Official ChessRun Rules

Where Intelligence Meets Speed

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International ChessRun Federation

Version 1.3 - 19 April 2025

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1 Introduction

The International ChessRun Federation (ICRFED) is the governing body for ChessRun, establishing the official rules, tournament standards, and equipment regulations for competitions worldwide.

ChessRun is a sport that combines chess and running on a basketball court. After each move on the chessboard, players must run 28 meters before making their next move. Over the course of a game, this adds up to about 1 km of running on average. The standard thinking time is 10 minutes plus 5 seconds per move, allowing for fast-paced games. A 7-round tournament can easily be played in a single afternoon.

ChessRun challenges both mental agility and physical endurance. Players must think strategically while tired, make good decisions under pressure, and stay focused despite the physical effort. This dual challenge creates a rich, balanced, and original competitive experience where the best players are those who can think fast... and run smart.

2 Field and Equipment

ChessRun can be played in both indoor and outdoor environments, making it a highly adaptable sport that can be practiced in a variety of locations.

2.1 Standard Playing Field

ChessRun is primarily played on a standard basketball court (28m x 15m), providing a widely available and standardized playing area. The basketball hoops are not used. Tables are positioned along the court's median line, accommodating up to 12 chessboards with electronic clocks. The setup ensures maximum spacing between boards, inspired by the Olympic standard for 100m sprint lanes, which are 1.25m wide. Optionally, cones can be placed to separate the lanes.
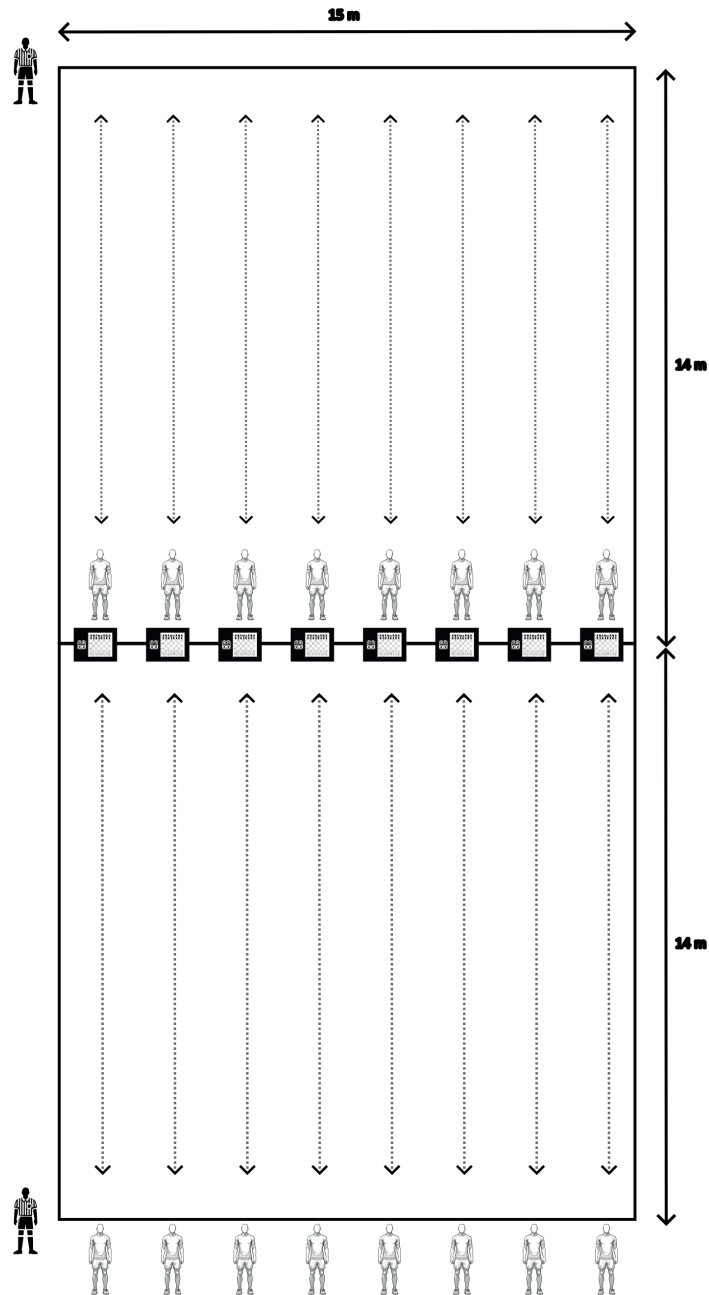

Figure 1: Standard layout example with 16 participants

After making a move, players must go to the edge of the court behind them, cross the line with both feet, and then return to the board. At the start of a round, players with the black pieces begin at the board, while those with the white pieces start behind the baseline, positioned directly behind their board. More details on the game rules can be found in Section 4.

