

Dear All,

I have been asked to make a ruling on the following appeal from the Lancashire Chess Association regarding the U100 match held on 11 June 2011 at Rearsby.

I will quote the appeal in its entirety, then briefly deal with the points raised in this appeal as they apply to the current rules of the Counties Championships.

Dear Adam

It is now quite clear that the current playing strength order used by the Essex U100 captain in the recent semi-final was completely wrong, against the rules of the ECF stages of the county championships:

Actual playing order:

DENNIS DARTNELL	91	280992J
RONNIE MELHUIISH	99	122527D
STEVE HAGGERTY	97	261773A
STEFAN REDGRAVES	71	277814C
HUGH TANTON	92	120048D
DAVID WILSON	90	245009E
JOHN ELLIS	87	163923H
CHRISTOPHER MULLENDER	79	268512H
JODY GORHAM	93	256002B
VOLDI GAILANS	88	111005G
PETER HUGHES	73	271180B
JOHN CHAPMAN	73	259433L

Below is the current performance of the Essex u100 team, obtained from Richard Haddrell within 15 minutes, and therefore the order the team should have been played in according to the rules:

DENNIS DARTNELL	91	280992J	129 (44)
STEFAN REDGRAVES	71	277814C	112 (19)
JOHN ELLIS	87	163923H	109 (15)
CHRISTOPHER MULLENDER	79	268512H	109 (17)
DAVID WILSON	90	245009E	107 (12)
JODY GORHAM	93	256002B	102 (19)
STEVE HAGGERTY	97	261773A	98 (27)
VOLDI GAILANS	88	111005G	95 (45)
PETER HUGHES	73	271180B	99 (11)
HUGH TANTON	92	120048D	94 (8)
RONNIE MELHUIISH	99	122527D	85 (17)
JOHN CHAPMAN	73	259433L	76 (59)

As can be clearly seen, no attempt was made to play the team in this year's ECF grading order (1) (by which grades these overgraded players would be eligible to compete) or, more importantly, current playing strength, as demanded by the rules of the competition (2):

C3. Before the time fixed for the start of play, the captains of the teams engaged shall make up their respective playing lists, putting the players in order of current playing strength, shall exchange such lists and then toss for colour. Any known defaults shall be placed on the lowest boards possible. The name of the player, their grading reference number and their grade must be included on the Result Sheet. ECF grades shall not be taken as indicating the order of current playing strength.

As can be seen, only two of the 12 Essex players were played in the current playing strength. Indeed, six of the team were clearly currently playing well above the grading limit of the competition, yet four of these were played in the lower two thirds of the team on the day. (3)

Because this team list was presented only just before the match (4), there was no time for scrutiny by either the two ECF arbiters present or the opposition captain; as usual, it would have to be taken on good faith that the Essex captain was playing in current playing strength order. Scrutiny afterwards (as with the board 5 Lancashire player John Reyes) clearly shows that non-intentional mistakes had been made, but mistakes which break the current competition rules.

Quite clearly Essex have completely infringed the rules of the competition and, by playing their team in a way chosen arbitrarily by themselves, have disadvantaged the other team, Lancashire.

I suspect this means that at least 4 players will have to have their results scored to their opponents, and also one point taken away per board so infinged.

This, as per the original result, would mean that Lancashire u100 proceed to the final.

Yours sincerely
Bill O'Rourke
Lancashire President"

COMMENTS

(1) The current rules as quoted in the appeal specifically state that
"ECF grades shall not be taken as indicating the order of current playing strength".
ECF grades should therefore not be used to determine board order. Essex have therefore not broken the rules by fielding players out of ECF grading order.

(2) The Essex Captain has fielded his team in order of what in

good faith he believes is "current playing strength", and has not broken the rules.

(3) Whilst I do not agree with the interpretation of the rules used in the appeal, applying the same methods to the Lancashire board order actually produces even less favourable results.

(4) The rules say "Before the time fixed for the start of play, the captains of the teams engaged shall make up their respective playing lists..." Therefore 'presenting a team list only just before the match' is not a valid complaint.

RULING

This appeal is dismissed for the reasons given above.

Essex had previously protested about an ineligible player in the Lancashire team, and this was confirmed by the controller Adrian Elwin. This decision was then appealed by Lancashire, but the original ruling was upheld.

Therefore Essex go through to the final of the U100, 7-4.

Adam Raoof, ECF Director of Home Chess
20 June 2011