

MCCU COUNTY TEAMS TOURNAMENT RULES 2024-5 Season

- 1) The County Championship Controller shall make all arrangements in respect of the grouping of counties for the purpose of these tournaments.
- 2) The qualifications for a player to represent a county in any competition shall be as per the ECF Rules on Qualification. ECF membership is not mandatory for players, but in entering a team or teams a county agrees to pay the game fee incurred for any non-members' games. No player may play for more than one county in that season. This applies equally whether the counties be members of the same or different Unions.
- 3) Teams and rating limits
 - a) Each county shall be represented by twelve players in the Championship, Under 2050, Under 1850, Under 1650 and in the Under 1450 rated tournament unless they mutually agree upon a greater even number of players. One game only shall be played between each pair of players; a win shall count one point and a draw half a point towards the match score.
 - b) Interim special provision for u1450 boards in u1650 matches for 2024-5 season. Captains of u1650 teams may agree that 2, 4 or 6 boards of a match will be reserved for u1450 rated players.
- 4) The penalty for playing unqualified or ineligible players in any match shall be the loss of such player's game and the deduction of one penalty point in respect of each such player from the total score made by the county in that match for which such unqualified or ineligible player shall have played.
- 5) Before the time fixed for the start of play, captains of the teams engaged shall make up their respective playing lists, placing their players in order of strength; shall exchange such lists; and shall then toss for move. The team whose captain shall have won the toss shall take first move on the odd numbered boards. Nothing in this rule shall prevent a substitute being included in a team in place of an absent player at any time prior to one hour expiring on the clock at his board.
- 6) The duration of play in the Championship shall be 135 minutes, plus a 15-second increment per move from move 1. Where suitable digital clocks are not available, the entire match will be played with the time limit of 150 minutes for each player for the whole game. In the remaining rating restricted tournaments the duration of play shall be 110 minutes, plus a 10-second increment per move from move 1. Where suitable digital clocks are not available, the entire match will be played with the time limit of 120 min for each player for the whole game. If captains wish to agree different time controls they may do so in consultation with the controller.
- 7) At the commencement of play, the captains shall start the clocks of the players having the move. If a player be absent at the end of the first hour, his opponent, if present shall score the game as a win unless a substitute be put in before the time of forfeit. A clock, once started, shall not be stopped or put back except in compliance with the current FIDE Laws of Chess. If neither player of a pair be present at the expiry of the first hour, the game shall be scored as a loss by both players.
- 8) Unless otherwise agreed the home county shall be responsible for the hire of the room and the making available of refreshments, which shall be a minimum of drinks and biscuits, and each county shall be responsible for its own travelling expenses. Any arbiter's expenses shall be shared equally between the counties. In the event of the match being played at a neutral venue, the cost of the hire of the room and refreshments shall be shared equally.

