

# WDCL Chess League Rules

League Rules – version 20250728SP

## 1.1 Laws of the Game of chess

Except where otherwise stated, play in all games shall be in accordance with the FIDE laws of chess, as approved and adopted by the English Chess Federation.

## 1.2 Fixtures

When two teams from the same club are in the same division, their first match in each period of the season must be against each other, and the rules regarding match cancellations (Rule 2.8.2) shall apply to the re-arrangement of such a fixture, save that the match will be played, as a priority, within 3 weeks of the date originally fixed date. A 'Fixture Creation Advice' document exists to assist in the creation of the league fixtures.

## 1.3 Registration and Panel Players

1.3.1 Before a player is eligible to play in any WDCL fixture, they must be registered on the digital 'League Management System' (LMS).

1.3.2 No player may register or play for more than one WDCL club in any season, except with the permission of the Executive Committee.

1.3.3 A player who is designated by their individual club as a 'panel player' must be expected to play regularly (which means they must be expected to play at least 50% of the league and cup programme).

1.3.4 Players who merit a 'panel' place but are not going to play very often must be listed as 'additional' (e.g. additional top 4 or top 10).

1.3.5 The following rules shall apply to regarding 'panelled' players:

1.3.5.1 Regular players who are not panelled can play for any team, but must be weaker than all the panelled players in their club.

1.3.5.2 If a member club has only one team, then no players are panelled. Instead, their players are designated as Regular (R) or Additional (A).

1.3.5.3 If a member club has more than one team, then the number of players panelled to that club's strongest team must equal the number of players in that team minus two. For example, if the 'first team' consists of 5 players, then 3 players must be panelled to that team. These designated panel players must be the strongest regular players in the club.

1.3.5.4 If a member club has two teams only, then no further team needs to have its players panelled. The remaining players will be accordingly designated as Regular (R) and Additional (A).

1.3.5.5 If a member club has at least 3 teams entered in the league, then the number of players panelled to the next strongest team must equal the number of players in that said team. For example, if the 'second team' consists of 5 players, then 5 players must be panelled to the 'second team'. These said 5 players must be the strongest players in the team.

1.3.5.6 If a member club has more than 3 teams, then paragraph 1.3.5.5 applies to the 4th and each subsequent team until the number of teams containing panelled players is equal to one less than the total number of teams entered by that club in that season (e.g. 3 teams containing panelled players when the club has entered 4 teams in total). The remaining unpanelled players are designated Regular (R) and additional (A).

1.3.5.7 Additional players share their ranking number and panel status with the next strongest regular player. For example, if an 'additional' player has a rating of 1800, and the next strongest regular player has a rating of 1750 and is also panelled to the 'first' team, then the additional player can only play for the said 'first' team.

1.3.5.8 Any team playing unregistered players in a match will automatically lose that match game in which the unregistered player is played and, in addition, a penalty half point will be deducted from their team's overall match score and, further, a half point will be added to their opponent's match score for each unregistered player played.

1.3.5.9 All teams that have panel players will have their list of panel players revised after half of their matches have been played in the season. This revision of lists can be done only once during a season at the halfway point as outlined above. Any team with players who have played in less than half of their team's allocated matches at that point shall be removed from the panel. If an 'additional' player has played in at least half of their team's matches and is likely to play in at least half of their team's remaining matches for that season, then that player can be appointed to the said team's panel, at the request of their respective club. In extenuating circumstances, a player who has supported the league in the past, and has played more than half of their team's league fixtures during that time, and has been registered as an 'additional' player at the start of the season, can be placed on the panel half way through the season on the written request of their club and agreement with the League Manager or member of the committee who does not belong to that club.

## **1.4 New Players**

1.4.1 New players without an ECF rating will be allocated a local or 'L' rating by their respective clubs when they begin playing WDCL

matches. The said local rating will be an honest and realistic estimate of the new player's playing strength.

1.4.2 LMS Local grade should initially be set by club (club owners have access).

Once a player has played 10 matches and achieves an ECF grading of 'K' or better, the Local grade will need to be reset to zero so that official ECF grade can be used.

1.4.3 The above mentioned estimated local grading will be removed in the following season and the 'live' ECF rating will be used thereafter.

1.4.4 In matches, it is already established practice that players are placed in playing strength order. In the case of new players, they can be placed on any board, based upon their respective team captain's assessment of their playing strength and this reasoning should be explained to the opposing captain.

