

LEAGUE RULES 2017-18

GENERAL

1) The Leicestershire Chess League shall affiliate to the Leicestershire & Rutland Chess Association (LRCA). It is administered by the League Management Committee (LMC), represented by its Secretary, Chairman or authorised official, whose decisions may be reviewed by the Committee. The "League" in these rules refers to this management structure, "Association" refers to the LRCA, "Committee" to the LMC, and "Secretary" to the League Secretary. These rules cannot be changed unless clubs are consulted. Any changes must be circulated with the annual invitation to clubs to enter the league for the forthcoming season. No further changes can be made in any circumstances during that season.

LEAGUE

2) Membership of the League is open to all the clubs that are members of LRCA who agree to pay such League subscriptions as may be set from time to time. A player can register for one club only, and in no circumstances may play in more than one league match only per day, home or away, (including one in which s/he wins by default). Playing for a club is taken as evidence of registration. A player wishing to change clubs after playing for part of a season must obtain written permission from the first club unless it no longer plays in the League. Such permission shall not be unreasonably withheld: disputes are referred to the Disputes Committee.

3) These League rules are designed to help ensure the smooth running of the League. For any queries the Secretary should be consulted.

4) The Committee may reach its decisions on the basis of information it has sought. It has the right to enforce penalties against clubs or individuals for breaches of the rules. Such penalties include (i) default of a game; (ii) order for a replayed game; (iii) additional penalty point(s) awarded to an opponent and deducted from the club penalized; (iv) default of a match; and (v) suspension of a player for part or whole of a season.

5) Clubs are required to apply to the Committee for inclusion into the League competition annually by a previously announced date in July/August, giving their preferences for divisions, and special requirements. Contacts, home venue, playing night[s] and other relevant information are required for inclusion on the results website. The fixtures for the League will start in late September or early October. Trophies will be awarded to League winners. Their acceptance by a club is conditional on an agreement that the club will keep them safely, maintain them properly, and return them complete and in good condition before September 1st in the following year. The agreement requires the club to accept the full financial responsibility if a trophy is lost or damaged.

6) Teams will score 2 match points for winning a match, with 1 match point for a drawn match. In each Division below Division 1 the two highest scoring teams (in match points) will be promoted to the next higher Division, (except in seasons where there are parallel divisions where only one team will be promoted). In all Divisions except the lowest the two lowest scoring teams will be relegated. These rules represent the right to claim a place in a Division automatically, but may be varied when teams are allocated to Divisions by the Committee. New clubs or teams will usually be placed in the lowest Division, but the proposed strength of a team is taken into account. Ties for championships, promotion and relegation will be settled as follows. If two teams are tied on match points, they will be separated *first* using the results of the two matches between them. If

these two results are equal, i.e. if both the matches were drawn or each team won one match by the same score, then *second* the results of the two teams against all the other teams in the Division, assessed in terms of games won minus games lost, will be used to break the tie. In the unlikely event of three (or more) teams being involved in a tie the same principles will be applied in a step-wise fashion. For example, if three teams are tied at the top of a Division, the results of the six matches between them will be used first to identify the weakest team of the three. That weakest team will then be eliminated as a contender for promotion, and the positions of the two remaining teams will be decided by applying the tie-break rules afresh, as above. If there are 3 teams tied for a relegation place, the strongest team of the three will first be eliminated, etc. In assessing the results between tied teams, the number of *match* points scored from matches between these teams is considered first.

If a team withdraws *before* completing half its matches, its results will be deleted unless it is replaced, in which case the new team will inherit its predecessor's results. If a team withdraws *after* completing half its fixtures, all its other matches may be counted as losses by default at the LMC's discretion.

