

Rules of the Oxfordshire Chess Association League

(as amended by the AGM on 18 September 2014)

1. Organisation of the OCA League

- 1.1 The composition of the League will be decided at the AGM. After the AGM, late adjustments may be made by the Committee.
- 1.2 In normal circumstances promotion and relegation of teams will be mandatory; however it may be necessary for other teams to be promoted or relegated in the interest of the League.
- 1.3 No club may have more than two teams in one division.
- 1.4 A club entering more than one team shall identify its teams as 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc. When a club has 2 teams in the same division, matches between them must be scheduled as the first match of the new season, and the first match of the new cycle after Christmas. The University should be allowed to postpone University 1 v 2 from October until a later date before Christmas if the League Secretary agrees.
- 1.5 Each team competing will play return fixtures with every other team in its division.
- 1.6 There will be six players in each team and one game on each board in a match.
- 1.7 Matches will be decided by the number of game points scored, with one point for a win, half a point for a draw and no points for a loss.
- 1.8 League match points will be awarded with two points for a win, one point for a draw and no points for a loss.
- 1.9 The team which scores the greatest number of League match points will hold the title of champion of their division.
- 1.10 Where teams in any division tie for first place by scoring an equal number of match points, the championship will be awarded to the team scoring the greatest number of game points in the matches between the teams tying on match points. If these are equal, the championship will be awarded to the team scoring the greatest number of game points over the whole league season.
- 1.11 Where teams tie on match points at the bottom of the division and relegation is an issue, the team with the least number of game points in the matches between the teams tying on match points will be relegated. If these are equal, the team to be relegated will be the team scoring the least number of game points over the whole league season.
- 1.12 A new club entering the League will normally enter the lowest division.
- 1.13 Fixture lists will be produced and sent to all clubs as soon as possible after the AGM. Changes to the Fixture List may only be made by the Secretary. (Information, including results and tables, will be published on the OCA website.)

2. Eligibility of Players

- 2.1 Except as permitted by 2.2 below, no player may play for more than one club in a season.
- 2.2 A player may transfer from one club to another in the course of the season, but only with the written consent of the former club duly notified to the Secretary.
- 2.3 Clubs entering more than one team must nominate or 'star' four players in each first-division team, and four players for each of its teams in lower divisions. Starred players may not play for

a lower team in the course of a season, or play for another team in the same division. Clubs are not required to star players in their lowest team.

- 2.4 If any player participates in fewer than four games for the team for which he is 'starred', then his/her club will be required to provide an explanation to the Committee. Any starred player not playing the required four league games may not be starred by that club the following season.
- 2.5 **Playing for more than one team**
- 2.5.1 Except as permitted below, a player who has played four games for a particular team ceases to be eligible to play for any other team of that club in the same or a lower division for the remainder of the season.
- 2.5.2 The restriction in 2.5.1 does not apply to players with an ECF standard-play grading (or an estimated grading) of 125 or below at the start of the season.
- 2.5.3 Moreover, (i) players with an ECF standard-play grading (or an estimated grading) between 126 and 140 at the start of the season may play in Divisions One and Two without affecting eligibility to play in lower divisions; and (ii) players with an ECF standard-play grading (or an estimated grading) between 141 and 150 at the start of the season may play in Division One without affecting eligibility to play in lower divisions.
- 2.5.4 For the purposes of 2.5.1 and 2.5.3, clubs registering new players without an ECF standard-play grading must supply an estimated grade together with any known current or historical grading information about the player. The estimate presented will be subject to the approval of the OCA grader, who may, in the light of available evidence, overrule an estimate given by a club.
- 2.6 Any game played by an ineligible player will be deemed lost by default. In addition, one match point will be deducted from the offending team.
- 2.7 'Visiting players' are defined as players who are able to play for a short period of time only (such as university students able to play in vacation time only). Visiting players with an ECF grading of 180 or above may only play in Division One, or a club's first team or its equal. Visiting Players with an ECF grading of 165 or above may only play in Division Two or above, or a club's second team or its equal or above. Visiting Players with an ECF grading below 165 may play in any division for any team.

3. Postponements

- 3.1 Fixtures may only be postponed by consent of the Secretary.
- 3.2 The responsibility for the rearrangement of a postponed match is solely in the hands of the Secretary, who will inform the clubs of the new date. Postponements will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, such as extreme weather conditions or unavailability of a venue. The inability to field the strongest team is unacceptable. (Notes for guidance: It may not always be possible to contact the Secretary in advance. However, provided that the postponement is made for the right reasons, and has been agreed between clubs, then a retrospective approach to the Secretary is acceptable. Clubs should not attempt to rearrange fixtures without the approval of the Secretary, since they may be unaware of other postponements or rearrangements that might complicate matters. The Secretary will endeavour to rearrange fixtures to suit the clubs involved.)
- 3.3 A postponed intra-club match must be played within five weeks; otherwise it will be deemed to have been double-defaulted.

