

ESSEX CHESS LEAGUE RULES

ORGANISATION

1. The League shall be called the Essex Chess League.
 2. The League shall be structured in divisions, each division comprising not more than 6 teams contesting a double round of matches, with the exception of the lowest division, which may be increased or contested on a single round basis at the discretion of the League Management Committee.
 3. Teams in Divisions 1 and 2 shall comprise 8 boards. All other divisions shall comprise teams of 6 boards.
 4. Clubs may not operate more than two teams in any division, except the lowest division.
 5. Clubs with more than one team shall designate teams I, II etc. in order of playing strength, team I being the highest designated team.
 6. At the end of the season, the top team in Division 2 and each lower division shall be promoted to the next highest division. The bottom team in each division except the lowest division shall be relegated to the next lowest division. The following exceptions shall, however, prevail:-
 - (i) Where vacancies occur in a division due to withdrawal and/or a team not exercising its option of promotion in accordance with Rule 6(iii), they may be filled at the discretion of the League Management Committee by waiving relegation and/or promotion of additional teams or the inclusion of new teams. Furthermore the League Management Committee shall have the right to leave a division below the full complement if it considers this to be appropriate to the League.
 - (ii) Where relegation would cause a club to exceed its quota of teams in a division, the lowest placed team in that division must also be relegated, even though that team has not necessarily finished in bottom position.
 - (iii) 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 of these instances the next highest placed eligible team in that division shall be offered the option of promotion.
 7. Clubs wishing to withdraw a team(s) shall only withdraw from the lowest division(s) excepting where the League Management Committee is satisfied that there is insufficient strength to support a team(s) in a higher division(s).
 8. New teams must apply by 15th August.
 9. The operation of the League shall be administered by a League Secretary. The League Secretary shall be assisted by a League Management Committee and by
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adjudicators who shall be appointed by the League Secretary and subject to the approval of the League Management Committee.

10. The League season shall be from 1st October to 1st May inclusive, unless extended by the League Management Committee.
11. The League will register with the English Chess Federation Game Fee Scheme.

LEAGUE DEPOSITS

12. All participating clubs shall be affiliated to the Essex Chess Association and shall abide by its rules.
13. All member clubs shall be circulated by the League Secretary by 31st July each year. Deposits of £10 per club, plus £5 for a second team and each additional team, will be debited to each club.
14. Deposits will be used to finance any fines, fees or other levies of £3 or under. Any balance shall be settled at the end of the season.
15. No club shall participate in the League until all deposits and previously outstanding debts have been settled.
16. If a club has not paid its Game Fee to the Treasurer of the Essex Chess Association by 20th December, all matches played subsequently until such time as the Game Fee is received by the Treasurer may be scored as defaulted.

MATCH ARRANGEMENTS

17. A meeting at which all clubs shall be represented shall be held in September for the purpose of arranging fixtures. Within seven days thereof, each club shall send the League Secretary a list of its arranged fixtures. Any subsequent alteration shall be notified to the League Secretary by both clubs. Clubs are required to complete all fixtures.
18. Where a club has more than one team within the same division, the teams shall play each other as the initial fixture(s) of the season in that division.
19. When a club fails to honour a fixture, the opponents are entitled to claim the match if less than 14 days notice is given. If a minimum 14 days notice is given, the match may be re-arranged but the requesting club shall offer at least two alternative dates and, if necessary, waive choice of venue.
20. Matches shall commence not later than 7.30 p.m. except where mutually agreed to the contrary.
21. Notwithstanding Article 12(2)(b) of the FIDE Laws of Chess it is legitimate to bring mobile phones into the playing venue. At the start of each match the Captains should announce that, "All mobile phones must be switched off or set to silent mode for the duration of the match". If a player's mobile phone rings in the playing room(s)

during the course of his game, that player shall lose the game. Such game losses must be reported in writing to the League Secretary.

