

Oxfordshire Chess Association

Team and Individual awards for season 2017/18

Div 1 – Univ 1

Div 2 – Witney 2

Div 3 – Cowley 4

Div 4 – Cowley 5

Frank Wood Shield – Cumnor Six Horsemen of the Apocalypse

Div 1 individual – Joris Gerlagh (Univ 1) $10.5/13 = 80.97\%$

Div 2 individual – Daniel O'Byrne (Witney 2) $7.5/9 = 83.33\%$

Div 3 individual – Hari Selvaraj (MCS/B) $12.5/13 = 96.15\%$

Div 4 individual – John Courouble (Cowley 5) $10.5/12 = 87.50\%$

Lester Millin trophy – Hari Selvaraj (MCS/B) $12.5/13 = 96.15\%$

Oxon Individual Championship – James Jackson (Banbury)

George Spalding,

Secretary, OCA

Note than players only qualify for the individual prizes if they play more than half of the league games in the division

Oxfordshire Chess Association Chair's Report 2017/18

The past season has certainly been an interesting one. I feel that the new format Frank Wood Shield has been a great success, and all of the players I have talked to have enjoyed the experience. Well done to the winners, "Cumnor Six Horsemen of the Apocalypse". Even so, there were a few problems starting the competition. Can I ask all clubs to submit their FWS teams as soon as possible this year?

Unfortunately, we had a club folding after only playing six matches. Losing clubs clearly diminishes the Oxfordshire chess scene, and there is a considerable disruption when it happens midway through the season.

Thankfully, there has only been a small number of disputes, and I would like to thank George for his skill and tact in dealing with them. Can I call on all clubs to have a copy of the FIDE and OCA rules, and the "Guidance for Clubs and Captains" on hand for all matches. All captains should also have at least a passing familiarity with these documents.

Finally, on a personal note, I would like to point out that I have now completed my 3 year stint as chair and, as dictated by the constitution, I must step down. I would like to thank you all for the honour.

David Robson

League Defaults – Season 2017/18

Div 1: 15 (including one match by Wantage 1)

Div 2: 17 (including one match by Cumnor 1)

Div 3: 64 (includes one match by Cumnor 2, but 49 by Cowley Workers who withdrew in mid-season)

Div 4: 24 (including one match by Bicester 2 and one match by Univ 3)

Total: 120

This seems worse than last season but this is largely owing to the demise of Cowley Workers. If we exclude this, things were a bit better this time.

Frank Wood Shield Defaults/withdrawals – Season 2017/18

The competition was in a new form this season, so there is little value in quoting defaults this time.

George Spalding, Secretary
06/09/2018

Secretary's Report for Season 2017/18

OCA Committee meeting at Cowley CC – Thu 13th September 2018

General

I think people were pleased that we managed this time to complete this season largely by the end of April.

We were sad to lose the rump of the Cowley Workers Club in mid-season. Owing to serious illness in some of the players and/or their spouses they felt unable to continue their Div 3 schedule and decided to disband the Club.

Defaults for 2017/2018

See separate sheet

Disputes in 2017/2018

I am pleased to report there were few again in the season just ended. Probably the major one arose in a Div 4 match between Univ 3 and Cowley 5, when the former team were adjudged to have employed a dubious board order.

Frank Wood Shield in 2017/2018.

The final of this year's contest was won by the Cumnor Six Horsemen of the Apocalypse.

As it has been the first season of a new format for this event, there have been a number of teething problems. We should be looking at these issues over coming months so that matters are much clearer next time.

Honours for 2017/18

See separate sheet.

George Spalding
Secretary
4th Sept 2018

Oxfordshire Chess Association

Treasurer's Report on 2017-18 Season

(revision 1 dated 7 Sep 2018)

1. The enclosed spreadsheet makes alarming reading at first sight. However, this Report will, I hope, make clear the underlying problems.
2. The accounts are made up to 31 August 2018, and do not disclose transactions made since then. Thus they do not show a few last minute adjustments. On the **credit** side, I have banked £150.00 being the receipts for three Rose Hill county matches, plus £64.00 from the Cowley Chess Club in respect of its share of ECF charges for the use of unregistered players for the 2017-18 season. On the **debit** side, they do not show a cheque I have written to the ECF for £476.00 in respect of the total charges levied on the OCA for this season.
3. The first (and comparatively minor) problem concerns late payment by clubs of League affiliation fees, currently set at £10 per team entered. Only one club (Banbury) has paid so far for this season, and did so back in October. The other two payments related to the 2016-17 season. The OCA is thus owed the following amounts in regard to affiliation fees:

