

# **Oxfordshire Chess Association AGM**

**7.30pm on Thursday 16 September 2021**

**Held at Rose Hill Methodist Church**

**Present:** Ian Bush (Cumnor, Chair), Roger Thetford (Didcot), Sara Sengenberger (Cowley), Gerard O'Reilly (Cowley), Will Burt (Cowley), Mike Handley (Cowley), Kevin Henbest (Oxford University), Alan Gentry (Witney), Steve Rumsby (Banbury), Gary Jackson (Banbury), Nigel Moyses (Cumnor), Lawrence Barber (Abingdon School), Pete McLeod (Oxford City), Mike Truran (Witney).

**Abbreviations:** OCA = Oxfordshire Chess Association, ECF = English Chess Federation, FIDE = Fédération Internationale des Échecs, 4NCL = Four Nations Chess League.

**1. Apologies for Absence:** Andrew Varney (Cumnor), Steven Bennett (Cumnor), Richard Beckett (Bicester), Peter Hemmings (Wantage), George Spalding (Wantage), John Place (Cumnor).

**2/3. Minutes of 2020 AGM and Matters Arising:** approved by the meeting with no matters arising.

## **4. Chair's and Online Chess Manager's Reports (Ian Bush)**

Ian said it was good to meet in person and hoped this indicated a return to more normal activities. The OCA successfully ran online competitions, some participated in other online events, clubs moved online and we kept local chess going. Ian's term as Chair is ending and he thanked the committee for all their assistance and especially Roger Thetford for his secretarial support.

As Online Chess Officer Ian supervised the two Mike Duck competitions won respectively by Oxford University's first and second teams. Despite some initial snags 154 players participated. Roger Thetford asked for thanks be recorded to Ian for managing all this.

## **5. Secretary's Report (Roger Thetford)**

Roger noted that the Online Chess Officer has already reported on last season's competitions and that he has nothing further to add.

## **6. Treasurer's Report (Sara Sengenberger)**

Sara has posted her report on the OCA website and proposed that we reinstate the affiliation fees which had been in place before the Covid-19 pandemic. Ian Bush mentioned our pre-pandemic commitment to allocate surplus funds to developing chess in the county.

## **7. Other Officers' Reports**

Steve Rumsby (Chiltern League Captain) reported that this league did not happen last season. He has asked if there is any interest in resuming it in 2021/22. The entirely online season has meant the Grading Officer has not had to submit results. Andrew Varney (Junior Liaison) has submitted a report which the Chair summarised. This has since been posted on the OCA website. In particular Andrew drew attention to notable performances by Jan Murawski, Kenneth Hobson and Tashika Arora. He also expressed concern over a lack of coaching in the county—Andrew has had to curtail his own activities on health grounds.

The organiser of the County Individual championship Gerard O'Reilly explained that this is usually based on results at the Witney and Kidlington congresses but, last season, the latter didn't happen so no award was made. It is hoped both events will go ahead next season and Witney's congress has already been announced—Mike Truran mentioned that they are still looking for one more arbiter. Mike also asked that his discussion of ECF matters be dealt with under Any Other Business.

## **8. Election of Officers for 2021/22**

Nigel Moyse stood for Chair and James Cole (not present) for Secretary. There were no further nominations and they were elected unanimously. All remaining officers were willing to continue in their roles and there were no other nominations. These reappointments were ratified unanimously. The full list of those elected was as follows:

Chair:	Nigel Moyse (Cumnor)
Secretary:	James Cole (Cowley)
Vice-Chair:	Kevin Henbest (Oxford University)
Treasurer:	Sara Sengenberger (Cowley)
Minutes Secretary:	Will Burt (Cowley)
Fixtures Secretary:	Asif Hameed (Cowley)
Grading Officer:	Peter Hemmings (Wantage)
ECF Representative:	Mike Truran (Witney)
Junior Liaison Officer:	Andrew Varney (Cumnor)
Webmaster:	Roger Thetford (Didcot)
County Individual Organiser:	Gerard O'Reilly (Cowley)
University Representative:	Kevin Henbest (Oxford University)
Online Chess Officer:	Ian Bush (Cumnor)

County captains were appointed at the May Committee meeting and John Place (Cumnor) continues his term as President. After his appointment Nigel Moyse took the Chair of the meeting.

## **9. Treasurer's Recommendations for 2021/22**

These were unanimously approved: affiliation fees (£10/team) to be reinstated and £1,800 allocated to the development of chess in the county.

## **10. Formation of the League for 2021/22**

The three division structure agreed at the May Committee meeting was amended in the light of more recent information from clubs:

- Division I: Banbury 1, Cowley 1, Cumnor 1, Didcot 1, Oxford City 1, Oxford University 1, Witney 1
- Division II: Cowley 2, Didcot 2, Oxford City 2, Oxford University 2, Wantage 1, Witney 2
- Division III: Abingdon School, Cowley 3, Cumnor 2, Oxford City 3, Oxford University 3, Wantage 2, Witney 3

The Fixtures Secretary should be able to produce a list based on this in the next few days. Gerard O'Reilly asked that at least one Cowley team play home matches on Thursdays—the current draft already allows for this.