2.2 Adaptations for Children

The physical demand of ChessRun is too high for children. To ensure a balanced competition while maintaining safety and enjoyment, the running distance is adapted according to the child's age for children below 14 years old. Instead of running the full distance, a marker is placed at a distance from the midline equal to the child's age in meters, indicating where they should turn back. For example, an 8-year-old child runs to a marker placed 8 meters from the midline before returning to the board.

2.3 Alternative Playing Fields

ChessRun can also be played in a variety of indoor and outdoor environments, as long as the playing area provides a minimum length of 28 meters to allow for the required running distance. This flexibility allows competitions to be held in sports halls, gymnasiums, and other open spaces. On an athletics track, chessboards can be placed in individual lanes, ensuring structured movement for players. Turning points are marked 14 meters from each table, as illustrated in Figure 2.3.
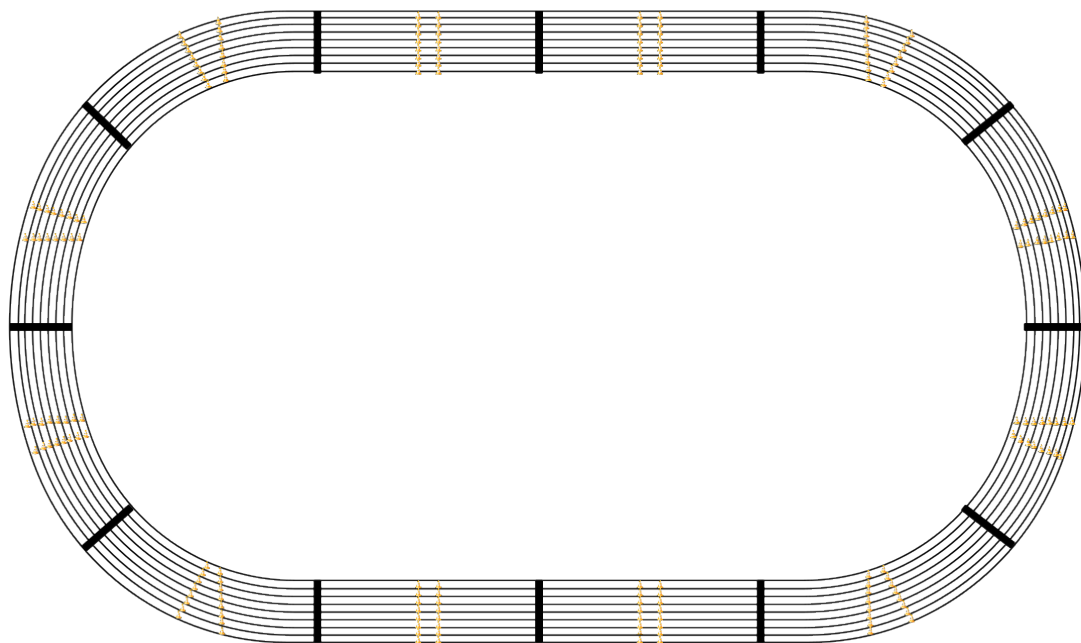
Figure 2: Example of a ChessRun setup on an athletics track with 8 lanes: 12 tables, represented by black rectangles, with 8 boards are placed. Cones indicate the turning points, positioned 14m from each table on both sides.

By adjusting the placement of tables and markers, ChessRun can be adapted to a wide range of venues, making it accessible for both casual and competitive play.

2.4 Equipment

Chess boards and pieces should follow the recommendations of the FIDE. Electronic clocks endorsed by the FIDE should be used. Mechanical chess clocks are not allowed. The table cannot be more than 85cm wide. Sitting is not recommended, but stools without backrests may be provided. The absence of a backrest ensures that players are not hindered when resuming their run. Players must wear appropriate shoes based on the surface (indoor sports shoes for gym-based play). As in most running and triathlon events, competing with a bare torso is not allowed.

3 Rating System and Player Divisions

ChessRun implements a structured ranking system called CR-ELO to ensure fair competition and precise player classification. Inspired by the traditional Elo system established by FIDE, the CR-ELO rating serves as the primary indicator of player strength and determines eligibility for the Pro Division.

