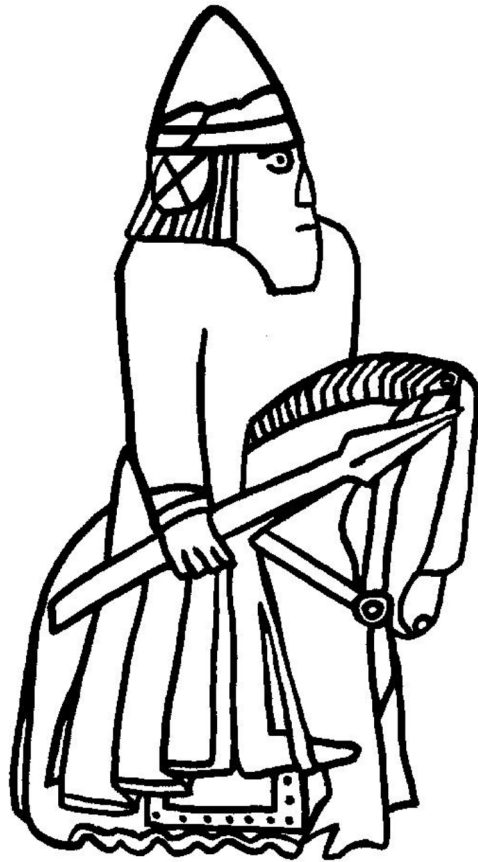


Chess Scotland



Quality Guide to Organising a Chess Club

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Authors: Walter Munn and Gerry Wilson (1999)

Revised: Alex McFarlane (2010)

Section 1 - Introduction - Things you need to know and getting started

The purpose of this document is to bring together some ideas of how to run an effective chess club, and in particular what to do to start a club. Many of the ideas here are simply an application of common sense. Some of them will be appropriate to clubs in a particular area, some of them to clubs of a particular size. I hope that you will find much in the document that is of use to you, and we will be pleased to have comments from you about the contents, good or bad, for inclusion in future issues.

Why have a Chess Club?

There are many opportunities to play chess provided by the Internet. This can be an excellent way of starting to play competitive chess and indeed of improving your skills. However, many people welcome the social aspects of a chess club and the opportunities that a good club provides for coaching (both formal and informal), the social interaction and the opportunities provided to discuss chess problems, suggest opening strategies and analyse previous games. The Internet does not provide you with the opportunity to see your opponent's face as you launch your mating attack.

Club and Competitive Chess

Before you begin, it might be useful to understand something about what competitive chess is all about, as it is likely that your club or your members will be participating in competitive chess at some time. Firstly let's discuss strength. The measure of a chess player's strength is his or her



grading. The higher the grading the stronger the player - a world championship contender will be graded in excess of 2700, while the leading Scottish players are graded around 2500. An average club player will be around 1500, while a new or occasional player will be around 1000 or below. These grading numbers are called ELO numbers after the inventor of the grading system, Professor Arpad Elo. There is no absolute scale of grades, they are just a set of numbers which give an estimate of a players playing strength relative to another player. If a player quotes an Internet grade this

will probably be inflated when compared to a Scottish one.

If you play at least 8 gradeable games and score at least half a point you will get a grade of 100 or more. Grades are computed and fixed officially once a year when the new grading list is published in August. These "published grades" are based on games between July 1 to July 1 of the year preceding publication. Graded players should quote this published grade when entering tournaments.

New (fluctuating) grades are continually displayed throughout the year in the CS online grading system. Therefore you do not have to wait until August to see your new grade - but only until you have the minimum number of games and points when your new grade will appear immediately in the online display (assuming the games have been submitted for grading).

Next a word about Tournaments. Allegro tournaments are one day or one evening events. As the name implies the rate of play is quite quick with a player having 15-30 minutes to play an entire game. These can provide a useful introduction to competitive chess.

For chess at a more leisurely pace there are tournaments held over a weekend as part of a chess congress, and provide events of different strength. Here periods of 3 to 4 hours are allowed for a game.

Whichever type of tournament you prefer, these are held throughout the country during the year. Club members - especially those in search of a grading are encouraged to play in congresses to obtain further practice and so improve their playing standard.



Details of forthcoming events are updated every week in the Chess Scotland website calendar.

Most chess tournaments are run as a Swiss tournament. This is a competition which gives everyone the same number of games and is designed with the intention of producing a unique winner. It works like this. Round 1 may be seeded or paired at random. In each game the winner normally receives 1 point, the loser 0, or in the event of a draw, $\frac{1}{2}$ points each.

(Occasionally a points system of win = 3 pts, draw = 1, and loss = 0 is employed.) For round 2, the round winners are drawn against each other in pairs, as are the losers and those with the $\frac{1}{2}$ point. The process of pairing players on like number of points continues in subsequent rounds and as the tournament progresses the idea is that you get more games against players closer to your own standard. You should not play an opponent more than once and attempts are made to alternate colours.

So much for an understanding of the competitive chess scene. How about the practicalities of organising a club. The first thing is to decide when and where to meet.

Meetings

You should plan on having club nights at least once a week on fixed evenings. There are various factors involved in selecting which evening and the following considerations may prove helpful.

Monday: Often a holiday, which means that people are away or your venue is closed.

Tuesday: May clash with domestic or European football matches.

Wednesday: Breaks up the week but again often clashes with football matches.

Thursday: A smaller chance of football interruptions.

Friday: People have other things to do on a Friday evening or go away for the weekend. It may even clash with a chess congress.

Saturday: Here you have the possibility of not only evenings but mornings and afternoons as well. This can be a possibility if you want to attract very young players but can also act as a deterrent to those with families and other commitments.

