

Rules Changes to Rules 2, 5(c)(2)(i), 19, 20, 22 and 23 of the SCCU County Match Rules.

A commentary explaining the proposed changes appears below followed by the proposed rule changes. References below to Sub-Committee are to the Rules & Appeals Sub-Committee (comprising the 2017/18 elected members and the County Match Controller).

Rule 2 - Interaction with the FIDE Laws

It was felt by the Sub-Committee that the role of the Match Captains in resolving disputes on the day needed greater prominence at the start of the Rules.

The Rule has also been expanded to identify where the match captains are expected to and should exercise certain functions reserved to arbiters under the FIDE Laws giving effect to the widely adopted pragmatic practices that have become the norm among match captains in SCCU County matches, which do not have arbiters present.

This underpins the similarly updated Guidance to Match Captains for the 2018/19 season and with a view to giving new captains (perhaps not aware of customs) greater assistance in their role.

With the increased focus on anti-cheating provisions there is a greater need for any derogation from the FIDE Laws to be clear in competition rules and for customary practice, arisen through pragmatic expediency to be set out in those rules.

Rule 5(c)(2)(i) – Ungraded players and seeking permission to play

The Sub-Committee recognised the unease of the County Match Controller in not being able to consider applications for clearance to play when made before the start of the match but where no-one was available to give clearance of a player that would otherwise have been cleared to play.

The proposed change to the rule allows for retrospective consideration and clearance by the County Match Controller but only where a request was made prior to the match. Players who are too strong for their section will still be excluded and deemed ineligible.

Rule 19 - Permitted exemptions (with applicable sanctions) to Articles 11 and 12 of the FIDE Laws

The existing Rule 19 provided a limited exemption for a mobile to be turned on (but not used) in the playing area and a variation to the penalty of loss of the game in to apply only where a second sound was made following a first offence warning. This was considered to be consistent with Articles 11 and 12.

The Sub-Committee noted that the operation of Articles 11 and 12 in certain circumstances allowed an arbiter to authorise derogation from these Laws in certain circumstances. It recognised that Match Captains themselves in order to fulfil their role required dispensation from the operation of these Laws and that there could well be circumstances where Match Captains might be called upon to grant special permission to derogate from a particular Law. To give clarity for players and captains alike the Sub-Committee considered appropriate exceptions to the Laws should be set out in the County Match Rules together with applicable penalties for breach.

Accordingly Rule 19 has been expanded to achieve this with the old Rule 19 retained at subclause d).

Rule 20 – Quick Play Finishes where incremental time controls are not in use

The Quick Play Finish provisions within this Rule have been updated to provide within the competition rules the express statement as required by Guideline III.2 as to the application of the Guidelines and to make it clear that the III.6 procedure (no arbiter) will apply (but not III.4 or III.5).

Rule 22 – Game Fee charges for players who are not ECF members

This rule addition derives from the amendments to Rules 5 and 12 of the General Rules. It provides for this competition the authority for recoupment as well as reminding participating match captains and their entering County Associations that Game Fee charged by the ECF in respect of a player who was not an ECF member (and did not qualify for an exemption) will be recouped from the County Association. It reflects existing practice.

Rule 23 Disputes Procedure – procedural enhancements

The wording has been strengthened to emphasise the importance of the first stage of the disputes procedure namely involving the Match Captains at the time of the match.

Where this did not result in resolution, the Sub-Committee considered there should be a greater focus on the merits of a dispute/appeal and on setting out the substance of the dispute in less heated exchanges. It recommended proforma for both raising the dispute with the County Match Controller and for appealing that decision.

The Sub-Committee considered that action was required to discourage unmeritorious appeals and has recommended two changes:

- a) the introduction of an appeal fee (returnable if successful or if the appeal was considered to have raised a matter of importance); and
- b) for County Associations to be responsible for appeal submissions by requiring submission by an executive officer and for disputes to the County Match Controller to be submitted through the Match Captain concerned.

The proformas form part of the issued updated Guidance to match captains. The Sub-Committee has recommended to the Executive an appeal fee of £30. The setting of the fee will be for the Executive to determine under this rule.