For the season 2015-16:

| | |
|------------|--------|
| University | £30.00 |
|------------|--------|

For the season 2016-17:

| | |
|------------|--------|
| University | £30.00 |
|------------|--------|

For the season 2017-18:

| | |
|----------------|--------------------------|
| University | £30.00 |
| City | £30.00 |
| Witney | £40.00 |
| Didcot | £40.00 (payment pending) |
| Wantage | £20.00 |
| Bicester | £20.00 |
| Cumnor | £20.00 |
| MCS | £10.00 |
| Abingdon | £10.00 |
| Cowley Workers | £10.00 |

Total affiliation fees outstanding = **£290.00**

To a large extent, this has been my fault, as I have not chased club treasurers for the money. Unfortunately, while I have the time to keep a careful record of OCA income and expenditure, I do not have enough for this sort of fund-raising, and must rely on clubs to send the money!

4. The second (and more substantial) problem concerns OCA liability to the ECF for the use by clubs of unregistered players in graded matches. This creates a quite unnecessary accounting burden on the OCA treasurer, who again hasn't got the time to dissect the blanket ECF request into separate club liabilities and chase the respective treasurers. Again, Banbury sets an example by not using unregistered players and so not incurring a charge. The OCA is currently owed the following amounts in this regard:

For the season 2015-16:

| | |
|------------|--------|
| University | £55.00 |
|------------|--------|

For the season 2016-17:

| | |
|------------|---------|
| University | £280.00 |
|------------|---------|

For the season 2017-18:

| | |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| University | £176.00 |
| Abingdon School | £57.00 |
| Bicester | £9.50 |
| Cowley | £64.00 (already paid) |
| Cowley Workers | £32.00 |
| Cumnor | £16.00 |
| Didcot | £41.50 (payment pending) |
| MCS | £32.00 |
| City | £32.00 |
| Witney | £16.00 |

Total arrears owed to OCA from University = **£395.00**

Total owed by OCA to ECF = **£476.00** (paid)

5. It is evident that if all affiliation and ECF arrears were paid, we would be £625.00 better off, clearing the deficit for 2017-18. If it could further happen that clubs could settle the coming season's affiliation fees promptly, along with their liabilities for ECF charges for 2017-18, our finances would be back in balance.
6. I therefore see no reason to increase the affiliation fee of £10.00 per team, as the underlying balance of income and expenditure is satisfactory.

I will be on holiday for 14 days from Saturday 8 September, returning on 22 September. I will have no email connection, but can be reached by text on 07505 799021 to answer any questions.

Simon King, Treasurer
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2017-18 SEASON (from 1 Sep 2017 to 31 Aug 2018)

(revision 1 dated 7 Sep 2018)

| | Current Account | Reserve Account | Total |
|--|-------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| Opening Balances | 2,286.41 | 722.70 | 3009.11 |
| INCOME | | | |
| Bank Interest | | 0.28 | |
| Club affiliation receipts: | | | |
| Bicester (2016-17) | 20.00 | | |
| Cowley (2017-18) | 60.00 | | |
| Banbury (2017-18) | 30.00 | | |
| TOTAL | 110.00 | | |
| Club dues for ECF game fee charges: | | | |
| MCS (2016-17) | 155.00 | | |
| Bicester (2016-17) | 100.00 | | |
| Witney (2016-17) | 20.00 | | |
| Banbury (2016-17) | 5.00 | | |
| Cumnor (2016-17) | 55.00 | | |
| Wantage (2016-17) | 17.50 | | |
| Cowley (2016-17) | 15.00 | | |
| TOTAL | 367.50 | | |
| | TOTAL INCOME: | 477.50 | |
| OUTGOINGS | | | |
| Venue costs for OCA mtgs (21/9/17; 24/5/18) | 27.50 | | |
| Venue costs for CCL county matches | 150.00 | | |
| ECF Yearbooks and entries fee | 72.00 | | |
| ECF (game fees for unregistered ODCL players (2016-17) | 842.50 | | |
| | TOTAL OUTGOINGS: | 1,092.00 | |
| Closing Balances | 1,671.91 | 722.98 | 2,394.89 |

Total loss for year = £614.22 -- see Treasurer's Report on amounts owing to the OCA as at 31Aug 2018

CCL Open Teams 2017-18 season

My report last year indicated that the CCL Open team competition was in difficulties, and in particular we had two of our home matches defaulted by the opposition. I recommended that we make a final effort to rejuvenate the Open competition by reducing both the number of players per team and the number of fixtures.

