

# **TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR CERTIFICATION STANDARDS – UPDATED AUGUST 2005**

## **Purpose**

The USCF certifies tournament directors in order to standardize procedures and ensure a competent tournament director (TD) for each level of USCF-rated tournaments.

## **General Qualifications**

### **1. USCF Membership.**

All certified TDs must be current members of USCF. If a TD allows his or her membership to lapse, his or her TD certification is de-activated and is not automatically re-activated upon payment of membership dues.

### **2. Established Rating.**

Except at the club level, all certified TDs must have an established USCF rating as an over-the-board player. TDs are encouraged to remain active as players to maintain proper perspective when directing.

### **3. Training.**

All TDs are encouraged to work with and be an assistant under other directors with greater experience and expertise to increase directing knowledge and understanding. All TDs are likewise encouraged to provide opportunities for less experienced directors to share in their philosophical understanding of tournament direction

### **4. Rules.**

Every TD should own a copy of USCF's Official Rules of Chess, current edition. TDs should become thoroughly familiar with these rules, and any rules changes or rulings by the Rules Committee effectively changing these rules, and administrative procedures regarding the sale of memberships, reporting formats and deadlines, basic rating formulas, and a variety of other subjects.

## **TD Testing Procedures**

### **5. Exams.**

Tests are written by the Tournament Director Certification Committee (TDCC) and administered by the USCF business office. These tests are generally mailed to qualified applicants to be completed with the assistance of any printed matter, but applicants are bound by honor not to discuss specific questions with other persons. Applicants must return all testing materials within two months. An applicant must first satisfy all experience requirements for the TD certification for which they are applying before

taking an exam for that level of certification. The applicant may apply to the TDCC for a variance on this procedure.

## **6. Applicants.**

Applicants for promotion of TD certification level shall provide the technical director with the names, dates, and number of entrants of the tournaments that satisfy the experience requirements. Upon request, applicants will present written verification of their claimed experience requirements.

## **7. Unsuccessful Senior And Local Applicants.**

Applicants who fail the test for local or senior level of TD certification must wait two months before taking the test a second time. Applicants who fail the second attempt must wait six months before taking the test a third or subsequent time. The same form of the same examination may not be taken more than once by any applicant.

## **8. Unsuccessful ANTD And NTD Applicants.**

Applicants who fail the test for associate national or national level of TD certification must wait three months before taking the test a second time. Applicants who do not pass the second attempt must wait one year before taking the test a third or subsequent time. The same form of the same examination may not be taken more than once by any applicant.

## **9. Documents And Tests.**

All documents, including completed tests, shall be submitted to the U.S. Chess Federation. The current USCF address can be found at: [www.uschess.org](http://www.uschess.org)

## **Chief TDs, Assistant TDs, and Tournament Aides**

### **10. Chief TD.**

The Chief TD has the ultimate authority and responsibility for the tournament. In general, the Chief TD must be physically present during play and should not himself be a player in a tournament he or she directs.

### **11. Co-Chief TD.**

In unusual circumstances two directors may jointly function as co-Chief TDs. Each co-chief receives USCF credit for one tournament with one-half the total number of entries.

### **12. Assistant TD.**

An assistant TD serves under the Chief TD performing assigned tasks relevant to tournament direction. Assistant TDs gain USCF credit for their experience when their duties include pairings and rules enforcement. Such credit is limited to 1 assistant per 50 players or fraction thereof. Assistant TDs must be certified TDs. A chief assistant TD is distinguished from a regular assistant TD by added duties and responsibilities as assigned by the Chief TD.

### **13. Tournament Aides.**

Tournament aides serve under the Chief TD performing primarily clerical tasks, such as entering results on pairing cards and wall charts. Aides do not possess the authority to make pairings or enforce rules, and they do not need to be certified TDs.

## **Tournament Categories**

### **14. Category I.**

A Tournament held in the United States that will be submitted to both FIDE and USCF for rating.

