

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY CHESS ASSOCIATION CONSTITUTION

June 2009

Name and Objects

1. The Association shall be entitled the “Buckinghamshire County Chess Association” and its objects shall be to encourage the establishment of chess clubs throughout the County and to foster and encourage chess playing generally.

Organisation

2. The Association shall consist of a President, Chairman, Vice-Presidents and other registered members of affiliated clubs and registered unattached members.
3. The Association’s affairs shall be organised by an Executive Committee of officers elected at annual general meetings.

Annual General Meeting

4. An Annual General Meeting shall be held at the end of each season and not later than 31st May to elect officers, together with a Grading Officer, an Auditor, and Match Captains for the following season.
5. At this meeting a statement of accounts for the past season shall be presented by the Treasurer, and reports presented by the various officers.
6. Any member wishing to submit a motion for this meeting must give written notice of it to the Secretary at or before the Executive meeting.
7. Fourteen days notice of any General Meeting and its agenda, together with a copy of the accounts for the past season shall be sent to each unattached member and to the Secretary of each affiliated club in respect of that club’s members.
8. The quorum for an AGM shall be five persons, of whom at least two shall be officers and at least two club representatives.

County Officers

9. The Officers of the Association shall be the President, Chairman, Match-Captains, Secretary, Treasurer, Controller of the Club Championship and other events, the Conductor of the Individual Championship, and the Junior Organiser.
10. Any person may be invited by Executive officers to be an honorary Vice-President of the Association

Executive Committee

11. The Association shall be managed by an Executive Committee, which shall consist of the Officers of the Association (except the Grading Officer/Webmaster and Auditor) and one representative from each affiliated club if the club is not already represented by a county officer

12. The Executive Committee shall meet at least once in each year for the purpose of convening the Annual General Meeting and determining its agenda.
13. Additional meetings of the Executive Committee may be convened by the Secretary at any time or by any other member of the Committee upon giving the Secretary written notice of his request and specifying the matters to be discussed.
14. The quorum for a meeting of the Executive Committee shall be five persons of whom two at least shall be officers and at least two club representatives.
15. The minutes of each meeting of the Executive Committee shall be circulated to members as soon as is practicable after the meeting.
16. If any matter shall require urgent decision, then that matter shall be decided by a sub-committee consisting of the Chairman, or the Secretary plus two other officers of the Association as they shall consider necessary. Any such decision of the sub-committee shall be reported to the next meeting of the Executive Committee. No officer may sit on a sub-committee dealing with a matter in which he is involved.

Territorial Area

17. Any club whose headquarters are not within the Buckinghamshire county boundary may nevertheless be affiliated on an affirmative vote of at least 75% of a meeting of the Executive Committee, who shall consider the proximity of the headquarters of the club in question to the Bucks county boundary and general suitability for affiliation to the B.C.C.A.

Subscriptions

18. The annual subscription for affiliated clubs, for un-attached members and for Vice-Presidents, shall be determined in the Annual General Meeting, and, in the case of affiliated clubs, shall be due and payable to the Treasurer at the time of entry by the club to the Club Championship Competition.
19. The Association's financial year shall be the 12 months ending on 30th April in each year.

The Laws of Chess

20. The laws of chess as for the time being published or adopted by the English Chess Federation (ECF) shall govern all play conducted by the Association., subject to minor modifications to adapt them to the circumstances of our competitions (see Schedules 1 and 2 of this Constitution).

County Tournaments

21. The Association shall in each season conduct the following tournaments:-
 - (a) Club Championship, in accordance with the rules set out in Schedule 1 following, and
 - (b) Individual Championship, in accordance with the rules set out in the Schedule 2 following.
 - (c) Other competitions to encourage people to play and to improve their standard of chess.

22. A board fee, decided at the AGM, shall be paid by a member playing in home matches for any County team.

English Chess Federation Fees

23. The ECF game grading fee scheme currently in force shall be adopted by the Association.
24. Accordingly it is a condition of affiliation by each club that it undertakes to pay such fees, which shall be collected by the Treasurer in respect of games played under Schedules 1 and 2 .
25. The Association will also provide ECF registration for each unattached member, on request.

Changes to the Constitution and Competition Rules

26. (*Amended 2007*) Alterations to these rules or to those in Schedules 1 and 2 shall only be made if supported by at least two thirds of the members present, and there shall be a minimum of 10 votes in favour.

