



FREESTYLE CHESS

Freestyle Chess World Championship

Official Rules and Regulations

1. Scope

These rules and regulations have been developed and set by Freestyle Chess Co. ("FCC" or the "Organizer").

2. Open Qualifying Competitions for each Grand Slam

Anyone not already qualified for a later stage, regardless of rating, can enter the Open Qualification Competitions for each Grand Slam, which will be organized by Chess.com with their own rules. Such Competitions will be played in accordance with the FIDE Rules for Online Competitions.

3. Grand Slams

3.1 Participants of a Grand Slam

Each Grand Slam will have ten participants (specified names already qualified for Grand Slam I/25 in Germany in February 2025):

- The top three of the previous Grand Slam (Magnus Carlsen, Fabiano Caruana, Levon Aronian)
- The top three ELO rated (classical) in a specified month before the Grand Slam (Hikaru Nakamura, Nodirbek Abdusattorov, Alireza Firouzja in April 2024)
- Two Organizer wildcards for members of the Freestyle Chess Players Club, one based on relevance for the international fans (Viswanathan Anand), and one for the local national market (Vincent Keymer)
- The winner of a major classical tournament before the respective Grand Slam (Ding Liren or Dommaraju Gukesh as new World Champion in classical chess)
- The winner of the Chess.com Open Qualification Competition preceding the Grand Slam (tbd in January 2025)



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3.2 Freestyle Chess Players Club (FCPC)

- 3.2.1 Qualifiers who do not take up their place in the Grand Slam can be replaced by any member of the Freestyle Chess Players Club, to be determined by the Organizer.
- 3.2.2 Admission to the Freestyle Chess Players Club (FCPC) is granted to every player once he has reached a classical ELO rating of 2725 or higher. Membership of the FCPC expires automatically once a player's classical ELO rating stays below 2725 for a period of 12 consecutive months.

3.3 Round Robin Stage of a Grand Slam

- 3.3.1 The ten participants are seeded 1 through 8 for the Quarter Finals based on their performance during the Round Robin stage. Finishers 9 and 10 are not qualified for the Quarter Finals, but there will be a 9th place playoff. Both players are urged to perform commentary tasks, otherwise their prize money will be reduced by 50%.
- 3.3.2 Time control for each game in the Round Robin stage is 10 minutes, plus 10 seconds per move. No draw offers until after move 40. A tiebreak is decided by 1) direct comparison, 2) number of wins, 3) Sonneborn-Berger.
- 3.3.3 The pairings for the Round Robin stage are determined by lot:
- Rd 1: 1-10, 2-9, 3-8, 4-7, 5-6. / Rd 2: 10-6, 7-5, 8-4, 9-3, 1-2.
 - Rd 3: 2-10, 3-1, 4-9, 5-8, 6-7. / Rd 4: 10-7, 8-6, 9-5, 1-4, 2-3.
 - Rd 5: 3-10, 4-2, 5-1, 6-9, 7-8. / Rd 6: 10-8, 9-7, 1-6, 2-5, 3-4.
 - Rd 7: 4-10, 5-3, 6-2, 7-1, 8-9. / Rd 8: 10-9, 1-8, 2-7, 3-6, 4-5.
 - Rd 9: 5-10, 6-4, 7-3, 8-2, 9-1.

3.4 Quarter Finals, Semi Finals and Final of a Grand Slam

- 3.4.1 In the Quarter Finals, Seed 1 plays against Seed 8 (Match A), Seed 2 against Seed 7 (Match B), Seed 3 against Seed 6 (Match C), and Seed 4 against Seed 5 (Match D). The winners of the Quarter Finals qualify for the Semi Finals. The pairings for the Semi Finals will be winner A-D and winner B-C; the losers qualify for the 3rd place playoff.



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- 3.4.2 Each match will be best-of-two games. The time control for each game is 90 minutes plus 30 seconds increment per move. No draw offers until after move 40. Players will be defaulted if they arrive at the board more than five minutes after the actual start time.
- 3.4.3 Each player will play one game with white and one game with black. It will be determined by the list after the round robin, higher placed player starts with black. The player who scores more points will win the match.
- 3.4.4 In the event of a tie, there will be a Play-off with two Rapid games. The time control for each Rapid game is 10 minutes, plus 10 seconds per move. In the event of a tie after Rapid, there will be two Blitz games. The time control for each Blitz game is 5 minutes, plus 2 seconds per move. In the event of a tie after Blitz, there will be one Armageddon game.
- 3.4.5 For the Armageddon game, each player shall bid a specified number of minutes (up to 5), and the player with the lower bid will have black and will only need to draw the game to win the match. The player with white will have 5 minutes and will need to win the game to win the match. There will be no increment in Armageddon. A player will be defaulted if they arrive at the board more than five minutes after the actual start time.
- 3.4.6 All players remain in the tournament until the end, and all places will be played out. The pairings will be loser A-D and loser B-C. The winners of such pairings qualify for the 5th place Playoff, the losers qualify for the 7th place Playoff.

