



GUIDELINES FOR COACHES: K-8 Scholastic Team State Championship

The ordered board format is designed to match a ranked and ordered group of players from one school against a ranked and ordered group from an opposing school. The players are ranked 1 through 5 according to actual playing strength. There is an allowance for alternate or substitute players (a maximum of two extra players can be registered for a total of seven), in which case they must be ranked relative to the others, e.g., 1 through 7. In the event that two players are considered equal, they should still be assigned consecutive rank numbers. These player rankings are set by the team coach with registration and reviewed by the GCA before the tournament. (See “RANKING OF PLAYERS” below.)

In a given match, two teams of five players each will face off on 5 “Boards.” The Boards are designated letters “a” through “e”. The team that is assigned “white” will have the white pieces on boards “a”, “c” and “e”. The team that is assigned “black” will have the white pieces on boards “b” and “d”. The reason for assigning colors in this manner is to equalize the colors between the two competing teams as much as possible.

The strongest player on each team will play each other on the highest ranked board, Board “a”. The second ranked player on each team will play on the second ranked board, Board “b”. The next two strongest players will face off on the third ranked board, Board “c”, etc. In the event of substitutions the relative ranking of the players must remain intact. In no case is it correct for a player to be on a higher ranked board than a teammate ranked above him. For example:

If the top ranked player (the player who would normally be on Board “a”) on a team does not play in a round, the appropriate substitution is for the players on Boards ‘b’ through ‘e’ to each move up one Board, and for the substitute to play on Board “e”. It is NOT correct in this example for the substitute to play on Board “a”. The penalty for playing out of order is that the player who played on a higher ranked board than he should have (in the above example the substitute who played on board “a” instead of board “e”) will have his game result count, and all players who played on lower ranked boards than they should have (in the above example players “b”, “c”, “d”, and “e”, who failed to move up one board each) will have their games forfeited. In the above example the team whose substitute played on Board “a” instead of on Board “e” would automatically lose this match, since 4 of their 5 games would be lost by forfeit.

Team wins in each round will be determined by adding up points from wins loses and draws on the five boards. For example, if a school team wins on 2 boards (one point for each win), loses on one board (zero points for each loss) and draws on 2 boards (one half point for each draw), that team wins its match by the score of 3-2, and earns one match point. In determining standings at the end of the tournament the first factor will be number of match points.

For details on further tie-break systems that may be used, and for other rules and procedures that will be used for the State Scholastic Team Tournament, please refer to the “Team Rules Summary.”

RANKING OF PLAYERS:

The ranking of team players is fundamental to the fairness of this ordered board format. First and foremost, the GCA relies on the honor of the team coach to accurately and fairly rank his or her players in terms of current playing strength. GCA will not alter the composition or order of the ranked set of players submitted by a coach. In cases where it is abundantly clear that the order submitted does not reflect the actual relative playing strength of the players, GCA reserves the right to penalize the team. Penalties may include, but are not limited to, forfeit of specific games, forfeit of a match, or matches, and expulsion from the tournament. The following factors should be considered in a coach's ranking decisions:

1. Recent tournament performance against OUTSIDE competition.
2. USCF ratings, factored for currentness, frequency of play, and whether the rating is provisional or established.
3. Consistent performance over time against teammates.
4. Other factors, such as maturity or general tournament experience.

Factors to AVOID in the ranking process:

1. Rigidly using USCF ratings as the ranking mechanism, when based on tournament performance and other indications it is very clear that the relative ratings do not reflect the current relative strength of the players.
2. Changing long standing teammate rankings just prior to the tournament due to a recent upset in a club or internal ladder game.
3. Ranking players based solely on their grade levels in school (i.e., automatically putting 5th graders ahead of 4th graders.)
4. Listing any two or more players as "equal."

This is not to be considered a complete list of factors to consider when ranking players. Any and all information which a coach may have about a player should be considered when deciding how to rank a player for this tournament.