

AGA Tournament Regulations (2005)

I. Tournament Sponsorship and Sanctions. The American Go Association (hereafter, the **AGA**) has an official interest in three different categories of tournaments as defined below.

A. AGA-rated. An AGA-rated tournament is one in which every player is an AGA member prior to the tournament, joins at the door, or pays the AGA non-member fee. The results of all games in an AGA-rated tournament will be submitted to the AGA ratings system for inclusion in the AGA ratings database.

B. AGA-sanctioned. A sanctioned tournament is an AGA-rated tournament in which the Tournament Director (hereafter, **TD**) and organizing committee, if one exists, agree to abide by AGA tournament regulations and procedures. The AGA commits itself in return to support the tournament as it is able, and, upon receipt of any member complaints, to examine the activities of the TD and/or organizing committee for infractions of said regulations.

C. AGA-sponsored. A sponsored tournament is an AGA-sanctioned tournament which the AGA itself through its officers and/or local representatives, plans, organizes, carries out, and assumes any financial burden which may thereby result.

II. Rules of the Game. The rule set created by the AGA itself (hereafter, the **AGA Rules of Go**) shall be the official rules of the game of go for tournament play unless otherwise superceded by tournament regulations given below. (Tournaments may also be conducted with the Ing Goe rule set.) AGA tournament regulations may be used to conduct tournaments using variant games and/or rules, but such games will not be included in the national ratings system.

III. Tournament Authorities: Their Duties and Responsibilities. The AGA suggests that the following posts be the minimum of organizational positions for planning and running tournaments, and further, that a person hold no more than one of these positions during any given tournament. It encourages organizers to define as many other positions as they may need to do the job.

A. Tournament Chairperson. (Hereafter, the **Chair**.) The Chair shall be responsible for overseeing the entire job of organizing the tournament in advance of its occurrence, for making all decisions necessary to insure its success, and for carrying out all jobs that need to be done.

1. The Chair shall have complete authority to decide all physical and logistic questions that might arise on the day of the tournament itself.
2. There should be no appeal of the Chair's decisions on tournament day.

B. Tournament Director. The TD shall be responsible for running the tournament system on tournament day and for seeing that the regulations of tournament play are followed.

1. The TD shall:
 - a. Make and announce pairings, time controls, and schedule;
 - b. Maintain order;
 - c. Determine tournament winners;

- d. Supervise time controls and overtime;
 - e. Generally carry out any other activities necessary to insure smooth play.
2. The TD may delegate as many of these duties to other individuals as is necessary to discharge his/her responsibilities.
 3. The TD's decisions as to the method of running the system shall be final.
 4. The TD shall send game results from the tournament to the AGA ratings system and membership data and monies to the Membership Secretary in a timely manner.

C. Assistant Tournament Director. (Hereafter, **ATD**.) The ATD shall assist the TD in whatever capacity the latter deems most useful, shall carry out such duties as the TD may assign, and have the same authority as the TD except as noted below.

IV. Appeals. The following procedure protects both the players and the TD if each is dissatisfied with the other while resolving disputes that may arise.

A. Appeal of the ATD. A player may appeal decisions of an ATD to the TD. Such an appeal must be made immediately after the ATD has rendered a decision.

B. Appeals Committee. In general, decisions of the TD may not be appealed. However, the TD may at any time convene an **Appeals Committee** to decide protests made to him/her; the TD must then abide by the decision of the committee. The TD is strongly encouraged to employ an Appeals Committee if there is sufficient time during the event.

C. Composition of Appeals Committee. An Appeals Committee shall consist of three to five experienced players selected by the TD with no connection to any of the parties to the dispute and with no stake in the outcome.

1. No TD or ATD may be a member of the committee.
2. The committee shall select one of its number as chairperson to supervise the proceedings.
3. It shall then obtain testimony from each of the parties to the dispute and any other witnesses that may be necessary, including the TD or ATD.
4. It shall deliberate, decide the question in accordance with tournament regulations and the rules of the game, and the chairperson shall communicate its decision in writing to the TD, who shall enforce it.

