

Total Chess World Championship Tour Regulations

Total Chess World Championship Tour is the annual series of chess tournaments among top players combining the most popular time controls – classical, rapid and blitz. It is foreseen that each year three tournaments will be played and the players with the best combined score are qualified for the Grand Final to determine the world champion in combined chess.

The Regulations are approved jointly by FIDE and Norway Chess and may be amended or clarified. All disputed or unclear matters are resolved jointly by FIDE and Norway Chess.

Tournament Format for Each Leg (Location)

Each leg of the tournament has two stages: the group stage and the knockout stage based on the group rankings. The starting number of players is 24 for leg 1, 2 and 3.

Draw of groups

The draw of groups at each location takes place on the day of the opening ceremony before the first playing day. The following principles shall be used for the draw:

- 24 players are allocated to 4 groups of 6 players each.
- Seeding method: draw of lots.
- The top four players by standard rating shall be placed in different groups.

Group stage

The group stage is played as a double round-robin format.

Each of the 6 players in a group plays 2 games per day against each other, so the group stage lasts 5 days. In total, each player plays 10 games.

Each game is played in the Fast Classical format with the following time control:

- 45 minutes with 30 seconds increment per move.

A win is awarded 3 points, a draw 1 point and a loss 0 points. Tiebreaks will determine the full rankings in each group.

- A 9-round Blitz tournament (3+2), with 24 players competing in a Swiss format, shall be played before the opening ceremony. The rankings in the Blitz tournament are used as the tiebreaker in the group stage.

Knockout Stage: Semifinal and Final in each Leg

In each group, players are ranked from 1 (the winner) to 6 (last place). The winners of each group advance to Knockout bracket 1, the 2nd places of each group go to Knockout bracket 2, and so on. Semifinal pairings in each Knockout bracket are determined by their pre-tournament blitz rank among those four, and paired 1–4 and 2–3.

Each knockout bracket is organized as a single elimination knockout system in which semifinals and then finals are played. The players who lose their semifinal matches play a match for the 3rd place so that the full rankings, 1-4, are determined per knockout bracket.

Only the winner of the final match in Knockout 1 is crowned the leg (location) winner.

Every player receives points based on how they perform in the brackets. The points are allocated as follows.

Rank	Knockout 1	Knockout 2	Knockout 3	Knockout 4	Knockout 5	Knockout 6
1	30	20	16	12	9	6
2	24	18	14	11	8	5
3	22	17	13	10	7	4
4	20	16	12	9	6	3

Table 1. Points system

Thus, the Knockout 1 winner receives 30 points and the Knockout 2 winner receives 20 points and so on. Points decrease by placement within each group as described in Table 1.

A player receives an extra 5 bonus points for winning each extra leg they win after their first. In other words, Leg 1 winner receives 5 points for winning Leg 2 or Leg 3. Similarly, Leg 2 winner gets +5 points for winning Leg 3. Thus, the maximum possible total across the tour is 100 points.

Knockouts Daily Winner Structure

In the semi-final, 3rd-place match, and final, the matches will be played over two days, using the “two-day system” described next. Each day includes Fast Classical, Rapid, and Blitz games before a winner is determined. First, four Blitz games will be played, then two Rapid games, and then the Fast Classical game.

The higher-ranked player based on the pre-tournament blitz ranking chooses the color for the first Blitz game on Day 1. Colors for all remaining games on Day 1 and Day 2 then alternate.

Points system:

Each Blitz game: 1 point for a win and 0.5 points for a draw

Each Rapid game: 4 points for a win and 2 points for a draw

Each Fast Classical game: 8 points for a win and 4 points for a draw

Time control:

Blitz: 3+2

Rapid: 15+10

Fast Classical: 45+30

Each day produces a day-winner, or a tie occurs.

