

# **CAMBRIDGESHIRE CHESS ASSOCIATION**

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**Tuesday 18th June, 2024 at 7.30pm**

**St. Ives Ivy League Club, 23 The Broadway, St. Ives, Cambs PE27 5BX**

### **AGENDA**

1. Obituaries
2. Apologies for absence
3. Minutes of previous AGM held on 27<sup>th</sup> June, 2023 and matters arising:
4. Reports of Association officers for 2023/2024:
  - 4.1 League Secretary (John Beck)
  - 4.2 Rapid-Play Organiser (Ollie Lenton)
  - 4.3 Tournament Organisers (Co.Individual: Jimmy Blair, Jamboree: Paul Spencer)
  - 4.4 County match captains (Open: Paul McMahon, U1850: Neil Greenwood)
  - 4.5 Results Officer (Chris Russell)
  - 4.6 Website Co-ordinator (Phil Turp)
  - 4.7 ECF and EACU delegates (Jimmy Blair, Paul Kemp)
  - 4.8 Junior Organiser (James Conlon)
  - 4.9 Disputes Committee (Paul Hanks)
5. Report of the Treasurer and adoption of the audited accounts
6. Presentation of Trophies
7. Patrick Ribbands legacy fund proposals (See Appendix 1)
8. Proposed rule changes (See Appendix 2,3)
9. Confirmation of OTB League fixtures, events and dates (See Appendix 4)
10. Election of officers for 2024/25: (See Appendix 5)

Chairperson	Junior Organiser(s)
Vice-Chairperson	County Match Captains
Secretary	Website Co-ordinator
Treasurer	Grading Officer
League Secretary	Auditor
County Individual Organiser	ECF Delegate
Jamboree Organiser	EACU Delegates
Rapidplay Organiser	Disputes Committee
11. Any other business
12. Day and Date of the Executive Committee Meeting (if necessary) and next AGM

## **Appendix 1: Patrick Ribbands legacy**

### **Jimmy Blair: Legacy expenditure (Guaranteed County Individual prizes)**

For the AGM agenda, I would like to propose that the sum of £250.00 be granted to this year's County Individual Championship in order to guarantee minimum prize money.

My proposed breakdown of this would be as follows:

County Champion - £100

County Runner-up - £50

Junior Champion - £70

Junior Runner-up - £35

We would also have several rating prizes paid for from entry fees. These would depend on entries and be decided nearer the time.

Also, I would like to propose that £250 be allocated to purchase and have engraved a permanent trophy for the County Individual Junior Champion. There is no trophy at present.

### **Chris Russell: Club start-up grants**

Two new chess clubs have started this year and requested help with providing equipment (see below). They both want to affiliate to the CCCA and enter teams in the Team 4000. Bourne chess club started in March and is run by Tom Ingram. He is unable to attend so I have attached his affiliation request below. He has funded the start up from his own pocket. March chess club under Tom O'Keefe has broken away from Rookwood club and would also like to affiliate. They are currently using equipment borrowed from New England.

I would suggest that a sensible approach to assist such start-ups would be a grant of £200 to each new club, to be spent specifically on chess equipment, with the proviso that the equipment is returned to the association if the club folds in less than five years. I think this is roughly half of the money needed for the club to get started. The remainder should be met by the club members.

### **Bourne Chess Club – Request for affiliation**

Dear Chris,

Apologies for not being able to attend the AGM in person - I am attending an arbiter's course that just happens to clash with the timing of your AGM; clearly, I am unable to miss attending the course as the dates have been pre-arranged well in advance.

I would like to respectfully ask to affiliate my new Bourne Chess Club with the CCCA - and ask your members to consider this at the AGM.

