

# Proposals to Oxfordshire Chess Association AGM

Thursday 19 September 2019 at Rose Hill Methodist Church

## 1. Minor Modifications to the Constitution and Rules

It was recognized at the May Committee meeting that there were a number of small errors and inconsistencies within the OCA Constitution and Rules. For instance the word "Secretary" was used referring to a number of posts all held previously by George Spalding, and with his stepping down it was necessary to clarify which of the Association's Secretaries were responsible for which job. The Committee asked Ian Bush, Roger Thetford and Gerard O'Reilly to address these issues, and the proposed new Constitution and Rules as provided with this proposal are the result of this effort.

If adopted, these become the base documents for more substantial changes, listed below, which go beyond simple tidying-up.

## 2. Timing of Proposals for the AGM

Currently point 2.8 of the OCA Constitution reads:

2.8 Proposals to change or amend this Constitution or the League Rules must reach the Secretary by the end of July, and will be included on the Agenda for the AGM. The Secretary shall circulate them to the clubs by the end of the first week in August.

This requires proposals to be to the Secretary a considerable time before the AGM. The current Chairman and Secretary feel this is much longer than is actually required, and therefore suggest this being changed to

2.8 The date for the AGM will be set by the committee meeting in May and shall be in either the second or third full week of September. The Secretary will publish this date on the website by 31 May and will contact club representatives directly informing them of the date.

2.9 Proposals to change or amend this Constitution or the League Rules must reach the Secretary by 24 August and will be included on the agenda for the AGM. The Secretary shall circulate them to the clubs by 31 August and will also publish the agenda on the website.

with the subsequent renumbering of points in section 2.

## 3. Officers (Ian Bush)

Proposal to bring the Titles and Responsibilities of the OCA Officers in line with Current Practice

The list of officers in the OCA Constitution does not quite align with current practice, in part due to the stepping down of George Spalding who had many hats. Further the list of responsibilities is not up to date. To address this, the following changes are proposed

- a) Remove the (unoccupied) posts of Auditor and Press Officer
- b) Add as 4.7 (replacing Auditor) the post of "Fixtures Secretary":

### Fixtures Secretary

To publish a timetable for the matches comprising the League for the coming season by 30 September of each year.

To ensure that the published timetable has enough free dates for the running of the Frank Wood Shield.

c) In the absence of an Auditor, change the responsibilities of the Treasurer to:

To provide up-to-date accounts for the AGM. The accounts must be submitted to the Chair by 17 August each year.

To collect requisite moneys from League clubs and County Match Captains in respect of team subscriptions, match fees, etc.

To arrange for the payment of all moneys due to the ECF and all other relevant bills.

To recompense officers for their duly claimed expenses.

To advise the Association on fee levels.

d) In the absence of an Auditor, to add to the responsibilities of the Chair:

To check and sign off the accounts as prepared by the Treasurer and supply them to the OCA Secretary by 24 August for publication before the AGM.

e) To clarify the current role of the League Secretary add:

To run the League and Frank Wood Shield in accordance with the competition rules.

f) Renumber "4.15 County Captains" to 4.14 due to the deletion of "4.14 Press Officer"

## **4. Determining the League Structure (Rod Langham)**

Currently the composition of the league for the coming season is decided at the AGM. This leaves very little little time to finalise the fixture list before the start of the season, thus causing clubs and players difficulties. It is therefore suggested that this decision is moved to the May meeting, with the AGM having the facility to making any late changes that may be required. The proposed changes to the Constitution and Rules to allow this are as follows:

### **1.1. Changes to the Constitution**

3.2.2 The May meeting will deal with matters arising from the season, will decide upon the composition of the leagues for the next season and may put forward proposals for the next season (including recommendations for changes to the OCA Constitution or the League Rules) to put before the AGM.

