

SUFFOLK COUNTY CHESS ASSOCIATION

**Minutes of the SCCA Committee Meeting,
held on line via Microsoft Teams on 30th May 2022, 7:30 – 22:05**

1. Present

President – Stephen Lewis (SLe)

Secretary – John McAllister (JM)

Treasurer – David Green (DG)

Competitions Secretary – Sam Gaffney (SG)

County First Team Captain – Steve Ruthen (SR) (had to leave mid-way)

County U1850 Team Captain – Bob Jones (BJ)

Internet Officer – Steve Lovell (SLo)

Rapid Play Organiser – Rob Sanders (RS)

2. Apologies for absence

None.

3. Minutes of the previous SCCA Committee Meeting, 10th January 2022.

Minutes of the January Committee were circulated in advance of the meeting, and accepted without amendment.

4. Matters Arising

DG pointed out that there were still several outstanding amendments to the constitution that have not yet been passed. This was recognised with the expectation that they would be voted on at the next AGM.

5. Treasurer's report

DG submitted the following report;

I am happy to report that I have finally been accepted as an authorised signatory by Barclays. I have also been given on line access to view the accounts.

Thank you Adrian and John for your help in getting this result.

I have received a statement dated 13/4/22 which shows that after collecting and banking all this season's fees the account stood at £990.62. I have at last been able to make a single payment by cheque of £275 to settle the invoice from the EACU and the account balance now stands at £775.62.

The deposit account has seen no activity at all and stands at £1357.77.

After discussion with the President we decided not to issue invoices in January for costs arising from non-members grading fees raised by the ECF principally because I do not

expect an invoice from the ECF until the end of the season. I did drop a note to those clubs who have players who will be charged a membership fee of the ECF because of the number of graded games they have played.

The list of non-members, based on an ECF membership list dated 22/4/22, who have had games submitted for grading is available for all to see at this link which does not seem to download well.

<https://ecflms.org.uk/lms/node/37698/reports/noneecf>

So far only the Ipswich club has players who will be liable for a bronze membership fee should they not join the ECF before the end of the season.

It was noted that SCCA accounts were down slightly, although SLe pointed out that a balance in the order of £2100 could be seen as rather high for a body the size of the SCCA. DG was thanked for his efforts.

NOTE:

After the meeting DG added that while the balance of the SCCA accounts is about £2100, there is no ongoing provision for the replacement of the County sets and clocks. Other than the trophies these are about the only physical asset the SCCA owns and their replacement will represent a huge drain on the SCCA. About 20 sets, boards and clocks will cost about £1300 to replace and they are uninsured. Given the £145 allocated at this committee meeting and the expected bills for this season's EACU teams refreshments £2100 does not appear too much to hold in reserve. Our loss this year has now jumped from an expected £83 to £228.

6. Review of the current season

SG reported that fixtures in all competitions were completed, although the season had to be extended into May in order for that to happen. He advised that in future it would be best to avoid May fixtures, as holidays etc complicate matters, and led to one match being won by default. Although considering the uncertain start we had, we did well to finish, all things considered.

SG summarised the season's competition winners;

Division One – Manningtree A

Division Two – Woodbridge

Division Three – Manningtree B

U1800 – Woodbridge

U1650 - Clacton

NOTE: After the meeting SG advised the committee that the POTY winners for each division were; Division 1 - Panagiotis Kanellopoulos, Division 2 - Simon Wilks and Division 3 - Sam Gaffney.

RS stated that the Divisional Rapid Play had been well supported, and stated that a single date and venue for the final proved to be very successful. JM suggested that we should consider increasing the increment from 5s to 10s as there is a pre-programmed number in the digital clocks to handle this. It would increase a 60 move game from a maximum of

one hour to one hour and ten minutes. While this would have been better brought up under AOB, and after confirming that program 16 on the clocks was genuinely Fischer (and not Bronstein) increments, it was agreed and an amendment would be proposed to increase the increment.

7. Competition Rules

7.1 Review wording of Rule 6.1.

Covered by item 6.4 below.

7.2 Additional clause to explain that where the word "rating" (or variant of) is used it refers to either August or January ECF ratings.

Covered by item 6.4 below.

7.3 The introduction of a refundable deposit for clubs seeking to appeal decisions taken by the Competition Secretary.

This was more of a suggestion than a proposal by SG, designed to prevent speculative appeals against decisions taken by the competitions secretary. SG pointed out that such a deposit is in operation in many other leagues. Several on the committee were not convinced that this was necessary as appeals are not common in the Suffolk league. It was decided not to proceed with this proposal, but that the matter would be revisited if the situation changed.

