

ROLE AND DUTIES OF MATCH CAPTAINS - SCCA

These notes are intended for the assistance of match captains in the SCCA and apply only to events held under SCCA auspices.

Introduction

The role of team captain is mainly administrative whether or not he plays in the match. The duties may vary according to the specific competitions but these notes are intended to cover only matches that form part of SCCA competitions. There is some information about the team captain's role in the FIDE Handbook and also some specific references in the Bye Laws of the SCCA, which, where relevant, have been incorporated. However they are not comprehensive, problems have occurred in practice and it is therefore considered appropriate to provide more detailed guidance.

The details shown below incorporate some of what has already been published for the sake of uniformity and to keep cross-referencing to a minimum. They are for guidance and are not necessarily binding but it is hoped they will be of particular help to captains newly in their role yet will also be useful to experienced captains in dealing with some of the awkward situations that sometimes arise in practice.

General

The captain should encourage his team to abide by the Laws of Chess as amended by the Bye Laws of the SCCA both in letter and spirit. This includes good conduct, sportsmanship and courtesy at all times. The home captain has the responsibility to ensure that an up to date copy of the Laws of Chess, the SCCA Bye Laws and a grading list are available for consultation.

A captain shall abstain from any intervention during play except where provided for in the list of duties below. He shall give no information to a player concerning the position on the chessboard, nor consult any other person as to the state of the game. Players are subject to the same prohibitions.

The captain may, when approached by a member of his team to provide advice about whether to make or accept an offer of a draw or to resign a game, advise the team member about the state of the match but not whether to accept or offer a draw, or resign.

The player has the final say over the conduct of his own game and is not compelled to follow the advice of his team captain. The captain cannot act on behalf of a player and his game without the knowledge and consent of that player except as allowed in duty 12 below.

Duties

Before the match

1. Be aware of the competition and eligibility rules (see bye laws 3.1,3.2,3.3.1,3.8 and 3.10).
2. Select the team in order of playing strength (see bye laws 2.6,2.7,3.2.3 and 3.2.4)
3. Ensure team members are aware of the date, start time, venue, time limits, type of game finishes, action to take in respect of unfinished games and that they should refer any problem/dispute to their captain.
4. For away games check the up to date address of the venue and as the Surrey Year Book does not always show the latest venue also use the SCCA website.
5. For home games set up boards, chess pieces, clocks, score sheets and have envelopes available for sealed moves (where there may be adjourned games) in readiness so that the match can commence on time.
6. Refer to the FIDE Laws of Chess for information on adjourned games.

At the match

7. Exchange the team list with the opposing captain including details of players' gradings, toss for colour, approve the team order and ensure that it is in compliance

with the rules. It is essential that a copy of the current grading list is available for this purpose. Make substitutions where necessary and provide details to the opposing captain and Inter-Club Tournaments Director.

8. Agree a start and end time for the match in compliance with SCCA Bye Law 3.5 Starting a Match. Ensure clocks are started at the agreed time and the times on the home teams clocks are adjusted if they are late starting the match. Default players who arrive after 30 minutes of the agreed start time.
9. Check that players are on the correct side of the board and have the right colours especially if the boards are not in a continuous row or have had to be moved say for poor lighting or noise. In the event of a game starting with the colours reversed if it is noticed within ten minutes of the start and there is sufficient time the game can be restarted provided both players agree. Otherwise play should continue with the colours reversed.
10. The home team captain should remind all players to turn off their mobile phones before the start of play and warn that failure to do may result in the players at fault losing their games. However provided both captains agree before the start of the match, mobile phones may be left turned on in the silent mode and not result in the loss of a game even if they do make some sound. This relaxation in the rule is intended to allow for the situation where a player has an important reason for being able to receive a call. However the phone may only be answered or calls made outside the playing area. The players concerned should be asked to avoid leaving their phone on a hard surface such as a table where it is likely to reverberate even if in the silent mode. It is best if the phone is kept in a pocket or similar so that the player can be aware of receiving a call but no noise is made or a flashing light visible.

During the match

11. Both captains are to act as arbiters in the event of disputes between players and have a responsibility to ensure the Laws of Chess as amended by the Bye Laws of the SCCA are upheld. Where a problem with a game arises and it is necessary for the captains to assist in resolving it, they should if at all possible do so without stopping the clocks in their own games. In the event of a major problem, which does not admit a straightforward solution, the captains may stop their own clocks for the minimum period strictly necessary.
12. In respect of Bye Law 2.8 Mobile Telephones the opposing team captain may intervene and claim the game in respect of a player whose mobile phone sounds, including beeping, during play, or if a player uses the phone in the playing area. This exception to the general rule that a captain shall not intervene during play is specifically allowed as the intrusion created by the mobile phone may affect the whole team.

After the match

13. Collate the match result, agree it with the opposing captain and using the appropriate, preferably electronic, forms send details to the Inter Clubs Tournaments Director within 14 days as required under Bye Law 3.7. This should include the positions for games, which are to be adjudicated.
14. For adjourned games check that the players who have to make a sealed move have done so and placed them in sealed and signed envelopes. Try to ensure the second session is completed within 28 days.

Some examples of the type of problems that a captain may have to resolve are given below.

1. Adopting the recommended procedure in the event of a player not recording moves as required under the Bye Laws/Laws of Chess.*
2. Advising the correct action in the event of a player making an illegal move.*
3. Ensuring spare clocks are available in case any used are faulty
4. Providing advice when needed to team members about time controls, resetting of clocks, types of finish and so on.
5. The home side should provide basic refreshments where possible.
6. Captains must refrain from pointing out flag falls in respect of other team members' games

* See SCCA website for a separate guidance document.