The proposed amendments are intended to give effect to these recommendations within the Rule 23 disputes and appeals procedures.

Implementation

With the exception of the Rule 23 proposals which add additional requirements, the proposed amendments are ones of clarification. Accordingly, and to more effectively underpin the updated Guidance to Match Captains, the Sub-Committee recommended that they be adopted for the 2018-19 season, should there be time to do so.

Rule Changes

The text of the **proposed amendments** appears below with changes shown in red/underlined. Deleted words from the existing rules have been struck through.

2. Except as otherwise provided by these rules, play in all matches shall be governed by the Laws of Chess as published from time to time by FIDE. The match captains may jointly exercise the discretion of an arbiter under Articles 11.2.3, 11.3.2 and 12.8 of the FIDE Laws of Chess pursuant to Rule 19 below and have a duty under Rule 23 below to jointly assist players in resolving questions or disputes. Players who are unable to resolve disputes between themselves should seek the assistance of the match captains particularly in respect of the application of the FIDE Laws of Chess and the County Match Rules. Disputes should be resolved at the match if possible.

5(c)(2) Players without published grade at start of season

(i) A player with no published grade at the start of the season may play in the grading-limited Competitions only with the ~~prior~~ clearance of the County Match Controller. The team captain must, before applying for permission, satisfy himself that the player is not of such strength as to breach the limit set for the Competition in question, and must submit evidence, where available, from the local grader or master list or other source. Application to the Controller must be made prior to the match. If granted, clearance shall be considered to have been granted at the time it was requested. The Controller will declare such a player ineligible (or no longer eligible) if he is not (or has ceased to be) entirely convinced that the player's current playing strength is below the relevant grading limit.

19. Concessions during play and penalties for breach

(a) A player may leave the playing venue during play only with the prior permission of the opposing match Captain, who shall notify both players concerned.

(b) Mobile phones must not be used during play unless the opposing match captain has given prior permission, who shall notify both players concerned.

(c) Mobile Phones and other electronic devices are permitted in the playing venue provided they are switched off and stored either in full view on the playing table or under the playing table in a bag (unless permission for them to be on has been obtained in which event they must be on silent mode).

The penalty for violation of these concessions shall be the loss of the game by the offending player.

(d) Mobile phones are allowed in the laying area. However they must be either switched off or switched to silent mode for the duration of play. Match captains must remind players of this requirement. If a player's phone makes any sound during his game, then: On the first occurrence he will receive a warning. For a second offence by the same player in the same game, the penalty is loss of the game.

20. Rates of Play

(a) Mechanical clocks

The rate of play will normally be 35 moves in 1¾ hours and then 30 minutes extra for each player for the remainder of the game. Appendix Guidelines III to the FIDE Laws applies but excluding parts III.4 and III.5. For any match, the captains may agree to vary the number of moves to the time control, the time allowed to the time control, and the length of the quickplay finish provided that:

- (i) there is a quickplay finish; and
- (ii) games remain eligible for Standard-Play grading.

22. For every match, each captain shall provide a match result sheet which must reach the County Match Controller within seven days of the match. In the event that the ECF levies Game Fee in respect of a player who is not an ECF member, that fee shall be charged to and paid by the player's County Association.

Disputes

23. In accordance with Rule 2, the captains of County teams shall jointly use reasonable endeavours to resolve any questions or disputes between their teams on the day of a match. The remainder of this rule deals with the circumstances where the captains have been unable to resolve such matters between them.

Any question or dispute, on a matter not provided for by Rules 1-22, shall be submitted to the County Match Controller within 3 days on the prescribed form, which shall be signed by the match captain. The County Match Controller shall forward the documentation received

Any appeal against a ruling of the County Match Controller shall be notified to him within 3 days of notification of the ruling. Notice of the appeal shall at the same time be given to any other interested party. The appellant shall submit within 10 days after notification of the ruling his written appeal on the prescribed form, which shall be signed by an Officer of the County Association ~~within 10 days after notification of the ruling, together with whatever fee² may have been determined by the Executive Committee.~~

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² Note: The fee is set at £x. This note will be amended if at any time a different fee is set.

4th September, Mark Murrell, SCCU President