

SHROPSHIRE CHESS ASSOCIATION  
2020 Special General Meeting

President: Francis Best.

To all officers and members of the Shropshire Chess Association:

Notice is hereby given that a Virtual Special General Meeting will be held using Zoom on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> September at 7.30 p.m.

We are deliberately keeping the Agenda as short as possible.

**AGENDA**

1. President's Report. Francis Best
  
2. Proposal – Confirmation of Rules for Online Competition Chris Lewis
  
3. Election of new President of the Shropshire Chess Association.

Francis is standing down. Matthew Clark has agreed to stand for election as President (nominated by Nathanael Paul and seconded by Dennis Bonner).

If anyone else wishes to stand for President, please could they inform Francis and Matthew (in my position as General Secretary) and please could they name a proposer and seconder.

4. Any other Business.

*(Please see following pages for proposed rules for online competition)*

## SHROPSHIRE CHESS ASSOCIATION : ONLINE LEAGUE RULES

1. All games must be played online. Players must use the Lichess Platform. Players must always play a rated match to ensure anti-cheating software is activated.

2. All games must be played according to the laws of chess as published in '[The Official Laws of Chess](#)' updated by FIDE on 1 January 2018.

3. If a player disconnects during the match, that player should attempt to reconnect as soon as possible. If that player is unable to reconnect they will lose the match unless both players agree to finish the match on another night.

4. No player may act as or exercise the powers of an arbiter. Any disputes arising from the interpretation or application of the laws of chess or the league rules will be resolved by the League Controller. Appeals against the League Controller's decisions must be sent in writing to the General Secretary within 14 days. The matter will be referred to a Rules and Disputes Committee, consisting of the President, the General Secretary, the Treasurer and one other. If one or more of these officers is a party to the dispute, the President may appoint replacements acceptable to both parties. The League Controller may be invited to attend and to give advice but will not be able to vote. The Committee's decision will be final.

5. It is the responsibility of the League Controller to decide which and how many teams shall play in each division (subject to the agreement of the Council), and to publish a fixture list before the start of each season. The League Controller has discretion (after due consultation) to specify the number of times each team shall play each other team in a division. In the absence of specification to the contrary, each team shall play every other team twice (once home, once away).

6. Each club must register its players with the League Controller at the start of each season, before the first fixture in which they play.

Late registration may be carried out at any time during the season, as long as the information is received no later than the first match result involving the player(s). Penalties for breaches of the rule are stipulated at rule 24.

7. When registering its players with the league Controller at the start of each season, division 1 teams must nominate **3 players** whilst teams in division 2 and 3 must nominate **2 players**.

A player registered before the start of the season must be one of the nominated players where;

- that player played fewer than 4 games in the Shropshire league in the previous season and;
- that player resides outside the county

A player registered after the start of the season must play a minimum of 3 games where;

- that player played fewer than 4 games in the Shropshire league in the previous season and;
- that player resides outside the county

If there are fewer than 3 games remaining in the season a player cannot be registered where;

- that player played fewer than 4 games in the Shropshire league in the previous season and;
- that player resides outside the county

Players nominated to a higher team cannot play for a lower team. Penalties for breaches of the rule are stipulated at rule 28. Nominated players must play for their team at least three times in a season. If this proves impossible on account of unforeseen circumstances (e.g. illness), the League Controller has discretion to accept an alternative nominated player for the remainder of the season. Normally, the alternative nominated player will be expected to play for the balance of games not played by the original nominated player. Any appearances of the new nominated player for a lower team prior to acceptance by the league Controller shall be disregarded from the point of view of rule breaches specified in rule 28. A penalty of one match point per player per game to encourage registered players being a true member of the team.

### TEAMS

8. A team shall consist of **Four players in division one** and **Three players in divisions two and three**.

9. The "away" team shall have White on boards 1, 3 and 5 (if applicable).

10. A member of a club may only be nominated for one team for that club. If a player is a member of more than one club, he/she may only play for one club within a division. If a team in the second or third division uses a player who normally plays for another Shropshire club in a higher division during that season, then it

is permitted only on condition that the player has a current July EC online grade of below 1710 for Div 2 and below 1560 for Div 3.

11. Where a player does not have an ECF online grade, over the board ECF grades will be converted to four-digit online ratings using the formula  $7.5 * ECF + 700$ .

