

ESSEX CHESS ASSOCIATION

FOUNDED 1898

ESSEX CHESS LEAGUE RULES (C19) 2021-22

Due to the problems arising from the pandemic the League Rules have been amended at a late stage during the formation of the League for this season. The amendments follow the agreed changes as recorded at the GPC of 15 September 2021.

The aim this season is a restart of League over the board chess, as such the League Secretary and League Management Committee will show flexibility in interpreting the Rules.

ORGANISATION

1. The League shall be called the Essex Chess League.
2. The League shall be structured in consultation with the clubs and at the discretion of the League Secretary and League Management Committee.
3. Teams in Division 1 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. Automatic promotion/demotion will not apply this season. The formation of the divisions in the following season shall also be in consultation with clubs.
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. The operation of the League shall be administered by a League Secretary. The League Secretary shall be assisted by a League Management Committee.
9. The League season shall be from 1st October to 30th April inclusive. The season may be extended by the League Management Committee.

LEAGUE DEPOSITS

12. All participating clubs shall be affiliated to the Essex Chess Association and shall abide by its rules.
13. A deposit will be debited to each club of £10 for a club with one team or £15 for a club with more than one team.

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.

14. No club shall participate in the League until all deposits and previously outstanding debts have been settled.

MATCH ARRANGEMENTS

- 16(a) Each season, the League competition shall be organised according to the following calendar:

- (i) All barred players (see Rule 24) registered with the Essex League by 15 November shall join the ECF Membership scheme by 30 November.
- (ii) Any player registered after 15 November who is to become a barred player should join the ECF Membership scheme before they become eligible to play.

- (b) Any subsequent alteration to the initial agreed fixtures shall be notified to the League Secretary by both Clubs.

17. Where a club has more than one team within the same division, those teams shall play each other as their initial fixture of the season in that division. If there are two rounds of matches in the division, this requirement applies to the first match between the teams: the second match between those teams must be played before either of these teams plays any other team for a second time.

18. 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. **If the failure is due to pandemic issues later notice may be given and both clubs should seek a re-arrangement.**

19. Matches shall commence not later than 7.30 p.m. except where mutually agreed to the contrary.

20. All matches must be played in accordance with the "Conditions of Entry / Participation" section of the Essex Chess Association - Living with the virus Playing Conditions Guidance (September 2021).

Document Link: [H&S Conditions of Entry and ECA C19 Playing Conditions](#)

21. Notwithstanding Article 11.3.2 of the FIDE Laws of Chess it is legitimate to bring mobile phones into the playing venue, provided the device is completely switched off. If a player's mobile phone makes any sound in the playing room(s) during the course of his game, then on the first occurrence he shall receive a warning. For a second such offence by the same player in the same game, the penalty is the loss of the game. Such game losses must be reported in writing to the League Secretary. A match captain is permitted to have a switched on phone in the playing room, provided it is on silent/vibrate mode until all players in his team have arrived or default time expires, but must leave the playing room to make or take a call.

22. Matches are to be reported on the ECF League Management System (LMS) within 48 hours. If technical issues preclude this the names of all players with their scores shall be forwarded to the League Secretary by the club concerned within 48 hours. 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

22. No player shall be allowed to play in the League for more than one club during the season.

- 23(a) All players must be registered on the club's "Player List" for the Essex League on the ECF LMS.

No player shall be allowed to play in a League match unless the League Secretary has received notification of their registration on the LMS and contact address at least three days in advance.

Registered players should be informed of the Essex Chess Association's Privacy Notice as to the processing of their personal data.

- (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:
- (iii) any player who plays in an Essex League match;
 - (iv) any nominated player against whom a default is shown in a team list for a League match; and
 - (v) any player nominated for the barred list by a club under Rule 24(a) unless the option of substitution is applied for under Rule 24(b) and accepted by the League Management Committee.

- 24(a) Clubs entering more than one team shall, before their first match, send to the League Secretary a list of their strongest members expected to play in each team other than their lowest designated team.

- (i) For each team entered in Division 1, 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 23.

- (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) 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

25. Except where amended by these rules, all games shall be played according to the current FIDE Laws of Chess.
- 26(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.
 - (iii) Captains may agree on a variation in board order to accommodate the face covering preferences of players.
- (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.
- 27(a) Chess clocks shall be used.
- (iv) The rate of play shall be all moves in 90 minutes. FIDE Laws of Chess Guidelines III, Clauses Guidelines III.5, and Guidelines III.6 apply. *Refer to Appendix 2 of [the 2019/20 Rules Compendium](#) for an annotated version of Guidelines III of the FIDE Laws of Chess.*
 - (v) Alternatively, if suitable digital clocks are available, an incremental "Fischer" time limit may be used, in which case the rate of play shall be all moves in 80 minutes plus 10 seconds a move added from the start. Adoption of the incremental time control shall be at the discretion of the home team, provided always that the opposing team shall have been given a minimum of 72 hours' notice that the incremental time control will be used and that it is used on all boards of the match. *For the avoidance of doubt it is stated that when an incremental rate of play is being used, Guidelines III of the FIDE Laws of Chess does NOT apply.*

However, should any circumstance arise before the agreed starting time of the match, which prevents the home team from being able to fulfil the requirements of this Rule 27(a)(ii), the match shall revert to the standard time control prescribed by Rule 27(a)(i).

In the event that, after the start of play, a digital clock develops a fault such that it can no longer be used, it shall be replaced. If a digital replacement is not available the faulty clock shall be replaced with an analogue clock, in which case, the rate of play shall revert to the conditions specified in Rule 27(a)(i) above and the analogue clock shall be set as follows:

Where less than 60 moves have been completed in the game, the time remaining on each clock shall be enhanced by the addition of the time increments not yet accrued, up to move 60, and transferred to the analogue clock so that the total time available to each player for the game shall be 90 minutes.

If 60 or more moves have been made, then the time displayed on each clock shall be transferred as the time remaining for each player. In the event that the faulty clock no longer displays data on one or either face, best judgement should be used to set the replacement clock, in accordance with FIDE Laws of Chess, Articles 6.10.1 and 6.10.2.

Two minutes shall be added to each player's remaining time to compensate for the disruption.

- (a) 45 minutes from the agreed starting time shall be allowed for any player absent, whereafter - subject to Rule 26(b)(ii) - the absentee shall forfeit the game.
- (b) 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

- 28. In each match, two points shall be scored by the winning team, one point by each team in the event of a draw.
- 29. 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 24. 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.
- 30. In the event of two or more eligible teams being level on points at the end of the season, the winner of the division 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.
31. 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.
32. There will be no penalties for defaulted games this season.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

- 33(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.
- 34(a) The League Secretary shall be empowered to impose the following penalties:
- (i) a fine of £3 for each infringement of Rule 21;
 - (ii) the scoring of a loss to any player who infringes any of Rules 22 to 27, 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 33(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.
- 35(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.
36. The League Management Committee shall rule upon any matter not covered by the foregoing rules.

RULE AMENDMENTS

37. 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.
38. 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.

Amended by the League Secretary as directed by the Association's Executive following the September 2021 GPC.