



# **LEINSTER CHESS UNION LEAGUE RULES**

Revised July 2023

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## 1. Definitions

The following definitions apply in these rules:

The **Committee** means the Executive Committee of the Leinster Chess Union.

**FIDE** means Federation Internationale des Echecs.

**FIDE rules** means The Laws of Chess published by FIDE.

**ICU** means the Irish Chess Union.

**LCU** means the Leinster Chess Union.

**Leagues controller** means the controller for all the Leinster Leagues.

**Season** means the period beginning with the start of the first league match and ending with the final determination of places in the last league to be completed.

## 2. League Structure and Fixtures

2.1 Subject to entry, the LCU leagues consist of seven divisions –

Division 1 – Armstrong Cup

Division 2 – Heidenfeld Trophy

Division 3 – Ennis Shield

Division 4 – O’Hanlon Cup

Division 5 – BEA Cup

Division 6 – Bodley Cup

Division 7 – O’Sullivan Cup

The maximum number of teams in the top four divisions is twelve. The maximum number of teams in all subsequent divisions is twenty-four, split into two equal-size groups based on a north/south geographical divide.

2.2 Divisions 1 and 2 shall consist of teams of eight players. Divisions 3 and 4 shall consist of teams of six players. All other divisions shall consist of teams of five players.

2.3 Fixtures shall be arranged so that the entire league programme is completed by the end of April. No league fixtures shall be arranged –

- On a public holiday or on a weekend encompassing a public holiday
- On a weekend involving a chess tournament officially sanctioned or endorsed by the LCU

2.4 Fixtures for clubs with teams in two or more divisions shall be scheduled to ensure that the team or teams in the higher division plays their first match ahead of the team or teams in a lower division.

2.5 Where a club has two teams in the same division, they will play each other in the first round. Where a club has more than two teams in the same division, the teams will play each other in the earliest possible rounds.

## 3. Promotion and relegation

3.1 Except for Divisions 1 and 5, the teams finishing in first and second place in each division will be promoted to the next highest division. In division 5 the top team in each group shall be promoted, while the second place teams play off to decide the third promotion place.

3.2 Except for the lowest division, teams finishing in eleventh and twelfth positions in each league will be relegated. In division 4, the team finishing in tenth place shall also be relegated.

3.3 A club may forego its right to be promoted, in which case a replacement team shall be selected at the discretion of the committee.

3.4 In order to maintain a geographic balance between the north/south groups in Divisions 5 to 7, a team which has not been promoted or relegated may be transferred from the north group to the south group, or vice versa.

#### **4. Scoring and tie-breaks**

4.1 In all divisions, a game won counts as one point to the winner, a game drawn counts as a half-point to each player and a game lost counts as zero points to the loser. The score of a team in a match shall be the sum of the points scored by the players on that team in the match less any penalties imposed for games defaulted and/or walkovers conceded.

4.2 The league score of a team shall be the sum of its match scores less any penalties that may be imposed on that team by the committee.

4.3 In the event of a tie for any place between two or more teams, the tie shall be resolved on the basis of, in order –

- Total game points scored in the games between the teams concerned
- Board count in the match or matches between the teams concerned
- A single play-off match between the teams concerned
- Drawing of lots.

4.4 For the purposes of rule 4.3, the board count shall consist of allocating points on a descending scale for games won in a match, as follows, with the team with the highest points total being deemed the winner:

<b>Board</b>	<b>8-player teams</b>	<b>6-player teams</b>	<b>5-player teams</b>
Board 1	8 points	6 points	5 points
Board 2	7 points	5 points	4 points
Board 3	6 points	4 points	3 points
Board 4	5 points	3 points	2 points
Board 5	4 points	2 points	1 point
Board 6	3 points	1 point	-
Board 7	2 points	-	-
Board 8	1 point	-	-

#### **5. Defaults and walkovers**

5.1 A default is a game conceded where a player who has been declared on the team sheet prior to the commencement of the match fails to play his game against his nominated opponent either through non-appearance or late arrival. A walkover is a game conceded when a team is unable to field a full complement of players. A scratch occurs when a team is unable to field any players for a match.

5.2 When there are insufficient players to make up a full team, walkovers must commence on the lowest board and continue upwards.