12. A reserve may be drawn from a lower team, as follows:- any players regardless of whether they are nominated or tied to one team may be used as reserves for a higher team as follows (rules 9a to 9e). Players who are not nominated to a team may also play for a lower team.

a) Players graded below 1710 can play for any of their club's teams in Division 1 without restriction, providing that the lower team, for which the player normally appears, and the higher team for which the player wishes to appear as a reserve, are not both in Division 1, in which case the restriction in sub - paragraph d will apply.

b) Players graded below 1600 can play up into any of their club's teams in Divisions 1 and 2 without restriction, providing that the lower team, for which the player normally appears, and the higher team for which the player wishes to appear as a reserve, are not both in the same Division, in which case the restriction in sub - paragraph d will apply.

c) Players graded below 1450 can play up into any of their club's teams in Division 1 and 2 without restriction.

d) Where a player is used more than three times for a higher team, then (unless sub-paragraphs a, b or c apply) he / she becomes a member of the senior team on the fourth occasion for the remainder of the season. Where a reserve wins by default the result will count as an appearance for the senior team.

e) Penalties for breaches of rule 9d are stipulated at rule 25.

A flowchart explaining player eligibility can be found [here](#).

## **MATCH DETAILS**

13. The time control for all matches shall be all moves in 45minutes plus an increment of 15 seconds per move from move 1.

14. Players must be arranged in order of playing strength according to the latest E.C.F. online grading list; except that players whose grading differs by no more than 75 points shall be regarded as interchangeable for the purposes of this rule. Penalties for breaches of this rule are specified at rule 26. Summer grades will be used for substitution purposes through the year. Ungraded players - if they have past history, the last known grade is to be used provisionally. If not, the player has the maximum flexibility subject to league controller's approval and a provisional grading will not be given if the last historic grade is older than five years.

15. Players must exchange teams via email at least 24 hours prior to the start of the match copying in the league controller (or the general secretary/president if the match involves the league controller's club). Failure to exchange teams by midnight will result in a game point penalty. Any changes to the team after this deadline must be immediately notified to both the captain and the league controller. All player's grades must be clearly indicated on the match card before the game starts. If a captain knows before start of play that the team will be incomplete, the remaining players must be declared in board order, and defaults must take place on the bottom board(s).

16. Matches must be played on the appointed date unless another date is previously agreed by the League Controller .

17. A default of a match will result in a 1 point deduction, no warnings. A team should consist of at least half the number of boards.

18. If a player suspects their opponent of cheating or a player is banned by the engine mid-match, that player should finish the game and only afterwards submit a URL of the game to the controller. The player should at no point directly accuse their opponent of cheating during or after the match. If after review, the controller concurs cheating has occurred the accused player will lose the match and possibly be banned for the remainder of the season at the controller's discretion. Otherwise the result will stand. The controller will give the accused the right to make representation before ruling the match forfeit. This decision may be appealed.

19. If a player chooses to suspend the game and submit a cheating complaint and the controller decides that player's complaint is unwarranted, that player will lose the match. This decision may be appealed.

20. If a player accuses 3 separate opponents of cheating throughout the season and the controller clears the accused on all occasions, at the controller's discretion the accuser may be banned for the remainder of the season. This decision may be appealed.

#### **START OF PLAY**

21. Matches should start at 7.30 pm (or at a time agreed by both captains).

22. If a player fails to start play within 30 minutes of the agreed start of play, he / she shall lose by default; if neither player is present within 30 minutes of start of play, that board is declared void.

23. Another player may be substituted for an absent player at any time during the first 30 minutes. If such a substitution breaches rule 12, it is subject to the agreement of the opposing captain, and it must be clearly indicated on the match card.

#### **END OF PLAY**

24. The outcome of games will be decided according to 'The Official Laws of Chess'.

#### **RESULTS**

25. Results must be sent to the League Controller within eight days of the match date. It is the responsibility of the home team captain to forward the result. If no result is notified within eight days, the League Controller will issue a warning to the home team. Penalties for breaches of the rule are specified at rule 27.

26. For each match win, two points will be awarded; for a drawn match, one point. If, at the end of the season, two or more teams are tied, then the team with the higher number of game points will be adjudged the higher team. If there is still a tie, then the team with the higher head to head board count will be adjudged the higher team. If there is still a tie a play-off match, or matches, will be organised by the league controller. If the play-off ends in a drawn match, then board count will be used to decide the winner. If all five games end in draws, then the team with black on board 1 will be named the winner. To decide colours the two team captains will conduct a coin toss on the night of the match and in the presence of a neutral party i.e. the league controller.

