4NCL Online Fair Play Guidelines - Leagues - Season 15

These are the current guideline and rules for fair play in 4NCL Online including a summary of anti-cheating arrangements. The rules are 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 Online.

2. General Fair Play Guidelines

Complying with Fair Play Rules

Players are required to comply with 4NCL Online's fair play rules and 4NCL Online 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 Online 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 and if necessary to 4NCL Online – see section 5 below for fuller details.

Information on Lichess's appeals process can be found here:
https://Lichess.org/contact#help-appeal-cheat

4NCL Online has no involvement in the Lichess appeals process, which is between the player and Lichess.

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

A captain may ask the 4NCL Chief Arbiter to ask if 4NCL Online has any concerns about any players in their squad based on data in its possession as a result of using Dr Ken Regan's software. The 4NCL Chief Arbiter may reply in the affirmative or negative only, without revealing the number of players or their identity.

Junior 4NCL Online requires the use of Zoom at the semi-final and final stages.

4. Mouse Slips

Occasionally a player may make an unintentional move because he/she accidentally loses control of the mouse. The player may ask the opponent if he/she can take the move back. The opponent is not obliged to agree, and may decline. Whatever the decision, the game continues.

Players who wish to remove the possibility of an accidental mouse slip ruining their game can use the 'Confirm Move' option on Lichess. This requires the player to acknowledge each move after it has been made.

5. 4NCL Online Fair Play Panel

The Fair Play Panel will review all games played in its leagues. This review will include i.a. :

- Review of the results from Dr Ken Regan's anti-cheating software (see above);
- (Where cheating is suspected) more in-depth statistical analysis of the suspected player's games;
- (Where cheating is suspected) GM analysis of the suspected player's games.

If in the Fair Play Panel's opinion, the player concerned has failed to comply with 4NCL Online's fair play rules the player's username and relevant game links will be forwarded to Lichess for Lichess's review.

In reaching an opinion as to whether a player has failed to comply with 4NCL Online's fair play rules the Fair Play Panel will use the z score and IPR variance values in the table in section 7 as default guides, but may at its discretion investigate the performance of players exhibiting lower scores if cheating is suspected.

If Lichess decides after considering the Fair Play Panel's submissions that the player's account will be closed or flagged the player concerned will be subject to 4NCL Online 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. The tariffs in the table are a guide, and may be varied at 4NCL Online's discretion.

The Fair Play Panel only submits usernames and game links to Lichess for review if in its view there is comfortable satisfaction that cheating has occurred.

The 4NCL Online Fair Play Panel consists of a pool of up to 10 people as selected by the Secretary to the Fair Play Panel in consultation with the 4NCL Management Board;

Offence	Circumstances	Tariff
Lichess account closure for fair play violations aside from computer or other external assistance.	General	No 4NCL Online action unless provider flags up a particular concern.
Sanctions applied after unsuccessful appeal or if no appeal made – see section 7.	First offence	Five round ban.
Sanctions applied after unsuccessful appeal or if no appeal made – see section 7.	Second offence	Ten round ban.
Sanctions applied after unsuccessful appeal or if no appeal made – see section 7.	Third offence.	Permanent ban.

4NCL Online sanctions will apply from the round following the closure/flagging if no appeal is made or immediately after an unsuccessful appeal. There will be no explicit 4NCL Online 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 Lichess will no longer let the player open an account, the player will not be permitted to play in 4NCL Online.

Results for match card and table purposes may be scored as a loss for the player and as a win for the player's opponent at 4NCL Online's absolute discretion if a player fails on appeal to have sanctions reversed, or if no appeal against sanctions is made. Games in which the player was involved during the 4NCL Online season in which the player was sanctioned may not be submitted for the purposes of ECF online rating at 4NCL Online's absolute discretion.

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.

6. 4NCL Online Appeals Committee

In certain circumstances a player may make an appeal against a 4NCL Online sanction to an Appeals Committee as described below. 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 as soon as possible after the ban/flagging;

- The player should make a 4NCL Online appeal no later than three days after a Lichess ban or flagging;
- Making a 4NCL Online 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 Lichess is prepared to provide and allow to be shared.
- The 4NCL Online Chief Arbiter will liaise with the Secretary to the 4NCL Online Fair Play Panel, who will set up an Appeals Committee comprising selected members of the 4NCL Online Fair Play Panel to hear the case should the player wish to appeal; Members of the Fair Play Panel will recuse themselves from an appeal if:
  - They were involved in the original Fair Play Panel decision;
  - They know the person well;
  - They could be seen to have a vested interest in the outcome of the appeal.
- The Appeals Committee will audit the work of the Fair Play Panel to ensure that it has been performed in accordance with the provisions of section 4 above, but will not, for example, reperform the original statistical analysis, reperform GM analysis of games or, in the absence of any further evidence provided by the player, overturn the original result of the Fair Play Panel.
- Grounds for considering an appeal might be:
  - Mistaken identity (e.g., another player using account without the player's 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 4NCL Online.
- There will be no right of further appeal.

7. User Names

Players may not play in 4NCL Online with a flagged Lichess account.

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 4NCL Online 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 4NCL Online 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 Online Appeals Committee will not be considered unless the player has also put in hand an appeal to Lichess.

8. Decision Process

	Account Flagged by Lichess	High Z score or IPR	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	No sanction applied.
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 from Lichess. The 4NCL Online Chief Arbiter may allow the player to resume playing without the need for an appeal if in his/her opinion there is clearly no case at all to answer.
5.	N	Y	N/A	No sanction applied.

9. Other

The 4NCL, its officials, members of the Fair Play Panel and members of the Appeals Committee shall have no liability to any player in tort (whether for defamation or any other tort), in contract or otherwise howsoever in relation to or arising from its anti-cheating/fair play arrangements, including the operation of these guidelines. The foregoing shall not limit liability for personal injury or death.

Players/captains must make any allegations of breaches of the fair play guidelines privately to 4NCL Online. Any player/captain who in the view of the 4NCL Online Fair Play Panel publicly (whether on social media or otherwise) makes an allegation of cheating against another player and in so doing names the player, or otherwise enables the player to be identified, will be subject to the same sanctions as those set out in section 7 of the guidelines: first offence five round ban, second offence ten round ban, third offence permanent ban. Penalties may be varied at 4NCL Online's discretion. There is no right of appeal.

4NCL Online games must not be streamed by anyone who is playing a league game at the time. Any player found to have streamed their game will lose the game in question.