

Chess Scotland Management Board

Date: Wednesday 13 October 2021.

Minutes of meeting

Apologies: D Congalton

In attendance: J Webster, I Brownlee, A Howie, D Bryson, H Marron, R McKay, A Tate, A Maxwell

1. Announcements

- a. Alan Tate successfully obtained an Award from the FIDE Planning and Development Commission for the European Team Championships 2021
- b. Andy Howie has been formally selected as a Deputy Chief Arbiter for upcoming 2021 World Championship Match in Dubai, UAE.

2. Annual General Meeting

- a. AGM Dates / COVID Delays
With high COVID numbers, despite the good vaccination rates the board considered that holding an AGM in November is not practical.
- b. All going well, we therefore plan to call the AGM in March 2022.
- c. Current Directors
In the interim all directors will remain in their current posts until the formal AGM is presented.
- d. Directors Reports
All directors are now requested to produce their reports to the Executive Director and the Annual Report will be published by the end of November.
At the AGM designated directors will be elected for 1-year tenure and the remaining directors will be elected for 2-year tenure. This will, in effect, bring the AGM cycle back into the requirements.
- e. Audited accounts
The accounts have been submitted to the Auditors and await formal approval and publication.
- f. Management Board positions
There are currently three Management Board positions unfilled.
 - i. Home Director
 - ii. Scottish Championship Director
 - iii. Marketing & Sponsorship Director
- g. Motions and proposals
 - i. New motions or proposals should be formally formatted and submitted for the March AGM
 - ii. 2019 Eligibility Working Party (EWP)
 1. The working party set up at the November 2019 AGM reported in February 2020 and proposed 2 motions to be considered by the membership. The covid lockdown stopped further consideration of the proposals until now.
 2. The first motion proposed by the EWP asks for eligibility rules to be included within the constitution which would require a 2/3rd of the members polled for the vote to succeed. The motion would also carry on a simple majority but would not be included in the constitution.
 3. The second motion proposed by the EWP requires a simple majority vote of members polled. (Please view details of the background of the EWP motions in Addendum 1).

3. Grading Matters

- a. Changes to grading system calculations were discussed in relation to the covid lockdown on the grading system and the impact on the standard-play grades of juniors.
 - i. The standard-play grades of the most improved juniors will be adjusted if they play standard-play OTB games in the new 2021-22 season.

- ii. Dedicated junior OTB events will now follow adult rules for time control eligibility. (Please see Addendum 2 for full details.)

4. Finances - Memberships

- a. Club Memberships

The Board has decided that the Club Membership fee be reduced by 50% for Season 2021/22. We have taking into consideration the slow, but gradual, return of clubs and have taking this action for the current season.

The modified fees have now been posted on the CS Website and the Membership Secretary will advise as and when Memberships are due <https://www.chessscotland.com/membership/join/>

- b. Individual Memberships

These are unchanged. The extensions for individual memberships were previously announced and can be found listed on the website.

- c. The Benefits for Members page has been updated and published on the CS website. It now refers to both individuals and clubs.

5. Scottish Championships 2021 & 2022

- a. 2021 – Andy Howie will arrange and manage an Online Championship in December

- b. 2022 – We are actively seeking a venue. The original venue has made changes to adapt for COVID suitability and is, unfortunately, no longer suitable for our needs.

- i. Ian Brownlee is currently looking for suitable venues

- ii. Preferred dates are 2nd – 9th July 2022. Later dates will clash with the British Championship with the subsequent dates for the 2022 Olympiad (OTB)

6. Richardson/Spens Cup

- a. It was agreed not to hold Home Director events for this coming season. This includes both the Richardson and Spens cups events.

- b. It was decided to officially announce the formal cancellation of the competitions from the 2019-2020 season.

7. Other Matters

- a. Commonwealth Championship

This will be held online, with South Africa being the organisers

- b. Social Media Presence

Whilst submitting a grant application for the Euro Team event, FIDE suggested that the Scotland federation should consider putting a social media link on the CS website. A Facebook account already exists and should be added as a link on the CS website and in a suitable position on the front page

Eligibility Issues – Addendum 1

Motion 1: An Eligibility Working Party (EWP) was set up after the 2019 AGM and over four months from early November 2019 to mid-February 2020 examined the rules and procedures related to eligibility for Championship titles and International representation.

