

## 4NCL Rules 2024-2025: Summary of Changes

*Note: Some rules have been re-numbered as a result of re-writing and introduction of new rules – the below numbers refer to the new 2024-2025 set of rules. Any rule re-numbering is not included below.*

### Major Changes

**1.2:** The option to play a junior player instead of a female player in Division 2 has been reinstated, returning to the pre-2020 position (Division 1 remains unchanged). Our main reason for changing this rule is that teams in Division 2 are finding it increasingly difficult to find a female player of the usual standard for that division, resulting in uncompetitive games on the bottom board in many matches (or in some cases, having to default the bottom board entirely).

**Team submission deadline** (rules 9.1, 9.3, 9.5, 11.1): The team submission deadline has been brought forward to 10pm – this is to allow the control team the opportunity to inform teams of any issues earlier than would be realistic with a midnight deadline.

**12.6:** The time control has been changed to 40 moves in 90 minutes, plus 30 minutes for the rest of the game, with a 30 second increment from move 1. The reasons we have changed this rule are:

- The previous time control was only used in a handful of other events, whereas the new time control is more widespread and used in many other events (e.g. the British Individual Championship, the Olympiad, World Cup etc.)
- We received feedback from some teams and players that the longer time control used meant problems with travelling home from venues on Sundays, and also finding places to have team meals and socialising with teammates on Saturday evenings (with many teams using the 4NCL as a social event as much as a chess event).

**15:** The appeals process has been moved into a separate section (previously they were part of rule 14), and re-written to clarify the process.

*Note:* Combined squads are staying with the current rule that a squad may have a maximum of one team in any round robin division (and so a captain wishing to have multiple teams in the same division must still split their squads) – Division 4 will still allow multiple teams from a combined squad to play in that division. After considering feedback received from some teams, the Management Board decided that the drawbacks of changing the rule outweighed any potential benefits - in previous seasons where squads were allowed to have two teams in each division, squads with multiple teams have benefitted both teams from being able to recruit stronger players during the season, resulting in a 2<sup>nd</sup> team at the end of the season resembling the same composition (and many of the same players) as a 1<sup>st</sup> team from the start of the season. While teams can still recruit stronger players under the current rules, this only benefits one team in a division rather than two.

It was considered to allow some flexibility in the lower divisions, but a rule that would allow for that flexibility and not leave any loopholes that could be misused would be very complicated for the control team and arbiters to implement.

### Minor Changes

**4.3:** Clarifying the circumstances in which a player may be deregistered, and allowing teams to deregister a player at any point in the season provided they haven't yet been published in a team list.

**9.4:** Any team change under this rule must now require the Sector Arbiter to be notified of the change.

**11.2:** Adding into the rules current practice that allow any player in a team to take a default win (provided that player is eligible to play in that team).

**11.6:** Changing the circumstances as to how a team can change its composition and/or board order in response to a late notified default.

**11.7:** Previously this rule stated that a team with 7 male or 7 female players could avoid a default fine in Divisions 1 and 2 if they brought an eighth player of the same gender to play a friendly against the opposition – this has been expanded to allow a team defaulting for any reason to avoid the fine by bringing a reserve otherwise ineligible to play in that team (e.g. a player who has already played in the first round of a split weekend).

**Clause removed from rule 11:** The clause that allowed the Management Board to insist on a team with an unsatisfactory default performance posting a bond as a condition of entry for the following season has been withdrawn, on the basis that default fines are now more stringent than when this rule was originally introduced.

**13.1:** Changing the third tiebreak from average rating of opposition, to OSB, and allowing teams to remain tied for positions not affecting promotion and/or relegation (including the Division 1 Champion) should all tiebreaks fail to split them.

### Clarifications

**4.2 & 5.4:** Stating the previous “by midnight” deadline as 11.59pm, to clarify that registrations can be made on Thursday night

**6.3:** Clarifying which wildcard fees are payable for a player that plays in multiple divisions in a single weekend.

**6.4:** Wildcards that become registered players do not count towards a squad’s allocation (in effect, the wildcard fee acts as the additional registration fee for that player).

**8.1:** Re-writing the rule for clarity, and clearly stating which rating list is used for board order purposes for each weekend

**10.3:** The Sector Arbiter must have prior notice of, and approve, any substitution made.

**11.8:** The lowest team(s) must be withdrawn from Div.4 if a team wishes to withdraw any of its teams from that weekend.

**12.7:** Rewording of the rule for simplicity.

**16.2:** Clarifying the expectation of players to not eat at their board during their games.