**TDCC TIP:** There are two types of FIDE events that can be submitted to FIDE: One, an event that will award title norms for GMs, IMs, WGMs, and WIMs and will be submitted to FIDE for rating. An International Arbiter (IA), Federation Arbiter (FA), or a Senior, or higher, certified TD, supervised by an IA, must direct these events. Two, an event that does not award title norms but will be submitted to FIDE for rating. These events must be directed by a TD certified at the Senior level or higher who has the FIDE endorsement and whose level is appropriate for the expected size of the event.

### **15. Category N.**

A tournament that awards a national title. *It is strongly recommended that for these types of tournaments, TDs have experience with computer pairing programs, back room pairing procedures, and on site player contact, or “floor,” problem solving procedures.*

**Subcategory N1:** A national tournament open to a large group of players. Examples: U.S. Open, U.S. Junior Open, U.S. Senior Open, National Open, U.S. Class, U.S. Amateur, U.S. Amateur Team, U.S. Masters, U.S. Action, U.S. Game/60, Pan-American Intercollegiate Team, National High School, National Junior High School, National School Grade, and National Elementary School Championships. Such tournaments must be directed by national TDs.

**Subcategory N2:** A national tournament restricted to a small group of players. Examples: U.S. Championship, U.S. Womens Championship, U.S. Junior Championship, U.S. Cadet, U.S. Blind, U.S. Computer, U.S. Armed Forces Championships, Arnold Denker National Tournament of High School Champions and the Susan Polgar National Invitational for Girls. Such tournaments may be directed by associate national TDs.

**TDCC TIP:** It is strongly suggested that the US Championship and US Women's Championship should be run only by an NTD/IA. These two are our most prestigious tournaments. They offer FIDE norms and should be run by an IA. Only an IA or FA can sign norm certificates.

**Subcategory N3:** One section of a N1 tournament where the TD is limited to solving problems and making rulings on the floor only (floor TD).

Examples: The K-3 section of the National Elementary Championship or the Reserve section of the National Open.

**Subcategory N4:** One section of a N1 tournament where the TD is limited to the duties of pairings in a backroom capacity using a pairing program (backroom TD). Examples: The K-3 section of the National Elementary Championship or the Reserve section of the National Open.

## **16. Category A.**

A USCF-rated Swiss system tournament or section of a tournament, except Category I or N, that regularly draws more than 300 entrants and awards \$5,000+ in prizes. Examples: World Open, New York Open, American Open, and Memorial Day Classic. Such tournaments may be directed by associate national TDs. *It is strongly recommended that for these types of tournaments, TDs have experience with computer pairing programs, back room pairing procedures, and on site player contact, or “floor,” problem solving procedures.*

**Subcategory A1:** One section of a Category A tournament where the TD is limited to solving problems and making rulings on the floor only (floor TD).

**Subcategory A2:** One section of a Category A tournament where the TD is limited to the duties of pairings in a backroom capacity using a pairing program (backroom TD).

## **17. Category B.**

A USCF-rated Swiss system tournament, except Category I, N, or A, drawing 100 or more entrants. Such tournaments or sections of tournaments may be directed by senior TDs. See also 32, Limitations. *It is strongly recommended that for these types of tournaments, TDs have experience with computer pairing programs, back room pairing procedures, and on site player contact, or “floor,” problem solving procedures.*

**Subcategory B1:** One section of a Category B tournament where the TD is limited to solving problems and making rulings on the floor only (floor TD).

**Subcategory B2:** One section of a Category B tournament where the TD is limited to the duties of pairings in a backroom capacity (backroom TD).

## **18. Category C.**

A USCF-rated Swiss system tournament or section of a tournament, except Category I or N, drawing 50 to 99 entrants. Such tournaments or sections of tournaments may be directed by local TDs. For more information see 28, Limitations. *It is strongly recommended that for these types of tournaments, TDs have experience with computer pairing programs, back room pairing procedures, and on site player contact, or “floor,” problem solving procedures.*

**Subcategory C1:** One section of a Category C tournament where the TD is limited to solving problems and making rulings on the floor only (floor TD).