7) Any dispute or query over the rules or other complaint may be referred without fee to the Secretary (or another LMC member if the Secretary's club is involved). The League Secretary may at his discretion refer a dispute to a panel of three uninvolved members of the League Management Committee to act in his place. If a dispute arises during a match, every effort must be made to resolve the issue on the spot: contact with the Secretary or another Committee member is encouraged (but note that mobile phones must not be used in the playing area at any time). If the dispute remains unresolved the details must be sent to the Secretary at the same time as the result is submitted electronically, and the latter submission should note that the result is subject to the disputes procedure. The Secretary (or his alternate) will base his/her decision on written or e-mail or phone evidence from the club or clubs involved in the dispute, and will explain in full his/her decision to those clubs. A club may *appeal* against the decision within 12 days of its promulgation, only on the grounds that it is perverse in view of the known facts, that the penalty imposed is unfair or disproportionate, or that the decision was procedurally defective or involved an unacceptable conflict of interest. No new evidence will be allowed at such an appeal, which will be heard by the LMC (minus any members with a conflict of interest). A club entering an appeal will be required to pay a financial deposit of £10, but this will be retained by the LMC only if on hearing the appeal it is felt to be frivolous or unwarranted.

The only parties to the appeal will be the League Secretary or alternate, who will provide the background information and the reasons for the initial decision, and the appellant club. The three possible results of the appeal are that (a) the appeal is rejected, in which case the appeal decision is final; (b) the appeal is allowed and the original decision is reversed or appropriately amended, in which case again the decision is final; or (c) the case is referred back for a re-hearing, which will be conducted by three individuals who are not LMC members and who did not have any conflict of interest. In case (c) the decision of the three individuals is final.

8) When an appeal is made (Rule 7), days when there is no postal delivery will not count towards the 12 days. First class post (or receipted or acknowledged e-mails) will be used in the disputes procedure, and the time will be counted from the dispatch day. Any document relating to a dispute or appeal must be copied simultaneously by post or e-mail to any other interested party.

9) Each team defaulting games during the season will be penalized by the loss of match points according to the following table:

Gam es	Pts	Gam es	Pts	Gam es	Pts	Gam es	Pts	Gam es	Pts	Gam es	Pts
0-4	0	5-7	1	8-10	2	11-13	3	14-16	4	17-19	5

A team defaulting more than 19 boards in a season may be disqualified forthwith and all its results are void at the LMC's discretion. NB: A team defaulting a complete match will suffer game defaults as above as well as the loss of the match points.

PLAY

10) Matches in Divisions 1 and 2 will be over a minimum of 5 boards, and matches in Divisions 3, 4, 5 and 6 will be over a minimum of 4 boards. Matches involving more than the minimum number of players can be played if the two team captains can agree on the number of boards *before the day of the match*: in the event of any dispute on this issue the match result will be decided using the minimum number of boards. All the games in any single match will start on the same day. The home team will have white on the even numbered boards. Scheduled start times will be those shown on the website under the home team. Clocks may be started at any time after that, whether or not all the participating players are present.

Players absent at the start of a match may subsequently be replaced with a time penalty of the time elapsed, up to a maximum of 45 minutes after the published start time (and irrespective of the actual start time) by a player otherwise eligible to play for that team (i.e. a player not barred for a higher team), and provided that none of the players playing above the substitute are graded 7 (seven) or more points below the substitute. Once the 45-minute period has elapsed the players present shall claim the game as won by default by stopping the clock. The submitted match result should note any such defaults, and substitute players should be marked "S". The barred player status of a substitute player thus marked shall not be affected by this appearance as a substitute. If a captain knows at the start of a match that the team will default one or more boards, these defaults must be on the lowest possible boards. The FIDE Laws of Chess will govern play in all matches. The home club is responsible for (1) providing premises, and (2) for providing and setting up the playing equipment and tidying it away at the end of the match: the latter responsibilities also apply to the listed *away* team when a match is played by agreement at a neutral venue.