Preface to Schedules 1 and 2

The FIDE Laws of Chess are prefaced with statements that the rules cannot cover all possible situations that may arise in a game, and that too detailed a rule might deprive an arbiter of the freedom of judgement, thus preventing a solution to a problem dictated by fairness, logic and special factors.

No independent arbiter is normally present during team or individual matches. This places responsibility on individuals to be aware of the basic rules, and to act in a reasonable and sportsman-like manner, when faced with any unusual circumstances that may arise, particularly those involving a possible infringement of the rules.

In cases of disputes, which have to be submitted to competition controllers for resolution, the attention of everyone is drawn to the importance of recording the final position immediately after the cessation of play, and the requirement to record moves, except during the last five minutes before the rapid-play time limit.

SCHEDULE 1

Rules for the Club Championship

Definition

“Championship” – means the competition under the organisation of the Controller and all divisions in that competition.

General

1. The Championship shall be annual and shall be open to all affiliated clubs. Clubs from neighbouring counties may be admitted subject to the agreement of the Executive Committee.

2. The Championship shall be conducted by a Controller, elected at the annual General Meeting. He shall make such additional regulations as seem to him desirable or necessary, subject to notification of the Executive Committee of such additions at an early date. The Controller may, if he wishes, seek formal approval of the Executive Committee.
3. The winning team in each division shall receive a cash prize, the value of which shall be decided at the AGM.
4. The FIDE Rules of Chess shall apply to all games, subject to any special provisions made by these Rules e.g. move rates.

Competition Structure

5. The Championship shall be divided into divisions, the composition of which shall be at the discretion of the Controller.
6. If there is more than one division, there shall be promotion and relegation at the end of each season (one-up/one-down for divisions of six teams) between adjacent divisions. Any variation to the promotion and relegation shall be subject to Executive Committee approval
7. (*Amended 2007*) Tie-breaks shall be decided by the following criteria:
 - a) The board points scored by each team and then
 - b) The results between the sides (including, where appropriate, the aggregate score).

If these criteria fail to separate the sides then the Championship shall be regarded as shared, and other decisions affecting promotion and or relegation shall be determined by the drawing of lots.

8. Any affiliated club may enter one or more teams, subject to notifying the Controller by 31st July of the number of teams to be entered for the new season. Later entries may be accepted at the discretion of the Controller.
9. Each match shall be played over six boards, or over such number as the Controller shall deem desirable, provided that all matches in any particular division are played over the same number of boards.
10. The Controller shall prepare a fixture list, and distribute copies to each club at least three weeks before the club's first match. The first-named team in each pairing shall be the home team.
11. Matches shall be played on the date specified, particularly those between teams from the same club. When there is a difficulty, the respective team captains may agree an alternative date, but this must be notified to the Controller.

Registration of Players and Nomination of Team Members

12. No person shall play for more than one club in the Championship in the same season.
13. Any club entering the Championship shall register with the Controller, before playing the first match, a typed list of players who will play for the club in that season. Names may be added to the list at any time during the season. (To assist the Controller and Grading Officer in reading illegible match reports).

14. At the same time, any club entering more than one team shall provide the Controller with written nominations of those who will play in each of its teams, except the lowest.
15. These registrations and nominations (and any subsequent changes or additions) may be made by hand, e-mail, or post. Telephoned nominations of new players shall be formally acknowledged by the Controller
16. Failure to nominate players shall result in a reduction of half a match point for each time a match is played without such nomination. Any such reduction of match points shall apply to all teams in a club.
17. Registrations and nominations shall be made available to other clubs on request.
18. The strongest team shall be named as the first team, and the next strongest as the second team, and so on. It is acceptable for the ranges of playing strengths (based on ECF grades) to overlap between adjacent teams.
19. Un-nominated players may play for any team entered by a club.
20. Clubs shall supply estimates of grades for un-graded players.

