

Playing chess indoors is a situation where there is a higher risk of catching or passing on COVID-19. This is because the players are in close contact and in a county match for a long time. Within a crowded space there are more people who might be infectious and fresh air might be limited.

The main way of spreading COVID-19 is through close contact with an infected person. When someone with COVID-19 breathes, speaks, coughs or sneezes, they release particles (droplets and aerosols) containing the virus that causes COVID-19. These particles can be breathed in by another person. The particles can also land on surfaces and be passed from person to person via touch.

Thus, under the HMG guidance for step 4 “[How to stay safe and help prevent the spread](#)” it is necessary to be particularly careful to follow the guidance on “[keeping yourself and others safe](#)” as the nation moves towards a return to normality. Every little action helps to keep us all safer.

For the safety of all participants, particularly at a time of the delta variant of Covid-19 causing increasing infections and hospitalisation particularly among the less vaccinated younger generations, minimum standards for venues and the conduct of matches have been included in the competition Regulations.

By taking these simple precautions as to ventilation, spacing from others, face coverings and hand hygiene, whilst also being considerate of the sensibilities of others ahead of your own conveniences, the risk of infection can be reduced for all to encourage as many people as possible to return to over-the-board chess and competition, knowing what to expect.

Each person must undertake their own assessment as to whether the risk is one which they are willing to accept and accordingly participate at their own risk. This is particularly important for 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.

The competition Regulations contain conditions of entry to ensure compliance. Players in breach can expect to be defaulted and expelled from the venue.

### **What should players do ?**

- Read the competition Regulations before accepting an invitation to play
- Read the supplied requirements of the venue and follow them
- Bring your own pen to record your moves and drinking vessel

- Familiarise yourself with any floor plan and how to find your board
- Please do not attend if you are required to self-isolate or if you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 (see Public Health England [website](#))
- Only enter the Playing Area when called in. This is to allow setting up in a controlled hygienic environment
- Only players should enter the Playing Area, as it may well have a capacity limit and contacts should be minimised.
- Sanitise hands on entry to and exit from the Playing Area and during play as appropriate (always before and after touching your eyes, nose or mouth)
- Wear a face covering in the Playing Area unless medically exempt (by way of adjustment additional playing precautions are in place for any board involving a player with a medical exemption requiring additional spacing from other players and the use of two-boards; where the adjustments are not acceptable to the masked player the game shall be scored 0-0). Ensure you are socially distanced from players and officials when partaking of refreshments inside the Playing Area if you are unable to use other parts of the Playing Venue.
- Maintain a distance of at least 1m from others whilst in the Playing Area.
- Players have dispensation to look up the pairings on their mobile devices before the start of play, where these have been published on the results server
- Store possessions under the playing table if you can and if not on the back of your chair
- Do not spectate at any game during your game or after it (a player can always ask the arbiter or a team captain the match score and tie-break position).
- Vacate the Playing Area as soon as your game is completed.

### **Other information**

Players can leave the Playing Area as with any other county match for toilets, refreshments, smoking/vaping, exercise and fresh air.

Matchdays: Saturdays 14 August, 4 September and 25 September.

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

All games will be OTB ECF Standard rated including those in a hybrid match.

ECF bronze membership or higher is required. A membership taken out now will be valid to 31/8/2022.