

# SUFFOLK COUNTY CHESS ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the SCCA Committee Meeting, held at Broadlands, Borough Lane, Gt Finborough, Stowmarket IP14 3AS on 24 February 2020 7:00-9:45 pm

## **Present:**

President – Leon Burnett (LB)

Secretary – John McAllister (JM)

Treasurer – Adrian Sanderson (AS)

Competitions Secretary – David Green (DG)

Results Officer – Dave Wild (DW)

U-160 Captain – Bob Jones (BJ)

By invitation as prospective Competitions Secretary – Sam Gaffney (SG)

## **1. Apologies for absence:**

Cup & Plate Organiser – Rob Sanders (RS)

First Team Captain – Steve Ruthen (SR)

Also absent was:

Junior Organiser – Tim Kent (TK)

## **2. Minutes of the last SCCA Interim Committee Meeting held on 8 April 2019**

Copies of these minutes had been distributed to committee members, these were approved without amendment.

## **3. Matters Arising:**

The question of the Norfolk-Suffolk Cup rules was raised, BJ stated that these had been agreed and that he would distribute a copy to the committee (Action Point [AP1]).

The new arrangement for County Match funding was discussed and it was agreed that the constitution now adequately covers this.

DG pointed out that he was not responsible for maintaining up to date copies of the constitution and rules on the county website. BJ stated that these documents on the website were now up to date, although not available as downloadable documents.

DG pointed out that when 4-digit grades are introduced the 10 point difference currently used in Rule 5.3 should convert to 75 points not 80. Notwithstanding, the consensus was to support rounding this up to 80 (Proposal 1).

The matter of using January published grades to supersede estimated grades in U125/U145 competitions was confirmed, although this was not formally proposed at last year's AGM. It was also suggested that category F grades should be regarded as estimates.

APs regarding inventory and location of all league trophies were still ongoing.

#### **4. Membership of the SCCA Committee**

The composition of the SCCA Committee was reviewed, and while the constitution currently defines this, it was felt to be a blunt instrument and that the membership of the committee ought to be agreed each year without the need to change the constitution. Apart from the President, the Association currently has the following posts

- 4.1 Secretary – John McAllister
- 4.2 Competitions Secretary – David Green
- 4.3 Results Officer – Dave Wild
- 4.4 Vice-President – Vacant
- 4.5 Rapidplay Organiser – Rob Sanders
- 4.6 Other posts – Treasurer – Adrian Sanderson
  - County team captains – Steve Ruthen and Bob Jones
  - Junior Chess Representative – Tim Kent
  - Women's Chess Representative – Vacant
  - Correspondence Chess captain – Vacant

It was agreed there was no need for a Rules Secretary, but DW explained that the Results Officer role would need to continue until the transition to the ECF League Management System (LMS) was fully complete, and that it may even be needed beyond that as the LMS is far from perfect. DW distributed to the committee a document detailing the role he has currently been performing, and possible changes that may be needed when we move to the LMS.

The fact that the Vice-president role was still vacant was a concern and JM agreed to contact all club secretaries to canvas for a volunteer (AP2).

DW suggested that Suffolk should simplify its committee membership in line with the Norfolk model, and it was agreed that a proposal would be drafted to put before the next AGM (Proposal 2).

#### **5. Review of the league season so far, especially defaults**

DG reviewed the current league positions and presented tables showing default statistics. The situation was satisfactory apart from the case of Ipswich B, which had lost some of its players and the team captain was unwilling to continue drafting in players from Division 3. LB proposed that if the team withdraws from the league before the season ends only the results of its first seven matches, played in the first half of the season, should still stand. Those matches played

after that would be expunged from the league tables, but would still be sent for grading. This was agreed by all.

AS had produced interim accounts for the year and stated that the league was on course to break even, although he had not charged those clubs for their U145 entry. He suggested that this could be collected next year.

## **6. ECF League Management System**

DG presented the work he had done on the ECF LMS, having set up the SCCA Organisation along with our full programme of events and accounts for all of the club captains. It is still a work in progress, and he identified the following issues;

1. Captains will need some training on how to use the system
2. The LMS does not monitor substitutions
3. The automatic grading is not always 100% complete
4. Players do not always appear in the clubs to which they belong

SG said he could probably scrape the necessary data from the LMS and produce some code of his own to monitor the substitutions. DW handed SG a copy of the LMS API, which would make that job more straightforward.

BJ stated that Steve Lovell has been using the LMS for some time and a meeting between Steve, DW, DG and SG might be beneficial. SG thought this could probably be done by email, at least at this stage, and the need for such a meeting was thus left for SG to arrange before the next meeting of the SCCA Committee in April if he felt one necessary.

DW recommended the LMS training videos for all club captains.

## **7. Review of Substitution Rule**

BJ stated that Bury (along with several other clubs) are strongly opposed to the new substitution rules and would like the committee to propose they are reversed. LB did not feel the new rules had had long enough to bed in and that it would be inappropriate to change them at this stage.

This issue divides the committee as it does the league, and no formal action by the committee was agreed on. It is open to any club to propose a reversion to the old rules should they wish, although LB and JM suggested that such a reversion should only apply to division two.

## **8. Junior Chess**

LB had received a request from Martin Tomes (MT) for the newly-formed Ipswich Juniors club to enter a team in the league. It had been communicated to MT that the club should consider entering the U125 first, as Woodbridge School have done. This had been accepted by MT, who requested the following;

1. All matches are played at their home venue in Ipswich.
2. Matches start at 7.00 pm.
3. Analogue clocks are used.
4. A shorter time control is used.

