

# SUFFOLK COUNTY CHESS ASSOCIATION

## Minutes of the SCCA Committee Meeting

Held on line via Microsoft Teams on 11th March 2024, 7:30 - 8:55.

**Present:** President – Stephen Lewis (SLe)  
Vice President – Simon Wilks (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)

### 1. Apologies for absence

None.

### 2. Minutes of the last SCCA Committee Meeting January 8th

These were circulated before the meeting. DG was not sure that the full extent of the issues he raised regarding the Safeguarding Children Policy were reflected in the minutes as the issues he said are much greater than a few typos. However he felt it expedient to wait until BJ completed his review under AP24 before commenting further. No other issues were raised and the minutes were accepted as written.

### 3. Matters Arising

SLe pointed out that the main reason this meeting had been arranged so soon after the previous committee meeting was because of the urgency in finding candidates for the three posts that would be vacant come this year's AGM. JM reported that he had written to all clubs via email regarding these posts (AP26), but had received no responses. A discussion followed on what action the committee could take to address this matter. Several suggestions were proposed, including (a) seek candidates from our own clubs, (b) approach individuals and (c) target clubs who do not have any representation on the committee. Phil Hopkins of Felixstowe had been approached for the role of first team captain, but SW informed the meeting that that is now very unlikely as Phil has told Felixstowe that he will be unavailable for the rest of the season.

After much discussion, and being very aware of the potential embarrassment the SCCA could face without suitable candidates, it was agreed that each member would go back to their clubs and seek volunteers. SW pointed out that we could live without a Vice-President for a while, but not treasurer and preferably not a captain for the county team.

Regarding candidates from the clubs of existing committee members SLe pointed out that we are searching in a limited pool, and the question was raised what clubs are not represented - these are Sudbury, Felixstowe and Clacton. And while Stowmarket will

join that group after the AGM, DG pointed out that Stowmarket has been well represented on the committee for many years.

The actual positions that need filling was then specified as; Vice President, Treasurer, First Team Captain, and possibly the Lead for Safeguarding required by the Child Protection Policy.

SG asked if Clacton had responded to the question of using digital clocks. SLe reported that he had contacted them (AP22), and they have stated that they will be getting some. BJ asked if the away team brings their own clocks, are Clacton obliged to use them? SLe read out the response from Clacton, that while they only have one more home fixture this season, if the away team wishes to bring their own digital clocks that would be ok. There was a proviso however, that each person bringing a clock would be fully versed in all of the clock's functions.

#### **4. Admission of Ipswich Sports Club to the SCCA**

SLe outlined a proposal from Alonso Paez to set up a new chess club in the Ipswich Sports Centre that included some very strong players i.e. David Spence, Stephen Gregory and John Bowers. No formal process exists and it was agreed that they merely need to inform the Competitions Secretary of their intention. DG explained that the normal process was for new teams to be entered in division three, although SG pointed out that he has the authority to organise the divisions how he sees fit and it was agreed that if this proposal goes ahead, that such a team would be entered straight into division one. JM reported that Alonso had informed him that they are having second thoughts about entering a second team in division three, and would be unlikely to do so. SLo reminded the committee of the new requirement that all new venues must have disabled access. SLe was actioned to contact Alonso to inform him that as long as the ISC submit their application to SG by the end of July, and that their playing room complies with the new access requirements, they will be admitted. He would add a recommendation that they send someone along to the AGM as well. (AP27).

#### **5. Amendment to Competition Rule 4.1**

Following a dispute that arose after an Ipswich Rapid play match SLe explained that Ipswich questioned the interpretation of a number of rules relating to substitutions and eligibility that led the committee to revisit the rules and propose clarification where possible. There were two proposals to change Rule 4.1, the first from JM is to replace the existing rule with the following:

“Monthly ratings of K and above will be used for determining eligibility, board order and substitutions throughout the season. If a player does not have such a rating, an estimated rating will be used.”