11) Any request for the postponement of a match for reasons other than inclement weather may only be agreed with the prior permission of the Secretary. Postponements will only be allowed by the League Secretary if a new date for the match has also been agreed between the clubs concerned. Any postponement without the permission of the Secretary, except in the case of bad weather, will result in the match being treated as a void match for both sides. *Postponements will normally NOT be granted simply because one or both of the teams involved cannot raise a team, or their best team.* The league secretary should notify the results webmaster of the revised date of any rearranged fixture.

12) TIME CONTROLS

In all divisions the long time control (3 hours) will be the default time control. The short time control (2 hours 40 minutes) is for clubs who have to vacate their premises by e.g. 10pm, although it may be used for other matches if both team captains agree.

Clubs have the option of having a published start time of 19:45 but if they do a 2 hour 40 minute session will be used. Alternately, both captains can agree on a longer time control if they wish.

If neither player in a particular game is present at the start of the match, White's clock will be started at that time.

If the home side is not set up for a match start by their published time then the away team may agree the amount of delayed start time with the home captain and remove this time off the home teams' clock.

Digital Clocks

Where digital clocks are available, games will be played with Fischer timings.

For clubs playing a 3 hour session, the time control is 75 minutes for the whole game, with a 10 second increment.

For clubs playing a 2 hour 40 minutes session, the time control is 70 minutes for the whole game, with a 5 second increment. In the very unlikely event of a game reaching 120 moves, the clocks should be stopped, 2 minutes added to each side, and the increments switched off. The game would then be played to a finish. In this final phase only, players would be able to claim a draw under the 2 minute rule (FIDE Laws Appendix G).

Where a club has insufficient digital clocks for all boards, digital clocks should be used for as many boards as possible, with analogue clocks used for the remaining boards.

Analogue Clocks

For clubs playing a 3 hour session, the time control is 90 minutes for the whole game.

For clubs playing a 2 hour 40 minutes session, the time control is 80 minutes for the whole game.

A draw claim under Appendix G6 (the 2 minute rule) can only be made where there are no increments, and at least 45 moves have been played by both players. If there are any games in which a claim for a draw has been made under Appendix G6 of the FIDE Laws, and there is no neutral arbiter present, the position at the time of the claim and an up to date score sheet, signed by the opposing player, shall be sent to the League Secretary within 48 hours of the match, provided that 45 moves have been made by Black in the submitted position. The position will be then referred to a neutral competent official without charge, whose decision will be final.

Results of all matches must be submitted within seven days using the facility accessed via the "Submit Results" link on the LRCA website with identification of the match venue, team names and numbers, players and their grades, board order, game results, and any relevant comments. In addition to the overall match result these details are needed to update players' grades at the end of the season, and to ensure that the board order and barred player rules are being adhered to. If a match result is not received from a team within 7 days of the fixture, that team shall be deemed to have defaulted a board and will be liable to loss of points under Rule 9. Clubs can appeal against this automated default if there was a submission/approval fault which was reported (along with the match result) within the 7 days.

BOARD ORDER

13) Each team in any match should have a board order corresponding to the ECF standard play grades as published on the ECF grading website <http://www.ecfgrading.org.uk> each July. (The Grading Officer should be consulted about players without a current ECF grade and will assign a temporary grade on the basis of the best evidence available). However two players whose grades do not differ by more than 7 (seven) points may play in either order. (Example; If players A, B and C have grades 158, 154 and 150 respectively, then A must always play above C, but B could play above A, between A and C, or below C). Exceptions to this rule will not normally be allowed, but occasionally in extreme circumstances the Grading Officer may give permission for a player to appear on a board at variance with the rule, by allocating a different grade, which will not be changed again during the season. The allocated grade will apply in handicap events as well as in the League. The permission of the Grading Officer for such exceptions must always be obtained in advance. Clubs will be expected to give full justification for such requests.
THIS RULE HAS PRECEDENCE OVER THE BARRED PLAYER RULES BELOW.

14) If a club enters two or more teams in the League, then it is expected that they will be numbered in order of strength (e.g. Leicester 1 will be stronger than Leicester 2, etc) and that each of the teams will abide by Rule 13 above. If as a matter of policy a club wishes to enter two or more teams in the same Division of the League, and to arrange for them to be of roughly equal strength, the Secretary's permission must be sought in advance.