22. The names of all players with their scores and details made of the arrangements made for the continuation of each adjourned game, shall be forwarded to the League Secretary by BOTH clubs concerned within SIX days. If a club has defaulted a board or substituted a player it shall also, within six days, provide the League Secretary with an explanation for the default or substitution.

PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

23. No player shall be allowed to play in the League for more than one club during the season.
- 24(a) No player shall be allowed to play in a League match unless the League Secretary has received notification of his name and address at least seven days in advance.
- (b) Clubs must ensure that all Essex League players become individual members of the Essex Chess Association. For the purposes of this rule, "Essex League player" is deemed to include:
- (i) any player who plays in an Essex League match;
 - (ii) any nominated player against whom a default is shown in a team list for a League match; and
 - (iii) any player nominated for the barred list by a club under Rule 25(a) unless the option of substitution is applied for under Rule 25(b) and accepted by the League Management Committee.
- 25(a) By one week before the fixtures meeting clubs shall send the League Secretary the names and addresses of all players expected to play for them in the League during the season. In addition to this, clubs entering more than one team shall clearly indicate their strongest members expected to play in each team other than their lowest designated team.
- (i) For each team entered in Division 1 or 2, 6 names must be indicated.
 - (ii) For each team entered in a lower Division, 4 names must be indicated.
- The players so indicated shall be barred from playing in a lower designated team. Further registrations may be added during the season in accordance with Rule 24.
- (b) The League Management Committee shall be empowered to accept, reject or replace the name of any barred player and to add to whichever list it considers appropriate the name of any other player registered for the League. In the case of new members being added to the barred list the option of substitution may be applied for.
- (c) If a player was declared by his club as a 'barred' player the previous season, but did not play, the Committee will only accept that player as an addition to the nominated list.

- (d) A list of barred players shall be circulated by the League Secretary to all clubs, as shall a list of any subsequent amendments.

RULES OF PLAY

26. Except where amended by these rules, all games shall be played according to the current FIDE laws of chess.
- 27(a) Match captains or their deputies shall exchange team lists at least five minutes before the agreed starting time and shall thereupon toss for colours; the team winning the toss shall have the WHITE pieces on the odd-numbered boards. A team unable to produce a team list at that time shall be deemed to have lost the toss.
- (b) Teams shall be arranged in descending order of playing strength except that:
- (i) Current club champions may be played on board 1.
 - (ii) A substitution may be made within 45 minutes of the agreed starting time if the nominated player on the team list is absent when the substitution is made.
- (c) Where a board is defaulted at the time team lists are exchanged, the default must appear below contested games in the board order. All other defaults must be shown against a nominated player on the team list.
- (d) When a board is defaulted by the home team without prior notice and adequate explanation to the away captain, the away player may claim a maximum of £10 travelling expenses from the home club. Claims must be made through the match captains. If agreement is not reached or payment is not made, the matter may be referred to the League Secretary within 14 days of the match.
- 28(a) Chess clocks shall be used. The rate of play shall be 24 moves per hour. When Black has completed 24 moves the clocks shall each be set back 30 minutes and the game shall be completed in the time then indicated on each clock. Article 10 (and in the absence of an Arbiter, Appendix D) of the FIDE Laws of Chess shall then apply.
- (b) 45 minutes from the agreed starting time shall be allowed for any player absent, whereafter - subject to Rule 27(b)(ii) - the absentee shall forfeit the game.
- (c) When through the negligence of the home club, clocks are started later than the scheduled time, the captain of the visiting team may insist that the lost time be debited on the clocks of the home team. The club responsible will also be reported to the League Management Committee for disciplinary action should their opponents lodge a complaint, or if an unreasonable delay comes to the attention of the League Secretary.