Despite changing the format of the CCL Open teams competition for this season:

1. Halving the boards per team from 20 to 10
2. Reducing the number of fixtures per team from 6 to 4
3. Changing to a format of all-play-all Jamboree-style fixtures

the season has not been successful, although Oxon did retain the Open team trophy that it won last year. Bucks were unable to field a team for two of these matches, and all other counties (including ourselves) needed to use significant numbers of players who were also eligible for the Under-160 team in order to field a team of just 10 players. This shows that there is a core of stalwart intermediate players who are playing at both Open and U-160 level.

Behind the scenes there have been many difficult and argumentative emails to me as the organiser of this year's competition in its new Jamboree-style format. As during last season, several Oxon players have again continued to express doubts about the viability of the Open team competition and have indicated that in its absence they would play in more 4NCL matches.

We have considered the future of the CCL Open team competition, and at present I'm still not sure that it has one as a stand-alone competition. My recommendation to the CCL AGM was that the Open and Under-160 teams be merged into a single team – with some kind of grading restriction at the top end. However, this proposal to the CCL AGM was not favoured by the other counties, and it was decided that the Open team competition will revert to the previous format of home and away matches over 16 boards. This will be aided by reducing the grading limit for the county 2nd teams - reverting to the previous level of Under-150, thus lessening the demands on the aforementioned core of intermediate players. I also have an increased expectation that this will see fewer defaults since Bucks now have an experienced Open team captain.

By reverting to 16-board Open team matches, we would be increasing the average cost per player for the hire of Cowley church hall. I think that £3 (£2.50 hall hire + 50p refreshments) is an acceptable match fee for home fixtures, with no match fee for away fixtures - since players pay for their own travelling costs. If home fixtures are played at Cowley, I will therefore be seeking a subsidy of £10 per home match from OCA. However, as soon as I have the 2018-19 fixture list, I shall also investigate availability and costs of other venues which do not have the time restrictions that Cowley church hall now has on every Saturday afternoon. (Due to a regular Saturday evening church booking, we have to vacate the premises by 5.30pm which means starting home matches at 1.30pm. – which is rather early for Hampshire players coming from the south of their county.)

Rod Langham

The results for the Oxon U160 team were 2 wins, 1 draw, 2 losses and 1 unplayed (see remarks at the end of the report). We ended up with 5 points equal with everyone else. However, the result of Hants v Bucks has not been recorded on the website, so it is unclear who has won. The detailed results can be found on the Oxford website in the Chiltern section.

It was a tough start to the season. Berkshire requested a reduction to 19 boards, then could only get 18, so we were one up by default. Simon kindly volunteered to step down which saved me the task of finding someone. The match teetered on the edge for quite a long time with Berkshire looking the stronger despite being outgraded on nearly every board. It was level with the last match to finish - between Derek Edwards and Rob Henley - and with minutes left on the clocks a draw was agreed. So the match was drawn 9.5:9.5. Our default point proving a match saver.

Our second match, against Bucks, proved even tougher. We had 2 players withdraw at the last minute and unfortunately I was unable to get replacements. However, Bucks didn't claim the defaults which was sporting of them. It didn't matter however, as they won comprehensively 10.5:7.5. We outgraded them on the top seven boards, but they easily outgraded us on the rest. There were some good wins from our side but it was not enough to turn the tide.

Our third match was against Berks as Hants asked for a postponement. We started out a board short due to illness, but 2 early wins put us in the lead. Although we outgraded them on all boards except the bottom 4, the difference was not enough to be significant. Once we got into a lead we never lost it. There were some fine attacking games played and we ended up winning 11:9.

Bucks could only field 12 players, which was a bit disappointing as 8 of our players had to stand down. We outgraded them on the top 6 boards but were roughly comparable on the bottom 6. In what seemed like a rerun of our last match, 2 early wins put us in the lead. Once we got into a lead we never lost it. There were some fine attacking games played and we ended up winning 7:5.

