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1 GENERAL

- 1.1 Games shall be conducted according to the FIDE Laws of Chess unless specified otherwise by these Rules.
- 1.2 Only members of the Association may participate in its competitions. Players in inter-club competitions must be bona-fide members of the clubs they represent.
- 1.3 A player may choose to play for any club in a competition in a season but once having played for that club shall be restricted to that club for that season. (This applies to each competition separately – a player may represent one club in the League, another in the KO competitions, and so on.)
- 1.4 ‘Debtor Players’ and members of a ‘Debtor Club’ who are not ECF Members shall be ineligible to participate in any HCA competitions and County Teams.
- 1.5 If any ineligible player competes in an HCA competition, his/her score shall be recorded as a ‘Default’ although the game will be submitted for grading.

- 1.6 All competition winners shall hold the trophy for one year.
- 1.7 All officers of the HCA and all officers of clubs, their team captains and players participating in the competitions shall abide by the Closed County Competition Rules.
- 1.8 No relaxation of the Closed County Competition Rules shall be granted retrospectively.

2 COMPETITION RULES

This section applies to all competitions, including the league.

- 2.1 Teams shall play in the order of their current playing strength.
- 2.2 The results of any League match, Knock-Out Competition, resumed game or adjudication shall be submitted to the League Secretary, or tournament controller, within 7 days of the event (or the third Friday in June, whichever is soonest). This is normally achieved by recording the results on the HCA Results & Grading Website, <http://www.e2-e4.co.uk/chess-results/results.htm>. Failure to do so may, at the League Secretary's or tournament controller's discretion, result in a forfeit of the match. If no match result is submitted then both teams may be defaulted.
- 2.3.1 Contrary to the FIDE Laws of Chess, mobile phones will be allowed into the playing area. However, it is expressly forbidden for a mobile phone or other electronic device to be used in a way that provides the player with information that may assist him/her in his/her game. Any player found to be using a mobile phone or electronic device in such a manner shall forfeit the game, and the matter shall be reported to the League Secretary or tournament controller.
- 2.3.2 Mobile phones within the playing area should be switched off or in silent mode. Any player who allows a mobile phone to ring or emit noise that causes distraction on more than one occasion during the game shall forfeit the game.
- 2.3.3 In exceptional circumstances it may be permitted for a player to register with the match captains that they are "on call". Nevertheless, any incoming call must not be allowed to distract an opponent, and any conversation with a third party must take place outside the playing area.

3 LEAGUE RULES

This section applies to the 'HCA League' only.

3.1 League Structure, Promotion, Relegation

- 3.1.1 The inter-club league shall be organised into divisions with a one-up/one-down promotion and relegation scheme at the end of each season.
- 3.1.2 If there is an imbalance in the numbers of teams in the divisions, the League Secretary has the authority to move teams between divisions and change the number of divisions.
- 3.1.3 If the League Secretary wishes to alter the League structure, those teams directly affected by the proposed changes must be consulted.
- 3.1.4 Clubs entering more than one team shall number them consecutively. The strongest team

shall be designated '1', the next strongest '2', and so on.

3.1.5 The number of players in each team shall be 5.

3.1.6 If there is a tie on match points in a division affecting promotion or relegation the winner shall be the team with the highest game difference (games won minus games lost). If the game difference is equal, the winner shall be the team with the highest game-point total (games for). Where teams still remain equal the following order of criteria shall be applied until a result is obtained:

a) teams shall be placed in ascending order of their board-count scores; 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

b) teams shall be placed according to board elimination

c) a single play-off match between the teams concerned shall take place: no new player nominations or registrations shall be permitted for such matches

d) if there is a tie in a play-off, the winner shall be the team with the lower board-count (total of board numbers of won games): if there is still a tie, the board-elimination Rule shall apply, starting from the bottom board; and if all games are drawn, the outcome shall be decided by lot.

