

English Schools Chess Championships 2023/24 Under 19 rules

The Championship is open to all schools in England. In the interests of safeguarding, the ECF requires that all matches are supervised by at least one adult with each team who is both approved by the senior management of that school and has a current Disclosure and Barring Service Enhanced Clearance Certificate for working with children. Additional adult supervisors must also meet these conditions.

1) Teams are of 6 players

2) A school may enter any number of teams. Teams will be designated A, B, C and so on. The A team must be the strongest, the B team the second strongest, and so on.

3) Eligibility of players –

a) Each player must be a pupil on the roll of the school they represent at the entry deadline.

b) Age limit: under 19 on the 31st August 2023.

c) Where a school enters more than one team in the championship, players in teams which qualify for the regional stage (including by automatic qualification) are ineligible to play for any other team in the qualifying competitions.

d) If two or more teams from the same school qualify to play in the regional stage then they must allocate players to each team. This can be different to the allocation in the Autumn Term. Once their own team is knocked out they become eligible to play in subsequent rounds for a higher team. In no case may a player represent a lower team than one they have already played for (e.g. once they have played for their B team they cannot play for the C team but once the B team is eliminated they could play for the A team in subsequent rounds).

f) As a condition of playing in this competition, schools should provide the name, gender and date of birth of all players who participate in the tournament for ECF rating. This data will be stored on the ECF rating server.

The name, gender and school represented will appear on the ECF rating website in public:

https://www.ecfrating.org.uk/v2/new/list_players.php -- More information can be found here:

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/rules-for-acceptance-of-games-for-rating-new/>

g) Any claim of ineligibility, or other complaint, must be submitted by email within 48 hours to the appropriate Conductor. An appeal against a ruling by a Conductor may be made, within 48 hours, to the English Chess Federation's Director of Junior Chess, whose decision will be final.

h) If any player is found to be ineligible, their game will count as lost by default. Additionally, for each ineligible player in a team, one half penalty point will be deducted from the team's score in that match.

Organisation of the Competition

4) The Championship will be organised in three stages –

a) a Qualification stage in the Autumn Term

b) a Regional Stage in the Spring Term, and

c) a National Final in the Summer Term.

5) The Qualification Stage

a) Teams can enter two types of qualifying event –

i) Afternoon events of three or more rounds will be run by a host school. Any team scoring more than 50% of the match points (2 for a win, 1 for a draw, 0 for a loss) will qualify for the Regional Stage. It is up to the host school to decide details of how the tournament is run, but a suggested format will be provided.

ii) Online events to be played in school on lichess.org. These will be afternoon events with the players together in a school room, with adult supervision.

iii) Online Repechage events will be held at the end of November. These will be after school events with the players together in a school room playing on lichess.org, with adult supervision. Note that there will be separate entry forms and fees for such events.

b) Teams may qualify automatically for the regional stage in one of two ways –

i) Teams who played at the 2023 National Finals will be offered automatic entry to the regional stage

ii) A school's first team, with a total rating of 9,600 or more can also apply for an automatic qualification place. The ratings must be published ECF OTB ratings, standard play or rapid play with letter A or K (but not P) and not ECF Blitz, online ratings (such as ECF Online, lichess or chess.com) or local ratings.

In both cases, teams claiming an automatic place should enter via the ECF website before the entry deadline, and will be asked to submit a team list.

6) The Regional Stage

a) Teams qualifying for the Regional stage will be placed in Regional zones. As far as practicable, there will not be large distances between schools. Each Region will be run as a knockout competition. Matches are normally to be played "Over the Board". If the distance between the two schools is over 50 miles then the away team can request an internet match. The Region Conductor will inform the home team, who will have the option of playing away or over the internet. Matches played over the internet must be suitably supervised, as prescribed by Region Conductor.

b) The draw will be made by the Region Conductor, who will state venues and a finishing date for each round. In cases of difficulty meeting the due date, the Region Conductor will act according to their discretion. The Region Conductor is entitled to award the match to one side or to disqualify both.

c) Apart from in exceptional situations (e.g. due to weather) teams cannot change the fixture date and time less than 5 days before the agreed date.

d) Matches will normally use standard play time limits (see rules 14c) unless both teams agree to a shorter time limit.

e) The winner of each Region will qualify for the national final.

f) Any team eliminated from the competition at the Regional Stage can enter an internet Repechage tournament. Leading teams at the repechage will be offered places at the National Final. Teams who withdraw from the Regional Stage will be ineligible to play in a repechage.

g) If a team which has qualified for the National Final subsequently declines to take up its place, the Under 19 Organiser will try, subject to any venue deadline or other practical constraints, to offer the place to the losing Region Finalist or a repechage competitor.

7) The National Final

The Rules for the National Final will be published later.

Match Rules

- 8) All matches will be played either over the board or over the internet as specified by the Organiser.
- 9) Unless otherwise agreed, or otherwise provided by the Under 19 Organiser, the time allowed for a match will be approximately 2 hours (schools are strongly encouraged to use digital clocks with Fischer increments, thereby avoiding claims under the “two minute rule” – see rule 14 below).
- 10) Before the start of play match captains will exchange team lists, arranged in descending order of known current playing strength. Any defaults must be on the lowest boards.
- 11) After the exchange of team lists, match captains will toss for colours. The side winning the toss can choose to take white on either the odd-numbered or the even numbered boards.
- 12) A player who is not present 30 minutes after the clocks were started will lose their game by forfeit.
- 13) A substitute for a player who is not present when the clocks are started may be provided at any time before 30 minutes have passed. They may not play on a lower board than that on which they would have played had they been a member of the original team.
- 14) Chess Clocks should be used for all matches.
 - a) In Autumn Term qualification events, the suggested time limit is 15mins + 5s/move where digital clocks are used (or 20 mins each on a clock if digital clocks are not available).
 - b) In the Spring Term Regional Stage, where digital clocks which allow Fischer timings (increments) are used, the time limit will be all moves in 50 minutes plus 10 seconds per move. With other clocks, each player has 1 hour in which to make all their moves and FIDE Guideline III will apply. See rule 17 for further details.
 - c) Teams may agree, and the Under 19 Organiser may stipulate, a different time limit.
- 15) Drawn matches

Regional matches cannot be drawn. If two teams score equally, the match will be decided by board count or bottom board elimination or colour in that order:

 - (a) Board count. Each team adds up the numbers of the boards on which it scored wins, and the team with the lower result is the winner.
 - (b) Bottom board elimination (to be used only if (a) has not resolved the match). The result on the lowest board is discounted. If it was a draw, the next higher board is discounted; and so on until a result is achieved.
 - (c) Colour (to be used only if (a) and (b) have not resolved the match). The team that had black on board 1 is the winner.
- 16) Match results must be emailed by both sides to the appropriate Conductor within 24 hours. Results sheets, listing players’ names and game results, should be emailed to the appropriate Conductor within 7 days to ensure that the games are graded.

General Rules

- 17) Except as otherwise provided by these Rules, all play in this competition will be in accordance with the FIDE Laws of Chess as of 1 January 2023 including Guideline III if increments are not used.

See <https://handbook.fide.com/chapter/E012023>

18) Any question arising which is not provided for by Rules 1 to 17 will be referred to the Under 19 Organiser. An appeal against this ruling may be made (within 48 hours) to the English Chess Federation's Director of Junior Chess, whose decision will be final.