

SUFFOLK COUNTY CHESS ASSOCIATION

COMPETITION RULES

As agreed at the SCCA Annual General Meeting on 2nd July 2025.

GENERAL RULES

1.1 These rules apply to all chess competitions run by the SCCA.

1.2 The Competitions Secretary is responsible for the efficient administration of the SCCA events. His additional responsibilities include the resolution of disputes, the enforcement of the rules when necessary and the compilation of fixture lists. The Competitions Secretary, in consultation with the Committee, is permitted to reformat the SCCA competitions to reflect any changes in the numbers of clubs that are entered.

1.3 The FIDE Laws of Chess will apply to all games unless superseded by these Rules.

1.4 Should any mobile electronic equipment emit a sound during play, the player in possession of it must immediately offer to resign. His opponent may decline this offer.

1.5 In all SCCA competitions the away team has White on the odd-numbered boards.

1.6 Matches will be played at the home team's club venue unless the captains agree otherwise.

1.7 Team captains must write down the names of their players in board order and exchange team lists before the start of the match.

1.8 Team captains must enter or confirm their match result on the website within seven days of the match. Failure to do so without notifying the Competitions Secretary of any problems they are having with the website will mean the loss of a point for their team.

TIMING

2.1 Matches will normally start at 7.30 pm but they may begin at other times if both captains agree.

2.2 White's clock will be started at the time agreed under rule 2.1. If a player does not arrive within 30 minutes of his clock being started he will lose the game. Another club member may be asked to replace the missing player at any time within this 30 minutes grace period. The replacement should normally meet the substitution rules, but if both team captains agree, the replacement's rating can be such that he is playing out of board order, i.e. he is rated more than 80 points below any player on a lower board, provided that he is not rated higher than the player he is replacing. Any time lost during this process will be lost only from the clock of the replacement player.

2.3 In all SCCA competitions, incremental ('Fischer') timing will be the default method of time control with each player having 75 minutes for the game plus an increment of 15 seconds for every move.

2.4 Where suitable digital clocks are not available, mechanical clocks may be used. In such cases, each player will be allowed 90 minutes to complete all moves. The first 30 moves must be completed within 75 minutes. This alternative time control is also available where both players agree to it, and either mechanical or digital clocks may be used in such cases.

FIXTURES, POSTPONEMENTS AND DEFAULTS

3.1 Each match must normally be played on the date specified in the fixture list. However, captains may agree to play a match on an earlier date, which the home captain must notify to the Competitions Secretary. If the new date is more than seven days before the original fixture date, the Competitions Secretary will change the date on the website to allow the result to be entered by the captains in the usual way.

3.2 A match may be postponed by agreement between the two captains. Where any two teams from the same club arrange a postponement then the postponed match may not be scheduled for a date that would make it the last match of the season for either team. A request for a postponement, made at any time up until 48 hours of the originally scheduled match date cannot be unreasonably refused. Subsequent requests to postpone a postponed match may be declined. In this case, the match will be played on the last agreed date. The date for the rescheduled match must not be later than 31 May.

3.3 If a match is due to be held within one month of the circulation of the fixture list, either captain may request postponement by notifying the Competitions Secretary by e-mail of the agreed postponement with details of why the postponement is required.

3.4 If a match must be postponed for good reason, such as bad weather, disruption to the transport system or the venue being unavailable, the captain requesting postponement should telephone the opposition captain before the match is due to be played to ask that a revised date be fixed. If agreed then the captain requesting postponement will notify the Competitions Secretary by e-mail and a new date will be fixed.

3.5 Team captains must make every reasonable effort to avoid having to default a board, including bringing in a lower- rated player if necessary. However, if a default does occur on any board, the opponent will gain the full point. If both teams default on the same board no points are awarded to either team for that board.

3.6 When a default occurs, the defaulting team captain must tell the opposing captain who the missing player is and must default on the board where that player would have played.

3.7 There is no requirement to default on the lower board.

3.8 Where both sides have an equal number of defaults then the remaining players must play each other.

3.9 Where a team defaults on one occasion a warning will be issued; should a further default occur, the defaulting team's results will be discounted in the calculations for that division.

ECF RATINGS

4.1 The August rating will be used for determining eligibility to a rating limited competition throughout the season. Board order and substitution will be determined by players' current monthly ratings. A player can qualify to play in a rating limited competition on the basis of an estimated rating. However, if their first (non-P) ECF rating is greater than the rating limit, then they can no longer play in the competition.

4.2 If a player does not have a current ECF standard rating then before they may play in a team an estimated rating must be agreed with the Competitions Secretary. Such an estimated rating has the same status in these rules as a published rating. Estimated ratings may be changed during the season if a player's performance differs significantly from the estimated rating. All club secretaries or their representatives will be advised of the change by email. If a player who is unrated at the start of a season subsequently acquires a current ECF rating, then this should be used instead of his estimated rating with the proviso that the current rating is at least Category K.