3.1.7 The match results of a team withdrawing from the league during the playing season shall be included in determining promotion and relegation at the end of the season as follows:

a) if at least one match against each other team has been played, the results of the first such fixture played shall count; defaulted games shall not count

b) if the withdrawing team has not played all other teams once, none of their results shall count.

3.2 Admission of a New Team

3.2.1 A new team seeking entry to the league must apply through the League Secretary who shall:

a) advise concerning the information (players' names, grades, etc) required

b) communicate with other clubs as appropriate

c) advise all clubs of the result of the application.

3.3 Fixture List

3.3.1 Club Secretaries will be invited by the League Secretary, typically around the time of the AGM in July, to advise concerning the teams and players expected to participate in the next league season. Failure to respond by the stipulated deadline risks omission from the Fixture List.

3.3.2 A Fixture List shall be circulated within a month of the start of the new season.

3.3.3 The Fixture List may be amended and then recirculated as a result of feedback provided by clubs.

3.3.4 Matches shall normally be played on the night specified in the Fixture List. If a club is unable or unwilling to play the match on the specified date, a postponement must be sought following the procedures in Section 3.4.

3.4 Postponements

3.4.1 Postponement of a match is permitted by agreement of both team captains. If one captain requests a postponement and the other refuses, the match must be played on the scheduled date.

3.4.2 Exceptionally, if a team is unable to play on the specified date through circumstances beyond its control, the match may be postponed. An example of "exceptional circumstances" is adverse weather (e.g. snow/fog/ice), when, in particular, the AA (www.theAA.com) advises against travelling unless absolutely necessary.

Note: Non-availability of players does not constitute "exceptional circumstances".

3.4.3 In the case of a postponement, the League Secretary shall be notified by each team captain no more than 7 days after the original match date, and notified of the rearranged date within 21 days of the original match date. It is the responsibility of the home team to propose at least two dates on which to play the rearranged match. These proposed dates must not coincide with (a) a Bank Holiday or weekend, or (b) a Closed Competition League Fixture of the away team. The away team must be given at least 7 days notice before the end of the season (the third Friday in June). Failure of the home team to propose at least two dates shall result in a forfeit of the match. Failure of the away team to agree to play the rearranged match on one of the proposed dates shall result in forfeit of the match.

3.4.4 If a League match is defaulted by a team, then, unless the default has been caused by exceptional circumstances, that team shall be awarded no match or game points in respect of that match. Additionally, at the start of the next season the defaulting team shall have deducted match points equivalent to a win and 5 game points. The non-defaulting team shall in the event of default be awarded match points equivalent to a won match and shall at the end of the season be awarded game points equal to the average number of game points scored per match played by that team during that season. That number shall be rounded up to the nearest half point.

3.5 Player Eligibility & Nomination

3.5.1 Prior to the first match of the season, all clubs must nominate to the League Secretary at least five players for each of their teams. Players must be nominated for teams in order of current playing strength. If a new player joins a club after the start of the season, he must be nominated for an appropriate team before his first match.

3.5.2 A difference of 15 ECF grading points or less is consistent with "order of current playing strength".

3.5.3 A player may only play for his/her nominated team or any stronger (lower-numbered) team during the season. If the player plays for a stronger team or teams 5 times, he/she is automatically renominated to the next strongest team, i.e. he/she can no longer play in his/her original team.

3.5.4 The penalty for a team that contravenes 3.5.1 – 3.5.3 above shall be the default of the game played by the ineligible player and the deduction of an additional game point for each offence from the score of the offending team.

3.5.5 A player may also be voluntarily renominated to a higher-numbered team by informing the League Secretary before his/her next game. Each player is restricted to at most one voluntary renomination per season.

