

# --- ISF Game Rules ---

## 01 Definition and Purpose

### 1.1

The ISF Game Rules are standard criteria set by the International Stratego Federation (ISF), which (together with the ISF Tournament Regulations) have to be met by tournament organizers if they want their tournament being taken into account for the ISF Stratego Rating. Those tournaments which meet these criteria will hereafter be called ISF-tournaments.

### 1.2

The ISF Game Rules are based on the Jumbo Stratego Original Game Rules (see article 5). The ISF Game Rules focus on potential conflict situations during tournaments, which are not described in detail in the Jumbo Stratego Original Game Rules.

### 1.3

The ISF Game Rules must be seen as instructions to arbiters how to solve conflict situations during the tournaments/matches. If players in mutual consent decide to solve conflicts differently (in a way which is not in the disadvantage of other players in an unsporting way) this is allowed and even desirable.

### 1.4

The objective of the ISF Game Rules is to guarantee fairness and sportsmanship for all participants, both at the ISF-tournaments and for the ISF Stratego Rating, by guaranteeing the same interpretation of game rules at all ISF tournaments.

### 1.5

The ISF Game Rules are valid for all countries that are or would like to become members of ISF. However they also aim for international validity, striving for harmonization of the organized playing of Stratego all over the world.

## 02 Changes in ISF Game Rules

### 2.1

Only the ISF General Assembly in which member national Stratego organizations are represented can authorize changes in the ISF Game Rules.

### 2.2

The ISF Game Rules will always include the normal Jumbo Stratego Original Game Rules (version 2006). Later versions of the Jumbo Stratego Original Game Rules can only come into effect after authorization by the ISF General Assembly.

### 2.3

Suggestions for changes in the ISF Game Rules can be brought into the General Assembly of the ISF by:

- national Stratego organizations who are members of ISF, or
- the ISF Court of Appeal, or
- the ISF General Board.

Individual Stratego players should direct suggestions for change to either their own country Stratego organization or to the ISF Court of Appeal.

### 2.4

New or altered Game Rules authorized by the ISF General Assembly in principle come into effect the next Stratego year, unless there is an exceptional need for immediate change. A Stratego year is a calendar year (January 1st till December 31st).

## 03 Overlooking ISF Game Rules: ISF Court of Appeal

### 3.1

ISF will incorporate a standing commission appointed by the ISF General Assembly which can act as a Court of Appeal for all technical matters (ISF Game Rules, ISF Tournament Regulations and the ISF Stratego Rating).

### 3.2

For the ISF Court of Appeal's role on arbitration in Game Rule matters: see article 17.3. of the ISF Tournament Regulations.

### 3.3

While the ISF Court of Appeal judges a formal complaint, the results of an ISF tournament cannot be ranked in the ISF Stratego Rating. Only after approval by the ISF Court of Appeal the results of an ISF tournament will be processed.

### 3.4

The decisions made by the ISF Court of Appeal are final and cannot be overruled.

### 3.5

The ISF Court of Appeal can be contacted by the e-mail address(es) as mentioned for that aim on the ISF website.

## **04 Arbitration and Punishment during the match**

### 4.1 Calling in an Arbiter

#### 4.1.1

Players are allowed to call an arbiter at any time in case of conflicts or problems during the match.

#### 4.1.2

If a match is played with clocks, any of the opponents is allowed to stop the clock when an arbiter is called in. The responsibility for stopping the clock lies entirely with the players.

#### 4.1.3

The arbiter is entitled (but not obliged) to extend the Main Playing Time (see ISF Tournament Regulations) for a match where he was called in.

#### 4.1.4

By abuse of the right to call in the arbiter with the objective to stall the game, the arbiter is entitled to punish (see article 4.5) the player who called for the arbiter.

### 4.2 Authority of the arbiters

#### 4.2.1

The arbiter is obliged to solve conflict situations between two players according to the ISF Game Rules. Only in case there is no defined rule for this particular situation he can let his own good judgment prevail.

#### 4.2.2

In case of any conflict situation or problem the arbiter is entitled to gather information in any way, for instance from spectators. However, this information can only be used as guidance and does not necessarily have to be followed by the arbiter.

#### 4.2.3

In principle the decision of the arbiter in a conflict situation between two players is final. If one or both players dispute this decision of the arbiter, they can appeal to the chief arbiter (if there happens to be one at this tournament). The chief arbiter can overrule the decisions of the other arbiters.