A lively debate followed, the principle arguments being:

BJ objected as teams are built at the start of the season and it should remain that way for the whole of the season. Also it could scupper that team, and it would pose particular difficulties for matches played on the first of the month when new ratings are published. JM pointed out that the difficulties around the first of the month for eligibility, also apply to substitutions as well, and argued that we should be consistent, and if we use monthly ratings for substitution and board order then we should use them for eligibility as well, or else we should abandon them completely and go back to

using annual ratings for everything. SG echoed BJ's reasoning, and that it would be particularly hard on small clubs like Woodbridge who have a limited squad that regularly bob up and down the 1800 threshold. SW acknowledged that consistency is desirable, but that there is a qualitative difference between the requirements to enter a competition and the finer details of that competition, so while it may overcomplicate matters he is happy for monthly ratings to be used for board order but not for the entry qualifications for the 1650 and 1800 competitions. There was no support for this proposal, it was therefore dropped.

The second proposal to change Rule 4.1 came from SG which was to add to the end of the existing rule;

“A player can qualify to play in a rating limited competition on the basis of an estimated rating. However, if their first (non-P) ECF rating is greater than the rating limit, then they can no longer play in the competition.”

SG explained that the issue of using estimated ratings to determine qualification to enter a rating limited competition had been discussed before, and that once someone obtained an official rating, it would be used instead of the estimate, and if necessary, disqualify someone who had risen above the threshold, and that this proposal was putting into the rules what had previously been the practice. This proposal was accepted unanimously.

## **6. Amendment to Competition Rule 5.1**

The proposal is to delete the last sentence, “All nominated players must have ECF Membership by the end of October.” And replace it with, “Nominated players must have ECF membership from October to the end of the season.”

JM queried whether this rule would be met by someone with rolling membership that was due to expire during the season. SG explained why this rule was introduced, which was to stop clubs nominating bogus players who were inactive. The purpose of the rule change was agreed, but that the words should be tweaked a little to something like, “Nominated players must have ECF membership by the end of October and they must continue their membership throughout the season.”

## **7. Amendment to Competition Rule 5.2**

SG proposed that we add the following to the end of Rule 5.2; “If, as a result of a re-nomination, a player, having a ‘main team’, acquires a new ‘main team’ then any earlier appearances for their previous main team will be treated as substitutions and governed by Rule 5.4.”

SG explained the reason for this proposal, which came about after Ipswich attempted to re-nominate a member of their B team (who had scored significant points for that team) to their C team, both teams being in the same division. While the rules don't prevent this he refused that change of nominations on the grounds of fairness and wanted the rules to reflect that. SLo pointed out that there could be legitimate reasons for doing this, for example where a club has had a significant change in membership, so he would support the idea that their previous appearances should be treated as substitutions, but if their limit had been exceeded then no penalty should be applied retrospectively, apart from the ban on them making any further appearances for other teams. DG questioned how this would apply if both team were in a higher division where you can only play for one team. SG said that such a player's appearances for

the other team would all be counted as substitutions, which would be illegal and therefore would all be defaulted to zero. While this might present a logistical problem, it was hoped that the penalty would be sufficient deterrent to stop it happening.

It was agreed to put this proposal to the AGM.

## 8. Amendment to Competition Rule A1.3

Add the following sentence to the end of this rule; “If a team is not entered into the League, they will provide a list of nominated players.” SLe explained that this is to cover teams entering a divisional knockout that do not play in the relevant division. DG referred to his suggested amendments to the whole of Appendix 1. It was agreed that these would all be put forward for approval at the AGM.

SLo questioned using the term ‘ineligible’ for a board order violation, arguing that the players are not ineligible, they have just been put in the wrong order. Others argued that if a player is out of board order, then they are ineligible for that board, and therefore they are an ineligible player. DG suggested we add a definition of ‘ineligible’ as a new rule 6.3. SLe asked SG if he would propose an amendment that would clarify what should be understood by the term ‘ineligible’ in the context of SCCA competitions. SG accepted that, but may have to submit it as a proposal from himself rather than the committee. (AP28)

## 9. Amendment to Competition Rule A3.8 and A3.9

SG proposed the following changes to the Norfolk and Suffolk Cup - Suffolk section rules. New text in bold, deleted text in strikethrough.