Sunday: It may be more difficult and more expensive to find premises.

You should also consider other local activities with which you might clash.

Most clubs start between 7 and 7.30 p.m. and finish between 10 and 10.30 p.m. If you plan to enter competitions, you will probably need at least $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours for a playing session (game) plus set-up and tidy-up time. Remember to allow for the fact that the venue may close at a specified time such as 10 p.m.

Another thing to be considered is how many weeks in the year the club will meet. Some clubs meet 52 weeks a year, others close for a period over the summer. Light nights and summer holidays will usually mean a drop-off in numbers. It must be decided if the numbers coming provide sufficient competition for each other as well as whether it is financially viable.

Premises

Selection of a place for your club to meet can be very difficult. Factors such as cost and noise can be particularly trying. If you intend to play serious competitive chess, it is important that you find somewhere that is not too noisy. Schools, Community Centres, Church Halls and Hotels are often useful places to consider. You should ensure that they are adequately heated for winter use. The point in the previous section about closing time is very important here as you need to ensure that you have sufficient time to tidy up before you leave the building. It is also worth noting whether you will need to do any set-up work yourself each evening - such as putting up tables. This can be a very tedious process that should be avoided if at all possible. When inspecting potential venues you should try to do so at the time your club is likely to meet. This will allow you to examine the lighting conditions (matches need good lighting) and noise levels. Another important consideration is the tables and chairs provided by a venue. Whilst a padded chair and coffee table may be acceptable for one friendly game of chess, these will prove to be too low for an evening of chess. Similarly many potential venues will have tables that are too broad to stretch across or too narrow to hold a regular sized chess board.

Social Clubs and Bars often have function suites which you can use. If this type of premises is to be used restrictions on junior membership may have to be considered.

Funding

The question of funding is a difficult issue for a new club. Start-up costs for equipment can be a high one-time expense. It may be appropriate to seek grants from local community groups, the local authority or other organisations. These are often more readily obtainable if juniors are involved. Grant applications may require the club to have a Constitution.

One-time joining fees for new members are another possible source of revenue.

On an ongoing basis you will certainly need a subscription, possibly set at different levels for adults and juniors. Most subscriptions are annual ones but some clubs offer monthly options. Many clubs also give discounts for 'fixed income' categories such as Senior Citizens, UB40s and students. In addition, some clubs also have a 'board fee'. This is a sum which is collected on a per-meeting basis from attending members. The sum will depend on your expenditure levels, but typically board fees are between 50p and £2. The downside of board fees is that someone has to collect them, and usually the treasurer is distracted from his chess in order to do this.

A bank account should also be opened. Many banks operate 'Treasurers Accounts' which are specifically aimed at clubs and essentially operate as interest bearing cheque accounts. It is usually good practice to ensure that more than one signature is required to operate the account, and that the signatures are not restricted to only 2 people - schemes such as any 2 from 3 signatures is quite popular and covers situations such as the illness or holiday of one of the signatories.

The bank paperwork can be rather tedious and it is recommended that a copy of the bank form which details how the account is operated and who the signatories are is made and retained. Banks usually require minutes of committee meetings where resolutions are passed about opening or changing a bank account to be presented. Banks may also ask for a copy of the club constitution. The signatories will almost certainly need to go to a branch of the bank to establish their identity.

Equipment

It is strongly recommended that any equipment you need is bought from a specialist chess supplier who will understand your requirements and be best able to meet your needs at an optimum price.

Whilst members own boards and sets can be used initially, reasonable quality equipment should be purchased as soon as possible. Good plastic sets are available at a reasonable price and have the advantage that individual pieces if lost can be easily replaced.



If you plan to engage in serious competition, some chess clocks will also be required. The numbers of these will depend on how many members you have and the number of games that will be required in a match if you join a local league. Analogue clocks tend to be cheaper than the more modern electronic (digital) ones. The latter do have more flexibility and allow for a variety of different times to be used, including incremental ones where extra time is added with each move.

A copy of the Laws of Chess is also useful. These can be downloaded from the FIDE (the world body) website www.FIDE.com or from Chess Scotland's own site www.ChessScotland.com.

All of the above covers initial purchases. On a regular basis it will be necessary to purchase scoresheets for the recording of moves. These tend to come in packs of 500 and that quantity should easily suffice for a first season. In order to continue games over more than one evening, which may be an option of your local league, adjournment envelopes might also be required.

Storage

It will be necessary to acquire something to store the equipment. It may be that there will be a cupboard or other storage facility available at your meeting place. If there are no facilities available,

a trunk or chest should be acquired. Either way it needs to be secured, and a combination padlock is often the best means of achieving this. Keys are easily lost and a combination lock means that you don't have to pass the keys around different people, depending on who is going to be present on a given night, or leaving the keys with the premises supplier.

Insurance

Once equipment has been acquired, and even more so if there is a trophy, it will be necessary to insure it. Chess Scotland operates an insurance scheme which is very reasonably priced, and use of it is to be encouraged.

Constitution and Rules

It is important that a constitution is drawn up and perhaps some rules. This will save many arguments later! Exactly what goes in the constitution will vary from one club to the next, but as a minimum, the club's name, purpose, arrangements for Annual and Special General Meetings, Office Bearers, and Subscription arrangements should be included. Constitutions normally also contain something about voting arrangements, especially at General Meetings, such as a $\frac{2}{3}$ or $\frac{3}{4}$ majority being required for constitutional changes. It is therefore important that precise rates of subscriptions and other items liable to regular change are omitted from a constitution. Arrange to have your constitution printed and filed for future reference.

