

Proposals to Extend Club Representation at Council, Abolish Council Membership Fees, and Update Council Membership Arrangements

Overview

The objective of these proposals is to:

1. Extend Council membership to include more representation from clubs - with a notional target of around 50 clubs to be admitted. The intention is to extend the ECF Council franchise within grass roots chess by providing for club representation alongside league, county, union and congress representation.
2. Abolish Council membership fees (in lieu of membership by virtue of games played) as these raise minuscule amounts of money and are cumbersome to administer, and replace them with the changes included in the proposed Council membership arrangement updates below.
3. Update Council membership arrangements with the aim of making them more transparent and logical.

Proposal to extend club representation at Council

1. Qualification for a club becoming an ECF Council member should be based on organising sufficient ECF-rated over the board standard games (or the equivalent – see note at end), to include club member only rated events as well as external rated congresses/events.
2. If a club organises ECF-rated internal competitions and also organises or is strongly associated with a congress/congresses, over the board standard games (or the equivalent) across all such events will be aggregated and the club will be treated as one entity for the purposes of the Council voting register.
3. The de minimis figure for membership should be 50 ECF-rated over the board standard games (or the equivalent) per year, so roughly equivalent to a single small standardplay congress or two internal club standardplay competitions. We consider this to be a reasonably high bar, but it should be kept under regular review (up or down) based on the level of take-up to achieve the overarching objective of achieving more club representation at Council.

Proposal to Abolish Council Membership Fees

1. Current procedures for levying Council membership fees (currently pitched at £64 per annum) for those organisations that do not qualify for Council membership based on organising sufficient ECF-rated over the board standard games (or the equivalent) raise next to no money and are administratively cumbersome.
2. We therefore recommend that Council membership fees be abolished, and replaced with the changes included in the suggested Council membership arrangement updates below.

Proposed Updates to Council Membership Arrangements

1. Unions and county associations should have membership as of right, with a single vote still retained even if no over the board standard games (or the equivalent) are organised.
2. The definition of 'other' ECF organisations should be changed to encompass organisations that do not organise rated competitions as their primary objective (so do not necessarily qualify for Council membership by virtue of the number of games organised) but that nonetheless deliver significant value to the chess community. Approval of submissions for membership to Council from such organisations would be at the discretion of Council.
3. Organisations which are currently (incorrectly) included in the 'other' membership category based on the above definition will in due course be reclassified as clubs, leagues or congresses as appropriate.
4. Organisations in the 'other' category (after the reclassification above) will, like unions, retain a single vote even if no over the board standard games (or the equivalent) are organised.
5. Voting rights for Council member organisations not in the 'other' category will, unless there is a good argument to the contrary, be suspended as Council members should fewer than 50 ECF-rated over the board standard games (or the equivalent) be organised – but such organisations will remain on Council pro tem as non-voting members.
6. Membership will, unless there is a good reason to the contrary, be terminated after three years of non-voting status, or at any point should the Council member organisation concerned request it. Of course, Council membership can be reinstated at any time should sufficient ECF-rated over the board standard games (or the equivalent) be organised.

Note

Each 'standardplay game' as referred to in this document constitutes two 'qualifying games' in the terminology used in the articles of association (this is because the articles treat each game as comprising two half-games). The phrase 'standardplay games (or the equivalent)' is used in this document because under the terms of the articles of association qualification for Council membership can be achieved or retained through organising rapidplay and blitz games as well as standardplay games (see section 31 of the articles of association).

In practice this means that Council membership qualification can be achieved or retained by organising one, or a combination, of the following categories: (a) 50 or more over the board ECF-rated standardplay games (played at an equivalent time control of 60 minutes per player or more); (b) 100 or more over the board ECF-rated rapidplay games (played at an equivalent time control of more than 10 minute per player but less than 60 minutes per player); (c) 300 or more over the board ECF-rated blitz games (played at an equivalent time control of less than 10 minutes per player); (d) online standardplay/rapidplay/blitz games (where the numbers to achieve Council membership qualification are 100/200/600 games respectively as opposed to 50/100/300 games for the corresponding over the board categories).

For the avoidance of doubt, games from each category above can be counted together for the purposes of establishing or retaining Council membership – so, for example, 30 over the board standardplay (or 60 online standardplay games) and 40 over the board rapidplay games (or 80 online rapidplay games) would suffice.