### 4.2.4

After the tournament players can appeal at the ISF Court of Appeal on the (chief) arbiters interpretation of the ISF Game Rules. However, this appeal can only affect the ISF International Stratego Rating, not the tournament results (see article 17.3.4 of the ISF Tournament Regulations).

### 4.3 Insolvable disputes between players

If the arbiter has no grounds (that is: no proof or clue on the board or witness information) for making an objective decision in a conflict situation between two players, the arbiter will hand back the responsibility of finding an agreement back to the two players concerned. With the help of the arbiter they can look for an acceptable solution. If they do not manage, the arbiter can propose a final solution. If this is not accepted, the arbiter (chief arbiter if there happens to be one at this tournament) can either enforce this solution or declare loss for both players (1 point). An example of 'insolvable disputes' is a conflict on whether a player did or did not move a bomb.

### 4.4 Unsporting behaviour

Examples of unsporting behaviour include:

- to stall time by taking a lot of time to think about every simple move (when playing without clocks).
- prolonging the game deliberately by trying to capture one or more of the opponent's pieces which cannot be taken because of the Two-squares rule or the More-squares rule.
- complaining about the opponent's supposed unsporting behaviour, while in fact this opponent is playing by the rules.
- Pressing the clock during an attack before placing back the opponent's piece the way it was placed before attacking.
- To move a piece before the opponent finished his move. In this case the move is basically performed in the personal time of the opponent, which is not allowed to do.
- Calling wrong ranks (see article 8.5). Although the player may be unconscious of doing so, it will be assessed as unsporting behaviour.

Situations not covered by any ISF Game Rules can still be considered unsporting by the arbiter, and punished accordingly (see article 4.5).

Not undertaking meaningful initiatives during the match or claiming a draw by time according to article 14.8 or 14.9 is not considered to be unsporting behaviour.

#### 4.5 Penalties

##### 4.5.1

An arbiter is entitled to give official penalties to players during the match or in between matches.

##### 4.5.2

The first OFFICIAL warning is symbolized by a yellow card. An arbiter can (but is not obliged to) give one or more informal warnings before giving a yellow card.

##### 4.5.3

The second official warning for the same offence is symbolized by a red card, which equals loss (1 point) of the game for the player concerned (and therefore a win for his opponent). In extreme cases of unsporting behaviour, the arbiter can decide that the punished player will even get 0 points.

##### 4.5.4

A break of the same rule in any subsequent match leads to instant loss of the match and direct disqualification for all remaining rounds of that tournament. For junior players or new players arbiters are not expected to enforce this rule as strictly as for experienced players.

##### 4.5.5

In extreme cases of unsporting behaviour, the arbiter is entitled:

- to penalize the player with a red card straight away, skipping the yellow card.
- to penalize the player with a disqualification for the rest of the tournament.

### 05 Jumbo Stratego Original Game Rules

The ISF Game Rules are based on the Jumbo Stratego Original Game Rules (version 2006). The Jumbo Stratego Original Game Rules which are not incorporated in any other article are listed below.

#### 5.1 Preparation

The pieces are set up on the four rows nearest to the player, one piece to each square, with the backs of the pieces facing the opponent. Red begins. A turn consists of either moving a piece or attacking an opponent's piece.

#### 5.2 Moving

Flag and Bombs are never moved (For the definition of 'move': see chapter 6).

Pieces are moved one square at the time, either forward, backward, to the right or to the left. The scout is an exception to this rule, as explained below.

No more than one piece may stand on a square, there is no jumping and no diagonal movement. The two lakes in the middle of the board may neither be entered nor crossed. Scouts can be moved across any number of vacant squares either forward, backward or sideways.

#### 5.3 Attacking

A piece, other than a bomb or a flag, may attack an opponent's piece that stands immediately in front of, behind, or to the right or left of it. The lower rank is removed from the board.

If the attacker wins, the piece occupies the square vacated by the captured piece; if the defender wins, there is no movement.

If both pieces are of equal rank, both are removed.

A scout can attack from any distance in a straight line provided that the squares between itself and the attacked piece are vacant.

#### 5.4 The ranks

A marshal defeats a general and all lower ranks; a general defeats a colonel and all lower ranks, and so on.

