

# **Bournemouth & District Chess League - Captains' Notes for the 2021/22 season**

## **Introduction**

These notes have been updated to give as much support as possible to Captains. We are very fortunate in our League that rule disputes are extremely rare, so the principal intention is to give Captains a little more knowledge and confidence should problems occasionally arise. It is understood there may be some practical difficulties given the current Covid climate so there will be as much flexibility as possible. The most important thing is that Captains discuss any Covid related concerns with each other and where necessary with the League Controller too.

As mentioned in the link <https://www.dorsetchess.co.uk/bdcl-2021-22-restart/> following a B&DCL Committee Meeting in August, it is not the responsibility of the B&DCL to dictate what restrictions there should be (or should not be) for each match. It will be the responsibility of individual venues and clubs to follow UK government guidance and undertake their own risk assessments. However,

- All venues should provide sanitising gel
- All venues should be well ventilated
- Boards should be spaced well apart
- We discourage players from gathering around boards particularly at the end of matches.

Most venues will probably not insist on the wearing of face coverings (masks) and the B&DCL cannot insist on it either given the UK government guidance. However, we encourage face coverings (masks) to be worn, particularly when walking around the playing room. Should a venue insist on the wearing of face coverings (masks), the League Controller and all clubs are to be advised well in advance. If a player is only willing to play if their opponent wears a face covering (mask) then this cannot be enforced but can be agreed by the teams beforehand (and this is to be encouraged). Therefore, some flexibility may need to be required regarding the 10 point grading rule (now the 75 point rating rule) for board order (as there may only be one player in the opposing team who will accommodate the face covering request).

## **The notes are in 4 sections:**

1. The Role of Captains – Are they Arbiters?
2. Captain's Administration
3. Rules Specific to the B&DCL
4. FIDE Rules and Adaptations

### **1. The Role of Captains – Are they Arbiters?**

It would be unfair to expect Captains to have the knowledge demanded of official Arbiters. The ECF see them as more "Administrators", with a League Controller subsequently arbitrating if needed. But it is obviously problematic, as captains are usually players themselves in a match and the League Controller is not present to witness. There may be many situations that might require the Captains to be involved, but mostly queries seem to be around flag fall, so the following might help to start off. Obviously, captains should not be giving any kind of advice to their players on their games during a match, except of course if the interpretation of the laws of chess becomes necessary.

#### **1.1 Flag Fall & Loss on Time**

A common problem in all leagues is everyone missing a flag fall at the end of the game. If a Captain is observing a game and a flag falls such that there is an immediate loss on time, he or she should immediately draw it to the attention of the players and ask that the clocks are stopped to signal a possible

end of the game. Please also see Section 4 , item 26 – the point is made that the players should agree on the actual numbers of moves completed.

Spectators are not permitted to intervene in any circumstances. As a general rule, if a spectator observes something wrong in a game, such as an illegal move, he or she must not intervene directly but instead, bring it to the attention of either Captain. Managing inappropriate spectator interference is tricky, but some guidance is in Section 4, items 14 & 15. When times scrambles are taking place, Captains should try and observe, and if that is not possible because they might be playing, other nominated witnesses may observe. If a flag fall is missed, unless the players agree otherwise, the only realistic option is to carry on the game to the next time control.

Captains are permitted to intervene to ensure the rules of chess are followed, but they must not give advice e.g. if a player is running short of time. Nor must they stop the clocks – only the players can do that, although possibly at the request of the Captains.

## **2. Captain's Administration**

### **2.1 Allocating players to teams**

A reminder: Captains need to allocate players to teams before the season starts. Players are allocated on the basis of the 75 point rating rule which used to be the old 10-point grading rule – e.g. as an example, it would not be acceptable to have a 1750 rated (140 graded) player in a team when there is someone of rating 1833 (151 grade) playing in a lower team. Rather than repeat more here, please refer to the actual B&DCL Rules <https://www.dorsetchess.co.uk/bournemouth-district-league-rules-2/>

### **2.2. Match Result Cards**

Reminder that these are still required to be completed at the outset of the match and the 75 point rating (10 grading points) rule applies. At end of the match they should be signed by both captains and kept, not posted, in case of subsequent query.

### **2.3 Notifying Result**

To be entered on ECF LMS, link on website, ideally by home team Captain and away Captain verifies, but can be other way round. A comment to add interest in the box provided would be great. There is no need to send result direct to the League Controller. The Dorset end of LMS is managed by County Rating Officer, Phil Wallace, who can help with setting up any Captain who needs to enter results and therefore becomes an "owner".