ADJUDICATION

15) Adjudications will no longer apply in the Leicestershire league.

BARRED PLAYERS

16(i) A barred player for a team is one who may play for that team, or a higher team for his club, but not a lower one. *The lowest team in a club, or the only team run by a club, need not nominate any barred players.* To conform with Rules 13 and 14 above it is expected that a club entering two or more teams in the League will normally bar its highest graded players for the first team, the next highest graded players for the second team, and so on. However it is acknowledged that there may be reasons why this arrangement is difficult or impossible to fulfil: such exceptions should be discussed with the League Secretary before the League season starts. The barred players for any team shall be listed on the original team list above the unbarred players. If an unbarred player is played above a barred player then the unbarred player becomes an additional barred player for that team. The Committee can declare that certain players will be restricted to a specific team.

(ii) The number of barred players per team shall be TWO in all Divisions irrespective of the number of the number of teams a club has in each Division. A player who has missed three consecutive matches is still a barred player. An additional player must be barred with immediate effect, i.e. once it is certain that three matches will be missed by a player, until the absent player returns, ensuring that each team still has the minimum of barred players. The absent player may not play for a lower team without the specific permission of the Secretary. If a barred player leaves a club for any reason during the season, a replacement barred player must be nominated at once, i.e. not after three matches.

(iii) A player who has played for any team or a higher team three times, becomes a barred player *for the team below.*

This rule will NOT apply when the player promoted to the team immediately above his/her normal teams plays on or below the lowest normal board, i.e. board 5 in Divisions 1 and 2, or board 4 in Divisions 3, 4 and 5. NB The effect of this rule is that a player appearing three times for Leicester 1 automatically becomes a *Leicester 2* barred player (if he/she is not already

barred), so cannot play for Leicester 3, 4 etc.

(iv) Lists of barred players must be sent to the League Secretary and agreed to before the start of the season. Failure to do so will result in the players on the highest boards in each team's first match being counted as the barred players.

(v) Before unbaring a player, the League Secretary will ask for an explanation (which may not be accepted) and may require notice of up to one week.

(vi) The barred player rules apply throughout a complete League season for all the affected teams from one club. For example, even if Leicester 1 have finished all their matches before Leicester 2, the Leicester 1 barred players remain ineligible for Leicester 2 for the remainder of the League season.

(vii) The clubs themselves will be responsible for policing their barred players and ensuring that they are played in the correct board order as per the rules. If a club wishes to make a complaint regarding another club's team board order that complaint must be made within 30 days of the date of the match to which the complaint pertains. A note is to be put on the "paper" results sheet to remind captains to ensure that all their players are eligible (e.g. not barred) and are being played in the correct board order. The new result sheets will be put on the Irca website.

(viii) The minimum punishment for board order breaches is the default of the lower board on which the higher-graded player played. The minimum punishment for barred players infringements is the default of that board. Any additional punishment should be at the discretion of the LMC.

MATCH CONDITIONS

17 (i) Smoking is banned in any room used for League and Cup matches.

(ii) Players' mobile phones and other electronic devices must be switched off, or set to silent/vibrate mode, for the duration of the match. Players may not speak into a mobile phone in the room used for matches (i.e. in an emergency players must leave the room to use their phones).

(iii) Hand-held or portable computers of any kind are not to be brought into the playing room or surrounding areas during matches.

Breaches of these rules will lead to the **automatic** forfeit of the game by the player concerned. A game lost in this way still counts for grading.

18) Match captains are allowed to (a) indicate flag fall for either player in a given game; (b) advise players of the match score at any time; and (c) in clear hearing and in English, advise a player if consulted on the acceptance of a draw, without commenting on the position itself, or on any other position in the match. *Please see the separate section on Advice for Match Captains.*

ADVICE FOR MATCH CAPTAINS 2017-18

This Section should be read in conjunction with the separate *Advice to Players* Section, which captains should bring to the attention of all their players.

