

ECF Online Counties Championships Rules 2020/2021

Section A: The Competition

The competition shall be ECF online standard rated and held each year under the direction of the Director of Home Chess who shall appoint a Controller and a Fair Play Controller.

The officials for this summer's event are

- (a) Controller: Mark Murrell - *ECFOCCController on chess.com*
- (b) Chief Arbiter: IA Adrian Elwin - *Sage2604 on chess.com*
- (c) Fair Play Controller: Mark Murrell - *ECFOCCController on chess.com*

The ECF Counties Online Fair Play Regulations apply to this event, which is a Tier one event for the purposes of the ECF's Online Fair Play and Anti-Cheating Rules ("OFPAC Rules"). All games will be ECF Online standard rated.

It is a condition of entry that all players must comply with these Rules, the Fair Play Regulations and the applicable OFPAC Rules. The ECF reserves the right to refuse any team entry or player registration at its absolute discretion without explanation.

A.1 Competition Structure

A.1.1 The competition shall comprise the following Championships:

- (a) Open, having no upper grade limit
- (b) Minor Open, for teams with a maximum average player rating of 1900
- (c) U1800, for teams with players with a competition rating below 1800.

A.1.2 Each Championship shall be divided into two stages: a Qualifier Stage and a Finals Stage. The highest placed teams from the Qualifier Stage progress to the Finals Stage.

A.1.3 The Qualifier Stage shall take the format of a team Swiss or round robin according to entry at the sole discretion of the Controller.

A.1.4 The Finals Stage shall comprise Semi-Finals and a Final, save that semi-finals will be dispensed with in the event of less than 8 entries in a Championship.

A.2 Membership Requirements

A.2.1 A player must be either an ECF member at bronze level or above or an ECF Supporter to take part in the competition.

A.2.2 A player must have an active chess.com account (see further rules C.3.1.(c) & (d)) and must declare their username to that account linked to their real name (see also rule C.4.1).

Section B: Deadlines and Playing Schedule

B.1 The close of entries is **6pm on Friday 11th June 2021**

B.2 All players must be registered in the County Championships Online organisation of the ECF League Management System ("LMS") and be accepted by the Controller,

who will set a player's LMS local rating to the player's competition rating. A player can only play for one county in the competition. Counties may enter a second team in any Championship drawn from its registered players but a player can only play for one team in a Championship.

B.3 Player registration for any match will close at 8pm on the eve of the match.

B.4 Teams must be entered in the LMS by no later than 2pm on match day.

B.5 Match cards will be revealed 1 hour before the scheduled start.

B.6 Matches start at 6:30pm.

B.7 The Default time is 15 minutes after the scheduled match start.

B.8 Playing Schedule

Qualifying matches will be played as required on one or more of the following match days: June 12 & 19, July 3 & 17, and August 21.

Semi-Finals will be played on September 11 (*advancing to September 4 in the event that the ECF over-the-board Pre-season Regional County Competition is not held*).

Finals will be played on September 18.

B.6 All matches must be played on the chess.com platform. Game pgn's for a match shall be supplied by the team captain at the request of the Controller.

B.7 Matches start at 6:30pm. Default time is 6:45pm.

Section C: Eligibility

C.1 Competition ratings

C.1.1 The ECF Online May 2021 list and the ECF Official Original Monthly Rating June 2021 list shall be used for the purposes of assigning a competition rating for each player.

C.1.2 A player's competition rating shall be set for the duration of the competition according to that player's published rating in one of the above lists and assigned according to the first list below in which a published rating appears for that player:

- a) ECF Online Standard May list
- b) ECF over-the-board Standard June list
- c) ECF Online Rapid May list
- d) ECF over-the-board Rapid June list
- e) ECF Online Blitz May list

C.1.3 A player who has no such published rating may play if permission has been obtained from the Controller at least 24 hours before the registration deadline and a competition rating assigned by the Controller. The team captain must submit evidence

from the local rating officer or other source. Evidence may also include other online ratings. Such a player shall be declared ineligible (or no longer eligible) if the Controller is not (or has ceased to be) entirely satisfied of a player's strength.

C.1.4 The competition rating shall be used for the purposes of player eligibility, team averaging and board orders.

C.1.5 In the Minor Championship each team must have an average rating not exceeding 1900. For every 5 points, or part thereof, by which the average rating exceeds the limit, one penalty game point will be deducted from the team's total score in the match.

