

*Text by Alon Shulman,
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WORLD SCHOOL TEAM CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP 2023 – PART 1

In this article I would like to share my experience as Deputy Chief Arbiter at the 2023 World Schools Team Championship that took place in Aktau, Kazakhstan. I wish to present my point of view as for the duties and actions expected from DCA as I see it. Being a leader of a group of arbiters, turning them into a united cohesive unit working as one. One for all and all for one.

I had the privilege of being appointed by FIDE as DCA at an event that took place for the first time. There has been an individual World School championship but there was never a team one. I am humbled, grateful and appreciative for the trust bestowed upon me at that position. It was my first visit to Kazakhstan which proved to be an exhilarating experience. It is no secret that team events, are in general more complicated to manage compared to individual events. In team events, you have team compositions that are changing every round. That means 70 captains have to upload their line-up every round to chess-results.com, and do it on time. There would always be issues here.

In team events, you need to calculate team results. This needs to always be double checked. In team events, you need to take names off the display board and put the correct new line-up for the next round, flags, teams and individual players in the right order, before each round. Those are part of those extra chores obstacles and responsibilities you do not face running individual events. We also had many young and inexperienced players. They have to know all the fair-play regulations and captains need to be on top of how to upload team compositions every round.

Remember this is a school event. Those are not national teams and captains are in many cases just parents or teachers escorting their teams. We had a fine team of match arbiters. Some more experienced than others. During the arbiters meeting I told them: " I see some of you are a bit anxious because for some of you it's their first international event. I want to tell you just not to worry. You are not alone. You are surrounded with support at all times. As match arbiters I practically only need from you one thing – Your eyes controlling all events in your matches. Your eyes on the boards, your eyes on the clocks, your eyes on the players, your eyes on the captains, your eyes around.

99 % of relevant events happen either on the boards or within 2-3 meters of the boards. I want your eyes there all the time so if something happens, you will be able to describe it exactly. I don't care if you don't know the exact rule applicable to a situation. I don't care if you don't know the solution. I just need you to tell me exactly what happened and alert me if something is off. That's it. Together we can take care of the rest if needed. You can ask me anything anytime, there are no silly questions, there are only over confident arbiters.

ECU Arbiters Council

The ECU Arbiters Council publishes monthly articles in the ECU E-Magazine.

Detailed information about the council and its activities can be found on the official website of the ECU AC:
<https://arbiters.europechess.org>

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The first FIDE World School Team Chess Championship took place from 3rd-8th August 2023 in Aktau, Kazakhstan. The event brought together more than 400 players from 53 countries who competed in two age categories: U12 and U18. Photo from official website of the event.



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Good arbiters are always hesitant. Bad arbiters are always confident. Keep calm and don't rush. Don't feel pressured to make a decision right away to try and look professional in the eyes of players/captains. We don't care what they think. We care about making the right decision. If something happens, just pause the clock and call me.

I don't care if you call me to the board 100 times. Don't care if you ask me 100 questions (I'll just add it as a bonus clause in future contracts). We first fix the pending issue and then I'll answer you privately anything you want to know. If I don't know I will ask. I had asked many questions during my 41 years as arbiter. Some very silly.

The arbiter's team formed quickly as a cohesive unit working as a team and helping each other. If there was an interesting case during the round we would hold a brief arbiters meeting and discuss it. As a whole it was a fantastic event. I was impressed with organizers eye for detail having so many activities for kids.

Playing hall conditions were very good and spacious. I was happy with the great accommodation conditions given to arbiters. The volunteers did a great job and we are truly grateful for the help they provided. In a future article, I will share some incidents that took place in the event and how we approached them.