Oxford played Hants in the U160 County match on Saturday 7th April. This was the re-arranged match from December. Hants were noticeably lower graded than Oxford on the top 14 boards and were about equal on the bottom 6, so I was hopeful of a positive result. After the first few games it was level, and so it continued until near the end when Hants just edged ahead. As the last game was concluding the score was 9:10, but unfortunately we lost it. So the final score was 9:11.

Our last match was an away match against Hants which was postponed due to bad weather. I suggested 2 dates in May – the 12th and the 19th. Hants initially said they could make the 19th, but then said they couldn't do that one and could do the 12th.

Then they said they couldn't do the 12th either. I asked them to suggest some alternative dates but they never got back to me. At the beginning of May I decided it was too late to try and arrange a new date as Hants hadn't responded to my emails. It was a disappointing end to the season. It is not clear who has won this year as the result for the Hants v Bucks match has not been posted on the website.

Steve Rumsby

Stephen Rumsby

Oxford and District Chess League

GRADERS REPORT 2017-2018

Results have been received and submitted to the ECF as shown.

| Event Name | Event Code | Category | Players | New players | Half-results | Status |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|------------|---------|-------------|--------------|-----------------------------|
| Oxford & District League | PHOL18 | Standard | 308 | - | 2576 | Submitted without FWS Final |
| Kidlington Congress U225 | PHK18A | Standard | 28 | 0 | 114 | Accepted |
| Kidlington Congress U180 | PHK18B | Standard | 48 | 0 | 210 | Accepted |
| Kidlington Congress U145 | PHK18C | Standard | 57 | 0 | 246 | Accepted |
| Kidlington Congress U120 | PHK18D | Standard | 61 | 2 | 274 | Accepted |
| Chiltern League (U150) | PHCL18 | Standard | 114 | 2 | 188 | Submitted |
| Chiltern League (Open Jamboree) | PHCJ18 | Standard | 69 | - | 136 | Submitted |
| Wantage Roger Davidge Swiss | PHWC18 | Standard | 13 | 0 | 72 | Accepted |
| Bicester Swiss | No event this year | | | | | |
| Cowley Trial Games | OXCT17 | Standard | 12 | 1 | 14 | Accepted |
| Didcot John Richards Cup | PHDC17 | Standard | 12 | 0 | 26 | Further results accepted |
| Oxford City Club Championship | PHOC18 | Standard | 11 | - | 40 | Submitted |
| Oxfordshire Schools League | OXOS18 | Rapid play | 122 | - | 322 | Submitted |
| Oxfordshire Schools League | OXXS18 | Standard | 22 | - | 44 | Submitted |

Player identification is always a key issue and clubs are reminded that it is better to give a player's given name rather than just an initial. I can cope with misprints better if there is a name to work with.

If you Google **ECF Game Fee** you will very quickly find www.bcf.org.uk/grading/game-fees.htm which gives the details of current game fees and discounts for early submissions.

Peter Hemmings
25 May 2018

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OCA Junior Report 2017–18

Andrew Varney, September 2018

Schools League

The winners were:

U18 Cherwell School
U13 MCS
U11 MCS and St Joseph's Primary School
U9 MCS

Some 32 teams took part in these leagues.

We thank Joan Clanchy (St Mary & St John), Susan Tawse (St Clare's) and Robin Harskin (Christ Church) for all their work in supporting schools' chess over many years; all are moving on to other pastures.

John Place (Oxon Schools Chess League Secretary)

School and Club Teams

MCS and St Joseph's reached the national semi-finals of the EPSCA U11 & U9 team Championships, and St Philip & St James the U9 semi-finals, while St Joseph's finished 6th in the ECF National Finals in Uppingham. The MCS U13 team finished 7th in the ECF National Junior Team Challenge after winning qualifiers at Aldro School in Surrey and at MCS. (John Place)

Building on the experience of last year, the ECF U11 Girls semi-finals saw 5 Oxfordshire teams of 3 entered from 3 schools (OHS, Headington Prep and St Joseph's).

In addition to a strong level of junior participation in the OCA League, separate junior chess clubs are held at Bicester and Wantage and (since earlier this year) at St Giles, Oxford. There is a strong possibility that another new junior club may start up in Headington in the near future launched on the back of the successful holiday clubs run by *Oxford New Generation* (see below).

