

Guidelines on treatment of disabled chess players

- 1) These guidelines will be used for all FIDE events.
- 2) No one has the right to refuse to meet a disabled player against whom he has been correctly paired.
- 3) All chess venues must either be accessible to all, or an acceptable alternative venue with full supervision shall be available to those who cannot access the nominated venue.
- 4) A circular shall be sent out when all competitors are known. This circular contains an entry form with the usual points and questions, asking whether any potential competitor has an impairment that will require special circumstances.
- 5) No disabled player shall be “penalized” because of disability.
- 6) Any impaired competitor who reasonably requests in time the placing of their equipment in a particular seat or orientation, has the right to do so, provided that this does not disadvantage his opponent or other competitors. The event organizer has to ensure that the needs of both players are catered for.
- 7) All relevant information shall be displayed before the start of the event, including maps of the venue showing the location of toilets, refreshments and emergency exits.
- 8) In all events there shall be a tournament physician. The organizer and the chief arbiter shall know the phone number of the local hospital and physician.
- 9) If a competitor cannot access the refreshments, arrangements should be made for their needs to be met.
- 10) If a competitor cannot press his own clock or move his own pieces, an assistant shall be available unless the opponent is willing to do so. If the opponent is acting as an assistant the chief arbiter may decide to give him extra thinking time.
- 11) If a player has made a prior request, copies of all notices should be available in large print. If a player is unable to read large print, then the notices must be read to him.
- 12) It is recommended that all team events have the rule that if a visiting team indicates that it has a player with an impairment coming with them, giving sufficient notice, that the home team does everything which is reasonable to ensure that that player can participate.
- 13) It is recommended that each national chess federation appoints an officer for matters regarding disabilities.
- 14) It is strongly recommended that all events adopt these guidelines.

Important issues to take into consideration:

Organisation of the tournament hall:

- ⌚ Only one game per table: the tables should be larger (2 m width in order to place the assistants for the disabled) and should be placed separately.
- ⌚ The corridors between rows of tables should be twice as large (wheel chairs)
- ⌚ The arbiters should be clearly visible to all players
- ⌚ Foresee additional contact points for electricity: some blind players use a lamp for their chess board. This lamp should not disturb the opponent
- ⌚ Put the blind chess players at the same place as much as possible (they will know the way to the rest room and back in very short time!) and give them the same assistant during the whole tournament.

Assistants:

- ⌚ The assistants should have a minimum knowledge of chess; the language is less important since most of the handicapped players only speak their mother tongue.

- ⌚ Assistants for blind players should know the name of the pieces in their language
- ⌚ Assistants for blind players should inform the player when they are leaving the chess board temporarily
- ⌚ The assistant should always write the moves: this is an important help for the arbiter. [Question: what kind of information would an assistant be allowed to give to the player?]

Tournament organisation:

- ⌚ Organise a players meeting for all players before the first round, preferably in the tournament hall.
- ⌚ If possible only one round per day should be played.

Chief arbiter:

- ⌚ After making the pairings the chief arbiter should decide manually on which board everyone should play: some players (blind) should always play at the same board whereas the largest space should be foreseen for wheelchair players.
- ⌚ For the announcement of the start of the round a combination of music (for the blind) and images (for the deaf) should be used for instance a short video. The end of it made clear that the round was going to start.
- ⌚ Draw proposals or claims can easily go via the assistant. Maybe the use of a card with the word “draw” in several languages and in Braille might be useful.
- ⌚ All blind players push the clock themselves.
- ⌚ In the case there is a time trouble situation with visually handicapped players the arbiter should bear in mind that the (not visually handicapped) opponent can reply almost immediately. The tournament regulations should therefore release the blind player from the obligation to annotate during the last five minutes, even when the game is played with an increment of at least 30 seconds. The blind player should then update his scoresheet after the time trouble.
- ⌚ The “advantage” of deaf players that they can’t be disturbed by noise is also their “disadvantage” when they are playing against players with another handicap. The deaf player can never be sure that the opponent’s assistant is not given information to the blind or physically handicapped player: therefore an assistant for all players (with different handicaps) is advisable.