

CONSTITUTION OF THE MONTANA CHESS ASSOCIATION (MCA)

PREAMBLE

The Montana Chess Association is the State Chapter Affiliate of the United States Chess Federation and organized to promote activities that enhance the enjoyment of the game for the membership, support chess education and general interest in chess.

ARTICLES OF ORGANIZATION

I. The organization shall be known as the Montana Chess Association (MCA).

II. Membership

A. Membership is open to Montana residents as defined in the attachment "Montana Residency for the Montana Chess Association."

B. Membership privileges

Members who have paid their annual dues (as defined in the bylaws) are eligible to:

- a. Vote, if present, at the annual MCA business meeting
- b. Earn grand prix points (as defined in the bylaws)
- c. Compete for the title Montana State Chess Champion (as defined in the bylaws)

C. Suspension of membership

Membership may be suspended by majority vote of the Executive Board (defined in Article III) for paying for MCA membership fees, an MCA-sponsored, or an MCA-sanctioned tournament (as defined in the bylaws) entry fee with a check returned for insufficient funds. The suspension is effective immediately and will continue for some period after the check is made good, as determined by the board.

D. Revocation of membership and expulsion

Membership may be revoked and an individual expelled from the MCA by majority vote of the Executive Board for any one of the following reasons:

- a. Failure to observe any of the standards of conduct listed in the Code of Ethics section of the current edition in force of the U.S. Chess Federations Official Rules of Chess.
- b. Refusal to comply with the rules of chess and tournament play.
- c. Repeated and/or egregious violation of the standards of conduct of players and spectators in the Rules of Play section of the current edition in force of the U.S. Chess Federations Official Rules of Chess.
- d. Repeated payment of entry or MCA membership fees with checks returned for insufficient funds.

E. Notification of suspension or revocation/expelled membership

Any individual who is suspended or expelled will be notified in writing by the Executive Board (defined in Article III) within ten (10) days of the decision. This notification will include the reason for the suspension or expulsion. Suspended or expelled members do not have the membership privileges listed above (Article II, Section B).

F. Appeal of suspension or revocation of membership.

Any individual who is suspended or expelled may appeal the decision. This is to be done in writing within thirty (30) days of receipt of notification of the action. In the appeal, the appellant is to nominate five (5) MCA members in good standing to the Executive Board (defined in Article III). The Executive Board will select at least one of these and appoint four (4) other members in good standing (not current members of the Executive Board) to serve as an appeals committee. The committee will render its decision based on the evidence contained in the written notification which levied the suspension or expulsion and on the individual's written appeal. By majority vote of the committee, the appeal will be either allowed or denied. The decision of the committee is final. If the appeal is allowed, full membership rights are restored.

III. Governance

An Executive Board, consisting of the elected officers specified in Article IV, will conduct the affairs of the MCA between its annual meetings.

IV. Officers

A. There shall be:

1. President
2. Vice-President
3. Secretary / Treasurer
4. Board Member at Large
5. Board Member at Large

- B. The duties and powers of these officers shall be those normally associated with the titles, plus any defined by these articles and bylaws.
- C. Officers shall be elected for one-year terms, beginning with the annual meeting (as defined in the bylaws). There are no term limits.
- D. Remaining board members shall appoint a replacement for any officer who vacates their office for any reason. The appointed officer shall serve until the next annual meeting.
- E. Elections are held during the annual meeting and are conducted by secret ballot if requested by any member. Members in good standing may nominate (no second is required) someone for an office. Only members may serve as officers and only members may vote. Members may not serve as officers if they have been members for less than 12 months.

V. Annual Meeting

- A. There shall be an annual meeting held in conjunction with the Montana Open (as described in the bylaws).
- B. The agenda of the meeting will always include the election of officers and any other business to be conducted.
- C. The agenda for the meeting will be published on the MCA website at least ten days prior to the meeting.
- D. Members wishing to place items on the agenda must provide the Secretary/Treasurer with written text 30 days prior to the Montana Open. The agenda will also include the names and desired positions of any persons seeking a position on the Executive Board for the following year.
- E. The Order of Business shall be:
1. Treasurers and other reports from the Executive Board
 2. Election of officers – nominations from the floor are in order and need not be seconded.

3. The published agenda
4. Members items (a two-thirds majority of members present shall be required to consider any actionable items offered from the floor)
5. Good and Welfare
- F. Except for amendment to these articles of organization, a majority vote of members present shall prevail.
- G. The out-going president, or designee, shall preside (and generally follow Roberts Rules of Order to conduct the meeting efficiently).

VI. Affiliation

The Montana Chess Association shall cooperate with other clubs and associations to promote chess. The Montana Chess Association shall be the recognized state chapter affiliate of the United States Chess Federation, paying the required annual affiliation fee, sponsoring the tournament that determines the Montana State Champion, and holding annual election of officers.

