

Surrey County Chess Association

Alex Holowczak,  
ECF Director of Home Chess

23 November 2017

Subject: County Championships Consultation

Dear Alex,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Surrey County Chess Association ("SCCA") in response to the consultation, referenced above, that was launched on the ECF website on 25th October 2017.

Firstly, we appreciate and thank you for the opportunity to be part of the consultation.

The SCCA Board recognises that the consultation requests responses on-line, utilising the questionnaire formats you have provided. However it seems to us that it would be useful to, in addition, provide a fuller response via this communication to give a proper perspective of our position. We also have some questions for you as to how you will utilise the data once gathered.

SCCA fields all 6 tiers of county teams from Open to U-100. In a typical season SCCA teams play between 25-30 matches in the Southern Counties Chess Union ("SCCU") championships. Our participation in the subsequent ECF National Stages depends on our performances in the Union stage. Typically we have played 3-6 matches in the ECF National Stages. Hence, in a typical season, SCCA relies on the SCCU championships for 80-90% of its matches. So the first and most important message to convey is that SCCA would not want to see any changes to the county championships that would negatively impact the SCCU competition, which is the mainstay of our county chess.

Regarding the ECF National Stages, an area that we believe continues to need strong focus is that of ensuring that Controller's decisions and any appeals are managed fairly, proportionately and transparently. This is not an easy task when the time-frame required for decisions is often very short. We recognise that ECF have recently modified their rules in relation to county matches and welcome the resulting increased transparency. We encourage you to continue to review your experiences of the operation of these rules to ensure that they are practicable for all parties involved.

We are very cognisant of the burdens of both cost and time on our captains and players when they travel to venues further afield. That may be inevitable up to the national semi-finals if we play counties who are not in the SCCU. However, we would welcome some increased flexibility to have the option to play any finals at a more local venue if we are matched against another county from within the SCCU.

