

Reference in these rules to counties and County Associations shall be construed as applying to Counties admitted to membership in accordance with Article 5.2 of the ECF Articles.

All references to rating below are to over-the-board rating unless stated otherwise.

Section A: The Competitions & Financial Arrangements

A1. Competition Structure

A1.1. The competition shall comprise two average team rating limited sections for teams of 8 players:

- (i) Major 2000, having no upper rating limit and a deemed lower limit of 1600
- (ii) Minor 1600, having an upper rating limit of 2000 and a deemed lower limit of 1200.

A1.2. The entry fee is £20 per team. County Associations will be invoiced by the ECF.

A1.3 The competition shall take place in 1 or more regions with teams assigned to a region according to their locality at the sole discretion of the National Controller.

A1.4 The format of the competition within each region shall be at the sole discretion of the National Controller according to entry but shall not exceed three rounds. *A three round team Swiss tournament will be held in each region where possible.*

A1.5 Matches shall be played on one or more of Saturdays 14 August, 4 September and 25 September (see also Regulation C2).

A1.6 By agreement of the captains of the two teams concerned any match may be played as a Hybrid match provided the arrangements comply with Section F of the ECF Tournament Rules and notice is given to the National Controller at least 7 days before the match.

A1.7 A play-off competition to determine the national County Challenge Champion between the Regional Champions may be held at the discretion of the National Controller later in the 2021/22 season. *The controller has Spring 2022 in mind.*

A2. Membership Requirements & Fines

A2.1 All players in all sections must be ECF members at bronze level or above. Counties will be levied the cost of bronze membership for each non-member

in their team, and such players will be upgraded to bronze membership. *(NB Bronze memberships taken out by a player now will be valid to 31 August 2022).*

Section B: Eligibility

B1. Competition Rating Lists

B1.1 For the purposes of team average and board orders, the applicable rating list shall be the ECF Official Original monthly standard list either for August or that current at the date of the match. Ratings from a single list must be used for all of the team.

B1.2 A player who has no published standard rating but does have a rating in the Rapid list shall be assigned a competition rating according to that list.

B1.3 A player who has no published over-the-board standard rating may play if permission has been previously obtained from the National Controller. Requests for permission must be submitted to the National Controller so as to arrive at least seven days before the player is due to play. The team captain must submit evidence from the local rating officer or other source. The National Controller shall, as soon as practical, assign the player a rating for the purposes of this competition only.

B1.4 Should any such player acquire an over-the-board standard rating in the September list that rating shall supersede any competition rating assigned by the Controller.

B1.5 The controller may vary any assigned competition rating should further evidence of playing strength come to light and shall give notice of any such variation to the team captain.

B2. Players Eligible to Participate

B2.1. A player is eligible to represent a County in the Championship if the player 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.

B2.2 A player may only play for one team in each section. A player may only play for one county in the competition. A player may play only one board in any match.

B2.3 A player is ineligible to play in any particular match if at the time of the match the player:

- (i) is required to self-isolate
- (ii) has tested positive for covid-19
- (iii) is displaying symptoms of covid-19 (which can include a continuous cough or a high temperature)

(iv) is displaying flu type symptoms (which can be similar to delta variant symptoms) occasioning sneezing or coughing.

B2.4 The penalty for playing an ineligible player in any match shall be the loss of the game for that player and a win for the opponent, provided the opponent is present and eligible; plus a deduction of one penalty point for each ineligible player from the resulting total score made by the County in that match. The game will still be rated according to the result of the game as played. The National Controller may impose an additional penalty if he is satisfied that the inclusion of an ineligible player was deliberate or wilful.

B2.5 It is a condition of entry and participation that a player must wear a face covering (e.g. a mask or visor) at all times in the Playing Area unless medically exempt or under 11. A player exercising a medical or age exemption shall play socially distanced chess using two boards in accordance with Section E of the ECF Tournament Rules, unless the opponent is willing to accept the increased risk of playing opposite a player without a face covering on a single board.

B2.6 In the event that a player facing an unmasked opponent chooses not to play on two boards the board shall be declared void (but shall continue to count for the purposes of average team rating) and scored 0 – 0.

B3. Eligibility of Teams

B3.1 Any County may enter up to two teams in each section provided they are not in arrears with any monies due to the ECF.

B3.2 In the Major section each team must have an average rating not exceeding 2000. Any player rated below 1600 shall be deemed to have a rating of 1600 for the purposes of calculating a team's average rating.