The Oxfordshire Junior Squad club ("Ojays") continued to meet weekly during term time, with professional coaching most weeks. Although it is by invitation only, since it is intended only for county-level players, membership grew yet again during the year, with a typical attendance of between around 10 to 16, mostly aged between 6 and 11 years' old, on Thursdays at Cumnor and averaging up to 20 on alternate Tuesday evenings in Yarnton, as the "Ojays+" session for secondary school pupils has become very popular too. For further details see <http://www.oxon-junior-chess-squad.org.uk/>

Holiday Clubs

A new venture this year was a holiday time junior chess and activity club with chess teaching and play in the mornings and other activities in the afternoons. There were sessions run successfully at Easter time, May half term and during August by the fledgling company *Oxford New Generation*, featuring small groups of around 8-12 from beginner to junior county level. Based on feedback and repeated attendance, these were clearly much enjoyed by the children and well-received by the parents.

EPSCA Inter-Association Competitions

U9 – The Oxfordshire Under-9 squad enjoyed an energized and successful season. Veterans of the 2017–18 campaign stepped up to take over from players who had moved on in the age groups and a host of exciting newcomers, not least in the middle order, helped make us a force to reckon with. There was impressive continuity and team spirit in the squad this year thanks to the enthusiasm and commitment of the players and the hugely positive support of parents. Highlights of the season included second place and 22 wins in the EPSCA South Zone final and an even stronger performance in the EPSCA national final with 23 wins securing fourth equal. While we surrendered the South Zone shield, we far surpassed our previous year’s performance in the final. The season as a whole witnessed some memorably stylish, dominant and defeat-cheating displays across main and reserve boards.

Elliot Kendall (Oxon U9 team manager)

U11 – In the season 2018-2019 the Oxon U11 team played in several friendly and official events. The first notable event was the Four County U11 Teams friendly in Maidenhead (11 Feb 2018), in which Oxon team came first 6 points ahead of the second place, convincingly beating Sussex, Maidenhead and Bucks. The 2018 EPSCA U11 Zone South qualifier on 17th March at New College, Swindon was a major test for the team but Oxon team managed to score 35 points and qualify for the finals coming 4th in the overall standing. The Under 11 Final took place in Birmingham at Grace Academy Solihull on 21st April 2018, in which 15 counties were participating. This was a very tough event in which Oxon finished 9th scoring 25 points. The winners were Kent and Richmond dominating throughout the event and scoring 48 points each. For the sake of comparison, the average grade of Richmond players was 114 ECF (Rapid Play), of Kent players 110, and of Oxon team 80. It should be mentioned that in all these events the Oxon team did not have all its strong players but at least many U9 players got a chance to acquire invaluable experience by playing against strong opposition.

David Zakarian (Oxon U11 team manager)

U11 Girls – The girls’ team fought bravely at this year’s EPSCA U11 final and with a bit more practice could surely improve on their 10th place positioning. An honourable mention to Rosa Zeng who was the team’s star performer with 3 wins out of 3. Alison Lau and Elizabeth Houlihan also did really well to score 2 out of 3. The competition was fierce, but as always, we’ll be back!!

Marc Ives (Oxon U11G team manager)

PS Oxfordshire hosted the EPSCA final this year and also ran an inter-county girls friendly tournament at U11 and U18 level last autumn. Oxon won the U18 trophy convincingly, while the U11 competition was so close between the 4 teams that one extra half game point could have completely reversed the final team standings! A more elite team of Oxon U11 girls also retained the trophy at another inter-county friendly held in Warwickshire. As he steps down from the role, we would like thank Marc Ives for managing the girls’ U11 team for a good number of years.

Many of the trophies won by the various teams can be seen in the “virtual trophy cabinet” at <http://www.oxon-junior-chess-squad.org.uk/trophy-cabinet>.

SCCU U14/U130

Our SCCU U14/U130 team has looked very strong this year. Having defeated Bucks 19½-4½, the team went straight through to a three way SCCU final (Hampshire and Berkshire disappointingly having withdrawn). An excellent 14½-9½ over Surrey will be followed by the team's final match for the title against Essex on September 30th. Surrey having beaten Essex, we must be ante-post favourites.

