

Agenda for General Meeting on 15 May 2017

(Including League Rules Revisions)

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Minutes of 2016 AGM
3. Matters arising (not dealt with below)
4. Nottingham Rugby Club
5. Presentation of League Prizes
6. Associate Membership – Amendment to Constitution (see below)
7. Adoption of the NCA Child Protection Policy document and short form instructions (see supporting papers) and amendment to the League rules (1 below)
8. League Rule proposals (2-17 below)
9. County Championship Changes (see supporting paper)
10. Vacant Posts
11. Best Game Entries Invited (Open and U140)
12. Any other business

Associate Membership (Amendments to Constitution)

We would like to institute a new class of membership, viz Associate Membership, for clubs and other organisations with an interest in chess but which are unlikely to want to affiliate. This would be a "lightweight" membership, with no voting rights and no fee.

We propose the following changes to the Constitution:

New 3c:

- c. associated organisations with an interest in chess.
[and re-punctuate 3a and 3b]

Extend 4:

Application for affiliation or association shall be open to:

- a. any club or organisation having its regular meeting place in Nottinghamshire; and
- b. any club in an adjoining county.

Extend 5: [new sentence]

An associated organisation shall have the right to send one delegate to general meetings.

Extend 6:

A club or organisation shall cease to be affiliated or associated ...

b. by a resolution terminating such affiliation or association passed ...

Simplify 10:

[delete "a club" in:]

This notice shall include ... a proposed resolution to terminate ~~[a club]~~ membership, otherwise ...

Clarify 13:

a. Each individual member or affiliated club delegate shall have one vote. ...

Note: We have left several instances of "club" unaltered; it is, eg, deliberate that associate members cannot propose alterations to league rules [etc], and that associate membership may be granted [but not terminated] outside a general meeting [eg, by EC].

Rationale: We have been approached or have otherwise been in contact with a number of organisations in recent years with an interest in chess but [probably] no desire to enter a team in the League. Examples include [but are not confined to!] schools, Nottingham Rugby, games cafes, NPSCA, Worksop CC, Nottingham Mechanics, NPSCA, We should find ways in which such chess activity can be encouraged. Associate membership will put organisations in contact with NCA, and give them a source of advice, coaching, publicity, and also give them a modest voice within NCA. It expands our horizons!

Proposed: A. N. Walker [President]

Seconded: R Richmond [Congress Director]

8.1. Child Protection Policy (Addition to Rule B2)

2. Clubs must, by 30th June, return the completed entry form to the League Secretary. After this date, any proposals to enter new teams may only be made by that club's Secretary. **Submission of an entry form to the League Secretary commits the club to comply with the NCA Child Protection Policy procedures during League Matches.**

Proposed: S Burke

Seconded: M Hill

This proposal is a result of the adoption of a Child Protection Policy.

8.2. Time Control (Amendment to Rule B9)

This proposal is to revert to the previous time limit:

9. All games must be played with chess clocks
 - a. The time limit shall be 30 moves in 60 minutes in the bottom division, or 35 moves in 75 minutes in all other divisions, after which the clocks will be set back 15 minutes and the game played to a finish.
 - b. Where electronic clocks are used, the required time periods must be set at the beginning of the match, so that no further adjustment of the clocks is required.

Proposed: J Swain

Seconded: D Levens

- A time control of 35 moves in 75 minutes with 15 minutes then added is ideal preparation for county matches (e.g. the under 180 time limit of 36 moves in 90 minutes, then 30 minutes added). The result of a county match is often decided by how well endings are played in the last games to finish.
- Secondly, the current time control puts a premium on clock handling and not on chess ability (other than clock control). Quite a few games this season have seen very experienced players (well used to playing 35 moves in 75 minutes) seriously misusing their time, no doubt looking for the perfect moves, to the extent that they haven't even been at move 35 when they're nearly out of time, where the opponent has lots of time and where the middle-game position is far too complicated to use the 2 minute rule. You might say it serves them right for bad time-keeping, but it can also be said that it encourages bad habits, thinking far too long on the opening and middle game phases! All the opponent has to do is shuffle with a few half-baked ideas and the game's over. Somehow "35 in 75" kept things more balanced – provided someone doesn't lose on time or lose due to time-trouble in the first 35 moves, they had at least 15 minutes to finish the game and complete an ending to a decent standard.
- Lastly, the playing session has become 180 minutes, rather than one of 150 minutes with 30 minutes of "extra time". This probably disadvantages older and certainly elderly players. Prior to this season, it was often the case that at least a couple of games in a match had finished by the first time control; far more games and matches are now decided in the last 10-15 minutes, but not always with more than 35 moves played and frequently with a big time difference between the players being the key determinant.