Over a period of years directors have introduced changes to existing policy not all of which have been discussed, publicised, explained or endorsed by AGM votes. This has resulted in various documents relating to rules on eligibility which are not always fully consistent with other documents e.g. entry forms, rule books.

The method by which players are initially allocated a FIDE ID and eligibility for a Scotland (SCO) registration was the subject of extensive EWP debate. The long-term eligibility criteria of parentage, birthplace and residence will continue but with some modifications to the application process.

The 2016 AGM ruling which restricted eligibility to Championship titles to only holders of a Scotland registration (SCO) was of particular significance and changed the previous policy which permitted non-Scot residents to have title eligibility. The lack of documentation about how the rule was to be implemented and how existing rules were to be modified led directly to confusion over eligibility for the 2019 Championship title. This resulted in a challenge to the initial title award and subsequent AGM motions which modified the result. The 2019 Championship difficulties provoked the desire for clarification on eligibility issues.

The EWP proposes that a new set of eligibility conditions which are broadly in line with the historic and generally accepted procedures be placed in the Constitution to state more clearly what are the eligibility principles which should be followed for championships and international play. If the rules are in the Constitution, it should minimise divergence from established procedure and provide a source document for anyone seeking CS rules on eligibility.

Motion 2:

The EWP propose that members vote on GM Matthew Turner (MT) to provide clarification on the future rights of the player to Championship titles and International representation.

Chess Scotland has never made a definitive statement on what rights are held by MT. This failure led directly to the 2019 Championship confusion.

It is now over 10 years since the initial vote by members to grant MT SCO status at the 2011 AGM. The circumstances of the registration were unique since the player offered grandparent as the bloodline connection to Scotland. The long-term eligibility criteria has been a Scottish parent is required for non-resident/non birthplace players. Two subsequent votes did not extend eligibility to grandparent level.

If members vote Yes, they agree with the proposal, then Matthew Turner will then have the same normal rights as any other SCO badged player from the date of the 2022 AGM.

If members vote No, they disagree then Matthew Turner would retain his Scotland registration but would only qualify for full SCO rights if he completed a two-year period of residency (or a further grandparent vote is passed).

A more detailed summary of the issues and contrary opinion behind the motions will be published when notice is given for the AGM early in the New Year.

Grading Issues – Addendum 2

Adjustment 1 – Adjust the standard-play grade to zero of those players who have a published Allegro grade at least 200 points higher than their published Standard grade after they record at least 8 gradable standard-play results in the new 2021-22 season.

Adjustment 2 – Adjust the eligible time control for all-junior events to be the same as adult time controls i.e. a minimum 1 hour each to be eligible for standard-play processing. (The previous junior time control permitted all-junior events of 25 minutes or more to be processed for standard-play).

Introduction: The shutdown of OTB activity since March 2020 means that the grading system has not had the usual level of data flowing through the system. In July 2020 we decided to try and keep grading ticking over by processing online data in the allegro system. Online allegro processing has continued into the new 2022 season.

Some OTB standard-play results have recently been processed for the new season. However these are all from tournaments held outside Scotland e.g. Northumbria Masters, Northumberland Congress, and the British Championships. A few Scottish clubs have restarted and submitted OTB standard-play data. There are currently (Oct 28, 2021) no OTB tournaments listed on the CS calendar.

We can only speculate how the covid situation will play out in relation to chess activity. The current guess would be that a normal pre-covid complement of league, club and congress play will not be in place for many months. These grading adjustments are prompted by the current situation and the estimate of future chess activity.

The lack of standard-play data should not affect adult ratings by much since most adult players have stable grades which should be little changed even after a prolonged period of minimal activity. We do not adjust inactive adult grades at all when players return to the game until more than 10 years have elapsed. (We do not use old grades in the case of players who left the game as a junior.)

However lack of activity has a much greater impact on junior players who are expected to increase annually on average by the level of junior additions and for several players their level of increase can be significant over a short period. Because of lockdown junior standard grades have not improved at all since there has been no data for 18 months and only a minor restart now. This has implications for the juniors themselves and also their opponents - the old grade will not show their true level of ability and opponents are victimised by only getting credit for playing against an old out of date grade.