- Take to each match a League results sheet (the current design, not previous ones), filled in with details of the venue, team, date, Division etc. If your club has more than one League team, PLEASE indicate clearly which team is playing! Don't sign the sheet until the match is over.
- League Rule 13 states that players must appear in grading order, using the July ECF grades, with a flexibility of seven points. The Grading Officer will assign a provisional grade (which will be put on the Web site) to any player without one, and no player should participate in a match without a published or assigned grade. Clubs and captains should note in particular that although the grade order rules have precedence over the barred player rules, BOTH sets of rules must be applied where possible. Thus if a previously unbarred player plays above a barred player through having a higher grade, then the previously unbarred player ALSO becomes barred.
- The home captain should ensure that all sets, boards and clocks are set up properly and in

good time. It is legitimate for the clocks to be started at any time after the home club's start time as listed on the website, whether or not all players from either or both the teams are present. Travelling teams should note that some clubs must start very promptly at [e.g.] 7.15 pm because they have to leave their premises by [e.g.] 10.00 pm

- Ensure that both (analogue) clocks on each board say exactly the same time – the hour hand as well as the minute hand!
- Before the match starts, exchange team lists with the opposing captain.
- During the match do your best to ensure that the playing area remains quiet, especially if casual games or other matches are in progress at the same time.
- During the match you may be asked by one of your players about the offering or acceptance of a draw. Such conversations must be in English and in clear hearing. You can advise your player on what to do, but you must not comment on the position or on any other position in the match. You can tell your players the match score at any time.
- You should point out a flag fall for any player on either side.
- Digital clocks operate in a way different from the familiar analogue clocks. Digital ones count down to the time limit showing the amount of time remaining. Make sure all your players understand this difference if digital clocks are not familiar in your club. Clubs that do or might use digital clocks are indicated on the results website. If digital clocks are used, please ensure that at least one person present knows how to operate them – including how to give a player extra time, in accordance with the FIDE laws. (E.g. where one player makes an illegal move and the opponent is awarded 2 extra minutes – Article 7.5b)
- If you are playing a 2 hour 40 minute session with digital clocks, please be aware of the rule covering the very rare situation where a game reaches move 120. The number of moves can be deduced from the actual time and the clock times. Each player will have received 80 minutes by move 120 so with a start time of 7.15pm, the total time on the two clocks will be the number of minutes left to 9.55pm. For example, if one player has 3 minutes left, the other has 4 and the time is 9.48pm then you must have reached move 120. In this case, the clocks should be stopped, 2 minutes added to each side, and the increments switched off. The game would then be played to a finish. In this final phase only, players would be able to claim a draw under the 2 minute rule.
- If your game seems likely to be involved in a claim under FIDE Law Appendix G, you can nominate a team mate to act as captain, telling the opposing captain that you are doing so.
- Be sure that you understand the quick-play finish laws. (See FIDE laws Appendix G). For games played using analogue clocks with no increments, a player **whose turn it is to move** and with less than two minutes on the clock can claim a draw ONLY if (a) it is impossible for the opponent to win by normal means (e.g. K+N against K); or if (b) the opponent is making no effort to win by normal means. The idea is that a player cannot win simply by making an opponent use up time: s/he has to be theoretically capable of winning and be trying to do so. The game is NOT drawn simply because it looks like a roughly equal position and one or both players have less than two minutes to go! Usually it is (b) that is trickiest, though complex claims might also arise under (a). A player with less than two minutes to go should make any justifiable claim under this Law as soon as possible after his/her clock passes the 2-minutes-to-go point. League rules allow such claims under (a) or (b) ONLY if both players have completed at least 45 moves. When there is no NEUTRAL arbiter present (the usual situation in the League), if such a claim is made the clocks must be stopped AT ONCE, and the position and the complete score of the game recorded. If the Captains cannot agree on the validity or otherwise of the claim, the final position and the complete game score should be submitted to the League Secretary under League Rule 12.
- At the scheduled end of the match, make sure you agree with the opposing captain the match score, and the clock times, positions and full scores of any games that are the subject of a quick-play finish claim under FIDE Law Appendix G. Sign both score sheets and submit your results within SEVEN days to the results website. Do NOT send results directly or via e-mail to the

