Nottinghamshire Chess Association: **League Rules 2026-27**

Schedule A – Administration

1. The League shall be controlled by a League Management Committee, with the day-to-day running of the League in the hands of the League Secretary and the Records Secretary.

2. Administration of the League shall be governed by the League Management Committee Standing Orders, as determined by the Nottinghamshire Chess Association.

Schedule B – The League

1. The season is from 1st September to 15th May and clubs must be affiliated to the NCA before entry into the League.

2. Clubs must, by 30th June, return the completed entry form to the League Secretary. After this date, any proposals to enter new teams may only be made by that club's Secretary. Clubs may request the late entry of additional teams by 30th November.

3. A team must immediately notify the League Secretary and all captains in that team's division of a change to the venue, the team captain or his or her details.

4. If two or more teams from the same club play in the same division, the first match(es) of the club's teams in that division shall be between them(selves). Matches between teams from the same club must be played by 31st January.

5. A team not completing at least half of its fixtures shall have its match results removed from the league table.
   If a team withdraws from the league after completing at least half of its fixtures, their remaining matches will be recorded as being defaulted.

6. Final positions of teams in a division will be determined by match points (win = 2 pts, draw = 1, loss = 0); game points; results between tied teams (match points; game points) fewest defaulted boards and playoff matches at a neutral venue, which if drawn will be decided by board count; bottom board elimination; toss of a coin by a neutral LMC member.

7. All matches must start at 7.15 pm or 7.30 pm or 7.45 pm as notified by the home club unless both team captains have agreed an alternative time. The home team will ensure the equipment is properly laid out at the agreed time of starting. If it isn't ready, the away team may:
   a) Insist on the lost time being taken off the home players clock; and
   b) Claim a win by default on any board not ready within 30 minutes of the agreed time of starting.

8. A match will be defaulted by any team that fails to field at least half the number of players scheduled to play in a match. **A team which defaults a match is required to submit a written explanation to the League (or Records) Secretary.**

9. The standard time limit shall be 65 minutes plus an increment of 10 seconds per move to finish the game.

10. Each match must be played over 5 boards in the top division and over 4 boards in all other divisions.

11. Before the start, the captains must exchange fully completed team lists. The away team shall have white on the odd-numbered boards.

12. The Laws of Chess, as interpreted by FIDE, must be adhered to. Exceptions or additions to these laws:
    a) English descriptive notation is permitted;
    b) Mobile phones must be switched off or, by prior agreement with the opponent and opposing captain, set to silent;
    c) If a player fails to arrive at the board within 30 minutes of the agreed time of starting, that board shall be defaulted unless a qualified substitute is found in the meantime. A substitute must be on the ECF grading database or have played for the club during the current season.

13. Each team captain must submit the result on the ECF League Management System,

and notify the League Secretary of any dispute, within 3 days of the match.

14. Any claim that a match has been won by default must be accompanied by a fully completed team list.

15. Fixture Rearrangements:
a) A captain seeking to rearrange must inform the opposing captain and seek permission from the League Secretary, explaining the compelling reason for such a request.
b) If the League Secretary agrees to the rearrangement, then, no later than 14 days after the scheduled fixture, the team captains must agree a new date and inform the League Secretary.

16. All games played in the league will be submitted for rating. Where penalties are applied under league rules, the actual game result will be used for rating.

Schedule C – Players

1. The LMC may penalise any club that uses a player who is not, in the opinion of the LMC, a *bona fide* member of that club.

2. A player may only play one game in anyone evening, including wins by default

3. No player may play in the League for more than one club in any one season except at the discretion of the LMC.

4. Once a player has been listed on a team sheet three times in total on higher boards for any team(s), that player may not appear for a lower team. Higher boards are defined as boards one or two that are played or won by default.

5. New Players:
a) A club wishing to field a player new to that club must inform the Records Secretary of the player's rating code and rating, date of birth (juniors only) and details of clubs or counties previously played for and confirm their written consent per rule C8 is held.
b). The information must be provided with, or before, the results of the player's first match for the club.
c) From 1st January each season, only players who live, work or study in Nottinghamshire, or have previously played in the league, may be introduced by a club. **A player may be introduced with the agreement of the Records Secretary if outside the scope of this rule.**

6. A player may not be rated more than 150 points above anyone on a higher board at the agreed start of the match (i.e. excluding substitutes). **This does not apply to any player on a board which the other team defaults before the agreed start of the match.**

7. If a substitute is used, they may not be rated more than 150 points higher than anyone on a higher board.

8. Before playing in the League, all players must have given their consent to their personal data being used in accordance with the NCA Privacy Policy.

Schedule D – Penalties

1. Club penalty – The penalty for infringing rule B2 is a fine of £20.

2. Team penalties –
a). The penalty for defaulting a match or infringing B3, B4 or B15(a) is the loss of 2 match points and a fine of £20.
b) The penalty for infringing B14 is the match is recorded as a double default.

3. Player penalties –

   a) The penalty for playing an ineligible player in C2, C3, C4, C5, C6 or C7, and for defaults above the bottom board played or won by default, is the transfer of any game points scored by the offending player plus 0.5 game points from the offending team to their opponents, provided that the total game score shall not become negative.

   b) The first time a player's phone sounds the opponent shall be awarded two extra minutes. The second time the player's phone sounds the game is lost, unless the opponent cannot win by legal means, in which case the game shall be drawn.

   c) The penalty for infringing rule B11 is the default of each board where no name is entered.

   d) The penalty for smoking in the playing area is the loss of the game.

4. **The LMC may impose any penalty it deems appropriate in the case of any interference in a game including, and not limited to, a change to the game or match result, a suspension for the person(s) who interfered, a fine for their club, etc.**

5. Clubs may appeal to LMC against any penalty imposed. Such appeals must be submitted to the League Secretary within 28 days of notification and explain why the infringement was not reasonably within the club's control.

Appendix – Grading Guidance re Rule C6

Clubs must assign a Match Rating for each player and include that rating with the player's first match result of the season. The Match rating will remain in force all season unless the Records Secretary agrees otherwise.

Assignment of the Match Rating should be in the following order of priority:

a) The September official original rating (Full only) for standard OTB play from the ECF Rating website.

b) The latest official original rating (Full only) for standard OTB play from the ECF Rating website.

c) FIDE or national rating converted if necessary.

d) Last published rating from the ECF Rating website (adjusted by up to 75 points either way if you feel it appropriate).

e) A club estimate of the player's rating.

There may be cases where an old ECF rating (option d) is considered to be inaccurate by more than 75 points. In these cases a club may assign an estimate, but only with the agreement of the Records Secretary. This permission should be sought before the player's first game as, if permission is not given, it may affect the player's eligibility for that match.

Notes:

In practice most players will be assigned their September rating Changes of rating mid-season are only likely to be granted in exceptional circumstances.