## **3. Rules Specific to the B&DCL**

These are covered here ... <https://www.dorsetchess.co.uk/bournemouth-district-league-rules-2/>

### **3.1 Estimated Ratings**

Clubs are requested to take special care when deciding on estimated ratings (grades) for new unrated (ungraded) players. Good practice includes arranging for several games in the club against varying strengths of opponent before determining the estimated grade. You might even work out a rough rating (grade) based on this. If your new member has played chess in a previous club, please do consider whether this might be relevant. e.g. a phone call to a club secretary could be very helpful. Also, if a new player has played for a club before, but doesn't have a current rating (grade), it may be possible to find some rating (grade) history in the ECF database by including unrated (ungraded) players in the search. If you are still unsure and need

advice, please contact the League Controller. Clubs are asked to kindly agree all estimated ratings (grades) with the League Controller in advance.

Please also note that in accordance with **B&DCL League Club Tournament Rule No.2 – Player Lists**, it is the player's rating on LMS at the start of the season that will be applied throughout the season for the purposes of eligibility and board order. Where a player's rating has been estimated or is clearly inaccurate, this may be subsequently amended by the League Controller in consultation with the clubs.

### **3.2 Team Orders**

When matches take place, there is no stipulation, or interpretation that players have to play in strict grade order. At the 2018 AGM the requirement to organise teams in “playing strength order” was removed. It all means there is some flexibility on this to reflect known local circumstances, but reminder the 75 point rating (10 point grading) rule must apply – in other words, you should not be playing above someone in the team who is rated more than 75 points (10 points grading) higher than you. There can be extenuating circumstances, such as when a substitute comes in for someone who doesn't turn up or due to Covid reasons (e.g. to ensure that face coverings are worn by both players on the same board in opposing teams) and both captains agree. Please note though, if there is no agreement by both captains then the 75 point rating (10 point grading) rule does still apply (this is referred to in the B&DCL Rules themselves).

### **3.3 The Reserve Places Model**

A player listed in a lower division, who plays as a reserve in a higher division will use 1 reserve place each time this occurs. A team playing 10 league games is entitled to 10 Reserve Places for the season, 12 league games then 12 Reserve Places and so on. Teams cannot exceed their allocation of Reserve Places at any stage of the season. But if they re-allocate a Reserve to the higher team for the rest of the season, then all previous Reserve Places used by that player are “refunded”. There is no limit on the number of times any player can play in a higher team, providing the Reserve Places maximum for that team has not been exceeded. This is referred to in B&DCL League Rule No.3 in the B&DCL Rules themselves. A running total of Reserve Places used for each club is available on the website and will be updated regularly during the season.

### **3.4 Starting Times**

Prompt starts are expected at all venues. Clocks will be started then unless another time is agreed. Some clubs are contracted to leave their premises by a certain time, so it may be worth checking this before play starts, if unsure. Obviously with Time Increments it is not possible to set a fixed finish time, but the introduction of Time Increments is not expected to make matches generally longer. However, team captains may want to consider what they would do if a game using Time Increments did run beyond “locking up time”.

### **3.5 Time Controls**

The B&DCL Division 1 & Division 2 Time Increments for season 2021/22, is 1 hour + 30 secs a move (except where digital clocks cannot be provided). The same Time Increments can be used for Divisions 3 to 5, but only if the Captains agree in advance otherwise it will be 35 moves in 1¼ hours and 15 minutes each to finish game. There are no adjournments.

### **3.6 Match Postponements**

The Captain of any team wishing to postpone a match must first seek the approval of the League Controller and a minimum of 5 days' notice should be given. This permission will only be given if there is a very good reason and both teams are in agreement. This does not include a particular player being unavailable and

there are reserves on hand. In any case, a postponed match must be played within 28 days of the original fixture date. Clubs are asked to postpone matches as a last resort please.

### **3.7 Mobile Phones**

It was agreed at the 2018 B&DCL AGM that with a mobile phone going off accidentally it should result in a caution, rather than immediate loss of the game. Only if there is a repeat in the same match should that player lose the game. The opponent shall win. However, in this unlikely situation, if the opponent cannot win the game by any series of legal moves, the game shall be a draw. If a player is required to have their mobile phone turned on during play (e.g. for work or health reasons), that player must advise both team captains of this, as well as his opponent prior to commencement of the game.