4. Defaults

- 4.1 Any team failing to keep an engagement without giving a reasonable explanation will lose the match by default.
- 4.2 Game fees will be returned to the innocent team at the beginning of the following season.
- 4.3 Any team defaulting more than one match will be reported to the Committee and may be subject to disciplinary action (including having its record expunged and/or automatic demotion) at the Committee's discretion.
- 4.4 A team defaulting a board must write down a name on the match card in grade order.
- 4.5 For every four games defaulted by a team in the league, that team will have one match point deducted from its total, unless a reasonable explanation is offered.
- 4.6 An intra-club match that is not played will be recorded as a 0-0 double default. Neither team will score any match points.

5. Disputes and Sanctions

- 5.1 Any disputes must be addressed to the Secretary in writing, by club secretaries, and a copy sent to the secretaries of other clubs involved.
- 5.2 The Secretary (or another officer or group of officers appointed to do so by the AGM) shall be authorised to settle a dispute.
- 5.3 In the event of either party in a dispute being unhappy with the decision, the matter will be referred to the Committee. All clubs involved in a dispute, or who are liable to disciplinary action, have a right to be represented at the Committee Meeting, whose decision will be binding.
- 5.4 If the Chairman and Secretary have reason to believe that there have been serious or persistent offences against the League rules or the spirit of fair play, they should call for an explanation from the captain of the appropriate team or teams. If they do not receive an explanation they consider satisfactory and the situation remains unresolved, they may refer the situation to the Committee to consider whether disciplinary sanctions might be appropriate. Any club or individual thus liable to disciplinary action has the right to be represented at the Committee Meeting, where the Committee's decision will be binding.

6. Trophies

- 6.1 All the divisional trophies and the Frank Wood Shield are the property of the League.
- 6.2 All of these trophies and the Shield must be returned to the Treasurer not later than 30 April each season for engraving.
- 6.3 Trophies will be presented at the AGM or as otherwise specified by the Committee.
- 6.4 An individual trophy named the Arthur Mushens Trophy will be awarded to the player who scores the best game points percentage in Division 1.
- 6.5 An individual trophy named the Bernard C Wyatt Memorial Trophy will be awarded to the player who scores the best game points percentage in Division 2.
- 6.6 An individual trophy named the David Del Nevo Trophy will be awarded to the player who scores the best game points percentage in Division 3.
- 6.7 An individual trophy named the Sam Phipps Trophy will be awarded to the player who scores the best game points percentage in Division 4.

- 6.8 'An individual trophy named the Lester Millin Memorial Trophy will be awarded to the junior (under 18 on 1 September of the year in which the season starts) who scores the best game points percentage in any one Division of the League.
- 6.9 A player must compete (wins by default do not count) in more than 50% of the League Matches for a team in the relevant divisions in order to receive an individual trophy.

7. Match Rules - All Divisions

- 7.1 The home club is responsible for the venue and all match arrangements.
- 7.2 Home clubs are expected to provide scoresheets, clocks, and sets and boards of a uniform, recognised pattern.
- 7.3 The use of clocks is compulsory. Either analogue or digital clocks may be used.
- 7.4 Arrangements will be made for a minimum of three hours' play, except that, for Division 4, the playing session is 2½ hours.
- 7.5 A time limit of all moves in 90 minutes will be played in Divisions 1, 2 and 3; in Division 4 the time limit will be all moves in 75 minutes.
- 7.6 All matches will commence at 7.30pm, except for Division 4 and school teams, which may at the start of the season unilaterally specify an earlier start time for their home matches, provided that this is not earlier than 7.15pm. Any other change to the start time must be agreed between the captains of the teams involved in the fixture.
- 7.7 Clocks must be started promptly at the specified starting time and any time that is lost because the home club is not ready shall be deducted from that club's clocks before play begins.
- 7.8 The visiting team will have white on the odd boards.
- 7.9 Team lists will be in approximate order of playing strength.
- 7.10 Prior to the start of play, team lists will be exchanged.
- 7.11 All games will be conducted in accordance with the FIDE Laws of Chess except as indicated here:
 - 7.11.1 A player wins the game by default if he or she does not have an opponent within 30 minutes of the start of a match. (The place of an absent player may be taken by a substitute at any time within thirty minutes of the start of the match.)
 - 7.11.2 Players may bring mobile phones into the playing area, provided that they are switched off for the duration of the playing session. Captains should ensure that a reminder to switch phones off is issued immediately before the start of the match. Should a mobile phone make a sound during the match, the captains will issue a warning to the player to switch it off. Should the player's device make a further sound, the captains will enforce loss of the game by the player.
 - 7.11.3 Players may record the moves of their games either in a recognized form of algebraic notation or in English descriptive notation.
 - 7.11.4 The Association encourages but does not require players to record draw offers on the scoresheet.
 - 7.11.5 For a first and a second completed illegal move by a player two minutes extra time will be added to the opponent's clock. A third completed illegal move by the same player loses the game, unless the position is such that no possible sequence of legal moves can lead to the checkmating of that player's king.

