

Cambridgeshire League Rules

Format

1. The competition shall be open to any affiliated club.
2. Entries should be notified to the League Secretary in time for them to be considered by the Annual General Meeting, normally held in June, unless clubs are informed otherwise.
3. The number of divisions and teams in each division shall be decided by the AGM, unless this is delegated to the Executive Committee. Clubs will provide the League Secretary with details of team captains, venue, match night and any other information required for the preparation of the fixtures. The League Secretary will prepare the fixtures and send a copy to the team captains.
4. On receipt of the fixtures, should a team captain find that a match is scheduled for a date on which the team cannot play, they will notify the League Secretary and seek to re-arrange the fixture with the opposing captain. This should be done within two weeks of the publication of the fixtures. Clubs should exercise this facility sparingly, if at all, and should ensure that the information provided under rule 3 is accurate.
5. Teams in the first division shall consist of five players. Teams in the second and division shall consist of four players. Teams in lower divisions shall consist of three players.
6. Two points shall be awarded to the team winning a match, and one point awarded to each team in a drawn match. The League champions shall be the team with the highest number of match points. In the event of a tie, the order of teams shall be determined by the number of game points scored. If this is also equal the title shall be awarded to the team with the higher aggregate of game points in the League matches between them. Should that also be the same a playoff shall be arranged, with board count and board elimination rules being used (in that order) if necessary to determine the winners.
7. The top team in the second division will normally replace the bottom team in the first division at the end of each season. Similar arrangements shall apply in respect of the other divisions. However, the AGM/Executive may vary these

arrangements to secure a reasonable balance of teams between the divisions and to reflect the preferences of clubs.

8. Teams that withdraw from the League during the course of a season shall have all their match results cancelled (though the games will still be rated).

Playing arrangements

9. All games shall be played according to the current FIDE Laws of Chess except where they are superseded by these rules.

10. It shall be the responsibility of the home team to provide the necessary equipment, including chess clocks, the use of which is mandatory.

11. Lists of players shall be exchanged by the captains before commencement of play. Should a selected player not arrive, they may be substituted. If neither the selected player nor a substitute is available one hour after the start of the match the board shall be defaulted.

12. Matches shall start at 7.30pm, unless the captains agree otherwise beforehand. At the agreed starting time the clocks should be started. Home teams will lose the appropriate number of minutes if they fail to be ready at the agreed starting time.

13. Digital clocks shall be used, with a Fischer time control of a single session of 70 minutes plus a 15 second increment from move 1, (except in Team 4200 where the time control shall be 50 minutes plus a 15 second increment from move 1.)

14. The away team shall have white on the odd-numbered boards where home and away matches are played. If only one game is played the captains should toss for colours, and should three games be played the captains shall toss for colours on the final occasion.

15. Matches should only be re-arranged in exceptional circumstances. In the event of captains disagreeing, the League Secretary shall decide the matter. A revised date for the fixture should be agreed within two weeks, and the League Secretary notified of both the postponement and the revised date. Captains should make every effort to play the postponed fixture within six weeks of the original date to avoid a backlog of fixtures at the end of the season.

16. Captains should enter match results directly on the ECF LMS website, and the other captain should confirm the fixture. This should be done within three days of the fixture.

Eligibility

17. Players should be bona fide members of affiliated clubs. No player shall play for more than one club in the same season without the permission of the League Secretary. The intention of this rule is to permit players to switch clubs for good reason (e.g. relocation) but not to allow players to play for more than one club at the same time or to chop and change between clubs.

18. If a club has two teams in the first division it shall nominate its four highest-rated players who may play for either one (but not both) of those teams. If a club has two teams in the second or subsequent divisions the higher team shall nominate two players who are ineligible for the lower team. If a club recruits during the season a player rated higher than any of the nominated players, they may play for either (but not both) teams.

18a. Any player with a rating higher than 1850 (September rating) will become ineligible for Division Two after they have played any games in Division One. Similarly, any player with a rating higher than 1650 will become ineligible for Division Three after they have played any games in a higher Division.