John Place (Oxon U14/U130 team manager)

ECF U13/U18

Oxfordshire secondary school juniors are as busy as ever and it was not easy to gather together teams in the academic year 2017/2018. Nonetheless, Oxfordshire managed to field a team of ten players for the Four Counties Invitational Tournament in Rugby, which took place on 26th November 2017. The team didn't collect too many points, but everyone enjoyed the competition and fought hard in all three rounds. Unfortunately, there were not enough responses for an invitation to play in the ECF Under 18 County Championships 2018.

Ola Murawska (Oxon U18 team manager)

4NCL

Oxfordshire juniors featured in the Oxford teams in the 4NCL and possibly in several other teams. Amongst them, Pavel Asenov and Zoe Varney played in first division Oxford 1, while Ross Tselos, Tom Shepherd, Dimitrios Zakarian and Hugo Rayner played for Oxford 3 and 4.

Three 'Ojays' (Oxfordshire Juniors) teams played in the Junior 4NCL weekends, which proved to be a great learning experience for many of the players. The Ojays A team also won the first place Division 2 trophy in September (weekend 1), having just dropped one match point out of ten, and were second in Division 1 at weekend 3 in April.

Delancey UK Chess Challenge

A relatively large number of schools and clubs took part in the UK Chess Challenge this year, but the entries for the Oxfordshire Megafinal were down dramatically. This was due to a number of reasons, including the date being in the Easter holidays, the venue not being confirmed until a matter of a few weeks beforehand, and lack of communication from the new organiser.

As a result, while some players missed out altogether, a lot of Oxfordshire juniors entered other Megafinals and there were probably at least as many qualifiers for the Gigafinal stage as in previous years. A reasonable number qualified for the final Terafinal and Challenger tournaments, which this year are being held during September rather than in August.

Other Oxon Tournaments/Events

Witney Junior Rapid Play is taking place on 23 September. Last year there were over 60 entries to the junior tournaments, just over half in the Major and a few less in the Minor section. It is expected to be at least as popular again this year.

Oxfordshire Junior Chess tournament

The Oxfordshire Junior Chess Championships for 2017-18 were held at Cumnor PS on 6-7 January 2018. The sections consisted of Under 9 (6-round Rapid Play, ungraded), Under 11 (6-round Rapid Play, ECF graded) and Under 13, Under 15 & Under 18 combined as one 6-round 2-day Standard Play tournament. All sections were well represented with over 120 entries total from 27 different primary or prep schools and 15 secondary or senior schools.

The winners were:

| | | | | |
|-----|-----------|--------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| U9 | Champions | Jan Murawski | St Joseph's | 5.5/6 (=TB 1&2) |
| | Runner-up | Jamie Sarisky | Phil & Jim | |
| | 3rd place | Jacob Iliffe | MCS | 5/6 |
| | | Charlie Lambert | Chandlings | 4/6 (SOP) |
| U11 | Champion | Amaan Kassey | MCS | 5.5/6 (SOP) |
| | Runner-up | Dimitrios Zakarian | CCCS | 5.5/6 |
| | 3rd place | Tashika Arora | OHS | 5/6 (SOP) |
| U13 | Champion | Hari Selvaraj | MCS | 4.5/6 |
| | Runner-up | Leonora Ives | SS Hel/Kats | 4/6 (=U15) |
| U15 | Champions | Bill Read | Wood Farm | 4/6 (no TB) |
| | | Josh Soanes | Bartholomew | 4/6 |
| U18 | Champion | Liza Sheremetyeva | OHS | 6/6 |

Under 18 School Cherwell*

Under 11 School MCS* (on tie-break)

* clock prizes awarded to Abingdon School and St Joseph's as Cherwell and MCS were awarded the clock prizes the previous season.

Individuals – International Representation

England representation among Oxfordshire juniors included:

| | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Daniel Varney | European Schools, U17 | (July 2018, Poland) |
| Ben Aubury | European Schools, U13 | (July 2018, Poland) |
| Elizaveta Sheremetyeva | European Youth, U17G | (August 2018, Latvia) |
| Dimitrios Zakarian | European Youth, U12 | (August 2018, Latvia) |

Zoe Varney was unable to play in the European Youth in September 2017 at the last minute due to illness. Several other Oxfordshire juniors played abroad in various tournaments, including Hugo Rayner and Tom Shepherd in the Gibraltar Junior International in August 2018.

