

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Byes and Pairings

2005-11-21

### What is a Bye?

A bye means that the player is not scheduled to play for one of several reasons, and may be given 0, ½ or 1 point in the tournament. Byes are either requested by a player or given to a player due to special circumstances. Club and USCF rules determine the points given for a bye.

### What are the Club's rules concerning Byes?

- 1 In Swiss-system events of any number of rounds, a maximum of two half-point byes for the event is allowed.
- 2 Players entering an event after the first round will have their half-point byes applied starting with round 1 until all of the allowed half- point byes are used.
- 3 Once a player's half- point byes are used, any other requested byes shall be zero- point byes.
- 4 A bye requested for the **last round** must be committed to **before the start of the 2nd round, and is irrevocable after the start of the 2nd round.**
- 5 Players entered in a tournament are **always obligated to notify the club** if they will miss any round for which they have not previously requested a bye. A player who fails **to notify the club** properly will **be assessed a forfeit penalty.**

### How do I request a Bye?

There are **only two valid ways** to request a bye:

1. By filling out the **bye sheet** at the Club.
2. By **leaving a message** on the Club answering machine **before 7:00 PM** of the night of play.

The number is **508-788-3641**. You might also remember it by **508-put-dog1**.

We have Club business cards and wall magnets at the Club, complete with the phone number. Store the number in your cell phone, post it on the wall at both work and home, and keep it in your wallet and wherever else you might need it. **Don't forfeit**. We have **strict penalties** about forfeits.

### Can I send an email to take a Bye?

**NO**. Email is **NOT** a valid means to request a bye. Our process is designed to allow whoever happens to be the TD on any given night to have all the information available to get the pairings done correctly. Email is not reliable, and the person who will be the TD that night may not even have email or be able to check it prior to arriving at the Club.

### I called in a Bye. Can I change my mind?

Yes, you can. When we check the phone, the last message from you is the one that counts. Some people call in for a bye thinking they will probably not be able to make it, and they don't want to forget to call. If it turns out that they can indeed make it, they simply call to cancel the bye. You have one hour from the start of the round before you will be forfeited for not showing.

### What do I need to say when I call in for a Bye?

All you have to do is:

- 1 Say your name clearly and slowly,
- 2 Tell us if you are requesting a bye or canceling a bye
- 3 Name the round you talking about.
- 4 And just to be sure, **repeat** your complete message.

Here is an **example** message for taking a bye:

"Hi. This is (*your name*). I'd like to request a bye for round (*number*). Once again, (*your name*) round (*number*) bye."

We don't need any reasons or stories. Please make it short and clear.

## Should I call and leave a message if I'm not sure I can make it?

**NO. Absolutely NOT.** You must tell us to pair you or not. If you don't think you are going to make it, play it safe and tell us NOT to pair you. If you show up at the Club on time to change your mind, **or** you are sure you are going to make it before forfeiting, tell us to pair you. If you leave us in doubt about whether you are going to show up or not, whatever decision we make about pairing you stands, and is **YOUR fault**. If we pair you and you don't show, you forfeit and must pay the appropriate fines. If we don't pair you and you show up expecting to play, sorry.

## I'm already registered; do I have to check in?

Once you are registered you will automatically be paired each week unless you request a bye. Of course, you could be paired out. You do not need to check in with us. All you have to do is show up to see whom you will be playing.

## How do I know whom I will be playing? On the Web site, it says it the pairings are "projected."

The official pairings are not announced until 7:30 pm on Tuesday night at the Club. The phone messages are checked just after 7:00 pm, and people can show up to enter or request a bye up till 7:20 pm. At that time, the pairings are calculated. At 7:30, the pairings are read out loud to those present in the playing room and then posted on the bulletin board for all to see.

## I can't make round 1 but want to register for the event. What should I do?

**Do NOT call to tell us about the future.** Only register when you are going to show up to play. When you register we will give you the byes you are entitled to.

## I can't get there in time to register but can make it in time to play. What should I do?

If you are a **Club Member** and think you might not get to the club before the registration cut-off time, you can leave a message **committing** to playing the first round. Leaving us such a message will ensure that you are paired for the first round (subject to the usual rules about being paired out), and **obligates you** to pay the entry fee and to show up to play. If you then fail to show up, you will forfeit your game and be subject to the forfeit penalty. If we cannot understand your message ---- for example, your name ----- then you won't be paired.

## Can I call in byes for more than one round at a time?

You can, but we prefer that you don't. There is too much room for error, both by you and us. You may mis-speak the other round, or we may not be able to make it out, and you didn't repeat it. We may think you are repeating the first part of the message and miss hearing the other round. If you do request two or three rounds at once, make sure you give us the information clearly and correctly, especially after the first one has gone by.