D. Next round commencement. The next round cannot commence until all appeals from the current round have been settled.

E. Player complaints. Players may not appeal the decisions of a TD or an Appeals Committee to the AGA. However, upon receipt of a player complaint against a TD or tournament organizer, the AGA shall investigate the matter and take action as under **VIII.D**.

V. Player Conduct and Etiquette. Go is a game steeped in tradition, courtesy, and respect for one's opponent. During tournament play, a player shall generally conduct him/herself with a minimum of

behavior that is disruptive or irritating to other players.

A. Noise. Talk is to be kept to a minimum in the playing area, as is all noise. Players who wish to replay a game should leave the playing area if at all possible; players who do not must speak softly enough not to disturb any other players still in games.

B. Kibitzing. Onlookers are specially enjoined against making excessive noise. They are specifically forbidden to comment or suggest moves or corrections that the players might hear. The TD may request violators leave the playing area; repeated offenses are grounds for disqualifying the offender from further play in the tournament.

C. Smoking. Smoking is subject to public law, the Chair, and one's opponent: only if all three allow it can one smoke in the playing area. If there is a separate playing area for smokers, and both players agree, a tournament game can be played there.

D. Eating and drinking. A player may eat and/or drink in the playing area only so long as such behavior does not disrupt any game in progress nor disturb any other player.

E. Problem resolution. A player being disturbed by another player should attempt to resolve the problem with that player first. Only if this fails or the problem persists should he/she bring it to the attention of the ATD or TD.

F. Access. A player may not prevent his/her opponent's access to, or sight of, the board, the stones on the board, the clock, and the prisoners (under Japanese or territory-style counting) under any circumstances.

G. Timeliness. A player shall endeavor to be in attendance before the start of registration and of each scheduled round during a tournament, both to ease the burden of directing from the TD and as a mark of respect for his/her opponent.

H. Cheating. Cheating is a deliberate infraction of the rules of go or of AGA Tournament Regulations. As such, it is also a breach of etiquette under the general sense of this section, hence doubly enjoined. No player shall cheat. Every player shall bring evidence of cheating to the attention of the TD or ATD as soon as possible.

I. Atari. A player is never required to tell an opponent that the latter is in **atari** (check), nor is it discourteous to refrain from doing so.

J. Clock Reminder. A player is never required to remind an opponent to punch the latter's clock; however, good sportsmanship asks that he/she do so, at least for the opponent's first lapse.

VI. Administration of Play. The AGA wishes to give local TD's wide latitude in running tournaments, but also to give players a reasonable expectation as to how a tournament shall be run and a guarantee of fair play; and itself, a reasonable basis for game inclusion in the ratings system. A TD should not override any provision of this section without careful consideration; he/she **must** announce to the players before play begins any section he/she does override. Sections italicized below are so crucial they can never be overridden without a waiver from the AGA.

A. Preparation for play.

1. Ratings and ranks.

a. A **rating** is a numerical expression of playing strength assigned to each AGA member by the ratings system. It varies as a result of rated games submitted to the ratings system by TD's or AGA chapters.

b. A **rank** is a graded system of levels inherited from the Orient used to express the relative strengths of players. Most tournament systems use ranks as a basis for handicaps and pairings. The AGA does not recognize amateur ranks higher than 6 dan.

c. The TD can derive approximate ranks from ratings by dropping the decimal portion of the rating. Negative ratings become kyu ranks; positive ratings, dan ranks.

d. *A player must play at a rank at least equal to that of his/her official AGA rating but no lower. (A player playing in tournament systems that use the rating to pair players shall enter at a strength at least equal to his/her official AGA rating.)* However, a player shall not be forced to play at a rank higher than the AGA recognizes at the time of the tournament. A player may, after consultation with the TD, elect to play at a higher rank. Unless otherwise directed by the TD, a player must play at the rank initially established for the entire tournament.

e. A player with no established AGA rating shall be assigned a provisional rank by the TD using his/her best judgement. The TD shall correct this provisional rank if subsequent play shows it seriously in error.

