

## Guidance to Players and Captains in SCCA events

### Introduction

This document incorporates the guidance previously issued as “Roles and Duties of Match Captains”, because players also need to know what captains can do (and more pertinently, what they cannot do) during a match.

At the 2023 AGM and Annual League Composition Meeting several amendments were made to the Bye laws which come into force for the 2023/24 season. It is very important that both Captains and players become conversant with these changes.

2.6.1 – Except as provided in Bye Laws 2.6.2 and 2.6.3 below, the ratings used for a competition shall be the original ratings for the calendar month in which the competition commences. (This means that eligibility is determined by August ratings, as previously.)

2.6.2 – Except as provided in Bye Law 2.6.3. below, for the purposes of Bye Laws 3.2.4 (board order), 3.8.2. (Lauder Trophy) and 3.10.2 (Stoneleigh Trophy), the ratings used for a match shall be the original ratings for the preceding month. (e.g., for a match in October, the ratings used will be those of September etc). It is vital that Captains check players' ratings before matches start to ensure correct board order.

2.6.3.1 – Where a player has more than one category A or K rating (Standard/Rapid/Blitz for OTB/Online), that appropriate to the competition shall be used. A player who does not have a category A or K rating appropriate to the competition shall be treated as unrated for that purpose of that competition and may not play in a Club Competition until an estimated rating has been determined in accordance with Bye Law 2.6.3.2 below. (It is absolutely vital that Captains ensure that players have a rating of the appropriate category (be it an A or K rating or an estimated rating determined by the Controller) as teams will incur defaults and penalties if they include unrated players. For the avoidance of doubt a player who has only a standard rating will need an estimated rapid play rating before playing in a rapid play competition.)

2.6.3.2 – An estimated rating to be used for an unrated player (including a player treated as unrated under Bye Law 2.6.3.1 above) shall be determined by the Controller using all available information. This estimate shall be used for the duration of the competition unless the player acquires a category A or K rating appropriate to that competition. Unless the context requires otherwise, any reference elsewhere in these Bye Laws to ratings shall include estimated ratings determined in accordance with this Bye Law. (Captains should be aware that a player unrated at the beginning of a competition might acquire a rating during the competition, which would automatically displace the estimate for board order and handicap purposes set out in Bye Law 2.6.2; the 150-point rule set out in Bye Law 2.6.3.3 below applies only for eligibility.)

2.6.3.3 – If an unrated player acquires an appropriate category A or K rating that is more than 150 points higher than the estimate determined under 2.6.3.2 above, then for the purposes of Bye Laws 3.2.2 (nominations), 3.2.3 (eligibility), and 3.10.3 (Ellery Williams), this rating shall be used in place of the estimate in respect of any matches played from the following calendar month. (The vast majority of estimated ratings will be fairly reliable, but Captains need to be mindful of any player whose new A or K rating jumps more than 150 points from the estimate.)

2.7 Playing strength – To determine which of two players is the stronger, a player whose rating exceeds that of another by 75 points shall be treated as the stronger. (Following the adoption of preceding-month ratings set out in Bye Law 2.6.2, this applies to all players, including juniors.)

3.6 – Games played with Fischer timing unfinished at the end of the agreed playing session are to be adjudicated. As games played on increment are more susceptible than normal to sudden swings of fortune, it is important that play stop immediately the agreed playing session ends. Although it is up to the captains how this is achieved, it is suggested that an alarm be set for the relevant time, perhaps on an additional digital chess clock.

## General

Captains and players should be familiar with the Laws of Chess and the SCCA Bye Laws applying to the event in question. It is the responsibility of the host venue (the home club in a Club Competition) to ensure that copies of these documents are available for reference.

Captains and players should abide by the Laws of Chess and the relevant SCCA Bye Laws both in letter and in spirit. This includes good conduct, sportsmanship, respect for others and courtesy at all times. Figures in square brackets refer to the relevant SCCA Bye Law.