NOMINATIONS AND SUBSTITUTIONS

5.1 Each club will provide a list of nominated players with their ratings for each team that they enter in the League. A player may only be nominated by a club for one team at any time; however a player may be nominated by two different clubs for teams that play in different divisions. If a team plays a match before nominating any players, the team will be deemed to have nominated the four players who took part in the match. Nominated players must have ECF membership by the end of October and they must continue their membership throughout the season.

5.2 Nominations can be changed during the season up to the end of the three-week period following the publication of the **January** ratings, by notifying the Competitions Secretary. When the three-week period that follows the publication of mid-season ratings has elapsed, no more renominations will be accepted for the rest of the season. If, as a result of a re-nomination, a player, having a 'main team', acquires a new 'main team' then any earlier appearances for their previous main team will be treated as substitutions and governed by Rule 5.5.

5.3 A player must not play on a board if their rating would exceed, by more than 80 points, the rating of the nominated player for that board.

5.4 Within a team, a player must not be rated more than 80 points above anyone on a higher board.

5.5 The following substitution rules will apply:

(a) A person may play an unlimited number of games for one team in his club; this will be known as his main team.

(b) A nominated player's main team will be the team for which he is nominated. For a player who is not nominated to any team, his main team will be the first team for which he plays three games.

(c) A player may act as a substitute for other teams from his club, subject to the limitations set out in Table 1 and (d).

(d) A player nominated by two clubs may play an unlimited number of games for both teams for which he is nominated, provided the teams he plays for are in different divisions - see section (g). He may not substitute for any other teams.

(e) A player may act as a substitute in a maximum of seven matches per season when not playing for his main team.

(f) The rating of a substitute player must not exceed 80 points more than the nominated player for whom he is substituting.

(g) A player may not play for more than one team in a division. This rule does not apply to the lowest division.

Table 1: The number of times that a player is permitted to act as a substitute for teams other than his main team:

Relationship of substitution team to main team	Number of permitted substitution appearances per season
Substitution team in the same division as the main team	No substitution is permitted except in the lowest division where three substitutions within the teams from the same club are permitted.
Substitution team in a higher division than the main team	A maximum of half the number of matches scheduled for the higher division that season up to the limit of seven as in rule 5.5(e)
Substitution team in a lower division than the main team	A maximum of three games in ALL teams (i.e. not three games per team)

PENALTIES

6.1 When resolving a dispute in any competition game, the following penalty may be applied: for league purposes, deeming the game to be lost by the offending player and won by their opponent.

6.2 In general, the result of a game penalised according to rule 6.1 will still be submitted for rating. However, if it is ruled that a player violated the Laws of Chess then a different result, or indeed no result, may be submitted instead.

6.3 For example, a player will be penalised according to rule 6.1 if:

- (a) They break a rule in section 5
- (b) They have neither a published ECF standard rating, nor an agreed estimated rating.
- (c) They are not a member of a club affiliated to the SCCA.

PROMOTION AND RELEGATION

7.1 The result of a League division will be decided on game points. If there is a tie, the team with the highest number of match wins will take precedence. If teams are still tied, their results against each other will count with game points taking precedence over match points. If the teams are still tied, a playoff match or matches will be used to decide promotion and relegation issues.

The result of the U1800 and U1650 competitions will be decided on match points:

2 points for a win

1 point for a draw

0 for a loss

Where teams are equal on match points, game points will determine league positions.

7.2 The bottom team in a division will normally be relegated to a lower division, if there is one. The winning team will normally be promoted to a higher division, if there is one. More than one team may be promoted if teams withdraw from a higher division.

INDIVIDUAL COMPETITIONS

8.1 Competitors must either be born in Suffolk, live in Suffolk or be a member of a club that is affiliated to the Suffolk County Chess Association.

8.2 The competition organiser will advise the Committee regarding the format of the competition when the number of entries is known.

8.3 The organiser of the competition will nominate one of the players in a game as the home player. The game will take place at a time and a venue agreed by both players.

DISPUTES AND APPEALS

9.1 Disputes must be referred to the Competitions Secretary for resolution. The Competitions Secretary may consult with a member of the Committee to aid in his consideration of the case. Once resolved the Competitions Secretary will notify the clubs in dispute of his decision.

9.2 If the Competitions Secretary has a conflict of interests, e.g. is a member of a club involved in the dispute or of a club that has an interest in the outcome of the dispute, the issue must be delegated, in this order, to the President, the Vice-President, the SCCA Secretary or another committee member until it falls to one without a conflict of interest.

9.3 If a Club is unhappy with the decision made about a dispute, an appeal against it may be submitted to the Committee within seven days of receipt of that result. The decision of the Committee concerning this appeal will be final.