Briefly, the status of the chess club is that it is based in Bourne where we meet on a Thursday (6.30-9.30pm) at "Wake House" in the town centre. We started up on 21st March 2024 and currently have 9 registered members and a handful of 'guests' who attend occasionally. The standard of play is

steadily improving and I am introducing use of the clock, recording of moves and 'touch move' as we go, but I am hopeful that should my request be successful to join the CCCA, I would like to think it entirely feasible to enter into the Team 4000 league come September.

With regards to the outlay in setting up the club, I have personally invested £199.63 on equipment and £69.82 on the "Chess Heroes" series of books by Richard James (all of which is receipted). My club has had a strong interest from younger players and I intend to use the Chess Series to provide some logical, constructive structure to assist them in their development.

I have had to postpone my intentions to set up a website for the club due to a lack of finances (cost of £150). Putting aside the money I have personally invested into the club; it currently breaks even after the taking of subscriptions by attendees and deducting the payments for room rental.

You mentioned in our last conversation the need for some assistance in interacting with schools about chess clubs in the region and ensuring a recognised Safeguarding representative. I would happily put my name in the hat regarding the safeguarding work as it is a subject I have a lot of experience with in my work.

Once again, I do apologize for not being able to attend in person and hope that my attending the arbiter's course does not reflect badly on my request. I would be more than happy to answer any other questions should they be raised at the AGM.

Regards,

Tom Ingram

#### **March Chess Club – Request for affiliation**

Thank you, Chris. March chess club wish to join league 4500. March chess club are Gideon Pearl, Lester Levett and myself, Tom O'Keefe. Last time we had 6 turn up. We wish to apply for funding for chess clocks etc please. I would like to see div 2 split up or div 3 etc. Thanks for all help.

Tom O'Keefe

## **Appendix 2: Proposed rule changes**

**Ed Knox / Paul Hanks: Proposal for defaulted matches to not count for deciding league titles.**

**Add to league rules:** "In the event of the winner of a CCCA team competition being decided by an advantageous defaulted match, the League Secretary shall direct that the match is re-scheduled even if it requires an undesirable prolongation of the playing season and/or at the expense of the defaulting team. Failure to comply shall result in all the previous corresponding home or away matches for the defaulting team being re-scored (*solely for league position purposes as a total whitewash*) in favour of the remaining league teams."

**Discussion points:** It has been pointed out that a match default can decide the outcome of a closely contested league. This is unfair to the team that has played all of its games. In the event that the defaulted game is not rescheduled then, in deciding league winners only, the defaulting team shall be deemed to have defaulted all of its other away (or home) matches. Results for grading will not be affected.

**Chris Russell: Proposal to increase the Team 4000 total to 4500**

I believe that we need to increase the aggregate total to 4500, in Rule 5.

5. The aggregate grades of the three players may not exceed **4500**. Where players are ungraded the captain shall provide a realistic estimate. *In the event of a dispute, the Results Officer will attempt to arbitrate a fair grade. The September ECF Grading List shall be used to determine the aggregate grade total. However, the current monthly grade should be used to determine board order.*

**Discussion points:** The provisional 'P' grades provided by the ECF are often inaccurate and inflated, due to the use of FIDE Elo grading method, which include a start point of 1800 as part of the initial value calculation. A player's grade is highly sensitive to the initial value chosen and the error often continues even after a 'K' grade has been assigned (10 games). A small increase in the points total should assist in preventing players being unfairly identified as ineligible.

I discovered that there was a problem here at the start of the season, and recommended that club owners set local grades for new players with provisional grades. IMHO the old ECF calculation provides much more accurate assessment for beginners. However, there have still been a number of minor arguments about teams potentially breaching the 4000 limit. I have attached one such email exchange below as I think it illustrates the point. I believe that the small increase in the total will help reduce these arguments.

