

2023-24 Proposed Rule Changes

1. Additions to the starring rules have been proposed as follows with the attention of reducing the grey areas in rules governing team selection that could lead to implications of a breach of the fairplay provisions:

2.4.6 A team may not field a player over 100 points stronger than its highest rated starred player in the September rating list with the exception of the club's highest team.

2.4.7 A club with two teams in the same division may elect to split their squads in writing to the League Secretary in advance of the season. The consequence of this, is that both teams will be treated as the same level for the purposes of rule 2.4.6. However, by doing so, no player may play for the club in both teams in the same division.

2. Amendment to the rule for fixture rearrangements (new text in italics):

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. *Rearrangements will only be permitted under exceptional circumstances eg. loss of venue, extreme weather conditions. Poor availability of regular squad players will not be routinely accepted as a reason for the postponement of fixtures.*

3. Additional provision regarding a breach of board orders with regards to the 75 point rating difference specified in rule 7.9 where this is not identified until after the completion of a match:

7.9.6 Should rule 7.9 be breached and not corrected through rule 7.9.4, then the board of the higher rated player causing the breach will be deemed as a default by the offending team. The result of the game will however stand for grading purposes. This is in addition to rule 5.4 for serious or persistent breaches.

4. Amendment to the rules regarding mobile phones (amended wording in italics):

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 player possessing this mobile phone will be defaulted. Should a player have a valid reason for keeping their mobile phone switched on, then they must make both captains and their opponent aware of this. By doing so, this exempts this player from a default where their mobile phone subsequently makes a sound.* 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.

5. Amendment to the FWS eligibility rules (fully rewritten):

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 one game for that club in the league during the season. This rule does not apply to the first round of the Frank Wood Shield and a captain may apply in advance to the League Secretary for an exemption to this rule where a player has strong ties to a club but would otherwise be ineligible.

6. To replace all references to “A-E” grades with “A or K” grades.

Motions submitted relating to the constitution

The AGM approves the formation of an Executive Committee – which will meet throughout the year as required – to be comprised of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary and one other member of the committee (to be determined at this meeting). This body will be tasked with 3 objectives

initially and will report back to the full Committee in May/June 2024 at the end of season committee meeting. The tasks are:

- 1) to look at and rewrite, in full, the current constitution, to take into account both this organisational change, and to clarify and make clear any contradictions currently in the constitution and league rules;
- 2) to consider options going forward for the 2024-2025 season and beyond, in terms of ensuring that an optimal structure can be brought forward as the current arrangements for one season, with 9 teams in divisions, is sub-optimal;
- 3) to consider the broader impact of chess in the region and come back with suggestions on how to both improve conditions for players and ensure that the OCA is providing the full remit that it carries.

It is expected that this Executive will meet both in person or remotely for an initial ideas meeting before Christmas 2023, and at least two further times (again in person or remotely) before presenting its report to the full committee in May/June 2024.