Herts Chess Online – Competition Rules

Format of the competition

The inaugural Herts Chess Online competition will take the form of an accelerated Swiss pairing tournament, with the four top-scoring eligible players comprising a club's team for the Open and grading-limited sections.

The competition will be a six-round Swiss with all players in one section.

Players will be seeded in order of their current ECF slowplay grade.

Players in the top quartile of grading will start the tournament with 2 points. Players in the second and third quartiles will start with 1 point. Players in the bottom quartile will start with 0 points. These points will be carried through to the end of the competition. *In effect this adds two extra rounds to the tournament; everybody starts with their expected scores after two rounds (neglecting draws, and assuming the higher-graded player will win).*

The following team scores will be calculated:

- An "Open" section where the top four scores of any players representing a club are counted;
- A "Major" section where the top four scores of any players representing a club, graded in the second quartile or below, are counted;
- A "Minor" section where the top four scores of any players representing a club, graded in the third quartile or below, are counted;

A player's score may count for more than one section.

Players affiliated to clubs with fewer than 4 representatives will be assigned to a "Lonely Herts" team for the purposes of this competition. *The objective is to provide chess for anyone who wants it.*

Players may request as many byes as they wish. The first two byes will score 0.5 points each, others will score 0 points. If a player knows in advance they cannot play in any given round, it is better to request a bye so that they are not included in the pairing for that round (and their opponent does not get a game).

Last-minute changes in circumstances may force a player to request a default in advance (by informing his opponent if possible, and the organiser(s)). The player requesting a default will score 0, and the opponent will score 1 point.

If a player simply fails to show up for a game, without reasonable effort to alert the opponent (and the organisers), an additional 0.5 point penalty will be applied for the purposes of team scores (but not for pairing the next round)

A second "no-show" without requesting either a bye or a default in advance will lead to disqualification of that player.

The objective of this competition is to ensure that everybody who wishes to play can do so. It is simple courtesy to request a bye if a player knows in advance they will be unavailable, or to make reasonable efforts to alert the opponent in the case of short-term changes in circumstances which make playing the game impossible.

Players are expected to take personal responsibility to sure smooth running and an enjoyable event for all.

Playing games

All games will be played using the Lichess server (www.lichess.org).

Games will commence on alternate Tuesdays at 7.30pm.

By mutual agreement between players, games may commence earlier or later than this time, but the date may not be changed.

The rate of play will be all moves in 45 minutes, plus 15 seconds per move. *It is unlikely that a game starting at 7.30pm will continue beyond 9.30pm.*

The player with the White pieces should challenge the opponent *(although there is nothing to stop the Black player doing so if they wish).*

When issuing or accepting a challenge, it is both player's responsibility to ensure that:

- The rate of play has been set correctly;
- The colours have been set correctly;
- The game will be "rated" by Lichess *(this will prevent random onlookers "heckling" during the game, and also ensures the Lichess anti-cheating algorithms will be active).*

Organisational issues

The fixtures will be on the following dates:

- Tuesday 29 September
- Tuesday 12 October
- Tuesday 27 October
- Tuesday 10 November
- Tuesday 24 November
- Tuesday 8 December

These dates have been chosen to avoid the 4NCL online fixtures.

A request for a bye must be received no later that 7pm on the Friday before the round *(requests received later than this may be successful but do not count on it; once the pairings are issued they will be treated as default requests instead).*

Pairings will be issued as soon as possible after 7pm on Friday before the round is due:

- By email to all players who have provided email contact details; this pairing will include lichess user name – essential for making challenges – and contact details where authorised;
- On the HCA website www.hertschess.com; this pairing will only include the lichess user name (so spectators can watch the games – but not comment).

Players will be responsible for contacting one-another in the event of problems with the game (e.g. late arrival / no-show, loss of internet connection, etc).

The organiser(s) will <u>not</u> be responsible for solving problems on the night, nor for re-pairing those players left without a game due to no-shows.

Players do not need to contact the organiser(s) to provide the result of the game, unless it has not been played or completed. For normal games, the result can be determined from the Lichess website. *The organiser(s) would appreciate an uncluttered email inbox.*

Results, team standings etc will be issued as soon as possible after the round is complete:

- By email to all players who have provided email contact details;
- On the HCA website www.hertschess.com.

Miscellaneous

It is not necessary to have ECF membership in order to play in this competition *(although all players are encouraged to support the ECF, which is reliant on membership income to survive)*.

Games will not be graded (for ECF online grading). *This eliminates the need for ECF membership, and also hopefully reduces the incentive for cheating*.

Cheating – Lichess has sophisticated algorithms for detecting probable cheating – and they work! Don't be tempted.

Appeals etc will be handled by the HCA Rules Committee.