3.1 ChessRun Rating System

3.1.1 Initial Rating Assignment

Participants who already have a FIDE or national chess rating will have their CR-ELO rating initialized to the higher of these ratings. For participants without an existing FIDE or national rating, their initial CR-ELO rating will be determined using the FIDE method for unrated players, based on their performance in their first rated ChessRun games.

3.1.2 Rating Calculation and Adjustments

The CR-ELO rating follows the standard FIDE Elo system for rating adjustments, applying the same K-factors and formulas to update player ratings after each game. All ratings are maintained and updated regularly on *ChessRun.org*.

3.2 Player Divisions

Players are classified into different competitive divisions based on their age, gender, and rating.

3.2.1 Pro Division

The Pro Division is open to high-level competitors with a CR-ELO of at least 2100. However, participation in this division is optional for players exceeding this threshold, allowing them to compete in their respective age categories if they prefer.

3.2.2 Open Divisions

This division is primarily designed for male participants, but is open to everyone.

- U8 (0-7)
- U10 (8-9)
- U12 (10-11)
- U14 (12-13)
- U16 (14-15)
- U18 (16-17)
- U20 (18-19)
- M20 (20-24)
- M25 (25-29)
- M30 (30-34)
- M35 (35-39)
- M40 (40-44)
- M45 (45-49)
- M50 (50-54)
- M55 (55-59)
- M60 (60-64)

- M65 (65-69)

- M70 (70-74)

- M75 (75-79)

- M80+ (80 and above)

3.2.3   Women's Divisions

This division is specifically designated for female participants.

- G8 (0-7)

- G10 (8-9)

- G12 (10-11)

- G14 (12-13)

- G16 (14-15)

- G18 (16-17)

- G20 (18-19)

- W20 (20-24)

- W25 (25-29)

- W30 (30-34)

- W35 (35-39)

- W40 (40-44)

- W45 (45-49)

- W50 (50-54)

- W55 (55-59)

- W60 (60-64)

- W65 (65-69)

- W70 (70-74)

- W75 (75-79)

- W80+ (80 and above)

3.2.4   Age Calculation Rule

Players are automatically placed in their corresponding category based on their year of birth, not their exact age on the day of the competition. This means that the category of each player remains the same throughout the calendar year.

3.3   Titled Players

The winner of the World Championship in each category is awarded the lifetime title *ChessRun Legend (CRL)*. Players maintaining CR-ELO ratings of 2500+, 2300+, or 2100+ for at least 50 consecutive games earn lifetime titles of *GeniusRunner (GR)*, *CleverRunner (CR)*, or *SmartRunner (SR)*, respectively.

4 Rules of Play

4.1 Setup and Start of Play

At the start of a round, all players with the black pieces begin at the board, while those with the white pieces start behind the edge of the field, positioned directly behind their board. A referee will count down: "3, 2, 1, GO." When "2" is announced, players with the black pieces start White's clock. At "GO," all players must begin running. Black must complete a full round trip before making their first move, while White only needs to run to the board.

4.2 Movement and Turn Execution

After every move, players must run to the edge of the field behind them and then return to the board. This can be done by either crossing the line with both feet, running around a cone placed on the line, or, if the court does not allow players to step beyond the boundary line due to a wall being directly at the edge or very close to it, by touching the wall with both hands before returning to the board.

4.3 Penalties and Referee Decisions

Referees are responsible for ensuring that the rules are followed and for imposing penalties in case of an infringement. In particular, when a player fails to properly cross the line during the run-out-and-back, the referee will stop the player at the next possible opportunity upon returning to the line and impose a 10-second penalty using a stopwatch. The player must remain motionless behind the line until the penalty expires. Referees must ensure that these penalties are applied as quickly as possible.

4.4 Differences from Classical Chess

ChessRun follows the FIDE rules for Blitz games, but the method of offering a draw is adapted to the dynamic nature of the sport. Since a player might be running when their opponent wishes to propose a draw, waiting for the opponent to return to the board could lead to a strategic disadvantage. To ensure fairness and consistency, each player is given two Draw Proposal Cards corresponding to their color: White has two white cards with black text stating "White offers draw" and Black has two black cards with white text stating "Black offers draw." To propose a draw, a player must place one of their Draw Proposal Cards on the board, regardless of whether the opponent is present at the board or not. The opponent can either accept the draw by stopping the clock or refuse the draw by taking the card and keeping it as a record of the rejected proposal. If a player notices that their opponent has committed an irregularity according to FIDE rules (for instance displaced a piece), they can press the opponent's clock and claim the irregularity. In addition to the penalties provided by FIDE, the opponent must correct the error and then run to the end of the field and back before they can make their next move.

