

Rules of the Oxfordshire Chess Association League

(as amended by the AGM on 13 September 2018)

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 A team with more match points at the end of the season than any other in their division will hold the title of champion of that division. If two or more teams in a division are tied on match points at the end of the season, the tie-break procedure set out in rule 1.10 may be applied to determine the teams' relative positions.
- 1.10 Where teams in any division are tied on match points at the end of the season, the team which has the highest game point difference among the tied group in the matches between them will be placed highest. If a tie still remains, the team which has the highest total game point difference in all its matches over the whole league season will be placed highest.
- 1.11 A new club entering the League will normally enter the lowest division.
- 1.12 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 **Starred players**
 - 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). Starred players may not play for another team either in the same or a lower division in the course of a season.
 - 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 nominated by the club 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.

2.4 **Playing for more than one team**

- 2.4.1 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.

- 2.4.2 The restriction in 2.4.1 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.

- 2.4.3 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.

- 2.4.4 For the purposes of 2.4.1 and 2.4.3, 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.

- 2.4.5 For the purposes of the grading boundaries relating to player eligibility in rules 2.4.1-3, the FIDE Elo rating of a player with no ECF grading may be converted according to the formula given on the ECF grading website, provided that Elo rating includes at least ten FIDE-rated games in the year preceding the start of the current OCA League season. (Otherwise the question should be referred to the OCA Grader, who may assign an estimated grade for the player.) Accordingly, provided enough recent games are included in the Elo rating:

(i) A player with no ECF grading but a FIDE Elo rating below 1638 may be regarded as though graded below 125.

(ii) A player with no ECF grading but a FIDE Elo rating between 1639 and 1750 may be regarded as though graded between 126 and 140.

(iii) A player with no ECF grading but a FIDE Elo rating between 1751 and 1825 may be regarded as though graded between 141 and 150.

- 2.5 Any game played by an ineligible player will be deemed lost for the purposes of the match result—though the actual result of the game as played will stand for purposes of grading if the ineligibility of the player is not discovered until after the game has finished. In addition, one match point will be deducted from the offending team.

- 2.6 '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 either an ECF grading of 180 or above or a FIDE Elo rating of 2050 or above may only play in Division One, or a club's first team or its equal.

Visiting Players with either an ECF grading of 165 or above or a FIDE Elo rating of 1938 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 Teams wishing to postpone a match must seek the approval of the League Secretary.
- 3.2 Postponements will only be approved for serious reasons, such as extreme weather conditions, the unavailability of a venue, widespread illness in the squad, etc. The inability to field the strongest team (or even a strong team) is not acceptable as a reason for postponement, but the inability to field a full team may be an acceptable reason if serious efforts have been made to use other available players in the club to assemble a full complement.
- 3.3 The responsibility for the rearrangement of a postponed match belongs to the League Secretary, who may either approve a date the two captains have agreed is mutually acceptable or choose to set a new date if it seems necessary in the interests of the competition.

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.

5. Disputes and Sanctions

- 5.1 Any claim or report relating to a dispute must be addressed to the League Secretary by email or in writing by either the team captain or the club secretary, with copies being sent to the secretaries and relevant team captains of all the 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 **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.
- 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 illegal move of any kind by a player two minutes extra time will be added to the opponent's clock. A third illegal move of any kind 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 Match results should be posted on the OCA website by either captain and confirmed by the other as soon as possible after the match. At the match venue, match cards should be filled in and signed by both captains and retained as evidence in case a dispute arises over the result as posted on the website. (If a captain does not have internet access, another team captain of that club or the club secretary may post the result. If this is not possible, the captain should post his copy of the match card to the League Secretary within three days of the match.)
- 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.

9. Frank Wood Shield Rules

League rules for Division 1 apply except where amended hereunder.

