

NORTH ESSEX CHESS LEAGUE

Rules of Match Play

- 1 These Rules shall apply to League Championship matches and to all other club competitions operated by the League insofar as they are not varied by or are inconsistent with any rules which may be formulated by the League for any one or more of such competitions.
- 2 The League Championship and all other club competitions operated by the League shall be run under the general direction of the League Committee who may appoint an officer or officers to administer the same or any of them. All references in these Rules to 'the Secretary' shall, in relation to such competition, mean the officer for the time being appointed to administer the same, or, if there is no such officer, the League Committee.

Decisions regarding any dispute arising in any League competitions shall be taken by the Secretary administering the competition, provided that he/she is not a member of a club involved in the dispute. If the Secretary is a member of such a club the decision will be taken by the League Chairman, Vice-Chairman or General Secretary provided such officer is not a member of a club involved in the dispute.

In any dispute the players involved shall write within ten days of the dispute first arising to the Secretary. In their letters the players shall briefly set out the facts, draw the attention of the Secretary to any law or practice of chess being relied on, and set out the decision the Secretary is being invited to come to. On receipt of both players' submissions the Secretary shall provide copies of each player's submission to the other player. In his letter the Secretary shall state the decision he is mindful of coming to, together with his reasons. The Secretary shall ask that a player who considers such proposed decision to be unacceptable to write to him within ten days, with a copy of the letter being sent at the same time to the other player, giving brief reasons why the proposed decision is considered to be wrong. On the basis of the evidence offered in the original submissions, as amplified or clarified by any subsequent letter received, the Secretary shall make his determination. It is for each player to ensure his submissions are full and complete and in the absence of manifest error no other correspondence shall be entered into unless initiated by the Secretary.

Any club appealing against such a decision shall submit the grounds thereof to the competition Secretary within fourteen days. The appeal will be considered by a League Sub-Committee which will reach a decision which shall be binding on both clubs. The League Sub-Committee shall consist of League Chairman, Vice-Chairman, General Secretary, Treasurer and competition Secretary provided that no officer can serve on the Sub-Committee if his/her club is involved in the dispute.

- 3 Match play in League Competitions shall take place between 1 September and 31 May in each season.
- 4 The League Championship shall consist of the number of Divisions (1, 2, 3, etc.) determined from time to time by the League Committee. A club entering more than one team shall designate them in correct order of strength (A, B, C, etc.). All Divisions except the lowest will consist of 11 teams; the lowest Division will be constructed of the remaining teams in the League. The Secretary may, at his discretion, re-allocate any team into another Division.
- 5 At the end of the season the top team in Division 2 and each lower division will be promoted to the next higher division. The bottom team in each division except the lowest division will be relegated to the next lower division. The following exceptions shall, however, prevail:
 - (a) Clubs may not operate more than two teams in any division, except the lowest division.
 - (b) Where promotion would cause a club to exceed its quota of teams in a division the promotion cannot be effective. Furthermore, promotion will not be mandatory when it would result in a club having more than one team in the higher division. In both these instances the next highest placed eligible team in that division shall be offered the option of promotion.
 - (c) Where relegation would cause a club to exceed its quota of teams in the lower division, the lower placed team of that club in the lower division must also be relegated, even though that team has not necessarily finished in bottom position.

