



FIDE ARBITERS DISCIPLINARY SUB-COMMITTEE

The Arbiters Disciplinary Sub-Committee (hereafter called "the DSC"), sitting in the following composition: Chairperson: Mrs. Carolina Munoz. Members: Mr. Jaroslav Benak and Mr. Ronald King.

During an exchange of correspondence and online meetings during the period 19 January – 12 April 2026, made the following

DECISION

Case No 2/2026 "Use of forbidden pairings in the 23rd AAGCC 2025"

1. The DSC notes its establishment by the DSC Chairman on 19 January 2026.
2. The DSC notes that in January 5th 2026, the Arbiter Commission (ARB) received a complaint from Mr PNAT, of a matter concerning alleged violation of the FIDE Regulations by IA BB (FIDE ID ...) ("the Respondent"), relating to actions during the "23rd AAGCC 2025" from ..., 2025, in
3. The DSC notes that the Respondent has been allowed to respond to the allegations in the report and has submitted an explanation regarding the case.
4. The DSC notes the contents of the following documents and emails received as part of the case file: Complaint by PNAT, Email answer, explanation and proof from the Respondent on February 9th, 2026; Tournament regulations, list of title norms signed by the Respondent related with the tournament, and Qualification Commission report.
5. The DSC notes the subject matter of the complaint and defence:
 - a. The Respondent is an IA and served as the chief arbiter in the "23rd AAGCC 2025" tournament, being responsible for the pairings.
 - b. The allegations against the Respondent in the present case relate to the use of forbidden pairing during the tournament, specifically "...in the last 2 rounds, where possible, players from the same countries/territories and with a score of more than 50% shall not be paired against each other." (See Tournament Regulations, article 4.1.).
 - c. The Respondent in his reply to the DSC did explain the reason behind the use of forbidden pairings: *"For your information, forbidden pairings have been used by the ACC as the organizer since 2003. Therefore, in this matter, the organizer has the authority to apply forbidden pairings. Previously, the organizer had issued a tournament brochure dated 08/03/2025 for the 23rd AAGCC 2025 (see the Invitation Brochure 08/03/2025 – Original Invitation in the attached file). The Invitation Brochure dated 09/03/2025 – Article 6 was blanked out after Shaun Press intervened regarding the Direct Titles (see the attached file). The Invitation Brochure dated 16/04/2025 was issued after the approval of Direct Titles for the 23rd AAGCC 2025 (see the attached file). Registration of Participants from ... Chess Federation and the Technical Meeting held on 01/07/25 accepted the regulations as per published in the Invitation. In addition, none of the participants from other national chess federations objected to the application of forbidden pairings during the Technical Meeting. Honestly, I was not aware that the use of forbidden pairings, which had already been announced in the tournament brochure, was prohibited. The last time I applied forbidden pairings that had been informed to the participants was at the ...- Chess Championships 2023 in ...-. In my view, as I have already explained to Shaun Press, the forbidden pairing that had been announced in advance to the participants was not an intentional action. The organizers*



of AAG already stated in the tournament prospectus that they would implement forbidden pairings, and this was communicated at the technical meeting. Changing the number of rounds or the order of the rounds is different, as it is done intentionally with the intention of benefiting one or more players. Furthermore, the use of forbidden pairings is permitted provided that it is notified in advance; this refers to Article 5.2 of the FIDE General Regulations for Competitions, which states: "If the pairings are to be restricted in any way – for example, players from the same federation shall, if possible, not meet in the last rounds – this shall be communicated to the players as soon as possible, but not later than the start of the first round. In this case, there is a conflict between Articles B.01.1.1.1 and B.01.1.4.2(d) of the FIDE Title Regulations and Article 5.2 of the General Regulations for Competitions. Without intending to be patronizing, I suggest that point Article B.01.1.4.2(d) needs to be clarified so that it is clear and not confusing, by adding a sentence stating that forbidden pairings are prohibited. I believe there may still be many organizers who are not yet aware that the use of forbidden pairings is not permitted for the purpose of obtaining direct titles or title norms. Therefore, it would be advisable for the QC to communicate this more clearly and explicitly to organizers, by stating that the use of forbidden pairings is prohibited in any form, so as to avoid ambiguity. After the event was completed, I requested a report of players who obtained Direct Titles from the Chairman of the Pairing Committee, and I forwarded it to the organizer to request a recommendation for the awarding of direct titles (see the attached file: recommendation for Direct Titles in Excel format). When QC objected to the awarding of several Direct Titles, a lot of explanations regarding the pairings were provided by the Chairman of the Pairing Committee- all of which the FIDE Legal Director was in the loop (see the attached file: recommendation for Direct Titles in Excel format). And after that Direct Titles awarded by the QC. Sorry, here I would like to question why two identical cases resulted in different decisions. This occurred in the Open U-12 on Board 1, where in the original pairing two ...- players were paired against each other in Round 9. Board 1: PTKN (...) 5½ – NLV (...) 6. In accordance with the forbidden pairing policy determined by the organizer, an adjustment was made as follows: Board 1: BNA (...) 5½ – NLV (...) 6. In this case, NLV drew his game and finished in 1st place, and the QC awarded him the direct title of CM. On the other hand, in the Open U-16, the treatment was different for the ...- player PTBK. In the original pairing for Round 9, he was paired against another ...- player, NAH: Board 3: PTBK (...) 5½ – NAH (...) 5. This was then adjusted to: Board 3: PTBK (...) 5½ – CAW (...) 4½. PTBK won and finished with 6½ points, placing 3rd. Places 1 and 2 were occupied by NHTH and TNMD, respectively, also with 6½ points. According to Table 1.23b (Direct Titles), all three players should receive the FM title; however, only two players were awarded the FM title, namely NHTH (1st place) and TNMD (2nd place), while PTBK (3rd place) was not awarded the FM title. In this matter, the QC may have made an error—how is it possible that two identical cases resulted in different decisions? The treatment should be the same; if the QC considers the use of forbidden pairings to be impermissible, then they should likewise not be awarding direct titles... With regards to question number 5, the reason the application of forbidden pairings differed across categories is that the use of forbidden pairings was not necessary when there were no pairings between players from the same country. In this case, as the Chief Arbiter, I am deeply saddened that there are players who were unable to obtain direct titles due to the application of the forbidden pairing policy, and there was nothing I could do about it. The players themselves were certainly not at fault. This case is very complex, with many differing interpretations when viewed from the perspective of the existing regulations. This indicates that there are still multiple interpretations of the relevant articles, and therefore the rules prohibiting forbidden pairings need to be reviewed so that they become clear and unambiguous." (See 9 February, 2026 email).

