

Text in red font shows rule changes proposed to the 2 September Exec meeting.

Text in blue font shows rule changes amended by the Exec meeting, and some additional tidying up.

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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 (*i.e. 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, their score shall be recorded as a 'Default' although the game will be submitted for grading. See rule 3.3.7 for the additional GP penalty.

- 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 - the league, U1600 league & knockout competitions.

2.1 Team board order

- 2.1.1 No player may have a September rating more than 100pts higher than any player in a higher (lower numbered) board. If the player has a provisional rating or is unrated then an estimated rating may be used.

2.2 Match Conditions

- 2.2.1 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.
- 2.2.2 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. This time shall be at least 2 hours 40 minutes after the commencement. 15 minutes shall be allowed between the cessation of play and the closure of the venue.
- 2.2.3 The away team has White on odd boards (*except in knock-out matches, see 4.3.4*).
- 2.2.4 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.

2.3 Rate of Play

- 2.3.1 The rate of play shall be all moves in 70 minutes, plus 10 added seconds per move per player.
- 2.3.2 Alternatively, if digital clocks are not available, 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.

2.4 Procedure at End of Playing Session

- 2.4.1 For games played using the rate of play defined in Rule 2.3.1 (*Fischer Timing*), clocks are stopped immediately by the player having the move when "time" is called.
- 2.4.2 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 adjudication (for games using the rate of play defined in Rule 2.3.1. only).

- 2.4.3 Games to be submitted for adjudication shall have the result temporarily recorded as 'A'. Games for adjudication shall be sent to the County Secretary within 21 days of the adjournment (or the second Friday in June, whichever is soonest). If the Secretary only receives one claim, the Secretary has the discretion to accept that claim.
- 2.4.4 There shall be no right of appeal against the result of adjudication.
- 2.4.5 Games played using the rate of play defined in Rule 2.3.2 will ignore the call of "time" and continue until concluded.

2.5 Notification of results

- 2.5.1 The results of any League match, Knock-Out Competition 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://chess-results.e2-e4.co.uk/>. 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.

2.6 Postponed matches

- 2.6.1 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.
- 2.6.2 Exceptionally, if a team is unable to play on the specified date through circumstances beyond its control, the match may be postponed.

Note 1. 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 2. Non-availability of players does not constitute "exceptional circumstances".

- 2.6.3 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 also 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.

2.7 Mobile phones

- 2.7.1 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 their 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.
- 2.7.2 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.
- 2.7.3 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 (and not the U16⁵⁰ and U14⁵⁰ leagues).

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, **alter the number of promotion or relegation slots** 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 The number of players in each team shall be 5.
- 3.1.5 If there is a tie on match points in a division 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.
- 3.1.6 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.
 - b) If the withdrawing team has not played all other teams once, none of their results shall count.
- 3.1.7 Clubs wishing to withdraw a team(s) shall only withdraw from the lowest division(s) excepting where the League Secretary is satisfied that there is insufficient strength to support a team(s) in a higher division(s).

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 Player Eligibility & Nomination

- 3.3.1 Clubs entering more than one team shall number them consecutively. The highest team shall be designated '1', the next highest '2', and so on.
- 3.3.2 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 accordance with rule 3.3.3.** If a new player joins a club after the start of the season, they must be nominated for an appropriate team before their first match.
- 3.3.3 No player may have a September rating more than 100pts higher than any player in a higher team. If the player has a provisional rating or is unrated then an estimated rating may be used.
- 3.3.4 A limited number of players may designated by their club as "exceptions", for whom rule 3.3.3 does not apply for player nominations (*for example to ensure a team has a captain, or sufficient drivers, or to keep family members together*). A club is limited to one "exception" per two league teams (round fractions down), i.e. 1 exception if 2-3 teams, 2 exceptions if 4-5 teams, etc. A club must give details why a player may be regarded as an "exception".
- 3.3.5 A player may only play for their current nominated team or any higher team during the season. If the player plays up 5 times for higher teams (PUT=5) then
- a) the games they played for their current team are transferred to their "Played Down" total (this is purely administrative detail);
 - b) they are automatically renominated for the lowest of the teams they played up for;
 - c) the games they played for their new nominated team are taken from their PUT and added to the number of games played for their nominated team. (This results in PUT<5)
- This procedure is followed every time a player reaches PUT=5.
- If a player is automatically renominated, this nomination does not have to comply with rule 3.3.3.
- 3.3.6 If, following an automatic or voluntary renomination, a team has less than 5 nominated players, this situation must be rectified immediately, by renominating other player(s) as necessary. Such renominations must comply with rule 3.3.3 and also 3.3.8 in the case of moving down to a lower team. A renomination to a higher team does not use up the voluntary renomination for that player. Moving to a lower team does count as voluntary, and additionally, the player must have played at least once during the current season.
- 3.3.7 The penalty for a team that contravenes 3.3.2 – 3.3.6 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 match score of the offending team.
- 3.3.8 A player may also be voluntarily renominated to a lower team by informing the League Secretary before their next game. This renomination must comply with rule 3.3.3. Any games played for the current team (before renomination) are transferred to the player's play-up total (PUT), which must not equal 5 or more as a result. Each player is restricted to at most one voluntary renomination per season.