A separate rules section is often useful for items which require regular change without the full force of a General Meeting. As noted above, detailed subscription rates and matters such as whether 5-minute chess is allowed with the club clocks may be included here.

Committee

The week-to-week running of the club should be done by a small committee. The size of this will obviously depend on the number of members in the club, but should be somewhere between 3 and 8 people. The club should have a Secretary to deal with all correspondence including entry to leagues and other competitions where appropriate and to receive details of chess events. There should also be a Treasurer to deal with the financial matters which will arise such as league fees and hall rental. Among other duties, a committee member should be allocated to look after everything on club meeting nights, and in particular to handle any prospective new members who turn up. Other positions on the Committee may be allocated to team captains and a representative of the junior section.

Record Keeping

At some time in the future, someone may want to write a history of your club or look back at some events in your past. It is therefore recommended that you keep some records such as membership lists, detailed match results, internal tournament winners etc. to assist this process.

Section 2 - Publicity

Chess like any other sport or game is always looking to promote itself. For the chess club this is essential in order to attract new members. New members are always required. The nature of any sport or pastime is that it can only be done by those with free time. This will naturally vary for a person from time to time and so members will be lost. It is therefore important to maximise ways of obtaining new members to retain stability. Publicity becomes an important matter. It may be helpful to appoint one person to co-ordinate this.



For a new club the local paper may be willing to carry a story about its formation and aspirations in a prominent position.

There are several ways of maximising your club's potential and of encouraging growth such as:

Advertising

There are various avenues of advertising to let people know where, why and what your club is all about.

- a) Inform your local community centre, libraries and local shops. A card or notice giving all the club's details - name, place, time and night you meet and a contact phone number for further enquiries - usually the secretary.
- b) Have a club web page. Putting together a web page with contact details and times of meetings is not too difficult, nor expensive. If news pages are to be included then these should be regularly updated. Out of date pages will discourage new members.
- c) Get in touch with schools (secondary and primary) in your area. This is a very positive step for a couple of reasons - to encourage juniors of all ages to take up the game of chess and to secure the long term future of the club. It may be useful to appoint someone who is prepared to give a bit of his time to promote such a venture.
- d) Call the local newspaper (if you have one) - they are always looking to fill their pages. Again let them know of your club's details. If there are any special events, let them know this as well, and preferably give them a report afterwards.
- e) A much under used facility is information centres. They provide those who may be just visiting or someone who have just moved into the area with the necessary details.
- f) Send your details to the CS Membership Secretary to list on the Chess Scotland website.
- g) Use local radio - local radio stations often have free "what's on" guides.
- h) Local chess congresses - ask the organiser if you can put up a notice at any congress in your area to advertise your club.
- i) If there is a University or College in your area, then its student union may be a good place to advertise, especially if they don't have a club of their own.
- j) If there is a large company in your area, then its social club, if



they have one, is also a potential source of new members

- k) Organise special activities such as a 'simul' where a member of the club takes on all comers, several at the same time, at a local shopping centre or fête or hold an open air tournament.
- l) A newsletter which can be sent electronically to members and other interested parties can be produced.
- m) Word of mouth is still a good way to attract new members. Your current members are ambassadors of the club and should provide a welcoming environment to visitors as well as talking enthusiastically about the club to friends and workmates.

Sponsorship

There is much to be gained from sponsorship - promoting your club's name via local businesses.

- a) Sponsorship with local businesses (solicitors, shops, insurances etc.) can be good for both parties. It is usually helpful in obtaining sponsorship if you have a contact within the business in which you are seeking sponsorship. This is particularly useful in making contact at the right level in the potential sponsor - the person who can say yes or no. Sometimes your club members may be useful contacts in this respect.
- b) Sponsorship with your local authority. It is often worthwhile approaching your local authority for grants etc. especially if you have some event or anniversary to commemorate. Some local authorities for example give civic receptions for organisations that have been in existence for a specific number of years (e.g. 50). This in turn generates further publicity or at least an excuse for a story in the local paper, as well as some awareness amongst your local civic representatives.

Chess Columns



Continuing the theme of the local newspaper from above, it may be an idea to offer to write a regular chess column in your local newspaper. You don't need to be a strong player to do this. Much of the time you can fill the column with club news - just another form of publicity. Names sell papers, so the more local names you can mention the greater the chance of the column being accepted. If a member has success, remember to mention his or her place of employment. The owner of the company may appreciate the free publicity and may be more amenable to allowing time off for

competitions or may become a sponsor.

A regular problem is often acceptable to the editor. These should generally be easy enough for casual players to solve.

Don't forget 'Scottish Chess', the magazine of the Chess Scotland. Tell it about your club champion and other events you run.

Section 3 - Events

Now that we have our club up and running with lots of members we can now sit back and enjoy a nice friendly game of chess, or can we. It's important for the club to include all its members in whatever activities it has on the night.

Club championship and other tournaments

In order to give a competitive edge to club activities, a number of tournaments can be organised. The format for these events will be determined mainly by the size of the membership and the total nights available.

Normally the club championship will be the principal competition and in most clubs it runs throughout the season with perhaps one night set aside each month for a round. Some clubs, particularly those that remain open all year round, prefer to hold the championship after the long league programme, usually October to April, is over.

Various points can be used and a new club must experiment until the most appropriate method for its members is found. As the club expands minor events can be introduced using the other modes.