3. Time Control (Amendment to Rule B9)

This proposal is to introduce an additional option to the standard one:

9. All games must be played with chess clocks

a) The standard time limit shall be 90 minutes (75 minutes in the bottom division) to finish the game.

b) The home side may set an alternative time limit of 75 minutes (60 minutes in the bottom division) plus an increment of 10 seconds per move to finish the game.

Proposed: S Scott

Seconded: S Burke

Reasons to use an increment are:

- a) To allow games to be played out by the players at a reasonable move rate. (An extension of the move we made to have quick play finishes many years ago now.) It will assist those players who have regularly got into difficulty with the previous and current time limits and have the game decided on the board more often than the clock.
- b) To avoid the complexities, and vagaries, of claiming a draw under the 2 minute rule.
- c) To allow time (just about) to keep a score (if you want to) and claim draws under the third repetition or 50 move rules.
- d) To get more endgames played through to a fair conclusion rather than shortened out of fear of losing on time.
- e) In July the FIDE Laws of Chess will be changed to say that all FIDE events must use incremental time limits. So that is the way things are headed and we may as well get on the road.

With a 10 second increment, the 30 minute reduction in the basic match time allows for a 100 move game in about the same time as the current limit.

This time control option has been used in the Leicestershire league for 5 years now, and they are considering making it the default time limit for all games (see attached LCA paper).

4. Quickplay Finishes (Amendment to Rule B12)

Add the following:

e) FIDE Quickplay rules apply, except that a switch to increment cannot be claimed.

Proposed: S Burke

Seconded: M Naylor

This is a gap between our rules and FIDE Laws pointed out by John Swain after a discussion he had with Dave Welch (ex Chief Arbiter of ECF).

5. Board Order (Amendment to rules C7 and D3)

Replace the existing text with:

C7. A player may not be graded more than 10 points above anyone on a higher board except where a lower graded eligible substitute is used after the agreed start of the match

Amend the existing text to:

D3. The penalty for infringing rule B9, B12b, C2, C3, C4, C6 or C7 is the loss of the game by each offending player”

C7. This proposal focuses entirely on the 10 point tolerance, and allows clubs to assign temporary grades themselves.

The procedural guidelines can be published in the league handbook and on the ‘Procedure for submitting results’ page on the website, possibly something like this:

Captains must state a player's 'grade' on the match result of a player's 1st match of the season.

- a) Use the player's grade on the August version of the ECF grading list, otherwise
- b) Use any other current grade or rating (incl the ECF January one), converting where necessary, or the last known ECF grade (+/-10 points), whichever is preferable, otherwise
- c) Assign an appropriate temporary grade.

The grade will remain in place **all season**, except where the records secretary agrees to a club replacing a temporary grade with an ECF January grade.

D3. To tidy up what was missed at last year's RRM, so that the penalties for infringement of rules in section C are consistent.

Proposed: D Sudar

Seconded: S Scott

5a. Board Order (Amendment to rules C7)

There is also a separate proposal to **change the 20 points to 10 points**.

Proposed: D Levens

Seconded: J Swain

6. Board Order (To replace Rule C7)

Delete Rule C7

Replace B11 with

- a) Before the start, the captains must exchange fully completed team lists.
- b) Players must be arranged in order of playing strength according to the August revision of the latest July ECF grading list.

A player must not be graded more than 20 points above anyone on a higher board in the team, otherwise they will be considered an ineligible player.

Before any ungraded players are included in a team, the club/captain must have already obtained a temporary grade by consulting the Grading Officer, who shall assign this on the basis of the best evidence available.

The away team shall have white on the odd-numbered boards.

Replace B12d with

If a player fails to arrive at the board within 30 minutes of the agreed time of starting, that board shall be defaulted unless an eligible substitute is found in the meantime.

To be eligible, a substitute must be

- i. on the ECF Grading list, have an assigned temporary grade or have played for the club during the current season and
- ii. lower graded than the player his is replacing.

If a substitute is played out of grade order (see rule B11) a full explanation of the circumstances must be submitted with the result.

Replace C6 with

6. New players:

a. A club wishing to field a player new to that club must inform the Records Secretary of the player's grading code and grade, date of birth (juniors only) and details of clubs or counties previously played for.

If the player is ungraded, before he plays a game the club/captain must have obtained a temporary grade from the Grading Officer (see B11b).

For players introduced after the January ECF list is published, the player's grade in that list will automatically be used if they weren't graded in the August revision of the list.

b. The information must be provided with, or before, the results of the player's first match for the club.

c. From 1st March each season, only players who live, work or study in Nottinghamshire, or have previously played in the league, may be introduced by a club.

Replace D3 with

The penalty for infringing rule B9, B11b, B12b, B12d, C2, C3, C4 or C6 is the loss of the game by each offending player.