3.6 Match Conditions

- 3.6.1 Matches shall be started no later than 19.45 hours. If the home team has not provided full playing facilities by 19.45 hours, the clocks of the home team shall be advanced by the amount of the delay beyond 19.45 hours. If the match cannot be started before 20.15 hours the match shall be scored to the visiting team by default.
- 3.6.2 Before the time agreed for play to begin, the captains (or their deputies) shall exchange team lists and agree the time for cessation of play. If the rate of play in 3.7.1 or 3.7.3 is used and there is no any other agreement between the captains, the time for cessation of play shall be 2 hours 40 minutes after the commencement. Where circumstances (such as the closing-time of the venue and travelling arrangements) permit, the captains should agree a longer playing session. 15 minutes shall be allowed between the cessation of play and the closure of the venue, for moves to be sealed and adjournment arrangements to be settled.
- 3.6.3 The away team has White on odd boards. If a captain (or deputy) is not present by the time agreed for play to begin, the opposing captain has the choice of time controls as per Rules 3.7.1 - 3.7.4. If neither captain (nor deputy) is present by the agreed start-time, the first to arrive gets choice of time controls.
- 3.6.4 Clocks for the players having the move shall be started at the time fixed for commencement of play. If one player is absent for the first hour after the commencement of play, the other player (if present) shall win the game unless a substitute has been put in before this time. If neither player is present after an hour, the game shall be scored as a loss for both players.

3.7 Rate of Play

- 3.7.1 The rate of play shall by default be 35 moves in one-and-a-quarter (1¼) hours. After 35 moves have been made, play shall continue at 7 moves each 15 minutes until the end of the playing session.
- 3.7.2 Alternatively, but only if both captains (or their deputies) agree, a rate of play of all moves in half the playing session may be used. The time available for each player's moves under this Rule shall not be less than 80 minutes.
- 3.7.3 Alternatively, but only if both captains (or their deputies) agree, a rate of play of all moves in 70 minutes, plus 10 added seconds per move per player may be used. (Fischer Timing).
- 3.7.4 If the normal rate of play (Rule 3.7.1) is being used for the match, individual players may agree with their opponents to use the rate of play in Rule 3.7.2 or 3.7.3 instead. Players using either of these alternatives may play beyond the time for cessation of play, agreed by the captains for the other boards, where circumstances (such as the closing-time of the venue and travelling arrangements) permit. Conversely, if the match is being played using the time control in Rule 3.7.2, individual players may agree to use the rate in Rule 3.7.1 instead.
- 3.7.5 All matches played after the end of May must be played to a finish using the time control in Rule 3.7.2. This Rule takes precedence over Rule 3.7.3 and 3.7.4.

3.8 Procedure at End of Playing Session

- 3.8.1 At the scheduled finish-time a sealed move must be made before the clocks are stopped (Quickplay finishes excepted). The player making the sealed move must comply with the next 15 minute time control (e.g. at move 42, 49, 56...)

- 3.8.2 The procedure for sealing a move is as follows: the player having the move must record the position on a score sheet, write the move in unambiguous notation on that score sheet, put the score sheet in an envelope, seal the envelope and then stop the clocks. Until the player has stopped the clocks, that player retains the right to change the sealed move. If the player makes a move on the chessboard, this same move must be written on the score sheet as the sealed move. The sealed move must be completed at least five minutes before the scheduled closure of the match venue.
- 3.8.3 Upon the envelope shall be indicated:-
- a) the names of the players,
 - b) the position immediately before the sealed move,
 - c) the time used by each player,
 - d) the name of the player who has sealed the move,
 - e) the number of moves made.
- 3.8.4 The move shall be sealed in an envelope signed by both players. The player who sealed the move shall keep the envelope and is responsible for producing it when the game is resumed (3.11.1). There must be no amendment to the sealed move.
- 3.8.5 Where Fischer Timing is in operation (3.7.3) whichever team calls for play to cease, after 2 hours 40 minutes (3.6.2), then their player shall make the final move on the board and the game shall be sent for adjudication (3.12).

3.9 Adjournment

- 3.9.1 Once clocks have been stopped, the game is adjourned and the players shall agree which one of the following methods to obtain a result will apply. This agreement shall be made on the night of play and before the players leave the venue:
- a) by agreement between the players
 - b) by agreement between the match captains
 - c) by either player electing to play on
 - d) by adjudication.
- 3.9.2 If both players opt for adjudication the result is temporarily recorded as 'A' and the game is submitted for adjudication. Games for adjudication shall be sent to the Adjudication Secretary within 21 days of the adjournment.
- 3.9.3 If one player has elected to play on the result is temporarily recorded as 'P'.

