

## **1 Management**

- 1.1 Each year the Management Board shall announce the arrangements for the following season including the entry fees, the official closing date for the receipt of entries and registration lists, and the name and address of the person appointed to receive entries.
  
- 1.2 The Chairman shall arrange meetings for captains and managers, as and when required, at which matters of current interest and future policy shall be discussed.

## **2 Registration Lists**

- 2.1 A club shall enter the 4NCL National Chess League ("the League") by payment of the designated fees and the registration of one or more squads of players who are expected to play during the season. Each squad may provide the players for one or more teams. No team may contain players who are not registered in the appropriate squad (unless they qualify under the Wildcard rules in section 4 below).
  
- 2.2 After the registration list deadline as announced per rule 1.1 above, a player who has explicitly consented to play for a team may not move to another team unless (a) the captain of that team voluntarily deregisters him/her or (b) the Chief Arbiter considers that it would be inequitable to hold the player to his/her previous commitment, taking into account the circumstances in which the commitment had been given and any relevant evidence subsequent to the giving of the commitment. It is the responsibility of the captain of a team wishing to retain the registration of a player who has agreed to play for that team to obtain firm evidence of explicit agreement (which should be in writing or by email, should be dated before the registration list deadline in 1.1 above and should record that the player has been informed of the consequences of giving explicit consent), such evidence to be made available to the Chief Arbiter and/or the Management Board if required. **i** A player who has given explicit consent to play for a team but who changes his/her mind must contact the Registrations Secretary before the registration list deadline. A player who has not given explicit consent will be considered to be validly registered for the team including him/her on its registration list, but until he/she has played for the team he/she remains free to play for other teams subject to the requirements

of sections 3 and 4 of these rules.

- 2.3 The registrations list shall be sent by email (preferred) or by letter (if email is not available) **ii** to the registrations secretary, and contain the following information for each player: (a) full name (b) FIDE code (if rated) (c) ECF grading code (if ECF graded) (d) nationality (e) estimated or foreign grading/rating (if neither FIDE rated nor ECF graded) (f) ECF membership number (if player not registered with another federation for FIDE rating purposes) (g) expiry date of ECF membership (h) date of birth **iii** (i) whether explicit consent under rule 2.2 has been obtained. Players registered as ENG should be ECF Gold members at the time the registration list is submitted. **iv** If a squad has teams both in Division 3 North and in the rest of the League, a player may be designated as northern or southern. In this event a northern-designated player can only play for a northern team and a southern-designated player cannot play for a northern team at any weekend, and both northern-designated and southern-designated players form separate "pools" for the purposes of rule 8.5.
- 2.4 With the exception of players registered with another federation for FIDE rating purposes, players in the 4NCL must be ECF members at Gold or Platinum level. In the case of existing Standard members, the ECF recognise this as Gold membership until the Standard membership would have expired. Such players should take out top-up Gold membership if their present membership expires before May 2014. **v**
- 2.5 Each team's entry fee shall cover the registration of up to sixteen players in Divisions 1-2 and up to twelve players in Division 3 South and North.
- 2.6 If a squad provides players for more than one team, the 80 point rules under section 8 below will apply.
- 2.7 If a player appears on the registration list of more than one team at the start of the season, the player in question will be registered to the team for whom he/she first plays.

2.8 Clubs entering more than one team in the League may, at their discretion, play on a combined squad basis (in which case the additional 80 point rule in the second sentence of rule 8.4 below should be borne in mind) **vi** or on a split squad basis (in which case players having once played for their nominated team may no longer play for another team, subject to the rules under section 5 below). The decision to play on a combined or split squad basis is irrevocable for the season in question.

2.9 The Management Board may at its absolute discretion refuse to accept a player's registration.

### **3 Additions to the Registration List**

3.1 Additional names of players expected to play during the season **vii** may be added to a squad's list of registered players and shall be sent to the Registrations Secretary either by email (preferred) or by letter (if email is not available). **viii** The information required in 2.3 above will also be required for additional registrations, and it is the responsibility of the team captain to obtain and make available to the Chief Arbiter and/or the Management Board documentary evidence of explicit consent obtained before the registration deadline per rule 3.3 below in the same way as for rule 2.2 above. **ix**

3.2 The date of application shall be taken as either the postmark of the letter or the send date of the e-mail.

3.3 To play as a registered player at a particular weekend the player must be registered no later than midnight of the Thursday of the week before the team lists need to be submitted under rule 8.1 below, i.e. nine days before the first round of the weekend. Any payment due under rule 3.5 below must be received before the player starts play, and if paid at the weekend itself must be paid at the relevant venue.