27. All results will be submitted for ECF online rating.

28. At the end of the season the top 2 teams in the lower divisions will be promoted, and the bottom 2 teams in the higher divisions will be relegated, subject to the provisions of rule 3.

#### **PENALTIES**

29. Where rule 4 is breached:

- a) all results achieved by the player in the league before registration will be treated as losses by default for match purposes.
- b) The team will be penalised one match point for each affected match.

30. Where rule 9 is breached:

- a) all results achieved by the reserve following their fourth appearance for the senior team will be treated as losses by default for match purposes.
- b) The team will be penalised one match point for each affected match.

31. Where rule 12 is breached:

- a) a player out of order will be deemed to have lost by default,

- b) the minimum number of players will be defaulted in order to achieve an acceptable playing order,
- c) the team will then be penalised by one match point.

32. Where rule 21 is breached any failure to notify a match result (subsequent to the first warning) will incur the loss of a match point.

33. Where rule 5 is breached:

a) all results achieved by the player for the lower team will be treated as losses by default for match purposes.

b) The team will be penalised one match point for each affected match.

34. These and any other penalties deemed necessary will be imposed by the League Controller who will inform the teams involved.

35. In exceptional circumstances the League Controller may waive penalties, providing the club/team writes in advance to the League Controller with a full explanation of the facts and providing the case is accepted.

# **Proposed New Rules - Online Chess League** **by Christopher Lewis, Matthew Clark, Adrian Zdanowski**

Following a survey of all clubs, there appears to be sufficient interest to hold a scaled down online-league. The most favoured format appears to be a traditional model of long-play chess.

## **Online League 2020-21**

*Proposal 1. Due to COVID-19 the 2020-21 season should be held online. Clubs will field teams of x (see below) and will be played with a standard time control of y (see below)*

If proposal 1 is passed please refer to the full proposed online rules. These rules use the current Shropshire rules as a template but where there has been deviation, these deviations are put to a vote below.

## **Divisions/Board**

*Rule 8. A team shall consist of Four players in division one and Three players in divisions two and three.*

*Rule 7. When registered its players with the league Controller at the start of each season, division 1 teams must nominate 3 players whilst teams in division 2 and 3 must nominate 2 players.*

Commentary:

From the survey the interest in an online league varies between clubs but it is clear that not all players are interested in playing online and we may even struggle to get 50% turnout. We therefore have a choice of reducing the number of boards or reducing the number of divisions. I propose reducing the number of boards as many division 3 players will be discouraged from playing if there are only 2 divisions, even when their opponent strengths are the same the perception is that the games are harder.

## **Time Control**

*Rule 13. The time control for all matches shall be all moves in 45minutes plus an increment of 15 seconds per move from move 1.*

Commentary:

From the survey this time control has a large majority support. It's used in the 4NCL and I would say it's been very successful.

## **Platform**

*Rule 1. Players must use the Lichess Platform. Players must always play a rated match to ensure anti-cheating software is activated.*

Commentary:

The past year I've played competitive chess on both Lichess and Chess.com and I've found Lichess to be far superior. It allows for easier observation of the other games in the match and it is far simpler to issue challenges.

## **Disconnects**

*Rule 3. If a player disconnects during the match, that player should attempt to reconnect as soon as possible. If that player is unable to reconnect they will lose the match unless both players agree to finish the match on another night.*

Commentary:

This rule may seem a little harsh but if 1 player is very short on time in a complicated position, a deliberate disconnect could allow a position to be properly analysed and thus prove a decisive advantage.

### **Players outside the county**

*Rule 7. A player registered before the start of the season must be one of the nominated players where;*

- that player played fewer than 4 games in the Shropshire league in the previous season and;
- that player resides outside the county

*A player registered after the start of the season must play a minimum of 3 games where;*

- that player played fewer than 4 games in the Shropshire league in the previous season and;
- that player resides outside the county

*If there are fewer than 3 games remaining in the season a player cannot be registered where;*

- that player played fewer than 4 games in the Shropshire league in the previous season and;
- that player resides outside the county

Commentary:

This rule aims to strike the right balance between expanding the pool of Shropshire players whilst preventing 1-off guests from swinging key match results.