## Email conversation with Steve Fairhurst - Re: Potential CCCA dispute

On Sat, 4 Nov 2023, 11:41 Chris Russell, <cjruss@virginmedia.com> wrote:

Hi Steve

I have had your comments on LMS from the game against Rookwood pointed out to me, and have discussed the matter with Jimmy:

*I did not think it was fair that the Rookwood team captain took our player sheet away with them before deciding who was playing on which board. I believed this was against the rules?*

*Also their combined players were clearly over the 4000 limit, which at the very least goes against the spirit of the competition.*

*This competition is about encouraging new and often younger players to compete, and when teams are fielding players whose ratings are estimated to fit in under 4000 rather than accurately estimating the players ability, all this will do is discourage younger players in participating in competition and may even discourage them from continuing with chess.*

There are two issues here.

Firstly, you are quite correct that your opponents may not take your team sheet away and use it to decide their own team order. That would quite properly be regarded as gamesmanship. Our rules say that team sheets are **exchanged** prior to play. Which stems from the days when game recording was entirely manual. Both teams brought a team sheet to the match, exchanged and filled in each other's sheets, and then signed both with the game results at the end of the evening before sending to the fixtures secretary. He generated and circulated current league tables before sending bundles of score sheets to the grading officer (me) every month. For me, having two sets of signed results mitigated the chance of data error in the data submitted to the then BCF.

Nowadays team sheets are strictly no longer necessary, except arguably as an aide-memoire to remind a team captain to put the result onto LMS. It is possible for a captain to switch on their smartphone and enter the result on LMS before leaving the match venue. So paper sheets are not absolutely necessary anymore and inevitably we have become a lot more lax. Opposing teams can be reported verbally if desired. But it should be done **simultaneously** to keep within the spirit of the rules.

Against this, it can be pointed out that only one of the three Rookwood players (Tom O'Keefe) has an official grade (1302). Team 4000 rules say that players graded below 1375 may be played in any order, so it could be argued that no board order violation actually occurred.

Which brings me to the second point. It is **very** difficult to rate newcomers to the game. When they have played less than 5 standard rated games an accurate grade is almost impossible to calculate. The rating system currently used by the ECF can be found here: [https://www.ecfrating.org.uk/v2/help/help\\_rating.php](https://www.ecfrating.org.uk/v2/help/help_rating.php)

It uses statistical tables and is now exceedingly complex. But basically, if you have played more than 30 games in the last year you will have an 'A' grade, which will be accurate.

The ECF also used to have grades B,C,D, and E based on less games over a longer period.

B = 30 games over last 2 years of which at least 20 were played in the current year.

C = 30 games over last 3 years of which at least 10 were played in the current year.

D = 15 games over last 3 years of which at least 5 were played in the current year.

E = 10 games over last 3 years of which at least 1 was played in the current year.

Any rating below this level was designated 'F' and was to be treated as 'suspect'. Even E grades were known to be only 'approximate'.

Because the ECF transitioned to FIDE/Elo grades last year, B to E have effectively been replaced with a K grade, known as a legacy grade, where old ECF 3 digit codes have been converted to 4 digit Elo codes. An approximate conversion can be made using  $Elo = (7.5 \times ECF) + 700$ .

Anyone playing less than 10 games is given a 'P' or Partial grade. I have been having a debate with the ECF grading manager, Brian Valentine, about the (lack of) accuracy of P grades, especially when applied to newcomers to the game. Because the new method uses a value of 1800 in its initial 'P' calculation, players with low initial strength can be given very inflated P grade estimates, perhaps by 200 points, or rather more. So I think it is highly likely that the P estimates for Levet (1447) and Pearl (1428) are unrealistically high. (Personally, I use a modification of the old ECF system which can give a considerably more reliable guide, especially once you have played a minimum of 10 games against players with at least a K grade.)

Notice that they are not included in the match total, whereas your players are, because the system believes that they have played sufficient games to be included. (Even in this total some K grades can be overestimated.)

The ECF will not accept that there are any flaws in its new system, but does permit the use of 'local grades' to be inserted into LMS where we believe that the ECF estimate is unrealistic. Local grades are not used in rating calculations, but can be used to assess board order violations and grade limit totals for events such as Team 4000. The ECF position is that with only a few recorded games, that local clubs and results officers may have more experience of a player's true grade. In other words - yes, there may be some problems with the new method, but no, we are not going to admit it!