Scores reset each day, and in case of a tie in one of the days, the other day acts as a tiebreaker. A tie occurs at the end of day 2 if a player wins day 1 and the other player wins day 2, or each day is tied. In this case, an Armageddon game, where Black has the draw odds, is played to determine the winner. The event is always determined on the final day.

Armageddon Time Control: 10 minutes for white, 7 minutes for black with 1 second increment, starting from move 41.

The player who has the most total points over two days chooses the color. If they have equal points, then an Armageddon bidding takes place.

The Grand Final: Semifinal and Final

The **four** players with the highest total points after three legs qualify for the Grand Final. Semifinal pairings are determined by total points (with ties broken by a draw of lots): 1 vs. 4 and 2 vs. 3. Semi-finals use the two-day system as in the Knockout stage of each leg.

The final is played over four days and consists of two sets. Each set uses the two-day system.

- The player who wins two sets is declared the winner.
- If each player wins one set, two blitz games will be played. If it is still a tie, an Armageddon game decides the winner.
The player who has the most total points over four days chooses the color. If they have equal points, then an Armageddon bidding takes place.

The winner of the final wins the Tour and is crowned the FIDE World Combined Champion.

All details regarding the conduct of the Grand Final and the knockout playoffs, including the rules for calculating sets and the number of games, must be approved and published in the first quarter of 2026.

The final rules for the Grand Final are subject to revision based on the experience gained from the pilot tournament in 2026.

Qualification Pathways

Pilot Event 2026 (only one event, no Grand Final)

The following categories were accepted as eligible qualification paths for the 2026 pilot event. The 24 available spots will be allocated as follows:

Slots	Qualification Pathway
1–2	Reigning World Champions (Gukesh Dommaraju and Ju Wenjun)
3–5	Three medalists of the 2025 World Rapid Championship
6–7	Finalists of the 2025 World Blitz Championship
8–16	Top nine players in the standard rating list (January 1, 2026)
17–18	Winners of the 2026 Candidates & Women's Candidates
19–21	Top three players in the standard rating list (June 1, 2026), excluding those already qualified
22–24	FIDE Open Circuit qualifiers (special ranking, including only open events)

Replacements and withdrawals:

1. World Champions.

In the event that any of the world champions declines to participate or withdraw after signing the relevant contract, he/she will be replaced in the following order of priority:

- the silver medalist of the Candidates/Women's Candidates 2026,
- the bronze medalist of the Candidates/Women's Candidates 2026,
- the highest-ranked player not yet qualified according to the FIDE Circuit as of September 1, 2026.

2. World Rapid Championship 2025

If the reigning World Champion finishes in the top 3 of the 2025 World Rapid Championship, the relevant qualification spot will be passed to the player who finished fourth in that championship.

In the event that any of the qualified players subsequently declines to participate or withdraw after signing the relevant contract, he/she will be replaced by the highest-ranked player not yet qualified according to the FIDE Circuit as of September 1, 2026.

3. World Blitz Championship 2025

If any of the finalists of the 2025 World Blitz Championship have already qualified for the tournament, the vacant spot(s) will be awarded to the non-qualified player(s) with the lowest average sum of placements from the combined results of the 2025 World Rapid Championship and the 2025 World Blitz Championship.

In the event that any of the qualified players subsequently declines to participate or withdraw after signing the relevant contract, he/she will be replaced by the highest-ranked player not yet qualified according to the FIDE Circuit as of September 1, 2026.

4. Top-9 Rated Players

If any player ranked in the top 9 of the rating list at the time of qualification has already secured a place in the tournament, the first replacement will be the non-qualified player with the lowest average sum of placements from the combined results of the 2025 World Rapid Championship and the 2025 World Blitz Championship. Any subsequent replacements (if needed) will be made according to the standard FIDE rating list of 1 January 2026.

In the event that any of the qualified players later will withdraw after signing the relevant contract, he/she will be replaced by the highest-ranked player not yet qualified according to the FIDE Circuit as of September 1, 2026.

