

**Agenda for the Annual General Meeting of the Sheffield & District Chess Association, to be held on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2025 at The Trades and Labour Club, 200 Duke Street, Sheffield S2 5QQ starting at 7.30pm**

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the 2024 Annual General Meeting
3. Matters arising
4. Treasurer's Report
5. Secretaries' Reports
6. Election of Officers, Auditors, Archivist & Match Captains

President

General Secretary

Treasurer

Auditors

Webmaster

Tournament Controller

Division 1 secretary

Division 2 secretary

Division 3 secretary

Division 4 Secretary

Division 5 Secretary

Summer League Secretary

Vice-Presidents

7. Election of members to serve on the Executive
8. Fixing of fees and subscriptions.
9. Proposed amendments to the Constitution & Rules (see below)
10. Approval of Clubs seeking membership to the league
11. Organisation of teams into Divisions
12. Any Other Business

Motions accepted under 9 “Proposed amendments”.

**1.**

**Proposed change to Rule 8 (a)**

Geoff Brown

To help the Executive Committee deal with complaints or disputes in the Summer League, it should be clear that the Secretary for the Summer League is an ex officio member of the Executive. I therefore propose the following change to the wording:

**8(a) The Executive shall consist of The President, the Treasurer, the General Secretary, the Divisional Secretaries, the Summer League Secretary, the Webmaster, the Tournament Controller and four members elected annually by the AGM.**

2.

Stephen Mann

I hereby formally submit proposals for the following additions to the existing S&DCA Rules for consideration at the 2025 S&DCA AGM.

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**Two new Rules to be added after the existing clauses of Rule 19:**

**19 (f) All games shall be conducted in accordance with the current FIDE Laws of Chess including its associated Appendices and Guidelines except where overridden in these Rules.**

**19 (g) Results of all eligible games shall be submitted for rating by the ECF.**

Comments: This states things not already stated in the Rules but which are assumed by default and for various reasons are better explicitly stated. It does not change existing practice. The word “current” is advisable as new Laws typically come into effect mid-season on the 1st of January. (Stipulating the Laws in force at the start of the season seems a questionable alternative.) If 19 (f) failed then 19 (g) above would become 19 (f) instead.

**Proposer: Steve Mann**

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They could be combined into one, but that could lead to inconvenience later. I’m reasonably confident that they do not need to be modified, though some overriding rules would best be added in addition, if anyone wishes to address any of them.

It seems bad rule-formulating practice to list the overrides in 19(f) itself. The overrides should themselves indicate their being overrides to specified FIDE Laws. Currently we have no rules which override FIDE Laws, as far as I can see. The following overrides spring to mind as possibilities for overrides.

- 1) Alan Mack’s Mobile Phone rule would be one, overriding Article 11.3. ([mannchess.org.uk/SRules/MobilePhones.htm](http://mannchess.org.uk/SRules/MobilePhones.htm))
- 2) Article 11.2 is a potential source of dispute if people choose to get silly. Too much is ill-defined and fails adequately to cater for different types of venue. Is a car park part of the “playing venue”? I know of one person who seems to believe it is. Maybe an override rule to this would be appropriate.
- 3) Article 6.5 (positioning of the clock) omits reference to the convention that the clock is placed on Black’s right. Currently the home club positions clocks in lieu of the specified “arbiter”. This convention could be introduced as an override. When I played at Rotherham, things were set up before the match with total disregard to this convention. At my board the clock was on White’s left. My opponent (without asking!) moved it to his right. Whilst I was quite happy with that, it did

mean that due to the very poor lighting, I could no longer actually read my clock!! All part of the fun. The lesson here is that you position the clocks where they will be visible to the two players (and be visible to an arbiter if there is one!), and then orient the boards so that the clocks are on Black's right (even if Black proves to be left-handed!).

4) Appendix D. (Rules for Play with Blind and Visually Disabled Players) might well be overridden as its specifications are significantly removed from actual practice. Idiots will say that we adhere to the FIDE Laws and they say . . . .

