

Mr. Wade's tournament FAQ for new chess parents.

- Q. Is my child ready for a tournament?
A. If your child knows the basic rules, come on down. Lots of our kids lose all their games at their first tournament, but want to come back for the next one anyway.
- Q. If my child isn't very good, will it hurt the team's score?
A. No. Team scores are usually based on the top 3 individual scores from each school. Having more kids there can only help us.
- Q. How does this work? If my child loses their first game, do we go home?
A. No. Everyone plays five games. If your child loses their first game, they'll probably play someone else who lost their first game. If they lose their first four, they'll be matched up with someone else who lost their first four. That way, everyone's playing other kids at about their skill level.
- Q. When does the tournament start, and when does it end?
A. Usually you need to be at the tournament by 8:45. Every tournament is different, but usually they end around 5:00.
- Q. How on earth does it take 9 hours to play 5 games of chess????
A. Everyone in your section has to finish their game before we can enter the results in the computer. Then the computer pairs everyone up based on their win-loss record. So yes, there's a lot of waiting around. Add in a lunch break and awards, and it can be a long day.
- Q. What do the kids do between games?
A. That's the really fun part. There's usually a big room called the Skittles room. You can play kids from your school, or kids from other schools, just for fun. They usually sell snacks, and usually there are movies, video games, or a basketball court. A lot of times some of the expert adults will give mini-lessons. Parents, bring a book. If you look bored, I'll make you volunteer for something. 😊
- Q. What's a rating?
A. If your kid has played in a rated tournament, they have a rating. It's the national organization's computer's estimate of how good they are. If they have a good tournament, their rating goes up. Ratings aren't very accurate until you've played 25 games, but they're good for bragging rights.
- Q. What do I need to do to sign up for a tournament?
A. Call me or email me when you're ready to go to a tournament, and I'll fill out the registration form for you. Please do this at least a week before the tournament so we won't pay any late fees.

Q. Can you watch my kids at the tournament?

A. No. I'm usually a tournament director (TD) – kind of like a referee. I'll be enforcing rules and working the computers. Parents need to be responsible for their own children. If you can't be there, strike a deal with another parent.

Q. Can I watch my kid's game?

A. Unfortunately, other parents have abused that right, so the rules are as follows:

1. You can watch the first 5-10 minutes of the game. Then the ref usually asks the parents to leave. Trust me, the kids are more relaxed once the parents leave.
2. You must stand behind your child, so they cannot see you.
3. No talking, grunting, coughing, hand signals, etc.

Q. How much does it cost?

A. Tournaments are usually \$15 to \$20. Plus, every year you need to buy a US Chess Federation membership, which costs \$10 – we'll take care of registering for that. Financial assistance is available; don't hesitate to ask me for help.

Q. Who are all these adults running the tournament?

A. We are OSCO, the Oklahoma Scholastic Chess Organization. We're a group of teachers and parents who run tournaments and promote the educational benefits of chess. All our volunteers are cross-checked against the Oklahoma Sex & Violent Offenders database. These are some of my dearest friends, and a great group of people.