4.5 Classical Mode

The standard time control in ChessRun is 10 minutes with a 5-second increment per move. However, to accommodate endurance differences, players in certain master categories receive additional time.

Table 1: Time Control for Masters Categories

Category	Time Control
M40/W40	10 minutes + 6 sec/move
M45/W45	10 minutes + 7 sec/move
M50/W50	10 minutes + 8 sec/move
M55/W55	10 minutes + 9 sec/move
M60/W60	10 minutes + 10 sec/move
M65/W65	10 minutes + 11 sec/move
M70/W70	10 minutes + 12 sec/move
M75/W75	10 minutes + 13 sec/move
M80+/W80+	10 minutes + 14 sec/move

4.6 ChessWalk

If all players prefer walking instead of running, ChessWalk serves as an alternative to ChessRun. The time control for ChessWalk is set at 10 minutes with a 15-second increment per move. Referees must ensure that all participants follow the rules of race walking, as defined in the Olympic Games. Race walking requires athletes to maintain continuous contact with the ground, ensuring that no visible loss of contact occurs. Additionally, the supporting leg must remain straight from the moment of first contact until it passes under the body. These rules ensure a walking motion without any flight phase, distinguishing walking from running. ChessWalk can be implemented as a separate category in tournaments or used for entire competitions, providing an alternative suited to the preferences and abilities of the participants.

4.7 ChessSprint

In knockout tournaments, if no winner is determined after all scheduled games, the match is decided by a sudden-death format known as ChessSprint. ChessSprint is played with a 10-minute time control without increment. Draw offers are prohibited. If the game reaches a theoretical draw, players must stop the clock and immediately start a new game with their remaining time and the same colors. This procedure repeats until a winner emerges. Exception: If either player has less than 2 minutes remaining when starting a new game, both receive an extra 2 minutes. Tournament organizers may also hold full competitions exclusively in ChessSprint format, creating a more intense and fast-paced experience.

5 Tournament Formats

Any standard chess tournament structure can be used for ChessRun. However, we believe that two-phase tournaments are the most exciting for both players and spectators. For this reason, it is the recommended main format. Depending on the tournament size, two different formats can be used:

- In major events, such as world championships, separate tournaments are held for each of the categories described in Section 3.2. Players compete only within their respective groups, and the final rankings are determined exclusively within each category [1].

- In smaller events, all players compete together in a single qualification phase. This phase determines the final classification within each age category. In addition, the top players in the overall standings advance to the finals, where they compete for gold, silver, and bronze medals in the general classification.

If players finish with the same number of points at the end of the qualification tournament, the FIDE tie-break criteria for Blitz tournaments are applied.

5.1 One-Day Events

For the qualification phase, a 5-round Swiss tournament is recommended. If the number of participants is high, an accelerated Swiss tournaments might be more appropriate than the classical version. The top four players in the qualification phase advance to the semi-finals, with the following pairings:

- Semi-final 1: 1st place vs. 4th place
- Semi-final 2: 2nd place vs. 3rd place

The winners of the semi-finals advance to the final, while the losing players compete for third place. In the knockout phase, all matches consist of a single game, with the higher-ranked player from the qualification phase playing with White. If the game ends in a draw, a ChessSprint tiebreak is conducted, as described in Section 4.7, with the players switching colors from the previous game.

5.2 Multiple-Days Events

In two-day events, a 7-round Swiss tournament is played on the first day. If the number of participants is high, an accelerated Swiss tournaments might be more appropriate than the classical version. For three-day events, a 13-round Swiss tournament is played over the first two days. All finals are played on the last day. The top eight players in the qualification phase advance to the quarter-finals, with the following pairings:

- Quarter-final 1: 1st place vs. 8th place
- Quarter-final 2: 2nd place vs. 7th place
- Quarter-final 3: 3rd place vs. 6th place
- Quarter-final 4: 4th place vs. 5th place

The winners advance to the semi-finals:

- Semi-final 1: Winner of Quarter-final 1 vs. Winner of Quarter-final 4
- Semi-final 2: Winner of Quarter-final 2 vs. Winner of Quarter-final 3

The winners of the semi-finals move on to the final, while the losing players compete for third place. In the knockout phase, all matches follow a best-of-two format, where the higher-ranked player from the qualification has White in the first game and Black in the second. If a match ends in a tie, a ChessSprint tiebreak is played, as described in Section 4.7, with the higher-ranked player from the qualification choosing his color.