### **3.8 Southbourne tea-break**

It is customary that at Southbourne Chess Club, matches be suspended for a short tea-break about halfway through the playing session

### **3.9 Dispute Resolution**

In cases of disputes, in the first instance, the captains of the respective teams are requested to jointly fulfil the role of arbiter. In the event that captains are unavailable then the players must attempt to resolve the dispute. If a dispute cannot be resolved on the match night, the clocks should be stopped, clock times and position on the board recorded, and these details, along with a written submission as appropriate by both parties, should be sent to the League Controller through the Match Captains within 72 hours (this is now referred to in the B&DCL Rules themselves).

## **4. FIDE Rules & Adaptations**

### **4.1 General - Awareness of basic rules**

No independent arbiter is normally present, of course, during team or individual matches. This places responsibility on both individuals and captains to be aware of the basic rules, and to act in a reasonable and sportsman-like manner when faced with any unusual circumstances that may arise, particularly those involving a possible infringement of the rules. For example, Club Captains are asked to be aware of the “2 minute rule” for quickplay finishes that allows a player to claim a draw if his or her opponent cannot win by reasonable play, or he or she is making no effort to win. Also Captains need to be mindful about illegal moves, e.g. taking position back and potentially awarding 2 minutes to the opponent).

### **4.2 Some Useful FIDE Rules of Chess**

1	If a flag fall is missed by everyone, can a loss be retrospective?	Yes, the claim can still be made after the event if the required number of moves have not been reached and if both flags have not fallen.
2	Is there a penalty for an illegal move?	Yes, typically 2 minutes are added to the opponent's clock. In some leagues and tournaments, a 2 <sup>nd</sup> illegal move loses the game. However, loss of game is not enforced in our leagues
3.	Offer of a draw, how & can it be withdrawn?	Make move, offer draw, press clock. It cannot be withdrawn.

4	Touching pieces — a player picks up their piece and in displacing an opponent's piece to take, realises it is a mistake. So, he or she decides on a different move with their piece. Is this acceptable?	No. He or she must go ahead with full original move which included taking a piece, providing of course, it is legal.
5	What 3 material situations in chess are technically impossible to win from according to FIDE rules?	(1) K v K & B (2) K v K & N (3) K & B v K & B (when bishops of the same colour) <i>This is something of a trick question, as many other situations may be considered a draw, e.g. K &amp; N v K &amp; N, but a mate is technically possible in them according to FIDE. However, may be common sense to agree a draw!</i>
6.	Can a draw be claimed if it is impossible to win?	Yes, it becomes an automatic draw, without needing to claim, if it is impossible to checkmate by any series of legal moves.
7.	Does it matter if a player is not recording the moves in a non-quickplay game?	Yes, FIDE rules require recording, except the 5 minutes before a time control. Once the time control is met however, the moves should be made up by that player and in their own time. With Time Increments of 1hr + 30secs all moves must be recorded.
8	What completes a move?	Pressing the clock
9.	When castling, do the rules say how it should be done?	Yes, the king should be moved first otherwise it is technically a rook move.
10.	Illegal move discovered after the game. Is the game void?	No, the result stands.
11.	White or Black castles, but the king passes through check from an opposing bishop. Is this permissible?	No, it would be an illegal move.
12.	Can a draw be claimed if the same position is reached 3 times?	Yes if it is the same person to move.
13.	Can an offer of a draw be made on conditions?	No
14.	Can spectators intervene?	No, spectators may only make comments to one, or both of the captains and away from the players.
15.	What happens if a spectator does make a comment?	In the first instance, they should be warned by the captains it is not acceptable and if repeated, asked to leave the playing area. In an extreme situation, such as pointing out a clock is to fall, the captains might pause the game — ask that spectator to leave the immediate playing area and allow the game to continue, but then submit a report to the League Controller.
16	A player accidentally touches a piece — must he or she move it?	No

