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## ***The Constitution and Rules of the Bristol & District Chess League***

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### **The Constitution**

- A The League
- B General meetings
- C Winding Up of the League

### **The Rules**

- 1 Membership
- 2 Management
- 3 General Rules of Team Competitions
- 4 Quickplay Finishes
- 5 Team Championships
- 6 Team Knock Out
- 7 Minor Team Knock Out
- 8 Other Competitions

## **THE CONSTITUTION**

### **A THE LEAGUE**

- A1 This is the Constitution and Rules of a voluntary association known as “The Bristol and District Chess League” (“the League”).
- A2 The objectives of the League shall be to:
  - Promote interest in and to encourage the study and practice of chess,
  - give advice on all chess matters,
  - organise and carry out championships and competitions between clubs and individual players in membership of the League.
- A3 The affairs of the League shall be governed by this Constitution and Rules, as managed and administered by a League Management Committee (“the LMC”).
- A4 The affairs of the League shall be conducted by its Officers, who are required to:-
  - transact the business of the League in the best interest of the League, and according to the wishes of the LMC,
  - maintain appropriate records and accounts of all their transactions on behalf of the League for an appropriate period, and, whenever required to do so by the LMC, produce these records and provide a full and clear account of their activities,
  - hand over promptly to the Treasurer all money received by them on behalf of the League,
  - protect any League property in their care, and hand it over to the LMC when required to do so.

## **B GENERAL MEETINGS**

- B.1 A General Meeting may be called at any time by the LMC or by the written request of the secretaries of three Member Clubs delivered to the LMC. The LMC shall give at least fourteen days' notice of any General Meeting by way of an Agenda for the Meeting circulated to the secretaries of all Member Clubs. The Agenda shall give the Motions and state the Elections on which the General Meeting shall vote.
- B.2 Motions may be proposed, either by any Individual Member of the League ("Member"), in which case it must be seconded by another Member, or by the LMC. Only those Motions published in the Agenda may be debated at a General Meeting.
- B.3 The LMC shall nominate a Chairman for each General Meeting.
- B.4 A quorum of twenty Members must be present when any vote is taken at a General Meeting. Only Members may vote, and voting shall be by show of hands.
- B.5 An Election of a League Officer shall be conducted by Transferable Voting. A vote shall be taken for each of the declared candidates. If any candidate receives more than half of the votes cast, they are elected. Otherwise, a candidate receiving the lowest vote shall be eliminated from the ballot. The process is then repeated. Any unresolved tie shall be decided by lot.
- B.6 Any Member may propose an amendment to any Motion as published, so long as that amendment is entirely concerned with the substance of the original Motion. The Proposer and Secunder, or the LMC, may accept an amendment to their own motion without a vote. Otherwise, an amendment shall be accepted if it is approved by more than half of those voting.
- B.7 Any Motion to alter or amend the Constitution of the League ("Constitutional Change") requires approval by at least two-thirds of those voting, and must then be ratified, by at least two-thirds of the Members voting at a General Meeting held not less than one month and not more than eighteen months thereafter, before the Motion comes into effect.
- B.8 Any Motion to alter or amend the Rules of the League ("Rule Change") requires approval by at least two-thirds of those voting.
- B.9 Any other Motion requires approval by more than half of those voting.

## **C WINDING UP OF THE LEAGUE**

- C.1 A Motion to wind up the League is a Constitutional Change.
- C.2 If ratified, the LMC shall, thereupon, proceed to realize the assets of the League, and after the discharge of liability, shall divide any balance remaining among those Member Clubs at the date of the first approval of the Motion whose subscriptions were then fully paid up, in proportion to the last annual subscriptions paid to the League by such clubs.

# THE RULES

## 1. MEMBERSHIP

### 1.1 General

All memberships of the League are subject to the approval of the LMC.