Substitutes for Nominated Players

21. Any player may play for the first team. For lower teams, no substitute shall have a grade more than 10 ECF points higher than that of the player replaced, with the exception of the situation concerning a strong new player joining a club, covered in Rules 23 and 24 below. For this purpose all players with a grade of 125 (was 100) or less shall be considered equal
22. (*Amended 2007*) Save where a substitute nomination is accepted under Rules 23 and 24 below, no player having played five times for any team, or a total of five games for teams higher than that for which he was nominated, may subsequently play for a lower team of his club
23. The Controller may accept a written substitute nomination in the course of a season if a new strong player joins a club. One originally nominated player may then play for the next lowest team, even though he may have played more than the normally permitted number of games for the higher team. Additional new strong players shall be accommodated similarly
24. Similar considerations to those in Rule 23 shall apply to dislodged nominated players from lower teams.
25. If a player is chosen to play for a higher team, and his opponent defaults the game, that selection shall not count for the purposes of illegibility for subsequent matches.
26. The Controller shall review substitute nominations at the end of the season, and may recommend that the Executive Committee deduct match points if they consider unfair advantage has been gained by unnecessary substitution (e.g. use of a strong outside player for crucial matches).
27. When a team is found to have played an ineligible player, that player's game shall be treated as lost, and a further board point shall be deducted for that match.
28. Defaults shall be reviewed by the Controller at the end of each season to ensure that no team is gaining advantage - e.g. by persistently defaulting (three times or more) on the higher boards. The Executive Committee may

impose a match point penalty when such advantage is deemed to have been gained.

Match Arrangements

29. The home team shall be responsible for providing the venue and all playing equipment and ancillaries.
30. The team captains shall declare their teams to each other before the match starts.
31. The team captains shall then toss a coin for choice of colours on the top board and the colours shall alternate with each board.
32. Matches should start at 19.30 hours. If play has not started by 19.40 hours all clocks shall be started, or shall be deemed to have been started.
33. Any player who arrives after 8.30pm shall be deemed to have defaulted and his team shall lose that board point.
34. No player shall be allowed to play two games, simultaneous or otherwise, in one match This would not preclude a named player, who's opponent was known to be defaulting, from playing for another of his club's teams on the same night.
35. Late substitution of a declared player shall be permitted, subject to the rules governing substitution.

Match Environment

36. Mobile Phones should be switched off during play. Those with jobs who are needed "on call" may leave the phones in silent mode. Match captains may need to contact late arrivals: this should be done outside the playing area way from earshot of the players.
37. Smoking in the playing area is not permitted. Any player who wishes to smoke during a game must leave the room to do so, and his clock shall be allowed to run if it becomes his turn to move. The only exception to the no smoking rule is when a playing area is in a room, which has to be shared with others involved in non-chess activities.

Quick-play ("allegro") Finishes

38. Each player shall make at least 35 moves in 75 minutes on his own clock, then both clocks shall be turned back 15 minutes after black's 35th move, and the game completed in the time remaining. If a flag falls before the game is finished, the player who has not reached his time limit shall be the winner, subject to the conditions of Rule 40 being met. Note: "35 moves in 75 minutes" may be reduced to "30 moves in 60 minutes" when limited time is available at the home team premises.
39. Except in special circumstances the clock shall be placed at the choice of the player with the black pieces. The clock button must be pressed by the hand which makes the move. Only one hand may be used to move the pieces.
40. Except for the 15-minute turn-back under Rule 38, neither player shall pick up the clock, nor shall undue force be used in operating it.
41. Clocks must not be stopped unless either player is claiming:

1. a win on time
 2. a draw during his/her last two minutes or
 3. an illegal move.
2. Each player shall keep a game score up-to-date unless less than FIVE minutes remains on his/her clock, but a draw by repetition of moves cannot be claimed unless an up-to-date score has been kept.
 3. A player may claim a draw when he/she has less than two minutes left on the clock and before the flag falls. This concludes the game. The claim may be on the basis that:
 1. the opponent cannot win by normal means, or
 2. the opponent has been making no effort to win by normal means.

In a) the claimant must write down the position and the opponent must verify it.
In b) the claimant must write down the position and keep an up-to-date score-sheet for submission to the Controller in support of the claim. The opponent shall verify both the score-sheet and the final position
 4. To win a game on time, a player must claim such a win by stopping his/her clock, and must have sufficient mating material. If both flags have fallen, and it is impossible to establish which fell first, the game is drawn.