Webmaster. Clubs WILL be penalised for failing to submit results within this time limit. Team captains should retain the written and signed results sheets in case any problem or dispute arises when or after electronic submission of the results.

- If your team includes a player with a disability, you should notify opponents in good time (at least a week in advance) before travelling to away matches, indicating the nature of the disability. If your club hosts a match which includes a player from either side with a disability, you should make every effort to ensure that the player enjoys conditions as similar as possible to those of the other players. If this might cause significant problems (e.g. because of the nature of the club premises) the opposition should be informed in advance of the match. It would be quite wrong for a player to refuse to play in a match, or on any particular board in a match, because [s]he objects to facing a disabled player.

- If a player listed on the team sheet is absent at the start of a match, his captain (or a stand-in captain) must choose for him the preferred time limit. The captain can use prior knowledge of the absent player, the default option, or any other basis for that decision.

ADVICE TO PLAYERS

This Section is designed to provide advice to all players taking part in our League matches. It complements, and to some extent duplicates, the Advice to Captains.

As in all sports and games there is a basic assumption in our competitions that when a player sits down to play a match, he/she is wholly familiar with the Laws of the game. In practice, however, the FIDE Laws of Chess are fairly extensive and complex (and in some places not 100% clear!), and there are several areas where even quite experienced players may not be certain of how to proceed. These are the areas covered in the paragraphs below. All the advice covers chess at Normal play time limits, including quick play finishes. Rapid play has one or two different Laws, and these are highlighted at the end of this section.

1. Writing down the moves (Article 8): You must normally write down the moves in your games as they occur – in theory, using algebraic and not English descriptive notation (though many players in practice use the latter). You must not write down your move before making it (this problem still arises from time to time). Draw offers by either player should be marked on the score sheet (see below). You do not have to write down moves once your time goes below five minutes, and you are not required to re-start recording moves if your time subsequently goes above five minutes (e.g. due to increments).

2. Using the Clock (Article 6): The commonest issue that arises here is that of the “two-handed” player. It is not permissible to save time by using one hand to make a move and the other to press the clock (you might inadvertently get those two actions the wrong way round!). So you must use the same hand to make your move and to press the clock. Note that it is not permissible to pick up the clock to examine its display more closely (this problem should disappear with the increased use of digital clocks with large displays) and you must press the clock properly with one or two fingers, i.e. not “punch” it. One issue that has arisen once or twice in recent seasons has been the problem of what to do about the clocks when *both* players are late for the start of a match. The FIDE laws are unequivocal in this situation – it is White who suffers all the time loss in such cases. (Article 6.7b)

3. Consequences of an Illegal Move (Article 7): Illegal moves occasionally occur, especially in time trouble, but many players do not know the correct actions in such cases. If an illegal move has been completed, i.e. if the player concerned has pressed his clock, and noticed by the opponent, the clocks should be stopped and the position put back to the position before the illegal move was made, or to the last identifiable legal position before the illegal move was made. The opponent of the player making an illegal move then gets time credits of (a) two

minutes; and (b) any time he/she might have lost while the previously legal position was being re-established. This Law applies to the first occasion in a single game when one player makes illegal moves. A player completing a second illegal move loses. If a player makes an illegal move with a piece or pawn that has a legal move available to it, then once the position has been restored a legal move with that piece or pawn must be made.

4. Castling (Article 4.4): Most players know that, in castling, they must touch the king first. If you touch your rook first, you can be obliged to make a rook move, if a legal one is available – you cannot castle. If you touch your king and rook simultaneously you must castle if it is legal to do so: if it is not you must move the king if you legally can.