So in this case, no, I don't believe that Rookwood violated the 4000 limit. At the start of the season, because most of his players were newcomers, I asked Tom to give me his assessment of his team and he did so. Where there are enough local games and/or an online history, it may be possible for me to calculate a local grading estimate, but in Rookwood's case, based on the data supplied it just was not possible.

Anyway, in summary, yes, this is a tournament to encourage new players into the game, and should be treated as such, with as much friendliness and goodwill as possible. Clearly there are going to be difficulties, so I would urge all players to be flexible and charitable when it comes to the interpretation of the rules.

Rookwood are new to our league and are still learning our rules. In this case I do not believe that they deliberately broke the rules, though perhaps an apology for not following the spirit of the rules on exchanging team sheets would probably be in order.

Chris  
Cambridgeshire Results Officer

On 04/11/2023 11:59 Steve Fairhurst <[steve.sporting73@gmail.com](mailto:steve.sporting73@gmail.com)> wrote:

Hi Chris

Thank you for your reply. The issues I am having are not just on Thursday's game. I agreed to captain this team as I believed the competition is a great opportunity for newcomers and children to feel part of the club.

When you look at the level of players New England are fielding as "beginners" for me, it totally goes against the spirit and possibly the rules of the competition.

When we played at Spalding they played a lower level player on board 1, as that player was the only player who had an official rating, the other 2 being provisional.

We have played 2 games in the league so far, and on both occasions both teams have fielded their strongest players on board 3. I am rated at 11-1200 and am constantly facing the strongest players.

The other 2 players in my team are children, and are getting disheartened by the competition, as it is not being played fairly, as other teams seem to want to win at all costs, not caring about sportsmanship and fair play. We have players at our club who are unrated, who I would estimate to be around 1800, but I would not enter them in this team competition, but I seem to be in the minority.

It seemed a good idea to encourage the children to take part, but if it doesn't change, then I will not be captaining a team next season, as it is just not being played in the spirit it should be.

Apologies for the rant, but it is just disappointing for myself and my team who are trying to do things properly

Kind regards  
Steve

On 04/11/2023 19:07 Chris Russell <[cjross@virginmedia.com](mailto:cjross@virginmedia.com)> wrote:

Hi Steve

I am really sorry you feel this way. We knew there would be considerable challenges in getting such a league going, but were hopeful that there would be enough goodwill to make a go of it.

I take any accusation that New England competes unfairly very seriously and strongly disagree. We agreed to participate because we had several newcomers last year who were too weak to participate in normal league chess. And we have very carefully **not** submitted any team that exceeded the 4000 limit. Sadly 2 of our weakest players (1020, 1116 strength) withdrew from the club in the summer, I think both being disillusioned by getting beaten, although we tried to encourage them to continue. We do have another circa 1000 newcomer this season, but so far, he has not volunteered to play league chess. So most of our current 4000 team members are circa 1200 to 1400. We will try and persuade any new weaker players to participate if we can. But it is difficult. Most chess players do not like to lose. And we don't normally have many juniors.

Chris Russell, CCCA Secretary

I cannot stress too highly that the ECF partial grades calculated and shown on LMS are just not realistic, so I hope that you are not judging us based on them. I have very carefully calculated **local grades** for a number of our team and can demonstrate and stand by the calculations that were used to arrive at them. When I look at Peterborough players, your grades are mostly A or K, so clearly playing enough chess to get much more accurate grades. That is great, but what you need to understand is that most of your opposition are not yet in this position.

This afternoon, to illustrate the point for Tom I calculated a grade estimate for Lester Levet. Based on only 6 games (2 draws and 4 losses) he has been given a P grade of 1447 but I think 1246 is much more accurate. I have attached it FYI to show the grade calculation problem. Anyway, I do not believe you should be judging your opposition on the basis of published partial grades.

