

LEAGUE RULES 2021-22.

GENERAL

1. The Leicestershire and Rutland Chess League is administered by the **League Committee (LC)**, represented by its Secretary, Chairman or authorised official, whose decisions may be reviewed by the Committee. The “League” in these rules refers to this management structure, “Association” refers to the LRCA, **LMC** refers to the **League Management Committee**, and “**Secretary**” to the **League Secretary**. These rules cannot be changed unless the change is authorised by a majority of the **LMC**. Any changes must be circulated with the annual invitation to clubs to enter the league for the forthcoming season. Clubs can suggest adjustments for the **LMC** to consider but once the season commences no further changes can be made during that season.

2. These League rules are designed to help the smooth running of the League. Queries should be directed at the **Secretary**.

LEAGUE MEMBERSHIP

3. Membership of the League is open to all the clubs that are members of LRCA who agree to pay the League subscriptions. A player can register for one club only and cannot play in more than one league match per day (including one in which s/he wins by default). Playing for a club is evidence of registration. A player wishing to change clubs after playing for part of a season must obtain written permission from the first club unless it has left the League. Permission should not be withheld unreasonably: disputes are referred to the Disputes **LMC**.

4. Clubs are required to apply to the **LMC** for inclusion into the League competition annually by a previously announced date in July/August, giving their preferences for divisions, and special requirements. Contacts, home venue, playing night[s] and other relevant information are required for inclusion on the results website. To comply with GDPR (Data Privacy) Club Secretaries must obtain explicit agreement from their club officials that their contact details can be displayed in the LRCA website. The fixtures for the League will start in September. Trophies will be awarded to League winners. Their acceptance by a club is conditional on an agreement that the club will return them complete and in good condition before September 1st in the following year. The agreement requires the club to accept the full financial responsibility if a trophy is lost or damaged.

5. LEAGUE ORGANISATION

5.1 The League is divided into divisions of 7-9 teams depending on the team entries received

5.2 Team Allocation to Divisions

a. In each Division below Division 1 the two highest scoring teams (in match points) in the previous season will be promoted to the next higher Division. In all Divisions except the lowest the two lowest scoring teams will be relegated. These rules represent the right to claim a place in a Division automatically but may be varied when teams are allocated to Divisions by the **LMC**.

b. In the event that additional place(s) becomes available in a division (e.g. due to a team dropping out) the place(s) should be filled in the following order:

- i) The higher placed team that was relegated from that division in the previous season (e.g. the team finishing 7th out of 8).
- ii) The team finishing one place below the promotion places from the division below in the previous season.
- iii) The lower placed team that was relegated from that division in the previous season (e.g. the team finishing 8th out of 8).
- iv) The team finishing two places below the promotion places from the division below in the previous season.

c. If a club enters a new team, this will normally be in the lowest division. They can request a different division which may be granted at the discretion of the **LMC** or additionally the **LMC** may place the new team in a higher division if the playing strength of the new team is considered too high for the lowest division.

d. If a club withdraws a team, they can decide which one it is provided they can justify the choice to the League Secretary. For example, if a club has teams in divisions 1,2,3,4 but then loses a number of 2nd team players then they could choose to drop the team in division 2 and retain teams in divisions 1,3,4.

5.3 Tiebreaks

Ties for championships, promotion and relegation will be settled as follows. If two teams are tied on match points, they are separated *first* using the results of the two matches between them. If these two results are equal, i.e. if both the matches were drawn or each team won one match by the same score, then *second* the results of the two teams against all the other teams in the Division, assessed in terms of games won minus games lost, will be used to break the tie. In the unlikely event of three (or more) teams being involved in a tie the same principles will be applied in a step-wise fashion. For example, if three teams are tied at the top of a Division, the results of the six matches between them will be used first to identify the weakest team of the three. That weakest team will then be eliminated as a contender for promotion, and the positions of the two remaining teams will be decided by applying the tie-break rules afresh, as above. If there are 3 teams tied for a relegation place, the strongest team of the three will first be eliminated, etc. In assessing the results between tied teams, the number of *match* points scored from matches between these teams is considered first.

5.4 Mid-Season Withdrawals

If a team withdraws *before* completing half its matches, its results will be deleted unless it is replaced, in which case the new team will inherit its predecessor's results. If a team withdraws *after* completing half its fixtures, all its other matches may be counted as losses by default at the **LMC's** discretion.