**Subcategory C2:** One section of a Category C tournament where the TD is limited to the duties of pairings in a backroom capacity (backroom TD).

### **19. Category D.**

Any USCF-rated Swiss system tournament or section of a tournament, except Category I or N, drawing fewer than 50 entrants. Club TDs may direct such tournaments or sections of tournaments. See also 24, Limitations.

**Subcategory D1:** One section of a Category D tournament where the TD is limited to solving problems and making rulings on the floor only (floor TD).

**Subcategory D2:** One section of a Category D tournament where the TD is limited to the duties of pairings in a backroom capacity (backroom TD).

### **20. Category R.**

A USCF-rated round robin tournament of eight or more rated entrants with a mean rating of at least 1800.

### **21. Category T.**

A USCF-rated team-vs.-team Swiss system tournament involving at least twelve teams of four or more players. *It is strongly recommended that for these types of tournaments, TDs have experience with computer pairing programs, back room pairing procedures, and on site player contact, or "floor," problem solving procedures.*

## **The Club Director**

### **22. Experience Requirement.**

An applicant for club TD accreditation must sign a statement indicating that he or she has read, has access to, and will abide by the rules contained in USCF's Official Rules of Chess.

### **23. Testing Requirement.**

For the first three-year term self-correcting practice worksheets designed to orient new tournament directors with the fundamental procedures required to conduct a rated USCF tournament. Each three-year term thereafter an objective test of moderate difficulty that must be passed at the required level.

### **24. Limitations.**

A club TD may not be the Chief TD for USCF Grand Prix, Category N or Category I tournaments and should not be the Chief TD of Category A, B, or C tournaments, which includes any tournament, or section of a tournament, expected to draw more than 50 players. Computer assisted club TDs can be the Chief TD of any tournament, or section of a tournament, expected to draw up to 60 players with the aid of one assistant TD.

## **25. Expiration.**

Three-year renewable term. Every three years, the club TD may apply to extend the Club TD Certification for an additional three years. This three-year renewal requires that the applicant pass an objective test of moderate difficulty designed to measure the applicant's knowledge of basic rules at the required level. Club TDs meeting the rating and directing experience requirements are encouraged to take the Local TD exam.

## **The Local Director**

### **26. Experience Requirements.**

- a. Satisfactory performance as Chief TD of one Category D tournament and Chief TD or assistant TD of two additional Category D tournaments of at least three rounds which total 50 or more entrants, or
- b. Satisfactory performance as the Chief TD at either a Category D1 or D2 tournament can be used as a replacement for one of the two additional Category D tournaments in section (a), or
- c. Satisfactory performance as the Chief TD at two Quick Chess Category D, D1, or D2 tournaments can be used as a replacement for one of the two additional Category D tournaments in section (a), or
- d. Attendance at a problem solving and discussion workshop (not a business meeting workshop) offered by the TDCC at a U.S. Open Championship can be used as a replacement for one of the two additional Category D tournaments in section (a), or
- e. Satisfactory performance for three years as a club TD, but
- f. For any applicant who takes and passes the local TD test (closed book) under supervision at a Category N tournament, the sole experience requirement is satisfactory performance as a Chief TD at one Category D tournament of at least three rounds. No substitutions may be made for the Category D tournament. Applicants must contact the USCF two weeks in advance of the tournament to request this option.

### **27. Testing Requirement.**

Objective test of moderate difficulty designed to measure the applicant's knowledge of basic rules.

### **28. Limitations.**

A local TD may not be the Chief TD for Category N or Category I tournaments and should not be the Chief TD of Category A or B tournaments, which includes any tournament, or section of a tournament, expected to draw more than 100 players. Computer assisted local TDs can be the Chief TD of any tournament, or section of a tournament, expected to draw up to 120 players with the aid of one assistant TD.

### **29. Expiration.**

Four-year renewable term: The testing requirement for re-certification is waived for a local TD with satisfactory performance as the chief or assistant TD of four tournaments or sections of tournaments during the four-year term.

