



VIRGINIA CHESS FEDERATION POLICY ON CELL PHONES AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Implemented January 1, 2016 -- Revised December 1, 2018 and November 3, 2021

This document, created by the Virginia Chess Federation (VCF), prescribes policy on the use and possession of cellular telephones and other electronic devices during VCF chess tournaments. In general, the VCF shall accommodate the technological innovations of the modern era, but we also shall vigorously protect the integrity of our tournaments and its games.

As described below in further detail, the foundation of our policy has 3 main points: (1) communications-capable devices must be turned off and stowed during games, players may not carry any communication-capable devices on their person while their games are in progress; (2) players are allowed to use US Chess-approved notation devices *in sections that are not FIDE-rated*; and, (3) music devices are not allowed.

Non-compliance with our policy subjects a player to the full range of actions by the Chief TD or Arbiter as allowed under the US Chess or FIDE Rules of Chess—from a warning to ejection from the event.

1. Devices covered under this policy include:

- a) Any device capable of communication between a player and an external party or another device.
- b) Any device capable of calculating chess moves or variations.
- c) Any device capable of looking-up positions from a database of chess games, including e-books.
- d) US-Chess-approved electronic notation devices.
- e) Music-playing devices.

2. **Communication or Calculation Capable Devices:** These are any devices *capable of transmitting or receiving information or signals, or capable of calculating moves or evaluating board positions, that can be used by a player, spectator, or assistant to convey an advantage to a player whose game is in progress*. Examples include, but are not limited to, cell phones, pagers, walkie-talkies, blue-tooth headphones, iPhones, iPads, computers, certain cell phone Apps, Android watches or iWatches. The test of whether a device qualifies as a communication or calculation device simply is whether it is *capable of transmitting or receiving information between a player and an external party or another device or is otherwise capable of evaluating positions*. For a player with a game in progress, all such devices under the player's control *must remain turned off* for the entire duration of the game. Further, while the game is in ongoing, these devices:

- a) *Must be stowed away* in a backpack, purse, chess bag, or otherwise placed in the location designated by the Chief TD/Arbiter. If a device is left outside of the Playing Area, a player may not access that device while his/her game is in progress. Devices must remain stowed away until the game is finished. The TD/Arbiter has the authority to ban all such devices from the Playing Area, including devices approved by the U.S. Chess Federation. Approval by US Chess of a device does not mandate its use, rather it simply conveys that using the device in a US Chess-rated tournament does not violate the *Official Rules of Chess*.
- b) *May not be carried on a player's physical person*, including in a pocket, coat, hat, other clothing, or any other container or bag carried or worn by the player while the game is in progress.
- c) *May not be used until their games end*. When a player's game is over, that player is considered a "spectator" for the remainder of the round and shall comply with the procedures described in paragraph 5 below.

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3. **US Chess-approved Electronic Notation Devices (ENDs):** An “END” is *the electronic equivalent of a paper scoresheet*. The VCF allows players to use only US Chess-approved ENDs in VCF events. As of November 2021, the only three (3) ENDs approved by US Chess for use in rated tournaments are the *Monroi, PlyCount, and ChessnoteR*. Other devices capable of performing similar functions are not allowed unless approved by the Chief Tournament Director. Any player using an END shall adhere to Rule 15A (Manner of keeping score) in the *Official Rules of Chess*, 7th Edition, which states: *"The player must first make the move, and then record it on the scoresheet. The scoresheet shall be visible to the arbiters (tournament directors) and the opponent throughout the game."* Note: Use of ENDs may not be allowed in certain FIDE events, even when they are directed and/or organized by the VCF.
 4. **Music-playing Devices:** These are electronic devices capable of playing music, including dedicated MP3/MP4 players, as well as headsets capable of receiving radio stations, internet music services, or blue-tooth transmissions. They are *not allowed in VCF events*.
 5. **Spectators:** Any spectator, including players whose games are finished, may be penalized and/or evicted from the playing area for the duration of the round if their cell phone or communication device disturbs ongoing games. Parents, spouses, siblings, and relatives of players must understand that they may inadvertently cause an appropriate game penalty to be applied to their related players. If the Spectator is a player participating in the tournament, the TD/Arbiter may impose a penalty that affects the player's next round of play or overall total game score. The Chief TD/Arbiter has the authority to ban all communication devices from the Playing Hall.
 6. **Rulings on Devices:** *The Chief TD/Arbiter shall make rulings* on what devices are allowed (or not allowed) during a VCF event. The Chief TD/Arbiter may ban the use of and/or confiscate any device suspected of being in violation of these rules. The Chief TD/Arbiter also may impose special conditions, such as requiring all players to place their cell phones on top of their desk while their games are in progress.
 7. **Warnings and Penalties:** To enforce rulings, *the Chief TD/Arbiter has the authority* to impose the full range of warnings and penalties allowable under the Official Rules of Chess. Penalties include loss of time, loss of game, reduction of game points, and expulsion from the tournament.
 8. **Exceptions:** Medical devices, electronic chess clocks, DGT Boards, and any other electronic device *approved by the Chief TD/Arbiter* are exceptions to this policy. For example, there are devices entering the market for use by blind players which the Chief TD/Arbiter has the authority to approve for player use even if the device is not US Chess-approved.
 9. Upon request by the Chief TD/Arbiter, players shall surrender any suspicious device(s) for inspection before play and/or safekeeping during play.
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History of Revisions:

- a. Approved by the Board of Directors on December 1, 2018: Added the ChessnoteR to paragraph 3; included clarifying information about music-playing devices; and, updated or enhanced language in other parts of the original 2016 version.
 - b. Administrative update by Mike Hoffpauir on November 3, 2021: Removed the e-Notate from the list of VCF-authorized Electronic Notation Devices. The e-Notate is no longer approved for use by US Chess.
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