends) and this is the underlying philosophy in setting behavioural standards for players, officials and member federations. This should prevail in all communications between players in a game of CC, between players and tournament directors, officials of ICCF and international contacts of member federations. Sending an abusive, obscene or objectionable communication is not acceptable, in any circumstances.

These guidelines are to clarify the kind of behaviour which is expected, and include disciplinary and appeals procedures for dealing with instances where the principles and philosophy may not be evident in practice.

2. Guidelines for Players/Team Captains

Whether it be in games with playing partners or with tournament directors, players are expected to be friendly in all communications, bearing in mind that we are playing a game, TDs are all volunteers and are all trying to promote international bonds of friendship and sportsmanship.

It is recommended that friendly messages are exchanged with playing partners at the start of a game/tournament and that such friendly exchanges continue throughout, until conclusion. Being generous in defeat and modest in victory are commendable virtues!

It is expected that players will decide the moves for themselves. It is unacceptable behaviour to have someone else play your games. The whole ICCF ratings and titles system relies on the assumption that games are played by the players named in the starting lists (or approved substitutes).

Players should observe the Playing and Tournament Rules carefully and should take care to write or communicate their moves clearly, to avoid ambiguity. Each move must be accompanied with the necessary information concerning time utilisation and each player is responsible for ensuring the normal continuity of the game. Care should be taken to observe rules concerning repetition, advance notification of leave, time exceeding claims etc.

Any disputes or claims by a player must, in the first instance, be communicated to the official TD of the tournament (except in team events, where the team captain should be the point of contact). The facts must be clearly reported and a player should avoid creating any unnecessary antagonism towards a partner, even when disputes occur. Abusive remarks have no place in ICCF philosophy.

Wherever possible, players should try amicably to resolve any problem quickly with a playing partner, before referring the matter to the TD (or TC).

A Team Captain is responsible for notifying his players, opponent Team Captains, and the Tournament Director when he goes on leave or is otherwise unable to represent his players.

A player or an entire team can lose its games if a Team Captain is unable to meet his responsibilities, especially in the reporting of time complaints.

A Tournament Director may request a federation to replace its Team Captain due to inappropriate behaviour or inability to perform his responsibilities.

Players should read the sections in these guidelines which cover the responsibilities of other officials, the handling of disciplinary matters (and penalties which may be imposed) and the procedures to be followed concerning appeals.

3. Guidelines for Tournament Offices/Organisers and Tournament Directors

All ICCF tournaments and ICCF approved tournaments should be organised according to ICCF principles, philosophy and rules, including related guidelines.

It should always be remembered that “players are our customers” and it is the duty to offer a good quality, fair and prompt service to players and to other officials who are also providing tournament services to players, e.g. ratings, qualifications, etc.

Tournament Offices/Organisers and Tournament Directors must ensure an efficient and timely service to the ICCF webmaster and games archivists when reporting results and provision of completed games scores, as defined by ICCF and its senior officials.

Although TDs are expected to exercise their initiative in resolving problems, they should observe all rules and guidelines carefully and seek experienced advice, if they are unsure about the best way to handle a problem. It is far easier to deal with consequent problems, if a decision has been well thought through before action is taken, rather than trying to sort out a problem resulting from a hasty or ill-considered decision, after it has been made and communicated to players etc.

4. Guidelines for Member Federations

ICCF belongs to its member federations and, therefore, any criticism of ICCF is also criticism of member federations and their delegates. We all have a collective responsibility for ensuring the high reputation and authority of ICCF, and its constituent member federations, is not undermined.

Of course, there are occasions, especially with more difficult or controversial issues where a decision is reached by the ICCF Congress (the voting delegates) which does not match the view of an individual or his/her national federation. In such an event, the correct approach is for that delegate/member federation to request that the matter should be discussed again by Congress.

ICCF is a democratic organisation and major issues are decided by Congress by the proper voting of delegates (ICCF officers do **not** have any voting rights) and, therefore, decisions of Congress should be accepted and respected by all of its member federations, acting in a responsible manner.

5. Disciplinary Procedures (and Penalties)

Every effort should be made to avoid disputes and the initiation of these procedures but, where unavoidable, they should be carefully followed by all ICCF officials and all Zonal Offices and member federations, when dealing with international CC matters.

Types of disciplinary action available, are as follows:

- (i) Formal Written Warning – for breaches in behaviour incompatible with ICCF statutes, principles or rules. Continuing or repeated misbehaviour will result in (ii) being implemented
- (ii) Disciplinary Action with Penalty/Sanctions – for serious or recurring breaches in behaviour incompatible with ICCF statutes, principles and/or rules. Immediate penalties/sanctions should be imposed, the degree of which should be related to the severity of the misdemeanour.

The following scale of penalties/sanctions should be used:

- (a) A serious behavioural issue, e.g. silent/unacceptable withdrawal from a tournament, unacceptable or abusive behaviour to players/officials/ICCF as a first offence – ban from all international CC tournaments and activities for a period of 2 years, from the date of decision..
- (b) A repeated serious behavioural issue, e.g. repeated silent/unacceptable withdrawal from tournament, repeated abusive behaviour to players/officials/ICCF – ban from all international CC tournaments and activities for a period of 5 years, from the date of the latest decision.
- (c) Outrageous behaviour or further repeated behavioural issue, e.g. theft, belligerent action towards ICCF or any of its officers, assault, etc. – ban from all international CC tournaments and activities for life duration. Appeal for remission of sentence is available after 10 years.

When dealing with disciplinary matters and considering penalties/sanctions, care should be taken to ensure consistency and that penalties are commensurate with the “crime” committed.

In all cases of disciplinary action, an individual has a basic right to express his/her case, with reasoning, before a decision is taken by an official/tournament director or tournament office, etc.

When a disciplinary action is taken, the reason must be given in writing (with a copy to the member federation), by the official responsible and any sanction or penalty imposed must be clearly stated, along with the appropriate appeals procedure which is available, should the recipient be unwilling to accept the decision.

ICCF will maintain a database of all cases which have been the subject of disciplinary action or application of sanctions, and all appeals thereon. An ICCF officer will be given this responsibility.

6. Extent of application of these Guidelines

All international tournaments organised, or approved, by ICCF are subject to these guidelines, including the disciplinary and appeals procedures. Applications from ICCF Zonal TOs and member federations for approval of tournaments, will imply their acceptance that these guidelines and procedures will apply to such tournaments, without exception.

However, it is important to recognise that these arrangements are intended for “international” CC matters and are not either “in place of” or related to any sanctions applied by member federations for disciplinary issues concerning domestic tournaments, national membership or their other rules.

The above guidelines are provided to give a clear framework for the behaviour of players, officials, member federations and ICCF generally. The “amici sumus” philosophy should permeate throughout ICCF and the activities of all players and officials.

They have been adopted by the ICCF Congress (Ostrava 2003) but may be refined and developed by the Executive Board, with changes ratified (or otherwise) by the next ICCF Congress to be held, before becoming operational from the next 1st January, following such ratification.