## Before the match

### **Captains' duties**

1. Take note of any specific restrictions when selecting your team [3.2]. These could include.
  - a grading limit for a particular board.
  - a limit on the total grade for the team as a whole.
  - ineligibility of players nominated for higher teams.
  - ineligibility of players already tied to another Club for the season.
2. Arrange the team in descending order of playing strength [3.2.4].
3. Ensure that all team members are aware of the venue, date and start time of the match.
4. For home matches, ensure that boards, sets, clocks and scoresheets are set up by the scheduled start time, and that envelopes are available for sealed moves in competitions in which adjournments are possible.
5. Exchange team lists with the opposing captain before tossing for colour. Team lists should include players' grades so that eligibility and board order can be verified before play. It is recommended that the team sheet be printed from the Results System as this will ensure that it is legible and the correct grading for each player is provided.
6. Agree the time by which play is to end.
7. Before play commences, the home captain should remind all players to switch off and store away their mobile phones [2.8]. Any permitted exceptions must be agreed by the opposing captain.
8. At the start of play, ensure that all players have agreed the game finish (If not Fischer then quickplay, adjournment or adjudication) and that the chess clocks are set accordingly.
9. At the start of play, check that the players are at the correct boards and have the correct colours. (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.)

### **Players' duties**

1. Arrive on time!
2. Ensure that you are sitting at the correct board and have the right colour.
3. Ensure your mobile phone is switched off and stored away. Note that it is not permitted for a phone to be on one's person. If, exceptionally, you need to keep your phone switched on, this needs to be agreed by the opposing captain before play commences.

## During the match

### **General**

1. A player has sole responsibility for the conduct of his own game, and neither the captains nor others may intervene or give any information or advice during play, except as provided under Captains' duties below.
2. Any query relating to the rules or an opponent's infraction should be referred to a player's captain.
3. Players are reminded of the following issues that can frequently lead to disputes:
  - In the course of play each player is required to record his own moves and those of his opponent in the correct manner, move after move. (This does not apply in the Ellery Williams or the Stoneleigh as these competitions are under one hour (Rapid play) for which the Laws of Chess do not require players to record their moves). Only if a player has less than five minutes left on his clock at some stage in a period and does not have additional time of 30 seconds or more added with each move is he not obliged to meet

this requirement. When time is added (e.g., after move 35), a player who has not recorded must update the scoresheet and record the moves until less than five minutes remain. For a first offence by your opponent, when he fails to record if required when you have less than five minutes left and do not yourself have to record, you may claim two minutes extra on your clock. For a subsequent offence in the same circumstances, you may stop the clock and claim the game.

- Persistent refusal by a player to comply with the Laws of Chess shall be penalised by loss of the game. The captains may intervene to deal with problems of this nature. If a captain refuses to intervene when his player does not comply with the Laws of Chess, then the matter should be referred to the Board.
- Draw offers may be made only after you have moved and before you press the clock. If your opponent offers a draw before moving, the offer remains valid after he has moved (unless the move ends the game). If your opponent offers a draw when your clock is going, this is an illegal distraction (although the draw offer remains valid), and you may stop the clock and claim two minutes extra. Likewise, repeated draw offers where nothing has materially changed are also an illegal distraction, and this should be brought to the attention of the captains immediately.
- Irregularities are governed by Article 7 of the Laws of Chess. In general, where an illegal move or other irregularity is discovered, the game should be restored to the position immediately before the irregularity occurred, and there may also be a time penalty for the player who committed the irregularity. Players are advised to refer to the captains as soon as possible.

### **Captains**

1. The captains should act together to resolve disputes between players and have a responsibility to ensure the Laws of Chess as amended by the Bye Laws of the SCCA are followed. However, a captain may not point out a flag fall except in his own game. 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.
2. Players arriving more than 30 minutes after the agreed start time [3.5] shall be defaulted; however, an absent player may be replaced by a *bona fide* substitute before the 30 minutes have expired.
3. A captain may, when asked, advise a team member on a question of rules or procedure, or about the state of the match, but not whether to accept or offer a draw or provide any opinion in relation to the position on the board.
4. A captain may intervene [2.8.8]:
  - to give an initial warning in the event of player's phone or electronic device sounding.
  - to declare a game lost by the offending player.
    - on a second sounding,
    - if a phone or electronic device is used without prior agreement,
    - in the event of any other infraction related to a phone or electronic device,
    - if a player leaves the playing venue during play, where this is not covered by prior agreement.
5. A captain cannot intervene in a game or act on behalf of a player, except as provided above.

### After the match

#### **Captains' duties**

1. Collate the match result, agree it with the opposing captain and use the results system to send details to the Inter Clubs Tournaments Director within 14 days [3.7]. This should include the positions for any games that are to be adjudicated.
2. 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.