6. RULE BREACHES AND DISPUTES

6.1 Penalties

The LMC can enforce penalties for breaches of the rules basing its' decisions on the information obtained. Such penalties include:

- (i) default of a game;
- (ii) order replayed game;
- (iii) additional penalty point(s) awarded to an opponent and deducted from the club penalized;
- (iv) default of a match; and
- (v) suspension of a player for part or whole of a season.

The minimum penalty for board order breaches (see 11. BOARD ORDER) is the default of the lower board on which the higher-graded player played. The minimum penalty for DTS player infringements (see 12. DECLARED TEAM SYSTEM (DTS)) is the default of that board. Any additional penalty should be at the discretion of the **LMC**.

6.2 Disputes and Appeals

Any dispute or query over the rules or other complaint may be referred without fee to the **Secretary** (or another **LMC member** if the Secretary's club is involved). The Secretary may refer a dispute to a panel of three uninvolved members of the **LMC** to act in his place. If a dispute arises during a match, every effort must be made to resolve the issue on the spot. If the dispute remains unresolved the details must be sent to the Secretary at the same time as the result is submitted electronically, and the latter submission should note that the result is subject to the disputes procedure. If the query/dispute concerns the result submission itself, it must be made within 7 days of the results submission. The Secretary (or his alternate) will base his/her decision on written or e-mail or phone evidence from the club or clubs involved in the dispute and will explain in full his/her decision to those clubs. A club may appeal against the decision within 12 days of its promulgation, only if it is perverse in view of the known facts, that the penalty imposed is unfair or disproportionate, or that the decision was procedurally defective or involved an unacceptable conflict of interest. No new evidence will be allowed at such an appeal, which will be heard by the **LMC** (minus any members with a conflict of interest). A club entering an appeal will be required to pay a financial deposit of £10, but this will be retained by the **LMC** only if on hearing the appeal it is felt to be frivolous or unwarranted.

The only parties to the appeal will be the **Secretary** or alternate, who will provide the background information and the reasons for the initial decision, and the appellant club. The three possible results of the appeal are that (a) the appeal is rejected, in which case the appeal decision is final; (b) the appeal is allowed, and the original

decision is reversed or appropriately amended, in which case again the decision is final; or (c) the case is referred back for a re-hearing, which will be conducted by three individuals who are not **LMC** members and who did not have any conflict of interest. In case (c) the decision of the three individuals is final.

Appeals should be made by e-mail, preferably asking for a receipt acknowledgement. The e-mail should be copied to all interested parties.

6.3 Game Defaults

Where board defaults are notified to the opposition team captain at least 24 hours before the start of the match, no additional penalties will apply. Where defaults are not notified the team will be penalized by the loss of match points as set out below unless in the opinion of the secretary exceptional circumstances apply.

Games	0-4	5-7	8-10	11-13	14-16	17-19
Points	0	1	2	3	4	5

A team defaulting more than 19 boards in a season may be disqualified forthwith and all its results are void at the **LMC's** discretion. NB: A team defaulting a complete match will suffer game defaults as above as well as the loss of the match points.

PLAY

FIDE Rules of Play apply and are not repeated here. Members should read them, they are found at: <https://www.fide.com/fide/handbook.html?id=208&view=article>

7. GENERAL

Teams will score 2 match points for winning a match, with 1 match point for a drawn match.

Matches in all Divisions will be a minimum of 4 boards. Matches involving more than the minimum number of players can be played if the two team captains agree on the number of boards before the day of the match: in the event of any dispute on this issue the match result will be decided using the minimum number of boards. All the games in any single match will start on the same day. The home team will have white on the even numbered boards. Scheduled start times will be those shown on the website under the home team.

FIDE 6.7 LRCA override to late arrival rules: Clocks should be started at the **published start time**. Absent players can be replaced with a player eligible to play for that team. After 45 minutes the absent board is defaulted.

If defaults are known at the start, the non-defaulting captain can specify which boards are defaulted.

The home club is responsible for (1) providing premises, and (2) for providing and setting up the playing equipment and tidying it away at the end of the match: the latter responsibilities also apply to the listed away team when a match is played by agreement at a neutral venue.

8. POSTPONEMENTS

Inclement weather may require a match to be postponed. In this case, the Secretary should be informed of the postponement and a new date arranged as soon as possible.

Due to the difficulty of finding dates for rescheduled matches, teams are not entitled to postpone on the grounds they are unable to raise at team. However, if the opposing team agree to a postponement this will be permitted provided that all of the following apply:

- A new date has been agreed by both teams, and the league secretary and webmaster notified no later than the date of the original match;
- The date is before the end of the season;
- In the opinion of the Secretary, neither team is getting an unfair competitive advantage from the postponement.