After winning the U7 section of the English Youth Grand Prix this year, Jan Murawski can expect to have a chance to represent England in an international event in 2019.

Committee Proposals for League Rule Changes at 2018 OCA AGM

(formulated by Roger Thetford and Gerard O'Reilly at the request of the Committee Meeting)

I. Starring Rules

The discussion at the Committee Meeting recommended that the League Rules specify what should happen when clubs/teams fail to nominate 'starred' players as required by the rules, and the formulation below is intended to reflect the consensus at the meeting.

Current rules on starring:

"2.3 Any club entering more than one team in the League must nominate or 'star' four players in each of its Division 1 teams and in any other teams (except its lowest). Starred players may not play for another team either in the same or a lower division in the course of a season.

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."

Starred players may not play for another team either in the same or a lower division in the course of a season.

Proposal arising out of the discussion at the May Committee Meeting:

"2.3.1 Any club entering more than one team in the League must nominate or 'star' four players in each of its Division 1 teams and in any other teams (except its lowest).

2.3.2 Each team required to 'star' players should notify the League Secretary of its nominations at the start of the season or as soon as possible thereafter. If such a team has not informed the Secretary of its starred players by 1 November, the Secretary will make the nominations. In this case the starred players will be those the Secretary judges to be the four strongest players likely to play the required number of games for that team over the season. The Secretary will publish on the OCA website the lists of starred players for all the relevant teams.

2.3.3 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."

The proposed addition is Rule 2.3.2 in the right-hand column, and we considered it helpful to draw together the rules relating to starring in a larger Rule 2.3. This would of course require re-numbering the current Rules 2.5 (with its subsections) to 2.7 as 2.4 to 2.6, as well as updating a couple of cross-references in the Guidance for Clubs and Captains.

II. Matches not played (by agreement)

The discussion on this matter arose from the perceived need to clarify the treatment under the rules of fixtures left unplayed by agreement between the team captains with the permission of the League

Secretary, as happened twice last season. The formulation below is intended to reflect as well as possible the feeling of the meeting.

Current rules on defaulted matches:

4. Defaults

4.1 Any team failing to keep an engagement without giving a reasonable explanation will lose the match by default. 4.2 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.

4.3 A team captain who is aware before the start of a match of being unable to field a full team may not name a missing player on the match card; any game or games defaulted must be from the bottom board upwards. In such a case the opposing captain should be informed as early as possible.

A captain who learns only at the venue immediately before the match that the opposing team is incomplete may adjust board order to take account of which players would otherwise be left without a game.

4.4 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.

4.5 An intra-club match that is not played will be recorded as a 0-0 double default. Neither team will score any match points.

Proposal arising out of the discussion at the May Committee Meeting:

4. Defaults

4.1 Any team failing to keep an engagement without giving a satisfactory explanation will be deemed to have lost the match 6-0, with all six games lost by default.

4.2 Any team defaulting more than one match in this way 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.

4.3 For every four games defaulted by a team in the league, that team will have one match point deducted from its total, unless a satisfactory explanation is offered.

4.4 If two teams (with the consent of the League Secretary) agree not to play a match, the match will be recorded as a 0-0 double default, with neither side scoring a match point but neither incurring defaults on the individual boards.

4.5 A team captain who is aware before the start of a match of being unable to field a full team may not name a missing player on the match card; any game or games defaulted must be from the bottom board upwards. In such a case the opposing captain should be informed as early as possible.

A captain who learns only at the venue immediately before the match that the opposing team is incomplete may adjust board order to take account of which players would otherwise be left without a game.

Here, the basic proposal for change consists in the replacement of the current Rule 4.5 by Rule 4.4, along with a little tidying-up, mainly of the order of the rules.

Time Limits: A Proposal for Amending League Rule 7.5.1

The use of incremental time limits has become increasingly common at all levels of chess with the widespread use of digital clocks, including at our two local weekend tournaments each year at Witney and Kidlington, and thereby in the revived Oxfordshire Individual Championship. A number of other leagues have already introduced such time limits in recent years. More and more chessplayers have experienced and appreciated the intrinsic benefits of an incremental time allowance, and more clubs have enough reliable equipment suitable for the purpose.

