
ESSEX KNOCK-OUT COMPETITION - RULES

GENERAL

1. The Essex Knock-Out Competition will be a team contest organised on behalf of the Essex Chess Association by a Controller appointed by the Association's Executive Committee and assisted by the League Management Committee of the Essex Chess Association.
2. The Competition will be run in a number of elimination rounds plus a final round. All teams will play in the first round unless there is an odd number of teams, in which case a bye will be awarded to the defending champions. The winners of each round will qualify for the next round, and so on until the final round.

Trophies shall be presented to the winning team(s) at the conclusion of the Final and shall be held for one year and/or returned to the Essex Chess Association when requested by the Controller. Any other prizes shall be announced in the Entry Form.

The Competition shall be managed via the ECF League Management System ("ECF LMS") for both Player Registration and reporting of match results (see Rule 14 below).

3. Each team shall consist of 5 players who will play two games against the same player from the other team, one game with the white pieces and one game with the black pieces.
4. Teams will be paired for each round by lot except that as far as possible teams from the same club or school will not be paired against each other before the Final. In each pairing the team first drawn will be termed the "home" team, its opponents the "away" team.
5. All matches will be played at the premises of the home team, unless varied by mutual agreement.
6. In the event of a drawn match, the team with the lower total of board numbers of games won will be deemed the winners. If the match is still drawn the result on the bottom board will be disregarded, and if it is still drawn the result(s) on the next higher board(s) will also be disregarded until the winners are identified. If all games in the match are drawn or this rule otherwise fails to break the tie, the match will be replayed.
7. If there are sufficient entries, an additional competition will be held for first round losers. This competition will be called the Plate Tournament with a separate prize fund.

When a Plate competition is to be held, the Controller shall seed the strongest teams from meeting each other in the first round, amounting to half the number of teams playing in Round 1. **Note:** *In the event of an odd number of teams entered, the defending Knockout Champions will have the bye to the second round (see Rule 2), so that there is an even number of teams participating in Round 1. The purpose of seeding the first round is to avoid, as far as possible, the strongest teams reaching the Plate competition.*

ELIGIBILITY

8. The following are eligible to compete:-
- (a) as of right, all clubs affiliated to the Essex Chess Association, all member Clubs of Affiliated Leagues and all Essex schools;
 - (b) at the discretion of the Controller, any other Essex based club.

Each club or school may enter more than one team.

9. Each player must be a bona-fide member of the club represented by his or her team, or, in the case of a school, he or she must be a pupil or employee of that school.

Definition: the term 'bona fide member' for Club teams shall mean an individual who is a member of the Club in question and participates in the team activities of that Club.

No player may play for more than one team in the Competition during the season ("the competition" means KO and Plate).

10. Entries must be accompanied by a list of players expected to appear for the Club in the competition (hereinafter "Player Registrations").

Any Club entering more than one team must order their Player Registrations by listing their players in the teams for which they are expected to appear; a minimum of five names should be indicated for each team but the lowest. The strongest players should be listed for the first team, the next strongest for the second team and so on. (**Note:** *playing strength does not mean strict rating order.*) Players may play in higher teams than that for which they are listed, but not lower.

Players may be added to the Player Registrations any time up to and including the Semi-Final stage, provided that such registration is received by the Controller at least 48 hours before the start time of the first match in which the new player is to appear. Such new registrations will be accepted only if the player meets the eligibility criteria (see Rule 9) and the player's Rapid grade is not higher than the current highest registered player's Rapid grade. **Note:** *this latter condition is to protect the integrity of the seedings so that a team's top end strength cannot be increased by a new registration.*

MATCH ARRANGEMENTS

11. Upon the announcement of the draw for the round, the home team shall within 3 days contact the away team with a choice of 2 dates on which to play the match. The away team shall respond within 3 days of receiving the home team's proposed dates.
12. All matches shall be completed by the closing date for the round, except that the Controller may grant an extension in exceptional cases, upon a reasoned request received from either team before the closing date.
13. A tied match shall be replayed within 3 weeks of the tie being declared, at the premises of the away team or at a venue to be agreed mutually.

14. Both teams in each match shall report the result by completing the match card in the ECF LMS within 48 hours of the match being played; one team to enter the result the other to verify. If either process is not possible the match details should be reported to the Controller by email within the same timescale on the understanding that the emailed notification provides at least the same information as the ECF LMS match card.

If one team fails to report a result, the result reported by the opposing team shall be taken as the result of the match. If neither team reports the result, both teams shall be liable to elimination from the event at the discretion of the Controller, who shall take into account any extenuating circumstances.

RULES OF PLAY

15. Match officials shall exchange team lists at least 5 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 in the first round of games. If officials of only one of the teams are present at the time designated for tossing for colours, that team shall be deemed to have won the toss.
16. Teams shall be played in descending order of strength, except that:-
- (a) current club champions may be played on board 1.
 - (b) a substitution may be made at any time before flag fall if a nominated player is absent.
17. Except with the consent of the opposing match captain there shall be no changes in the teams between the two rounds of a match, save that a nominated player who is substituted in the first round may be reinstated for the second round.
18. The rate of play shall be all moves in 20 minutes plus 10 seconds a move added from the start (G20+10); if suitable digital clocks are not available, the rate of play shall be all moves in 30 minutes, provided always that the same type of clock and the applicable time limit is used on all boards of the match.
19. The FIDE Laws of Chess, and in particular Appendix A relating to Rapid chess games will apply. Guidelines III of the FIDE Laws of Chess does NOT apply.

PROTESTS, PENALTIES AND APPEALS

20. A team may protest against the alleged commission by its opponents of any breach of the foregoing rules. Such protest shall be referred to the Controller within 7 days of the related incident.
21. If a team should field an ineligible player the penalty shall be loss of the game(s) concerned and the deduction of a penalty point for each offence. *For the avoidance of doubt, it is stated that if an ineligible player has played in both rounds of a match, this will be counted as two such offences and both games will be scored as losses for that player (wins for the opponent) and two penalty points will also be deducted from the offending team's score.*

22. Any matter not covered by these Rules and any conflict between one rule and another rule, shall be decided by the Controller.
23. A team may appeal against any decision of the Controller. Such appeal must be lodged with the Controller within 7 days of the announcement of the decision and shall be referred by the Controller to the League Management Committee, whose decision shall be final.
24. Once a team has been eliminated from the Competition, no decision - whether on appeal or otherwise - shall serve to reinstate that team if an affected match in the following round has been started.
25. These rules can be amended by the Executive.

As amended by the Executive May 2023