

BURY AREA CHESS LEAGUE : AGM 2017

The AGM took place on Wednesday 19 July, at the Bury St Edmunds Chess Club (Moreton Hall Community Centre, Symonds Road, Bury St Edmunds IP32 7EE)

Present were :

Norman Hutchinson (Chairman)
Patrick Ribbands (Match Secretary & Rapidplay Organiser)
Stephen Pride (Administrative Secretary)
Paul Kemp (Treasurer)
Bob Jones (Grading Officer, Handbook Editor & Jamboree Organiser)
Steve Lovell (Congress Secretary & Internet Officer)
Mark Szymanski (Roger Goldsmith Organiser)
Margherita Boroni
Stephen Lewis
Colin Roberts
David Wood

1 The Minutes of the previous AGM (held on 6 July 2016) were approved.

2 There were no Matters Arising from those Minutes.

3 Officers' Reports

(i) The Chairman said it had been a good season, but it was sad to see the demise of the Newmarket Club. He had approached someone to become Vice-Chairman, but had been turned down, and he would welcome any suggestions.

(ii) The Match Secretary presented his Report, and agreed it had been a smooth season, with no disputes. He would welcome more entries for "Game of the Season", and the Internet Officer agreed to put games on the website.

(iii) The Treasurer presented his report. The League itself had made a surplus of £44 and in addition the Congress had made a surplus of £437, resulting in satisfactory balances for both. It was agreed to leave the League fees unchanged.

The ECF was changing its Game Fee system, although the charge for a non-member's fourth game had been cut since his Report was written (to £16 for an adult, and £9-50p for a junior). He believed that a non-member could play three free games in one League, and three in another, but was confident that the Roger Goldsmith competition would be treated as part of the Bury League. As in the past, any ECF charges incurred by the League would be passed on to the Club concerned. It was therefore vital that Clubs monitored any of their players who were not ECF members.

(iv) The Grading Officer handed out copies of his Report. It was agreed that after the July Grading List was published, Club Secretaries would be asked to send to the Grading Officer, before 1 September, a list of their members with estimated grades (so that they could be checked before the Handbook was published).

(v) The Handbook Editor said that if the printed handbook were discontinued there would be a bit more time for Clubs and Officers to prepare for the next season, but it

wouldn't save much work since the information was still needed. It was useful to have something to carry to matches (particularly because of the restrictions on mobile phones), and it cost only £2-50p. It was agreed to keep the printed handbook, but to put most of the information on the website as well.

It was also agreed to check whether individual Officers, Captains and Club Secretaries were willing to have their contact details published on the website.

(vi) The Internet Officer said everything was running smoothly. In due course he intended to be able to put mid-season January grades on to the website alongside the grades from the previous July list.

(vii) The Roger Goldsmith Organiser introduced his paper, based on a survey of the views of Clubs and Captains about grading limits in each Division, and the number of teams they might enter. He recommended that the limits should stay as they are, or that the Divisions be merged.

In discussion the following points were made :

- No change might leave Division 2 with only two teams, clearly unviable ;
- Merging the Divisions would require a lower grading limit than 580 ;
- With a limit of 550, Cambridge might be able to field one team, but would struggle to field two ;
- Colin Roberts wondered if there was a second problem, unrelated to grading limits ;
- An alternative to the limit on the grading total could be a ceiling for each board. In the past a team could choose whichever system suited it. There hadn't been a ceiling on Board 1, however, and Stephen Pride felt that the spirit of the competition would require a ceiling on all boards.

It was agreed that the Divisions should be merged, with a limit on the grading total of 520.

An alternative proposal, to retain the two Divisions with limits of 580 and 520, was defeated.

(viii) The Rapidplay Organiser said only 22 had participated in the 2016 event at Bury, mainly from Bury. In 2017 only 17 had played in the event in Cambridge, mainly from Cambridge. These numbers were barely viable.

Nevertheless, it was agreed that the event should remain restricted to BAFL players.

It was also agreed to retain the current format for one more year, to hold it in Bury, and to fix the date soon (so that it could be publicised in the Handbook).

(ix) The Congress Secretary said prospects for sponsorship of the 2017 Congress, and for its finances, were very promising.

Last year the Bury Council had asked us to devise a constitution for the Congress, and a text had been circulated. It was agreed to adopt the Constitution

4 Honours (including Games of the Season)

League	Div 1	Cambridge Examiners
	Div 2	Cambridge Oddfellows

	Div 3	Cambridge gowns
Roger Goldsmith	Div 1	Bury Abbey
	Div 2	Linton Tigers
Jamboree		
Player of the Year	Div 1	Akito Oyama
	Div 2	Martyn Goodger
	Div 3	Jim Clarke
Game of the Year	Div 1	
	Div 2	
	Div 3	

5 Possible Rule Changes

The Chairman said that by and large the rules worked well. The Admin Secretary introduced his paper, setting out some ideas for rule changes, mainly put to him by others. If any were approved he would devise an appropriate amendment after the meeting.

(1) Voting at the AGM : Chairman's vote

It was agreed to specify in rule 1.3 that the Chairman may not vote as a club representative, but has only a casting vote.