6. Upon due consideration, the DSC, by unanimity of its members, finds regarding the



admissibility of the complaint that:

- a. The alleged breach of the FIDE Handbook - General Rules and Technical Recommendations for Tournaments, C04, and International Title Regulations B01 is a referral by a FIDE organ regarding a matter concerning FIDE's interests, specifically related to disciplinary issues involving arbiters. See articles 1.1. and 2 in the FIDE Arbiter Disciplinary Regulations (B.06.5);
 - b. The Respondent is registered in the FIDE database as an IA and as such part of the FIDE Family, over which the DSC exercises jurisdiction.
 - c. The statements prima facie have the potential to constitute a violation of the conduct prohibited in Article 3.6(a) and (c) of the Disciplinary Regulations for Arbiters.
 - d. The potential transgression occurred in the international sphere, as the event involved multinational participation. See article 2.7.a of B.06.5;
 - e. The DSC finds, therefore, that it has jurisdiction to investigate a violation of the General Rules and Technical Recommendations for Tournaments and the International Title Regulations.
7. Upon due consideration, the DSC, by unanimity of its members, observes and finds regarding the issue of the Respondents' guilt as follows:
- a. During the investigation, DSC found that the correct pairings had been altered due to the use of prohibited pairings in the Tournaments Girls U12, Open U8, U12, U14, U16, U18 and U20. Those pairings were according to Tournament Regulations.
 - b. Article C04.2.A.5 in the General handling rules for Swiss Tournaments, effective till 31 January 2026, reads: "It is not allowed to alter the correct pairings in favour of any player. Where it can be shown that modifications of the original pairings were made to help a player achieve a norm or a direct title, a report may be submitted to the QC to initiate disciplinary measures through the Ethics and Disciplinary Commission." The word "any" in article C04.2.A.5 refers to a specific player, not a group of players. When the CA made the decision, he didn't have the goal of benefiting a person from participating in or avoiding a specific match. Both, the tournament regulations were written and the technical took place before the tournament. At that time, the CA did not know what matches would take place in the tournament, and therefore the alteration in the pairings was not made "in favour of any player." Although the arbiter made changes to the pairings, he did so not to benefit specific players, but rather based on the tournament regulations, in order to prevent players from the same federation with more than 50% of the points from facing each other in the later rounds; without knowing if that change will benefit or not the specific player. Therefore, it is not considered that all the elements were met to determine whether the CA committed willful misconduct.
 - c. Article B01-1.1.1 in the FIDE Title Regulations, effective from 1 January 2024, reads: "1.1.1... Tournaments where players have different conditions in terms of rounds and pairing are not valid..." Also, article 5.2. in the General Regulations of Competition, reads: "5.2 If the pairings are to be restricted in any way – for example, players from the same federation shall, if possible, not meet in the last rounds – this shall be communicated to the players as soon as possible, but not later than the start of the first round." It is understandable that the arbiter considers both articles contradictory, and based on the tournament regulations and the background of other events, considers that he could apply article 5.2.
 - d. Although Ms. Munoz also believes the arbiter is not at fault and that the regulations are unclear, she states her opinion on the application of both articles: it is important to highlight that Article 5.2 is a general rule that can be used in FIDE-rated tournaments. Article B01-1.1.1, on the other hand, is a specific rule applicable to events that count towards norms and player titles. In this sense, the use of prohibited pairings can be applied in events, but not in events that count towards titles or norms, or if it is used, the CA must be aware that it affects the validity of those direct titles or norms. Given the relevance of their use and the confusion that



both articles can cause, it is recommended that they be more clearly specified in the title regulations and the competition regulations.

Appropriate sanction

8. After due consideration, the DSC, by unanimous decision of its members, resolves that the Respondent is not guilty.
9. Mr Munoz also consider that a corrective measure to be taken by the arbiter: update on at least Swiss Systems and title regulations.
10. The complainant is referred to Article 6 of the B.06.5 FIDE ARBITER DISCIPLINARY REGULATIONS and advised that he has the right to appeal this decision to the FIDE Council by giving written notice of such appeal to the DSC Chairperson (wimcmunoz@gmail.com) within 15 calendar days from the date upon which he receives this decision. The notice of appeal must clearly state all the grounds for the appeal. An appeal lodgement fee of 300 euros must be paid simultaneously to the FIDE Financial Department. Failing the due exercise of this right of appeal, the DSC's decision will become final.
11. The DSC will communicate the decision to the Respondent, the Complainant and the FIDE Arbiters Commission.

DATED ON THIS 20 April 2026

IA. Carolina Munoz Solis
CHAIRPERSON DISCIPLINARY ARBITERS SUB-COMMITTEE