SCORING

29. In each match, two points shall be scored by the winning team, one point by each team in the event of a draw.
30. If a team withdraws from the League during a season before it has begun half of its scheduled fixtures, the matches played prior to withdrawal shall be treated as null and void for the purposes of League placings, promotion, relegation, cumulative defaults and barring under Rule 25. If a team withdraws after beginning half or more of its fixtures, the results of the fixtures played shall stand, and the remaining matches scored as defaulted to the scheduled opponents.
31. In the event of two or more eligible teams being level on points at the end of the season, the winner of the division and promotion and relegation shall be determined as follows:
- (a) Teams shall be placed in descending order of match points scored between (or amongst) themselves. This operation shall be repeated until it has no further effect.
 - (b) Where teams still remain equal, they shall be placed in descending order of game points in the match or matches between them.
 - (c) Where teams still remain equal, they shall be placed in ascending order of their board count scores in the match or matches between (or amongst) themselves. Board count, for this purpose, shall be the total of board numbers of games won plus half of the total of board numbers of games drawn.
 - (d) Where teams still remain equal, they shall be placed according to bottom board elimination in the match or matches between or (amongst) themselves.
 - (e) Where teams still remain equal then a play off or play offs between the teams concerned shall take place. Should a play off result in a draw then board count and, if necessary, bottom board elimination will be applied. No new registrations shall be permitted for such matches.
32. All trophies shall be presented at the next Annual General Meeting of the Essex Chess Association and engraved with the names of the winning clubs. All trophies shall be returned to the League Secretary by the previous season's winners by no later than 31st May. The League Management Committee shall be empowered to impose a maximum fine of £10 on any such club failing to return a trophy by this date unless the Committee considers that its late return was due to extenuating circumstances.
33. Subject to the discretion of the League Management Committee, teams will be penalised for defaulted games during a season as follows:
- Division 1 and 2 teams - deduction of two points for the first eight games defaulted and thereafter deduction of one point for every four games defaulted.

All other divisions - deduction of two points for the first six games defaulted and thereafter deduction of one point for every three games defaulted.

Ineligible players and games defaulted on resumption count as defaults for cumulative purposes.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

34(a) A club may protest against the alleged commission of any breach of the foregoing rules. Details must be sent in writing to the League Secretary within seven days of its discovery.

(b) In connection with any offence reported to him or discovered by him, the League Secretary shall take such action as lies within his authority and, if necessary, refer the matter to the League Management Committee for decision.

35(a) The League Secretary shall be empowered to impose the following penalties.

- (i) a fine of £3 for each infringement of Rule 22;
- (ii) the scoring of a loss to any player who infringes any of Rules 23 to 28, and the award of the game to his opponent, if eligible;
- (iii) any other sanction authorised under powers delegated by the League Management Committee.

and shall refer persistent offenders to the League Management Committee.

(b) A club may appeal against any decision of the League Secretary under Rule 34(b) by writing to the League Secretary within 14 days of notification. The appeal shall be referred to the League Management Committee, whose decision shall be final.

36(a) For each infringement of the rules, the League Management Committee shall be empowered to impose the following MAXIMUM penalties:

- (i) the deduction of two match points from the offending team's score, and/or
- (ii) the suspension of a player or match official from participating in the League until the end of the season, and/or
- (iii) the imposition of a fine of £15,

or such lesser penalties as it determines, and shall recommend any greater or additional penalty to the Executive Committee of the Essex Chess Association.

(b) In connection with any offence referred to the League Management Committee, the club(s) involved shall have the right of non-voting representation.

37. The League Management Committee shall rule upon any matter not covered by the foregoing rules.

RULE AMENDMENTS

38. Any alteration of or addition to these rules shall be considered by the General Purposes Committee of the Essex Chess Association, to whom due notice shall have been given and whose recommendations thereon shall be passed to the Association's Executive Committee for decision.

39. All proposals for alterations of or additions to these rules must be submitted to the League Secretary who will refer them to the League Management Committee for consideration, prior to placing them before the General Purposes Committee. Existing rules subsequently affected by alterations or additions agreed at a General Purposes Committee meeting can be considered for amendment by that same General Purposes Committee. All proposals must be received by the League Secretary by 1st March in order for such alterations or additions, if approved, to become effective for the following season.

As amended by the Executive on the 31st July 2008 following the GPC meeting on 30 June 2008.