5.3 In the event of a default by a declared player, the game shall be scored -1 (minus one point) for the defaulting player and 1 point for their opponent.

5.4 Where a team benefits from three or more defaults/walkovers in a match, or six or more defaults/walkovers in a season, and as a result there is a distortion in placing such that another team suffers – by relegation, missing a play-off or promotion place or failing to win a division – a special match shall be arranged between the team benefiting from the defaults (“Team A”) and the displaced team (“Team B”), to determine relative places. Where multiple defaults occur, the scores of all defaulting teams will be eliminated to determine “special match” rights.

To reverse the placing, Team B must defeat Team A (who shall have home venue). In the event of a draw, placing remains unchanged.

Team B shall only have the right to this match if Team B has a greater total of points than Team A when both teams’ scores on the defaulted boards only against the team that defaulted or conceded walkovers are eliminated.

5.5 The leagues controller shall notify any clubs that have the right to a special match under rule 5.4. Clubs wishing to avail of these rights must reply to the leagues controller within seven days of being notified.

5.6 Teams which scratch a match will be relegated one division the following season except in the lowest division, where the team may be expelled from the league the following season, unless the club submits a written explanation acceptable to the leagues controller.

5.7 Teams which scratch three matches in any one season will be relegated to the bottom division the following season except in the lowest division, where the team may be expelled from the league the following season, unless the club submits a written explanation acceptable to the leagues controller.

## **6. Constitution of Teams**

6.1 All players must be registered with the ICU.

6.2 A team which utilises an unregistered player in any match will not be credited with any score for that match. A team appealing a decision under this rule must do so in writing to the leagues controller within fourteen days of notification of the non-crediting of the score by the controller who imposes the penalty. Such an appeal must include confirmation of the player’s registration.

6.3 Any team playing an illegal player – as defined in the various paragraphs in this Section 6 – will be awarded a score of -1 on the board the illegal player played on, and the opposing team will be awarded a score of 1. If both players on a board are illegal players, both teams will be awarded a score of -1. Where points are deducted from a team or its players, the result(s) of the game(s) shall stand for rating purposes.

6.4 No player may play for more than one club in any season. A player who plays for a club, having already played for a different club during the season, shall be considered an illegal player.

6.5 Where a club has two or more teams in the same division, no player may play for more than one such team in any season, except where a club’s lowest (or only) teams are in the same division, in which case a player from a lower team (based on the designation A/B/C, etc, where the A team is the highest) may sub for a higher

team, but not vice versa. A player who plays for a team, having already played for a team for the same club in the same division, or who, in the case of a team's lowest teams being in the same division, subs down from a higher team to a lower team, shall be considered an illegal player.

6.6 No player may play for a team in the last round or in a play-off unless said player has played in at least one match for that club in any division during the season. Any such player shall be considered an illegal player.

6.7 Prior to the commencement of play in each division, clubs who have two or more teams in the leagues must submit the names of players selected for their respective teams by completing the 'Team Declaration' form on the LCU website. Teams in Divisions 1 and 2 must declare a panel of at least eight players. Teams in Divisions 3 and 4 must declare a panel of at least six players. Teams in all other Divisions must declare a panel of at least five players. These nominated players shall be deemed to be the declared team, and no player can be declared on more than one team. There is no limit to the number of players that can be declared for a team. Players can be added to a team's panel of declared players provided they have not been declared on a team in a higher division.

6.8 When a player who has not already been declared on a team plays their first game of the season, they must be declared for the team for whom they play their first game or a team in a lower division. Failure to nominate a player as a substitute and declare them on a team in a lower division will result in the player being automatically declared for the team for whom they play their first game.

6.9 No player declared – whether by rule 6.7 or 6.8 – for a higher division team may play in a lower division in that season. Any player playing for a team lower than the one on which they have been declared shall be considered an illegal player.

6.10 A player declared in a lower division may play as a substitute in a higher division. Where a club has two or more teams in the same division, a substitute from a lower division may only play for one of those teams in the relevant higher division.

6.11 Where a player has played more than three games in a higher division or divisions as a substitute, they (subject to rule 6.13) may not play again that season in a lower division. Where a player has played as a substitute for more than one team in higher divisions, they may only play again for team for which they played as a substitute for a fourth time. Thereafter for the remainder of the season no further substitution in respect of that player shall be allowed. Any player, having played as a substitute more than three times in a season, subsequently plays for a team other than the one for which they made their third substitute appearance shall be considered an illegal player.