C.2 Counties Entitled to Participate

All counties affiliated to the ECF and who are not in arrears of sums due to the ECF are eligible to compete in the competition. A combined county team may participate at the discretion of the Controller.

C.3 Players Eligible to Participate

C.3.1 A player is eligible to represent a county in the Championship if the player:

- (a) is a current ECF member or supporter; and
- (b) has been accepted to the chess.com ECF club for that county; and
- (c) has an active chess.com playing account under the username accepted to the ECF club and a player has or has had no other chess.com playing account; and
- (d) is not banned by the ECF from its online Clubs; and
- (e) meets one of the following criteria:
 - (i) Birth in that county.
 - (ii) Five years' domicile in that county at any time.
 - (iii) Two months' immediate previous and present membership of a club either in or affiliated to that county.
 - (iv) One month's immediately previous and present domicile in that county.
 - (v) Present attendance as a student at a school, college or university in that county.

C.3.2 A player may not play in the Finals Stage unless at least 1 game was played in the Qualifier Stage.

C.3.3 A player may not play in any match until registered on the ECF Club page for the county on chess.com and has been registered on the LMS providing real names, linked chess.com username and competition rating. After the close of registration for round 1, LMS registration of players will only be by e-mail request to the Controller.

C.4 Player Contract

C.4.1 It is a condition of entry for teams that a) participating adult players and b) for junior players a parent or guardian and player where old enough agree to:

- (a) the publication of a player's name, title and ratings/grades and associated team lists, team sheets and match cards on the ECF LMS, ECF Website, ECF online rating list and on chess.com;

(b) the processing of their personal data under the lawful basis of legitimate interest in accordance with the ECF Privacy Notice, see:

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/ecf-privacy-notice/>

(c) the Fair Play Regulations & applicable OFPAC Rules and that the ECF shall have no liability (whether in contract, tort or otherwise) in relation to its implementation of those Regulations and Rules.

A player who objects to any part of the above may not participate in the competition. The act of participation in any match shall constitute agreement.

C.4.2 Players agree to uphold the general standards of conduct, sportsmanship and online behaviour required by chess.com whilst using their platform.

C.4.3 Players agree that during play they will not:

(a) receive help from any other person, player or coach;

(b) make use of chess engines, bots, plugins, analysis tools, tablebases, blunder checks or other best moves tools

(c) make reference to chess literature whether online or otherwise.

C.4.4 Players wishing to withhold their consent should not and shall not be permitted to play in the competition.

C.4.5 It is the responsibility of team captains to ensure that players are informed of the Player Contract (rules C.4.1 to C.4.4) and are provided with the rules of the Competition, Fair Play Regulations and the OFPAC Rules.

C.5 Penalty

C.5 The penalty for playing an ineligible player in any match shall be:

(a) the loss of the game for that player and a win for the opponent, provided the opponent is present and eligible; and

(b) a deduction of one penalty point for each ineligible player from the resulting total score made by the team in that match.

Section D: Administrative Arrangements

D.1 The Role of the Controllers

D.1.1 *The Controller:* The competition shall be conducted by the Controller. Any decision made by the Controller regarding the administration of the competition may be appealed to the Director of Home chess, whose decision shall be final.

D1.2 *The Fair Play Controller:* The administration of the Fair Play Regulations and applicable OFPAC Rules in respect of fair play and anti-cheating procedures, reported concerns, sanctions and appeals shall be overseen by the Fair Play Controller, to whom the match arbiters shall report any unresolved fair play and anti-cheating dispute for resolution under the Fair Play Regulations and applicable OFPAC Rules.

D.2 Allocation of colours in all matches

The designated home team in any LMS fixture shall have white on the odd numbered boards and black on the even numbered boards. Colours shall be the reverse for the away team.

D.3 The Pairings for the Finals Stage

D.3.1 In the event of a Championship semi-final the four highest placed finishers shall qualify and the semi-final pairings shall be 4th v 1st & 2nd v 3rd, with the winner of the first pairing. In the absence of a semi-final the pairing for the final will be 1st v 2nd.