B3.3 In the Minor section all players must have a rating not exceeding 2000 and each team must have an average rating not exceeding 1600. Any player rated below 1200 shall be deemed to have a rating of 1200 for the purposes of calculating a team's average rating.

B3.4 Any board without a named player shall be treated as having a rating equivalent to the section average limit of the team.

B3.5 In any match in any section, 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.

Section C: Arrangements for Matches

C1 The [ECF Anti Cheating guidelines](#) apply.

C2 Matches shall be played on, or by mutual agreement before, or on the Sunday immediately following, the designated matchdays set out in A1.5 above.

C3 All matches shall be arranged by the County Associations of the teams concerned. The County drawn away may insist on an intermediate venue provided they notify the home county of their decision at least a fortnight before the scheduled date and provided it is prepared to make all the arrangements and that all expenses are shared by the teams concerned. An intermediate venue should not disadvantage either team and as far as possible should be of comparable distance from their respective County towns as listed in Appendix 1.

C4 The captain of the team arranging the venue shall be responsible for advising the other team's match captain in writing of the venue arrangements and conditions of hire/use so they are received seven days before the date of the match and shall also be responsible for setting up boards, sets and clocks and providing scoresheets, with appropriate risk assessed Covid-19 hygiene controls.

C5 The Playing Area within the venue must conform to the minimum standards set out in Section F and the match conducted in accordance with those standards. County Associations are required to consider the ECF competition risk assessment checklist accompanying these Regulations, assess the risk for the Playing Area and venue and act accordingly. The completed checklist should be provided to the opposing team captain.

C6 Matches must be conducted in accordance with national and local government legislation and guidance applicable at the date of the match.

C7 At the request of either captain, made not less than seven days before the match takes place, a neutral arbiter shall be appointed. Upon receiving such a request, the National Controller will make a suitable appointment, which may not be appealed against. Both counties will be charged £20 at the conclusion of the Championship, and the ECF will pay the arbiter's expenses. It is strongly recommended that counties arrange for arbiters to be present at each match and is mandatory at each venue in a Hybrid match.

C8 Match officials including non-playing captains must wear a face covering in the Playing Area. Arbiters must be provided with a copy of the risk assessment checklist completed by the County Association of the team arranging the venue prior to acceptance of appointment.

C9 Where applicable national or local government legislation and/or guidance allows people to meet but sets a limit on how close they can be Section E of the ECF Tournament Rules permitting any game to be played using two boards shall apply and any requested variation thereof approved by the National Controller. Use of clock in reach of both players is an acceptable variation where it is possible to do so.

C10 Should any team default any match, or any game in a match, its County Association shall be required to reimburse such of its opponent's reasonable expenses incurred as the National Controller shall determine in the absence of agreement.

C11 The arbiter will report the result of a match to the National Controller.

C12 If an arbiter is not present, results must be reported by both teams on the results server not later than 24 hours after the match was played. If a result is not reported or confirmed within the due time, the National Controller may impose a fine of £10 on the offending County or Counties. If neither team reports the result, the National Controller may default or eliminate both teams.

Section D: General Rules

D1. Pre-Match Arrangements

D1.1. Any matter affecting the arrangement of a match on which officials of the Counties concerned cannot agree shall be referred to the National Controller whose decision shall be final on all points, whether arising under these rules or otherwise.

D2. Time Control

D2.1. The time control shall be all moves in 105 minutes, plus a 15 second increment per move from move 1 (G105' + 15"). (*Playing session of 4 hours*).

D2.2 Where suitable digital clocks are not available for an entire match to be played with this time limit, then the time limit shall be 30 moves in 1.5 hours, plus a 30 minute quickplay finish (30/90' + G30').

D2.3 The time control for an Article 20 Hybrid match shall be G90' + 30".

D2.4. The time limit of any match may be varied by agreement between the captains with the permission of the National Controller, provided the time control is eligible for ECF standard rating.

D3 Boards

D3.1 Each match shall be played over a minimum of 8 boards. However only the first 8 boards will count for the purposes of tie-breaks (see Regulation D6.2).

D3.2 Additional boards above 8 may be played by agreement and will count towards the match result for the purposes of match points.

D4. Responsibilities of the Captains

D4.1 At least 15 minutes before the time fixed for the start of play, the captains shall exchange team lists, with players arranged in rating order. Any known defaults shall be placed on the lowest boards. It is the responsibility of the captain to provide the names of the players, their ECF rating reference numbers and their ratings on the result sheet. Where an opponent's team list is not available to a captain by this deadline, then the captain may insist that: (i) the start be delayed until at least 15 minutes after the completed result sheet has been provided to him, and (ii) the amount of time lost by starting late is deducted from the opposing team's clock.