### **Nominated Players - 50% rule**

*Rule 7. Removed requirement for nominated players in division 1 to play 50% of matches.*

Commentary:

It is proposed that this rule is temporarily suspended this season as we need to be doing everything we can to encourage as many teams and players as possible

### **Grading**

*Rule 10. If a team in the second or third division uses a player who normally plays for another Shropshire club in a higher division during that season, then it is permitted only on condition that the player has a current July EC online grade of below 1710 for Div 2 and below 1560 for Div 3.*

*Rule 11. Where a player does not have an ECF online grade, over the board ECF grades will be converted to four-digit online ratings using the formula  $7.5 * ECF + 700$ .*

*Rule 12 - ECF grading boundaries have been converted to 4 digit ECF online grades*

*Rule 28. All results will be submitted for ECF online rating.*

Commentary:

The ECF have been grading online games throughout the lockdown. Those that have played in the 4NCL already have an ECF online grading but the majority of players will need to have their grades converted.

<https://englishchessonline.org.uk/monthly-ratings/>

### **Exchange of Team Lists**

*Rule 15. Players must exchange teams via email at least 24 hours prior to the start of the match copying in the league controller (or the general secretary/president if the match involves the league controller's club). Failure to exchange teams by midnight will result in a game point penalty. Any changes to the team after this deadline must be immediately notified to both the captain and the league controller.*

Commentary:

Most team lists during online matches are sent to the league controller. However with so many different games on different nights of the week this puts a lot of pressure on the league

controller to send out the teams within the 24 hours. By insisting the controller is copied in, this reduces disputes if 1 team claims the other did not submit their team list.

The potential downside of this rule is that players are given the opportunity to prepare for their opponents. The deadline for team lists could be less time (1hour?) but then there are potential co-ordination problems.

There will be a potential advantage of disclosing your team list second. For fairness, the rule could be that the home team releases their list first?

### **Anti-Cheating Procedure**

*Rule 19. If a player suspects their opponent of cheating or a player is banned by the engine mid-match, that player should finish the game and only afterwards submit a URL of the game to the controller. The player should at no point directly accuse their opponent of cheating during or after the match. If after review, the controller concurs cheating has occurred the accused player will lose the match and possibly be banned for the remainder of the season at the controllers discretion. Otherwise the result will stand. The controller will give the accused the right to make representation before ruling the match forfeit. This decision may be appealed.*

*Rule 20. If a player chooses to suspend the game and submit a cheating complaint and the controller decides that player's complaint is unwarranted, that player will lose the match. This decision may be appealed.*

*Rule 21. If a player accuses 3 separate opponents of cheating throughout the season and the controller clears the accused on all occasions, at the controllers discretion the accuser may be banned for the remainder of the season. This decision may be appealed.*

Commentary:

Unfortunately experience from the 4NCL shows that claims of cheating did occur throughout the competition. To ensure the integrity plus the image of integrity of the leagues robust anti-cheating procedures need to be put in place that are fair to everyone. However, given the animosity an accusation of cheating can cause between players these rules try to keep any accusation confidential until the situation has been assessed by the league controller. I envision the league controller reviewing the game with the aid of an engine and submitting a report to Lichess who can assess the game using their software.

### **Default Time**

*Rule 23. If a player fails to start play within 30 minutes of the agreed start of play, he / she shall lose by default; if neither player is present within 30 minutes of start of play, that board is declared void.*

*Rule 24. Another player may be substituted for an absent player at any time during the first 30 minutes.*

Commentary:

Given the nature of online chess, unavoidable missed games including car breakdowns etc. aren't likely to occur and anyone forgetting their match can be at the board in minutes. Therefore the 1 hour default time seems excessive.

***A few further proposals not in the rules themselves:***

### **League Trophy**

*Proposal 2. The winner of each Shropshire division will be awarded the league trophies the same as any other year.*

Commentary:

From my discussions around a possible online league I was surprised that there was resistance to awarding the league trophies for an online season with players suggesting a separate trophy being purchased. I view this as a waste of Shropshire resources as hopefully the league will only be held online one year. I am very keen to award the trophy to ensure maximum competition.

### **Online League Controller**

*Proposal 3. For the avoidance of doubt, Adrian Zdanowski is appointed the online league controller.*

### **Freeze the Table**

*Proposal 4. The first online season will allocate teams to divisions based on numbers and playing strength and will take no account of the tables at the end of the prior season. If the 2021-22 season goes back to over the board play, the divisions for this season will use the suspended league positions from 2019-20.*

### **Match Nights**

*Proposal 5. The league controller will endeavour to ensure clubs from the same division will play their matches on the same night (whilst still having full discretion when setting the fixtures). The day of the week of this match night will vary.*

Commentary:

It will increase the enjoyment of everyone if multiple matches take place on a single night as then players can observe those matches during and after their own games.