**A3.8 If the competition is played as an all-play-all league, then the following tie-break rules apply.** In the event of a two-way tie, the competition will be decided by using the league tiebreak rule in section 7.1. ~~A3.9~~ In the event of a three-way tie, the competition will be decided in favour of the team with the lowest aggregate rating over both matches, excluding defaults on any board.

**A3.9 If the competition is played as a knock-out, tied matches will be decided by applying the following methods until a result is obtained: (a) board count; (b) by elimination of the lower boards, one by one, until a result is obtained; (c) selecting the team with the lower aggregate rating; (d) by the toss of a coin.**

SG explained that these proposals are a result of an action (AP19) he was given at a previous meeting, to clarify the tie break rule in a knockout scenario. JM questioned whether we should consider changing ‘lower’ to ‘higher’ in A3.9(c) if we want to challenge Norfolk with the strongest team possible. The general feeling was no, we should be consistent with other rules on this matter, and it was agreed that these rule changes would go forward to the AGM as written.

## 10. Rapid Play Handicap Rules

SG ran through his proposed Rapid Play Handicap rules (AP20). SG pointed out that this set of rules does not explicitly invoke the general league rules covering board order etc, so needs a clause similar to A1.11. JM pointed out that for pedantic reasons we should say ‘minimum of a K-rating’ rather than just ‘K-rating’. SLe questioned whether we should specify how decimal points are handled in the Rating Difference column. SG did not think that necessary, but SLo suggested using the total rather than

an average, but then the problem of defaults would need addressing. SG will tweak the document to cover these matters, and format it as an appendix to the rules.

#### **11. Review of the SCCA Child Welfare Policy**

BJ reported that he had spoken to Tim Kent (AP24), and they plan to meet soon to review the current policy and report back to the committee. SLe asked if this needs to be done before the AGM bearing in mind that there will be a role that needs filling. BJ pointed out that the 'Lead' role has never been a committee position, and sees no reason why it should be as it would only make finding someone to take it on that much harder. DG pointed out that the policy document defines the Lead as someone who reports to the committee and drives through amendments/improvements etc, although it doesn't specify how that person is chosen, whether they are elected or appointed for example. SLe made it clear that we cannot go before the AGM with a policy and ask for a volunteer unless we are clear ourselves what that role entails, and suggested that if we have a committee meeting before the AGM we could get a better picture of what we need to present to the AGM regarding this policy. BJ suggested that Tim himself may be prepared to take on this role, but not if it means being on the committee.

#### **12. Refundable deposit for appeals to the Committee**

SLe proposed that the SCCA charge a £20 deposit, refundable in the event of a successful appeal but not returned if the appealed is unsuccessful. He explained that it is too easy to appeal a decision which has been made by the Competition Secretary and confirmed by the President. This is intended to be a deterrent that should not block genuine claims, only frivolous claims.

SLo made the point that while we as a committee are perfectly qualified to adjudicate disputes involving SCCA league rules, disputes about the laws of chess could require an arbiter, about which our rules make no reference. It was agreed that if such a case arose we could bring in an arbiter. It was agreed to put this proposal to the AGM.

#### **13. AOB**

JM asked BJ if he would organise the engraving of the trophies again this year. BJ agreed, JM would therefore round up the trophies and deliver them to BJ in time for him to get them engraved for the AGM.

DG asked that any club with claims on SCCA funds should get them to him before the end of the financial year, which is April 1. He would like to hand a clean set of accounts over to the new treasurer.

SLo explained the Green King sponsorship of score sheets for the SCCA. Green King have approved the design, although he is aware that there is opposition to an alcohol sponsor in certain areas. BJ echoed concerns that some parents may not be happy if their children came home with a beer sponsored score sheet. While acknowledging such concerns, it was felt that the project could go ahead and if any clubs/individuals object, clubs can be advised to carry a stock of unbranded score sheets.