5. Replacement for the Winner of the 2026 Candidates Tournament/Women Candidates.

If the winner of the 2026 Candidates Tournament/Women Candidates has already qualified or withdraw after signing the relevant contract, he/she will be replaced in the following order of priority:

- the silver medalist of the Candidates/Women's Candidates 2026,
- the bronze medalist of the Candidates/Women's Candidates 2026,
- the highest-ranked player not yet qualified according to the FIDE Circuit as of September 1, 2026.

6. FIDE Open Circuit spots

In the event that any of the qualified players subsequently declines to participate or withdraw after signing the relevant contract, he/she will be replaced by the highest-ranked player not yet qualified according to the FIDE Open Circuit as of September 1, 2026.

The 2027 Tour

First Leg

The following players are eligible to participate in the first leg of the 2027 Tour (in chronological order of qualification):

1. The reigning World Champion, Gukesh D.
2. The reigning Women's World Champion, Ju Wenjun.

3. The 2025 World Rapid Champion (if the title is won by Gukesh D., the invitation goes to the silver medalist).
4. The 2025 World Blitz Champion (if the title is won by a player already eligible, the invitation goes to the silver medalist).
5. The top 3 winners of the 2026 Candidates Tournament. If one or more of these players have already qualified, the spot(s) go to the player(s) placed next (but no further than 6th). If any spot(s) remain, they are transferred to the FIDE Circuit 2026.
6. The winner of the 2026 Women's Candidates Tournament.
7. The three winners of the 2026 Tour pilot event. If any of them have already qualified, the spot(s) go to the player(s) placed 4th (and no further). If any spot(s) remain, they are transferred to the FIDE Circuit 2026.
8. The top 2 players in the 2026 FIDE Open Circuit standings. If any of the winners have already qualified, the spots are passed down to the next highest-ranked players in the standings until two players are invited.
9. The 2026 World Rapid Champion. If the winner has already qualified, the spot goes to the 2nd place, and then to the 3rd place. If all have already qualified, the spot is transferred to the FIDE Circuit 2026.
10. The 2026 World Blitz Champion. If the winner has already qualified, the spot goes to the 2nd place, and then to the 3rd place. If all have already qualified, the spot is transferred to the FIDE Circuit 2026.
11. The top 3 rated players as of 1st October 2026, from among those not already qualified, but no lower than the top 10 of the rating list.
If any spots remain vacant after applying all the above criteria, they will be filled based on the FIDE Circuit 2026 standings.
12. The top 3 rated players as of 1st January 2027, from among those not already qualified, but no lower than the top 15 of the rating list.
If any spots remain vacant after applying all the above criteria, they will be filled based on the FIDE Circuit 2026 standings.
12. Three wildcards, jointly determined by the organizers and the FIDE President.

Second Leg

The following players are eligible to participate in the second leg of the 2027 Tour (in chronological order of qualification):

1. The seventeen (17) players based on the results of the first stage.

2. The five (5) players from the 2027 Grand Swiss who have not already qualified, provided they finished in 10th place or higher.

3. The winner of the 2027 Women's Grand Swiss.

4. The organizers' wildcard (which can only be awarded to a player ranked in the top 20 of the rating list).

If any spots remain vacant after applying all the above criteria, they will be filled based on rating, but no lower than the top 20 of the rating list.

If any spots remain vacant after applying all the above criteria, they will be filled based on the FIDE Circuit 2026 standings.

Third Leg

The following players are eligible to participate in the third leg of the 2027 Tour (in chronological order of qualification):

1. The seventeen (17) players based on the results of the second stage.

2. The finalists of the first stage (if these players did not qualify via the criteria mentioned above).

3. The finalists of the 2027 World Cup.

4. The winner of the 2027 Women's World Cup.

5. The organizers' wildcard (which can only be awarded to a player ranked in the top 20).

6. The highest-rated player (must be ranked no lower than top 10 in the rating list).

All remaining vacant spots will be filled via the FIDE Circuit 2026.