## **11. Proposals for Changes to the OCA Rules**

Roger Thetford introduced these, explaining that some had been deferred from last year when the Covid-19 pandemic had meant implementing a completely different online competition.

The first proposal was to extend incremental time controls (used in Division I in 2019/20) to the entire league and also included an amendment to mobile phone rules to cover the possible use of a smartphone app to provide a digital clock. It was considered in its original form, assuming a four division structure (a separate proposal has been tabled to remove anomalies caused by the reduction to three divisions). The proposal was passed unanimously.

The second proposal was to allow captains to decide whether to use the current ECF rating list or the one from the previous month. It also specified a maximum tolerance of 75 rating points when determining board order. The proposal was also passed unanimously.

The third proposal was to allow the use of FIDE (or other national rating) if it is based on at least ten games in the year before the current season and also on more games than the player's ECF rating. Mike Truran suggested instead just using whichever rating was the highest and also pointed out that, in the wake of the pandemic, nobody would currently have FIDE rated games in the previous year. After discussion the proposal was amended to widen the period in which rated games had been played to three years and then passed unanimously.

Roger Thetford explained that the fourth proposal was to remove

anomalies created by the reduction of the number of divisions in the league from four to three. The Sam Phipps trophy for the best performance in Division IV will be held in abeyance. After a short discussion this proposal was passed unanimously.

The final proposal was to replace references to grading(s) with the term rating(s) and use the formula  $\text{New ECF} = 7.5 * \text{Old ECF} + 700$  (rounding up fractions when required) to convert specific numbers. It was noted that there is a reference to “the start of the season” and it was agreed that, for the purposes of the rules, this would be taken to be 1 September. With this addition the proposal was passed unanimously.

Further discussion led to a general feeling that the resumption of our league could be facilitated by relaxing eligibility rules. It was noted that our constitution states that formal rule changes have to be submitted by 24 August. Instead an emergency resolution was adopted to relax rules, for the 2021/22 season only, by reducing the number of starred players required by rule 2.3.1 from four to three and suspending the rules in 2.4 about playing for more than one team. This was proposed by Mike Handley and passed unanimously.

## **12. Any Other Business**

Mike Truran reported as our ECF representative that the ECF had survived the pandemic financially with 65% of members having renewed their subscription. It has worked hard to provide membership benefits and, alongside the 4NCL, kept chess going online. As the ECF facilitates the resumption of over the board chess, Mike outlined his views on how he should vote as our representative and asked for the OCA’s approval of this, which was granted.

Ian Bush introduced the issue of Covid-19 safety protocols. The OCA has circulated a document to clubs which includes guidance but does not make any impositions. Clubs have been asked to say what protocols they have in place. Gerard O’Reilly raised whether clubs could also declare if any of their players (whether through medical exemption or personal choice) would not be wearing face coverings at matches and if this should also be added to the guidance.

As Online Chess Officer, Ian Bush said he had no immediate plans as the current focus is on resuming over the board competitions. There is, however, an appetite for competitive online chess and we should consider this in the future. Mike Truran reminded the meeting that the 4NCL has an online competition.

The meeting closed at 9.27pm.

*Will Burt (Minutes Secretary)*

*15 October 2021, rev. 2 November 2021*

# **Oxfordshire Chess Association**

## **Treasurer's Report to 2021 AGM**

From a financial point of view anyway, this has been an uneventful year. Income relating to the 2020-21 year was zero: since we were unable to provide any over-the-board chess, we charged clubs no affiliation fees. Costs relating to this year were very low at approximately £39, so our expected loss relating to this year is £39. This consists of flowers for Ian Brookes' funeral plus the engraving of just two trophies. (None of the usual divisional awards were made because the online competition had a different structure. We awarded only the Lester Millin Shield for best junior, and the Ray Starkie Cup for best game.)

The annual accounts before you consist largely of reimbursements related to the previous year (2019-20). Last year I mentioned that the OCA's expenditure has historically exceeded our income by about £75 per year. Rather than increase club affiliation fees to address this, we have continued to very slowly erode our large capital, which currently stands at approximately £2800.

Last year I recommended allocating £1800 of that £2800 to development, keeping £1000 to use for cash flow and unanticipated expenses.

I propose that the current club affiliation fees be restored to the pre-pandemic level of £10 per team.