3.4 If a player has not been registered in accordance either with rules 2.1/2.2/2.3 or rules 3.1/3.2/3.3 the player will be considered to be a Wildcard.

3.5 A fee of £5 shall be paid for each registration above a team's allocation under 2.5 above. Players previously registered for a team may not be deregistered to avoid payment of this fee unless such deregistration takes place before the end of the first playing weekend.

#### **4 Wildcards**

4.1 A Wildcard is a player who is not registered for any squad in the League. No player whose registration has been refused **x** pursuant to rule 2.9 may be a Wildcard.

4.2 A fee of £10 (Divisions 1 and 2) or £5 (Division 3 South and Division 3 North) **xi** shall be paid for each Wildcard, payable no later than the start of play of the match in which the Wildcard plays. The Wildcard fee is levied on a per player basis according to the number of individuals appearing as Wildcards for a squad over the course of a weekend.

4.3 A Wildcard will become fully registered after the weekend at which he/she plays as a Wildcard. **xii**

4.4 A player is not required to be a member of the ECF for the weekend at which he/she appears as a Wildcard. After this first weekend the player must adhere to the requirements of rule 2.4 above.

4.5 A team in Division 1 may play one Wildcard in each match.

4.6 A team in Division 2 and Division 3 South and Division 3 North may play up to two and three Wildcards respectively in each match provided not more than one of the Wildcards plays in the top half of the team.

4.7 Unless he/she has applied for a transfer, a player named on a squad's list of players is not available as a Wildcard for other squads.

## **5 Transfers during the Season**

5.1 A player who is named on a squad's list of players may transfer to another squad provided he/she has not played during the current season and is not subject to the provisions of rule 2.2 above.

5.2 The transfer request must be agreed by the Registrations Secretary.

5.3 The squad to which the player is moving must fulfil all the requirements for additional registrations, including the payment of a £5 administration charge. **xiii**

5.4 The player must be registered for the new squad no later than midnight of the Thursday of the week before the team lists need to be submitted under rule 8.1 below, i.e. nine days before the first round of the weekend. Transfers later than this deadline will be subject to the Wild Card rules in section 4 above. In this instance, a Wildcard fee of £10/£5 is payable in addition to the £5 administration charge. **xiv**

5.5 If a team withdraws from the League, players who have played only for that team become free agents and may choose to play either for other teams in the squad if applicable or to join another team/squad. In such cases no registration fees are payable (but Wildcard fees will apply if appropriate). **xv**

## **6 Fixtures and Format**

6.1 Each division's fixtures shall initially be played over eight rounds and over four weekends, with one round

being played on Saturday and one round on Sunday. Three further rounds shall be played on a designated Bank Holiday weekend.

- 6.2 The first-named team in each pairing shall have the white pieces on the odd-numbered boards and black on the even-numbered boards.
- 6.3 Divisions 1 and 2 will comprise 16 teams each. Divisions 1 and 2 will comprise two preliminary pools of eight for the first seven rounds, with the two pools in each division of broadly equal strength as determined by the Management Board. The top four and bottom four teams in each preliminary pool will form two final championship/promotion and relegation pools respectively. With regard to the teams in each final pool, only matches played between themselves during the first seven rounds will be carried forward to the final pools (i.e. matches played by teams against teams in the other final pool during the first seven rounds will not be carried forward). Team placings at the end of the first seven rounds will be decided in the first instance on match point totals in the preliminary pool. If at the end of the first seven rounds teams are tied on match points, the tie shall be broken in favour of the team having (a) the greatest number of game points in the preliminary pool (b) the result(s) of the match(es) between the teams still tying (c) board count (d) elimination from the bottom board upwards (e) the toss of a coin. Tie breaks shall be applied in order until all ties are broken. Tie breaks shall be applied in order until all ties are broken.
- 6.4 Division 3 South and Division 3 North shall be played as a Swiss tournament in which pairings for both rounds of the first three two-day weekends will be determined in advance. If entries do not permit a Swiss tournament, an alternative arrangement will be determined by the Management Board. **xvi** At the two final weekends (rounds 7-11) Division 3 South and Division 3 North will combine into a single division, with match and game points carried over from the first three weekends. During these final weekends best endeavours will be made to maximise the number of matches played between Division 3 South and Division 3 North teams.

## **7 Match Arrangements**

- 7.1 In Division 1 each match shall be played over eight boards and each team must include at least one male and one female player.
  