We therefore wish to propose that—where a club has digital clocks which cater for incremental time limits and where time constraints at its venue (as to when the premises have to be vacated) do not exclude their use—the OCA introduce the possibility of using an incremental time limit in the League in some cases.

The *current* rules on time limits in the OCA League are these:

"7.5 Time Limits

7.5.1 A time limit of all moves in 90 minutes will be played in Divisions 1 and 2.

7.5.2 In Division 3 a time limit of all moves in 90 minutes will also normally be played. However, a team which regularly includes one or more players aged under 16 on 1 September in the year in which the season starts may stipulate before the start of the season that its matches be played at a time limit of all moves in 75 minutes. A club secretary or team captain/manager may do this by emailing the League Secretary and the Fixtures Secretary. In such a case, the time limit will be published in the preliminary matter at the top of the authorized Fixtures List.

7.5.3 The time limit in Division 4 will be all moves in 75 minutes."

We do not propose any change to Rules 7.5.2 or 7.5.3, only a change to rule 7.5.1.

We have formulated two possible ways of changing Rule 7.5.1 for the AGM to consider.

Version A:

7.5.1 A time limit of all moves in 90 minutes will normally be played in Divisions 1 and 2. However, a team in Division 1 or 2 may stipulate before the start of the season that its home matches be played at a time limit of 75 minutes plus 10 seconds per move increment from move 1. A club secretary or team captain/manager may do this by emailing the League Secretary and the Fixtures Secretary. In such a case, the time limit will be published in the preliminary matter at the top of the authorized Fixtures List.

Version B:

7.5.1 A time limit of all moves in 90 minutes will normally be played in Divisions 1 and 2. However, a team in Division 1 or 2 may declare a preference before the start of the season for its matches to be played at a time limit of 75 minutes plus 10 seconds per move increment from move 1. A club secretary or team captain/manager may do this by emailing the League Secretary and the Fixtures Secretary. In such a case, the time limit will be published in the preliminary matter at the top of the authorized Fixtures List. All league matches between teams who have thus declared a preference will be played at that incremental time limit.

Notes & Queries relating to the proposal:

(i) *What is the essential difference between the two versions?*

Under Version A, a Division 1 or 2 team (belonging to a club with an appropriate venue and suitable equipment) is entitled to stipulate that *all* its home matches throughout the season will be played at the incremental limit. (Cf. the current Rule 7.5.2.)

Under Version B, the incremental time limit would be used in all and *only* those matches in Divisions 1 and 2 *between teams who have expressed a preference for it.*

(ii) *Why two versions at all?*

Though our own preference would be for Version A, we understand that some may have objections or misgivings. We thought it desirable, therefore, to present an alternative, Version B, still allowing the use of an incremental time limit in some cases, while meeting understandable concerns about Version A. It would in our view be a pity if the idea of an incremental time limit, with its intrinsic advantages, were rejected by the AGM rather than given a chance to prove its viability in the OCA League as it has in various other leagues. To mention briefly what is perhaps the most likely objection to Version A:

Under Version A, teams who may not prefer the incremental time will be forced to use it in away matches against teams that declare their intention of using it. And in that case, it might be argued, that gives the home team an advantage. (Of course, those teams that prefer the 'all moves in 90 minutes' option might similarly be argued to have an advantage in their home matches against teams that prefer the 'incremental' option but are forced to use the 'all moves in 90 minutes' time limit.)

Nevertheless, even if a club feels very strongly in urging such an objection against Version A, the same objection could not be raised against Version B, under which no team would be forced to play under the incremental time limit which had not already declared its preference to do so. And it is hard to see what analogous objection there could be to matches between teams who have declared a preference for the incremental time limit being played under that limit.

(iii) *Under an incremental time limit, might not games go on very late?*

This is the concern most frequently raised against this sort of proposal. It must be admitted that in theory this could be a problem. [I (GO'R) was worried about this possibility when we introduced increments at the Kidlington Tournament a few years ago. But in practice it has worked very smoothly, and the feedback I received from local players who hadn't used an incremental time limit before was overwhelmingly positive.]

Aware of this concern, we have proposed a time limit under which after three hours of play a minimum of 90 moves will necessarily have been played. It is very rare for league games to go even that distance. And, after only 10 minutes more, in those very rare games that are unfinished in 90 moves, a minimum of 120 moves would necessarily have had to be played.

Mike Truran
Gerard O'Reilly
(31 July 2018)