### **1.2. Changes to the Rules**

1.1 The composition of the League will be decided at the May Committee meeting to facilitate timely production of fixture lists before the next season. After the May Committee meeting, late adjustments may be made by the AGM.

1.12 Fixture lists will be produced by the [Fixtures/League] Secretary and sent to all clubs as early as possible before the AGM. After the AGM, changes to the Fixture List may only be made by the [League] Secretary. (Information, including results and tables, will be published on the OCA website.)

The items in square brackets may need changing depending on decisions at the AGM with regard to the titles and responsibilities of the officers of the Association.

## **5. Tie-breaks (Ian Bush)**

Currently point 1.10 of OCA League rules reads:

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.

As written this only deals with ties between two teams, and is over-complicated. As such I suggest it is changed to

1.10 Where teams in any division are tied on match points at the end of the season, they shall be placed higher to lower by descending order of their game point difference over the league season. Teams remaining tied on game point difference shall be placed higher to lower by virtue of having defaulted fewer games over the season. Should a tie still exist it shall be broken by a drawing of lots, to be organised by the [League] Secretary.

## 6. Board Order (Gerard O'Reilly)

At present League Rule 7.9 reads simply:

"7.9 Team lists will be in approximate order of playing strength."

On the other hand, the Frank Wood Shield has a more precise rule, which reads:

"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.)"

It seems a good idea to have a rule for the League with similar intent, partly because we have had a number of questionable team lists, on occasion (in extreme cases) to the point of disciplinary action being taken against teams playing fast and loose with board order. A specific rule should be a useful guide captains as to what will be considered fair and (one hopes) will much reduce complaints and eliminate the need for disciplinary action.

With this in mind, I propose that League Rule 7.9 be amended — see below. The basic idea applies the criterion used in the 4NCL and the FWS. I would point out that 7.9.5 is added in order to avoid an arguably unnecessary default which leaves disappointed player having no opponent and therefore probably a wasted journey. Note also that I haven't specified a penalty (but nor, strictly, do the FWS rules), though note sub-rule 7.9.4 in what I've formulated. If it seems over-complex, I dare say it could be simplified at the risk of giving less specific and helpful guidance about what is considered fair.

The proposed amendment to Rule 7.9 is that it should read:

"7.9 Teams must be arranged at least approximately in descending order of playing strength. In particular, if the grading difference between any two players with current A-E ECF gradings at the time of a match is greater than ten points, the higher-graded player must play on a higher board.

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 no current A-E ECF grade has a FIDE Elo rating that includes at least ten FIDE-rated games in the year preceding the start of the current OCA League season, that rating may be converted to its ECF equivalent in accordance with the standard formula  $(\text{FIDE} - 700) / 7.5 = \text{ECF}$ .

7.9.2 If a player has neither a current A-E ECF grade nor a FIDE Elo rating as described in 7.9.1, but has an estimated grade assigned by the Grader for the purpose of the Frank Wood Shield, that estimate will be used as a basis for the purpose of this rule.

7.9.3 For players with without any of the above specifications of playing strength, a captain should use a recent standard-play grade, or an official rapidplay grade. In the absence of all these, a captain should use his or her own best judgement as to a player's strength relative to the other players in the team.

7.9.4 If, when team lists are exchanged before the match in accordance with rule 7.10 but before play starts, a team captain notices that the opposing team is in breach of this rule, that captain may insist that the opposing team's board order is adjusted so as to comply with the rule.

7.9.5 If a listed member of a team at the start of a match fails to turn up and the grading of the only available replacement before the 30-minute default time would breach the requirements of this board-order rule, those requirements may be waived with the consent of the opposing team's captain. In such a case, the team captains should notify the League Secretary of this agreement after the match."

For the smooth operation of this rule, it is also proposed that Rule 7.10 be amended. It currently reads:

"7.10 Prior to the start of play, team lists will be exchanged."