- 7.2 In Division 2 each match shall be played over eight boards and each team must include at least one representative from two of the following three groups: (a) male players (b) female players (c) junior players who are under eighteen years on 1 January 2014. **xvii**
  
- 7.3 In Division 3 South and Division 3 North each match shall be played over six boards. Teams in Division 3 South and Division 3 North are free to field players regardless of gender or age.
  
- 7.4 The starting times shall normally be 2 pm on the first day of the weekend, 1 pm on the middle day of a three-day weekend and 11 am on the last day of the weekend.
  
- 7.5 The rate of play shall be 40 moves in 1 hour 40 minutes plus 30 seconds per move, followed by the rest of the game in 50 minutes plus 30 seconds per move. **xviii**

## **8 Team Lists**

- 8.1 For all fixtures in a given weekend, team lists must be submitted to the Chief Arbiter or his nominated representative by midnight of the Thursday before (i.e. 38 hours before the scheduled start of play of the Saturday match), with any defaults declared to the opposing captain by the same deadline. Any changes to these lists may be made without penalty (provided they do not introduce further defaults) up to midnight of the day before the fixture. All team lists must give the full names of the players clearly in board order.
  
- 8.2 Team lists may be amended without penalty (providing further defaults are not introduced) for circumstances

beyond captains' control provided this is done at least two hours before the scheduled start of play.

- 8.3 In all divisions FIDE ratings will be used to determine the order of strength of a team. For a player without a FIDE rating, an ECF grade will be converted to an equivalent FIDE rating using the appropriate conversion formula. For players without both a FIDE rating and ECF grade, their national rating will be converted if they have one. Captains may elect to use the latest published ECF grades or other national ratings for conversion to an equivalent FIDE rating using the appropriate conversion formula for any player, provided this is declared prior to the player playing in that season. Such an election is irrevocable for the season. **xix**
- 8.4 Where there is a difference of more than 80 FIDE rating points under rule 8.3 between two players in the same team, the higher rated player must play on a higher board than the lower rated player. In squads with more than one team a player is only eligible for a lower team if his rating under rule 8.3 is not more than 80 FIDE rating points higher than the rating of any person playing in a higher team in the same numbered round.
- 8.5 When applying the 80 point requirement for squads with more than one team under rule 8.4, the male and female player "pools" under rule 7.2 and the northern-designated and southern-designated player "pools" under rule 2.3 are considered separately (NB junior players in Division 2 under rule 7.2 are considered part of the female player "pool" for this purpose). It should be noted, however, that all teams must comply with the 80 point requirement for all players in the team regardless of sex or age. It should also be noted that for the purposes of applying the 80 point rule across squads with more than one team, lower teams in a squad may not have a higher average FIDE rating than higher teams in the same squad. When calculating team average FIDE ratings, board 8 in teams in Divisions 1 and 2 will not be included.
- 8.6 Any complaint about the composition of a team must be made before the scheduled start of the round.
- 8.7 Where both captains and the Chief Arbiter agree in advance, the requirements of rules 8.3 to 8.6 may be

waived, if this is in the best interests of the League.

- 8.8 Known defaults must be on the lowest boards of the lowest possible team.
- 8.9 The Chief Arbiter will endeavour to publish team lists ninety minutes before the start of play, and in any event no later than one hour before the start of play.
- 8.10 If the late submission of all or part of a team list causes one or more pairings to be published late, the arbiter may, at his discretion, deduct time from the clock of each member of the team whose name was not published on time.

## **9 Reserves**

- 9.1 Prior to the deadline for the submission of team lists a team may nominate one male and one female player (Division 1), one male and one female or junior player (Division 2), or two players regardless of gender (Division 3 South and Division 3 North) as reserve players.
- 9.2 A nominated reserve may replace an absent player provided this is done not more than 55 minutes (or such later time as the two captains concerned and the Chief Arbiter may have agreed before commencement of the game) **xx** after the scheduled start of the round.
- 9.3 The clock of the reserve shall be adjusted to show the elapsed time subject to a minimum of 30 minutes.
- 9.4 The improper use of reserves may result in the Chief Arbiter imposing a penalty as he deems appropriate on the offending team.