## The Senior Director

### 30. Experience Requirements.

- a. Satisfactory performance as Chief TD of five Category C tournaments of at least four rounds (the following may be substituted for two Category C tournaments: any combination of two Category C1 or C2 tournaments or any combination of four Quick Chess Category C, C1, or C2 tournaments), and
- b. Satisfactory performance as Chief TD of five or more additional Swiss system tournaments of at least four rounds, such that the 10 or more tournaments total at least 400 entrants, but
- c. Any of the following may be substituted for one of the tournaments in Requirement b (limit, two substitutions):
  - c1. Attendance at a problem solving and discussion workshop (not a business meeting workshop) offered by the TDCC at a U.S. Open Championship;
  - c2. Satisfactory performance as assistant TD to a national TD or associate national TD at one Category A, A1, A2, B, B1, or B2 tournament or any combination of two Quick Chess Category A, A1, A2, B, B1, or B2 tournaments;
  - c3. Satisfactory performance as Chief TD of one Category R tournament or two Quick Chess Category R tournaments;
  - c4. *Double credit* is given to a local TD if he or she trains a club TD as his or her assistant at any tournament except a Quick Chess tournament. *Double credit* refers to two tournaments, not double the number of entrants;
  - c5. *Double credit*, as defined above, is given to the TD of an official state or region open championship, except a Quick Chess tournament; but

For any applicant who takes and passes the Senior TD test (closed book) under supervision at a category N tournament, experience requirements are reduced to satisfactory performance as a Chief TD at three category C tournaments of at least four rounds (either a Category C1 or C2 tournament may be substituted for one of the three Category C tournaments or two Quick Chess Category C, C1 or C2 tournaments may be substituted for one of the three Category C tournaments) and three additional Swiss system tournaments of at least four rounds (two Quick Chess Swiss system tournaments may be substituted for one of the three additional Swiss system tournaments). Applicants must contact the USCF two weeks in advance of the tournament to request this option.

### 31. Testing Requirement.

Difficult objective examination designed to evaluate the applicant's knowledge and judgment in situations not clearly addressed by the rules.

### 32. Limitations.

A senior TD may not be the Chief TD for Category N tournaments and should not be the Chief TD of Category A tournaments, which includes any tournament, or section of a

tournament, expected to draw more than 300 players. Computer assisted senior TDs can be the Chief TD of any tournament, or section of a tournament, expected to draw up to 360 players with the aid of one assistant TD.

### **33. Expiration.**

Five-year renewable term. The testing requirement for re-certification is waived for a senior TD with satisfactory performance as a chief or assistant TD of five tournaments during the five-year term.

## **The Associate National Director (ANTD)**

### **34. Experience Requirements.**

- a. Satisfactory performance as Chief TD of ten Category B tournaments of which three awarded \$1,000+ in prizes (the following may be substituted for one Category B tournament: any combination of two Category B1 or B2 tournaments or any combination of four Quick Chess Category B, B1, or B2 tournaments), and
- b. Satisfactory performance as Chief TD or Chief Assistant to a national TD at a Category N, N1, N2, N3, N4, A, A1, or A2 tournament or any combination of two Quick Chess Category N, N1, N2, N3, N4, A, A1, or A2 tournaments, and
- c. Satisfactory performance as Chief TD of a Category R tournament or two Quick Chess Category R tournaments, but
- d. Allowable substitution for Requirement (a) is a satisfactory performance as Chief TD of six Category B tournaments (the following may be substituted for three Category B tournaments: any combination of three B1 or B2 tournaments or any combination of six Quick Chess Category B, B1, or B2 tournaments) and an additional 16 Category C tournaments (the following may be substituted for five Category C tournaments: any combination of 5 Category C1 or C2 tournaments or any combination of 10 Quick Chess Category C, C1, or C2 tournaments), three of which awarded \$1,000+ in prizes.

