

COMPETITION RULES 2019-2020

NEW RULES ARE SHOWN IN BOLD

1. DIVISIONS

Prior to the Fixtures Meeting, the league is divided into divisions, which are chosen and arranged by the League's Constitution Committee (appointed at the AGM). A new club entering the league cannot enter a team straight into Division 1 and neither can any club re-joining after having left the league.

2. NUMBER OF MATCHES

Each team competing shall play where there are seven teams or less, home and away matches with every other team in their division. Where there are 8 teams or more in a division then each team shall play single fixtures with every other team in that division, unless otherwise decided at the A.G.M., or by the sub-committee appointed for this purpose.

3. FIXTURES

- a) League fixtures are arranged at the Fixtures Meeting, convened before the start of the season. The results of all league match's to be with the Record Secretary by 28th April or not be recorded in the league tables.
- b) On the request of either club, fixtures may be re-arranged up to 28 days before the arranged date, ideally to a new date to be within 28 days of the original, the re-arrangement to be notified to the Records Secretary. If the clubs cannot agree a new date, they may appeal to the Records Secretary to choose a date binding on both clubs.
- c) Fixtures may be postponed if it proves impossible for either team to play on the date arranged. Bad weather or cancelled public transport are considered valid reasons, but difficulties in raising a team are not. Following a postponement, the clubs should a) inform the Records Secretary, b) agree a new fixture date within 14 days, and again inform the Records Secretary. If not so informed, the Records Secretary chooses a new date binding on both clubs.
- d) Any team defaulting a match will be penalised 1 league point and must give at least 24 hours' notice to the opposition or be penalised an additional 1 league point in an away match, or an additional 2 league points in a home match. Should a home team default and cause a team a wasted journey on 2 occasions, they shall be expelled from the league for that season. Any team defaulting 3 matches in a season shall be expelled from the League for that season. A defaulted match should be defined as any match where less than 50% of a team play.
- e) When a club has more than one team in a division, inter-club fixtures must be the first to be played, in each half of the season where applicable, or as soon as possible if it is not practical.

4. NUMBER OF GAMES PER MATCH

- a) 'League matches shall have teams containing these numbers of players in each side: Division 1-6 a side; Division 2-6 a side; Division 3-5 a side; Division 4-4 a side, one game being played at each board.'
- b) A won game shall score 1, a drawn game ½ and a lost game 0 points.
- c) A won match shall score 2, a drawn match 1 and a lost match 0 points.

5. REGISTRATION OF PLAYERS

- a) The players of each club shall be registered, and no player shall be registered with more than one club. A player may change his registration to another club at any time during the season subject to the provisions of 5(c) hereof. The change shall be effected by registration whereupon the earlier registration shall automatically be cancelled. Any player changing clubs shall inform the Records Secretary and his previous club in writing.
- b) All players registered for a club shall be a bona fide paid up member of such club, unless said player is an honorary member of the club, and also be a Direct Member of the ECF, unless there are exceptional circumstances [*Sec's Note: 'exceptional'-was understood to include e.g. players of very few games; v. late registered players etc.*]
- c) The secretary of each club shall supply to the Records Secretary the names and addresses of players it desires to register on a registration form supplied by the league. The Records Secretary may query the registration of any player, and if not satisfied, shall reject the registration of that player. The registrations shall not be accepted until any amendment has been made. Registrations must be done in writing five clear days (from the date of postmark) before the commencement of league or competition play. All juniors (any person under the age of 18 years on the 1st September in that season) marked with a 'J' in the

column provided and show their date of birth. Failure to comply with the latter's request could result in a club's registrations not being accepted. Any extra registration shall be on a form provided or on a sheet of paper suitable for filing. No player shall be registered after 1st March. A copy of the registration form should be sent to the treasurer when sending the club's league fees.