Knockout tournament

The knock-out tournament is probably the least satisfactory as obviously half the competitors will be eliminated in the first round. To avoid losing some of the best players in round one, the four strongest, or if entries are sufficient, the eight strongest, can be seeded into separate sections of the draw which will ensure that they do not meet until the later stages of the competition. Otherwise, the draw is made by lot and generally colours are also decided by lot in each tie, although a somewhat complicated rule can be introduced which obviates the same player having white in every game.

If the number of entries is not in the series 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64 etc. then a preliminary round is required to reduce the number to the largest possible in the series. For example if 23 enter you



must have a preliminary round with 7 matches (14 players) to reduce the number to 16.

The knock-out is a useful format for tournaments starting mid-season. These give new members, joining after the main competitions are underway, a chance of competitive play and they are usually joined by those with flagging interest in their chosen tournaments. The knockout is also popular for open events such

as time handicap based on grading. When two hours are available, the following rules give the weaker player a fighting chance but each club can do some fine tuning to meet requirements.

- a) If the grading difference is less than 10 points, both players will have 60 minutes on the clock to complete the game
- b) For each 10 grading points difference, add one minute to the time of the lower graded player and deduct one minute from the time of the higher graded player
- c) The higher graded player cannot have less than 20 minutes on the clock
- d) If the game is drawn, a second game is played with colours reversed and each player having one tenth of the original time on the clock.

All play all tournament

The all play all system is ideal for the small club with 10 or 12 members but is clearly impractical in a large club unless there are various sections. These can be selected according to grading with either the strongest players in the top section and the weakest in the bottom, or each section can have a similar variety of grades.

If the highest grades are in the top section, this can be designated the championship and promotion and relegation can operate throughout all the other sections.

If the sections are of equal strength, then either a final knockout or another all play all section will be required to determine the outright winner. In this case, the number of players in the preliminary sections will have to be restricted to allow time for the second stage. Usually, only one or two players go through from each preliminary section.

Very large all play alls are not advised as those doing badly tend to lose interest and default their games. If a competitor completes half his games then the defaults against the remainder should be scored as wins for the opponent but if less than half the games have been played all the results should be discarded.

Swiss tournaments

The Swiss tournament is by far the most popular form of chess event because it can accommodate a large number of entries, produce a winner quickly and at the same time allow all the competitors to complete the prescribed number of rounds.

The basis of the Swiss system, which is essentially a hybrid of the knockout and all play all methods, is that each round competitors are paired against others on the same or nearest possible score with the proviso that they cannot play the same opponent twice. Gradually, contenders find their own level within the competition and this helps to maintain interest especially in large events where grading prizes are available.

The rules for making the correct pairings are quite complicated but as long as the basic rules are grasped, a competent organiser will have little difficulty in making a reasonable draw and with experience will be able to handle all the refinements which have been made to the pairing system as it has evolved. Full details of the recommended systems can be found in the Chess Scotland Rule Book. Several computer programmes are also available for this purpose.

The objective is to produce as quickly as possible a clear winner who has met all or at least most of the others in contention. The more rounds there are, the easier this becomes and the more

accurate are the placings below the winner. The number of rounds required to produce an outright winner given a set number of entries is as follows:

Number of players	Rounds required
Up to 8	3
9 to 16	4
17 to 32	5
33 to 64	6

If an accurate second place is required, another two rounds will be necessary and a further two for each additional placement.

As with large all play alls, those at the tail end tend to default but as they can be withdrawn from the following round pairings, they cause less havoc to the overall competition.

Tournament administration

No matter which system is used for club tournaments, chaos will reign unless strict dates are arranged and adhered to for each round. Competitors failing to play by the due date must be defaulted ruthlessly otherwise a shambles results. Clearly all results must be available before the next round draw in a Swiss can be made. The temptation to bend the rules in knock-outs and all play alls should be resisted as inevitably one leg of a knockout will run ahead and in an all play all one competitor will have more games to play than there are remaining club nights in the season.

Members are keen to keep abreast of their standing in the various events and suitable charts for recording results of all types of tournaments can be obtained from chess stationery suppliers who can also provide Swiss pairing cards and scoresheets for recording games.

Other tournaments

Other tournaments which can be organised are the ladder and the accumulator.

The requirements for a ladder tournament are very simple. A small name card should be prepared for each competitor and a ladder can be drawn on thick card with a slit on each rung where the name cards can be slipped easily in and out as required.

Initially the names can be inserted in random order, or if the grades of the competitors are known, in grading order with the highest at the top. Players are allowed to challenge those higher in the ladder and if they win take the loser's place forcing the loser and intervening players to move down one place.

Each club can draw up its own rules which may define

- a) the number of rungs above their own that may be challenged
- b) the number of times the same player can be challenged
- c) very limited reasons for refusing a challenge.

The winner tops the ladder at the end of the season.

The Accumulator tournament works best in larger clubs but by modifying the rules has proved successful with memberships between 20 and 30.

The objective of the Accumulator is to give all members the opportunity to play a competitive game each evening the club is open irrespective of other activities on the night such as league matches the club championship or other minor tournaments.

If the start is delayed each night until 20 or 30 minutes after the normal starting time, members who find that their expected opponents have failed to appear for other events can enter and avoid a totally wasted night. It is also a good tournament to introduce newcomers to competitive chess, it can accommodate visitors and the best in the junior section can occasionally be invited to have a game when space permits.

Each evening those wishing to play will advise the tournament organiser by registering their names in the prescribed manner. Every competitor should have a Swiss pairing card which will record his previous opponents, results and colour sequences.

The cases for those wishing to play are taken from the pack and the draw is made with the object of giving competitors opponents of about the same strength. Unlike the Swiss system, scores are ignored and it may be necessary occasionally to pair the same players again although this should be avoided if possible and will not occur often in large clubs. Players having a good run can be moved up to the next grading band and the converse can also apply. Provisional ratings given to ungraded players can be constantly updated depending on his results.