QUICKPLAY FINISH RULES

10.1 A Quickplay Finish is one where all remaining moves have to be completed by a player within a given time. When Black has made his 30th move within the initial time control the clock will be stopped, the times on both clocks will be noted and the clocks will be set back by 15 minutes. The end of time control is then on the hour. The players retain the use of any of their time they have not consumed prior to this setting back.

10.2 In a quickplay finish, if a player has less than two minutes on the clock he or she may stop the clock and claim a draw if it is believed that the opponent either cannot win by normal means or is making no effort to win by normal means. If their own games have been completed the two captains may jointly arbitrate in this matter and if necessary should allow the game to continue until flag fall in order properly to evaluate the claim.

10.3 If a claim made under 10.2 cannot be resolved an agreed score of the game and final position shall be submitted to the Competitions Secretary. He will arrange for an independent arbiter to adjudicate at the expense of the team claiming the draw if the claim is turned down, or of the other team if it is upheld.

10.4 To win a game on time a player must claim such a win and also have mating material. The game will be declared a draw if the player whose flag has not fallen has insufficient mating material. The game will be declared a draw if both flags have fallen.

10.5 Third parties must not intervene in any way in a Quickplay Finish. They must not indicate to either player that time is short or that the flag has fallen. It is entirely up to the two players themselves.

PLAYER OF THE YEAR

11.1 In each division in the League, there will be an annual award of 'Player of the Year' (POTY) to the player who scored the greatest number of game points during the season. In the event of equality of points between one or more players, the POTY title will be tied.

11.2 A win by default will count as a win for this competition, but in a game against an ineligible opponent, the actual result of the game will be used. If a player is ruled ineligible for a game, the result is disregarded for his personal score.

11.3 If a player plays for more than one team in a division, only the results achieved for the team for which he scored the highest number of points will be used to calculate the POTY score.

AMENDMENTS TO THE RULES

12.1 Proposals to change these Rules will be considered at the Annual General Meeting or an Extraordinary General Meeting called specifically for that purpose. Those attending a general meeting may decide to recommend that the SCCA shall be authorised to formulate the exact wording of any competition rules approved at the said meeting.

Appendix 1

SUFFOLK DIVISIONAL RAPIDPLAY CUP

A1.1 This is a knockout competition for teams of four players.

A1.2 By default every team that plays in the Suffolk League will be entered into either the Division 1 cup, the Division 2 cup, or the Division 3 cup. Any team wishing not to take part should notify the Divisional Rapidplay Cup Organiser by the entries deadline of 31 July. A club that is affiliated to the SCCA but does not have a league team, may enter a team in the Rapidplay competition by application to the organiser. Extra teams over and above those automatically entered are permitted.

A1.3 Each team will have the same nominated players as those for its entry in the League. Where a club or team does not have an entry in the league the Rapid Play Cup team must be nominated in the same way as all League teams.

A1.4 Each match will comprise two rounds of Rapidplay games, where each team member plays the same opponent twice, with White and Black. The time control for each player is 25 minutes with an increment of 10 seconds per move. If Fischer timing is unavailable then each player will have 30 minutes for the entire game. Changes to board order between rounds is not permitted unless it is to correct a board order violation discovered in the first round.

A1.5 The away team will have White on the odd boards for the first game and White on even boards for the second game.

A1.6 Rapid play ratings excluding those with suffix P should be used to determine board order. If a player does not have a rapid play rating, then their current standard play rating should be used. If no standard rating exists then an estimated rating must be used.

A1.7 Players may make **only** one substitute appearance **across all other teams (not one per team)** from the same club in a different division of this competition.

A1.8 In the event of a tie, the match will be decided by a blitz game for which the time control will be 3m+2s (setting 15 on DGT2010). Each team captain will select a team member, who took part in the match, to play. Colours will be determined by coin toss. The result of the game will be submitted to the ECF for rating. If the game is drawn, the match will be decided by the toss of a coin. If a match is later declared drawn due to the application of a penalty imposed for a rule violation, the match will be decided by:

- (a) Elimination of the lower boards, one by one, until a result is obtained;
- (b) Selecting the team with the lower aggregate rating;
- (c) The toss of a coin.

A1.9 A neutral venue for the final matches is preferable but not mandatory. At a neutral venue the team with White on odd numbered boards will be decided by the toss of a coin.

A1.10 The pairings for each round (including any byes if the eventuality arises) will be decided by a random draw made by the Cup organiser.

A1.11 In all other matters including ineligibility penalties this competition defaults to the SCCA league and general rules.

Appendix 2

SUFFOLK RATING-LIMITED COMPETITIONS

A2.1 The Competitions Secretary will decide the exact format of these events depending on the number of teams entered. In the event of a knockout phase or phases, the Competitions Secretary will perform the draw and assign any byes by drawing lots.