### 1.2 Member Clubs

- a. All chess clubs in Bristol and the surrounding district (as determined by the LMC) are eligible to be Member Clubs.
- b. The subscription to the League for a Member Club for the year from September to the following August shall be £30 per team (for teams in divisions 1, 2 and 3) or £20 per team (for teams in all other divisions) entered in the Team Championship.
- c. Each Member Club shall also pay the ECF dues for any player who was not a member during the previous season and is required to pay a fee or subscription for that season under the rules of the ECF.
- d. All subscriptions, fees and fines are payable to the League Treasurer within one month of receipt of a request for payment from the Treasurer.
- e. The LMC may fine the club up to £5 per team for each month or part thereof by which the payment is late.
- f. Clubs should pay their fees in a single transaction. If a club causes a second bill to be sent it will be charged £5

### 1.3 Individual Membership

All bona FIDE members of Member Clubs are automatically Individual Members of the League ("Members") and are not required to pay any fees.

### 1.4 Affiliated Membership

Any organization is eligible to be an Affiliated Member of the League ("Affiliate"). An Affiliate is not required to pay any fees. An Affiliate may nominate two representatives who will have the rights of Members in respect of General Meetings.

### 1.5 External Affiliations

The League shall affiliate to the West of England Chess Union and shall support the ECF as a registered Game Fee event (Rule 1.2.c).

## **2 MANAGEMENT**

### **2.1 Organization of the League Management Committee**

- a. The LMC shall consist of the following League Officers: President, Chairman, General Secretary, Match Secretary, Treasurer, Congress Secretary, ECF Representative, Grand Prix Secretary, Junior Organizer, Recruitment and Publicity Officer, Webmaster and a WECU representative (“the LMC posts”).
- b. No person may hold more than one of the following LMC posts at the same time: President, Chairman, General Secretary, Match Secretary, and Treasurer.
- c. The LMC may from time to time appoints or terminates the appointment of a Trophy Secretary, a Minutes Secretary, and/or such other League Officers (excluding the LMC posts and the Auditor) as it sees fit.
- d. Meetings of the LMC shall normally be organized by the General Secretary. As well as the other LMC members, he shall invite to any meeting any League Officer or other person who shall be able to assist the workings of the LMC, or who has reasonable cause to be represented before the LMC. Any such person shall have speaking rights but not voting rights at the meeting.
- e. Five members of the LMC shall form a quorum for a meeting of the LMC. The Chairman, or in his absence the President, shall preside.

### **2.2 General Powers of the League Management Committee**

- a. In the case of any infringement of these Rules by a Member Club, the LMC may impose an appropriate penalty, which may comprise a fine not exceeding £25, a deduction of points in the Team Championships, or the disqualification of a team or teams from one or more competitions. Such a penalty shall take account of the gravity of the infringement, and where appropriate due warning of an infringement shall be given to the Member Club prior to the imposition of any penalty.
- b. Any protest or dispute, or any matter arising not provided for in these rules, shall be referred to the LMC whose decision thereon shall be final.
- c. The LMC may at any time replace any League Officer who ceases to act.
- d. The LMC may at any time act to fill any LMC post which has become vacant for any reason.

### **2.3 The General Secretary**

- a. The General Secretary shall be the primary external contact for the League and represent the League on all bodies to which the League is entitled representation, including the WECU Executive.
- b. The General Secretary shall summon and give due notice of all General Meetings of the League and meetings of the LMC and maintain records thereof.
- c. The General Secretary shall receive an honorarium of £50 if he continues to act in that capacity.

## **2.4 The Match Secretary**

- a. The Match Secretary shall be responsible for the day-to-day running of the League's fixtures and competitions.
- b. The Match Secretary shall receive an honorarium of £50 if he continues to act in that capacity.

## **2.5 The Treasurer**

- a. The Treasurer shall receive and take charge of the funds of the League and pay all accounts approved by the Chairman or by the LMC.
- b. The Treasurer shall complete an Annual Account and Balance Sheet up to and including 31 March each year. These shall be certified by the Treasurer and the General Secretary and duly audited.
- c. The Treasurer shall receive an honorarium of £50 if he continues to act in that capacity.

## **2.6 Annual General Meetings**

The Annual General Meeting of the League ("the AGM") shall be held in May or June on a date to be fixed by the LMC. At the AGM reports and accounts shall be rendered by the General Secretary, the Match Secretary and the Treasurer, and, at the discretion of the LMC, by any other League Officer; there will be an election of officers for the LMC posts; there will be an election for the post of Auditor. No person may hold this post at the same time as he holds an LMC post.