### **35. Testing Requirement.**

Essay examination of substantial difficulty designed to measure the applicant's understanding of the rules as they relate to complex problems. An experienced national TD grades the examination. If the NTD gives the exam a failing grade, the applicant may request that the exam be regraded by two additional experienced NTDs. A regrade will automatically occur if the applicant scored between 70%-79%. The final result of the grading process will then be the result given by at least two of the three graders. The same form of the same examination may not be taken more than once by any applicant.

### **36. Limitations.**

An associate national TD may not be the Chief TD of Category N1 tournaments.

### **37. Expiration.**

Six-year renewable terms. The testing requirement for re-certification is waived for an associate national TD with satisfactory performances as the chief or assistant TD of six tournaments during the six-year term.



## **The National Director (NTD)**

### **38. Experience Requirements.**

- a. Satisfactory performance as Chief TD of 15 Category B tournaments, three of which awarded \$1,000+ in prizes (the following may be substituted for five Category B tournaments: any combination of five Category B1 or B2 tournaments or any combination of ten Quick Chess Category B, B1, or B2 tournaments), and
- b. Satisfactory performance as Chief TD of a Category R tournament or satisfactory performance as Chief TD at two Quick Chess Category R tournaments, and
- c. Satisfactory performance as Chief TD or Chief Assistant to a national or associate national TD at a Category T tournament of at least four rounds or satisfactory performance as Chief TD or Chief Assistant to a national or associate national TD at two Quick Chess Category T tournaments of at least four rounds, and
- d. Satisfactory performance as Chief Assistant to a national TD at a Category N1 tournament (the following may be substituted for one Category N1 tournament: Both a Category N3 AND a Category N4 tournament), and
- e. Satisfactory performance as Chief TD or Chief Assistant to a national TD at an additional Category N1, N2, N3, N4, A, A1, or A2 or satisfactory performance as Chief TD or Chief Assistant to a national TD at any combination of two additional Quick Chess Category N1, N2, N3, N4, A, A1, or A2 tournaments, but
- f. Allowable substitution for Requirement A is a satisfactory performance as Chief TD of ten Category B tournaments (the following may be substituted for three Category B tournaments: any combination of three Category B1 or B2 tournaments or any combination of six Category B, B1, or B2 tournaments) plus 20 Category C tournaments (the following may be substituted for six Category C tournaments: any combination of six Category C1 or C2 tournaments or any combination of 12 Quick Chess Category C, C1 or C2 tournaments), three of which awarded \$1,000+ in prizes.

### **39. Testing Requirement.**

A rigorous essay examination designed to measure the applicant's understanding of the philosophies behind the rules. An experienced national TD grades the examination. The same form of the same examination may not be taken more than once by any applicant. If the NTD gives the exam a failing grade, the applicant may request that the exam be regraded by two additional experienced NTDs. A regrade will automatically occur if the applicant scored between 70%-79%. The final result of the grading process will then be the result given by at least two of the three graders. The same form of the same examination may not be taken more than once by any applicant.

### **40. Limitations.**

None.

### **41. Expiration.**

Life.

## **The International Arbiter (IA) and FIDE Arbiter (FA)**

### **42. Title.**

The titles of International arbiter and FIDE arbiter are awarded by the World Chess Federation (FIDE).

### **43. Qualifications.**

The USCF will submit a title application for the International arbiter and FIDE arbiter titles for current USCF members who are certified at the Senior, ANTD, or NTD level and meet all the following requirements. FIDE requires that an IA applicant must already hold the title of FA :

- a. Thorough knowledge of the *Laws of Chess* and the FIDE Regulations for chess competitions;
- b. Absolute objectivity, demonstrated at all times during his or her activity as an arbiter;
- c. Sufficient knowledge of at least one official FIDE language for FA and obligatory knowledge of the English language, minimum at conversation level, and of chess terms in other official FIDE languages, for IA.
- d. Experience as chief or deputy arbiter in at least four category I events documented by the appropriate title norm certificate signed by a current IA or FA and governed by the FIDE Laws of Chess and Rules of Play such as the following:
  - d1. The final of the National Adult Championship (not more than two);
  - d2. All official FIDE tournaments and matches;
  - d3. International title tournaments and matches;
  - d4. International chess festivals with at least 100 contestants.