2. Handicaps. If used, *handicaps shall consist of the number of stones difference in rank between the two players and placed according to the AGA Rules of Go.*

a. Handicaps may never exceed nine stones.

b. If used in a Swiss-McMahon system, handicaps consist of the band difference between the two players. In lower bands encompassing several ranks, the TD may prefer to use traditional handicaps. Players beginning above the Bar should never receive handicaps.

c. Mathews Accelerated system handicaps are defined within the system itself.

3. Even game compensation and draws. Even game compensation (commonly known as **komi**) shall be given to the player of the White stones in accordance with the *AGA Rules of Go*. **Ing** system compensation is defined within the **Ing Goe** rule set itself.

4. Choosing colors in even games. They may be assigned:

a. By the TD by lot;

b. By a system which attempts to insure that all players use each color as equally as possible;

c. By the players themselves. Traditionally, one player picks up a handful of white stones and the other, either one or two black stones. If the parity of both guesses agrees, that player uses black; if not, vice versa. However, any other mutually agreeable method of lot will suffice.

5. Prepared materials and consultation.

- a. *A player shall not use, consult, or bring to the playing surface any prepared game materials, move dictionaries, problem collections, etc., during the current round.*
- b. *A player may not use a second set to "mirror" any part of the tournament game or to work out any positional variations arising from it.*
- c. *A player may not go elsewhere inside or out of the playing area during the current round and contravene a. or b. of this section.*
- d. *A player may not use a computer to contravene either a. or b. of this section. A player using a computer to record a game must be willing and able to satisfy his/her opponent and the TD at any time that he/she is not so contravening this stricture.*
- e. *A player may not consult with a third party, solicit advice, nor receive unsolicited advice on any game he/she has not finished.*

6. If a clock is used, the player with the white stones shall choose upon which side of the board to place it. If the TD requires that the clock be on a particular side for administrative purposes, then that player shall choose at which side of the board to sit.

B. Play of the game.

1. A stone is **played** when it has been placed on an intersection of the board and is no longer touched by the player. Once played, a stone may not be moved or removed except as a capture or as part of the retraction of an illegal move, as provided below.
2. A stone must be played on an intersection with a minimum of adjustment and a minimum of time being touched by the player. Players are specifically enjoined to remember the spirit of **V.F.** when playing a stone.
3. A **move** is either:
 - a. *The play of a stone and capture of any prisoners, or,*
 - b. *A pass of the move.*
4. A move is **complete** when the clock is punched, or, in non-clocked games, when a player's hand releases the stone and removes any stones captured by the move.
5. A player who accidentally disrupts the board position must re-establish it using his/her own time. If the position can not be re-established to the satisfaction of both players, the TD or ATD shall adjudicate.
6. A player may ask an opponent to clarify the ambiguous placement of a stone *before* making his/her next move.
7. The penalty for illegal moves is given in the *AGA Rules of Go*, or if using the Ing system, the Ing Goe rule set. The TD may consider repeated illegal moves grounds for awarding a forfeit to the victim.

8. A player may resign at any time, and should do so by stating clearly, "I resign."

C. Adjournment of play. In the event it becomes necessary to adjourn play (typically, to break a round for meals), the following procedures should be observed.

1. The TD shall announce an adjournment time before the current round begins play.
2. Play shall be adjourned only upon instruction of the TD or ATD, who shall warn players ten minutes before the time of adjournment.
3. Players may continue to move, but with the understanding that the player "on the move" at the actual adjournment time will have to **seal** his/her move when the TD or ATD comes by the game. (The TD is cautioned not to expect instant compliance when he/she comes to adjourn a game, nor to levy a penalty unless a player is unreasonably dilatory.)
 - a. *He/she does **not** place a stone on the board, but writes the coordinates of the next move on a slip of paper, or marks its position on a full-board diagram.*
 - b. *The player **must** insure the move is unambiguously described.*
 - c. The player then stops both clocks, places the paper with the move inside an envelope provided for the purpose by the TD or ATD, and seals it.
 - d. The TD or ATD writes the board number, clock time remaining, and player to move on the face of the envelope; both players sign it across the flap.
 - e. The TD or ATD takes custody of the envelope.
4. *Both players must leave the board until time for the resumption of play. The provisions of A.5. remain in force during the hiatus.*
5. To resume play, in the presence of the TD or ATD:
 - a. Both players confirm the board number, the position of the stones on the board, and the clock setting;
 - b. *The player who did **not** make the sealed move opens the envelope and verifies the placement of the stone;*
 - c. *Unless the move is impossible or illegal, it **must be played as written and sealed**; if impossible or illegal, the TD shall adjudicate as under D.3. and 4. below.*
 - d. Once the player makes the move, his/her clock is started and normal play resumes.

