

4NCL Online Congresses: Fair Play Guidelines

These are the current guideline and rules for fair play in 4NCL online congresses including a summary of anti-cheating arrangements. The rules are being reviewed on an ongoing basis and will be updated as appropriate based on experience from 4NCL Online and other events.

1. Scope

The rules and guidelines apply to all players playing in 4NCL congresses.

2. General Fair Play Guidelines

Complying with Fair Play Rules

Players are required to comply with the 4NCL's fair play rules and the 4NCL shall have no liability in relation to its implementation of the rules as set out in this document.

Players are asked to review the Lichess fair play rules as relevant, and make sure they comply with these for their games at all times. Further details can be found here:

<https://Lichess.org/terms-of-service>

Please note that the following are specifically not allowed during play:

- Help from any other person, player, or coach;
- Impersonation/use of other people's accounts;
- Use of chess engines, bots, plugins, analysis tools, tablebases, blunder checks or other best move tools;
- Artificially inflating or deflating ratings by intentionally losing, or arranging with an opponent to win;
- Interference with other members' games;
- Reference to physical opening books and static (i.e. non-engine based) tablebases.

The above list is not exhaustive and players should refer to Lichess's terms and conditions and supporting material on their website for the full set of rules and guidelines.

Standards of Conduct

In addition to the above, players should take note of the provider requirement to comply with Lichess's rules in relation to general standards of conduct, sportsmanship and online behaviour.

Staying Connected

Players should familiarise themselves with the rules about making the first move, disconnection and game abandonment.

Players should make sure they are ready to start playing when their game is started, and should be sure to make their first move within the allowed time. If players are disconnected for any reason before or during a game they should try to reconnect and log back in as quickly as possible. Failure to make a move within the allowed time or to reconnect following a disconnect will result in the game being recorded as a loss by Lichess.

If players are unable to reconnect due to issues with their internet connection, the provider's result will stand for online rating purposes, with a win for their opponent where they have disconnected and not been able to reconnect in time. Where games are defaulted as a result of the server going down for both players, players should speak to the 4NCL organisers who should be able to rule on the game result for rating purposes.

Players should also avoid disconnecting in a lost position and should make use of the resignation button if they wish to concede the game.

3. Anti-cheating Measures

It is a condition of entry that players must agree to their real names being disclosed so that players know whom they are playing.

Lichess's anti-cheating software will be in place to detect instances of cheating in all games.

Lichess's anti-cheating measures are published on their web site as part of their FAQs, which can be found here:

<https://Lichess.org/faq>

The reporting process and form can be found here:

<https://Lichess.org/report>

In the event that a player is banned or flagged by Lichess, the player should decide whether they wish to contest the ban or flagging, and if so they should make an appeal to Lichess in the first instance as soon as is practical after the allegation has been made or sanction applied.

Information on Lichess's appeals process can be found here:

<https://Lichess.org/contact#help-appeal-cheat>

The 4NCL will have no involvement in this process, which is between the player and the platform provider.

The 4NCL sends PGNs of all games that are played for scanning by Dr Ken Regan's anti-cheating software.

The 4NCL has considered additional measures for detecting cheating such as requiring webcams (as FIDE have done with a number of their events). There are no plans to implement such measures because the gains are felt to be marginal and would be outweighed by the practical difficulties of implementing such a system.

4. 4NCL Sanctions

A player with a closed or flagged account as a result of cheating or breaching fair play guidelines will be subject to 4NCL sanctions as set out in the table below, which vary depending on the nature of the offence, the player's circumstances, and the number of occurrences.

Before any sanctions are applied a player's games will be reviewed using Dr Ken Regan's anti-cheating software, and the results will be shared with the player on request.

Sanctions are only applied if the review supports the provider's conclusion that there is a very high probability of cheating based on information from the provider, independent statistical evidence from analysing the game moves as above, and following a review of the specific circumstances of the case as appropriate.

Offence	Circumstances	Tariff
Lichess account closure for fair play violations aside from computer or other external assistance.	General Junior	No 4NCL action unless provider flags up a particular concern.
Lichess account closure for computer or other external assistance, or Lichess account flagging as computer assisted.	First offence	One congress ban.
Lichess account closure for machine or other external assistance, or Lichess	Second offence	Two congress ban.

account flagging as computer assisted.		
Lichess account closure for machine or other external assistance, or Lichess account flagging as computer assisted.	Third offence.	Permanent ban.