Any piece that attacks a bomb, other than a miner, is destroyed.

If a miner attacks a bomb it is defused and removed from the board, the miner will occupy the vacated square.

The spy's mission is to capture the opposing marshal which it does by attacking it. The spy is lost if attacked by any enemy piece, including the marshal.

Any piece can capture the flag.

## 06 The sequence of a single move

A Move (also called "a turn") comprises one of the following sequences of activities:

Pressing the clock is not part of a move. It's just mentioned to show, at which part of a move a player is entitled to press the clock.

### 6.1 Moving without attacking

- take your own piece in your hand
- move it to any legal free square
- release it
- (- press the clock)

### 6.2 Moving, attacking and losing your piece

- take your own piece in your hand
- touch or turn the opponent's piece
- show and mention the rank of your own piece
- return the opponent's piece in its original state
- hand over your piece to your opponent or lay it in his box
- (- press the clock)

### 6.3 Moving, attacking and winning your opponent's piece

- take your own piece in your hand
- touch or turn the opponent's piece
- show and mention the rank of your own piece
- take the opponent's piece
- (- press the clock)
- put the piece visible in your box
- (-if not done before: press the clock)

### 6.4 Moving and attacking with equal pieces

- take your own piece in your hand
- touch or turn the opponent's piece
- show and mention the rank of your own piece
- hand over your piece to the opponent or lay it in his box
- take the opponent's piece
- (- press the clock)
- put the piece visible in your box
- (-if not done before: press the clock)

## 07 Moving / touching pieces

### 7.1

Touching one of his own pieces does not oblige a player to move it. A move is made when:

- a piece is released on another square than the starting one, or

- a player touches an opponent's piece with one of his own pieces or with the hand in which his own piece is held.

### 7.2

It is not allowed to touch any of the opponent's pieces at all, except when attacking it. If there are any questions about the position of a piece, permission must be asked before rearranging any of the opponent's pieces. Every player has the right to ask the opponent, directly or via the arbiter, to rearrange his pieces in case of unclarity about the exact location of a piece.

### 7.3

At request, the opponent must show or indicate the last move he made on the board.

### 7.4

If a player moves a piece over more than one square in one move, the opponent has the right to check whether this piece is indeed a scout. He is only allowed to check the piece before he moves one of his pieces. If he wants to check the piece, he has to ask the opponent or an arbiter to reveal the piece. For a check, a player has to spend his personal time (if playing with a clock).

### 7.5

When a player suspects that his opponent made an illegal or irregular move, he has to call the arbiter. In case of an offence against the rules, the arbiter is entitled to penalize with yellow or red cards. If a player is caught for the same offence again in the same or subsequent matches, the arbiter can disqualify this player from the tournament.

## 08 Attacking

### 8.1

To attack a piece of your opponent you must first show and mention the rank (name or number) of the piece you attack the opponent's piece with. This attacking piece must be clear to the opponent before he discloses the rank of the piece that has been attacked. Every player has the right to see and check the attacking piece of his opponent, this turn only.

### 8.2

If there is a dispute on which piece made the attack, and the attacking player himself turned or touched the attacked piece of his opponent, the arbiter must be called in. The arbiter is entitled to decide that:

- all of the attacking players pieces that theoretically could have attacked the turned or touched piece (not including pieces on a distance (except for scouts), bombs or flags) are shown by the arbiter to the disadvantaged player, after which the disadvantaged player can pick himself with which piece the attack was made, or;
- the disadvantaged player can change the attacked piece with any of his other pieces which are still on the board (bombs and flag can only be changed within the 40 setup squares).

### 8.3

If you lose a piece you have to hand over the captured piece either in the hand or in the box of your opponent. Throwing pieces is considered unsporting behaviour and can be punished by the arbiter with a yellow (first offence) or red card (second offence). Captured pieces must be put visible in the box in any order before the next move.

### 8.4

If a player has tipped or turned over the opponents piece when attacking this piece, and the opponent's piece ends up as the winning piece, the first (attacking) player must place that winning piece back the way it was before attacking, before pressing his clock (when playing with clocks).

### 8.5

Obviously it is not allowed to call the wrong rank of a piece in an attack situation. However, it is every players own responsibility to check the piece of the opponent when he himself or the opponent attacks. If a player decides not to check the piece, he accepts the risk that in reality the piece is higher or lower ranked than initially suspected.