It was agreed that no new rules would be needed to cover this, and the committee were happy to recommend admission. A couple of matters would have to be agreed however;

1. Woodbridge School also play all their matches at home, therefore the matches between them and Ipswich Juniors would need to be decided in advance.
2. The time limit for the games could not be less than one hour for each player to be eligible for standard grading.

While not specific to Junior Chess, the subject of our existing time controls was discussed. Rules 2.3 to 2.5 need changing to make incremental time controls the default across all competitions, including the grade-limited competitions (Proposal 3).

## **9 Matters for clarification**

### **9.1 Promotion and relegation**

After some discussion, it was agreed that our current rules allow the Competitions Secretary sufficient flexibility to manage promotion and relegation matters.

### **9.2 Nomination of bottom board**

JM questioned the need to nominate all boards in Division Three (or whatever is our lowest division). Where a club's lowest graded player is also among its most consistent players, it forces that club to exclude him from its nominations or suffer a default on the rare occasion he is ill or otherwise unavailable. This could mean nominating someone that that club has no intention of ever playing for that team, thus keeping the letter of the law, in order to comply with a law that isn't really necessary.

DG said that Stowmarket and Bury had had similar situations and the solution was simply to allow Mr Keen but weak to play three matches as a substitute for the club's lowest team when he would then become a main team player for that team and be entitled to play in every match of the lowest team so no new rule was needed.

DG went on to explain that Stowmarket had a similar keen but weak player and to provide for a player whose appearances are limited by shift working the club had nominated the shift worker and routinely played a weaker player.

The committee would therefore consider an amendment Rule 5.1 (Proposal 4).

### 9.3 Re-nominations in January.

With the advent of monthly grades LB questioned the rationale behind remaining with January for re-nominations. There was no consensus for any alternatives, thus the matter remains unresolved.

### 9.4 Clause 4.8 of the Constitution

The anomaly in this clause has been known for some time, and while it does not give the committee any practical difficulties, it was felt a minor change to the clause was appropriate to remove the anomaly (Proposal 5).

### 9.5 County Web Site

The sorry state of some sections of our county website was discussed. One of the reasons for this appears to be the lack of support for document files, meaning all documents must be copied into html files. BS has agreed to check with Steve Lovell on this, for without the ability to download pdf files, it remains a tedious task to maintain the currency of the Rules and the Constitution, and it means that agendas, minutes and other county documents will continue to remain absent from the site (AP3).

### 9.6 Rapidplay dates

LB raised a number of concerns regarding the dates fixed for the league knockout competitions, particularly the fact that a large number have to be postponed and are not re-scheduled for several months. Rather than have them included in the fixture on specific dates, he suggested that perhaps clubs could be given a window of time in which to arrange their matches, which would have the benefit of obviating potential problems if a club refuses to re-schedule. No conclusion was reached, and no specific changes were proposed.

BS suggested that rather than fix the half way point of the league season in December, it should be moved to mid-January, allowing the earlier fixtures to spread out a little more. This would help with slotting in Knockout fixtures.

## **AOB**

LB read a short letter from the archivist of the Southern Counties Chess Union requesting any information from matches played back in the 1950s. BJ said he might be able to help.

DW read a short appeal from the East Anglian Chess Union for volunteers to help administer the Union. JM agreed to circulate the appeal to all club secretaries (AP4).

DG repeated his willingness to take on the role of Treasurer when AS steps down at the AGM.

## **11. Date and venue of next SCCA Committee Meeting**

The date of the next committee meeting was set for Monday 27th April.

The date for the AGM was set for Friday 26th June.

The meeting closed at 9:45 pm.

## **SUMMARY OF ACTION POINTS**

**AP1.** BJ to circulate the current version of the NS Cup rules to the committee.

**AP2.** JM to contact all club secretaries to canvas for a new Vice-President.

**AP3.** BJ to liaise with Steve Lovell regarding document support for the county website.

**AP4.** JM to circulate the appeal from the EACU for volunteers to all club secretaries

### **Action Points from previous meetings**

BJ and AS to provide an up to date inventory of trophies.

## **PROPOSALS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE COMMITTEE**

### **Proposal 1. Change to Rule 5.3.**

Insert the words "ECF or 80 points ELO" between "points" and "above".

### **Proposal 2. Change to clause 4.1 of the Constitution.**

Delete the words "County Team Captains, Suffolk Junior Chess representative, Women's Chess representative, Correspondence Chess captain, County Results Officer" and insert the word "and" between "Treasurer" and "Competitions Secretary". Delete the existing sentence after "Competitions Secretary" and replace it with, "Occupants of all other roles of the SCCA will be invited to join the committee at the AGM".

### **Proposal 3. Changes to Rules 2.3 to 2.5.**

Rule 2.3 should be deleted in its entirety.

In Rule 2.4, delete the words "Divisions 1 and 2," and replace them with, "all SCCU competitions," and renumber this rule 2.3.

Rule 2.5 should be deleted in its entirety.

New Rule 2.4 added stating. "Where suitable digital clocks are not available, mechanical clocks may be used. In such cases, each player will be allowed 90 minutes to complete all moves. The first 30 moves must be completed within 75 minutes. This alternative time control is also available where both players agree to it, and either mechanical or digital clocks may be used in such cases.

### **Proposal 4. Change to Rule 5.1.**

Add to the first sentence, “except the team in the lowest division where only board 1 (or boards 1 and 2) need nominating. The remaining boards in that Team/Teams will be filled in accordance with Rules 5.3 and 5.4”

**Proposal 5. Change to clause 4.8 of the Constitution.**

Change “The Secretary shall give members 21 days' notice of the date of each meeting, together with an Agenda and the Minutes of the previous Committee Meeting.”

To “The Secretary shall give members an Agenda, Minutes of the previous Committee Meeting and any other necessary documentation at least 21 days before the date of each meeting.”