(2) Voting at the AGM : Clubs mandating

Patrick Ribbands had proposed that Clubs should be forbidden from mandating their representatives. Representatives should be able to exercise their own judgement. But some others were concerned that we should not attempt to interfere in the internal affairs of the Clubs, and that such a rule would be unenforceable.

it was agreed that no amendment would be made to the Rules ; but that a Club representative at the AGM should be encouraged to listen to the arguments put forward by others, and if he or she found them persuasive, should feel free to vote differently from the way their Clubs might have expected.

(3) Executive's decision making

It was agreed to make clear that it is open to the Executive to take any of its decisions without meeting. (This would affect Rule 1.4 (and 1.5-1.6)).

(4) Grading Tolerance

Patrick Ribbands had proposed increasing the 10 point grading tolerance to 15 points. That would make it easier to substitute a stronger play for the nominated player in the League. But it was agreed not to make any change.

(5) Notifications to Internet Officer

Under rules 3.4, 3.5, 8.4, and 8.5 Clubs or Captains are required to send a notification to the Match Secretary. It was agreed that they should also notify the Internet Officer.

(6) Clarity about clock settings

Rule 4.4. Following an incident at Bury, Kelvin Hunter had suggested that the captains should record before the match starts which setting is to be used on each board, to avoid confusion. But during play, the captains are able to advise the players about the settings. It was agreed that such a rule change was unnecessary.

(7) Fischer Timing in Division 3

Bob Jones had proposed extending Fischer timing to Division 3 (on the same basis as in Divisions 1 & 2 - ie Traditional timing is used only if both players agree). But Stephen Lewis wished to keep the existing rule (Traditional if either player wants it).

Fischer timing as the default appeared to have worked successfully in Divisions 1 and 2 for some years, and by eliminating the "two minute" rule had reduced the number of disputes. But Stephen Lewis believed that it would drive some Stowmarket players away from League chess.

It was agreed not to make any change of substance, but instead to alter Rule 4.5 to read something along the following lines : "In Division 3, if suitable clocks are available, the normal time control will be Fischer, but either player may require the use of Traditional timing."

(8) Default Time

Under Rule 4.6, if someone fails to turn up roughly on time, the board is defaulted. At present, the normal default time is 30 minutes, but it can be extended to 1 hour by agreement. Paul Kemp had suggested that the time should be increased to 1 hour in all circumstances, with no requirement to agree.

Part of the problem was that circumstances varied so much : the player might be well on his way, or might be uncertain when he is going to arrive, or might not be coming at all. Those present at the match might have been told well in advance, or at the last moment, or might have no idea what was going on.

After a lengthy discussion, it was agreed to abandon the provision permitting extension of the default time by agreement. Instead, if the late player has notified his captain (or another team member) before the clocks are started that he will be late, and this notification is immediately conveyed to the player's opponent, then the default time will be 1 hour after the scheduled start of play. In all other circumstances, the default time will be 30 minutes after the scheduled start of play.

(9) Signing Scoresheets

The 2016 AGM rejected the Executive's proposal to require this, but asked the Executive to consider disapplying the normal FIDE requirement. It was agreed to amend Rule 6.6 to disapply it.

(10) Rearranging matches by agreement

Even when the two captains are willing to refix a match, Rule 8.5 requires them to agree, before the original date, what the new date is to be. There is no need for that urgency, and in practice it can be very difficult to negotiate a date during the short period after one captain discovers that he cannot get a full team out. The result can be that a match that both teams desire cannot take place.

It was agreed that the requirement be relaxed so that a match can be refixed by agreement, provided agreement is reached within one week after the original date as to what the new date should be. Failure to do so will result in the match being defaulted by the side which originally sought postponement.

6 Election of Officers

The following were elected :

(i)	Chairman	Norman Hutchinson
(iii)	Match Secretary	Patrick Ribbands
(iv)	Administrative Secretary	Stephen Pride
(v)	Treasurer	Paul Kemp
(vi)	Grading Officer	Bob Jones
(vii)	Internet Officer	Steve Lovell
(viii)	Handbook Editor	Bob Jones
(ix)	Roger Goldsmith Organiser	Mark Szymanski
(x)	Rapidplay Organiser	Patrick Ribbands
(xi)	Jamboree Organiser	Bob Jones
(xii)	Trophy Officer	Kelvin Hunter (subject to confirmation by him)
(xiii)	Congress Director	John Wickham
(xiv)	Congress Secretary	Steve Lovell

It was agreed that the Executive would appoint (ii) the Vice-Chairman.

7 There were no other proposals from Officers or Clubs.

8 League and Roger Goldsmith entries

Clubs submitted the following entries for 2017/8 :

Club	League	Roger Goldsmith	Comments
Bury	2+1+3	3	
Cambridge	3+3+0	2 or 1 or 0	Will decide soon
Ely	1+1+0	1 or 0	Will decide soon
Linton	1+1+2	2	
Stowmarket	0+0+1	1	
TOTAL	7+6+6	Between 6 & 9	

9 Any Other Business

(1) Colin Roberts floated the idea of having only two Divisions in the League, but it was agreed to defer consideration until the 2018 AGM.

(2) It was suggested that Cambridge University might be interested in fielding a team in the League. Transport to away matches might be a problem, but that might be overcome by involving postgraduates or senior members. Stephen Pride said the Cambridge City Club would look into this.

Stephen Pride
Administrative Secretary
23 July 2017

Future Events to note :

- 7 September Jamboree in Bury
- 28 & 29 Oct Bury Congress