4. Grand Slam Points Counting for the World Championship, Awards and Prizes

- 4.1 There will be a maximum of six Grand Slams in each calendar year. In each Grand Slam, the winner will receive 25 points, second place will receive 18, third 15, fourth 12, fifth 10, sixth 8, seventh 6, eighth 4, ninth 2, and tenth 1 point.
- 4.2 After the last Grand Slam in a calendar year, the Freestyle Chess World Champion will be determined by the maximum number of points received during all Grand Slams in such calendar year, combined.



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- 4.3 The prize money of each Grand Slam in 2025 shall be set at \$750,000 and will be distributed as follows: 88% of the prize fund (\$660k) will be allocated among the ten players in the following ranking: \$200k for first place, \$140k for second, \$100k for third, \$60k for fourth, \$50k for fifth, \$40k for sixth, \$30k for seventh, \$20k for eighth, \$12,5k for ninth, and \$7,5k for tenth place.
- 4.4 12% of the 2025 prize funds (\$90k) will be allocated among those nonplaying members of the Freestyle Chess Players Club, who have a classical ELO rating of more than 2725 in the month of the Grand Slam (relative allocation according to ELO points above 2725).
- 4.5 The 2025 Freestyle Chess World Champion, as well as the second and third place of the World Championship will receive trophies and extra prize money after the last Grand Slam of the calendar year: \$150,000 for the winner, \$100,000 for second place, and \$50,000 for third place.
- 4.6 The prize money of each Grand Slam in 2026 shall be set at \$1 million and will be distributed as follows: 80% of the prize fund (\$800k) will be allocated among the ten players in the following ranking: \$250k for first place, \$160k for second, \$110k for third, \$70k for fourth, \$60k for fifth, \$50k for sixth, \$40k for seventh, \$30k for eighth, \$20k for ninth, and \$10k for tenth place.
- 4.7 10% of the 2026 prize funds (\$100k) will be allocated among those nonplaying members of the Freestyle Chess Players Club, who have a classical ELO rating of more than 2725 in the month of the Grand Slam (relative allocation according to ELO points above 2725). The remaining 10% (\$100k) of each prize fund in 2026 will be reserved for distribution at the end of the calendar year 2026 to the winner, second and third place of the Freestyle Chess World Championship, as well as to players with extraordinary achievements, to be determined by the Organizer.

5. Fischer-Random Processes at the Freestyle Chess Grand Slams

- 5.1 Each Grand Slam is an eight-day chess tournament with two days of playoffs with rapid time limits, and six days of standard time limits. Fischer-Random rules are played at all games of the tournament.



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- 5.2 The initial position of the pieces will be drawn at random by the organizer. All simultaneous games will be played from the same starting position.
- 5.3 The initial position will be presented to the players 15 minutes before the scheduled start time of a match. Players are permitted to use the 15-minute period to seek advice from other players, but not from an electronic source (e.g., a chess engine).
- 5.4 For Armageddon games, the advice time periods will be reduced to 5 minutes.
- 5.5 If the start position of classical chess is randomly selected, the draw for the initial position of the pieces will be repeated.

6. Playing Conditions at Grand Slams

- 6.1 During a game, a player may only communicate with an arbiter or an organizer during their game.
- 6.2 Players are not permitted to bring into a playing area a phone, technical or other equipment extraneous to play, which may in any way disturb or upset their opponents. The Chief Arbiter shall decide what constitutes extraneous equipment disturbing the opponent.
- 6.3 Audience will be allowed close to the players (not closer than two meters). The Organizer will provide players with voluntary noise cancelling equipment to prevent players being disturbed by the audience.
- 6.4 All Players will wear heart rate sensors in every game as provided by the Organizer. The heart rate can be presented in graphics in the TV broadcast from the event, and the commentators can use the development in heart rate to increase the suspense for the audience.
- 6.5 The players are urged to enter confessional-booths to give a short, on-camera, statement on the game so far.



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7. Players' Conduct at Grand Slams

- 7.1 Dress code: Wearing the neat shirt and formal jacket to be provided by the Organizer is mandatory. Shoes and long trousers must appear "smart-casual" to match the official upper body attire. Shorts, baseball caps, or any other headgear are not allowed. The Organizer will make sure each player's personal sponsor's logos are included on the outfits.
- 7.2 All players must be present at all approved functions, including the Opening and the Closing Ceremonies. In addition, players are expected to attend the Technical Meetings called by the Chief Arbiter, and to make themselves available for interviews with the media and/or the Organizer, especially immediately after each game.
- 7.3 Failure to appear at any approved function, such as official receptions, press conferences or interviews, as well as behavior in a manner contrary to the spirit of sporting behavior, may result in penalties, from forfeiture of prize money to disqualification from the current or any future event.
- 7.4 The Organizer will appoint a Chief Arbiter for each Grand Slam who must always be present in the playing area during play. The Chief Arbiter may appoint a Fair Play Officer or take on that role himself.

8. Commercial Issues

- 8.1 The Organizer retains all commercial and media rights including Internet.
- 8.2 The players, principals, and arbiters as well as any technical staff admitted to the venue understand that they may be captured either by recorded or broadcasted video, or by their images, including photographs, video frames or works of art (referred to as Images) at the venue of the event as well as at the site around it, and provide their irrevocable consent for such capture, record and broadcast.