5) There are 115 occurrences of "arbiter" in the Articles, Appendices and Guidelines, but only in Guideline III.6 is there provision for the absence of an arbiter. There used to be attempts by the BCF/ECF to offer advice on what to do when there is no arbiter present. Traditionally, captains (or, if a captain's own game is still in progress, someone appointed by the captain) should try to resolve a matter where the Laws call on an arbiter to resolve it. Inevitably there can be disagreement meaning that the matter has to be referred to the organising body. That can leave play in a game left unfinished or else adjourned until a ruling is received. This has happened in the past and is unsatisfactory.

The "arbiter" in Article 9.3.1 should surely be the opponent, while in Article 11.2.3 the "arbiter" should perhaps be the opposing captain.

Going through all 115 "arbiter" occurrences to determine the appropriate course in the absence of an arbiter would be tedious, though there might be as few as four main alternatives, but a global override rule to address the "arbiter" problem could be considered.

Steve

3.

**Proposed Change to Rule 24 (o)**

mike smith

When the Richardson Cup 'Plate' competition was introduced for teams that played and lost in the first round, it was deemed desirable to seed the first round so as to keep the top teams apart and give other teams something to play for.

That presented a problem deciding which teams should be seeded as the Cup and top division had a different number of boards. The present rule reflects that conundrum and is somewhat convoluted, the number of seeds can vary from year to year, and arguably some of the strong teams may still fail to be seeded.

Now the number of boards is the same in both competitions there is the opportunity to simplify the seeding and better reflect what was intended.

Proposed that Rule 24 (o) to read:

**"The following teams shall be kept apart in the first round: winners from the last season, the teams finishing in the top five positions in the Davy Trophy from the last season."**

Note: the Richardson Cup has been won by teams not in the top division on 2 occasions to my knowledge.

4.

**Proposed change to Rule 25 (h)**

Geoff Brown

The current Rule 25 (h), re Summer League registration of players, still has mention of Chair of the Executive, a position that was done away with some years ago.

I propose that "Chair of Executive," be simply removed from the Rule and the new wording would then be:

**"Except as provided under Rule 17(c) and 25 (i), registration of players shall be subject to approval by the Executive. If the Executive is not scheduled to meet, the approval shall be by consultation between the General Secretary and the Summer League Secretary/Secretaries."**

5.

### **Proposed temporary change to the rules for the Individual Competitions**

Geoff Brown

Entries to the Sheffield Individual Championships have gradually decreased over the years (back in the late 80's we used to have three separate tournaments with a couple of dozen entrants in each; now we're lucky to have twelve players in just one section).

The reasons for the decrease are numerous: difficulties in arranging matches; games played at the opponent's home; on strange chess sets; travelling to out of the way places; providing refreshments when hosting; matches not rated; playing the same players year after year; etc, etc.

The Executive Committee discussed the matter and would like to breathe new life into the tournaments (there are three separate trophies to play for) and have come up with the idea of holding each of the six rounds at a single venue, with everyone playing at the same time on a set night each month (7.30 pm on the last Wednesday of the month at the Sheffield Chess Centre). With homogenous playing conditions for everyone there is no reason why the games cannot be sent for rating.

The suggestion is to try this format for the 2025-26 season before committing to it for ever, hence the following proposal for a temporary change to Rules 26 to 29 inclusive.

### **TEMPORARY RULES FOR INDIVIDUAL COMPETITIONS – FOR SEASON 2025-26 ONLY**

26.

#### **SHEFFIELD CHAMPIONSHIP**

(a) A Sheffield Individual Championship tournament shall be held annually. If there are sufficient entrants, then the format will be a six-round Swiss system tournament. If the number of entrants is low then the Tournament Controller can alter the tournament format.

(b) The winner shall hold, until the end of the following season, the title of "Sheffield Chess Champion" and the Bruce Trophy.

(c) **Entry shall be open to any member of the Association but note that ECF membership, at Bronze level or above, should be held and still in place on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2026.**

(d) (i) The Tournament Controller shall 'seed' the six highest rated players before play begins. If fewer than 18 players compete, then one third of the entrants shall be seeded. The highest placed player not included in this list of seeds shall hold the Holroyd Trophy until the end of the following season.