- 9) Arbiters
- a) Neutral arbiters for play-offs may be agreed upon by the counties concerned. In the case of counties failing to agree upon either a venue or arbiter, the County Championship Controller shall appoint one.
 - b) Where counties share a common border, matches between them will be played in the home county, unless that county agrees otherwise. Where counties do not share a common border, matches between them will be played at a neutral venue, unless otherwise agreed. The away team is responsible for arranging the neutral venue, but costs thereof are to be shared as per rule 8. This rule will apply whether or not a section is split into zones or divisions. Any disputes regarding venues are to be referred to the County Championship Controller.
 - c) It is the responsibility of the home side to provide sets, chess boards and clocks for all games in each match. For games played at a neutral venue, the two captains will agree beforehand who is responsible for providing sets, chess boards and clocks for all games. Failure to do so will result in the loss of any game by the home team or in the case of a neutral venue, the responsible team, unless suitable equipment is provided within one hour of the time specified for the start of the match. Captains should still agree as to who is supplying score sheets but failure to do so will not result in defaulting the match.
- 10) Within 7 days of the match a copy of the full score, as far as completed, shall be forwarded by the appropriate official of both counties to the County Championship Controller, who shall impose such sanctions as he/she sees fit if this is not complied with.
- 11) The playing area
- a) The playing area in all county matches must be a no-smoking area.
 - b) Mobile phones and other electronic devices may be brought into the playing area, but must be switched off or set to silent, and may not be used in the playing area whilst any games are in progress. If a player's electronic device makes a sound during his/her game that player shall lose the game. However, if the opponent cannot win the game by any series of legal moves, it will be declared a draw. Match captains must remind players that electronic devices must be switched off or set to silent.
- 12) The winner in each section/zone shall be the team making the highest score; a won match counting two points and a drawn match one point.
- 13) The Championship and 2050 sections
- a) The Championship section (Open and Minor) will be played as one section within the MCCU stages. If there are 8 or more teams then this will be in 2 zones as described above. The winner of this section will be declared the MCCU Champions. For the purposes of qualification to the ECF stages counties should elect whether they wish to receive nominations for the Open or Minor section. This decision should be made on or before 31 December.
 - b) The number of teams receiving nominations in the ECF Open and ECF Minor competitions will be determined by how many teams have elected to be in each section.
 - c) Entries for the U2050 section can also be made on or before 31 December.
 - d) In any section where there are two teams only, they may agree to play a double round.
 - e) Where teams tie on points for first place they will be declared joint champions.
- 14) If two teams in the same zone tie on points for an ECF qualification place, the winner of the tie shall be the winner of the match played between the two teams involved. In the event of that

match having been a tie, the tie shall be resolved by firstly board count and then by the elimination of the lowest board until a result is reached. If all boards are drawn, the match shall be awarded to the team which had black on the odd numbered boards.

- 15) In the event of a tie on points between three or more teams for an ECF qualifying place, places shall be decided by reference to the aggregate scores between the teams concerned. First place will be awarded to the team with the best percentage of aggregate score against the other counties concerned in the tie, second place to the next best score and so on. In the event of this procedure not producing a clear winner, then the tie shall be resolved by reference to board count in the matches between the tied teams and then by the elimination of the lowest board in each match until a result is reached. If the application of the above rule still fails to break the triple (or greater) tie, a jamboree play-off shall be held. Where this rule provides a clear winner, but leaves a tie for other places rule 15 will continue to be applied until or unless only two teams are tied, when rule 14 will apply.
- 16) If, in any tournament, the match for the MCCU title, or any play-off, is drawn the tie shall be won by the team defaulting the least number of boards. If defaulted boards are equal then the team with the lowest board count shall win if still equal the bottom board(s) shall be eliminated until the scores are unequal.
- 17) The current FIDE Laws of Chess, as published by the ECF shall govern play in all matches.
- 18) Any dispute or question which may arise in connection with the tournaments shall be referred to the County Championship Controller, and his/her decision shall be final, subject to the right of appeal to the Disputes Committee. (for the appeals procedure see the MCCU Constitution)
- 19) Competition format
 - a) Where a tournament is played in one section (i.e. no play-offs are required), all matches must be completed by fourteen days following the final date for matches fixed by the controller.
 - b) Where a tournament is played in zones (i.e. play-offs are required), no match may be played later than the last date for zone matches fixed by the controller. The only exception to this being the final match itself where rule 20 (c) is applicable.
 - c) If any match is arranged contrary to the above then that match shall be declared void with neither team receiving any points for that match.
- 20) Dates and venues for matches
 - a) The Controller shall arrange the dates on which matches are to be played.
 - b) A team shall be entitled to insist upon an alteration in the date of a fixture, provided that it shall give twenty eight days notice in writing to the opposing county official and shall offer two alternative Saturday dates. If the two teams are unable to agree, within fourteen days, to play the fixture on one of the two dates suggested, or on any other date, the matter shall be referred to the County Championship Controller, who, after receiving any representation the teams may wish to make, shall fix a date which shall be binding upon both teams, subject to the provisions of rule 20(c).
 - c) A team shall be entitled to insist upon a postponement of a fixture if it proves impossible to play the fixture on the date arranged. Without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing weather conditions in which travelling is not possible shall be deemed to be included within the scope of this rule, but difficulties in raising a team shall not be deemed to be within its scope.