Any postponement without the permission of the **Secretary**, except in the case of inclement weather, will result in the match being treated as a void match for both sides.

9. TIME CONTROLS

When the home team has digital clocks available, games will be played with Fischer timings. Where the home team does not have digital clocks available, they may ask, at their discretion, for the away team to bring digital clocks.

If the home side is not set up for a match start by their published time, then the away team may agree the amount of delayed start time with the home captain and remove this time from the home teams' clocks.

In all divisions, the default time control shall be all moves in 75 minutes, plus a 10-second increment per move.

The short time control shall be all moves in 70 minutes, plus a 5-second increment per move.

The short time control is for clubs who must vacate their premises by e.g. 10pm or choose to have a published start time of 19:45, although it may be used for other matches if both captains agree.

Where a club has insufficient digital clocks for all boards, digital clocks should be used for as many boards as possible, with analogue clocks used for the remaining boards. Fischer timings are still to be used for the boards with digital clocks.

Where digital clocks are not available:

- i) The long-time control shall be all moves in 90 minutes. The short time control shall be all moves in 80 minutes.
- ii) Quickplay finish rules and Guideline III.5 apply. A draw claim under Guideline III.6 (formerly Appendix G.6 - the 2-minute rule) **can only be made where there are no increments**, and both players have played at least 45 moves. If there are any games in which a claim for a draw has been made under Guideline III.6 of the FIDE Laws, and there is no neutral arbiter present, the position at the time of the claim and an up to date score sheet, signed by the opposing player, shall be sent to the **Secretary** within 48 hours of the match, provided that 45 moves have been made by Black in the submitted position. The anonymised position will be then referred to a neutral LMC official without charge, whose decision will be final.

Both captains can agree on a longer time control if they wish, regardless of whether digital clocks are being used.

If neither player in a game is present at the start of the match, White's clock will be started at that time.

10. RESULTS SUBMISSION

Results must be submitted/approved online using the LRCA results website by at the latest, **11pm on the Monday after the match** else that team shall be deemed to have defaulted a board and will be liable to loss of points as per 6.3. Clubs can appeal against this automated default if it was due to submission/approval fault which was reported (along with the match result) by the result submission deadline.

11. BOARD ORDER

Each team in any match should have a board order corresponding to the ECF ratings published on 1 September. These are listed on the Players page of the LRCA website. The Grading Officer should be consulted about players without a current ECF grade and will assign a temporary grade based on the best evidence available. However, **two players whose grades do not differ by more than 50 (fifty) points may play in either order.** (Example; If players A, B and C have grades 1600, 1580 and 1540 respectively, then A must always play above C, but B could play above A, between A and C, or below C). Exceptions to this rule will not normally be allowed, but in extreme circumstances the Grading Officer may allocate a different grade. The allocated grade will apply in handicap events as well as in the League. The permission of the Grading Officer for such exceptions must always be obtained in advance. Clubs will be expected to give full justification for such requests.

12. DECLARED TEAM SYSTEM (DTS)

12.1. At the **start** of the season each club arranges its active player list in grade order (using the 50-point rule if so desired to produce a truer reflection of playing strength) and then allocates a team to each player as follows:

- The first 4 players are designated as 1st team players.
- The next 4 players are designated as 2nd team players.
- This process is repeated for the remaining teams.
- Declared teams must be at least the size of a team (4) but clubs may choose to allocate additional players to teams. Keeping Declared teams at the minimum size will give a club the maximum amount of flexibility within the DTS but may mean there are **more** automatic Declared Team List updates throughout the course of the season. Declaring teams at larger than the minimum size (to give a more realistic impression of who will play for which team) reduces a club's flexibility somewhat in future team selection but will tend to result in **fewer** future team list updates.
- Inactive players may be added as additional players on the list according to the grade ordering rules stated above.
- If a club does not submit a DTS list before its first fixture is played, then it will be automatically generated based on the club's active players listed in descending grade order.

12.2. Suspended for 2021-22 season

12.3. Clubs may play a maximum of two players from the team **above** (e.g. 1st team) in the team **below** (e.g. 2nd team) but no more.

12.4. Players may **not** play any games at all for a team lower than the team below their **declared** team (i.e. 1st team players can never play for the 3rd, 4th, 5th team etc but may play for the 2nd team as permitted by rule 12.3).

12.5. Suspended for 2021-22 season

12.6. Suspended for 2021-22 season

12.7. Board orders are determined by the current Board Ordering rules (i.e. descending grade order with a 50 point tolerance). There is no requirement for board orders to follow the ordering of the **Declared Team List**.