(ii) The Tournament Controller shall 'seed' the six next highest rated players before play begins. If fewer than 18 players compete, then one third of the entrants shall be seeded. The highest placed player not included in either list of seeds shall hold the Shapero Trophy until the end of the following season.

27.

#### CONDUCT OF TOURNAMENTS

**(a) Entries shall be sent to the controller. The treasurer will make arrangements to collect the ECF game fee (£21.00 from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2025) from entrants without at least Bronze ECF membership.**

(b) The closing date for entries shall be October 15th.

**(c) Matches will be played at the Sheffield Chess Centre, 329A Coleford Road, Darnall, Sheffield S9 5NT, starting at 7.30pm, on the final Wednesday in October, November, January, February, March and April (i.e. 29<sup>th</sup> October, 26<sup>th</sup> November, 28<sup>th</sup> January, 25<sup>th</sup> February, 25<sup>th</sup> March and 29<sup>th</sup> April).**

**(d) The draw for successive rounds shall be made by the Tournament Controller as soon as possible after 15<sup>th</sup> of each relevant month. Players may request a half-point bye in any round as long as they notify the controller by 15<sup>th</sup> day of the month of that round.**

(e) Should a tie-break be required to determine an outright winner in any of the sections then tie-break systems will be applied in the following order: (i) Direct Encounter (where the tie-break is required to separate only two players on the same score) (ii) Buchholz Cut 1 (iii) Buchholz (iv) Sonneborn-Berger

28.

#### CONDUCT OF TOURNAMENT GAMES

**(a) The time limit for the individual tournament shall be 60 minutes per player plus 15 seconds per move.**

29.

#### DEFAULTING OPPONENTS

(a) The Controller shall have the authority to disqualify players who default more than one game.

(b) The Controller's decision shall be final in the event of any dispute.

6.

### **Rule addition proposal re mobile phones and other electronic devices**

Alan McIntosh

At the S&DCA Fixture meeting in 2023 it was agreed to adopt, at our 2024 AGM, a rule regarding mobile phones and other electronic devices. Unfortunately, this was forgotten about, and it remains as just advice. We are therefore supposed to be following FIDE rules, which are much stricter than we need and adhere to (see 11.3). Regarding unapproved electronic devices, rule 11.3.2.2 states that...If it is evident that a player has such a device on their person in the playing venue, the player shall lose the game. The opponent shall win. The regulations of an event may specify a different, less severe, penalty.

In the event of a phone going off I think a warning should be given, but I know some prefer that it be an immediate loss, and our current advice is that it should be. I have therefore come up with two possibilities to be voted on, in the assumption that one will be adopted.

#### **Either**

**Mobile phones and other electronic devices capable of suggesting moves are allowed into the playing area but must be switched off. Ideally these devices should be left on the table, beside the board, but as space may be at a premium they can be left on the player's person but should not leave the playing area during the game. A mobile phone can be exempted if, for example, the player is 'on call' and both captains agree to the exemption. If a player's non-exempted phone or device makes a sound during the game, that player shall receive a warning. On a further instance of a sound from the same device or any other device belonging to that player, they shall forfeit the game. If a player has a non-exempted phone or device switched on and in use during their game, that player shall immediately forfeit the game. This would be the case if, for example, a player was seen scrolling through texts or answering their phone.**

#### **Or**

**Mobile phones and other electronic devices capable of suggesting moves are allowed into the playing area but must be switched off. Ideally these devices should be left on the table, beside the board, but as space may be at a premium they can be left on the player's person but should not leave the playing area during the game. A mobile phone can be exempted if, for example, the player is 'on call' and both captains agree to the exemption. If a player's non-exempted phone or device makes a sound during the game, they shall forfeit the game. If a player has a non-exempted phone or device switched on and in use during their game, that player will forfeit the game. This would be the case if, for example, a player was seen scrolling through texts or answering their phone.**