19. Players may **otherwise** play for a higher team on the bottom two boards without affecting their eligibility for the lower team. They may also play up to three games on a higher board for a higher team. However, if they play more than three times for the higher team on board 3 or above (first division) or board 2 or above (subsequent divisions) they become ineligible for the lower team.

20. Teams shall be played in order of strength. Generally, this will be the ECF standard play rating in the latest monthly rating list, which should be used one week after publication. A tolerance of 100 grading points will be permitted to allow current form to be reflected in the board order. (See also Local Grades below,)

21. Players rated under 1375 may be played in any order. This is to allow rapidly improving players to play on the board justified by their form.

22. Where players are unrated the captain shall estimate the players' strength and notify the League Secretary. This estimated grade will be used for the purposes of rule 20 until the player concerned receives a current standard OTB rating in a published monthly rating list.

23. Where a player is inserted as a substitute because the selected player does not turn up (rule 11) the requirement to play in order of strength shall be waived.

Match conduct

24. Unless both players agree otherwise, the clock will be placed on the left hand of the player with the white pieces. The clock button must be pressed with the hand that makes the move.

25. Each player must keep an up-to-date game score until they have less than five minutes on the clock. This applies to both the Fischer and standard time controls.

26. Should a player make an illegal move at any stage of the game their opponent will receive an additional two minutes on the clock provided it is claimed at that point. A further two minutes will be added if a second illegal move is made, but on the third occasion the player shall forfeit the game.

27. To win on time a player must have mating material, otherwise the game will be declared drawn. If both players have run out of time and it is impossible to establish who was first the game will also be declared drawn. (NB Digital clocks show who lost on time.)

28. Third parties (including team captains) must not intervene in a game at any stage, for example by warning a player that they are short of time, or pointing out a loss on time or illegal move. This is a matter for the players themselves.

29. Mobile phones and other electronic devices must be turned off, unless there is an exceptional reason agreed between the captains beforehand. Any player whose mobile phone makes any sound during play will receive a warning for the first offence and be defaulted for a second offence in the same

game. Any player found to be using or consulting any device capable of suggesting chess moves will be defaulted in that game.

Disputes

30. In the event of a dispute in relation to any matter in these rules the captains shall write to the League Secretary within seven days setting out the nature of the dispute, the issue between the teams, and their claim or proposed resolution.

31. The League Secretary shall determine the matter unless their club is involved, in which case they will delegate this responsibility to another Association officer. The League Secretary/other Association officer may take advice from an independent ECF arbiter before coming to their conclusion.

32. Should either side wish to appeal against the decision they should notify the Chairman of the Disputes Sub-Committee within 14 days, who will convene a meeting of the Sub-Committee. Their decision shall be final. The fee for an appeal is £10, which will be refunded if the appeal is successful.

Local Grades

33. At the start of the season, a local grade may be requested for any players entering grade-limited competitions. Specifically, this will apply to club members with no official rating, provisional (P) or recent K grade, where this is believed to be significantly in error. When this is requested, the club concerned must provide justification for their rating assessment to the Fixture Secretary. A local grade may be changed at any point when better evidence is forthcoming, but justification for the change must still be provided. Once the player concerned achieves a 'K' Grade then a local grade may only be used up until the end of the season, with approval from the Fixture Secretary, but a maximum tolerance of 100 points will be permitted. Local grades will no longer be permitted for any player once they reach 20 games in total in the ECF database, over the past 2 seasons.

34. A grading subcommittee will be formed to assist the Fixtures Secretary approve local grades. This will consist of the Results officer, the Fixture Secretary and one other member (ideally from a different club) nominated at the AGM. They will review all requests for the setting of local grades.

35. For new players that arrive mid-season, a local grade may still be set. If a team captain wishes to use a new player, without either an official or local rating, they are required to obtain agreement from the opposing captain before the match. In such cases, a club estimated local grade will be accepted, subject to rule 36. Formal ratification of the local grade set must then be requested from the grading sub-committee.

36. Any club may challenge an opponent local grade where they believe it to be in error. The grading subcommittee will attempt to arbitrate to prevent a dispute.

Last updated by Chris Russell

July 2025 – based on decisions made at the 2025 CCCA AGM