A2.2 Teams will consist of four players, all with a standard rating as published in the summer rating list, that is less than an agreed rating.

A2.3 Players may only play in one team.

A2.4 In the event of a tie, the competition will be decided by:

- a) The greater number of game wins;
- b) Elimination of the bottom boards until a result is obtained;
- b) Selecting the team with the lowest aggregate rating;
- c) Toss of a coin.

Appendix 3

NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK CUP (SUFFOLK SECTION)

A3.1 This is a competition for teams of six players. The Competitions Secretary will perform a draw at the start of the season.

A3.2 If three teams enter the format will be all play all. If four or more teams enter it will be a knockout competition.

A3.3 A club may only enter one team. A player may only play for one Club in this competition.

A3.4 The team with White on odd numbered boards will be decided by the toss of a coin.

A3.5 Play in rating order subject to the League 80 rating points board order rules.

A3.6 Use Fischer timing set for 75 minutes with 15 seconds increment.

A3.7 Use the Suffolk League default rules and the Suffolk League postponement rules. Default to FIDE rules for any other situations.

A3.8 If the competition is played as an all-play-all league, then the following tie-break rules apply. In the event of a two-way tie, the competition will be decided by using the league tiebreak rule in section 7.1. In the event of a three-way tie, the competition will be decided in favour of the team with the lowest aggregate rating over both matches, excluding defaults on any board.

A3.9 If the competition is played as a knock-out, tied matches will be decided by applying the following methods until a result is obtained: (a) board count; (b) by elimination of the lower boards, one by one, until a result is obtained; (c) selecting the team with the lower aggregate rating; (d) by the toss of a coin."

A3.10 It is preferable to play the Final at a neutral venue if this can be arranged.

Appendix 4

RAPID PLAY HANDICAP

A4.1. This competition is for teams of four players.

A4.2. Each match will comprise two rounds of Rapidplay games. The time control for each player is 25 minutes with an increment of 10 seconds per move. If Fischer timing is unavailable, then each player will have 30 minutes for the entire game.

A4.3. The away team will have White on the odd boards for the first game and White on even boards for the second game.

A4.4. Rapidplay ratings should be used to determine board order. If a player does not have at least a rapidplay K-rating, then their current, or agreed estimated, standard play rating, should be used. The board order, and players, need not remain the same for both games.

A4.5. The mean rapidplay rating for each team is to be worked out. Any defaulting players are excluded from the calculation. For example, if a team defaults on board 1 in the first round and board 3 in the second, then the aggregate rating of the players who played is divided by 6. The winning team shall be decided depending on the difference in average rating as follows:

If the difference in rating is 40 or less, the team that wins on the most boards wins the match – in the event the result is 4-4 then the match is drawn. For any other result the winning team shall be determined as follows:

Rating Difference	Score needed to win by the higher rated team
41-115	5
116-190	5.5
191-265	6
266-340	6.5
Over 340	7

In the event the higher rated team does not reach the required score, the lower rated team is deemed to have won the match.

A4.6. The team winning a match will receive two points towards league standings.

A4.7. Teams drawing a match will each receive one point towards league standings.

A4.8. The structure of the league (e.g. all-play-all once/twice, swiss) will be determined by the Competitions Secretary.

A4.9. Players may play for more than one team in this competition. However, clearly, they cannot play for both teams involved in a match.

A4.10. In matters of board order and penalties, this competition defaults to the SCCA league and general rules. To help with the calculations for this competition, use the table on the next page and the following directions:

- Fill out the results and players in the first table below.
- Sum the results and enter the highlighted cell in row (a).
- Sum the ratings for each team and enter the aggregate rating in the highlighted cells in row (b). For defaulting players, do NOT add any rating.
- Enter the number of defaulting players for the teams in the highlighted cells in row (c).

- Subtract the number of defaulting players from 8 (i.e. the number of players in a team). Enter highlighted cell in row (d)
- Divide your aggregate rating for each team by the value in row (d).
- Fill out the second table and refer to the rules, to determine the score needed to win.

Board	Home Team Player	Rating	Home Score	Away Score	Away Team Player	Rating
Match 1 – Board 1						
Match 1 – Board 2						
Match 1 – Board 3						
Match 1 – Board 4						
Match 2 – Board 1						
Match 2 – Board 2						
Match 2 – Board 3						
Match 2 – Board 4						
a) Match results						
b) Sum of Ratings						
c) Number of defaults						
d) 8 minus (c)						
e) Mean rating (b)/(d)						

Higher Rated Team	Mean Rating	Lower Rated Team	Mean Rating	Rating Difference	Score To Win
(f)	(g)	(h)	(i)	(g)-(i) =	