12.8. After an update to the **Declared Team List**, a club is not obliged to apply the revised list for matches played within 7 days of the update.

12.9. Changes to an existing player's LRCA grades mid-season (e.g. revisions of estimated grades) may require updates to the club's Declared Team List.

If **new** players (since the start of the season) are going to play in the league, clubs must inform the webmaster by the end of the preceding week. A club can stipulate the team/category designations valid within the Declared Team List (according to 12.1) but initially the new player is classified as Inactive until they have played 2 times.

12.10. If a player has not played 2 games for their club by 30 November or does not play 2 games for their club between 1 December and the end of February then they shall be classified as Inactive. Inactive players do not count towards the required number of players in a team. If reclassifying a player as Inactive reduces the number of declared players below the required number for the team then an update to the DTS will occur to ensure the minimum number of 'active' players is maintained in each team.

12.11. A club is permitted a DTS update with movement of players down one place in the DT list when a previously inactive player becomes active (by playing 2 games).

12.12. Not applicable

13. MATCH CONDITIONS

(i) Smoking is banned in any room used for League and Cup matches.

(ii) Players' mobile phones and other electronic devices must be switched off, or set to silent/vibrate mode, for the duration of the match. Players may not speak into a mobile phone in the room used for matches (i.e. in an emergency player's must leave the room to use their phones). The automatic default specified in FIDE rules for a phone making a sound will not be applied

(iii) **Hand-held or portable computers** of any kind are not to be brought into the playing room or surrounding areas during matches.

Breaches of these rules 13(i) and 13(iii) will lead to the automatic forfeit of the game by the player concerned. A game lost in this way still counts for grading.

14. COVID RESPONSIBILITY

Players agree to play at their own risk and are responsible for their safety and that of others. In particular:

- i) Players should not play if they are experiencing Covid-19 symptoms (as outlined on the Public Health England website: www.gov.uk/coronavirus) or if they are required to self-isolate.
- ii) Players should comply with the Covid rules in force at the match venues. These will be advised on the 'Clubs' section of the LRCA website.

There is an expectation that players will be vaccinated against Covid. This does not apply if there is a valid medical reason for a person not taking the vaccine. It also does not apply to people who have not yet been offered the vaccine due to their age. **Players will not be required to provide evidence that they have been vaccinated.**

15. LOCKDOWN RESULTS

In the event that Government restrictions force the league to be suspended for a period of time, all matches during the suspension should be recorded as 2-2 draws unless both captains agree to play the match after the lockdown and manage to do so before the season ends in which case the match result is as played.

ADVICE FOR MATCH CAPTAINS

● Match captains can:

(a) indicate flag fall for either player in a game;

(b) advise players of the match score at any time; and

(c) in clear hearing and in English, advise a player if consulted on the acceptance of a draw, without commenting on the position itself, or on any other position in the match. **You can tell your players the match score at any time.**

● The home captain should ensure that all sets, boards, and clocks are set up properly and in good time. It is legitimate for the clocks to be started at any time after the home club's start time as listed on the website, whether or not all players from either or both the teams are present. Travelling teams should note that some clubs must start very promptly at [e.g.] 7.15 pm because they have to leave the premises by [e.g.] 10.00 pm

● Before the match starts, exchange team lists with the opposing captain.

● During the match do your best to ensure that the playing area remains quiet, especially if casual games or other matches are in progress at the same time.

● **You should point out a flag fall for any player on either side.**

● When digital clocks are used, ensure that at least one-person present knows how to operate them – including how to give a player extra time, in accordance with the Fide laws. (E.g. where one player makes an illegal move and the opponent is awarded 2 extra minutes – Fide Article 7.5.5)

- If your game seems likely to be involved in a claim under Fide Guideline III for games with no increment, you can nominate a team mate to act as captain, telling the opposing captain that you are doing so.
- At the scheduled end of the match, make sure you agree with the opposing captain the match score and submit your results to the website by at the latest, **11pm on the Monday after the match**.

Do NOT send results directly or via e-mail to the Webmaster. Clubs can be penalised for failing to submit results within this time limit. Team captains should retain the written and signed results sheets in case any problem or dispute arises when or after electronic submission of the results.

- If your team includes a player with a disability, you should notify opponents in good time (at least a week in advance) before travelling to away matches, indicating the nature of the disability. If your club hosts a match which includes a player from either side with a disability, you should make every effort to ensure that the player enjoys conditions as similar as possible to those of the other players. If this might cause significant problems (e.g. because of the nature of the club premises) the opposition should be informed in advance of the match. It would be completely wrong for a player to refuse to play opposite a disabled player in a match.