It is proposed that it be amended to read:

"7.10 Prior to the start of play, team lists will be exchanged. These lists will give not only the names of the players but also their ECF grading or its converted FIDE equivalent, or else whatever kind of standard-play or rapidplay grade or rating is being used, or any estimate (rapidplay or estimated grades being indicated as such on the team list)"

## **7. Frank Wood Shield – start date (Ian Bush)**

Currently the Frank Wood Shield starts in the New Year, as per Rule 9.2:

9.2 The first round of the competition will take place in the New Year.

Experience has shown that this has led to the competition not finishing until almost June, which can cause difficulties especially for University teams. Therefore it is proposed that start date is moved one month earlier, i.e. that 9.2 is amended to

9.2 The first round of the competition will take place in December.

## **8. Ineligible players (Gerard O'Reilly)**

League Rule 2.5 currently reads:

"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."

It is proposed that an addition be made to this rule, so that it would read:

"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 normally be deducted from the offending team.

However, if a listed member of a team at the start of a match fails to turn up and there is no available substitute before the 30-minute default time other than a player who, under the provisions of Rule 2.4, is not eligible to play for the team, then, provided that both players and both captains consent, that player may replace the absent player and play a graded game without the team losing the additional match point. This graded game will still be deemed lost for the purposes of the match result. In such a case, the team captains should notify the League Secretary of this agreement as soon as possible after the match."

The advantage I see over the current rule is that, with the consent of all relevant parties, a team/club which would otherwise default a board can give a graded game to one of their own members and a member of the opposing team who has turned up for a match without being penalised for doing so.

## **9. Digital clocks (Gerard O'Reilly and Mike Truran)**

Rule 7.3 currently reads:

7.3 The use of clocks is compulsory. Either analogue or digital clocks may be used.

It is proposed that it should be changed to read:

7.3 The use of chess clocks is compulsory. Digital clocks are to be used where enough are available for every board in a match.

## **10. Time limits (Gerard O'Reilly and Mike Truran)**

Rule 7.5 currently reads:

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."

It is proposed that an incremental time limit be used for all matches in Division One, with changes to Rule 7.5 as follows:

"7.5 Time Limits

7.5.1 In Division One digital clocks will be used for all matches, with a time allowance of 75 minutes plus 10 seconds per move from move 1.

7.5.2 In Division Two a time limit of all moves in 90 minutes will be used.

7.5.3 In Division Three 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 Four will be all moves in 75 minutes."

It is to be noted that the preamble at Rule 9 to the Frank Wood Shield rules currently says, "League rules for Division One apply except where amended hereunder."

Since the proposal is not intended to affect the FWS, as a corollary of this proposal for an incremental time limit in Division One, it is proposed to add to the FWS rules a Rule 9.9, to read:

9.9 Matches in the Frank Wood Shield will be played with a time limit of all moves in 90 minutes.

## **11. Quick-play Finishes (Gerard O'Reilly and Ian Bush)**

To ensure compliance with the ECF Rules for graded games, add an additional rule

7.6 As the OCA League is not an event supervised by an arbiter, whenever a non-incremental time limit is used, all games will follow the procedure laid down in Article III.6 of the *Guidelines* attached to the *FIDE Laws of Chess* covering *Games without increment including Quickplay Finishes*, for a draw claim by a player having the move and

less than two minutes on the clock. For more detail about applying this procedure, see the OCA's *Guidance for Clubs & Captains*, which can be found on the *Admin documents* page of the OCA website.

and renumber subsequent rules appropriately.

## **12. Disabled Players (Gerard O'Reilly and Ian Bush)**

To ensure compliance with the ECF Rules for graded games, augment rule 7.1 so that it reads

7.1 The home club is responsible for the venue and all match arrangements. In particular, the home club is to take account of the ECF's Guidelines on treatment of disabled chess players (<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/guidelines-on-treatment-of-chess-players-with-impairments/>) and make every reasonable effort to implement those of the guidelines that are applicable in the League.