- (d) Where vacancies occur in a division due to withdrawal and/or a team not exercising its option for promotion in accordance with Rule 5(b), they may be filled at the discretion of the Secretary by waiving relegation and/or promotion of additional teams or the inclusion of new teams. Furthermore the Secretary shall have the right to leave a division below the full complement if the Secretary considers this to be appropriate to the League.
 - (e) A new team may at the discretion of the Secretary be placed in a higher division.
 - (f) Clubs wishing to withdraw a team or teams shall only withdraw from the lowest division or divisions excepting that the Secretary is satisfied that there is insufficient strength to support a team or teams in the higher division(s).
 - (g) After relegation or promotion, a club's teams will be re-designated if necessary so that no team is in a higher division than a higher designated team.
- 6 So long as it is, in the view of the League Committee, practical so to do, each team taking part in the League Championship shall play each of the other teams in its Division twice in a season, once at home and once away. The venue for a match may be altered by agreement between the clubs concerned, or by the League Committee.
- According to the number of teams taking part in the League Championship, the League Committee may direct that either
- (a) Each team shall meet each other once in a season.
 - or
 - (b) Any Division may be divided into sections, with qualifier(s) from each section playing off for the championship in accordance with rules formulated for that purpose.
 - or
 - (c) Each team shall meet each other once with qualifier(s) playing off for the championship in accordance with rules formulated for that purpose.
- 7 A fixture list shall be established by the Secretary prior to the start of each season. The fixture list shall be adhered to where possible, but clubs may by agreement alter the date or starting time of any fixture, provided that such date falls between the dates specified in Rule 3 hereof.
- 8 A club wishing to postpone a match until after 30 April shall first obtain the sanction of the Secretary.
- 9 After 31st October, no postponements are allowed - except due to bad weather. If a team wish to postpone a match for any other reason permission must be sought from the Secretary seven days before the scheduled date for the match, but it is unlikely that permission will be granted. If two clubs mutually agree to rearrange a match this does not count as a postponement; the Secretary must be informed of this decision before the match was originally scheduled to take place.
- 10 If a club procures a postponement of any fixture on grounds which, in the opinion of the League Committee, are not reasonable, or fails to complete a postponed match within the stipulated period, the League Committee shall have the power to award the match to the opposing club by the maximum board score. The same shall apply to any club which fails to arrive for a match without having given notice of its wish to postpone the match. If the League Committee finds that a postponed match has not been completed by the cause or neglect of both clubs concerned, then it may penalise both clubs as it shall see fit.
- 11 Matches in all Divisions shall be played over four boards. The captains of each team shall toss for colour and the team winning the toss shall play the white pieces on the odd numbered boards and the black pieces on the even numbered boards.

- 12 Play in a match shall commence not later than 7.30 p.m. Opposing captains shall exchange lists of the players in the respective teams in board order prior to the commencement of play, the exchange to be made as soon as both captains arrive at the venue for the match. In the event of team lists not being exchanged by 7.30 p.m., the defaulting team shall forfeit on each board the elapsed time between 7.30 p.m. and the actual time that lists are exchanged. All clocks shall be started upon the commencement of play in a match.
- 13 A reserve player may be introduced at any time up to 8.15 p.m. If a player is not available at or before 8.15 p.m., the board is defaulted. No player can play more than one game on the same occasion.
If a captain has a known default, this must be notified to the opposing captain as soon as possible to avoid unnecessary travel.
- 14 A club wishing, by reason of travelling difficulties, to commence play in a match after 7.30 p.m. may apply to the Secretary for sanction so to do. If such sanction is granted then both clubs shall be notified by the Secretary of the latest time at which play may start and this time shall be read into Rule 12 hereof instead of 7.30 p.m. Similarly, a time 45 minutes after the starting time stipulated by the Secretary shall be substituted for 8.15 p.m. in Rule 13.
- 15 All matches will be played to a finish. The rate of play will be all moves in 80 minutes with a 10 second increment per move from the start. Alternatively, the home team may choose a rate of play of all moves in 90 minutes if there are issues with venue closure time or the availability of digital clocks.
All four boards in a match will be required to use the same rate of play.
- 16 Match results shall, not later than five days after play is completed, be submitted online by one team and confirmed online by the other team. Teams with no web access may inform the event Secretary by other means.
- 17 Chess clocks must be used in all games. All clubs are expected to have a full complement of equipment in normal circumstances. Exceptions to this rule may be made at the discretion of the League Committee for clubs with less than two years league membership. In such cases, the visiting club shall be asked to provide clocks to make up the required number. However, it is the responsibility of the home club to request that the away club should bring such equipment. Any request should be made at least 7 days before the match and not more than 14 days before.
- 18 Each game shall be properly recorded on a score sheet. Players score one point for a won game, ½ point for a drawn game and no points for a lost game, in the customary fashion. In the event of a double default, both clubs score no game points. In all matches each player winning a game by default shall be deemed to have made an appearance for his club.
- 19 In all matches a team shall score two points for a won match, one point for a drawn match and no points for a lost match. In the event of two or more teams scoring the same number of match points at the end of the season, the teams are to be separated by:
 - (a) Game Points
 - (b) Result(s) of the Match(es) between the teams
 - (c) If the match(es) between the remaining tied teams was (were) drawn, board count followed by bottom board elimination will be used to separate the teams
 - (d) Ruling of the League Committee
- 20 Except where these rules are inconsistent with this clause, each team entered by a club in any League competition shall have its players arranged in descending order of strength, the strongest player playing on the top board and the weakest on the bottom board. If, in the opinion of the League Committee, a club is in breach of this rule, match or game points may be deducted at the discretion of the Committee.
- 21 A player may not represent more than one club in any one season, except with the prior sanction of the General Secretary.