D4.2 If a captain's board order does not comply with the above requirement, then the opposing captain may at his discretion insist, prior to the coin toss only, that the captain must provide an alternative board order complying with rule D4.1.

D4.3 Upon completion of D4.1 and D4.2, the captains shall toss for colour. The home captain shall toss the coin, and the away captain should call. The captain winning the toss shall choose to take white on either the odd- or the even-numbered boards.

D4.4 At the time fixed for the start of play, the captains shall ask for clocks to be started on all boards. If this cannot happen on any game of a match because the team responsible for setting up boards, sets and clocks and providing scoresheets in accordance with D\$.3 has not done so by the time fixed for start of play, then the amount of time lost due to the delayed start must be deducted from the clock of each player from that team whose game is late starting.

D4.5 If a player is absent, a substitute may be put in up to one hour from the start of the clock, and the original game shall be annulled. A new game shall be started between the substitute and his opponent, with the clock of the substitute adjusted such that the elapsed time since the start of clocks shall be deducted from his thinking time. If no substitute is available, then his opponent, if present, shall score the game a win. If neither player is present nor can be substituted, then the game shall be scored as lost by both players. (*For clarification, because a substitution is made after the coin toss, the substitute does not need to comply with the requirements of D4.2.*)

D4.6 A player may only ask the arbiter or his captain for the match score at any time. A captain when providing the match score may also state the tie break position. No other information may be provided to any player. Players must not ask their captain or anyone else about whether or not they should offer, or accept the offer of, a draw. If a captain or anyone else communicates with a player in his team contrary to the provisions of this rule, then the arbiter may decide to declare the game lost for that player. If no arbiter is present, then the incident may be reported to the National Controller after the match, who will decide the result of any affected games.

D4.7 The National Controller may impose a penalty if he is satisfied that the board order did not meet the requirements of D4.2 because a captain deliberately or wilfully provided incorrect ratings of players to the opposing captain.

D4.8 Captains are encouraged to use the results server to display exchanged team lists for the start of play to help players find their boards.

D5. Result of the Match

D5.1 The match shall be won by the team which has scored more game points.

D5.2 For any match where only one team can progress, where game points are equal, the result shall be decided by:

(i) 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;

(ii) 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;

(iii) Average Team Rating: the team with the highest rating shall be eliminated. If the tie is not thereby resolved;

(iv) Colour: the team that had the black pieces on board 1.

D6. Standings and tie-breaks

D6 Where the format of the competition so requires:

D6.1 teams shall be ranked in order of match points scored applying 2 points for a win, 1 point for a draw and 0 points for a loss followed by game points.

D6.2 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 bottom board or boards.

D6.3 for the purposes of Regulations D6.1 as to game points and D6.2 as to tie-breaks only the results of the first 8 boards shall be counted.

D7. Mobile Phones and Electronic Communication Devices

D7.1 During play, a player must not have any access to mobile phones, electronic means of communication or devices capable of suggesting chess moves. Such devices, if brought into the playing venue, must be completely switched off and placed in a bag on or under the player's table before play starts. A player, when still in play, is forbidden to leave the playing area with such a bag, unless an arbiter gives permission. If it is evident that a player has such a device on their person in the playing venue, the player shall lose the game. The opponent shall win.

D7.2 Dispensation from this rule may be sought from the National Controller.

Section E: The Appeals Process

E1. Resolution on the Day

(a) If there is a dispute between two players in a game, it shall be resolved by the arbiter present at the venue.

(b) If there is no arbiter present at the venue a player who has finished their game – ideally the captains – shall attempt to phone one of the arbiters provided by the

National Controller at the start of the competition, who shall make a ruling to resolve the dispute.

(c) If it is impossible to contact one of the arbiters in (b), then the captains may attempt to resolve the dispute until such time as an arbiter can be reached.

Any final decision made by an arbiter may be appealed to the Appeals Committee. The captain shall submit a written statement to the National Controller and Director of Home Chess within 48 hours of the scheduled start time of the match and have paid a deposit of £50 which will be returned if the appeal succeeds.