6.12 The board order of each team in each match shall be as determined by the team captain immediately prior to the commencement of the match. No player may be placed below a team member whose rating is 150 points or more lower. Any player placed below a team member whose rating is 150 points or more lower, is to be considered an illegal player.

6.13 The criteria for determining a player's rating are as follows:

1. For players who are registered with the ICU, the latest ICU rating published prior to the commencement of the current season. The Leinster Chess website shows this rating when players are declared at the start of the league season. If

there is any doubt about a player's published rating, confirmation should be sought from the leagues controller who will verify the correct rating to be used.

2. For players who have no ICU rating but are rated by FIDE, their current FIDE rating. Team captains must inform the leagues controller of the player's FIDE code and rating when returning the match scorecard.

3. For players with no ICU or FIDE rating and who have a rating from another federation, their rating from said federation. Team captains must inform the leagues controller of the player's rating and federation when returning the match scorecard.

4. For all other players including unrated players, team captains must determine the player's playing strength and advise the leagues controller of the estimated rating to be used to determine board order.

5. Note all players rated 1200 or below, including unrated players whose strength has been deemed to be 1200 or below, are deemed to have a rating of 1200. This means they can play on any board provided that no player with a rating of 1350 (ie 1200 + 150) or higher is placed on a lower board.

6.14 No player may play on a team in a lower division if a fellow club member rated 150 points or more below the player is declared on a team in a higher division. A player playing on a team where a fellow club member rated 150 points or more below the player is declared on a team in a higher division shall be considered an illegal player.

6.15 A player who has substituted three times for a team cannot play any further games for that team during that season if there is another player rated 150 points or more above them playing for that club in a lower division. A player playing a fourth (or subsequent) game for a team where there is a player rated 150 points or more on a lower team for the same club shall be considered an illegal player.

6.16 Immediately before the commencement of each match, the opposing team captains must declare their respective teams to each other, to show names and ratings as well as ICU registration numbers and arrange the pairings. Once a team has been declared no substitutions can be allowed. Teams offending against this rule will automatically forfeit any points gained from the games concerned.

6.17 At the time determined for the start of the game, White's clock is started.

## **7. Playing Rules**

7.1 Play shall be in accordance with FIDE rules. Where there is a conflict between FIDE and LCU rules, the FIDE rules take precedence. Clubs shall be responsible for ensuring that their players are conversant with current FIDE and LCU rules.

7.2 The start time for weekday matches is 7:15pm for games in the Armstrong, Heidenfeld and Ennis, and 7:30pm for all other divisions. The start time for weekend matches is 2:30pm.

7.3 A club based more than 15 miles/24km from the GPO may choose to classify themselves as a country club. All games involving country clubs shall commence at 2:30pm on Saturdays, excepting (a) for the final round, and (b) where the two clubs

are less than 15 miles/24 km apart, in which case games should be played on the day or night the home team usually plays.

7.4 The time control in the Armstrong, Heidenfeld and Ennis is 90 minutes plus a 30-second increment from move 1. For games in the O'Hanlon and BEA, the time control is 75 minutes plus a 30-second increment from move 1. For games in all other divisions, the time control 60 minutes is plus a 30-second increment from move 1.

7.5 In cases where both players agree, where digital clocks are not available, or where a club's venue has a set closing time, then games may be played with a set time control of two hours for all moves for games in the Armstrong, Heidenfeld or Ennis, 105 minutes for all moves in the O'Hanlon and BEA, or 90 minutes for all moves in all other divisions. Where a venue has a set closing time, this should be communicated to visiting teams in advance. FIDE Guideline III (Games without Increment including Quickplay Finishes) shall apply.

7.6 Where the final round of league matches takes place in the same venue at the same time, special rules helping facilitate the smooth running of this final round may be issued and shall take precedence over the rules relating to other rounds. Clubs must be notified of any special rules not later than two weeks before the date of the final round.

7.7 Subject to agreement between the respective team captains, games may be played in advance of the scheduled date. If a team wishes to postpone games in a match, the approval of the leagues controller must be obtained in advance, which approval shall be given only in extenuating circumstances.