Adjustment 1 will revise the grades of the most improved players.

The CS grading system has a 200-up mechanism by which fast improving players are processed as new players if their initial calculations indicate they are at least 200 points higher than their previous published grade. This will usually mean that once the 200-up trigger is met a grade will increase well beyond 200 since the arithmetic is not held back by the old grade. However at this stage we do not know just how much OTB activity there will be this season. It may be that when these improved players take part in standard OTB they do not manage to record enough games to pass the initial hurdle of being classed as a 200-up player.

The adjustment will use the information available from the online processing of allegro data to revise the most improved players who are 200 or more points higher in published allegro compared to published standard-play - there are about 40 such players, nearly all juniors.

Once this group of players record at least 8 standard-play games their standard grade will be adjusted to zero and they will start again as ungraded. They will then get full credit for their standard-play results this season without being held back by the published grade. The proposal is effectively a faster version of 200-up – faster is required since we do not know what the likely level of OTB this season. Opponents will get credit for an estimate which is much more realistic than the published grade and will be adjusted throughout the season as new data is submitted and processed.

It may be the case that some very active juniors will play several OTB events and would hit 200-up anyway but for others less active it be they get stuck with a standard grade which is too low. This adjustment should lessen the problem for these players if they play standard-play this season (provided they rack up 8 or more results). If other juniors not in this group of 40 play well above grade when they play OTB standard-play, then they will as normal go 200-up if they get to that level.

2) Time Control for Junior Grading.

(This issue relates to events where every player in the event is a junior i.e. an “all-junior” event. It is not indicating any change to junior grade processing when a junior competes in an event along with adults.)

The grading of younger all-junior data did not start seriously until the 1990s. Minimum grades were only lowered from 600 to 300 in 1992-93 season and later to 100 minimum to accommodate the influx of younger, lower-level players. The phenomenon was UK-wide with many players starting (and finishing) their chess careers in primary school rather than previously as teenagers. At the time the decision was made to maximise sample size by putting all junior data through the standard-play list without any great regard for time control, even some games played without clocks were processed. The allegro list did not get a regular publication in tandem with the standard-play list until the 1995-96 season at which point there was some debate to move junior games to that list.

There was an AGM decision taken in 2008 to regulate junior time control to a minimum of 25 minutes to be eligible for the standard-play list (the AGM motion passed was 30 mins, but later amended to 25).

The covid lockdown and lack of junior activity has affected junior grades such that allegro grades supported by online data have now become a more reliable indicator of junior strength. Standard grades have been stuck with no data since March 2020 and they will continue to become progressively more out of date as each month passes.

It would be beneficial if data from all-junior events was now only processed for the allegro system since it would remove most of the out-of-date junior grades from standard-play processing. If juniors understand that their data is going to the allegro system, then they will realise that is the marker by which players are ranked and how they can compare themselves with their peers. Allegro grades are already being used for selections to online events.

This change would mean that most juniors in future will not be able to get a standard-play grade until they compete in an adult OTB congress, league, or club event. Those juniors who already have a current standard grade will lose that grade if they complete three years of zero standard-play data. All grades 600 and below are normally deleted if a player is inactive (however this year we retained several 600 and below players since they had been active in the allegro system).

These changes will require further consideration and possible adjustments. Announcements on these and other issues will follow. Will the accelerated 200-up adjustment be required in future seasons? When should allegro grades go inactive? (currently immediately a player records a zero game season); which grade will be used when a player starts or restarts allegro? (currently the standardplay grade is used); the 200-up rule replaces allegro grades with an estimate but that will not be appropriate if allegro is the main source of junior data.

The CS grading system is currently being overhauled and rewritten by programmer Andrew McHarg which also involves extensive work on a revamped website to host the changes and enhance user experience in all viewing modes. Calculation changes have not been possible since the current version of the program was written almost 15 years ago and some of the speculated changes in the previous paragraph will not be possible until we again have control of the program's arithmetic. The accelerated 200-up adjustment requires a simple manual change and is in place now. Time-control eligibility does not involve calculation changes.