## 10 Defaults

- 10.1 A player will be deemed to have defaulted a game if he/she fails to appear for the game in question within one hour of the start of play (but see rule 9.2 above). **xxi**
  
- 10.2 A team will incur half a game point penalty per default in addition to scoring zero on the board(s) concerned if their absence is communicated to the arbiters and to the opposing captain at or before the time that team lists are submitted under rule 8.1, i.e. midnight of the Thursday before the fixture, except when the pairings are not known at that time. As an example, a team in Division 1 with one such default will have a 0-1 result on bottom board (under rule 8.8, assuming no other teams in the squad) and also lose a further half point, turning a 4-4 draw into a 3½-4 loss for the team and a 4-3½ win for the opposing team. Where captains know in advance of the weekend that they will be affected by defaults, they must **xxii** communicate this to the arbiters and to the opposing captain in good time so as to allow changes to travel and accommodation arrangements. In these circumstances it is permissible for the player affected by the default not to appear at the match in question.
  
- 10.3 A team will incur one game point penalty per default in addition to scoring zero on the defaulting board(s) if, having been named on a team list, a player(s) fail to appear for the match in question within one hour after the start of play or arrives but is not prepared to play, or if a default is not notified until after the deadline under rule 8.1. As an example, a team in Division 1 with one such default will have a 0-1 result on the board concerned and also lose a further point, turning a 4½-3½ win into a 3½-3½ draw (for both the team and the opposing team). In these circumstances, players affected by defaults will wherever possible be offered a rated/graded game against another player in a similar position. Pairings for these games will be matched for rating/grading purposes as far as possible. Pairings will be made one hour after the start of play, and the time control for these games will be 40 moves in two hours, followed by an extra one hour per player to complete the game.
  
- 10.4 Appeals against game point penalties will be considered only in exceptional circumstances, for example the

hospitalisation of a player or the death of a close family member on the morning of the match. Appeals against game point penalties caused by car breakdowns, traffic delays, public transport delays or cancellations, bad weather (except where a severe weather warning can be shown to have been issued by the Meteorological Office) etc will not be considered. Appeals against game point penalties must be made before the start of the match in question to the Chief Arbiter, whose decision, in the interests of providing certainty to the teams involved, will be final and not subject to referral to the Management Board or the appeals committee.

- 10.5 When a team indicates that it has a default, the opposing team may adjust its board order to minimise any inconvenience caused (but may not breach any rules in so doing).
- 10.6 If both teams default on the same board, no default penalties will be incurred.
- 10.7 A team defaulting a game for whatever reason will incur a penalty of £20 per defaulted game unless a successful appeal has been made under rule 12.3. This penalty will not apply to the first game defaulted by a team during the season. If a Division 1 or 2 team defaults an entire match for whatever reason a fine of £200 will be incurred unless a successful appeal has been made under rule 12.3. If a Division 3 South or Division 3 North team defaults an entire match for whatever reason it will (a) not incur a fine so long as the intention to default the match is notified to the Chief Arbiter no later than one week before the team list submission deadline under rule 8.1 above (b) incur a fine of £50 in all other circumstances unless a successful appeal has been made under rule 12.3. In all instances where a Division 3 South or Division 3 North team defaults a match other teams will be re-paired making use of triangular matches as necessary.
- 10.8 In the event that a team in the view of the Management Board has an unsatisfactory default performance during a season, the Management Board may at its discretion insist that that team post a bond in the amount of £250 as a condition of its entry being accepted in the following season. The bond, which will be held by the

League, shall be used at the Management Board's discretion to defray any financial costs incurred by opposing teams should the team, or any other team in the squad of which the team forms a part, default games in that following season. The bond will be returned to the team once in the Board's view sufficient evidence has been provided that the team's default performance has improved to an appropriate standard.

## **11 Promotion and Relegation**

- 11.1 Four teams will be relegated from Division 1, four teams will be promoted from Division 2, four teams will be relegated from Division 2 and four teams will be promoted from the Division 3 combined division.
- 11.2 End of season team placings in Divisions 1 and 2 will be decided in the first instance on match point totals in the final pool. If at the end of the season teams are tied on match points, the tie shall be broken in favour of the team having (a) the greatest number of game points in the final pool (b) the greatest number of match points including all matches played during the season (c) the greatest number of game points including all matches played during the season (d) the match points between the teams which remain tied (e) the game points between the teams which remain tied (f) board count (g) elimination from the bottom board upwards (h) the toss of a coin. Tie breaks shall be applied in order until all ties are broken.
- 11.3 End of season team placings in the Division 3 combined division will be decided in the first instance on match point totals. If at the end of the season teams in the Division 3 combined division are tied on match points, the tie shall be broken in favour of the team having "(a) the highest sum of opponents' match points (b) the greatest number of game points (c) the highest sum of opponents' game points (d) the toss of a coin.
- 11.4 Once the requirements of rule 11.1 have been fulfilled, in the event that existing teams decide not to renew their entries teams in the relevant division that would otherwise have been relegated at the end of the season will not be relegated (starting with the relegated team finishing in the highest position, and so on down the relegated teams). In the event that the number of teams not renewing their entries exceeds the number of

relegated teams, extra teams will be promoted from the lower division after applying the provisions in the first section of this rule, and so on down the divisions as necessary. Therefore the number of promoted teams between adjacent divisions will only exceed four if no team has been relegated from the higher division.

