

Oxfordshire Chess Association AGM, Thursday 16 Sep 2021

Rule Change Proposals

Incremental time limits (deferred from 2020 AGM)

The introduction of increments in Division 1 seems to have been successful. Extending this to other divisions should avoid further controversy over draw claims under the two-minute rule. Hence the following rule changes are proposed for consideration by the AGM:

- 7.3 The use of digital clocks is compulsory. In the event of clock failure, a mobile phone app is an acceptable substitute. If a phone app is used, audible alerts for incoming calls and messages must be turned off.

(7.4 unaltered)

7.5 Time Limits

- 7.5.1 In Divisions One and Two the time allowance will be 80 minutes plus 10 seconds per move from move 1.
- 7.5.2 In Division Three a time limit of 80 minutes plus 10 seconds per move 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 65 minutes plus 10 seconds per move. 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 Four will be 65 minutes plus 10 seconds per move.

(renumber 7.7 to 7.12)

- 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. Sounds emitted by a chess clock app on a mobile phone that is being used as a replacement chess clock are to be disregarded under this rule.

Newly published gradings (deferred from 2020 AGM)

The publication of grading lists in January means that the 'current' grades may change very shortly — even minutes — before a match. It is unreasonable for a captain who has selected a team, informed the players which boards they are playing on and travelled to a match, to be told upon arrival that the proposed board order no longer complies with the grading list and be forced to change it. The planned move to monthly gradings will exacerbate this problem. Equally, it is reasonable for a captain who has eagerly been awaiting an updated list, possibly to remove an

anomalous grading for a fast-improving junior, to be able to use the new list. *(Note added August 2021: ECF intends to update the ratings on the first of each month. The interface to the ratings site allows ratings to be fetched by date. In the proposal below, the original wording 'that were in force at the start of the month' has been revised to 'that applied on the last day of the preceding month'. This clarifies the situation for a match taking place on the first of a month: the captains may use either the newly published ratings or the ones from the previous month. The match card will show the ratings on the match date, which will be the new ones.)*

Therefore the following amendment is proposed:

- 7.9 Teams must be arranged at least approximately in descending order of playing strength. In a calendar month when a new ECF grading list is published, the captain of a team may for the purposes of this rule (and its sub-rules) adopt for that team either the newly published gradings or the gradings that applied on the last day of the preceding month. If the grading difference between any two players with current A-E ECF gradings (or other ratings that have been converted to ECF gradings under sub-rule 7.9.1) is greater than ten Old ECF points (=75 New ECF points), the higher-graded player must play on a higher board. ...

FIDE ratings (deferred from 2020 AGM)

New arrivals in the UK, particularly newly arrived students, may have a FIDE rating that gives a better indication of their playing strength than their ECF grading. Therefore:

- 7.9.1 For the purposes of ordering players in a team in a way corresponding to the above example, if a player who has a FIDE or (failing that) national rating that includes at least ten rated games in the year preceding the start of the current OCA League season and is based on more games than the player's ECF grading (if any), the captain may adopt the FIDE or national rating instead, converting that rating in accordance with the standard formula. For FIDE ratings this is $(\text{FIDE} - 700) / 7.5 = \text{Old ECF}$. The conversion to New ECF grade is simply $\text{FIDE} = \text{New ECF}$.

Reduction of the Size of the League to Three Divisions

Due to the reduction of the number of teams it has been proposed that the League be reduced to three divisions. For this to occur a number of small changes to the League rules are required. The changes are mostly straightforward save that the old division four had a number of provisions, mainly to promote the league to juniors, specifically

- A shorter time control
- An (optional) earlier start time

Here I propose that these provisions are transferred to the new Division Three, thus in essence the restructuring will be by deleting the old Division Three, and relabelling the old Division Four as the new Division Three.

To enable this the following changes are required (changes in bold):

Modify 7.4 to read

- 7.4 Arrangements will be made for a minimum of three hours' play, except that, for Division **Three**, the playing session is 2½ hours.

Delete 7.5.3, which discusses time controls for the old Division Three, and replace it with a modified 7.5.4 which reads

7.5.3 The time limit in Division **Three** will be all moves in 75 minutes.

Modify 7.7 to read

7.7 All matches will commence at 7.30 pm, except for Division **Three** 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 7.15 pm. Any other change to the start time must be agreed between the captains of the teams involved in the fixture.

It is also proposed that the Sam Phipps Trophy, awarded to the player who scores the best game points percentage in Division Four, be held in abeyance in the hope that when the pandemic finally is over we will be able to return to four divisions. Should this not be the case I hope it will be repurposed. To enable this:

Delete rule 6.7

Note: The above is for modifications of the existing rules as of 19th August 2021. It is likely that the above will be further modified at the AGM, especially the time controls.

ECF 4-digit grades

Over the last year the ECF has moved from a 3-digit system for player gradings to a 4-digit rating system. To accommodate this in the OCA League Rules the following changes are required:

Throughout the League Rules the following formula shall be used to convert all the ECF grading limits in the Rules from old (three-digit) grades to corresponding the new (four-digit) ratings: $\text{New ECF} = 7.5 * \text{Old ECF} + 700$. Any fractional ratings that result shall be rounded up. Thus an Old ECF grading of 155 corresponds to a new ECF rating of 1863.

Throughout the League Rules the following formula shall be used to convert all the ECF grading differences in the Rules from old (three-digit) grades to corresponding the new (four-digit) ratings: $\text{New ECF} = 7.5 * \text{Old ECF}$. Any fractional rating differences that result shall be rounded up. Thus a difference of 10 Old ECF points corresponds to 75 New ECF points.

Throughout as appropriate “grade” will be replaced with “rating”

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Modify 2.4.5 to read

2.4.5 For the purposes of the rating boundaries relating to player eligibility in Rules 2.4.1 to 2.4.3, if a player that has no ECF rating but does have a FIDE rating the latter may be used, provided that FIDE rating includes at least ten FIDE-rated games in the year preceding the start of the current OCA League season. If a player does not have a ECF or FIDE rating, but does have a national rating that may be used, after any appropriate conversion formula is applied, again provided at least 10 games rated by that national organisation have been played in the year preceding the start of the OCA League season. Otherwise the question should be referred to the OCA Grader, who may assign an estimated rating to the player.

Modify 7.10.1 to read

- 7.10.1 For the purposes of ordering players in a team in a way corresponding to the above example, if a player who has no current A-E ECF rating has a FIDE or (failing that) national rating that includes at least ten rated games in the year preceding the start of the current OCA League season, that rating may be used instead.