E2. Appeals Committee

The appeal will be heard by the Appeals Committee, which shall be composed of three members of the Appeals Panel appointed by the Director of Home Chess. The Committee shall be Chaired by an International Arbiter; the other two members shall not be International Arbiters. The people on the Panel will be published before the start of the Final Stage, and it will have at least five members plus the Chief Arbiter.

E3. Appeals Process – Director of Home Chess

Upon receipt of an Appeal by the Director of Home Chess, he shall:

1. Inform the opposing team of the receipt of the appeal.
2. Appoint an Appeals Committee
3. Ask the National Controller, or the arbiter who made the decision, to provide a written statement about the incident within 48 hours of being invited to do so by the Director of Home Chess.
4. Ask the opposing team to provide a written statement about the incident within 48 hours of being invited to do so by the Director of Home Chess.
5. Send these statements to the Appeals Committee.

E4. Appeals Process – Appeals Committee

E4.1 The Committee shall receive all statements provided to them by the Director of Home Chess and invite all parties to comment on each statement. The Committee may put specific questions to each of the respondents about their statements, or their responses to each statement.

E4.2 The Committee shall meet and make any decision necessary.

E4.3 The Committee shall write a report of the incident, including any explanations and recommendations going forward, and send it to the Director of Home Chess. This report should be received by the Director of Home Chess within 72 hours of the statements being sent to them by the Director of Home Chess.

E5. Appeals Process – Notification to all Parties

E5.1 The Director of Home Chess shall then distribute the report of the Committee to both teams, the arbiter who made the decision, and the National Controller.

E5.2 The Director of Home Chess will, if the appeal is successful, instruct the Office to refund the £50 deposit.

Section F: Playing Area conditions for play – minimum standards

F1. Ventilation

Ventilation should be available:

F1.1 Through ventilation via air conditioning that refreshes using outside air.

F1.2 Through ventilation based on either an open door and window or two or more open windows that are not adjacent without compromising safety or security.

F2. Social Distancing

F2.1 The position of the playing tables should provide for at least 1m distance between players.

F2.2 For any game played using two boards with one or more player unmasked the two boards should be arranged so that the players are not facing each other and to provide at least 2m distance between an unmasked player and any other players.

F3. Spectators

F3.1 Only players and match officials are permitted in the Playing Area.

F3.2 Players should not spectate at any board or linger in the Playing Area. This includes whilst their game is in progress.

F4. Players

A player is ineligible for match selection if required to self-isolate or displaying symptoms. See Regulation B2.3.

F4.1 Face coverings must be worn in the Playing Area unless a medical exemption applies. See also Regulations B2.5 and 2.6.

F4.2 Players must vacate the Playing Area at the conclusion of their game.

F4.3 Players may bring refreshments into the playing area. However these should be consumed with consideration for others including appropriate social distancing from the opponent and other players where the player needs to remove their face covering. (see Regulation F2).

F4.4 Players must keep their possessions under their playing table or on the back of their playing chair. Players should avoid touching the possessions of others.

F4.5 Players suffering from medical conditions and those at greater vulnerability are advised to undertake their own evaluation of risk and seek medical advice where appropriate.

F4.6 Players should adhere to HM Government's Summer 2021 roadmap guidance on how to stay safe and help prevent the spread.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-summer-2021-roadmap/coronavirus-how-to-stay-safe-and-help-prevent-the-spread>

Appendix 1 – County Towns for the purposes of Regulation C3

County	County Town
Bedfordshire	Bedford
Berkshire	Reading
Buckinghamshire	Aylesbury
Cambridgeshire	Cambridge
Cheshire	Chester
Cornwall	Truro
Cumbria	Carlisle
Derbyshire	Derby
Devon	Exeter
Dorset	Dorchester
Essex	Chelmsford
Gloucestershire	Gloucester
Greater Manchester	Manchester
Hampshire	Winchester
Herefordshire	Hereford
Hertfordshire	Hertford
Kent	Maidstone
Lancashire	Lancaster
Leicestershire	Leicester
Lincolnshire	Lincoln
Merseyside	Liverpool
Middlesex	Westminster
Norfolk	Norwich
Northamptonshire	Northampton
Northumberland	Alnwick
Nottinghamshire	Nottingham
Oxfordshire	Oxford
Rutland	Oakham
Shropshire	Shrewsbury
Somerset	Taunton
Staffordshire	Stafford
Suffolk	Ipswich
Surrey	Guildford
Sussex	Lewes
Warwickshire	Warwick
Wiltshire	Trowbridge
Worcestershire	Worcester
Yorkshire	York