17.	In what circumstances can a draw be claimed using the 2-minute rule?	If there are less than 2 minutes on the clock in a guillotine finish, blocked position or opponent making no reasonable effort to win.
18.	Does a claim using the 2-minute rule effectively end the game?	Yes, unless the captains decided the claim was invalid, in which case the game continues. However, if the captains cannot agree, then B&DCL Rule 3.8 "Disputes" applies.
19.	Does the 2-minute rule apply when Time Increments are used?	No.
20.	It is not anticipated the use of Time Increments will make games longer. However, and exceptionally, a game might go on beyond, say, 70 moves and the premises have to close at 11pm. Is there a provision for this?	No provision in the rules. However, common sense must prevail and, exceptionally, captains might need to intervene if a game showed no signs of finishing and clubs have to close etc. One option, which would need to be agreed by captains in advance of the match starting, is when 70 moves are reached, the clocks are adjusted to a quickplay finish with 5 minutes for each player, but carrying over any time from play up to that point. Please note that the 5 minute FIDE rule (no longer required to keep score) and 2 minute FIDE rule (claiming a draw if the opponent is no longer trying to win by normal means other than on time) will then have to be reintroduced after move 70 if players become short of time.
21.	The players are playing on in a drawn position and one loses on time. Is that an acceptable result?	Yes unless it would have been impossible to win by any series of legal moves (please also see 6 above).
22.	How many moves without a piece being taken, or no pawn moves for it to be a draw?	50 but but a draw <u>must</u> be claimed, otherwise game continues.
23.	What is the 75-move rule?	The game is drawn if the last 75 moves have been completed by each player without the movement of any pawn and without any capture - even though neither player has claimed a draw (note: same as 50 move rule, when one of the players claims it is a draw).
24.	A player claims the game is drawn as there have been no pawn moves or pieces taken for 50 moves. However, this claim is not correct as a pawn did move. What should happen?	Unless the players now agree otherwise, the game continues and the opponent should be awarded 2 minutes on his or her clock.
25.	In determining the result of a match are board count and board elimination the same thing? (not applicable, of course, to league matches in B&DCL & County League)	No. Board count add together boards each team won and winner is the lowest aggregate. Board elimination is to keep taking out bottom board until there is a result.
26.	A flag falls and White or Black claims a win on time. What should happen?	Stop the clocks and check both players agree on number of moves played.

27.	When promoting a pawn, does it have to be placed on the square of arrival?	No, typically the pawn is removed and the new piece replaces it, but on the square of promotion.
28.	How does a draw by repetition come about?	The same position must occur for a third time with the same person to move. These positions can occur at any time during the game — they do not have to be in sequence. The position is NOT the same if an en passant capture is possible on the first occasion, or the right to castle has been lost between occurrences. If a player wishes to repeat the position and claim a draw, he or she must write down his or her next move. He or she must not play it.
29.	When recording, is Bxg3 the same as Bg3, when the bishop takes the piece on that square?	It is, but potentially confusing. Bxg3 is better and clearer. But under FIDE rules to show a piece is being taken is optional.
30.	After 5 moves it is realised the players have the wrong colours. What should happen?	Abandon the game and restart up to 9 moves. If 10 moves have been played then keep playing.
31.	A player starts the opponent's clock before making their move. Is this an infringement?	Yes, technically it is an illegal move and typically 2 mins should be added to the opponent's clock.
32.	Does it matter what notation is used to record moves?	Yes, it should be algebraic, but descriptive will not be penalised.
33.	With Time Increments set at 30secs a move or more, must all moves be recorded?	Yes
34.	Time scramble. If only one player has not been recording, his or her scoresheet must be made up, in his or her own time, after flag fall. True or false?	True
35.	If a draw offer is made before moving is it a valid offer?	Yes, but the opponent may wait to see the move.
36.	How can an offer of a draw be turned down?	Orally or by touching a piece to move it.
37.	What is the definition of a Rapidplay game?	More than 10 mins each but less than 60 mins.
38.	If a piece is pinned against its own king, can it still give check to the opponent's king.	Yes
39.	A player wishes to adjust a piece on the board. What is the procedure?	Only the player having the move may adjust one or more pieces on their squares, provided that he or she first expresses his or her intention (for example by saying "j'adoube" or "I adjust").
40.	Distracting opponents, is it an offence?	Yes. Players may need to be cautioned if they are distracting or annoying their opponent, e.g. continually asking to check the other player's

		scoresheet.
41.	Can an upturned rook substitute for a queen (promoted pawn)?	Disapproved by FIDE. Suggest last resort and spare queens should be available.
42.	Can you make your move with one hand and press the clock with the other?	The FIDE rules actually say the same hand should do both!
43.	Player B moves, Player A moves and then records both moves on his or her scoresheet. Is this acceptable?	Yes, but no more than these 2 moves at any point in the game.

**Martin Simons – Acting B&DCL League Controller**