## **2.7 Voting at General Meetings**

At any General Meeting including the AGM, any member present may at any time before or during a vote on a Motion, where the Motion affects the playing conditions, rules, format, eligibility or any other aspect of a chess match, request that a separate vote be taken for that Motion for each division and/or competition, or for specific divisions and/or competitions. If such a request is made, the question shall be put to the vote as a procedural motion and, if approved by more than half of those voting, separate votes shall be taken on the substantive Motion as specified in the request.



### **3 GENERAL RULES OF TEAM COMPETITIONS**

#### **3.1 General**

- a. The LMC shall organize and promote the team competitions described in these rules. It shall provide a trophy for each competition, engraved with the winner's particulars.
- b. A representative of the winner of any competition may accept the custody of the relevant League trophy for a limited period. Any person accepting custody must:
  - sign a declaration provided by the Treasurer to the effect that the person shall give all due diligence to providing safe custody for the trophy, and accept any conditions of custody imposed by the LMC or its insurers,
  - provide the Treasurer with a permanent address at which the trophy shall be kept, and any changes in that address during the period of custody; immediately notify the Treasurer in the event of any loss or damage to the trophy, providing all the necessary information for any insurance claim to be completed,
  - return the trophy to the Treasurer on demand.

#### **3.2 Rules of Play**

- a. All games shall be played in accordance with the latest Laws of Chess published by FIDE. Each club must have a copy of these laws available at their home matches. See Link below for the FIDE Laws of Chess taking effect from 1 January 2018.

<https://www.fide.com/fide/handbook.html?id=208&view=article>

- b. Games may be recorded in either algebraic or English descriptive notation, but the use of algebraic notation shall be encouraged by the League.
- c. All team competitions shall be played without an arbiter. Team captains shall not be acting as arbiters.
- d. Games requiring all moves to be completed in 60 minutes or less shall be subject to the FIDE Laws of Rapidplay. Games requiring all moves to be completed in 61 minutes or more shall be subject to the standard FIDE Laws.
- e. Any player whose mobile phone makes an audible noise shall have their opponent awarded an extra two minutes for the first offence claimed and shall lose their game for any subsequent offence during the same game.  
A player who has a reasonable necessity may request permission of the captains to keep their phone switched on in silent mode.  
A player who, without such permission, makes or answers a phone call or text or consults a mobile phone in any way other than to switch it off shall lose their game immediately.
- f. The LMC may make additional match bylaws which shall be circulated by the Match Secretary and/or made available on the League website.

### **3.3 Playing Sessions & Rates of Play**

- a. The playing session shall not be on a Friday, Saturday, or Sunday, except with the express advance permission of the LMC.
- b. The playing session shall be from 7.30pm until 10.30pm. The period of grace before the game is defaulted is 8pm. However, all clocks must be started by 7:40 pm.
- c. Where suitable digital clocks are available and the playing venue allows enough time, the standard rate of play shall be 80 minutes on the clock for each player, with additional time of 10 seconds after each move. An alternative of 55 minutes with additional time of 10 seconds per move may be used for any game in which a junior is playing (see 3.3.e).
- d. In other circumstances, or where captains agree, an alternative time of 90 minutes for all the moves may be used. An alternative of 65 minutes for all moves may be used for any game in which a junior is playing (see 3.3.e). In these cases, Rule 4 regarding quickplay finishes shall apply.
- e. Any junior who is aged under 16 on the 1 September of the current chess season may use the alternative time rates stated in sections 3.3.c and 3.3.d. To use these reduced time rates the club should give the opposing club 72 hours' notice of intent.
- f. The normal playing session is regulated using a chess clock.
- g. These rates of play apply to all team championship games and the knock-out competitions.