Once the pairings have been made colours can be determined in a similar fashion to the Swiss.

The rate of play will be fairly fast as the time available will be limited but, if desired, it should be possible to meet the minimum requirements for grading. The disadvantage of having the games graded is that it tends to inhibit the stronger players who are quite happy to play and experiment in non-graded games. On the other hand, newcomers and juniors without grades will not make the grading list so quickly.

The winner of the tournament is the competitor with the most points irrespective of the number of games played. Clubs can introduce additional novelty prizes such as half-season, grading, junior or beginners.

With experience special local rules can be incorporated for example results in league matches played home or away on the club night can be included in the competitor's total score.

Special events

To add some variety to the club calendar, some special one night events can be arranged.

A challenge match between the President's Select and the Vice President's Select is a good way to start the season as all regular team members from the previous campaign will receive a telephone call inviting them to play. This evokes a much better response than merely sending out a reminder and it also gives a feedback on members' availability for the coming season.

Tournaments with a quick rate of play are always popular. A fifteen minutes each, five round Swiss Allegro and a five minutes each Blitz with preliminary and final all-play-all sections of six or eight should be tried. The rules for these tournaments can be found in the Chess Scotland Rule Book.

The Allegro can also be run with a grading based handicap or if a crazy night is required try a different chess variant for each round.

Some more established clubs run open tournaments on club or separate nights either during the season or in the summer break. These events give focus, help promote the club image and can on occasion increase membership. Other clubs with access to suitable premises and willing helpers run weekend congresses often with sponsorship from local councils and businesses.

Another option is to invite a strong player to play several members of the club at the same time. This is called a simultaneous display or 'simul'.

Local leagues

As soon as a club has a sound nucleus of members, it should consider joining the local leagues. The number of players required for a team can vary from four to eight but it should always be kept in mind that over a long winter season reserves will be necessary. It is often tempting for a new club with eight members to enter two teams of four only to find halfway through the season that they are defaulting on many boards as the "A" team members will not be allowed to call on the "B" team for reserves if they are both in the same division. Helpful guidance on organising league teams is given elsewhere in this booklet.

Scottish wide events

Clubs wishing to spread their wings a little further can join Chess Scotland and enter the Spens Cup competition which is a knockout event for clubs throughout Scotland. The clubs eliminated in the first round can enter a plate competition so at least two matches are guaranteed. If a club proves strong enough it may enter the Richardson Cup for the Scottish Team Championship.

The ties are normally played on a Saturday but can be played on a Sunday and when the clubs are far apart they take place at a neutral venue.

Chess Scotland also organises two individual knockout competitions which can be entered by members with the required qualification.

The popularity of the Scottish National League (another CS event) has considerably increased since the matches have been played at a central venue. Teams from all over Scotland come together on a Sunday, four times during the season. Each Sunday the teams play one match in the morning and another in the afternoon against other sides in their division. If there is an odd number of matches the spare session at the end of the season is used for an individual Allegro Tournament.

Contact addresses for League and Association Secretaries will be found on the Chess Scotland website

Section 4 - Literature

Membership form

A well designed membership form can be a great asset to a harassed secretary. If drafted in three sections it can subsequently be split up with one part for the Treasurer, another for the Tournament Organiser and a third for the member's team captain. The information can be stored on a database with access given only to those officials who need it.

Section 1 should call for the member's name, address, postcode, home and mobile phone numbers, an email address and date of birth if under 21. The date of birth is required for CS grading purposes.

The various categories and rates of subscription can be detached so that the relevant one can be indicated and the correct designation for cheques should be shown.

In section 2, the various club competitions can be listed so that members can identify their requirements. Spaces should then be available for their name, in block letters, their grading and CS pin number.

A third section should detail the various team options and remind members of their commitment to the team for which they are selected. They should be required to sign this part of the form stating that they will be regularly available apart from certain circumstances which should be detailed in the space provided. These circumstances may include shift work, holiday arrangements, study for examinations etc. The more comprehensive information the team captain has the easier will be his task when he has to field a team.

The form should be accompanied by a friendly letter inviting members to rejoin. The commencing date, starting time and venue should be given together with the early season programme which might include an allegro tournament, a challenge match and a simultaneous display. There should be a brief description of the various club competitions with closing dates for entry noted.

Members should be encouraged to play for the club teams and reminded when subscriptions fall due. However, no member should be pressured into taking part in an activity against their wishes as this will lead to one fewer member.

Mention can be made of any special forthcoming events and if further funds are required donations can be requested.

Calendar and fixture list

The bugbear of teams' captains and tournament arbiters is the member who frequently forgets about matches and competition nights. Although a good fixture list will not completely solve the problem, it gives the defaulter one less excuse.

All members should be issued, at least, with a chronological list showing what is on each club night supplemented with a note of all fixtures for their team.

Alternatively, a more ambitious combined calendar and fixture list can be published including all team matches and competition dates. This should be distributed to all members and if space can be provided for match results, they can help track how the club is progressing.

Somewhere in the publication should be a reminder exhorting members to immediately note in their diaries the matches and tournament dates in which they are involved and try to keep them free of other engagements.

The telephone numbers and email addresses of all team captains, tournament arbiters, the secretary and, if appropriate, the match rooms should be listed so that in an emergency someone can be contacted.

A master fixture list should be kept up to date on the notice board by team captains and the secretary.

New members' guide

Although the letter sent to members at the start of the season will give a synopsis of the club activities, it is useful to have a guide which can be handed to visitors or prospective members.

