

# SUFFOLK COUNTY CHESS ASSOCIATION

**Minutes of the SCCA Committee Meeting,  
Held on line via Zoom on 20th February 2023, 7:30 - 8:45**

**Present:** President – Stephen Lewis (SLe)  
Vice President – Simon Wilkes (SW)  
Secretary – John McAllister (JM)  
Treasurer – David Green (DG)  
Competitions Secretary – Sam Gaffney (SG)  
County First Team Captain – Steve Ruthen (SR)  
County U1850 Team Captain – Bob Jones (BJ)  
Internet Officer – Steve Lovell (SLo)  
Rapid Play Organiser – Rob Sanders (RS)

## **1. Apologies for absence**

None.

## **2. Minutes of the previous SCCA Committee Meeting, 30th May 2022.**

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

## **3. Matters Arising**

None.

## **4. Treasurer's report**

DG reported the late payment of EACU fees due to the absence of an EACU treasurer, but payments are now up to date. The county has a balance of £1358, earning an insignificant interest of 0.6%. A new mandate has now been prepared and signed, which will allow BACs payments in the future, which covers item 11 of this agenda.

DG reported that Ipswich was late paying their league fees, which were eventually paid from the personal account of the Ipswich Treasurer. DG did not impose a penalty due to the exceptional circumstance the club is facing at present.

## **5. Review of the current season**

SLe gave a brief summary of two disputes that arose this season, one of which was resolved quite quickly, the other went to appeal. Members of the committee without a personal interest in the case were asked for a view, and while it was clear that the letter of the law have been broken, it was felt that there was sufficient ambiguity in League Rule 5.4 to not penalise the club concerned, but issue a warning instead. This led to item 8 on the agenda.

SG reported that Ipswich withdrew from the Norfolk/Suffolk Cup and the Division One Rapid Play Cup, and have so far defaulted two boards in Division One matches. They are clearly struggling, a situation not helped by several mistakes being made in setting the digital clocks. The problem appears to arise when the clocks are changed for other events, and not reset correctly. SLe suggested a help page on the SCCA web site giving 'simple' instructions on how to set the digital clocks correctly.

SG stated that the rest of the competitions were progressing satisfactorily.

RS raised a question over the re-nomination of Michael Cook and Martin Fogg by Ipswich, and questioned if either will actually play, particularly as neither are ECF members. It allows Ipswich to play their previously nominated team on a lower board by defaulting their top board. SG pointed out that a number of teams have some questionable nominations. JM acknowledged that Manningtree A's board four could be questioned, but he is only nominated because he has expressed a desire to play during his breaks from university, and if he were not nominated that would not be possible. BJ suggested that perhaps the rules governing nominations should be revisited and possibly changed. The committee agreed to keep the matter under review for the time being.

## **6. Financing of the county teams and the claimable expenses by the captains**

DG requested more clarity on what is, and what is not a claimable expense for county matches, for example, can petrol/parking costs be reimbursed to a non-playing captain. He explained that the constitution allows for discretionary payments but it is not clear who has that discretion. In times past county matches were mostly funding from board fees, but since these were dropped, the cost of county matches consume the greater part of SCCA funds, and they risk being depleted. SLe said that he would be happy for the President to be consulted on any discretionary payments in the future so that the responsibility did not rest on one individual. It was accepted that while team members pay their own travel and parking costs, a non-playing captain should be able to claim such expenses on the grounds that he is representing the SCCA in such circumstances.

SLo described the reasons for dropping board fees. Players paid for their own fuel and parking, and it seemed a little unfair to then imposes a board fee on top, which can at times be difficult to collect. BJ reminded the committee that only passengers were asked for a board fee, drivers were exempt, although this does pose a problem when a large number of players make their own way to venues, and captains can find

themselves out of pocket. The committee was not unanimous in re-introducing board fees and felt that the issue should be decided at an AGM. Options such as part board fee and part SCCA funding should also be considered by the league.