- 9.1 The Frank Wood Shield will be a knockout competition using a handicap system based on the difference between the average grades of the two teams playing a match.
- 9.2 The first round of the competition will take place in the New Year.
- 9.3 **Teams.**
- 9.3.1 A club may enter for the Frank Wood Shield any number of teams not exceeding the number of teams it has in the League.
- 9.3.2 Each team shall have a distinctive name, to be given to the competition organiser along with contact details of the captain/manager no later than the date specified by the organiser.
- 9.4 **Players' Eligibility**
- 9.4.1 A player is eligible to play for a team entered by a club in the Frank Wood Shield once he or she has legally played two games for that club in the league during the season.
- 9.4.2 No player may play for more than one team during the competition, except as permitted by Rule 9.4.3.
- 9.4.3 A player with a current grade of 80 or under (either an ECF A-E grade published in the latest grading list or an estimated grade assigned by the OCA Grader for the competition) may play for any team of his or her club at any stage of the competition.
- 9.4.4 A team that fields an ineligible player in a Frank Wood Shield match loses that match.
- 9.5 Should a match (or a board) be defaulted by a team, the opponents must declare the team (or player) that would have played, and Rule 9.4.2 above will apply.
- 9.6 **Grades**
- 9.6.1 If a player has an ECF A-E grade, this will be used.
- 9.6.2 If a player does not have an ECF A-E grade, the club or team captain wishing to play that player must contact the OCA Grader at least a week before the player's first match in the competition, asking for an estimated grade to be assigned to the player for the purposes of the competition and providing the Grader with any available evidence of the player's strength.
- 9.6.3 If the Grader feels unable to assign an estimated grade, the player will be treated as though graded 100.
- 9.6.4 The Grader may give or alter an estimated grade at any later stage of the competition in the light of further information about a player's strength.
- 9.6.5 A player who has an ECF A-E grade of below 50 will be treated as though graded 50.
- 9.7 **Results**
- 9.7.1 A team with an average grade at least 80 points higher than that of the opposing team must score 6-0 to win the match.
- 9.7.2 A team with an average grade at least 50 points higher but less than 80 points higher than that of the opposing team must score at least 5.5-0.5 to win the match.
- 9.7.3 A team with an average grade at least 35 points higher but less than 50 points higher than that of the opposing team must score at least 5-1 to win the match.
- 9.7.4 A team with an average grade at least 25 points higher but less than 35 points higher than that of the opposing team must score at least 4.5-1.5 to win the match.
- 9.7.5 A team with an average grade at least 15 points higher but less than 25 points higher than that of the opposing team must score at least 4-2 to win the match.

- 9.7.6 A team with an average grade at least 5 points higher but less than 15 points higher than that of the opposing team need only score 3.5-2.5 to win the match.
- 9.7.7 In all these cases, if the team with the higher average grade fails to reach the specified winning score, the team with the lower average grade wins the match.
- 9.7.8 In matches between teams differing in average grade by less than 5 points, a team scoring at least 3.5 points is the winner of the match. Should such a match be tied 3-3, board count will be used to decide the result. If the match is still tied, the result will be decided by eliminating the bottom board, then (if necessary) the fifth, etc. Should all the games in the match be drawn, the team with the lower average grade will win. If the average grades of the teams are identical, the away team will win.

9.8 Match Rules

- 9.8.1 Teams must be arranged at least approximately in descending order of current playing strength. In particular, team order must follow ECF A-E grades (or the grades assigned for the competition by the OCA Grader) within ten points. (For example, a player graded 136 may play below a player graded 126, but not below one graded 125.)
- 9.8.2 Team captains are to have their team order, each team member's (actual or estimated) grade, and the average grade of their team ready to exchange as soon as both captains are present. The home team must show this first to the away team. The captains will then work out the match handicap and announce it to both teams before play starts.

If a default subsequently requires a change in the match handicap in accordance with Rule 9.8.4 (ii) below, the procedure laid down there will be followed.
- 9.8.3 Captains will toss for colours at each match after the exchange of teams.
- 9.8.4 (i) A team captain who, at the time when team details are exchanged with the opposing captain, is aware 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.

(ii) If, at the time when team details are exchanged with the opposing captain, a player is expected by his or her captain to be coming and is listed on the match card but fails to turn up and loses by default after 30 minutes, that team's average grade will then be determined by whichever measure yields the higher average: the original average grade as stated on the match card before the match starts and agreed by the captains, or the average grade of the players who actually play. In such a case, the captain of the incomplete team is responsible for correctly recalculating the average grade and (if necessary) the changed handicap as soon as possible after the default is confirmed and presenting it to the opposing captain. If a change in the handicap is required, the captains may ask players to pause or stop their clocks for the few seconds required to announce the new handicap.