- d) Any club failing to pay their league fees by the 31st October, shall lose all points gained so far. They will continue to do so until the fees are paid. There will be no rearranging of matches under any circumstances, until fees are paid.
- e) When a club has more than one team competing in the league not less than six players in Divisions 1 & 2, five players in Division 3, or four players in Division 4, shall be registered for each team. These players should be registered in decreasing order of playing strength and allocated, as far as is practicable, to teams in order from the highest placed team to the lowest. If a club has more than one team in a division, the teams must be labelled A, B, C... in strength order (A-high), and players registered in accordance with the previous requirement.
- f) i) When registering players at least half of a team's minimum registered players (currently 6 in divisions 1 and 2, 5 in division 3 and 4 in division 4) must be either 'new' or "active" players. A 'new' player is someone who was not registered for the club at the start of the previous season. An 'active' player is someone who was registered for the club in the previous season and played at least five league matches.
 - ii) The remaining players shall be registered for the lowest division in which the club is playing.
 - iii) When a club has more than one team in its lowest division the required players must be registered for each 'higher' team. The remaining players should all be registered in the 'lowest' team.
- g) No player shall play for a 'lower' team than that in which he is registered. A player who has not played more than 3 times for his registered team may be re-registered for a lower team by writing to the Record Secretary. The player cannot play for his new team until the club has received written confirmation from the Record Secretary of the suitability of the re-registration. No further re-registration of this player is permitted. Re-registered players may not play in a higher division.
- h) A player may play a total of three times for each higher team, including those in the same division, than the one in which he was first registered, but on playing a fourth time in any of the higher teams he shall be deemed to be tied to the team in which he has played on the fourth occasion for the rest of the season. A tied player can still play for a higher team than the one he is now tied to.
- i) Any team which includes a player who is not validly registered, or who is disqualified from playing for that team, shall lose the offending board and all boards below, but player scores will be retained for grading purposes.'

6. MATCH PROCEDURE

- a) Before the commencement of a match the captains of the respective teams shall exchange lists of eligible players (six in Divisions 1 & 2, or five in Divisions 3, or four in Div. 4); in order of playing strength [*] whether or not the players are present. Should a team play any player deliberately out of order they shall lose the offending board and all boards below and in addition two points from the league table. The Records Secretary may query the registration of a team's board order. If a captain be aware that any player(s) in his team will be defaulting, then the default(s) will be placed on the bottom board(s).

*[*For this purpose, a grading difference of up to 10 points will be regarded as acceptable]*

- b) The away team shall have the WHITE pieces on the odd boards.
- c) Play in all match games must start at either 7.15 or 7.30 pm and each club must state in the league information sheet which they use for home matches. A continuous period of at least 3 hours must be allowed for the match.
- d) Each club/team must separately make the result of the match known to the Records Secretary within SEVEN days of the date on which the match was played. If a match result is not received within SEVEN days, then on the first offence the club is warned, and on each subsequent offence a team league point is deducted.
- e) Both players in every game shall keep an accurate record of the game using a recognised system of notation.

7. GAMES IN DEFAULT

- a) A game shall be scored to each player for whom no eligible opponent is provided. Any club failing to keep an appointment shall lose the match by default.
- b) No game shall be claimed by default until the defaulting player's time has lapsed.

- c) Any club winning a match by default shall send in a match card to claim the match within FIVE days. Failure to do this will result in a double default. The defaulting team should also notify the Records Secretary at the same time.

8. ADJOURNMENTS

All games will be finished in one session of play with no adjournments.

9. ADJUDICATIONS

All games will be finished in one session of play with no adjudications.

Procedure for resolving disputes in Quick Play finishes (the 2-minute rule) are now detailed in Rule 14.

10. CHAMPIONS, PROMOTION, RELEGATION and WITHDRAWAL

- a) For each division the title of Champion and the positions of i) runners-up and ii) lowest two teams, shall be decided by the total match points for the season. The winner of Division 1 shall be known as League Champions.
- b) If any team retires during the season from any division, its results shall be ignored in calculating the final positions for that division if less than half of its fixtures have been played. If half or more of its fixtures have been played, its unplayed fixtures shall be scored as won by default by its opponent(s).
- c) In the event of a tie on match points for any of these positions, the team which has defaulted no matches, or the least, shall be declared the higher.
- d) If there is still a tie, the Records Secretary will inform teams that a Play-off match is necessary to break the tie.
- e) The Champions shall be, and the runners-up of each division shall have the right to be, promoted to the next higher division for the following season. The two lowest teams in each division at the end of the season will be relegated to the next lower division for the following season.
- f) Any other promotions or relegations for the purpose of adjusting the numbers in each division, can only be made with the consent of the clubs concerned.
- g) Should any club withdraw a team from the league, that team shall be the one in the lowest division. When taking into account promotion and relegation the team dropped out shall count as one of the relegated teams.