7.4 Proposals for amendments to SCCA rules.

The following five proposals were put forward by Bury St Edmunds and were discussed at some length.

Rule 4.1 Delete all after 'throughout the season'. Add 'Board order and substitution will be determined by players' current monthly ratings.'

The use of January ratings harks back to when mid-season grades were introduced. Now that ratings are revised on 1st of every month, there is no need or logic to using January ratings.

DG pointed out that monthly ratings make substitution rules etc more complex, and new software would be needed to keep track of them to ensure compliance with league rules. SLe questioned the impact this would have on January re-nominations. BJ pointed out that re-nominations are not automatic, and only change where new players appear, not when ratings change. SG was asked for his view on the impact of monthly ratings on his role. He considered that the biggest impact would not be on him, but on team captains, who would need to check the ratings of their players each month to avoid falling foul. SLo was not convinced that the current rules were what was agreed in the first place, he believes that the September/January ratings were to determine board order, with substitutions should be based on only the September rating. The need for the re-nomination rule itself was also questioned, and should it be removed. The question was then raised, should monthly

ratings determine eligibility for U1800 and U1450 competitions? And should unrated players be ineligible for rating limited competitions?

SLe proposed that he would write up a concise report on the various options relating to monthly ratings to be put to the league at the AGM (**AP13**).

Without necessarily bottoming out all the implications of this proposal, nor reaching a unanimous position, it was agreed that the committee would nonetheless put the proposal forward to the AGM.

Rule 4.2. Add, at end, “If a player who is unrated at the start of a season subsequently acquires a current ECF rating, then this should be used instead of his estimated rating. *An estimated rating is just that – estimated. As soon as a ‘real’ rating is known, that must take precedence as it will be much more accurate. In the case of rating-limited competitions, we will need to decide if a player’s first proper rating should apply, or the current one.*”

This was agreed with little need for discussion, and would be put forward to the AGM.

Rule 5.3 to read: Within a team, a player must not be currently rated more than 80 points above anyone on a higher board.

The word ‘currently’ has been added. Without this it could be argued that start of season or January ratings should apply.

This was agreed with little need for discussion, and would be put forward to the AGM with the proviso that it will only go to a vote if the change to Rule 4.1 is passed.

Rule 5.4(f). To read, “The rating of a substitute player must not exceed 80 points more than the nominated player for whom he is substituting.” Rule 6.1(a) will also need to be deleted.

This would bring SCCA rules into line with BACL rules

This proposal reinstates a rule that was previously dropped in 2014. This did not receive unanimous agreement within the committee for two basic reasons. RS felt it inherently wrong to substitute a nominated player with a stronger one, a view shared in principle by everyone. In practice however, others felt that with swings in monthly ratings being as they are, a person with a higher rating (especially by just a few points) is not necessarily a stronger player than one immediately below him. Also, as board order has a tolerance of 80 points BJ felt it was right that substitutions are brought in line. The second reason the committee was not in full agreement was that the rule favours larger clubs over smaller ones, which was the reason the rule was dropped in the first place. While the committee was not unanimous, the majority agreed to pass this proposal to the AGM.

Appendix 1 – DIVISIONAL RAPIDPLAY CUP Rule A1.4. to read: Each match will comprise two rounds of Rapldplay games, where each team member plays the same opponent twice, with White and Black.

This makes more sense than “... will comprise two Rapidplay games”. It also confirms that both games are played between the same opponents (which has always been the case in practice).

This was initially rejected by the majority of the committee as it was seen that there are some scenarios where fielding different players could be beneficial. However, after further discussion RS was asked for his view, and as he supported the proposal it was agreed to put it forward to the AGM.

8. Minimum standards for SCCA Competition matches.

This subject was brought up for a second time after another player found the Felixstowe venue unsuitable for serious league chess. While it was acknowledged that small clubs often find more suitable venues too expensive, and the committee did not want to jeopardise existing small clubs, nor discourage potential new ones by specifying rules and conditions for club venues, it was agreed that SLe would write to Felixstowe expressing the concern that some players have voiced to the committee. No further action was proposed until a reply is received.

9. Purchase of three Rapidplay Cup Trophies.

RS proposed that the SCCA should purchase three new trophies for the Divisional Rapid Play as its success showed it was a competition that was here to stay. Views were varied on this proposal, ranging from “good idea” to “trophies are more trouble than they’re worth”. After much discussion, consensus was reached that RS was given a mandate to purchase three trophies with a budget of £120.