## **1.5 Richard Furness League**

The Richard Furness League is a separate league within the LMS which has its own particular rules, which are summarised below:-

a) Matches consist of 4 boards, **the away team has white on odd boards.**

b) The combined aggregate ECF grading of all 4 boards for each team must not exceed 6600. Clubs exceeding this maximum limit will default the match.

c) Defaulted boards will have rating of 1650.

d) There is no upper limit on an individual player's rating. The upper rating's limit in the Richard Furness League is on the aggregate rating of 6600 for the 4-person team. Each club has therefore complete discretion and choice to play whatever combination of players they choose, provided they do not exceed the maximum aggregate limit of 6600 for the four boards.

## **1.6 Disputes**

1.6.1.1 All disputes regarding individual games, matches and the general application of these rules to the administration of the league competitions or cups, shall be reported to the League Secretary, Mr Stephen Deakin of Atherton Chess Club. The said League Secretary will then subsequently convene a disputes committee that will consist of the three ECF qualified chess arbiters in the WDCL, namely Mr Peter Mulleady (Atherton), Mr Damian McCarthy (Culcheth) and Mr Stephen Deakin (Atherton). Any arbiter whose own club is involved in a dispute will be automatically disqualified from adjudicating upon that particular dispute.

1.6.1.2 In the event of an arbiter or arbiters being unable to adjudicate on a dispute for whatever reason, the remaining members or member of the committee shall, with unfettered discretion, appoint substitute members of the committee, always ensuring that the said committee retains a quorum of three who will proceed to adjudicate of the dispute.

1.6.1.3 The Disputes Committee has the authority to invite any 'expert' on the laws of chess to act in an advisory capacity.

1.6.1.4 The disputes committee has complete discretion upon how it adjudicates on a matter.

1.6.1.5 The decision of the committee is final and binding and there is no right of appeal.

## **1.7 Allocation of Awards**

1.7.1 In each division two points will be awarded to a team for winning a match; one point will be awarded to each team for a drawn match and zero points will be awarded to a team for a lost match.

1.7.2 The team with the most match points at the end of the season will be the winners of their respective division. In the event of a tie, the team which has the highest board difference are the winners. In the event of a further tie, the team which has won the most boards are the winners. In the event of a further tie, the team which scored the most board points when the tied teams met during the season, shall be declared the winners. In the event of a further tie, board elimination from the latest match, and, in the event of each game being drawn, the first match between the teams will be used to determine the winners.

## **2. Match Arrangements**

### **2.1 Starting Time**

The official starting time for matches shall be 7.30pm, or earlier by prior arrangement. The playing session shall be for a minimum of three hours.

### **2.2 Team Selection**

**2.2.1** Each captain, or deputy, must hand the opposing captain or deputy a list of their players in current playing strength order. The players will then be paired with the corresponding player in the opposing team list.

**2.2.2** For Division 3 only, there shall be a maximum aggregate rating cap of 7500 (average 1500 per player). (There is no individual player rating cap – just an aggregate team cap of 7500 for the 5 players, which works out at an average of 1500 per player).\_

### **2.3 Choice of Colours**

In league matches of five boards, the away team shall have white on odd numbered boards. In all other matches, after team declarations, the captains shall toss for colour, with the winner choosing either white or black on odd numbered boards. If the captain or deputy is not present at the official or the agreed starting time, the opposing captain or deputy may then choose the colours.

## 2.4 Clocks and Rate of Play

2.4.1 Clocks should be started at the official (or agreed) starting time, after the opponents have agreed the rate of play. The opponent of an absent player is entitled to decide the rate of play for that specific game, and may thereafter set and start the clocks accordingly.

2.4.2 The rate of play to be adopted in league and cup matches is 80 minutes plus a ten second increment per move, starting from move one.

2.4.3 An alternative rate of play, where all moves must be completed within a time limit of 90 minutes, can be adopted but only where both players to the game agree. In the absence of agreement, the 80 minute and ten second increment rate of play will be used.

2.4.4 Clubs that do not possess digital chess clocks, and therefore do not have the facility to play ten second increment games, shall use the rate of play whereby all moves must be completed within 90 minutes.

2.4.5 Team captains can agree to shorten the length of games in a match to not less than 60 minutes per game, provided that both captains agree.

This option to reduce the standard time limit can apply to all boards in a match or to individual boards in a match. The new rule gives complete flexibility provided a minimum time limit of not less than 60 minutes is played. It would therefore be possible, for example, for a match to have three boards playing standard 80 mins and two boards playing 60 mins. In the absence of agreement to shorten the time limit, the default 80 minutes will apply.

## 2.5 No Arbiter

The current ECF guidelines for games without arbiters should be followed. Captains are encouraged to act as arbiters and to use reasonable endeavours to seek agreement where possible on any matter arising during the course of play.