This can give a brief history of the club and an outline of how it is currently managed. For contact purposes, full details of the club secretary should appear.

As the average club can be a somewhat daunting place for the novice, it would be reassuring to learn that casual games are encouraged usually followed by brief analysis pointing out where mistakes were made.

If there is a junior membership, age limits should be specified and if not integrated into the adult club, the set up for the junior section should be summarised. Even where a junior section exists, promising juniors should be encouraged to join the 'adult' section when their ability and behaviour permit.

There should be a full description of all the club competitions which can be entered giving the format and level of ability expected.

The club's involvement in team competitions should be set out giving a guide to the competence required for selection at the various levels. The commitment required of intending team members should be stressed.

Details of other events organised by the club for open competition should be listed. These may take the form of an evening Allegro Tournament, a one day Junior Competition or a weekly Swiss Tournament during the summer months when the club is closed or less active. For the team to quickly improve their playing standard, information on weekend congresses should be available on the notice board.

It can be helpful to complete newcomers to have a section briefly explaining the following mysteries:

1. How to obtain a grading
2. The Swiss pairing system
3. Clocks and their use
4. Various time controls including Quickplay finishes, Allegro and Blitz games
5. Adjournments
6. Firms specialising in chess clocks, stationery and computers

Guide for team captains

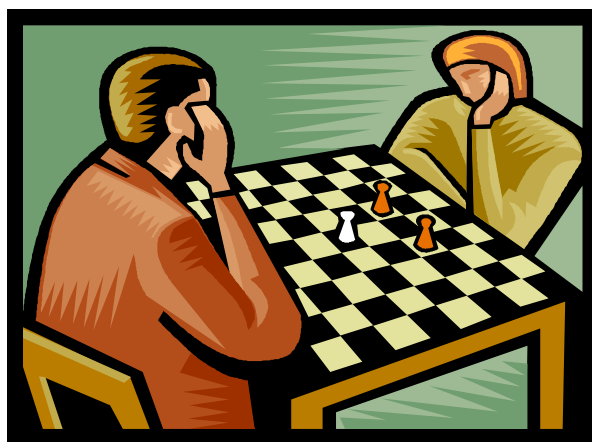
Although this is designed for those thrown in at the deep end and in their first season as captain, it can act as a refresher course for all but the most experienced.

The captain's two main functions are to make sure he has a full team for each match and to organise the administration of the matches.

After the selection committee has picked the teams, the secretary should give each team captain a form listing in grading order the players in the team pool and the reserves. Wherever possible, telephone numbers and email addresses should be provided.

Vertical columns, in chronological order, should be used for each fixture and headed with the name of opponents, date of match and clear indication if home or away. Members' results can then be filled in for each match. This should avoid reserve appearances exceeding league limits and also provide a record if the club gives prizes for the best individual performances.

The captain should then quickly learn the idiosyncrasies of all team members. Some will be well organised and only require a reminder a week before the fixture while others will have to be contacted again the night before the match.



If the club's membership form has a section requesting selection for matches and detailing unavailability, the secretary should pass the relevant slips to the team captains. Otherwise, the captain should ask all team members to advise all dates when they cannot play.

The captain should then adopt a regular routine, informing the team at least one week before each match and, if required, reserves should be notified at the same time. Advance warning is imperative, as some members can only spare one night per week for chess and may have to forego the club night if they have an away match on another evening.

Members willing to provide transport to away matches should be identified. They and those travelling by public transport should be given clear instructions to the venue with a map if necessary. The starting times, which can vary, and the journey times should be stressed. Pick up points and meeting places should be obvious landmarks and, to avoid mix-ups, should be used constantly. It

may also be beneficial with certain players to organise a standard meeting time regardless of journey times.

Consideration should be given to appointing a deputy so that pre-match duties can still be carried out if the captain is delayed.

The captain should always have a copy of the league handbook, for reference, and should be familiar with the League Rules and Laws of Chess. The captain must also decide the board order with the strongest player on board one. This will normally be done in, or close to, grading order. Variations to this may have to be checked in advance with the League Controller.

Administration duties before, during and after the match include the following:

- a) Supplying boards, sets, clocks and scoresheets (home games)
- b) Setting clocks for the appropriate rate of play (home games)
- c) Providing team list
- d) Scrutinising opponents' board order
- e) Tossing for colour on board 1 (some leagues have this predetermined)
- f) Keeping an eye on all boards but not to the detriment of your own game
- g) Advising members to accept or offer draws with respect to the state of the match but not with respect to the position on the board
- h) Watching for flag fall
- i) Fixing dates for adjournments (now rare)
- j) Reporting results to league controller
- k) Registering results in club records



Occasionally, captains will be required by the opposition to rearrange a date but this should only be done in consultation with the Secretary to ensure that the new date does not conflict with other matches or competitions which may or may not be on the original calendar. Team members should be advised of the change as soon as possible. A team captain should normally be accommodating if asked to rearrange a match. However, other than for extreme weather conditions, it is acceptable to decline a postponement request if made at less than a week's notice.

Newsletter

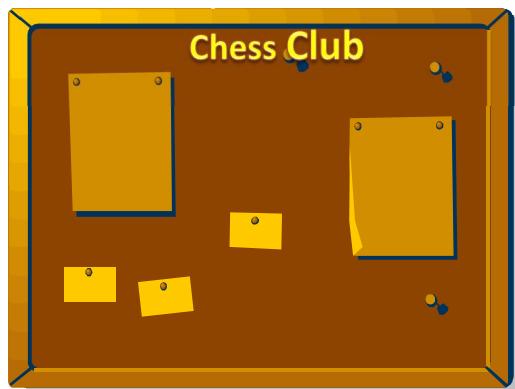
This can provide a useful service to members if an editor can be found for what can be quite a time consuming task. A printed copy may be useful for some members but most will be happy to have it emailed to them provided it is in a format that can be easily read such as pdf. Some members may not be able to open the most recent version of Microsoft Word, for example.