Illegal Moves

5. Illegal moves do not necessarily lose. If an illegal move is claimed, the clocks shall be stopped and the claim verified. For a first illegal move, two minutes shall be added to the opponent's time, and the legal position restored before the clocks are restarted. For a second illegal move by the same player, a further two minutes shall be added to the opponent's time. A third illegal move by the same player shall forfeit the game. For time penalty purposes only, an illegal move is not deemed complete until the opponent's clock has been restarted, and a legal move must be made with the same piece; if no legal move is possible for that same piece, any legal move may be played.
46. Both players are responsible for continuously checking the legality of all moves made, and if an illegal move is not claimed before the result of the game has been agreed and the clocks have been stopped, the original result shall stand.
47. When a player makes further recorded moves before an illegal move is claimed, the clocks shall be stopped and the last recorded legal position shall be restored. If possible, the players shall agree to reset the clocks to estimated times at the restored position, and restart the game. If no agreement can be reached, the dispute procedure shall be followed.

Match Reports

48. Match results shall be reported in detail on match reports by hand, post or email within fourteen days of the original fixture date (or approved revised date). The postmark or e-mail date shall be the criteria used in relation to the time limit.
49. Any disputed game shall be identified on the match report. ("card" deleted)

Team Withdrawals and Defaults

50. Any team failing to fulfil a fixture without giving sufficient cause or notice to their opponents shall forfeit the match. If the team captains are in dispute

- regarding what constitutes “sufficient cause or notice”, the Controller may arbitrate or refer the matter to the R & A Committee (See “Disputes” below).
51. If both teams default on the same board in a match, neither team shall score any board points for that board.
 52. If a team withdraws from the competition before completing its fixtures:
 - a) its results shall be ignored for the purposes of the competition if less than half its fixtures have been completed, or
 - b) if half or more than half its fixtures have been completed, those results shall stand, and teams it has not played shall be deemed to have won with a maximum score.

Disputes

53. In the event of a dispute, which cannot be resolved by the players or the team captains, the clocks shall be stopped and the position reached on the board together with the clock times shall be agreed and recorded by both players. The captains with the assistance of the players concerned, shall each submit an independent report of the circumstances, together with the original score sheets (even if one or both players have stopped recording because they are in the last five minutes), position and clock times and any claim, to the Controller within fourteen days of the match, accompanied by a claim fee of £10, for resolution. If either player departs before the positions/times have been recorded on the match night, or either team fails to submit the specified information within the fourteen days (as defined by postmark), the opposition’s claim shall prevail. Other evidence may be submitted by e-mail.
54. Any dispute, which cannot be settled by the Controller, shall be referred to a Rules and Appeals Sub-committee, chaired by the Controller. The R & A C may take independent advice from an external authority such as an official ECF arbiter. The Controller shall report all decisions on disputes at the Executive Committee Meeting.
55. When the dispute involves an R & A C member’s club, that member may be required to withdraw from the discussion, and be substituted by a co-opted representative from an independent club. If the Controller’s own club is involved in the dispute, the Association Chairman, Secretary or another independent county officer shall take the chair.
56. The Controller may resolve disputes by telephone or other means of communication with R & A C members, if this seems to him to be effective and expedient.
57. *(New 2007)* If the Controller is faced with disciplinary issue, he shall be empowered to give a written warning to the player(s) and/or Club(s) involved. If the Controller considers the situation was sufficiently serious (e.g. abusive behaviour involving bad language, violence etc) he shall call on an independent sub-committee of the Executive to review the matter and it may impose such further penalties as it considers necessary, up to and including a permanent ban from BCCA activities

SCHEDULE 2

Rules for the Individual Championship

Qualification for Entry

1. The Competition shall be annual and shall be open to all paid-up and registered members of the Association.

Organisation and Structure

2. The Competition shall be conducted by a Controller, elected at the Annual General Meeting, who shall make such additional regulations for the conduct of the Competition as seem to him to be necessary or desirable, subject to the reporting of such additional regulations to an Executive sub-committee at an early date.
3. The Competition shall consist of one or more divisions, preferably with 7 to 9 players in each, with promotion and relegation between divisions.
4. The composition of each division will depend on the results in the previous season, and the numbers and playing strengths of the entrants in each year.
5. The Controller shall have discretion to change the number of divisions each year according to the number of entrants, and, when there is such a change, to re-allocate players to divisions as he deems appropriate, taking into account results in the previous season.
6. The Controller shall place new entrants in divisions appropriate to their ECF grades insofar as vacancies permit, but shall endeavour to maintain divisions of odd numbers to give players equal opportunities with the black and white pieces.
7. If there is more than one division, promotion and relegation shall be on a two-up/two-down basis for divisions of more than six players, and one-up/one-down for divisions of less than six players.
8. Ties for promotion or relegation shall be decided by play-offs, with each player taking the opposite colour to that which he had against the same opponent in the first game.