VII. Bylaws

The bylaws of the Montana Chess Association (following these Articles of Organization) are to standardize and guide the specific activities of the Association.

VIII. Amendment

Changes in these articles may be made during the annual meeting. The proposed changes must be announced, at least 10 days in advance, on the MCA website. A two-thirds majority of those members in good standing who are present during the annual meeting is required to make changes.

BYLAWS

I. Dues

A. Current Rates

1. Adult membership: \$15 per year
2. Youth membership: \$15 per year - Youth must be < 20 years old at membership expiration.
3. Family membership: \$40 per year – covers parents and children under age 19 living in a household at the same address
4. Unrated players: The first annual MCA dues will be waived for an unrated player who is under 19 at the start of their first tournament.
5. Surcharges (for checks returned for insufficient funds): \$10.00

B. Changes in rates

Annual dues, including any necessary increases, are established by the Executive Board. Any increase exceeding 20% must be approved by the membership during the annual meeting.

C. Dues are not refundable.

II. Tournaments:

A. MCA sponsored tournaments:

1. The Montana Open and the Montana Closed Championship are sponsored by the MCA (see bylaws IV and V)
2. At the discretion of the Executive Board, MCA may sponsor other tournaments (historically, these

have included an invitational, triple header, and junior championship)

3. The MCA will make arrangements, provide a tournament director, and absorb any loss, while retaining any profit, from MCA-sponsored events.

B. MCA sanctioned tournaments:

Individuals and groups wishing to conduct tournaments are encouraged to offer them as MCA sanctioned events. The MCA has no responsibility, other than advertising tournament and publishing results, for MCA-sanctioned tournaments. The organizers of MCA-sanctioned events bear the responsibility for conducting the tournament, including absorbing losses and retaining profits. Sanctioned tournaments:

1. May qualify as MCA grand prix tournaments (see bylaw III, below)
2. May be advertised on the MCA website (contact the secretary/treasurer for listing)
3. Must provide the secretary/treasurer with a cross-table of the results
4. Must conform to the conditions of tournament play specified in the current edition in force of the U.S. Chess Federations Official Rules of Chess.

C. MCA membership is required for Montana residents to participate in MCA sponsored and sanctioned tournaments.

Tie-breaks. Tie-breaks in round-robin events are (in the following order): Sonneborn-Berger, Kashdan, Rating of Opposition. With Swiss-style competitions, the tie breaks are (in the following order): Solkoff, Cumulative, Cumulative of opponents, Kashdan. Organizers of MCA-sanctioned tournaments are encouraged to use the same tie-breaks.

III. Grand Prix System

- A. The annual grand prix cycle shall begin after the Montana Open each year, and conclude with the following year's Montana Open. Grand prix points shall be issued to all MCA members with a plus score. Grand prix points shall not be issued to nonresidents. The Secretary/Treasurer shall compute the grand prix points awarded and track the standings, arranging for those standings to be published on the MCA website throughout the year.
- B. Grand Prix points shall be awarded to all players with a plus score according to a formula which shall be established and published on the website montanachess.org prior to the start of each chess season by the Executive Board.
- C. Grand Prix points shall also be awarded to tournament directors, who shall be treated as having obtained a score of 3 in any tournament in which they do not play but have served as a tournament director. Grand Prix points for that score of 3 will be calculated according to the same formula as for players.
- D. The formula shall allow for tournaments of differing number of rounds, shall have a bonus multiplier to reward players for miles traveled, and shall take into account the strength of field and the finishing position of each player with a plus score. The calculated values for each term in the formula will be the same for players earning the same score, with the exception of the Travel Bonus Multiplier.
- E. Grand Prix status shall be limited to sanctioned tournaments that are open, Swiss system events. Furthermore, Grand Prix tournaments must draw 10 or more MCA members as participants and have time control not faster than game in 30 minutes. Grand Prix events must be announced as such in advance in the official tournament announcement, newsletter and/or website. In the interest of avoiding scheduling conflicts, the Board may see fit to limit Grand Prix events throughout the state to

one per month. In resolving such scheduling conflicts, the Board shall give due consideration to tradition and to a fair geographic distribution of Grand Prix tournaments.

IV. Montana Open

A. The date of the Montana Open shall be determined by the Board, who shall make reasonable efforts to schedule in Q2 (April 1 – June 30).

V. The site of the Montana Open shall be determined each year by the Board, using its discretion to identify a location that is most convenient for the MCA and for the players. State Champion

A. The MCA shall sponsor and sanction an annual tournament called the Montana Closed Championship (Closed) following the Montana Open to determine the State Champion. The Closed shall be a six-player, round-robin tournament. There shall be no entry fee. Non-residents are not eligible for the Closed.

Tie-breaks will be used to determine the State Champion for the purpose of the seed for the following year's Championship. All players tied for first place shall be listed as co-champions for that year, regardless of tie breaks. All co-champions will receive an award.