For mentioning wrong ranks of pieces during no-attack situations: see chapter 16 (Bluffing).

## 09 Tipping over pieces

### 9.1 Tipping over own pieces

#### 9.1.1

When a player tips over his own pieces, the arbiter must be called. In case less than 4 pieces were tipped over, the pieces can be returned to their positions. The pieces cannot be changed.

#### 9.1.2

When a player tips over 4 or more of his own pieces, the arbiter is entitled to declare the game lost for this player, or decide otherwise.

### 9.2 Tipping over pieces of the opponent

#### 9.2.1

When a player tips over pieces of the opponent, the arbiter can be called. In case less than 4 pieces were tipped over, these pieces can be changed with other pieces. Both players are allowed to call the arbiter to supervise this changing of pieces.

#### 9.2.2

When a player tips over the opponent's flag, the arbiter must be called. The opponent is allowed to change up to 3 of any of his pieces with any other 3 pieces (none of these 6 pieces necessarily includes the flag) under the supervision of the arbiter.

#### 9.2.3

If 4 or more pieces of the opponent are tipped over, this opponent can claim the match won.

#### 9.2.4

When tipped pieces of the disadvantaged player are changed with other pieces, bombs and flag can only be changed within the 40 setup squares.

#### 9.2.5

It is allowed to move or attack with any of the changed pieces directly after the tipping incident.

## 10. Three Moves on Two Squares: Two-Squares Rule

### 10.1

It is not allowed to move a piece more than 3 times non-stop between the same two squares, regardless of what the opponent is doing. It does not matter whether a piece is moving and thereby attacking an opponent's piece, or just moving to an empty square.

### 10.2

When a scout is involved in the Two-Squares Rule, a scout is considered to start on the starting position of his move plus all the squares he steps over, and he ends on the final position of his move plus all the squares he steps over.

## 11. Repetition of Threatening Moves: More-Squares Rule

### 11.1

It is not allowed to continuously chase one or more pieces of the opponent endlessly. The continuous chaser may not play a chasing move which would lead to a position on the board which has already taken place.

### 11.2

Exception: chasing moves back to the square where the chasing piece came from in the directly preceding turn are always allowed as long as this does not violate the Two-Squares Rule (Three-Moves-on-Two-Squares).

### 11.3

Definitions:

*continuous chase*: the same player is non-stop threatening one or more pieces of his opponent that is/are evading the threatening moves.

*chasing move*: a move in a continuous chase that threatens an opponent's piece that was evading during the continuous chase.

Hereby:

*a/to move*: a/to move plus attacking or a/to move to an empty square.

*to threaten*: to move a piece next (before, behind or besides) a piece of the opponent.

*to evade*: to move a piece away in the direct following move after it has been threatened.

## 12 The end of the match

### 12.1 A game ends when:

- one of the flags is captured.
- at least one of the players has no movable piece anymore. A movable piece is a piece that still has at least one legal move.  
Note: according to the Two-Squares Rule it is not allowed to move between two squares for a fourth time, even if this square is theoretically empty and the piece is not threatening another piece! This can be important in case of one last 'movable' piece when the main playing time is over.
- when at least one of the player's personal time on the clock has run out, and this is mentioned by one of the players.
- when both players agree that the game is over.
- when the arbiter decides that the game is over.

### 12.2

A player wins the match when:

- he succeeds to capture his opponent's flag.
- only the opponent has no movable pieces anymore.
- the opponent surrenders.
- the arbiter declares the match won (that is: lost by the opponent, for instance by receiving a red card).
- only the personal time on the clock of the opponent has run out, and the player mentions this.

### 12.3

A match ends in draw when:

- at the end of the official playing the match has not ended yet.
- both players agree to a draw.
- the arbiter declares the game a draw.
- both players have no movable pieces anymore.
- both personal clock times have run out and this is mentioned by at least one of both players.
- the personal clock time of (one of) both players exceeds the remaining net playing time of the Main Period (all within the requirements as mentioned in article 14.9).

## 13 Leaving the board after the end of the match

### 13.1

After the game either player has the right to call the arbiter to check whether the opponent has still at least one movable piece.

### 13.2

A player is not allowed to turn the opponent's pieces to study his setup, without the permission of the opponent. In case of violation the arbiter is entitled to punish the player with a yellow or red card, loss of points (by giving 0 points for the lost game instead of 1) or even disqualification from the tournament.