11. PLAY-OFF MATCHES

- a) The Record Secretary will arrange the time, date, and venue for the match; and notify teams not less than two weeks in advance
- b) These matches shall be regarded as part of the playing season and only bona fide players for their respective teams will be allowed to play in them. Any player of the club who has been tied to another team during the playing season will NOT be eligible to take part in the play-off.
- c) Clocks shall be started at the time fixed for the commencement of play. The time limit will comply with Rule 13.
- d) A match referee, appointed by the Records Secretary, will be present and act as arbiter. His/her decision will be final.
- e) If the match is drawn, the following tie-break procedure(s) shall be applied, in order:
- i) The Board Count method: Each team shall add together the numbers of the boards at which it won games. The team with the lowest total shall win,
and if there is still a tie:
 - ii) The Elimination Rule: Games shall be eliminated from the match from the bottom board upwards until the respective team scores become unequal. The team then with the higher total of game points shall be the winner
 - iii) If it is still drawn the team with black on board 1 will win.

12. CHESS LAWS

All matches shall be played in accordance with the rules laid down in the authorised edition of the laws of chess published by the International Chess Federation and the tournament rules of the English Chess Federation unless otherwise provided by these rules. No persons should act in a way to disturb the players during a game.

13. USE OF CLOCKS

The use of clocks shall be compulsory, and the time limits in all WDCL competitions shall be one of the following options: (the default rate of play will be option (1)):

- (1) All moves in 80 minutes with 10 seconds per move added throughout (incremental) if sufficient digital clocks are available.
- (2) All moves in 90 minutes.

14. QUICKPLAY FINISHES Claiming a draw in the last 2 minutes when using Rule 13(2); (no arbiter present; no flag fallen). This rule does not apply when incremental time control, Rule 13(1), is being used. No claim for a draw in the last 2 minutes is allowed when using an incremental time control.

a) When a draw is claimed by a player on the basis that his opponent A) cannot win by normal means or B) has been making no effort to win by normal means, he must immediately stop the clock. This concludes the game.

b) If his opponent disagrees with the claim, the final agreed position must be copied on an adjudication diagram or score sheet by each player separately. In case B), the score sheet must have been completed before play ceases. The basis of the claim shall be clearly stated on the diagram and the diagram shall be headed: Position occurring in the last 2 minutes of a Quickplay Finish.

c) Claims shall be made by each player separately. These claims shall be sent to, and be handled by, the records secretary. Claims must arrive within seven days of the match, otherwise the other side receives their "claim". Should neither sides position not arrive within SEVEN days, BOTH shall lose.

d) In all cases of positions sent for a ruling, no money shall be sent with the positions. A claim will be made at the end of the season by the treasurer for all outstanding monies. A fee £4 is payable by the side whose claim fails.

e) The Records Secretary shall inform each concerned club's secretary of the results in writing.

f) Either club may appeal the ruling in writing within SEVEN days of the decision, enclosing a deposit of £10.00 to be returned if the appeal succeeds. If based on the chess position, grounds for appeal should include chess analysis. The Records Secretary must inform the opposing club an appeal has been made. Appeals shall be decided by a county adjudicator whose decision shall be final.

15. CONDUCT OF PLAYERS

a) Smoking will be banned both at the board and in the immediate playing area. Each club must define its 'playing area' and home team captains must inform visiting teams of its boundaries.

b) Mobile phones must be turned off during play. If a player's phone rings, he should be asked to switch it off and a warning given. If it rings again the player automatically loses the game.

16. DISPUTES

In the event of any dispute between clubs the matter shall be referred to the rules and disputes sub-committee in accordance with the league constitution.

17. GRADING OF RESULTS:-

a) Individual chess game results, including those played in both league and cup competitions, are referred to the ECF for grading. Games won in default are not referred.

b) Games decided by completed adjudication procedure (Rule 13) shall be referred for grading.

18. COMPETITION RULES

These rules cancel and replace all previous competition rules of the league and are dated 2019.

[Please note that the Laws of Chess have been revised by F.I.D.E. and came into effect as from 1st Jan 2018. All members are advised to make themselves familiar with them. In general, they do not seem to require any immediate changes to the WDCL's current rules. See: <https://www.fide.com/fide/handbook.html?id=208&view=article>
