

# BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY CHESS ASSOCIATION CONSTITUTION

September 2024

## Club Championship Rules

*Draft Version 2 Paddy Collins 19<sup>th</sup> July 2025*

### **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 FIDE Rules of Chess shall apply to all games, subject to any special provisions made by these Rules e.g. move rates.

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.

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 before the rapid-play time limit.

### **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 by the date of the AGM 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 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 by e-mail with the Controller, before playing the first match, a 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

14. Any club entering more than one team shall provide the Controller by e-mail with 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) must be made by e-mail,

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 ratings) to overlap between adjacent teams.

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

### **Substitutes for Nominated Players**

20. Any player may play for the first team. For lower teams, no substitute shall have a grade more than 75 rating 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.

21. 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.

22. The Controller may accept an e-mailed 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

23. Similar considerations to those in Rule 23 shall apply to dislodged nominated players from lower teams.

24. 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.

25. 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).

26. 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.

27. 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**

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

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

30. The away team is always White on board 1.

31. 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.

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

33. 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.

34. Late substitution of a declared player shall be permitted, subject to the rules governing substitution.

### **Match Environment**

35. Mobile Phones should be switched off during play. The use of phone cameras is not permitted during play. Those with jobs or serious domestic requirements who needed to be "on call" may leave the phones in silent mode but must notify the captains that they are doing so. Match captains may need to contact late arrivals: this should be done outside the playing area way from earshot of the players.

36. Smoking in the playing area is not permitted.

### **Time Control**

37 Each player has 80 minutes for all moves plus a 10 second increment per move.

38. 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.

39. Clocks must not be stopped unless either player is claiming:

- a) a win on time
- b) a draw during his/her last two minutes or
- c) an illegal move.

40. 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.

### **Draw Claims**

41. 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:

- a) the opponent cannot win by normal means, or
- b) 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 scoresheet for submission to the Controller in support of the claim. The opponent shall verify both the scoresheet and the final position

42. 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**

43. 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.

43. 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.

44. 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**

45. Match results shall be reported in detail by e-mail within fourteen days of the original fixture date (or approved revised date).

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

### **Team Withdrawals and Defaults**

47. 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 Rules and Appeals Committee (See “Disputes” below).

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

49. 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**

50. 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 fourteen 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 fourteen the opposition’s claim shall prevail. Other evidence may be submitted by e-mail.

51. Any dispute, which cannot be settled by the Controller, shall be referred to a Rules and Appeals 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.

52. 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.

53. 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.

54. 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