It need only be published two or three times in the season and should give match results, league tables, competition leaders and information on forthcoming events within and outside the club.

Notable achievements of members in Congresses, games scores, a few annotated games and members' profiles all add interest.

Notice Board and Notices

A comprehensive notice board, kept up to date, will give much of the information to be found in a Newsletter.



The master fixture list has already been referred to and this can be supplemented with individual performance details on forms similar to those issued to team captains with match dates and telephone numbers omitted.

The rules of all club competitions should appear with the rate of play highlighted as this always elicits most enquiries.

If the club has a very full notice board, it is a good idea to put a NEW indicator in a bright colour to draw attention to the notice otherwise it is likely to be overlooked.

Section 5 - Junior Section

Any club considering setting up a comprehensive junior section should be under no illusion about the amount of work involved.

Scope of activity

To a large extent what can be done for youngsters will be determined by the size of the club. If it is small a few junior members can be assimilated without difficulty if they are competent enough to give the weaker players a reasonable game. Care should always be taken to integrate them into all club activities. If left to play amongst themselves, they can become bored and even disruptive. As a caveat in these circumstances, some adults, whilst happy to play the occasional junior, will object to playing a continuous stream of them.

Bigger clubs may be more ambitious and aim to organise a junior division which, hopefully, will supply a constant stream of talent for the adult section.

There is little doubt that the standing of the club in the local community will be enhanced if provision can be made for juniors. Some regional and district authorities will give reduced rental rates and other concessions where children are involved. Free press publicity is always easier to obtain if youngsters can be photographed at play or receiving prizes.

The proposed introduction of juniors should be carefully considered by the club committee. It is most important to have the full support of sufficient members to make viable whatever scheme is adopted.

Depending on the accommodation and equipment available a decision should be reached regarding age limits and the numbers to be admitted bearing mind that younger children require greater supervision and probably cannot be permitted in the main club room.

The upper age limit for a separate junior section can be set at 14 or 15 as older children can normally be assimilated with the adults. If those still at primary school, are allowed to join, it is best to limit the numbers, if necessary, by ability rather than by age. In this way, those with no aptitude for the game can be declined entry after a short probationary period.

There will be much greater scope for a comprehensive junior set up if it can be held in a separate room. Additional supervision will be required but a much more varied programme can be contemplated. A coherent club spirit can be engendered if the juniors meet on the same night as the club but if insufficient volunteers can be found it may be easier to convene at the weekend or on another evening starting at an earlier time.

Personnel

It is rare to find one person willing to take responsibility for the juniors so several volunteers or perhaps all committee members will be required to act on a rota basis. It can be most helpful if one of the group is a schoolteacher or youth club leader with professional knowledge of dealing with children.

It is best to appoint a junior supervisor who will have overall control and whose duties will include:

1. Drawing up and implementing a diversified programme of events
2. Arranging the members' duty roster
3. Acting as arbiter for junior championship
4. Dealing with disciplinary matters
5. Monitoring individual performances
6. Liaising with parents

It is important that the club has a Child Protection Policy and that those involved have CRBS clearance. This can be done through Chess Scotland for clubs in membership (see Junior section on the CS website for details). Whilst some volunteers will object to the hassle of these CRBS checks, it is a necessary precaution to take to reassure parents that everything in the club is above board. Regardless of CRBS status it is inadvisable to have an adult alone with a child or children.

While coaching and special features such as simultaneous display can add variety to the calendar, children generally prefer to play competitive games. The programme therefore should be geared to this end with a junior championship as the principal event. Depending on the number of entries, this can either be an all-play-all or Swiss tournament. As interest wanes, halfway through the season, a knockout competition can be introduced.

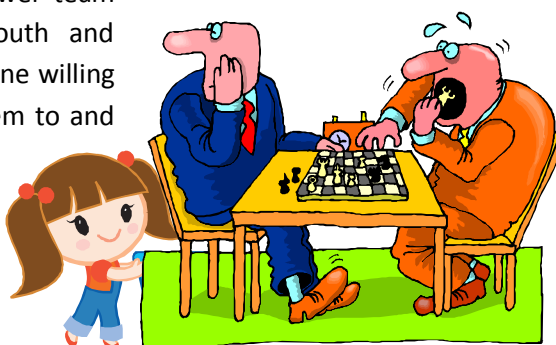
As games between juniors can be over in a few minutes, it is possible to complete short tournaments in the one evening. If members grouped according to playing strength are entered in crosstables of four, six or eight, with the better players in the smaller sections, most games will be completed in the one session.

The club official who submits grading data to Chess Scotland can generate considerable interest if they regularly produce an updated list of club member grades. A weekly update of grades is available for download to CS member clubs. The grading list will also help the supervisor evaluate the juniors. The best can be encouraged by introducing them gradually to the adult section, perhaps in an accumulator tournament. Some clubs, mainly those with junior sections, calculate their own grades for club events. As a further incentive, a "Player of the Month" award can be instituted. This can be decided by competition results, progress at training sessions and good behaviour. Some clubs, mainly those with junior sections, calculate their own grades for club events.