D.4 Registration, Reporting and Penalties

D.4.1 Players

D.4.1.1 Players are required to register their chess.com username by joining the ECF chess.com club for the competition, in which messages from the Controller will be posted. [ECF Online English County Championships - Chess Club - Chess.com](#)

D.4.1.2 Players must report their results to their team captain

D.4.1.3 Players are also responsible for checking their result in the LMS. Any discrepancies should be reported to the assigned match official or the Controller or otherwise to their team captain as soon as possible and no later than 24 hours after the match start.

D.4.1.4 Players with fair play concerns must raise these confidentially with chess.com (see E.5.8). These may also be raised with the Fair Play Controller through the online reporting form available from the ECF website competition page. Players must not make public allegations and should refrain from unsubstantiated allegations.

D.4.2 Team Captains

D.4.2.1 It is the responsibility of the team captain to collate a single pgn of all games played in any match at the request of the Controller.

D.4.2.2 In a match that is not controlled by a match arbiter or a controller, team captains shall enter and where appropriate verify results for that match. Otherwise, this shall be the sole responsibility of the assigned match official.

D.4.2.3 Failure to comply will result in a penalty match point deduction.

D.4.2.4 Failure to submit the team entry by 2pm on match day may result in forfeiture of the match or game point penalties at the discretion of the Controller.

Section E: General Rules

E.1 Pre-Match Arrangements - captains

E.1.1 It is a condition of entry that team captains agree to:

- (a) their contact details being published on the ECF LMS and provided to other captains, match arbiters and competition officials; and
- (b) the processing of their personal data under the lawful basis of legitimate interest in accordance with the ECF privacy notice, which can be viewed at: <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/ecf-privacy-notice/>

E.1.2 Agreements to vary the number of boards in any match must be reached and communicated to and, where necessary, approved by the Controller before 8pm on the day preceding the match.

E.1.3 Team submission

E1.3.1 The team captain must submit the team list on the LMS no later than 2pm on match day, in board order complying with Rule E1.4.1. Any known defaults must be placed on the lowest boards.

E.1.3.2 The team captain must ensure that the LMS Player List for their county listed in the Club section of the competition home page on the LMS prior to the close of registrations for round 1 contains their registered players and that the profile for each player includes their chess.com username and competition rating applying rule C1.2.

E.1.4 Team captains must ensure that their players know when and where to locate the LMS matchcard to find their pairing, how to make and receive challenges on chess.com and how to contact their match official.

E.1.5 It is a Condition of Entry that team captains must:

- (a) provide to the team's players the competition rules, Fair Play Regulations and the OFPAC Rules; and
- (b) inform players (and parents/guardians of junior players) that their agreement to comply with the following will be assumed unless they object:
 - i) Conditions of Entry for players set out in rule C.4.1
 - ii) the standards of conduct and sportsmanship under rule C.4.2
 - iii) the prohibition on assistance during play set out in rule C4.3and that those wishing to withhold consent shall not be permitted to play in the competition (rule C.4.4).

E.1.6 Captains must ensure that parental permission is obtained for junior players to participate including for chess.com "friends" to be added for matches and "unfriended" afterwards and that parents take safeguarding responsibility for the operation of the chess.com account for their child. All juniors under the age of 13 must use a parental account. Safe mode for children should be engaged.

E.2 Number of Boards

E.2.1 In any match each team shall be represented by 12 players.

E.2.2 The number of players in any match may be varied upwards by agreement between the team captains. Any such variation must be notified to the Controller by 8pm on the day preceding the match.

E.2.3 The number of players in any match may be varied downwards by agreement between the team captains and the Controller. Any such variation must be notified to, and approved by, the Controller by 8pm on the day preceding the match.

E.2.4 Note that for some tie-break provisions the results of the first 12 boards only in any match are counted (see rule E.9).

E.2.5 Each player plays only one game.

E.2.6 No player may play more than one board in any one match.

E.2.7 No player may play in two matches at the same time.

E.3 Time Limit

E.3 The time limit shall be all moves in 60 minutes, plus a 15 second increment per move from move 1 (G60'/15" – on chess.com 60 + 15).

E.4 Board Orders

E.4.1 In all sections a player cannot be listed on a board below another who is rated (or deemed to be rated) more than 80 rating points lower than the other player. The captain must use the competition rating for the purpose of this rule. If a team's board order does not comply with this requirement, then the team's board order will default to descending order of rating with players of the same rating placed in alphabetical order. The matchcard will be revised accordingly by the Controller.