7.8 In all divisions, the away team shall have the white pieces on the odd-numbered boards.

7.9 Home teams shall be responsible for the provision of all playing equipment. In case of a dispute, the home team is responsible for making available a copy of the current LCU league rules and a copy of the current FIDE rules. Where a home team fails to produce clocks or other equipment at the appointed starting time, the visiting team may demand that the time lost by such failure be deducted from the home team's clocks before the match commences and if the time lost is one hour or more, the games affected shall be deemed lost by walkover to the visiting team, but such home players as may be present before the hour elapses shall not suffer any loss beyond a nil score.

7.10 Subject to rule 11.3 and to any direction from the leagues controller, the player with the black pieces shall have the choice as to whether the clock shall be on the left or the right side of the board.

7.11 Disputes arising between players in a league match should be settled between the team captains and the players involved away from the playing area to avoid disturbance to players on adjacent boards. If a dispute is not resolved in this way, the game or games affected shall continue with either or both players and or their respective captains having the right to appeal the outcome to the leagues controller, and the resumption of play in these circumstances shall not pre-empt or prejudice the appeal process in any way.



7.12 Players who have deliberate recourse to the advice of third parties shall forfeit any points gained during the game(s) concerned and shall be suspended from play for two matches.

7.13 Clubs are responsible for providing proper facilities suitable for playing chess. Visiting clubs may report excessive noise and/or insufficient light or heat to the leagues controller who shall investigate and if necessary demand remedial action.

7.14 A player who has been declared on the team-sheet but who does not arrive within one hour of the scheduled start time of the game shall be considered to have defaulted the game.

## **8. Results and Appeals**

8.1 At the end of a match, score cards should be agreed by both captains or other nominated persons to ensure that the result is agreed by both teams. Results must be submitted using the LCU online Match Results Service. Results must be submitted within three days of the match being played.

8.2 Clubs lodging an appeal must do so in writing to the leagues controller within ten days of the alleged offence/incident. After this period no objection or claim will be allowed. All appeals e-mails must copy in the secretary of the club making the objection, the captain of the team involved in the objection, and, where applicable, the individual player involved.

8.3 An appeal may be made against the league controller's decision. This shall be addressed to the LCU Executive and must be submitted within ten days of being advised of the league controller's decision. The LCU Executive will establish a three-person appeals committee from independent league players of good standing, which will hear the case and convey a decision by e-mail to the appellant club's secretary within 21 days. The decision of the LCU appeals committee shall be final.

## **9. Trophies and Prizes**

9.1 All LCU trophies shall be held for one year by the tournament winners, who shall be responsible for the safe custody of the trophy and who shall be obliged to make good the loss of, or damage to, the said trophy.

9.2 Board prizes shall be awarded annually in all divisions to players scoring at least 75% of the available score. Points scored by a player in a higher division or in play-offs will not be credited for the purpose of determining a board prize.

9.3 Clubs which return trophies having failed arrange the relevant engraving shall be fined €30, payable with the league fees for the following season. These funds are then to be used to reimburse future winners of the trophy for the costs of bringing the engraving up to date.

## **10. Playing Venues**

10.1 Clubs must ensure that the venue for their matches is agreed beforehand with their opponents. The publication of a club's normal playing venue on the LCU website shall be deemed sufficient for this rule.

10.2 All clubs should ensure that visiting players have access in and out of the match venue at all times.

## **11. Players with Disabilities**

11.1 Where the opposing club's premises do not have appropriate access for players with physical disabilities, they may play their "away" games at their own club's venue. This concession does not apply to other team members, unless the assistance of a particular team member is required to ensure that the player with a disability is able to play their match.

11.2 Players with physical disabilities may take toilet breaks during matches by stopping the clocks after making their moves, provided they have informed their opponents before making their move.

11.3 Players with disabilities affecting hand movements and those with visual impairments who use tactile boards are exempt from the 'touch move' and 'scoring' rules and shall have a choice as to whether the clock shall be to the right or left side of the board irrespective of the colour of their pieces.

## **12. Pre-Season Contact**

12.1. Clubs are required to contact the leagues controller regarding teams entering or leaving the leagues by 31<sup>st</sup> August.

12.2. Prior to the commencement of a season, clubs are required to update their contact information on the LCU website (by contacting the LCU secretary or leagues controller). When available, clubs should inform the leagues controller of their team captains to facilitate a list for division controllers and other relevant team captains for the coming season.

