

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY CHESS ASSOCIATION CONSTITUTION
September 2025
Club Championship Rules

Definition

“Club 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 September 1st ECF rating list shall be used for the whole season regarding any rating limited rules. Note that ‘P’ ratings are ignored.
The latest (prior to 1st September in the current season) FIDE Rules of Chess shall apply to all games, subject to any special provisions made by these Rules.
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. The captain and senior club officials are responsible for the conduct of their players, and they should ensure they are abiding by the laws of chess.
Before applying the rules too rigidly, consideration of the experience and ability of the players should be taken into account.
4. 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.

Competition Structure

5. The Championship shall be divided into divisions, the composition of which shall be at the discretion of the Controller. There is a circulating winner’s trophy for each division.
6. If there is more than one division, there may be promotion and relegation at the end of each season (one-up/one-down) between adjacent divisions unless any variation is agreed at the AGM at the start of the season.
7. 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 at least 4 weeks prior to the start of the season, 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 in Division 1 and 5 boards in Division 2, 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, publish it on the county website and email copies to each club at least two 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

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, before playing the first match, a list of players who will play for the club in that season. New players should be added to the clubs player list before playing their first match.

14. 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 ratings) to overlap between adjacent teams.

15. Clubs shall supply estimates of ratings for unrated players.

Player Nominations and eligibility

16. Players rated 1900 or above cannot play in a lower division. The only exception being where a club does not have a team in division 1.

Players rated 1900 or above can only play for one team in division 1.

Players rated 1700 or above can only play for one team in division 2.

Note that the rating list in 3. above shall be used for the whole season.

Board order (100 points)

17. Teams should be arranged in order of current playing strength, using the latest monthly ECF ratings. A difference of 100 ECF rating points or less is acceptable. Differences outside of this range should be first agreed with the controller.

18. 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.

19. 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

20. The home team shall be responsible for providing the venue and all playing equipment and ancillaries.

21. The team captains shall declare their teams to each other before the match starts.

22. The away team has white on the odd boards.

23. 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.

24. Any player who arrives after 8.30pm shall be deemed to have defaulted and his team shall lose that board point.

25. No player shall be allowed to play two games; simultaneous, either in one match or in a separate match. This would not preclude a named player, who's opponent has defaulted, from playing another match on the same night.

26. Late substitution of a declared player shall be permitted, subject to the rules governing eligibility and rating difference.

Match Environment

27. Contrary to the FIDE Laws of Chess, mobile phones will be allowed into the playing area. Mobile Phones should be switched off during play. The use of phone cameras is not permitted 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.

Any player who allows a mobile phone to ring or emit noise that causes distraction on more than one occasion during a match shall forfeit the game.

Time Control

28. Each player has 80 minutes for all moves plus a 10 second increment per move. If for any reason digital clocks are not available the move rate shall be all moves in 90 minutes.

29. Except in special circumstances the clock shall be placed at the choice of the player with the black pieces.

Match Reports

30. Match results shall be reported in detail within seven days of the fixture date.

31. Any disputed game shall be identified on the match report.

Team Withdrawals and Defaults

32. 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).

33. If both teams default on the same board in a match, neither team shall score any board points for that board.

34. If a team withdraws from the competition before completing its fixtures:

a) its results shall be ignored for the purposes of the competition if the team has not played every team once.

or

b) if the team has played every team once, those results shall stand, and teams it has not played shall be deemed to have won with a maximum score.

Disputes

35. 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 by e-mail, together with images of 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 seven days of the match, 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 seven the opposition's claim shall prevail. Other evidence may be submitted by e-mail.

36. 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.

37. 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.

38. 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.

39. 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