- 11.5 In Divisions 1 and 2 no more than two teams from any club will be permitted to play in the same division. Where this situation is caused by a club team/teams finishing in a promotion place, the next eligible team will be promoted instead. Where this situation is caused by a club team/teams being relegated into a lower division, the necessary number of teams from that club will be relegated from that division and the highest placed team/teams that would otherwise have been relegated will escape relegation. The top placed eligible teams in Divisions 2 and/or the Division 3 combined division will be offered promotion as required to ensure that the complement of sixteen teams in the top two divisions is maintained. **xxiii**

## **12 Other**

- 12.1 The Chief Arbiter, or in his absence the Senior Arbiter for the weekend, shall be empowered to administer the rules of the League.
- 12.2 The League shall be conducted according to the most recently published FIDE laws of chess. In particular, it should be noted that FIDE rules on mobile phones and other electronic means of communication will be applied without exception. The Chief Arbiter will not normally give permission for any player or spectator to bring any mobile phone or electronic communication device or computer into the playing hall. Players should also refrain from bringing baggage in to the playing hall.
- 12.3 An appeal against an arbiter's decision must be made to the Chief Arbiter (or another on site Senior Arbiter if the Chief Arbiter himself made the decision). If permitted by the rules, a review of the outcome of the appeal may be made to an appeals committee (consisting of a third party arbiter and two independent captains/players chosen from a panel) on payment of a £50 deposit. The decision of the appeals committee

will be final. The £50 deposit will be returned if the appeals committee finds in favour of the party requesting the review. Any review request accompanied by a £50 deposit must be made to the Management Board within seven days of the weekend in question.

- 12.4 A £100 fee will be payable where a change to a team name is made during the season.
- 12.5 All outstanding fees from prior seasons (e.g. for wild cards, registrations, defaults or default bonds) must be settled in advance of an application to re-enter the League. No team belonging to a club playing on a combined squad basis will be allowed to re-enter until all outstanding fees relating to all teams in the squad have been settled.
- 12.6 The Management Board may apply penalties as it sees fit for any flagrant or premeditated breaches of the spirit as well as the letter of the rules.
- 12.7 All participants in the League shall consent to their name, gender, nationality, title and grade being shown on the 4NCL website, such consent being a requirement of the Data Protection Act. Those wishing to withhold their consent shall not be permitted to play in the League. Team captains and managers are also expected to have their contact details shown on the 4NCL website. Players are also assumed to consent to having their photographs taken; if they object to this they should raise the matter either with the arbiters or the photographer concerned. Copyright to photographs remains with the photographer concerned.
- 12.8 **xxiv**
- 12.9 A player may ask his/her captain if he/she may offer or accept a draw. The captain may agree, refuse or tell the player to refer to the match result sheet. In no circumstances may the captain look at any game between

receiving the request and giving his/her decision.

12.10 A team, once it has had its entry accepted, is not entitled to a refund of entry fees should it subsequently withdraw.

12.11 The entry guidelines for each season form part of these rules.

12.12 In all cases the decisions of the Management Board shall be final.

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i Clarification of documentary evidence requirements.

ii Change to existing rule (email rather than letter preferred).

iii Additional information requirement.

iv Addition to existing rule.

v Change from '2013'.

vi Clarification of existing rule.

vii Addition to existing wording for greater clarity.

viii Change to existing rule (email rather than letter preferred).

ix Clarification of documentary evidence requirements.

x Change to existing wording for greater clarity.

xi Change to existing rule (from £10 to £5 for Division 3).

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xii Change to existing rule (simplification).

xiii Change to existing rule (from £10 to £5).

xiv Changed to bring in line with 4.2 and 5.3.

xv Change to existing rule.

xvi Extension to existing rule.

xvii Change from '2013'.

xviii Change to existing rule.

xix Change to existing rule.

xx Additional words added in brackets.

xxi Addition to existing wording to cover rule 9.2 exception.

xxii Change from 'are expected to'.

xxiii Now combined with rule 12.8.

xxiv Now combined with rule 11.5.