E.4.2 Team captains may vary the submitted team lists prior to 2pm on match day. Changes after the player registration for the round must be notified immediately to the Controller.

E.4.3 A declared player who is not available to play may be substituted prior to 5:15pm on match day upon notification to the Controller. If no substitute is available, then the game shall be scored as a loss for the defaulting player.

E.5 Pre-Match Arrangements - Players

E.5.1 Players should familiarise themselves with the competition rules and fair play arrangements.

E.5.2 Players must have read the Fair Play Regulations and OFPAC Rules.

E.5.3 Players should familiarise themselves with the operation of the chess.com platform both for making and accepting challenges and for playing. Players are advised to practise both beforehand.

See: <https://www.chess.com/article/view/introducing-chess-com-version-3>

E.5.4 Players should familiarise themselves with the buttons for resigning or offering a draw.

E.5.5 Players should understand about the risks of loss of connection and how to reconnect, see: <https://support.chess.com/article/213-how-do-i-fix-my-disconnect-lag-issues>

E.5.6 The chess.com platform has live game rules that cannot be overridden, see <https://support.chess.com/article/338-how-does-game-abandonment-work>.

E.5.7 In particular players should note that on the chess.com platform:

- (a) failure to make their first move within 55 seconds will result in loss of the game;
- (b) failure to reconnect within 3 minutes will result in loss of the game;
- (c) in the first 10 moves of play only, any player taking more than 30 minutes on any one move will lose the game;

- (d) closure of a chess.com user account during play will lose the game;
- (e) mouse or finger slips cannot be rectified.

E.5.8 Players should familiarise themselves with the chess.com guidance about:

(a) how to report a suspicion of cheating and the reasons for doing so, see:

<https://support.chess.com/article/209-how-do-i-report-someone>; and

(b) information about chess.com's appeals processes, see:

<https://support.chess.com/article/648-what-do-i-need-to-know-about-fair-play-on-chess-com>.

E.5.9 The ECF has no control over the operation of the chess.com platform and the decisions made in respect of a player's user account(s). Any issue in respect of the making of such decisions must be taken up with chess.com direct.

E.5.10 Players are advised to join the ECF Competition club on chess.com to find assistance guides, receive news and forum messages from the control team:

<https://www.chess.com/club/ecf-online-english-county-championships>. The ECF County club page may provide team information. All players should consult the LMS for fixtures and results: <https://ecflms.org.uk/lms/node/60070/home>.

E.6 Match arrangements by Players

E.6.1 Both players **must** join their opponent as a "friend" on chess.com before making arrangements for the match. This will facilitate making and receiving the challenge. Opponents **must** be "unfriended" afterwards. This is a Safeguarding requirement to protect junior players and vulnerable adults when on an online media platform.

E.6.2 Each player **must** ensure that their chess.com account live settings are configured in advance before they make or receive a challenge in accordance with the Settings shown in Appendix 1 (save for those marked personal choice) but set to "Any Any" for incoming and outgoing challenges.

E.6.3 Challenge, Rejection and Acceptance

E.6.3.1 The player with the white pieces should 5 minutes before the scheduled start of play follow this procedure on chess.com to make a challenge:

- (a) Select Play and then Live Chess;
- (b) Ensure that the Settings comply with Appendix 1 subject to "Any Any" for incoming and outgoing challenges and save them;
- (c) Next click on play a friend, find option 2 and search for the opponent's username;
- (d) Select the 60 + 15 time control;
- (e) Click on options select the colour you have been allocated, then press play;
- (f) Be ready for the game to start as this will happen on acceptance of the challenge by the opponent which may be before the scheduled start of play.

E.6.3.2 The player with the black pieces should 5 minutes before the scheduled start of play log in to chess.com and be ready to receive the challenge ahead of the scheduled start of play. The receiving player (whether the originally paired black player or as a result of a substitution) should check that time control and colour allocation are correct before accepting the challenge.

E.6.3.3 An incorrectly constituted challenge must be rejected and opponent contacted to reissue.

E.6.3.4 If an expected challenge has not been received by 6:35pm by a player that player should issue the challenge, ensuring to allocate one's own colour correctly.

E.6.3.5 Acceptance of the challenge will start the opponent's clock.

