

A Newcomer's Guide to Warwickshire Chess Association Junior Tournaments

How Do the Tournaments Work?

Each tournament will be a Swiss-System, played over a pre-determined number of rounds. The Swiss System means that your child needs to attend every round, and as far as possible, children are paired with someone else on the same number of points as them. This means that children will eventually "find their level" after a few rounds, even if the earlier rounds are a bit too easy, or a bit too hard. Because a child needs to play every round, if you do need to leave at some point during the day, you should let our front-of-house know (see later in the document).

In Advance of the Tournament

Parents will need to enter their child on the tournament website. We are not in a position to accept payment in any other way (e.g. cash on the day).

The organiser will be in contact with all entries approximately 24 hours prior to the tournament with additional information, such as:

- Where the waiting areas are
- Where in the school the tournament will be held
- The staff who will be present
- Where to find the pairings and results online
- Any other special arrangements requiring communication

With the exception of that, all of the tournament information is on the website.

At the Tournament

When you attend the tournament, you should attend one of the waiting areas at the venue. There is no need to register at the venue – if your entry is displayed on the list of entries online for your tournament, then there is no problem. If it does not appear there, then you should contact the organiser by email as per the email address displayed on the website, rather than wait until you arrive at the tournament.

Prior to Round 1

Shortly before round 1, the organisers will invite you through to the playing area with your child. You are not permitted to stay in the playing area whilst the games are going on, and so you before departing, you should make sure that your child knows where to find you after their game has finished, because they will need to make their way unaccompanied back to meet you in the designated waiting areas.

The pairings will be displayed online – the link varies from tournament to tournament, but will be provided in the welcome email sent 24 hours prior to the tournament. If you are unable to find them there, then you will need to find them printed on a clipboard in the playing area. When you find your name, go to the correct board number for your child, and sit in the chair for that board – with the correct colour (white or black pieces)! The printout will include the board number and colour information on it. This is usually quite challenging in round 1, but it is much easier later on in the tournament once everyone is familiar with the part of the room they are playing in.

The organiser will then read out some very brief notices, which serve as reminders to people about the key details, and then invite the parents to leave the playing area. Once that has happened, the games will begin.

End of the Children's Game / Between Games

Once the children have finished their game and reported their result to one of the tournament staff, they will be asked to leave the playing area. They should take all of their property with them – anything that is forgotten will need to stay there until they come in for the next round.

At that point they must return back to where their parents are waiting. Rounds start at hourly intervals, and so the wait might be some time if their game was fast. You may therefore want to bring some “entertainment” for the children between rounds. Good examples of this include:

- Books
- Tablet Computers
- Homework

It is possible for children to play outside if we have been given permission by the school, but no children are allowed outside without the direct supervision of their parents. The tournament does not have enough staff to be able to provide a child-monitoring service. The tournament staff will make sure that the chess element of the event runs smoothly and successfully, but this means that parents need to take responsibility for their own children when they are not in the playing area.

If we have access to a playground and ball games are permitted, but should be kept well clear of cars.

Children who have gone onto grassy areas, such as playing fields, and whose entry into the school buildings will introduce a significant amount of mud onto carpets or furniture, may be prevented from entry to play their game.

Returning to play in Later Rounds

The organisers will call children through when we are ready. After round 1, parents will not be permitted to re-enter the playing area or building – the tournament staff will make sure they sit in the correct place. In our experience, when even young children are left to find their own seat, they manage to do it correctly just as often as adults playing in adult tournaments. Without needing to wait for the parents to come in and get out again, it saves a significant number of minutes and makes sure the tournament runs more speedily for everyone.

Waiting Areas

In general, we are able to provide a number of waiting areas for parents; such as classrooms, halls and other areas. Parents are asked to be mindful of others, and not reserve seating or table space for themselves or their own children. Sometimes the rooms will be very busy during the day because the school may just not have enough waiting space for all of the parents and all of the children. Schools do not provide free wi-fi to tournament staff or parents. Parents attending our tournaments should not expect to be able to sit quietly and get on with some work in the waiting areas – schools are not really designed to provide sufficient space for 150 children waiting for play to start, and another 150 parents working in office-like conditions. It is advisable that only one parent attends with their child. In the past we have had children who attend with both parents, a grandparent, and even a pet. We are not able to accommodate that number of people, or indeed any animals, on site.

Parents who situate themselves in areas of the school we do not have access to will immediately be asked to leave those areas. Repeat offenders will be asked to leave the site, and result in their child being excluded from the tournament.

It is essential that post-tournament, the waiting areas are returned to their original condition. This includes tables and chairs being returned, but also ensuring rubbish is put in the bins. If there are spillages or any other issues, then please let the front-of-house know. Just after the start of the last round is a good time to ensure the waiting areas are clean.

Front-of-House

We are seeking to appoint a front-of-house to each tournament. You should speak to them if:

- You are not sure about something in the tournament
- You need to leave the tournament (this courtesy avoids pairing your child for a game they will never play, meaning that their opponent doesn't have to sit around for a game they were never going to play)
- There has been an incident in one of the waiting areas that we need to be aware of

Eating / Drinking

Our junior tournaments are unable to provide catering. You should arrange to bring your own food and drink if your child wants it throughout the day.

Smoking / Vaping

Our tournaments are in schools, and it is not permitted to smoke or vape on site. If you wish to do either of those things, then you will need to completely leave the school site (i.e. out on to the road) and do them there. Please note that if you are away for a prolonged time, then your child may finish their game and not be able to find you.

Prizegiving

The tournament concludes with a prizegiving. The tournaments will award a variety of medals and/or trophies as prizes, but these will only be distributed at the prize giving – it is not possible to “collect the medal now because we've got to go”. The whole ceremony will last no longer than 10 minutes, and we ask that parents wait until after the conclusion of the ceremony to go, rather than disappear gradually through the ceremony once their child has collected their prize.

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