3.10 Agreement of Resumption Dates

- 3.10.1 In the absence of an agreed result of the game on the night, each player is entitled to insist on the game being played on. The player at home for the first session must decide first whether or not to play on. If he/she decides to do so he/she must travel to the home venue of his/her opponent, who thus becomes 'the host' for the resumption, and the home player 'the guest'. If the home player indicates that he/she favours adjudication, then the away player has the opportunity to enforce the play-on. A player enforcing play-on must travel and becomes 'the guest', and the home player 'the host'.
- 3.10.2 Within 7 days of the first session the host player shall offer the guest player a minimum of three dates for the resumption that fall within 35 days of the date of the match. The dates should be from Monday to Friday and at least one of them should be the club night of one of

the players. These offered dates must avoid the guest player's scheduled HCA matches (defined as matches for the opponent's nominated team, periods allocated to HCA Closed Competition Events), the Christmas period and other bank holidays. Failure to offer three dates within the deadline without valid reason shall result in an automatic default. The players shall inform the League Secretary within 10 days of the adjournment of the agreement reached.

- 3.10.3 In the case where the guest player cannot play on any of the dates offered he/she shall immediately make a counter offer of three dates (copied to the League Secretary and explaining his problem) that are within 42 days of the initial session, subject to the constraints given in 3.10.2 above. He remains the guest player and still has to travel. The discussion period is then extended to 14 days. Both players shall inform the League Secretary of the agreed date within 17 days of the initial session. Failure to offer three dates within the deadline without valid reason shall result in an automatic default.
- 3.10.4 If only one player informs the League Secretary of the agreement reached, that instruction prevails; if neither player complies, the result will be recorded as "game double-default".
- 3.10.5 The date can subsequently be changed by the agreement of both players, provided that the new date falls within 35 days of the date of the match and the League Secretary is notified before the original date.
- 3.10.6 If, without good reason, a player fails to play on the resumption date agreed he/she shall lose the game. If the game cannot be played on the agreed resumption date for reasons beyond the control of one or both players, e.g. illness or bad weather, both players shall immediately inform the League Secretary and in good faith endeavour to resolve the problem.
- 3.10.7 If players cannot reach agreement on a resumption date the League Secretary is empowered to intervene. The League Secretary has the authority to:
 - a) encourage the players to investigate alternative dates at alternative club venues
 - b) grant time extensions
 - c) submit the game for adjudication – where he believes neither player is to blame
 - d) declare that a player has lost – if he believes that the player is being obstructive
 - e) double-default – if he believes both players are being obstructive.

3.11 The Resumption

- 3.11.1 The host player shall be responsible for providing equipment. The time for resumption shall be 19.45 hours unless otherwise agreed by the players. The player who kept the envelope containing the sealed move (3.8.4) is responsible for making it available.
- 3.11.2 When the game is resumed, the position immediately before the sealed move shall be set up on the chessboard, and the time used by each player when the game was adjourned shall be indicated on the clocks. The envelope shall be opened only when both players are present. The sealed move shall be made on the board, and the clock of the player having the move shall be started. Should either player not be present at the time agreed for resumption then his/her clock shall be started and the sealed move only played on his/her arrival.
- 3.11.3 If the sealed move is found to be illegal or ambiguous, the player sealing the move shall lose the game. If the envelope has been lost or is not intact, the player responsible for keeping the envelope shall lose the game.
- 3.11.4 In the second session there shall be a single time control after 63 moves at 2¼ hours total

time from the start of the game each, after which both clocks shall be set back 15 minutes for the completion of the game (Quickplay finish). NB the (first) time control for the second session is at move 63 whether or not intermediate time controls were played during the first session (thus the time controls at moves 42, 49 and 56 do not apply for the second session). ECF Quickplay Finish Rules shall apply after move 63.