### **3.4 Fixtures**

- a. Before the start of the season, the Match Secretary shall determine and publish a list of fixtures for the season. This list along with the complete handbook will be published electronically on the League website [www.chessit.co.uk](http://www.chessit.co.uk) The fixtures, club directory and Rules will all be available separately for download. Additional fixtures may be determined by the Match Secretary during the season. The electronic copy will be updated accordingly.
- b. Any fixture determined by the Match Secretary may be rescheduled at the direction of the LMC. Such a fixture may also be rescheduled by the explicit approval of the Match Secretary in advance together with the agreement of the opposing team captains, providing that the rescheduled match takes place within the published duration of the competition, and that the Match Secretary is informed of the rescheduled date by the home captain within 30 days of the postponement.

### **3.5 Eligibility of Players**

Only Members may compete in League team competitions. Additional eligibility rules may apply in each competition.

### **3.6 Match Preliminaries**

The following preliminaries should be carried out before the start of the play:

- a. The home team shall be responsible for providing, for each game, the following equipment in usable order: a chess set and board, a chess clock, two score sheets, a table and two chairs.
- b. Each team shall present a captain. The captain or a competent deputy must remain available for the duration of the match. The captains shall first agree any variations in the conditions of play permitted by the competition. Then they shall exchange lists of eligible players in order of decreasing playing strength, the strongest player being designated board one, the next board two and so on (the LMC may penalize any team that flagrantly abuses this stipulation). The away team shall have White on the odd boards and Black on the even boards.

### **3.7 Default of Game**

During the period of grace defined for each competition, captains may substitute an eligible reserve in place of a player failing to keep their appointment. Any board on which a captain is unable to field an eligible player within the period of grace shall be lost by default; in addition, if an ineligible player is fielded, the LMC may impose a penalty as set out in Rule 2.2.a.

### **3.8 Scoring**

- a. Individual games shall be scored one point for a win, half a point for a draw and no points for a loss. These points are then aggregated, and the team with the higher aggregate score shall win the match; if the scores are equal, the match is tied.
- b. If a team match tie is to be broken by board count, this is calculated by aggregating one point for a win on board one, two points for a win on board two and so on down to the last board, the team with the lower board count winning the match.
- c. If a team match tie is to be broken by board elimination, the winner is determined by disregarding as many of the lowest boards as necessary to secure a result.

### **3.9 Notification of Results**

The home team captain must complete a Match Result form and ensure that the Match Secretary receives it within 72 hours of completion.

The LMC may impose a fine of £5 for any unreasonable delay in forwarding the result of the match.

## **4 QUICKPLAY FINISHES**

### **4.1 Rules of Play**

Quickplay finishes shall be subject to the latest FIDE Laws of Chess, particularly those Laws which refer specifically to games played with quickplay finishes.

### **4.2 Claiming a Draw**

Draw claims under FIDE Law Article 9 shall be submitted to the Match Secretary who shall where necessary consult an arbiter. Any unresolved claims shall be dealt with by the LMC, whose decision, having regard to the opinions of the arbiter shall be final. If at any stage the draw claim is withdrawn or rejected, the claimant shall lose the game; if the claim is rejected, the club of the claimant shall also be fined £3. If the claim is successful, the club of the claimant's opponent shall be fined £3.



## **5. TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS**

### **5.1 Format**

- a. Team Championships shall be held from 1 September to the first week in May each year.
- b. Each Team Championship shall consist of a division of teams determined by promotion and relegation from the previous season. The most senior division shall be the first division, the next most senior the second division and so on.
- c. In each division, each team shall play every other team in the division twice, once at home and once away. The LMC may revise these conditions if the number of teams engaged makes this desirable.
- d. In divisions 1, 2 and 3 each match shall be between two teams of six players. In all other divisions, each match shall be between two teams of four players.  
A team shall score two Match Points for a match won, one Match Point for a match tied and no Match Points for a match lost.
- e. At the end of the season, the teams in each division shall be placed in order of decreasing number of Match Points aggregated. If the two or more teams have the same number of Match Points, then the following tie-breaks shall be used in this order:
  - greatest number of individual game points aggregated in all matches,
  - fewest number of Default Penalty Points (see Rule 5.4),
  - greatest number of individual game points aggregated in the matches between the tied teams.
  - If still tied, the teams shall be in a tied position.
- f. In all but the first and fourth divisions, the two teams placed highest in the division at the end of a season shall be promoted to the next more senior division in place of the two teams placed lowest in that division, who shall be relegated to the less senior division. The LMC shall have the power to promote additional teams and to waive relegations.

