

Observer Etiquette in Chess Tournaments

A game of chess is a very personal experience. When two players are engaged in this match of wits, we tournament directors try to allow that game to happen with as little interference from the outside as possible.

Thus, all people in the room should be SILENT and move as quietly as possible. This includes players.

Observers are at no time to offer any assistance to the players. This can be hard to do when one sees an illegal move or an undiscovered check, or even checkmate or a fallen clock flag!

If an observer has any problems with a game he/she should always quietly consult the tournament director, not the players. Players may talk very quietly if necessary to resolve their own problems but if this cannot be quickly done, the Tournament Director (TD) should be consulted.

Players with questions should simply raise their hand and if not observed by the TD, they can walk to the TD and ask for help.

It is also customary to give players space to play. Even if it is the last board of the last round that will determine the winner; observers should give the players AT LEAST 5 FEET of distance.

The rules of chess are determined by the players until one of them asks for help from the TD or an official assistant. Observers are NEVER to answer player questions or give advice on rules or moves.

Violations of this etiquette can result in observers being removed from the room. This includes other players as well!