3.12 Adjudication

- 3.12.1 A position for adjudication shall be sent within 21 days of the match (or the second Friday in June, whichever is soonest) to the Adjudication Secretary together with analysis if so desired. If the Secretary only receives one claim, the Secretary has the discretion to accept that claim.
- 3.12.2 There shall be no right of appeal against the result of adjudication.
- 3.12.3 The club of the losing player shall pay the adjudication fee (currently £6).

4 OTHER COMPETITIONS

This section applies to the following competitions only

4.1 Inter-Club Under-120 League

- 4.1.1 The number of players in each team shall be 4.
- 4.1.2 Should the home team have sufficient digital clocks then the default rate of play shall be Fischer Timing, all moves in 70 mins plus 10 added seconds per move per player.
- 4.1.3 In the absence of sufficient digital clocks, all moves shall be played within at least 80 minutes per player.

4.2 Inter-Club Knock-Out Competitions

- 4.2.1 Russell Trophy A competition for teams of 6 players with no grade limit. The winner of this competition shall hold the Russell Trophy.
- 4.2.2 Sharp Trophy A competition for teams of 6 players graded less than 160. The winner of this competition shall hold the Sharp Trophy.
- 4.2.3 U140 Cup A competition for teams of 5 players graded less than 140. The winner of this competition shall hold the U140 Cup.
- 4.2.4 U120 Cup A competition for teams of 4 players graded less than 120. The winner of this competition shall hold the U120 Cup.
- 4.2.5 Clubs may only enter one team for each competition.
- 4.2.6 If there is a tie, the winner shall be the team with the lower board count (total of board numbers of won games). If there is still a tie, the elimination rule shall apply, starting from the bottom board. If all games are drawn, the match shall be replayed.
- 4.2.7 All moves shall be played in 80 minutes minimum.
- 4.2.8 Alternatively, but only if both captains (or their deputies) agree, a rate of play of all moves in 70 minutes, plus 10 added seconds per move per player (Fischer Timing). Games should be played to a finish.

4.3 Individual County Championships

- 4.3.1 The winners of the county individual Open, Major and Minor tournaments shall receive respectively the Capel, Burn and Bunce Cups.
- 4.3.2 The winner of the Capel Cup, as County Champion, shall be nominated to play as Hertfordshire representative in the Southern Counties Chess Union individual championships for the following season. If the Capel Cup winner does not wish to be nominated, the runner-up shall be nominated, or, if neither player wishes to be nominated, the nomination shall be at the discretion of the Executive Committee. If the nominated player is the County Champion then the player's entry fee shall be paid by the Association.

4.4 Inter-Club Team Rapidplay Tournament (Old Puller Cup)

- 4.4.1 The rate of play shall be all moves in 30 minutes (ECF Rapidplay Rules apply).

5 Rules Committee

- 5.1 The Rules Committee shall consist of at least three Members of the Association.
- 5.2 The role of the Rules Committee is to:
 - a) handle requests for relaxation of the Rules (but see 1.8)
 - b) investigate complaints or Rule infringement
 - c) deal with disputes between clubs over these Rules
 - d) recommend amendments to the Rules.
- 5.3 Petitions to the Rules Committee shall be sent to the County Secretary who shall:
 - a) acknowledge receipt
 - b) invite clubs to provide copies of their evidence, where appropriate
 - c) liaise with the Rules Committee within 21 days of the request being received: where judged appropriate, a meeting shall be convened.
- 5.4 21 days notice of a Rules petition is required.
- 5.5 The County Secretary shall send a reply to the petitioner giving the reasons for the decision reached by the Rules Committee.
- 5.6 The County Secretary shall report on the activity of the Rules Committee at Executive Committee Meetings or the AGM.
- 5.7 A club may appeal against the decision of the Rules Committee. This will be dealt with by the Executive Committee at their next Meeting or by the AGM.