### **5.2 Entry**

Entry to the Team Championships is open to any Member Club whose League subscriptions are fully paid up. A club may enter more than one team, in which case the teams shall be designated "A", "B", "C" and so on, in decreasing order of seniority. Entries shall be delivered to the Match Secretary on or before 1 July prior to the start of the season.

### 5.3 Eligibility of Players

- a. For each team entered in the Team Championships, the Secretary of the Member Club must provide the Match Secretary with a list of at least six bona FIDE members (in the case of divisions 1, 2 and 3) or at least four bona FIDE members (in the case of other divisions) of the club to be registered for that team, at least two clear days before that club's first match of the season. It must be the intention that these players shall play regularly for the team for which they are registered, and players should be registered in order of strength as far as is practicable.
- b. Additional players will be registered for an appropriate team following the inclusion of their names on any Match Result form. The LMC will consider any request for re-registration of a team player.
- c. A player may not normally play in the Team Championships for more than one club during a given season. The LMC may allow this under exceptional circumstances.
- d. The LMC shall have the power to veto or cancel registration of a player without disclosing their reason for doing so.
- e. For each match in the Team Championships, the club must field a team consisting solely of players registered for that team or for another team from the same club. A player may be registered for only one team at any time.
- f. The Match Secretary shall publish at the start of each season a set of Grading Thresholds for each division. The July ECF grading shall be used throughout the season for eligibility purposes.
- g. A player wishing to play for a lower team that is in the same division must have a grade less than the threshold of the division below that in which they play. If further teams from that club play in that same division, to play for them, the player must have a grade less than that of the division below that in which they play.
- h. If the team next below that of the player is in a lower division it is only required that the player's grade be less than the threshold of the division in which that team plays. But, if further teams from that club play in that same lower division, to play for them, the player must have a grade less than that of the division below that in which they play.
- i. Players registered for a team in Division 1 or 2 may play for a senior team up to four times without penalty. On a fifth occasion, the player will automatically become registered for that senior team.

## **5.4 Default of Games**

- a. For each game defaulted in a Team Championship match in divisions 1, 2 and 3, Default Penalty Points (“DPPs”) shall be automatically imposed on the team defaulting, at the rate of 6 DPPs for a default on board 1, 5 DPPs for a default on board 2 and so on, reducing to 1 DPP on board 6.
- b. For each game defaulted in a Team Championship match in divisions 4 and below, Default Penalty Points (“DPPs”) shall be automatically imposed on the team defaulting, at the rate of 4 DPPs for a default on board 1, 3 DPPs for a default on board 2, 2 DPPs for a default on board 3, and 1 DPP for a default on board 4.
- c. A club may appeal against the imposition of DPPs, and the LMC can use its discretion in considering the appeal. The appeal must reach the Match Secretary within fourteen days of the match date. The LMC will normally waive DPPs if the club can show that 48 hours’ notice of intention to default was given.
- d. In divisions 1, 2 and 3, for each ten DPPs accumulated in one season, one Match Point shall be deducted from the team's total.  
If a team exceeds 45 DPPs during the season, it shall be required to resign from the Team Championships.
- e. In divisions 4 and below, for each five DPPs accumulated in one season, one Match Point shall be deducted from the team's total.  
If a team exceeds 22 DPPs during the season, it shall be required to resign from the Team Championships.

## **5.5 Resignation or Dismissal of Team**

- a. If a team resigns or is dismissed from the Team Championships, the entire record of that team shall be deleted from the Team Championship records.
- b. If a club cannot meet the obligations of all its teams in the Team Championships, the LMC may decide which team is to be withdrawn.

## **6. TEAM KNOCK-OUT**

### **6.1 Format**

- a. A Team Knock-Out competition shall be held during the season.
- b. The fixtures for each round shall be determined by a draw made by the LMC and communicated to the club secretaries by the Match Secretary. The team drawn first in each fixture shall play at home.
- c. Each match shall be between two teams of eight players and shall be played on a knock-out basis. If the match is tied, board count will be used to break the tie. If this fails to resolve the tie, board elimination will apply. If the match is still tied, the match shall be replayed at the away team's premises.