E.6.4 In the event that it is noticed that an incorrectly constituted Challenge has been accepted the game shall:

(a) be restarted with a correctly constituted challenge if less than 10 moves have been played by both players;

(b) continue if white has played 10 moves or more.

E.6.5 If a challenge has not been received or made after 6:35pm a player should inform his team captain and the match arbiter through chess.com and stay online until it is confirmed that a default win has been awarded.

E.6.6 If neither player has been on online between match start and the default time the game shall be scored as a loss for both players at the default time.

E.7 Issues during play

E.7.1 In the event of a time out loss of the game for the first failure to make the first move on time the players shall restart the game by the player with the white pieces making a further challenge in accordance with Rule E6.3. The lost game will be rated by chess.com but will not be submitted for ECF rating.

E.7.2 Disconnections are governed by the Fair Play Regulations. In the event of deliberate disconnection (e.g. disconnecting rather than using the resign button) or allowing the clock to run down in a lost position or other gamesmanship a player may be suspended from the competition.

E.7.3 Issues during play should be raised with the assigned match official. Where this does not result in resolution the players should continue the game where possible, failure to do so may result in the game scored 0 – 0 or the game result being decided in favour of the player willing to continue. Such disputes should be referred by both players to the Controller immediately following the conclusion of the game or where continuation is not possible as soon as possible. Matters concerning the Fair Play Regulations and/or OFPAC Rules should be referred to the Fair Play Controller.

E.8 Match non-communication and following the team

E.8.1 Players must not ask their captain or anyone else about whether or not they should offer, or accept the offer of, a draw.

E.8.2 Captains and players should not communicate with players whilst a game is in progress unless that communication is necessitated by rule E.7.

E.8.3 Players are not permitted to view other chess games whilst their own game is in play. Players are permitted to view the LMS live score for their team's match.

E.8.4 In the event of breaches of this rule the match arbiter or the Controller may decide to declare the game lost.

E.9 Result of the Match

E.9.1 The match shall be won by the team which has scored more game points.

E.9.2 In the Qualifier Stage 2 points will be awarded for a win and 1 point for a tie.

E.9.3 In matches played in the Finals Stage where game points are equal, the result shall be decided by:

- (a) Board Count: the numbers of the boards won by each team shall be added, and the team with the lower total shall win. If the tie is not thereby resolved;
- (b) Elimination: the lowest board shall be eliminated from the match score. This operation shall be repeated until the scores are unequal. If the tie is not thereby resolved;
- (c) If the tie remains unbroken the Championship shall be shared.

E.10 Qualifier Standings

E.10.1 Teams shall be ranked in order of match points scored in the Qualifier Stage.

E.10.2 For two teams on equal match points ranking shall be determined in the following order until the tie is broken:

- a) total game points scored
- b) match points between those tied
- c) game points between those tied
- d) lowest board count between those tied
- e) game points remaining after elimination of the top board or boards

E.10.3 For the purposes of rule E.10.2 all matches played only the results of the first 12 boards shall be counted.

Issued on 11th June 2021

APPENDIX 1 – <https://www.chess.com/settings/live> (Rule E.6.3)

Note that outgoing challenges should be set to “Any Any” and not as shown

Enable Premoves	<input type="checkbox"/>	Switch removes off.
Always Promote to Queen	<input type="checkbox"/>	Keep off
Confirm Resign	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Switch on to avoid losing by accident.
Play Multiple Games at a Time (Premium Only)	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A
Auto-Watch Top Game	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A
Always Use Focus Mode	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Personal choice
Low-Time Warning	<input type="checkbox"/>	Personal choice
Dark Mode	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Personal choice
Engine Evaluation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Switched off
Post-Game Quick Analysis	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Personal choice
Allow Challenges	Everyone	Keep as everyone
Allow Offline Challenges ?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Switch on
Incoming ?	Min: Any, Max: Any	SET TO: Any Any
Outgoing ?	Min: -200, Max: +200	SET TO: Any Any
Chat Requests	Everyone	Might help before a match
Game Chat	Nobody	Nobody - avoid distractions.
Challenges Alerts	All Challenges	Allow all, so your opponent can challenge you.
Friends Alerts	Requests and Log On/Log Off	Allow so your opponent can add you as a friend.
Event Announcements	Off in Game Chat	Leave off
Right Button Draw Arrows and Highlights	<input type="checkbox"/>	Leave off
Show Timestamps	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Leave on

Save