## 2.6 Reserves

2.6.1 Reserves may be substituted for any absent player or players up to 30 minutes after the start time. In such cases, the clocks shall not be re-set. Any player arriving more than 30 minutes after the start of the game, shall forfeit the game.

## 2.7 Unfinished Games

2.7.1 In the event of any games being unfinished at the end of a match night, the game or games in question shall be adjourned. In such circumstances, the player to move shall write down the chosen move and then shall seal the said move in an envelope. The said envelope shall also contain an agreed written record of the game position, the times used by each player and the resumption date and venue. This envelope is to be signed across the seal by both players. Where the resumption date is not fixed on the night, then paragraphs 2.8.2(i)-(v) shall apply to the fixing of the resumption date, and 'home team' and 'away team' shall be read as 'home player' and away player' accordingly.

2.7.2 In the event of either player not attending the agreed resumption date for the game, or arriving more than 1 hour after the clock has been re-started, the game shall be forfeited by the late or absent player.

2.7.3 In the unlikely event of a game still being unfinished after the second session, and a result cannot be agreed, a further adjournment procedure shall be adopted following the same procedures as set out in 2.7.1 and 2.7.2 above, until a result is obtained.

## 2.8 Match Cancellation

2.8.1 League and cup matches can be postponed only upon the agreement of both captains of the two teams involved. In the absence of such agreement, the match shall be forfeited by the team unable to meet its fixture commitments, as set out on the digital LMS.

2.8.2 There is a presumption that postponed matches are re-arranged quickly so that the postponed match is ultimately played on a date that is as reasonably close to the original date as possible.

2.8.3 Any postponements must be notified to the league manager expeditiously.

2.8.4 Where it has been agreed by team captains to postpone a chess match, then the following procedure should be followed:

(i) The home team will offer the away team three alternative 'reasonable' dates for the re-arranged match. This must be done within one week of the original fixture date.

(ii) The away team then has a further week to agree the new date for the match.

(iii) Once a match has been re-arranged, no further re-arrangements are permissible.

2.8.4 If any of the provisions of paragraph 2.8.3(i) and (ii) above are not complied with, then the League Manager will award the match to the

opponents of the team that has failed to comply with the appropriate stage.

2.8.5 For the purpose of paragraph 2.8.4(i) above, the word 'reasonable' means:

- (i) dates which do not all fall in the same week
- (ii) dates which contain a minimum of two week-nights
- (iii) dates which do not fall on a bank holiday
- (iv) dates which do not fall on or between 23rd December and 1st January
- (v) dates which do not include nights when the away team already have a fixture (note the word 'team' and not 'club').

2.8.6 In the event of a team being unable to fulfil a fixture and defaulting the match, the opposing captain must be given 48 hours notice. If this period is not given, then the defaulting team shall be docked a league point.

### **3. Notices**

3.1 Whereby any provision of these rules requires 'notice' to be given both to, or by, the League Secretary or the League Manager, then such notice shall be given in writing or by email.

3.2 Any notice of an EGM, or any proposal received from a member for a forthcoming AGM or EGM, shall be published on any website maintained by the WDCL for the publicising of League activities.

### **4. Notation**

4.1 Moves shall be recorded during WDCL chess games using algebraic notation.

### **5. Mobile Communication Devices**

5.1 The general rule is that mobile telephones, smart-phones and other mobile communication devices are allowed in the designated playing area at member clubs, but such devices must be always switched off when chess games are being played. This rule is designed to prevent disruption caused by the noise of phones ringing and the noise of alerts and notifications being received.

5.2 In exceptional circumstances, the above-mentioned electronic device may be set to 'silent mode' in order that it may receive urgent communications by email, text message or other phone message, provided that both team captains agree there exists a good and persuasive reason for so doing.

5.3 All such mobile communication devices, as outlined above, must not be taken out of the designated playing area when chess games are ongoing, except for attending to the substance of the agreed exceptional and persuasive reason outlined in paragraph 5.2 above.

5.4 As a fair-play measure, under no circumstances whatsoever and wheresoever can electronic or mobile communication devices be taken into the toilets at club venues.

5.5 In the event that an electronic device or a mobile communication device is used inappropriately (i.e. for a reason other than that agreed by the team captains), then the offending player will forfeit the game immediately.

5.6 In the event that an electronic device, or any other mobile communication device, makes an audible noise during play, the offending player will be reminded by their respective captain of the rule to turn off such devices during play. Any further noise from the offending device (in other words a second noise from the same device whilst the chess game is being played) will entitle the non-offending opponent to claim the game under this rule.