- d) If a match is postponed under the provisions of rule 20(c), the counties shall agree a new date within fourteen days or, in default of agreement, the matter shall be referred to the County Championship Controller, who, after receiving any representation the counties may wish to make, shall fix a date which shall be binding upon both counties, subject again to the provisions of rule 20(c).
- e) Notice of the venue of a match shall be given by the county responsible for arranging the venue to the official of the opposing county, and the County Championship Controller, in writing, at least twenty one days before the match. If notice of the venue or meeting point has not been given fourteen days before the match to the away team official, the home team shall lose the match by default if the away team claims the match.
- f) If any match is postponed under rule 20(b) or (c) above then the County Championship Controller shall be notified of a newly agreed date not later than twenty one days after the original date set for the match.
- g) Where a county match is not played as a result of the away team defaulting and giving less than twenty one days notice, the defaulting team shall be drawn away in the corresponding fixture in the following season.
- h) Where a county match is cancelled then the defaulting side shall compensate the opposition financially for any reasonable costs incurred in arranging the match. Written evidence of the costs incurred shall be provided by the County Association claiming compensation.
- i) Should a home county or either county at a neutral venue default any game, a fine of £10 per board may, at the discretion of the County Controller, be incurred payable to the county who has suffered the default. However if such a default is notified in advance (by email with a copy to the County Controller), at the latest the day before the match preventing unnecessary travel, no financial penalty will be incurred.
- j) Should an away county default any game, a fine of £5 per board may, at the discretion of the County Controller, be incurred payable to the county who has suffered the default. However if such a default is notified in advance (by email with a copy to the County Controller), at the latest the day before the match preventing unnecessary travel, no financial penalty will be incurred.
- k) Where a default or defaults have been notified in advance as in 20(i) and 20(j), the defaults must be placed on the lowest boards of the defaulting team. Where such notification takes place, the team winning on default does not need to produce a player to claim the win nor give a name of any player; the games being shown on the score sheet as defaulted.
- l) Where a team finds itself unable to fulfil a fixture the captain must ensure he/she speaks to the opposing captain in person. The sending of email or text messages or leaving messages on a telephone answering service is not sufficient. If the opposing captain is not available, another officer of that county must be made aware of the situation. A fine of up to £50 may be imposed for failure to do so.
- m) Any organiser's change of address, phone number or email must be communicated to the Counties Championship Controller within 14 days of the change occurring.

21) Rating limits

- a) Limits apply at the start of each season and will be taken from the original over-the-board K or A standard play rating (excluding rapid play rating) current at September 1st. Subsequent rating lists will be used to assist in placing players in board order but not to determine eligibility

- b) A player who has no published rating may participate in any rating restricted tournament providing that there is no doubt in the team captain's mind that the player is not of such a playing strength as to breach the limits set and the inclusion of that player is cleared with the County Championship Controller before he/she plays. A player who has no ECF rating or a partial (P) rating and not cleared prior to competing can be deemed to be an ineligible player and rule 4 will apply. It is accepted that in exceptional circumstances it may not be possible to contact the controller prior to the match, in such cases a player must be cleared within 48 hrs of the match taking place. Team captains should have recourse to previous rating lists and the advice of their local grader. Any disputes on unrated players should be referred to the County Championship Controller for the tournament. Counties may enter more than one team in any rating restricted tournament. Where a county has more than one team in any rating restricted tournament, players are not interchangeable and each team must be a completely separate squad. Any estimated rating allocated by the Union County Championship Controller is only applicable to MCCU County Championship competitions.
- c) If a player without a published September 1st rating acquires an over-the-board K or A standardplay rating (excluding rapidplay) in a subsequent rating list, then that rating will count for eligibility with effect from one week after publication. It will supersede any clearance, or refusal of clearance, previously declared by the County Match Controller.

22) Measures to reduce spread of infection

- a) MCCU recommend that hand sanitizers should be readily available at each venue;;
- b) Home counties (or both counties in a neutral venue) should use their best endeavours to space tables well apart to support social distancing. Venues, where possible, should be well ventilated.
- c) Home teams may decide whether to offer refreshments. Teams can offer tea and biscuits