Replace D4 with

The penalty for infringing rule B11a is the default of each board where no name is entered.

Proposed: S Burke

Seconded: N London

These changes reposition the current Rule (drafted during the last RRM) to where the various aspects should be within the rules framework, and clarify some procedures. As such they are a "package deal", though the specifics of some may be amended if the meeting wants to change the currently applied interpretation.

7. Teams withdrawing from the League (Addition to rule B5)

5. A team not completing at least half of its fixtures shall have its record deleted and be regarded as having withdrawn. The games played will be graded, but will not count for eligibility purposes in the future games of their opponents.

If a team withdraws from the league after completing half its fixtures, the results stand and games will still count for eligibility. Their remaining matches will be recorded as losses by 4-1 (3-1 in the bottom division).

Proposed: S Burke

Seconded: N London

This is a clarification/definition of the procedure when a team is withdrawn. The reason for using 4-1 or 3-1, rather than 5-0 or 4-0 (i.e. default) is to be fairer to the teams they have already played as the withdrawn team would mostly likely have picked up a board win or draw here or there in their remaining matches.

8. Extending Bottom Division Rules (Amendment to rules B9 and B10)

9. All games must be played with chess clocks. The time limit shall be 90 minutes (75 minutes in the bottom **two divisions**) to finish the game.

10. Each match must be played over 4 boards in the bottom **two divisions** and over 5 boards in all other divisions.

Proposed: S Burke

Seconded: M Naylor

The reason for proposing these changes is to give the clubs a chance to decide what they prefer for next season. Last season the LMC struggled to balance some clubs' requests to have their teams in Division 5 (because they wanted to play under the "bottom division" rules) with creating a balanced league structure. Particularly after Mansfield 2 withdrew, this resulted in unacceptably unbalanced divisions. The LMC intends to prioritise the league structure over such club requests next season.

9. Restricting Eligibility (Amendments to Rule C4)

Proposal 1 - Add

Once a player has played on board 1 or 2 of a team in division 1, he/she may not play for any other team.

Proposed: D Sudar

Seconded: K Morrison

Division 1 should ideally be a fair competition between 8 distinct teams, each gaining points on their own merit. Currently this is not the case as clubs' strongest players can play several times for the 2nd team before becoming tied to the 1st. This can (and has) directly and unfairly affect both the title race and/or the relegation battle, and therefore is totally against the spirit of the competition.

Even the Derby & District Chess League, which is not unduly concerned about rules, has a rule to cater for the above problem. Their rule is that if a club has two or more teams in division 1 a player may play for only one of them. That is far stricter than this proposal which still allows players to double up on the lower boards for more than one team in division 1.

Proposal 2 - Add

Before the season starts, a club must list 3 current members who will be tied to the 1st team.

Proposed: D Sudar

Seconded: R Richmond

This proposal should prevent clubs from using their strongest players in lower teams to affect title races/promotion/relegation, and applies to all clubs in all divisions. It's expected that clubs will act properly in listing their 3 players but, in case some clubs are tempted to list non-members, the LMC will have the power under rule C1 to require a club to replace the name of anyone on the list the LMC feels is not a current member of the club.

10. Change for Consistency of Terminology (Amendment to Rule D4)

Replace the existing text with:

D4. The penalty for infringing rule B11 is the default of each board where no name is entered.

Proposer: Drag Sudar

Seconder: Steve Burke

This is just a tidying up exercise, replacing loss with default for consistency.
(NB. If item 6 was passed this becomes unnecessary.)

11. Reduce the Penalty for Ineligible Players (Amendment to Rule D7)

Replace the existing text with:

D7. The penalty for playing an ineligible player in a match is the transfer of **0.5 game points** from the offending team to their opponents, in addition to any other penalty, provided that the total game score of a team shall not become negative"

Proposed: D Sudar

Seconded: S Burke

To get rid of the full point transfer which does seem rather harsh for what often are honest mistakes, i.e. forgetting that a player is tied to a higher team or accidentally playing someone in the wrong board order.

12. Defaulted Boards (Amendment to Rule D8)

Replace the existing text with:

D8: Defaults that occur above the bottom board ~~played~~ will incur not only the loss of that game, but also the transfer of 0.5 points from the offending team to their opponents (provided that the total game score of a team shall not become negative) **but ONLY if it can be shown without any doubt that the offending team captain knew beforehand that they were aware that such a player would be unavailable.**

Proposed: D Levens

Seconded: J Swain

In its present form the rule is unreasonable.