DG was asked to produce an estimate of what the league fees would need to be if the county was going to continue covering all the costs of county competitions **(AP14)**.

## **7. Engraving of SCCA Trophies**

JM is in possession of five trophies and wanted clarification on whether they should be engraved with anything covering the covid seasons. It was decided that there would be no engraving for the missing years. JM also requested we get an 'official' engraver so that costs could be controlled rather than leave it to individual clubs. BJ knows such a person who does engraving and he would be happy to pick up the trophies and get them engraved.

## **8. Clarification of Competition Rules relating to those playing for multiple teams and clubs (see attached document from David Green)**

In view of the dispute that arose over the interpretation of Rule 5.4 SLe précised the existing rules that continues to allow a person to play for more than one team in division three (not to be confused with the rule that prevents a person from playing for more than one club in the same division).

RS disagreed with the idea of having different rules in different divisions, however as this concession was granted to division three at time the rules were changed to prevent sideways substitution it would require an AGM vote to change it.

There was general consensus that the existing rule is confusing in places, therefore SLe will prepare new wording to remove all ambiguity **(AP15)**.

## **9. Handicap Rapid Play League (see attached from Sam Gaffney)**

SG presented his idea for a new rapid play division with the same time controls as the Divisional Rapidplay Cup (see appendix). As it would be open to teams in all division a handicap system would be in place.

BJ said that because Bury have teams in the Suffolk and Bury Area leagues they would be unable to participate simply because they do not have sufficient space in their calendar. RS raised concerns that it might adversely affect support for the Divisional Rapid Play Cup, and questioned whether strongest and weakest players in the SCCA would get anything out of such a tournament. SG pointed out that he was not proposing a knock-out but a league so it would not be in competition with the divisional cups. There was general agreement that the two competitions could side by side, although doubts were expressed regard the level of support such a division would get.

SLo pointed out an inconsistency in the proposed rules, which SG acknowledged and would correct. It was agreed that SG would canvas the clubs to ascertain the level of support such a league would get **(AP16)**. It was further agreed that clubs could only enter a team in the handicap league if they had a team in the divisional rapid play cup.

**10. Request from Anthony Fulton to write an article on the SCCA web site seeking more historic information and to publicise his book “The Southern Counties Chess Union - a retrospective”.**

JM had received a request from Anthony Fulton, the author of a book called “The Southern Counties Chess Union – a retrospective” to advertise his book for sale on the SCCA web site. He would also solicit for information about the SCCU from any SCCA members. This was agreed and JM would contact Anthony Fulton and point him in the direction of SLo **(AP17)**.

**11. Proposal to change the mandate for the SCCA’s community account at Barclays. (see attached document from David Green)**

The mandate was completed and posted to Barclays for processing.

**12. AOB**

BJ requested clarification of Rule 4.2. It was confirmed that when a player receives a K rating that replaces his previous estimate, it is the first K rating he receives that is used for the remainder of the season for eligibility purposes.

RS expressed his view that with the Rapid Play Cups established and under the control of the ECF LMS, his role as Rapid Play Organiser was now redundant. SG said he saw no problem including the Cups alongside the leagues in his remit.

SG reported an incident where a player had forgotten to press his clock and was reminded to do so by his team member on another board. The opponent of the first player proceeded to claim the game on the grounds that his opponent had received outside help. The committee was unanimous that such a claim would not be supported, and that the “interfering” player would be given a warning. Such disputes should be settled by the captains, acting as arbiters.

**13. Date and venue of next SCCA Committee Meeting**

The next committee meeting was scheduled for Monday 6th July.

## **SUMMARY OF ONGOING ACTION POINTS**

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

**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.

**AP14.** DG to prepare an estimate of the level of league fees necessary for the SCCA to continue funding county matches without deleting SCCA funds.