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[1] If a category has fewer than 8 players, it is automatically merged with the smallest adjacent age category. For example, if the U10 category has 15 players, the U12 category has only 6 players, and the U14 category has 23 players, the U10 and U12 categories are merged. This process starts with the smallest category and continues until all categories contain at least 8 players. Separate rankings are still maintained within each original category to determine individual winners.

6 Team Matches

In ChessRun, teams are composed of six players. Team competitions can be played in two different formats:

- A tournament-style event, where multiple teams compete in a single venue over a short period.

- A league-style championship, where teams face each other over a full season, alternating home and away matches.

6.1 Tournament Format (Multiple Teams in One Event)

In this format, multiple teams compete at a single venue over a short period. During each match, the top player from one team faces the top player from the opposing team, the second player faces the second, and so on. A victory on each board earns one point for the team. At the end of the match, the team with the most points receives 2 match points, while both teams receive 1 match point in the case of a draw. At the end of the qualification phase, standard FIDE team tie-breaks are used to separate teams with the same number of match points.

6.1.1 One-Day Events

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- Semi-final 1: 1st place vs. 4th place

- Semi-final 2: 2nd place vs. 3rd place

The winners of the semi-finals advance to the final, while the losing teams compete for third place. All matches in the knockout stage are played as single games. The higher-ranked team from the qualification phase plays White on boards 1, 3, and 5, and Black on the other boards. In case of a tie, five ChessSprint games are played, as described in Section 4.7. Only Boards 1 to 5 are used for these tie-breaks, ensuring an odd number of games and guaranteeing a decisive result. The colors are reversed compared to the regular games: the team that played White on a board now plays Black, and vice versa.

6.1.2 Multiple-Days Events

In two-day events, a 7-round Swiss tournament is played on the first day. For three-day events, a 13-round Swiss tournament is played over the first two days. All finals are played on the last day. The top eight teams in the qualification phase advance to the quarter-finals, with the following pairings:

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The winners of the semi-finals move on to the final, while the losing teams compete for third place. In the knockout phase, all matches follow a best-of-two format, where the higher-ranked team from the qualification plays White on boards 1, 3, and 5, and Black on the other boards in the first game and vice versa in the second game. In case of a tie, five ChessSprint games are played, as described in Section 4.7. Only Boards 1 to 5 are used for these tie-breaks, ensuring an odd number of games and guaranteeing a decisive result. The colors for the ChessSprint games are the same as in the first game of the match.

6.2 League Format (Season-Based Championship)

In this format, teams compete over an entire season, with each match taking place at the home venue of one of the teams.

6.2.1 Match Structure

Instead of facing just one opponent, each player competes against all six players from the opposing team, resulting in a total of 36 games per match.

6.2.2 Pairings for the Six Rounds

If we name A-1 and B-1 the top players from Team A and B, A-2 and B-2 the second strongest, and so on down to A-6 and B-6, here are the pairings for all rounds:

- Round 1: A-1 vs. B-6, B-5 vs. A-2, A-3 vs. B-4, B-3 vs. A-4, A-5 vs. B-2, B-1 vs. A-6.

- Round 2: B-5 vs. A-1, A-2 vs. B-4, B-6 vs. A-3, A-4 vs. B-2, B-1 vs. A-5, A-6 vs. B-3.

- Round 3: A-1 vs. B-4, B-6 vs. A-2, A-3 vs. B-5, B-1 vs. A-4, A-5 vs. B-3, B-2 vs. A-6.

- Round 4: B-3 vs. A-1, A-2 vs. B-1, B-2 vs. A-3, A-4 vs. B-6, B-4 vs. A-5, A-6 vs. B-5.

- Round 5: A-1 vs. B-2, B-3 vs. A-2, A-3 vs. B-1, B-5 vs. A-4, A-5 vs. B-6, B-4 vs. A-6.

- Round 6: B-1 vs. A-1, A-2 vs. B-2, B-3 vs. A-3, A-4 vs. B-4, B-5 vs. A-5, A-6 vs. B-6.

The final round is designed to have each player face their counterpart with the same rank, ensuring the most balanced and decisive matchups to conclude the competition.

6.2.3 Scoring System

- Each board win contributes one point to the team score.

- The team with the most points after all 36 games is declared the winner of the match and wins 2 match points.

- There are no tie-breaks in the league format. If both teams accumulate the same number of points, the match is declared a draw and both teams receive 1 match point.

6.2.4 League Standings

Teams accumulate match points throughout the season, with the top teams qualifying for playoffs or a championship final, depending on the chosen format. If several team have the same amount of match points, the amount of board points is decisive. This structure ensures that every game is meaningful, promoting fairness while maintaining a high level of competition.