- 7.11.6 The Association, in its capacity as the organizing body of the League, makes no claim to ownership of whatever scoresheets are used for recording games. Nor does it require the players to sign both scoresheets at the end of the game.
- 7.11.7 Since the FIDE Laws in general presuppose the presence of an authorized person acting as arbiter, and many of them refer to actions the arbiter may take, certain articles of the Laws cannot be followed to the strict letter in the OCA League. In the absence of arbiters, team captains are expected to take on those aspects of an arbiter's function which circumstances make it practical for them to perform, in cooperation or (where appropriate) individually. To help them carry out their responsibilities in this regard, captains should familiarize themselves with any relevant guidance issued by the Committee.

8 Results

- 8.1 The matches will be decided as stated in Rule 1.7 .
- 8.2 One score card shall be filled in and signed by both captains. The home team shall either forward it to the Secretary, or send an e-mail to the Secretary, or enter the results on the league website. Email results on their own are not acceptable in the event of a dispute.
- 8.3 The match card should show the following information: date, division, names of players and their scores. The match card should be signed by both team captains.
- 8.4 A home club which fails within seven days of the match to send the match result to the Secretary or to submit it on the league website may lose the match by default.

Frank Wood Shield Rules

League rules for Division 1 apply except where amended hereunder.

9.1 Players' Eligibility

- 9.1.1 A team in the Frank Wood Shield should in general correspond to the team of the same name in the League in that season. In particular, (i) a player 'starred' for a League team under Rule 2.3 may only play for that team in the FWS, and (ii) no player may play in the FWS for a team in a lower division than that of the team for which he or she normally plays in the League.
- 9.1.2 Subject to 9.1.1, playing for more than one team in the FWS in the same season is permitted, but only as follows:
- (i) a player with an ECF standard-play grading (or an estimated grading) of 125 or below at the start of the season may play in the FWS for teams in any division;
 - (ii) a player with an ECF standard-play grading (or an estimated grading) between 126 and 140 at the start of the season may play in the FWS for teams in Divisions One and Two without affecting eligibility to play for teams in lower divisions;
 - (iii) a player with an ECF standard-play grading (or an estimated grading) between 141 and 150 at the start of the season may play in the FWS for teams in Division One without affecting eligibility to play for teams in lower divisions.
- Clubs should note that in the case of players without an ECF standard-play grading at the start of the season the procedure for estimated gradings set out for the League in Rule 2.5.4 will apply.
- 9.1.3 A team that fields an ineligible player in an FWS match loses that match. (A captain in any doubt as to the eligibility of a player for his team in the FWS is therefore advised to seek the advice of the OCA Secretary before the match.)

9.2 Colours

Captains will toss for colours at each match after the exchange of teams.

9.3 Results Handicapping

9.3.1 Teams in the same division - no handicap. The board count rule will operate if the match is drawn. If this fails to resolve the match, elimination of bottom board etc will apply. If all games are drawn, the match will be replayed, players changing colours.

9.3.2 Teams one division apart - higher team must win 4.0 - 2.0;

9.3.3 Teams two divisions apart - higher team must win 4.5 - 1.5;

9.3.4 Teams three divisions apart - higher team must win 5.0 - 1.0.

9.3.5 Any result by a smaller margin means a win on handicap for the lower team.

9.3.6 Examples:

A div 1 team must win by at least 4.0 - 2.0 against a div 2 team
A div 1 team must win by at least 4.5 - 1.5 against a div 3 team
A div 1 team must win by at least 5.0 - 1.0 against a div 4 team
A div 2 team must win by at least 4.0 - 2.0 against a div 3 team
A div 2 team must win by at least 4.5 - 1.5 against a div 4 team
A div 3 team must win by at least 4.0 - 2.0 against a div 4 team.