5. Offering a Draw (Article 9): This is an area where the Laws are rather unclear. They say that you should offer a draw after making a move but before pressing your clock, i.e. in your own time! But they also say that a draw offer at any other time is valid!! However you must not distract your opponent by repeated draw offers. A draw offer cannot be withdrawn and remains in force until your opponent accepts it, or rejects it orally or by making his/her next move. Draw offers by either player should be recorded on your score-sheet. Most players know that a player about to move can claim a draw if that move results in exactly the same position appearing on the board for the third time. Note that word exactly! – It means, for example, that the position must be the same, with the same player's turn to move. On the other hand it is not necessary for the position to arise three times in successive moves; the occasions may be separated by any number of intermediate moves. You can also claim this type of draw if the same position has just appeared for the third time and it is your move, i.e. if your opponent has mistakenly allowed the repetition to occur, presumably without noticing it.

6. The 2-Minute Draw Law (FIDE Laws: Appendix G): Note that if a game is played using Fischer time limits (increments) then NO CLAIM MAY BE MADE under this law. Problems with this law come up a few times every season, and are almost always difficult. Since the use of quick-play finishes is now virtually universal in chess at all levels, a rule of this kind is almost certainly necessary, but it presents serious problems in the context of Leagues like ours, where an arbiter is not normally present. The basic principles are pretty clear. If you reach [say] an equal position, but have spent a good deal longer on the clock than your opponent, then you must expect to pay the price for that, as managing the clock is an intrinsic part of the game. On the other hand it is not fair for you to lose a game through time shortage if (a) it is impossible for your opponent to win, however badly you play; or (b) your opponent is making no attempt to win, but is simply waiting for your clock to run down. So the Law says that if it is your turn to move and you have less than two minutes on your clock you can claim a draw on either of those grounds, i.e. that it is impossible for your opponent to win (e.g. he has a K and N against your King), or that he is not trying to win, but simply (by repeating moves as often as possible, or playing aimless waiting moves) running your clock down. If you feel that either of those situations has arisen, then you should claim the draw as soon as possible after your last two minutes has arrived. In the absence of an arbiter you should make your claim, stop the clocks, and make sure that no further play is allowed by either side. You should record the position at once, and, unless the match captains can agree on a decision, a score sheet of the whole game, signed by both players, must be sent to the League Secretary immediately. If the situation is clear-cut – e.g. if the claim has been made at the wrong moment, or if the position is clearly technically drawn – then a decision will be made rapidly. In other cases it is likely that advice will be sought from the ECF or elsewhere outside the county, so the result is likely to be delayed (and there is now no appeal). It is hard to generalise about these unclear situations, and many awkward positions can be envisaged, but if you simply have a drawn position and not much time, then unless the game score provides convincing evidence that your opponent has not been

trying to win, your claim is likely to fail. The scoresheet should contain enough moves to show that the opponent has been unable to make progress, the final position is a simple draw and that you know how to draw it.

7. Grades and Board Order: You should note that the League Rules about board order are quite strict. You should ensure before playing in any match that (a) you have an ECF grade, either published on the ECF/LRCA Web sites, or (e.g. in the case of new players or those returning after a significant absence from the game) a grade assigned in advance by the Grading Officer; and (b) your position in the team complies with Rule 13, i.e. you must not play below a player whose grade is more than seven (7) points lower than yours.

8. Only one game per day! It occasionally happens that a player whose name is on a team sheet for a particular match gets to know in advance that he will win by default, as the opposition is a player short. (Teams who know they are going to be short-handed should, in courtesy, tell their opponents in advance). If the player winning by default is in the away team he might not want to travel a long distance, and that's fine. BUT that player cannot then turn up at his home club and play for another team on the same day, even if he is eligible to do so in other respects. You can play only one game per day for your club, home or away, including any that you win by default.