- (a) It is a condition of registration that player data (limited to name, club, ECF code, ECF ratings, and ECF membership number) and game results may be kept on computer and published. Members may optionally provide an email address so as to be included in NECL distribution lists. Club secretaries will maintain venue and basic contact data on their NECL club web pages which also form the online directory. Officers can alternatively opt for their own contact data to be restricted to a view which is only visible via a login by other officers.
- (b) At least 24 hours before the first fixture within a season, each club shall send all fees due to NECL to the Treasurer, and send the names of intended players to both the General Secretary and Treasurer. Clubs may optionally overpay to create a credit balance towards any later new registrations. The Treasurer will mark payment and the General Secretary will mark registrations on-line and assign a player eligibility date of no later than the day after receipt. This will be visible in the NECL-accounts, registrations and nominations sections of each club.

A new player registration during a season will similarly require at least 24 hours' notice before the player's first fixture. Clubs may optionally overpay to create a credit balance towards any later fees. Any players incurring a pending fee to ECF via NECL will be ineligible whilst their club has insufficient credit to cover all of such players' fees.

- (c) Nominations will be formed starting from the top of a list in descending ECF rating order; any exceptions to this order cannot differ by more than 40 rating points. A number of players equal to one fewer than the number of boards in the club's "A" team shall be nominated for that team; the number of players next on the list equal to one fewer than the number of players in the club's "B" team shall be nominated players for that team, and so on.

However, a player that was nominated in the previous season but did not play in any matches is not counted when evaluating nominations, so that the team for which he is nominated must have an additional player nominated.

Nominations will be revised accordingly if affected by either new registrations added during the season or a performance-based-revision of the estimated rating of a non-rated player. A club changing nomination ordering based on monthly official rating updates should do so within two weeks of a rating list being published, or can opt to not do so where this affects driver availability.

A player shall not be eligible to play in any team below the category of team for which he is nominated.

- (d) Subject to eligibility, there is no limit to the number of games that a player can play during the season.
- (e) If a team fields an ineligible player then his game will be lost by default, and an additional ½ point will be deducted from the team's total. Individual game results will stand for rating purposes only. Incomplete teams should default on the lowest board(s).
- (f) Teams will play in descending ECF rating order from board one downwards. Any exceptions to this cannot differ by more than 80 rating points.

When a reserve player is substituted for a listed player who has failed to arrive, the reserve cannot have a rating more than 80 rating points higher than the absent player.

- (g) Matches between teams from the same club (in whichever Division) shall be played before any of the teams plays a match against any other club.

23 No team can be compelled to play on a Saturday or a Sunday.

24 Smoking is not permitted in the playing room during matches.

25 Mobile phones are allowed at matches, but they must be either switched off or set to silent mode for the duration of the playing session. Match Captains should remind all players of this requirement prior to the start of play. If a player's phone does ring audibly during the playing session, then he or she will be given a warning. If the same player's phone rings for a second time, then he or she automatically forfeits his or her game.

26 Except where they are inconsistent with the foregoing, the Laws of Chess as published by FIDE shall be deemed to form part of these Rules.

The FIDE Laws of Chess allow the use of an assistant by a visually handicapped player. The League will also allow the use of an assistant by any player, as and when required.

27 Any alteration of or addition to these rules shall be considered by a League Committee Meeting, for which due notice shall have been given.

All proposals for alterations of or additions to these rules must be submitted to the General Secretary. Existing rules subsequently affected by alterations or additions agreed at a League Committee Meeting can be considered for amendment by that same League Committee Meeting. All proposals must be received by the General Secretary by 1st July in order for such alterations or additions, if approved, to become effective for the following season.

Adopted: 1st September 2022