Lester Levet							
Grade estimate		1246		Delta	375		
				Limit	300		
2022-3 season							
Match	Colour	White	Grade	Result	Black	Grade (Sep23)	ResW
D2 v Peterboro	W	Carver, G	1753	1 - 0	Levet, L	1246	1
T4 v NewEng	W	Levet, L	1246	0.5 - 0.5	Wedley, N	1448	0.5
D2 v St Ives	W	Levet, L	1246	0.5 - 0.5	Baddeley, P	1617	0.5
FKO v Peterboro	W	Carver, G	1753	1 - 0	Levet, L	1246	1
D2 v Godmanches	W	Levet, L	1246	0 - 1	Rankine, A	1513	0
T4 v Peterboro	W	Levet, L	1246	0 - 1	Fairhurst, F	1374	0
No. of games			6				
Points			7473				
Estimate			1245.5				
ECF			1447				
Error			16.18 %				

I would certainly not recommend fielding players that, though ungraded, you believe to exceed the 4000 limit. That type of gamesmanship will destroy the new league in a hurry. A certain former Peterborough team captain became infamous for just such tactics. And the reason that 1375 was set as a limit to allow play in any board order is to allow for rapid improvement in new players.

I sincerely hope that you will persevere in trying to make the league work. Please give me a call if you wish to discuss these issues in more detail.

Chris



## **Appendix 4: Proposed league changes**

### **Peter Baddeley: Proposal for smaller division 1 teams**

I would like to propose that the 1st division goes down to 4 boards and operates on the same rules as the 2nd division for players not being able to play in other teams. Whilst some clubs, including St Ives, have seen a surge in new players and juniors, most of these are beginners or more suited to lower leagues. Maintaining five boards for many clubs has become challenging, especially for away fixtures.

Further, I hope that it will encourage other entries into the 1st division so we can move beyond 4 teams and remove the need for the 3rd fixture.

## **Appendix 5**

### **Paul Hanks proposal: Revision of junior chess organisation to allow for 4 area hubs (N,S,E,W) to develop junior chess locally with a view to exploiting Patrick's legacy.**

I have been thinking about the problem of the dearth of organisers for CCCA events following Patrick's bequest. In recent years, the Association has not been sufficiently dynamic in the domain of junior chess but going forward, it will become a key area of activity. I was wondering whether covering the whole county is too large a task for a single volunteer Junior Organiser and deters any would-be applicant. Would it be an idea to sub-divide the county into four e.g. a) Peterborough b) Wisbech/March/Ely c) Cambridge d) Huntingdon/St Ives/St Neots for the purpose of weekend tournaments and junior development?

Each area would be responsible for organising one event/year so that we can offer a quarterly circuit of weekend competitions. Apart from prizes/titles for the individual events, there could be an aggregated competition ("The Ribbands Grand Prix"?), say, from the best 3 scores with the fourth as tie-break. Each tournament would have a separate director and the local junior organiser would have the task of creating interest and a feeder route to the junior section of their local competition.

Two general points.

1 Will we be better served (outside the county leagues) by requiring more organisers with a bite-sized remit rather than an individual prepared to take on something that is possibly overwhelming?

2 Do we have the constitutional flexibility to be able to contemplate such changes if we feel it makes best use of the bequest? It would be a pity if the sub-committee has to return to a General Meeting for authorisation for extra Committee members or co-opted officers etc. Are there any Constitutional amendments we feel might be necessary?

#### **Discussion points:**

- This proposal would break down the task of junior organiser, and make it more manageable. But we would need rather more volunteers to come forward to make it work. Needs airing in clubs before the meeting to persuade individuals to come forward.
- Perhaps we still have one junior organiser, but the hub volunteers act as their lieutenants?
- If it is successful, I think we could easily modify our constitution after the fact.