D. Completion of play.

1. Both players should continue to alternate play until all neutral points have been filled and all repairing moves made. *A game is over when both players pass in succession.* The last to play should stop both clocks.
2. Both players shall score the game according to the *AGA Rules of Go* (or *Ing Goe rules*, if

under the Ing system).

3. If either player disputes the result, the TD or ATD can adjudicate by scoring the game himself or herself, using the final game position, existing game records, and/or observations of spectators.

4. **Both** players must report the game result to the TD and fill out any reporting forms he/she may require.

E. Timekeeping.

1. The minimum time limits that the AGA accepts for games in AGA-rated tournaments is 30 minutes per player per round of basic time control plus no more than the equivalent of 20 moves in five minutes per overtime control (often called **byo-yomi**), and 45 minutes per player per round in games with no overtime control. The AGA does not absolutely require the use of clocks during tournament play, but very strongly encourages it.

2. The TD shall explain time allowances, overtime method (if any), and operation of the clocks (as needed) before the commencement of play in the first round. It is strongly suggested that the TD at least summarize this explanation before commencing each round.

3. The TD may start any round with at least ten minutes notice, but no earlier than any previously announced time.

4. Either player may set the initial time allowance on the clock. *It is, however, each player's duty to assure him/herself that the clock is correctly set and that he/she understands its working.*

a. A player doubtful of clock setting or working must consult the TD or ATD before play begins.

b. Failure to consult the TD or ATD as above leaves a player liable for any timekeeping errors that may occur, except those attributable to clock malfunction during the course of play.

5. Games will start at the time designated by the TD. Absent players' clocks will be started by the TD. If both players are absent, upon the return of either, time remaining in the round will be split equally between them, and the clock started. If clocks are not used, an absent player shall forfeit if more than thirty minutes elapse after the announced start of play.

6. The second player will start the clock for the first player prior to the first move.

7. *A player must "punch the clock" with the same hand that plays the stone.*

8. Each player is responsible for managing his/her own time. Failure to punch the clock results in time lost; it cannot subsequently be restored.

9. A player who suspects a clock has malfunctioned must notify the TD or ATD at once, and not continue play until the TD or ATD directs. *A player may not escape the consequences of running out of time by claiming a clock malfunction earlier in the round which he/she never brought to the TD's attention.*

10. Players may stop both clocks only under the following circumstances:

- a. Scheduled adjournment;
- b. At the direction of the TD/ATD;
- c. Removal of more than one captured stone;
- d. Exchange of prisoners;
- e. Game's end;
- f. To make a protest to the TD/ATD.
- g. To resolve a dispute with one's opponent, as under **E**.

11. *If the game is not over when a player has used all his/her allotted time, that player must either resign or go into overtime (if overtime is a part of the announced time control).*

12. Either the TD, ATD, or a **monitor** appointed for the purpose should explain conditions of overtime play to the players involved. And although some systems allow the players to conduct overtime themselves, it is preferable for the TD, ATD, or the monitor to do so.

13. Normally a player is responsible for claiming to the TD that an opponent has passed a time control. However, the TD may delegate that responsibility to a monitor.

- a. In the Canadian overtime system (see below), the monitor is always responsible for resetting clocks and counting out stones when a player has met a time control.
- b. The TD may require monitors to claim forfeits when players miss an overtime control.
- c. The TD may also require monitors to claim that a player has missed a basic time control.
- d. The TD must announce what role monitors will play in advance of the first round.