### **44. Testing Requirement.**

An essay examination for the IA and FA candidate designed to measure the applicant's understanding of the philosophies behind FIDE rules. An IA designated by the TDCC grades the examination.

### **45. Limitations.**

FIDE arbiters and International arbiters may direct all Category I tournaments. In order to submit the tournament as a USCF rated tournament, the IA or FA must also have a level of USCF TD certification appropriate to the USCF Category into which the tournament fits.

### **46. Expiration.**

The expiration of IA certification is determined by FIDE. Currently (as of the adoption of these standards), International arbiters are certified for life.

**TDCC TIP:** Any TD certified Senior or higher may take a test designed to teach and evaluate the applicant's knowledge of organizational and reporting requirements for FIDE rated events. Contact the USCF for more information.

## **Waivers**

### **47. Special Consideration.**

The TDCC reserves the right to give special consideration to applicants in extraordinary situations. Requests detailing the extraordinary circumstances must be submitted in writing to the TDCC chairperson through the technical director.

## **Certification Restrictions**

### **48. Restrictions.**

The USCF may impose restrictions on a TD's certification upon documentation of technical incompetence, partiality, professional misconduct, or inefficiency.

### **49. Due Process.**

Allegations of these offenses will be investigated by the TDCC or the executive director. The accused will be afforded due process. In every investigation the TDCC or executive director will consider the past accomplishments of the TD in service to chess and other substantiated complaints against the TD.

### **50. Penalties.**

Imposed restrictions may include warnings, probations, requirements of additional experience or testing to maintain or advance level, demotions of level, limitations on the types of tournaments that may be directed, temporary suspensions of directing certification, or permanent de-certifications.

### **51. Appeals.**

Any imposition of TD restrictions made by the executive director may be appealed to the TDCC. Any decision made by the TDCC may be appealed to the Executive Board. Any decision made by the Executive Board may be appealed to the Board of Delegates. All appeals should be filed within 30 days of notice of action taken. Restrictions will generally remain in effect during the appeals process.

## **Uniform Code of Discipline**

### **52. Technical Incompetence.**

In cases in which technical incompetence on the part of the TD has been demonstrated, the TDCC will normally impose additional testing requirements for the TD to maintain his or her level of certification. In extreme cases the TDCC may demote the TD's level of certification or suspend his or her certification until greater competence is demonstrated. Technical incompetence is typically demonstrated by gross misapplication of USCF's Official Rules of Chess.

### **53. Partiality.**

In cases in which partiality on the part of the TD has been demonstrated, the TDCC will normally impose a suspension of directing privileges for a period not less than three months and not greater than three years. In extreme cases the TDCC may recommend permanent de-certification to the Executive Board. Bribery, fraudulent reports, deliberately unfair pairing or scoring practices, deliberately inconsistent rules

enforcement, and even minor irregularities that benefit the TD as a player in an event in which he or she is eligible for a prize typically demonstrates partiality.

#### **54. Professional Misconduct.**

In cases in which professional misconduct on the part of the TD has been demonstrated and reconciliation between the complainant and the TD cannot be achieved, the TDCC will normally issue a warning to the TD. Extreme cases of professional misconduct, especially when representing the USCF at a national tournament, may warrant certification demotion or suspension. Professional misconduct is typically demonstrated by denigration of a player, arrogance, rude behavior, and failure to respond to official inquiries by the executive director, his or her designee, or the TDCC.

#### **55. Inefficiency.**

In cases in which inefficiency has been demonstrated as the cause of a poorly directed tournament, the TDCC will normally issue a warning to the TD. In extreme cases certification may be suspended until the TD demonstrates improved procedural techniques. Inefficiency is typically demonstrated by lack of adherence to an announced tournament schedule, untimely or inaccurate posting of pairings and results, and untimely or inaccurate calculation of tournament-prize distributions.