## Why do the pairings show me not being paired or having a bye when I didn't ask for one?

Generally, one of two reasons will explain this:

1. The projected pairings, based on the information known at the time they were done, predict that you will be "paired out." Usually, this is because there are an odd number of persons projected to be playing in your section. It may also be because we have you recorded as forfeiting a game. Anyone who forfeits will no longer be paired until the issue of the forfeit is cleared up.
2. We may have made an error in updating the computer files from the bye sheet, and given your bye to someone else by mistake. If you think there is an error, please leave a message on the Club phone clarifying what you think is in error. You may also try to reach us by email to give us a heads up, but the phone or you in person are the only ways to officially correct the situation.

If the net result of people phoning in byes or showing up to play is an odd number, you will be paired to play. If there is someone else from another section also paired out, then you will have the option, but not the obligation, to play that person. In this situation, the ratings may be too disparate, so one of you might not want to play, or would just as soon have the night off, or would prefer to play a casual, unrated game, instead.

## Why do the pairings, standings or wall charts show me NOT getting a bye when I asked for one on the bye sheet?

This usually indicates that an error was made on our part. We may have incorrectly given the bye to someone else, missed the information altogether when updating the computer files, or you may have written onto the bye sheet after we last checked it for the evening. Please leave a message on the Club phone clarifying what you think is in error. You may also try to reach us by email to give us a heads up, but the phone or you in person are the only ways to officially correct the situation.

## You show my bye but I didn't get the half-point. Why not?

Usually this is because you are mistakenly thinking you are entitled to a half-point bye when you are not. On occasion, we make a mistake entering the bye information from the bye sheet, or forget to give bye points for earlier rounds when you enter after round 1.

## What do I do when my pairing shows me "paired out" or says "See TD"?

**You must show up to play** unless you now request a bye. The pairings are "**projected**," based on what information was available at the time. There is at least a fifty-fifty chance that you will end up being paired. All it takes is an odd number of people choosing to take or cancel a bye, and you will end up being paired. It is understandable, especially if you travel a great distance, that you don't want to leave it to chance on whether or not you will be paired. **If you don't want to take the chance, then you need to call and request a bye.** You should consider several things before doing this:

1. If you do get paired out, it is not possible to be paired out a second time in the same event. If someone from another section also gets paired out, or if there is someone else available to play, you may play for fun or for rating, if both players agree. Shorter time controls may be used.
2. You got paired out, partly due to your score in the event so far. If you call in for a bye and you aren't eligible for a half-point, your score will not change and you will likely be selected the next round to be paired out again. If you come to the Club and get paired out, you will get one full point for the round. Generally, it will be better for you to show up if you can. You may get a game anyway, and you can watch the other games in progress or use the library to study or play for fun if you do get paired out.

## Why do the pairings seem different from what I calculated them to be?

The usual reasons are that the Club uses Look-Ahead Pairing, which is a bit more complicated than the more understandable Top-Down Pairing. Also, it is common to forget to take into account byes that other players have requested, and whether two players have already played each other.

## What are the Club rules about pairings?

1. Pairing of MCC events shall be done by computer whenever possible.
2. Where questions arise in the accuracy and/or propriety of a computer-generated pairing, it is the policy of the MetroWest Chess Club to accept the program's pairings in the absence of an obvious or clearly understood violation of USCF rules.
3. 1/4 Accelerated-Pairing rules shall be used for any section within an event that meets the recommended criteria for their use as set out by the most current rules of the USCF. The "Adjusted Rating" option shall be used. We further define the USCF phrase "far exceeds" used in its recommended criteria to mean that the number of players is greater than or equal to, the average of, two raised to the number of rounds, and two raised to the number of rounds plus one. Some examples are, 4 rounds = 24, 5 rounds = 48, 6 rounds = 96.
4. Players who are paired out will receive a credit of \$5 if they do not end up playing a rated game.

### **What are the Club rules about re-entries?**

1. Players may re-enter an event by paying the full entry fee. Half-point byes will be applied to any missed rounds.
2. A player will be permitted to enter an event after round 3 has been played only if this does not result in an already-entered player being paired out.
3. Players entered on this basis will pay the entire member or non-member (as applicable) entry fee for the event, and will remain in the section they enter for all subsequent rounds of the event.
4. Those players will have the right to take byes on the same basis as every other player entered in the event, including the right to half-point byes for earlier rounds not played, in accordance with the rules for the particular event.
5. Those players will have the right to be paired, and the risk of being paired out, on the same basis as every other player entered in the event.