

Differences between OTB US Chess Regular and Blitz rules

Last updated: January 24, 2021

Note: two things that are the same regarding regular and blitz that there is sometimes confusion about is that both are played with touch move rules and no insufficient losing chances, unless a variation is posted/announced for a specific tournament.

Regular rule

1. The “total playing time” must be at least thirty minutes. The base time must be at least five minutes. Different rounds/schedules of a tournament can use different regular time controls.

2. The recommended amount of increment or delay to be used on a time control is five to thirty seconds. If the organizer fails to specify the increment or delay in the time control, even if it’s zero, a five second delay applies. There is no defined “standard” regular time control.

3. For time controls without increment and delay (or a digital clock without increment or delay capability in time controls that include increment or delay), a digital clock is always preferred over an analog clock.

4. Scorekeeping is required for each move in a time control until one of the players falls below five minutes, unless the time control includes an increment of at least thirty seconds in which scorekeeping is required for every move.

5. A legal move is complete once the player presses the clock.

6. The penalty for a completed illegal move is to add two minutes to the opponent’s time, provided the illegal move is pointed out before the opponent completes their next move.

7. If a player runs out of time but the opponent has only two knights, the player has no pawns, and opponent does not have a forced win, this is considered insufficient mating material to win on time and the game is drawn.

Blitz rule

1. The “total playing time” must be from five to ten minutes. The base time must be at least three minutes. All rounds of a tournament must use the same time control.

2. The recommended amount of increment or delay to be used on a time control is two seconds. If the organizer fails to specify the increment or delay in the time control, even if it’s zero, a two second delay applies. The “standard” blitz time control is G/5;d0.

3. For time controls without increment and delay (or a digital clock without increment or delay capability in time controls that include increment or delay), a digital clock is preferred over an analog clock unless the digital clock can’t be set to continue to run for a player when the opponent has run out of time.

4. While there is no rule that specifies that scorekeeping is not required for each move in blitz until one of the players falls below five minutes, it’s assumed that it’s not required and never enforced.

5. A legal move is complete when the hand leaves the piece.

6. A completed illegal move loses, provided the opponent claims the illegal move before determining their next move and has sufficient mating material. If the opponent does not have sufficient mating material, the game is drawn.

7. If a player runs out of time and the opponent has only two knights, this is considered sufficient mating material to win on time.

8. If it is discovered that one of either player's last ten moves was illegal (or two moves in "time pressure"), the position is reinstated to what it was before the illegal move.

9. If the initial position of the pieces was set up incorrectly or the game started with the colors reversed, the game is annulled and a new game is played if it is discovered prior to the completion of Black's 10th move. Clocks still reflect the elapsed time each player used in the annulled game. If it's discovered after the completion of Black's 10th move, the game continues. If the initial time on the clock was set incorrectly, this is corrected once it is discovered.

10. The standard penalty for the first violation of a rule (including an illegal move) is to add two minutes to the opponent's time.

11. A ruling of the chief tournament director can be appealed to an appeals committee or special referee unless the orderly progress of the tournament would be disrupted.

8. An illegal move is not corrected once the opponent has determined their next move.

9. Once Black has completed move one, the initial position of the pieces and time on the clock remain as set.

10. The standard penalty for the first violation of a rule (excluding an illegal move) is to add one minute to the opponent's time.

11. The decision of the chief tournament director is final.