13. LMC Powers (Amendment to Rule D11)

The current rule is

11. The LMC may take such action as it deems equitable in accordance with rule A1(d).

The proposal is

11. The LMC may take such action on penalties as it deems equitable in dealing with the application of the rules.

Proposed: S Burke

Seconded: D Padviz

This proposal specifically increases the power of the LMC to deliberate on any aspect of the rules, and take whatever action they feel is fair and in the spirit of those rules. It can be argued that the LMC already have this power under the current wording, but the proposed text leaves less room for doubt.

We all (I assume) play in the League because we enjoy it, as there is no financial benefit beyond the clock prizes for Division Champions. The rules are there to provide the structure for us to do this in a

fair and reasonable manner. The purpose of this amendment is to ensure that the LMC are able to administer the League in that spirit and circumvent any unintended effects of the rules.

14. LMC Membership and Procedure (Amendments to Rules A2 and A3)

A2. Membership

- a. The Committee shall have nine members, consisting of the League Secretary, Records Secretary and seven members elected by the NCA. Where the posts of League Secretary and Record Secretary are both held by one individual there shall be eight elected members.
- b. The elected members must be from different clubs.
- c. Where the League Secretary and Records Secretary are both from the same club then no elected member can be from that club.

A3. Procedure

- a. The quorum shall be five.
- b. The Committee shall elect a chairman, who shall have a vote and a casting vote.
- c. There must be at least five members voting on any issue for a valid decision.
- d. No member may vote on any issue directly concerning their club, except by joint decision of the other members where there are not five eligible to vote.
- e. Minutes will be taken of all meetings and published on the NCA website.

Proposed: S Burke

Seconded: J Litherland

The change to A2 is intended to increase the spread of influence on the LMC to more clubs by effectively making the reserves full members.

The change to A3 is to put the current LMC practice into the rules for clarity.

15. Grading of Games (New Rules A6 and B16)

A6. The Grading Officer (who is not a member of the LMC) shall:

- a. Grade all games played in the League.
- b. Assign temporary grades to ungraded players.

B16. All games played in the league will be graded. Where penalties are applied under league rules, the actual game result will be used for grading.

Proposed: R Abrahart

Seconded: S Burke

To enshrine the grading of games in the rules.

16. LMC Standing Orders (New LMCSOs and Amendments to Section A of Rules)

The proposal is that **the League Rules Schedule A should constitute a new set of LMC Standing Orders.**

Correspondingly, the existing Schedule A content should be removed and replaced by:

- 1. The League shall be controlled by a League Management Committee, with the day-to-day running of the League in the hands of the League Secretary and the Records Secretary.**
- 2. Administration of the League shall be governed by the League Management Committee Standing Orders, as determined by the Nottinghamshire Chess Association.**

Proposed: A N Walker

Seconded: R Richmond

Since the NCA has instituted the mechanism of Standing Orders for EC, we would like to bring LMC within that fold. This gives us an opportunity to simplify the League Rules, and perhaps also the Constitution in the future.

At this stage, we do not propose specific changes to the Constitution or to the rest of the League Rules. However, as a matter of principle, the LMC SO [rather than the League Rules] should list the powers of LMC, so future meetings might consider how this can be achieved, and whether references to the League within the Constitution might also be better placed within the LMC SO. If this principle is agreed, then more detailed proposals can be made next year.

17. Food for thought on how we run the League?

This is not a proposal yet, but in addition to the reorganization involving setting up the LMC SOs, another, more radical change, might involve the actual drafting of the rules being done by the LMC based on guidance from the clubs in General Meeting.

Many players are put off attending RRM's because of the technical debates over forms of words that go on for ages and, at the end of that, some people end up not being sure what they are voting for anyway, or simply leave before getting all the proposals dealt with!

If the meeting only had to decide on the principles that would be simpler, e.g. Do you want to have an order of strength rule? How many points leeway should be allowed? Job done!

This must present a generally more interesting evening in prospect for delegates. The rest could be done by the LMC who have a better chance of getting the actual wordings right and covering all the bases in the rules

It would greatly simplify the "RRM" procedure, as the clubs would only have to express and vote through their intentions and not draft rules text "on the hoof" if amendments are proposed on the night, or where proposals clash and need to be combined.

The rules could then be drafted by the LMC at some leisure (taking advice from other experts when needed) and it can give due consideration to "side effects" and how to cover them in the rules. This could have avoided some of the issues arising from the C7 rule that was passed at last year's RRM for example.

Along with some that are worthy of a good debate, there are often a number of technical rule changes. There is no real change in the intent of these rules, just clarifications of procedure and fact. These will however take time out the RRM (particularly if minor amendments to the wordings are proposed) that might be saved or better spent on the other items – and these will bore most of the attendees to death!

If there is any support for such a radical path, proposals could be put up for debate at the AGM that would allow the procedure in place ready for use in the future.

S Burke

League Secretary