

First Tournament Things To Do

1. When you first come to a tournament, check to make sure you are entered. If you registered online or sent in a flyer with your information and payment, the tournament director (TD) should have you child entered.
2. Make sure you know what playing equipment your child needs. In most tournaments, the TD asks the participants to supply the boards, pieces, clocks, scorebooks, and pencils/pens. If you go to a National tournament, these tournaments usually supply the boards, pieces, and scoresheets. The standard is a 20" board (wood or vinyl), pieces that have a 3 3/4" king (wood or plastic), a clock that has the clock for both players. The scoresheets have spaces for up to 100 moves. If you do not have these, the TD will usually have some for sale.
3. When the TD says "Pairings are up", you will want to make your way to where these pairings are posted. The pairings show who each player is competing against and on what board number. The board numbers are placed on the playing tables and are listed from lowest to highest. Once you find your child's name, help him/her to that board number on the table. If your child was listed on the left hand side of the pairing sheet, he/she is playing the white pieces in that game. If he/she is listed on the right hand column, he/she is playing the black pieces in that game. Do not worry. The TD's pairing software has a built in default where your child should be alternating each game playing white and then playing black. There are times when a situation arises that prevents this but for the most part, the goal will be to have your child play the same number of games as white and the same number of games as black.
4. Make sure your child knows all of the rules of the tournament. The most common are the "touch-move" rule, the necessity to keep score and use a clock, how to castle, and what is checkmate.
5. When your child finishes his game, try to review it with him/her so that he/she can get immediate feedback on what went well as well as what your child can improve on.
6. Most scholastic tournaments use the Swiss System meaning that no one gets eliminated. The first goal of the Swiss System is to have each child play another player who has won & lost the same number of games as he/she has. The second goal is to not play the same player twice. Third, it is to make sure that each player has the best chance to play the same number of white pieces as they play the black pieces. Finally, it is to have them compete only with those players with similar ratings for trophies.
7. Make sure you know what time each game is scheduled and make sure your child is at his board number at that time. If a player is not present at the scheduled time, their clock may be started and this can result in as little as feeling pressured to make all of the moves (meaning more possibilities to make mistakes because of this pressure) within the allowed time to losing the game due to forfeit.
8. There is usually a lunch time break built in to the schedule. Make sure you know when this time is.
9. Find out what the sections are for trophies. Common sections are: Unrated, U400, U700, U1000 etc. This means that if a player is in the U700 section, he/she is only competing with those players rated from 401-699 for trophies...no matter who they play in the tournament. The TD's goal for awards is for each participant to have an equal chance to win a trophy and second, to only compete with those players who have the same approximate rating as your child.
10. Know that when a section does not have enough players for that section to be held, the TD will combine sections. The trophies will still be awarded based on the section advertisement.