### 13.3

Both players are responsible to put all the pieces back in the box, in any order but visible.

### 13.4

Both players must sign the score sheet and they are both responsible for the delivery of their score sheet to the computer table.

## **14 Use of clocks (in case of matches played with clocks)**

Rules considering the use of clocks are not limited to this chapter only. The ISF Tournament Regulations deal with the use of clocks as well in chapter 12 (Time Schedule) and chapter 16 (Digital Clocks).

### **14.1**

The colour of play must be decided by drawing of lots. The player who plays with blue has the right to decide on which side of the board the clock will be placed.

### **14.2**

The clock must be tipped with the same hand that moved the piece. The arbiter is entitled to punish a player with a yellow (first offence) or red card (second offence) for not living up to this rule.

### **14.3**

Both players are allowed to stop the clock in case of any dispute, a question to the arbiter, or at a request of both players.

### **14.4**

In case of a break-down of the clock during the match, the arbiter must be called. The arbiter will either:

- repair the clock, after which the match will continue, or
- replace the clock (if possible), reach an agreement on the remaining clock times, and continue, or
- (as a last remaining option) decide to finish the match without a clock.

### **14.5**

Hitting the clock at the end of his move is the player's own responsibility. However, the arbiter is entitled (but not obliged!) to interfere and mention this to the player.

### **14.6**

When the personal clock time of one of the players has run out he immediately loses the match, but only when the opponent notices and mentions that this time has run out. The arbiter is not allowed to interfere and mention this fact.

### **14.7**

At any moment during the match, a player can claim winning by time if the opponent's clock is out of personal time. This is not possible if:

- the players has already lost his flag or his last movable piece.

- the players already agreed on a draw.
- the player already surrendered before mentioning the opponent's clock being out of personal time.

### **14.8**

At any moment during the match a player can claim a draw by time when both personal clock times have run out. This is not possible if:

- one of the players has already lost his flag or his last movable piece.
- one of the players already surrendered.

### **14.9**

Instead of moving a piece, a player can claim a draw by time if his personal clock time exceeds the remaining net playing time of the Main Period. This is not possible if:

- the player already lost his flag or his last movable piece.
- the player already surrendered.

## **15 Leaving the board during the match**

### **15.1**

When a player for whatever reasons needs to leave the board, he must first call the arbiter. In case a player leaves the board without calling the arbiter, his opponent can call the arbiter. The arbiter is entitled to penalize the player who left with either a yellow or a red card.

### **15.2**

If the game is played with a clock, the time of the player who left will have to be running. If the game was played without clocks, only the player who did not leave the board has the right to claim extra playing time after the official playing time of the match has ended. The amount of this extra playing time is decided upon by the arbiter.

### **15.3**

A player who leaves the board must be back within 10 minutes (Unless the arbiter decides otherwise. This can be shorter or longer, depending the circumstances). If a player does not return within the given time, the arbiter is allowed to penalize the player with either a yellow or a red card.

### **15.4**

The arbiter must always make sure that the pieces of the player who has left the board cannot be seen by his opponent.

## **16 Bluffing**

Psychology, bluff and misleading manoeuvres are considered important aspects of Stratego. Bluffing consists of all verbal communication (talking) or non-verbal communication (acting, mimic or feign) which is intended to mislead your opponent. All forms of bluff are allowed at any time during the game, unless prohibited by any other rule. Abuse will be considered unsporting behaviour and can be penalized accordingly.

## **17 Using papers**

Players are allowed to use notes for deploying their troops during the Setup Period. During the rest of the match, players are not allowed to make or use notes in any way, neither on paper nor with the help of any electronic device.

## **18 Spectators**

### **18.1**

During the match (including the Setup Period) every player has the right to ask the arbiter to remove spectators from the playing area. Playing participants will not be allowed at any time, with the possible exception of those who have already finished their tournament. Non-playing spectators will in principle be allowed, unless they interfere with the game or disturb one of the players.

### **18.2**

If a person, other than the two players or an arbiter interferes with a match, both players have the right to call in the arbiter. Together with the arbiter the players have to find a solution. If there is no solution on which both players can agree, the arbiter can decide:

- to continue the match.
- to continue after changing pieces.
- that both players lose the game.