Sanctions as set out in the table above will apply from the round following the closure/flagging. Should there be a successful appeal under section 7 of these guidelines any sanctions previously applied will be rescinded. However, in any event a player may not play while an appeal is in progress (see section 6). There will be no explicit 4NCL publicity of sanctioned players' names.

Players will be informed of the sanction being applied and will have the right of appeal, with the appeal being heard before any sanction is applied over and above any Lichess sanction.

Notwithstanding the above, if a player has previously been banned repeatedly on Lichess to the point where Lichess will no longer let the player open an account, the player will not be permitted to play in 4NCL congresses.

The 4NCL will manage any changes to results etc in such a way as to avoid or minimise any publicity for a sanctioned player.

Results of games played during the congress may be scored as a loss for the player and a win for the player's opponent at the 4NCL's discretion if a player fails on appeal to have sanctions reversed, or if no appeal against sanctions is made. The results of all previous games in which the player was involved during the congress in which the player was sanctioned may be scored as a loss for the player and as a win for the player's opponent for the purposes of ECF online rating.

Once a player's sanction has been completed, submission of the results of future games in which the player is involved will resume for ECF online rating purposes.

5. 4NCL Online Appeals

In certain circumstances a player may make an appeal against a 4NCL sanction to an appeals committee consisting of a technical expert on anti-cheating, a legal expert, and a 4NCL team captain not directly involved with or having an interest in the incident(s) concerned. If the appeal is successful then the player will not be sanctioned.

The appeals process is as follows:

- The player should appeal a Lichess ban or flagging within two weeks of the sanction occurring;
- The player should make a 4NCL appeal within a week of an unsuccessful appeal to Lichess;
- Making a 4NCL appeal costs £25, refundable if the appeal is successful;
- The appellant will be provided with the results of Dr Ken Regan's analysis of their games and any further information relating to the ban which the provider is prepared to provide and allow to be shared;
- A case will be considered in the first instance by the 4NCL Chief Arbiter, who will advise the player of the proposed sanctions before setting up a panel to hear the case should the player wish to appeal;
- The appeal will be heard by an appeals committee/panel consisting of a technical expert on anti-cheating, a legal expert and a 4NCL team captain not directly involved with or having an interest in the incident(s) concerned;
- The panel will be drawn from a wider pool of 5-10 people;
- Those in the pool would need to recuse themselves from an appeal if:
 - The event is one of their events;
 - They know the person well;
 - They could be seen to have a vested interest in the outcome of the appeal;
- Grounds for considering an appeal might be:
 - Mistaken identity (eg another player using account without the players knowledge);

- The player being able to demonstrate recent performances in OTB events significantly higher than their current grade or ELO rating to an extent that would materially reduce the likelihood of external assistance having been used;
- Other mitigating circumstances.
- If the appeal is successful then the player will not be sanctioned by the 4NCL;
- There will be no right of further appeal at the national level.

6. Overall Appeal Principles

Players may play under only one user name during the season unless:

- They have had a sanction applied under the fair play guidelines and require a new user name to resume playing once the sanction is complete; or
- They have made a successful appeal to the 4NCL but require a new user name to resume playing.

In both instances it is the player's responsibility to obtain a new user name from Lichess and the 4NCL will have no involvement in this process.

User names may be changed between seasons subject to any sanctions still in place at the end of the previous season being completed.

A player may not play while an appeal is in progress.

An appeal by a player to the 4NCL will not be considered unless the player has first appealed to Lichess.

7. Decision Process

	Account Flagged by Lichess	High z Score	Successful Appeal to Lichess	Process
1.	Y	Y	N	Sanction remains in place unless a successful appeal is made to the appeals committee to have the sanction rescinded. The burden of proof is on the appellant. If the appeal is successful the player may resume playing under a different user name if one can be obtained.
2.	Y	Y	Y	Sanction remains in place unless a successful appeal is made to the appeals committee to have the sanction rescinded. The burden of proof is on the appellant.
3.	Y	N	Y	No sanction applied.
4.	Y	N	N	An appeal may be made to the appeals committee. There will be a presumption of innocence unless in the view of the appeals committee there is clear evidence of engine use. If the appeal is successful the player may resume playing under a different user name if one can be obtained.
5.	N	Y	N/A	Dr Ken Regan's findings are reported to Lichess. If Lichess decide not to mark/close the account, no sanction is imposed. If Lichess decide to mark/close the account, the player must appeal to Lichess in the first instance. If the appeal is unsuccessful the process as per row 1. above is followed. If the appeal is successful the process as per row 2. above is followed.