**AP15.** SLe to reword Rule 5.4.

**AP15.** SG to canvas support for a rapid play league.

**AP17.** JM to contact Anthony Fulton regarding the promotion of his book on the SCCA web site.

Draft

## APPENDIX

### Handicap Rapidplay League Competition

#### Motivation

- Apart from the Divisional Rapidplay Cup competitions, there are few opportunities to play rated rapidplay games in the area served by the SCCA
- Most amateur chess is now played online with rapid time controls. Offering competitions with faster time controls may allow us to attract and retain new players.
- A rapidplay competition may also appeal more to junior clubs as rapidplay is often the default time control for junior competitions.
- ECF Rapidplay ratings of many Suffolk players are inaccurate, due to the small number of rapidplay games played, leading to “unusual” board orders in Rapidplay Cup matches.

#### Proposed Match Format:

1. Each match will comprise two rounds of Rapidplay games, where each team member plays the same opponent twice, with White and Black. The time control for each player is 25 minutes with an increment of 10 seconds per move. If Fischer timing is unavailable then each player will have 30 minutes for the entire game.
2. The away team will have White on the odd boards for the first game and White on even boards for the second game.
3. Rapidplay ratings should be used to determine board order. If a player does not have a rapidplay K-rating, then their current, or agreed estimated, standard play rating, should be used. The board order need not remain the same for both games.

Rules 1 to 3 largely align with the Divisional Rapidplay Cup to avoid confusion. I'd also like to replace Suffolk Rule A1.6 with Rule 3.

4. The mean rapidplay rating for each team is to be worked out and the winning team shall be decided depending on the difference in average rating as follows.  
If the difference in rating is 40 or less and the result is 4-4 then the match will be drawn  
For any other result the winning team shall be determined as follows:

<b>Rating Difference</b>	<b>Score needed to win by the higher rated team</b>
41-115	5
116-190	5.5
191-265	6
Over 340	7

5. The team winning a match will receive one point towards league standings.
6. Teams drawing a match with each receive half a point towards league standings.  
Rules 4 – 6 (largely borrowed from the Norfolk Handicap Rapidplay Knockout Cup) aim to introduce a league without the complexity of different divisions whilst not disadvantaging weaker teams. This approach also addresses dissatisfaction expressed by some of the weaker clubs/teams that they don't stand much chance of ever winning an SCCA competition.

#### Scheduling the league:

- In the 22/23 season, there were 11 weeks in which Suffolk League chess was not played (largely in order to align with the BACL). These weeks were then used for the Divisional Rapidplay Cup and the U1800 Cup.
- The U1650 and U1800 Cups are currently played as leagues. If these reverted to KO competitions and assuming most clubs had teams in every Divisional Rapidplay Cup, that would give at least 9 weeks for a new competition.

## Proposed League Format

### All-Play-All Once:

1. Each Club may enter **one** team of six players.
2. Fixtures will be published at the start of the season.
3. Each club will play one match against every other team. The venue of a match will be one of the clubs' home venues. The Competitions Secretary will choose one.
4. The winner is the team with the most match points at the end of the season. No tie-break will be applied.

With 9 "core" SCCA clubs, 8 matches should fit into the 9 weeks available. Teams of 6 should balance the demand to play given the restriction on entries to one team.

### OR:

### Swiss:

1. Each Club may enter any number of teams. Each team will comprise of four players.
2. The competition will consist of 9 matches over the 9 weeks.
3. Dates for the competition will be published at the start of the season along with the pairings for the first match.
4. Pairings for the next round will be published at the end of the previous round and will be determined using the Swiss pairing system. The venue of a match will be one of the clubs' home venues. The Competitions Secretary will choose one.
5. The winner is the team with the most match points at the end of the season. No tie-break will be applied.

Allows more teams to enter but, as fixtures can't be published in advance, may cause problems with venue/player availability e.t.c.

### Summary

This proposal should give players an opportunity to play an additional 16-18 rated rapidplay games per season. Adding the two guaranteed games from the Divisional Rapidplay Cup, makes 18-20 games. With a Suffolk League player having the opportunity to play ~10 standard play games a season, this proposal definitely achieves a balance in time controls.