14. Overtime play may be conducted in one of three ways:

a. **"Second counting."** A player must make each move within a fixed number of seconds. Failure to complete a move in time is punished as under **11**. Monitors implicitly have powers as under **13.b**.

b. **Japanese.**

(1) A given number of overtime periods of a given length (typically, five periods of 30 seconds) are allotted to the player at that point of basic time equal to the sum of the overtime periods.

(2) If a player completes a move in less than the time of one period, no time elapses.

(3) Whenever a player uses a period's worth of time, the number of periods available is reduced by one.

(4) Failure to complete a move before the expiration of the last overtime period is punished as under 11.

(5) The "reading seconds" provision of the Ing chess/go clock is an acceptable way to carry out this method of overtime.

(6) Monitors implicitly have powers as under 13.b. and c.

c. Canadian.

(1) A given number of stones is counted out, the clock reset to a given number of minutes, and the player's stone container closed and removed.

(2) When these stones have been played, a new set is counted out and the clock reset. Continue *ad inf.*

(3) Failure to play all the stones counted out in the time provided is punished as under 11.

(4) Monitors implicitly have powers as under 13.a. and may have the powers of b. and c. also.

F. Tiebreaking procedures. Most tournament systems leave two or more players tied in placement by the end of the tournament. The procedures published by the AGA under the title **Resolving Ties** are recommended for that purpose.

1. The TD must announce what tie-breaking procedures he/she is going to use before first round play begins.

2. If cash prizes are being awarded, ties are broken **only** to place the victors. *The actual cash prizes given to the places tied are summed and divided among all the players tied, regardless of what tiebreaking procedure is adopted.*

VII. Use of Computers. Throughout this document, the word computer encompasses both the physical device and the electronically encoded instructions that run upon it. The AGA recognizes three ways computers may be used during tournaments. Computer use must never be allowed to disrupt tournament activity, but no further restrictions are placed on computer use, except as noted below.

A. TD use. The TD may always use computers to register entrants, pair them, and report their game results to the AGA.

B. Player use. Players may use computers to record their tournament games and those of other players, subject to V.A.5.d.

C. Computer entry. Computers may enter tournaments under certain conditions:

1. Only the inventor of the hardware/program or his/her designated agent may enter the computer (hereafter, either inventor or agent are called the **operator**.);

2. The computer must correctly handle any move legal for it or its opponent to make and

must not make any illegal moves;

3. Both computer and operator must be AGA members;
4. The operator must play computer moves on a regular board and "punch the clock" for the computer;
5. The operator may enter or adjust playing parameters before a round begins, but not during a round;
6. The computer's clock must be left ticking if the operator must fix hardware or software problems.
7. The operator may offer to resign on the computer's behalf.

D. Classes of computer participation. There are three classes of computer tournament participation. Tournament publicity should indicate what class a tournament is ahead of time; if not announced, the tournament is automatically class **B**. The TD should also announce the class of tournament before first round pairings.

1. Class **A**: no computer entrants allowed.
2. Class **B**: computers allowed, but humans have the right to refuse computer opponents. Humans wishing to do so must notify the TD before first round pairings.
3. Class **C**: computers allowed; humans may not refuse computer opponents.

VIII. Penalties. The AGA makes few attempts to set out specific penalties for tournament faults, as the number of potential situations is too great. Instead, it offers the following:

A. Objectives. The foremost objective of a penalty is to restore the *status quo ante* the infraction.

B. Forfeits. An infraction is not in itself grounds for awarding a forfeit unless the infraction is repeated, deliberate, the *status quo ante* cannot be restored, or the offender gives evidence of not intending to abide by tournament regulations or the rules of go. A forfeit counts as a victory for the opponent of the player who forfeits.

C. Lesser penalties. TD's are cautioned not to attempt to levy lesser penalties that arbitrarily adjust the game score or clocks beyond what is necessary to restore the situation; ad hoc adjustments of territory and/or time are difficult to justify.

D. TD infractions. If the investigation of a player complaint reveals that the TD has violated tournament regulations, the AGA shall levy any penalties with **A**. in mind and with the object not only of correcting any injustice to players, but of guiding the TD not to make similar mistakes in the future.