B. The six players to compete in the Closed shall be, in order of priority:

1. The previous year's State Champion as long as they played in at least 1 Grand Prix Tournament in the current chess season. The requirement to play in a Grand Prix Tournament will not apply in chess seasons where there are less than 4 Grand Prix Tournaments. If the previous year's State Champion does not qualify then any co-champions can fill the slot in tie breaker order if they played in a Grand Prix Tournament. If no co-champions meet the criteria the vacancy will be filled as in C below.
2. The top two players in the Grand Prix Standings.
3. The top three finishers with plus scores in the Montana Open.

C. Players for the Closed are seeded after the Montana Open. The procedure for seeding players into the Closed is as follows:

1. Fill the seeded positions according to section B, above.
2. Any remaining vacancies will be filled from the Grand Prix standings.

D. Site and Date for the Montana Closed Championship

The site and date of the Closed will be determined after the Montana Open to accommodate the participants. Because of their relative centrality, Bozeman, Butte, and Helena will be given first consideration for sites for the Closed.

VI. Amendment

These bylaws may be changed during the annual meeting, a simple majority of members present prevailing.

Montana Residency for the Montana Chess Association

In determining whether a person is a resident for the purpose of membership in the Montana Chess Association, the following provisions apply:

- (1)** A member of the regular armed forces of the United States, a member's spouse or dependent, as defined in Montana Code Annotated § 15-30-2115, who resides in the member's household, or a member of the armed forces of a foreign government attached to the regular armed forces of the United States is considered a Montana resident if:
 - (a)** the member was a resident of Montana under the provisions of subsection (4) and continues to meet the residency criteria of subsections (4)(b) through (4)(d); or
 - (b)** the member is currently stationed in and assigned to active duty in Montana, and has resided in Montana for at least 30 days. The 30-day residence requirement is waived in time of war. Reassignment to another state, United States territory, or country terminates Montana residency for purposes of this section, except that a reassigned member continues to qualify as a resident if the member's spouse and dependents continue to physically reside in Montana and the member continues to meet the residency criteria of subsections (4)(b) through (4)(d). The designation of Montana by a member of the regular armed forces as a "home of record" or "home of residence" in that member's armed forces records does not determine the member's residency for purposes of this section.
- (2)** A person who has physically resided in Montana as the person's principal or primary home or place of abode for 180 consecutive days and who meets the criteria of subsection (4) immediately before making application for membership is eligible to obtain membership. As used in this section, a vacant lot or a premises used solely for business purposes is not considered a principal or primary home or place of abode.
- (3)** A person who obtains residency under subsection (2) may continue to be a Montana resident by physically residing in Montana as the person's principal or primary home or place of abode for not less than 120 days a year and by meeting the criteria of subsection (4) prior to making application for membership.
- (4)** In addition to the requirements of subsection (2) or (3), a person shall meet the following criteria to be considered a resident:
 - (a)** the person's principal or primary home or place of abode is in Montana;
 - (b)** the person files Montana state income tax returns as a resident if required to file;
 - (c)** the person licenses and titles in Montana as required by law any vehicles that the person owns and operates in Montana; and
 - (d)** if the person registers to vote, the person registers only in Montana.
- (5)** A student who is enrolled full-time in a postsecondary educational institution out of state and who would qualify for Montana resident tuition or who otherwise meets the residence requirements of subsection (2) or (3) is considered a Montana resident.
- (6)** An enrollee of a job corps camp located within the state of Montana is, after a period of 30 days within Montana, considered a Montana resident as long as the person remains an enrollee in a Montana camp.

- (7)** A person who does not reside in Montana but who meets all of the following requirements is a resident for purposes of membership:
- (a)** The person's principal employment is within this state and the income from this employment is the principal source of the applicant's family income.
 - (b)** The person is required to pay and has paid Montana income tax in a timely manner and proper amount.
 - (c)** The person has been employed within this state on a full-time basis for at least 12 consecutive months immediately preceding each application.
- (8)** An unmarried minor is considered a Montana resident if the minor's parents, legal guardian, or parent with joint custody, sole custody, or visitation rights is a Montana resident. The minor is considered a resident for purposes of this section regardless of whether the minor resides primarily in the state or otherwise qualifies as a resident. The resident parent or guardian of the minor may be required to show proof of the parental, guardianship, or custodial relationship to the minor.
- (9)** A person is not considered a Montana resident if the person:
- (a)** claims residence in any other state or country for any purpose; or
 - (b)** is an absentee property owner paying property tax on property in Montana.

Revised July 23, 2026
Revised September 1, 2025
Revised August 15, 2023
Revised August 15, 2022
Revised September 10, 2021
Revised June 16, 2021
Revised September 30, 2020
Revised April 6, 2018
Revised April 14, 2017
Revised April 16, 2016
Revised April 2, 2006
Revised April 24, 2005
Adopted April 18, 2004