### **6.2 Entry**

Entry to the Team Knock-Out is open to any Member Club whose League subscriptions are fully paid up. A club may enter only one team. Entries to the Team Knock-Out shall be delivered to the Match Secretary on or before 1 July prior to the start of the season. There is no fee.

### **6.3 Eligibility of Players**

A player may play for only one team in the Team Knock-Out in any one season.

## **7 MINOR TEAM KNOCK-OUT**

### **7.1 Format**

- a. A Minor Team Knock-Out competition shall be held during the season.
- b. Each match shall be between two teams of six players. The format shall otherwise be as for the Team Knock-Out.

### **7.2 Entry**

- a. A club may enter one or more teams, but no player may play for more than one team during any one season's competition.
- b. The rules for entry are otherwise as for the Team Knock-Out.

### **7.3 Team Eligibility**

- a. No team may be fielded in any match who's mean (average) ECF grade shall exceed 135.
- b. Where a player has no current ECF grade they shall use firstly their last published standard grade. Failing that they shall use their last published quickplay grade. Failing that they shall use a grade of 135.
- c. The July ECF grading shall be used throughout the season for eligibility purposes. However, where a player has no July ECF grade but then subsequently obtains a January ECF grade then that January grade shall be used for the remainder of that season's competition.
- d. No player may play in the competition if they are registered for a team playing in division 1 of the Team Championships.

## **8 OTHER COMPETITIONS**

All other competitions shall be played according to rules laid down by the LMC. The LMC may organise a Summer Lightning Competition, an Individual Knock-Out competition, Individual Championships to be decided by a weekend congress, and other competitions as it sees fit.

# Grading Thresholds Explained

## General

In order to minimise the occurrence of defaults some players are allowed to play for teams in their own club other than their registered team. This facility to play up and down between teams of a club is **not** intended to be used as a tactical ploy and misuse may incur a penalty.

Attention should be given to Rule 5.3a which stipulates 'It must be the intention that these players shall play regularly for the team for which they are registered, and players should be registered in order of strength as far as is practicable.'

## Playing down

Where a player is playing down to a team less senior (less strong) than the player's registered team it is often the case that the opponent is weaker than one that would be met when playing for the registered team. It is plainly not desirable that a team should be significantly strengthened by playing a strong reserve from a more senior team. To prevent this occurring, players playing down must be graded below the threshold set for the division into which they are playing. Compliance with Rule 5.3a must still be observed.

## Grading Thresholds

Grading thresholds are based on the previous season's playing strength and are set to prevent the strongest two thirds of players in a division playing down into the division below. The thresholds also apply to playing down between teams within the same division.

## Examples

The thresholds used in these examples are those in use for the 2009 -2010 season which are:

$$\downarrow 2 = 158 \quad \downarrow 3 = 128 \quad \downarrow 4 = 111 \quad \text{and} \quad \downarrow 5 = 107$$

1. White Knights A play in Division 1, the B team in Division 2 and the C team in Division 3, an A team player playing down to the B team must be graded below 158 (Rule 5.3g). A and B team players playing down to the C team must be graded below 128 (Rule 5.3g).
2. Black Bishops A, B and C teams all compete in Division 2, an A team player playing down to the B team must be graded below 128 (Rule 5.3h). A and B team players playing down to the C team must be graded below 128 (Rule 5.3h).
3. Red Rooks A and B teams play in Division 1 whilst the C team compete in Division 2, an A team player playing down to the B team must be graded below 158 (Rule 5.3h). A and B team players playing down to the C team must be graded below 158 (Rule 5.3g).

Purple Pawns A play in Division 1 and the B and C teams in Division 2, an A team player playing down to the B team must be graded below 158 (Rule 5.3g), a B team player playing down to the C team must be graded below 128 (Rule 5.3h). An A team player playing down to the C team must be graded below 128 (Rule 5.3g second sentence). This is to prevent an A team player playing down to the C team whilst a lower graded B team player may not.