**Sara Sengenberger**  
**OCA Treasurer**  
**19 August 2021**

**Oxfordshire Chess Association**  
**Accounts for 2020-21 season (1 Aug 2020 - 31 Jul 2021)**

Cash basis

revision 1, dated 20 Aug 2021

		<b>Current Account</b>	<b>Reserve Account</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Opening Balances</b>		2088.32	725.48	2813.80
<b>INCOME</b>				
<b>Bank interest</b>		NIL	0.12	0.12
<b>Club affiliation receipts 2019-20:</b>		70.00		
<b>Club dues for ECF game fee charges:</b>		210.00		
<b>Chiltern Chess League match fees from players 2019-20:</b>		120.00		
	<b>TOTAL</b>			
	<b>INCOME:</b>	<b>400.00</b>	<b>0.12</b>	<b>400.12</b>
<b>OUTGOINGS</b>				
<b>ECF invoices for game fees:</b>	2019-20	246.00		
<b>Trophies:</b>	2019-20	171.91		
<b>Flowers for Ian Brooke's funeral</b>		25.00		

<b>TOTAL</b>			
<b>OUTGOINGS:</b>	442.91	NIL	442.91

<b>Closing Balances</b>	<b>2045.41</b>	<b>725.60</b>	<b>2771.01</b>
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# OCA Junior Report 2020–21

Andrew Varney, 16 September 2021

Like everything else, junior chess in Oxfordshire did not run in the normal way this last season, primarily due to the pandemic.

## Schools

- The Schools League did not run at all for any age group
- Most after-school chess clubs were discontinued entirely
- A handful of schools ran successful online clubs with a significant coaching element on Zoom – this included well-established chess schools (e.g. St Joseph's), some independent schools (e.g. Dragon, Summer Fields) and some completely new schools for teaching beginners
- Scholastic chess with CSC (Chess in Schools and Communities) was significantly impacted, with only one local school continuing during the pandemic

## Ojays

- The county-level invitation-only Oxfordshire junior chess squad club, Ojays (<https://oxonjuniorchess.blogspot.com>) has continued to run throughout the pandemic, with chess games played on [www.chesskid.com](http://www.chesskid.com) and one-hour coaching slots via Zoom.
- Master-level holiday chess coaching over several mornings offered online during Christmas, Easter and half term school holidays proved to be popular, especially with some of the more advanced players.

## Tournaments

- Many tournaments ran on-line, including the regular Witney Rapidplay
- Oxfordshire county trials and Oxfordshire Junior Championships did not run at all
- The Delancey UK Chess Challenge did not run local OTB Megafinals, instead using online tournaments
- Notably, a series of junior tournaments was run OTB at Cheney School by Joe Conlon as regulations permitted this to happen. These well-run events were much appreciated by parents and children (not just locally in Oxfordshire). This resulted in the tournament being declared the ECF Congress of the Year and Joe receiving the ECF President's Award. You can read more at <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/ECFAwards2021.pdf>

## National Team Competitions

- A lichess club <https://lichess.org/team/ojays>, run by Ola Murawska, welcomed all Oxfordshire Juniors to play regularly for the county.
- Regular online inter-club and inter-county team competitions, mostly on the lichess platform, included the Junior 4NCL, Inter-County team battles and England Junior Blitz arenas.
- Some tournaments were run in divisions and some according to age and/or gender.
- Oxfordshire Juniors took part in all EPSCA online events (Girls U11, U9 and U11 Open).
- Oxfordshire entered U14 Minor, U14 Major and U18 sections in the SCCU (online) Jamboree in June. The U18 team won their section.
- Many thanks to Ola Murawska and Joe Conlon for managing the Oxfordshire online teams.



## Individuals – Notable Results

Notable individual results include:

- The U10 section of the ChessKid UK Championship in June was won by Jan Murawski.
- Kenneth Hobson and Tashika Arora have qualified from the online stages for the main Terafinal of the Delancey UK Chess Challenge to be held OTB at Blenheim Palace.

## Outlook for 2021-22

While there are ongoing issues related to the pandemic, most school chess clubs appear to be reforming to play OTB rather than run online. There has been unprecedented interest from schools locally wanting to take up scholastic chess lessons and/or after-school chess club provision with CSC for the first time. This is probably due to a combination of factors including “The Queen’s Gambit Effect” and the new interest in chess from people starting to play online during the pandemic.

Unfortunately this has also coincided with a lack of available chess coaches and chess tutors in the Oxford area. I am unable to teach much in person due to ongoing back issues (officially disabled) and many of the existing chess tutors have stopped for a number of different reasons. I am therefore looking for new chess tutors in my role as CSC Regional Organiser as well as on behalf of various schools I am in contact with in my voluntary chess organisation roles.

Oxfordshire Junior Chess, featuring the Oxon Schools Chess League, is due to hold our AGM online via Zoom on Monday 27 September 2021. The last two years this has not taken place due to my back injury and the pandemic. As I am relinquishing two of my voluntary roles for health reasons and both the Treasurer and (Schools League) Secretary have already stood down, the future of the schools league is currently in doubt, along with some other junior chess activities, unless we have new volunteers to take up the roles.

Please contact me if you are active in running junior teams, school clubs or in junior chess coaching locally and would like to hear more about getting involved in some way.

Andrew Varney  
OCA Junior Liaison

# 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"

Throughout as appropriate "grading" will be replaced with "rating"

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.