10. AOB

It was reported to the committee that at the Suffolk v Middlesex county match Steve Ruthen and Laurie Potts were forced to enter the London Low Emissions Zone to deliver themselves and their passengers to the venue. While the petrol costs were shared among those involved, the drivers did not feel comfortable asking for more, especially as some were juniors. Both drivers requested that the SCCA reimburse the fee due for entering London’s LEZ. The committee decided that on this occasion they would do so, but would not cover these costs routinely.

SG asked if Player of the Year trophies were still being purchased. They are and BJ offered to source and purchase them.

As the EACU AGM was approaching, JM asked who normally attends such meetings and was informed that it was the President and the Secretary.

SG commented that the competition rules are not always consistent. SLe stated that in such cases an explanation of intent would be made.

All existing officers agreed to continue in office, although the post of Vice-President was still open.

11. Date and venue of next SCCA Committee Meeting

The 2022 AGM would be held in person at a venue to be decided (hopefully Ipswich) on Tuesday 12th July.

SUMMARY OF ONGOING ACTION POINTS

AP from previous meeting. BJ and AS to provide an up to date inventory of trophies.

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

AP13. SLe proposed that he would write up a concise report on the various options relating to monthly ratings to be put to the league at the AGM.

PROPOSALS FROM THE COMMITTEE FOR CHANGES TO THE COMPETITION RULES

Rule 4.1

Delete all after 'throughout the season'. Add 'Board order and substitution will be determined by players' current monthly ratings.'

Rule 4.2

Add, at end, "If a player who is unrated at the start of a season subsequently acquires a current ECF rating, then this should be used instead of his estimated rating.

Rule 5.3

to read: Within a team, a player must not be currently rated more than 80 points above anyone on a higher board.

Rule 5.4(f)

To read, "The rating of a substitute player must not exceed 80 points more than the nominated player for whom he is substituting." Rule 6.1(a) will also need to be deleted.

Appendix 1 – DIVISIONAL RAPIDPLAY CUP

Rule A1.4 to read: Each match will comprise two rounds of Rapldplay games, where each team member plays the same opponent twice, with White and Black.

Appendix 1 – DIVISIONAL RAPIDPLAY CUP

Rule A1.4 Change 5 seconds to 10 seconds.

PROPOSALS FROM THE COMMITTEE FOR CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION

Proposal 2. Change to clause 4.1 of the Constitution.

The purpose of this change is to enable any new posts created by the League (such as Internet Officer) to be automatically invited onto the committee without the need to change the League Rules. It also removes roles that are no longer filled.

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 5. Change to clause 4.8 of the Constitution.

The purpose of this change is to remove the anomaly that exists whereby a secretary can give just 21 days “notice” for a meeting, when members must submit any items for inclusion on the agenda for that meeting at least 28 days in advance. 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, along with minutes of the previous Committee Meeting, plus any other necessary documentation, at least 21 days before the date of each meeting.”

Proposal 6. Change 8.3 of the SCCA Constitution.

The purpose of this change is to enable the use of internet banking and electronic money transfers. Currently the SCCA finances rely solely on paper-based transactions such as cheques and paying in slips. There is a current account that requires two signatures on each cheque and a deposit account that holds about 70% of the SCCA’s cash and requires just one signature to make a withdrawal. It is proposed that the current account be moved to a provider that will give free internet banking and allow postal deposits of received cheques. It is proposed that the Deposit Account be unchanged except that two signatures should be needed in future to make any withdrawal. The recommendation from the SCCA Treasurer, is that the SCCA uses Santander Bank.

Change “A Current Account will be maintained by the Treasurer to receive income and make payments on behalf of the SCCA. All withdrawals will require two signatories drawn from the President, Secretary and Treasurer. A Deposit

account may also be held to hold extra funds. Withdrawals from this account will be paid into the current account and only one signatory is required for this purpose.”

To “A Current Account with online facilities will be maintained by the Treasurer to receive income and make payments on behalf of the SCCA. The Treasurer and the President and/or the Secretary will hold the access codes and passwords for the on-line current account with the Treasurer authorised to make BACS payments that do not require a signature. A Deposit Account may also be held for extra funds. Withdrawals from this account will be paid into the current account and two signatories drawn from the President, Treasurer and Secretary are required for this purpose.

Proposal 7. New emergency clause in the Constitution

The committee proposes that the following new clause be added to the constitution to enable it to act constitutionally during such events as have occurred this past year.

12. Suspension to the Constitution or Competition Rules

In the event of an emergency the committee has the power to suspend normal SCCA protocols.