

Oxon Schools' Chess League

General Organisation of the League

1. The Oxon Schools' Chess League is a non profit-making organisation dedicated to promoting chess within schools through the establishment of a schools league and, where possible, supplying chess sets or clocks to playing schools. An AGM is held each autumn on a date as announced by the Chairman (ideally in September), at which the officers of the league are elected and any modifications to the rules are agreed.
2. There are four age groups within the league: U9, U11, U13, U18 (Open). If the number of entrants is small, age-groups may be combined. If the number of entrants is ten or more, the teams shall be divided into two or more pools of approximately equal strength, as determined by the Secretary and agreed by the Chairman.
3. A pupil may play in any team provided he is under the stipulated age (the age to be calculated on the 1st September of that school year).
4. Teams comprise **six** players, except for U18 (Open) where the team is of four players. These are to be arranged in order of playing strength, the strongest on board one.
5. Composite teams (drawing players from more than one school) are permitted to play, but shall not be eligible for the trophies. An exception is made for the U13 section, where up to two U11 players from “feeder” local-authority maintained primary schools in Oxfordshire may play for the associated secondary school team. This is in order to encourage continuity as children move from primary to secondary school, especially where a secondary school chess club currently has very limited membership.
6. After the Secretary has sent out details of the league, schools should arrange matches between themselves at a time and venue that is mutually suitable. Each team will play an opponent once only, except if the number of teams in any division is less than five in which case, subject to mutual agreement, they will play twice, home and away. Schools should attempt to play some of their matches during the first term in order to avoid a backlog of fixtures. The Secretary will give a date for the completion of all matches; this will usually be set as the end of the second week of the third term.
7. Whenever a match has been played, both team managers should enter the result on the Oxon Schools League Website (www.oxfordfusion.com/oca/).
8. At the completion of all league matches, the top two teams in each division or pool will play in a knockout competition for the championship (unless home-and-away fixtures were played, in which case the top team becomes the champion). The order will be decided as follows:
 1. league points gained (win = 3 pts; draw = 2 pts; loss = 1 pt; No Result = 0 pts);
 2. where league points are equal, the result of the match between the two teams;
 3. where the match between the two was a draw; the team with the greater games won and lost difference.
9. Where three or more teams share equal match points, the following tie-breaks will apply:
 1. game-point difference over the whole season
 2. result of the match between any two tied teams
 3. game-point difference after eliminating the results of all bottom-board games over the whole season.

10. If there are two pools, then the winner of one pool shall play the runner-up in the other pool. The two winning teams shall play a final and the winning team becomes champion.
11. If there are three or four pools, the winner of pool A will play the runner-up of pool B, the winner of pool B will play the runner-up of pool C, and so on. The winners of each pool will proceed to semi-finals.
12. In the case of three pools, a fourth place in the semi-finals will be allocated to the runner-up team which had the highest game score in the pool play-off stage. If there is a tie for this place on game points, the following tie breaks shall be applied in order:
 1. Fewest defaulted boards.
 2. Board count.
 3. Bottom-board elimination.
13. If a match in a pool play-off or semi-final stage is drawn, the tie breaks specified in 12 above shall be applied in order.
14. If a final match is drawn, both teams will be declared winners and the title will be shared, except in the case where boards in the final match have been defaulted, in which case the team with the fewest defaults will be declared the winner.
15. Cancellation of matches: where any team withdraws from a fixture on the day of the match without cogent reason, their opponents will be awarded a 3pt win and the defaulting team 0 pts.
16. Should a team have fewer than the necessary six (four for U18 (Open) section) players for a match, the board(s) defaulted will be the lowest board(s) (i.e. the players present will occupy the top boards in descending order of ability irrespective of whether they would have originally played on those boards).
17. All teams playing should be accompanied by an adult (teacher or parent) to oversee the correct running of the match (see below).
18. The League Secretary will endeavour to ensure that the winning team in each league receives the trophy (to be kept for one year and engraved) and individual players medals, and the losing finalists receive a certificate for having reached the county finals.
19. All results shall be posted on the website. Teachers are encouraged to print off and display in their schools.

Match Organisation

The final arrangement of a match depends upon agreement between the two teams.

General rules are as follows.

1. Matches should be played using full size chess sets. Where a school does not have these (or clocks, for matches in the U11 – U18 age groups), the home manager should advise the away team and the visitors may bring their own sets / clocks. If neither school has full size sets, whatever is available may be used.
2. Length of matches.
 - U9: Either one hour for the whole game or, only where both schools agree, half an hour for each player on the clock. Where the one hour match is played, adults in charge should take reasonable steps to ensure that any player does not take an unsporting or unnecessary amount of time over his/her move(s). If a game is unfinished at the end of the hour, those supervising can agree the result between them.

- U11: One hour match. Chess clocks should be used, with half an hour each on the clock. Rules regarding adjudication etc. as above.
 - U13: One hour / one and a half hour match. Chess clocks should be used, from thirty to forty-five minutes for each player. Rules regarding adjudication etc. as above.
 - U18: Two hours for the match. Chess clocks should be used, with one hour for each player. Rules regarding adjudication etc. as above.
 - Finals should use clocks wherever possible. Team managers should agree time limits between themselves, but they should not be less than as above.
3. Those in charge of teams should ensure that matches are played in the correct conditions of quiet. Players who have finished their games should not be allowed to cluster round unfinished games. Ideally, there is space for children to record their games. Home team managers should try to supply score sheets.
 4. The full rules of chess always apply. Particularly, this involves:
 - touch move and touch take;
 - where players have a chess clock, the same hand must move the piece and press the clock.

There are, of course, other rules, some of which are more complicated. Common sense and fair play should always prevail in any dispute. In particular, the July 2014 FIDE Laws relating to the penalty of loss of game for illegal moves are considered inappropriate at this junior level, so will not be enforced.

5. Colours: At the start of the game, the players toss for colours. The winning captain shall have the choice of White or Black on the odd or even numbered boards.
6. It is traditional, though not compulsory, for the Home team to offer some sort of refreshment to the visiting team (usually orange juice / chocolate bar etc).

The above are intended only as a guide. The general rule is that fair play, common sense and the true spirit of the game are always adhered to. Any disputes should be referred to the Chairman, whereupon the league committee will act as arbiters, but it is hoped that these will not occur!