## **13. Fees and Charges**

13.1 All fees due to the LCU for participation in the leagues should be paid not later than 30<sup>th</sup> November. The following annual league fees apply –

- An administration charge of €32 per club.
- €110 per team entered in divisions 1 and 2.
- €80 per team entered in divisions 3 and 4.
- €70 per team in all divisions where teams comprise 5 players.
- €20 per team in the bottom division (such fee to over-ride any fees noted above)

**Leinster Chess Union Cup Rules  
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## Definitions

In these rules –

**Competition Controller** is the person running the Branagan Cup

**Eligible Players** must meet the following criteria –

- Have played or been declared on a team in either Division 1 or 2 of the Leinster Leagues of the current season (Branagan Cup)
- Have played or been declared on a team in in Division 3 or lower in the current season (Killane Shield)
- Have an ICU rating of less than 1500 (William Brennan Competition)
- Be a current member of the ICU (all competitions)
- Have not already played for another club in the leagues or the cups in the current season (all competitions)

**FIDE** means Federation Internationale d'Echecs

**FIDE rules** means The Laws of Chess as most recently published by that body

**ICU** means Irish Chess Union

**LCU** means Leinster Chess Union

## 1 Competition Structure

1.1 Every team shall be declared and entered by a date set by the competition controller. A declaration shall include the name of the club and contact details for the team captain. An entry fee of €20 per team shall apply for all competitions

1.2 The three competitions are run as group tournaments with the winner and/or runner-up of each group qualifying to ensure an appropriate number of teams in the knockout rounds, according to the number of teams who have entered

1.3 In the event of a knockout match being drawn, a board count shall be used to determine the winner. This shall consist of allocating points on a descending scale for games won in a match, as follows, with the team with the highest points total being deemed the winner:

Board	6-player teams
Board 1	6 points
Board 2	5 points
Board 3	4 points
Board 4	3 points
Board 5	2 points
Board 6	1 point

1.4 In the event of a further tie, the match shall be determined by a replay, to be hosted by the away team of the original match. In the event of a further tie the placing shall be decided by lot.

## 2. Constitution of Teams

2.1 The same rules as per Section 6 of the main Leinster League rules shall apply, with the following adjustments for the Cup competitions.

2.2. Each team will consist of six players.

2.3. Where there are two or more teams from the same club in a competition, the players declared on one club team cannot play for another club team during the

course of the competition. However, a player may play for the same club in the Branagan Cup, Killane Shield, and William Brennan Trophy provided that they meet the eligibility criteria outlined in the Definitions section above.

2.4. The ICU rating list to determine board order shall be the most recent rating list published before the tournament entry deadline.

### **3. Defaults and Walkovers**

3.1 The same rules as per Section 5 of the main Leinster League rules shall apply.

3.2. Where a team plays an ineligible player, they shall score -1 for that board, and their opponents shall score 1 point. Where both players on a board are ineligible, both teams shall score -1 for that board.

### **4. Playing Rules**

4.1 The same rules as per Section 7 of the main Leinster League rules shall apply, with the following adjustments for the Cup competitions.

4.2. The time control in the Branagan is 90 minutes plus a 30-second increment from move 1. For games in the Killane and William Brennan, the time control is 75 minutes plus a 30-second increment from move 1.

4.3 In cases where both players agree, where digital clocks are not available, or where a club's venue has a set closing time, then games may be played with a set time control of two hours for all moves for games in the Branagan, or 105 minutes for all moves in the Killane and William Brennan. Where a venue has a set closing time, this should be communicated to visiting teams in advance.

### **5. Results and Appeals**

5.1 The same rules as per Section 8 of the main Leinster League rules shall apply, with the following adjustments for the Cup competitions.

5.2. Results should be forwarded by e-mail to the competition controller within three days of the match being played.

### **6. Trophies and Prizes**

6.1 The Branagan Cup, the Killane Shield and the William Brennan Trophy shall be held for one year by the relevant competition winners, who shall be responsible for the safe custody of the trophies and who shall be obliged to make good the loss of, or damage to, the said trophies.

### **7. Playing venues and Players with disabilities**

7.1 The same rules as per Sections 10 and 11 of the main Leinster League rules shall apply.