3.4 Defaults

- 3.4.1 A defaulted game is scored as a win to the opponent. It does not count as a game played, for either player's play-up totals (see 3.3.5).
- 3.4.2 A defaulted match is one in which a team defaults 3 or more boards (i.e. they can no longer draw the match), and "exceptional circumstances" don not apply. (*If there are "exceptional circumstances, the match may be postponed, see rule 2.6*)
- 3.4.3 If a League match is defaulted by a team, the results of any games played shall count towards the match score, and any defaulted boards as in rule 3.4.1. Additionally the first match default by a

team shall incur penalties of 2 match points and 5 game points, deducted from the team's totals.
The penalty for the second match default shall be 4 match points and 10 game points.

3.4.4 If a team defaults 3 matches in a season it shall be removed from the league. (Rule 3.1.6 will apply)

4 OTHER COMPETITIONS

This section applies to the following competitions only. League rules apply unless otherwise noted below.

4.1 General

4.1.1 In grade-limited competitions the ECF Rating List September revision will determine a player's eligibility for the whole season ahead. If a player joins a club in mid-season, their September rating shall still determine their eligibility. Note that team board order is still governed by rule 2.1.1.

4.2 Inter-Club Under-1650 and Under-1450 Leagues

- 4.2.1 The Under-1650 League and Under-1450 League are separate competitions.
- 4.2.2 The number of players in each team shall be 4.
- 4.2.3 Clubs entering more than one team shall number them consecutively. The highest team shall be designated '1', the next highest '2', and so on.
- 4.2.4 It is not necessary to nominate players in the event that a club has more than one team in the League.
- 4.2.5 If a player plays for a higher team (or teams) 5 times, they can no longer play in a lower team
- 4.2.6 The away team has White on odd boards.
- 4.2.7 If there is a tie on match points in a division, the procedure described in Rule 3.1.5 shall be followed.

4.3 Inter-Club Knock-Out Competitions

4.3.1 The following knock-out competitions shall be held:

	Trophy	Team size	Rating limit
4.3.1.a	Russell Trophy	6 players	No limit
4.3.1.b	Sharp Trophy	6 players	Under 1900
4.3.1.c	U1750 Cup	5 players	Under 1750
4.3.1.d	U1600 Cup	4 players	Under 1600

- 4.3.2 Clubs may only enter one team for each competition.
- 4.3.3 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.
- 4.3.4 The team playing White on odd boards will be determined by the toss of a coin.

4.4 Individual County Championships

- 4.4.1 The winners of the county individual Open, Major and Minor tournaments shall receive respectively the Capel, Burn and Bunce Cups.
- 4.4.2 If the winner of the Capel Cup, as County Champion, wishes to play in either the Southern Counties Chess Union or East Anglian Chess Union individual championships for the following season, then the player's entry fee shall be paid by the Association.
- 4.4.3 The format of the competitions (e.g. date(s), number of rounds, rate of play - subject to the games being rated as Standard Play - and pairing system) shall be decided by the organiser.

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

- 4.5.1 The format of the competition (e.g. date(s), team composition, number of rounds, rate of play - subject to the games being rated as Rapid Play - and pairing system) shall be decided by the organiser.

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.

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