Entrance to the Competition

9. The Controller shall make available competition entry forms to club secretaries by 31st of August each year for distribution to their members.
10. Entrants shall submit their entries by the closing date (usually early/mid October) specified on the form, accompanied by the entrance fee, determined each year at the County AGM.

Fixtures and Arrangement of Games

11. The Controller shall provide each competitor with a fixture list and a copy of the essential rules governing arrangement of games and conditions of play by 1st November each season.
12. In each pairing, the first-named player shall have the white pieces, and black shall have choice of venue
13. Black should contact white to arrange the date, starting time and venue for the game not later than the 3rd day of the scheduled month of play. It is also black's responsibility to provide all playing equipment.

14. In exceptional circumstances (e.g. illness, business commitments), a game may be played after the scheduled month by mutual agreement, but the player requesting the re-arrangement should inform the Controller. Games may be played before the scheduled date, provided that this does not delay the schedules of others.
15. Players may be deemed in default for unreasonably failing to make, agree or comply with arrangements for games. Anyone who has difficulty in contacting an opponent should contact the Controller.
16. It is the responsibility of any competitor to advise the Controller and his remaining opponents of any change of address or telephone number during the course of the competition.

Rules of Play

17. Each player shall make at least 35 moves in 75 minutes on his own clock, then the clocks shall be turned back 15 minutes after black's 35th move, and the game completed in the time remaining. If a flag falls before the game is finished, the player who has not reached his time limit shall be the winner, subject to the conditions of rule 19 being met.
18. Except in special circumstances (e.g. handicapped player), the clock shall be placed at the choice of the player with the black pieces. The button must be pressed by the hand, which makes the move.
19. Each player, unless physically handicapped, shall keep a game score up-to-date until less than five minutes remain on his clock, but a draw may not be claimed unless an up-to-date score has been kept.
20. To win a game on time, a player must claim such a win by stopping his clock, and must have sufficient mating material. If both flags have fallen and it is impossible to establish which flag fell first, the game is drawn.

Illegal Moves

21. Illegal moves do not necessarily lose. If such a move is claimed, the clocks shall be stopped for verification and the player in error (claimant or opponent) shall concede a two-minute time addition to his opponent's time. A second offence shall be similarly penalised, but a third forfeits the game. For time penalty purposes only, an illegal move is not deemed complete until the opponents clock has been restarted, and to continue the game, a legal move must be made with the same piece.
22. A player may claim a draw when he has less than two minutes left on his clock and before his flag falls. This concludes the game. He may claim on the basis that:
 - a) his opponent cannot win by normal means, or
 - b) that his opponent has been making no effort to win by normal meansIn (a) the player must write down the position and his opponent must verify it. In (b) the player must write down the final position and submit an up-to-date score-sheet, which must be completed before play has ceased. The opponent must verify the score-sheet and the final position.

Disputes

23. A player should notify his opponent immediately if he considers that the rules have been infringed during play (e.g. an illegal move, failure to record the moves etc), and stop the clock for verification and correction of the situation. If the game is allowed to proceed without correction, the infringement will be deemed condoned, and the result of the game shall stand.
24. In the event of a dispute, the FIDE Laws of Chess, as adapted herein, and on which these rules are based, shall apply. The clocks shall be stopped and the times and position recorded on the score-sheet, which should be up-to-date. Both players shall submit their claims to the Controller within one week of the game, with the completed score-sheet and any written comments they wish to be considered.
25. The failure of either player to submit a written claim in a dispute will result in the opponent's claim succeeding by default.
26. If the Controller is unable to settle a dispute, he shall inform the players concerned that the matter would be submitted to the Executive Committee for a ruling, and that Committee's decision would be final.

Reporting results

27. Both players are responsible for reporting the result of a game by the 7th day of the month following that scheduled for the game.

Trophy and Prize Money

28. The Championship Trophy shall be presented to the winner of the top division at the AGM. The Trophy shall remain the property of the Association and shall be returned to the Controller at or before the AGM at which it is to be presented.
29. The winner of each division shall be presented with a cash prize, the value of which shall be set at the AGM of the previous year.