Encouraging youngsters to play in adult tournaments

At the start of the season, the best youngsters from the previous term should have the opportunity to enter minor adult tournaments. If they have reached a satisfactory standard and after receiving parental approval, their names can be added to the lower team pools. Some clubs prefer to have a mixture of youth and experience in such teams while others may arrange for one willing member to look after a team of juniors transporting them to and from away matches.

By allowing small numbers from the junior section to attend the adult club from time to time, the children have the opportunity to savour the atmosphere without



unduly disturbing the members. In junior versus adult encounters, the latter should be encouraged to analyse the game after the competition with the youngster.

Coaching

Occasional coaching classes should be organised. Leading players in the club should be persuaded to train the outstanding juniors while the average member can easily give brief lessons to the novices. The best coaches are not necessarily very strong players but are able to engage with the children and keep their attention. Coaching lessons should be kept fairly short with plenty of opportunities to practice what has been learned.

A problem solving competition could be organised to confirm that the lesson has been learnt.

Discipline



Where young children are involved, it can be a problem maintaining a discipline conducive to playing chess. Some basic rules should be drawn up and deployed on the junior notice board. These should include:-

1. Clear guidance on the level of noise which will be tolerated
2. Restrictions on movements about the room
3. Prevention of interference in other games
4. Mandatory selection of opponents

If the duration of the session is more than an hour, it is best to have an interval to allow visits to the toilet and tuck shop.

The parents and guardians of the children admitted should be given letters outlining the structure and aims of the section and making clear the standards of behaviour expected. Information regarding the delivery and collection of the children should be noted. They should not be permitted to leave the club rooms without their escorts. Contact telephone numbers should be requested and these should always be readily available.

Links with local schools

There can be reciprocal advantages to the club and local schools if a link can be established between them. Be aware however that some schools have strict policies which will make it difficult to form relationships between the club and the school.

With some work, inter school competitions at primary and secondary level could be encouraged with the help of the local authority. Such gatherings provide excellent opportunities to enrol additional members and may stimulate the formation of new chess clubs within schools that have a few players but no formal staff involvement.

If a few club members are willing to provide some tuition at schools during or after hours a mutually beneficial relationship can be fostered in some cases with parent teacher associations.

After some time, it may be possible to help set up a regular inter-school competition either in the form of a league or knockout tournament.

Chess Scotland and the SJC organise various events. As these are usually at weekends, it is a good idea to involve the parents of children likely to be in the teams selected. They can then transport and supervise the youngsters in the events entered.

A similar system can be used for the individual tournaments where a rota of parents can be coordinated to take car loads when necessary.

Some of the individual events include coaching as well as competitive sessions. More formal training courses are also organised for the best juniors in different age groups but these are mainly by invitation.

Running a junior section can be very rewarding especially when a future international master comes on the scene. As this is likely to happen only once or twice in a lifetime, the sights should not be set too high. If one or two good players in the 1800 to 2000 grading range can be produced regularly, all the hard work will be justified.

It should be kept in mind that there is a large fall-out rate from the younger age groups with lots of primary children giving up after transferring to secondary. For many reasons others fail to return to the club after they leave school.

The main point to remember is that an interest in chess has been fostered and quite often many years later when settled in work and marriage, the drop-outs will return to the game and perhaps rejoin the club accompanied by their offspring.



About Chess Scotland

In 1867, Wilhelm Steinitz, later to become the world champion, visited Glasgow and Dundee. Later that year, our first international tournament was held. Walter C Spens (later Sheriff Spens) was so inspired by these events that on 2 February 1884 at his chambers in Wilson Street in Glasgow he formed the Scottish Chess Association (SCA), one of the oldest national chess organisations in the world.

Whilst the SCA was asked to be founding member of the British Chess Federation when it was formed in 1904 it only affiliated in 1908. Membership continued until the Association resigned in 1930 to secure membership in its own right of the World Chess Federation (FIDE). FIDE recognised the SCA from 1932 and since then Scotland has participated frequently in Olympiads and other international competitions.

In 2001 the SCA and the Scottish Junior Chess Association combined to form Chess Scotland (CS).

Chess Scotland's mission is to promote chess throughout Scotland. CS does this through a combination of direct action in organising competitions, and through assisting and facilitating a whole range of separate organisations who run various types of competition.

CS recognises that chess clubs are at the heart of Scottish chess. There are over 70 clubs in Scotland providing essential facilities for players of all ages and strengths to enjoy chess, and for the more competitive of them to meet opponents either in representing their club or on their own behalf.

Here are the main services offered by Chess Scotland of relevance to clubs:

Tournaments

For teams,

- the Richardson Cup for the top clubs to determine Scotland's Champion Club, and the Spens Cup for clubs which don't think they have a strong enough team for the Richardson,
- the National League currently having four divisions meeting approximately once a month at Dunfermline,
- a Team Lightning Tournament for the Batsford Trophy.

For individuals

- the Scottish Congress
- the Maclsaac Tournament of Club Champions
- the East and West of Scotland Championships
- Grand Prix.

Insurance

A competitively priced all-risks insurance scheme for club equipment and trophies.

Grading

Weekly update of normal speed and allegro chess to enable players to judge their standard of play.
Annual publication in August of grading list.

Arbiters

Organising training of and the examination and registration scheme for arbiters.

Scottish Chess

A bi-monthly magazine of news, games and articles about chess in Scotland and around the world.

Chess Calendar

A list of all known chess events in Scotland regularly updated

The CS rule book

A publication detailing the laws of chess and rules for all CS competitions.

CRBS Clearance

CS provides a service allowing coaches and chaperones to obtain the necessary checks required to carry out their duties.

Website

Further details of all of the above and much more can be found on the Chess Scotland Website at www.ChessScotland.com