In fulfilment of AP 21, SG outlined his proposal for tie break rules in the Rapidplay Knockout competition. "A1.8. In the event of a tie, the match will be decided by a blitz game for which the time control will be 3m+2s (setting 15 on DGT2010). Each team captain will select a team member, who took part in the match, to play. Colours

will be determined by coin toss. The result of the game will be submitted to the ECF for rating. If the game is drawn, the match will be decided by the toss of a coin.” This was accepted and will be put forward for approval at the AGM.

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

Monday 20th May.

**15. Date and venue of 2024 SCCA AGM**

Wednesday 19th June. JM will contact Ipswich for booking the venue (AP29).

## **SUMMARY OF ONGOING ACTION POINTS**

**AP23.** BJ to provide a help sheet for team captains suitable for all clubs to help eliminate accidental board order violations.

**AP24.** BJ to liaise with Tim Kent to review the SCCA Child Protection Policy.

**AP27.** SLe to Alonso Paez to inform him that as long as the Ipswich Sports Club submit their application to SG by the end of July, and that their playing rooms and toilets comply with the SCCA disabled access requirements, they will be admitted. He would add a recommendation that they send someone along to the AGM as well.

**AP28.** SG to propose an amendment to Rule 6 (perhaps a new 6.3) to clarify what is to be understood by the term 'ineligible' in the context of the SCCA Competition Rules.

**AP29.** JM to book the Ipswich venue for the AGM.

## **PROPOSALS FROM THE COMMITTEE TO PUT TO THE AGM**

### **Rule 4.1**

Add the following to the end of the existing rule;

“A player can qualify to play in a rating limited competition on the basis of an estimated rating. However, if their first (non-P) ECF rating is greater than the rating limit, then they can no longer play in the competition.”

### **Rule 5.1**

Delete the last sentence;

“All nominated players must have ECF Membership by the end of October.”  
and replace it with;

“Nominated players must have ECF membership from October and they must continue their membership throughout the season.”

### **Rule 5.2**

Add the following to the end of Rule 5.2;

“If, as a result of a re-nomination, a player, having a ‘main team’, acquires a new ‘main team’ then any earlier appearances for their previous main team will be treated as substitutions and governed by Rule 5.4.”

### **Rule A1.2**

Add the following to the end of the existing rule;

“Extra teams over and above those automatically entered are permitted.”

### **Rule A1.3**

Add the following sentence to the end of this rule;

“Where a club or team does not have an entry in the league the Rapidplay cup team must be nominated in the same way as all League teams.”

#### **Rule A1.4**

Add the following sentence to the end of this rule;  
“Changes to board order between rounds is not permitted.”

#### **Rule A1.6**

Replace the existing rule with;  
“Rapidplay ratings excluding those with suffix P should be used to determine board order. If a player does not have a rapidplay rating, then their current standard play rating should be used. If no standard rating exists then an estimated rating must be used.”

#### **Rule A1.8**

Replace the existing rule with;  
“In the event of a tie, the match will be decided by a blitz game for which the time control will be 3m+2s (setting 15 on DGT2010). Each team captain will select a team member, who took part in the match, to play. Colours will be determined by coin toss. The result of the game will be submitted to the ECF for rating. If the game is drawn, the match will be decided by the toss of a coin.”

#### **Rule A1.11**

Replace the existing rule with;  
“In all other matters including ineligibility penalties this competition defaults to the SCCA league and general rules.”

#### **Rule A3.8**

Replace the existing rule with the following;  
“If the competition is played as an all-play-all league, then the following tie-break rules apply. In the event of a two-way tie, the competition will be decided by using the league tiebreak rule in section 7.1. In the event of a three-way tie, the competition will be decided in favour of the team with the lowest aggregate rating over both matches, excluding defaults on any board.”

#### **Rule A3.9**

Replace the existing rule with the following;  
“If the competition is played as a knock-out, tied matches will be decided by applying the following methods until a result is obtained: (a) board count; (b) by elimination of the lower boards, one by one, until a result is obtained; (c) selecting the team with the lower aggregate rating; (d) by the toss of a coin.”

#### **Rule 9.3.**

Insert the following between the two sentences of the existing rule;  
“A refundable deposit of £20 will be required for such an appeal. If the appeal is successful the deposit will be returned.”