Munster Chess Union
Club League Rules

(Adopted at EGM 2017, Last Updated at AGM 2026)

1) These rules and their appendices shall be used for the running of the Munster Chess Union (MCU) Club League (herein after called the league). These rules can only be changed/amended at a general meeting of the MCU and shall be published on the MCU web site and shall be downloadable in PDF format.
2) At the MCU AGM a leagues controller shall be appointed or failing this the MCU committee shall appoint a leagues controller (herein after called the controller). Should the controller be unable to fulfil his/hers duties the MCU committee shall appoint a replacement/deputy. A leagues controller appointed by the MCU Committee under this rule shall hold the office of League Controller, with the same duties and the same standing on the Committee as an Officer elected under the Constitution, until the next AGM.
3) All queries regarding the league shall be referred to the controller save those appropriate to the Arbiter. Decisions of either the controller or the arbiter may be appealed to the MCU committee whose decision will be final.
   3.a) All appeals must be submitted in writing and by paying the relevant fee. Fee is given back if the appeal is accepted.
   3.b) The MCU Committee must appoint a three person committee of independent parties to investigate the appeal.
   3.c) An appeal must be lodged within 7 days of the decision appealed against.
   3.d) The three-person committee under 3.b) shall consist of individual members of the MCU who are not members of any club party to the matter and not members of the MCU Committee; it shall report its findings to the Committee, which shall decide the appeal within 21 days of it being lodged.
   3.e) The decision appealed against shall stand until the appeal is decided.
4) The controller shall apply to the Irish Chess Union (ICU)/ Fédération Internationale des Echecs (FIDE) for the registration/rating of the league as appropriate and appoint a suitable arbiter(s)..
5) Clubs as defined in the MCU constitution shall apply to the MCU for inclusion in the league. The structure of this league is set out in Appendix A.
6) Fees for entry to the league shall be determined at the MCU AGM and are set out in Appendix B.
7) Scoring and tie breaks are set out in Appendix C
8) Clubs shall put forward a team or teams for inclusion in the league. No person may participate in the league if their membership of: FIDE, ICU,

National Federation or Irish Provincial Union has been suspended until such suspension has been revoked. The composition of these teams is set out in Appendix D.

9) Each team shall nominate a team captain who must be 16 years of age or older and whose duties are set out in Appendix E.

10) The controller shall correspond with the Club/team through the team captain. Should the team captain be unavailable he/she shall inform the controller and advise the controller of a deputy (who also be 16 years of age or older) and their contact details. The team captain or their nominated deputy must be present at all games. Absence of the captain and deputy does not invalidate the match; item k.3) of Appendix A shall apply, without prejudice to any action by the League Controller in the case of repeated absence.

11) The controller shall decide the dates, times and location of all the games and shall inform the team captains in a timely fashion.

11.1) The League Controller shall circulate a draft schedule of dates, times and venues for the season to the team captains, and shall allow not less than fourteen days for comment, before publishing the schedule. The schedule shall be published before the commencement of round 1.

11.2) A published date, time or venue may be altered only —

a) with the written agreement of the captains of all teams affected; or

b) where the League Controller has notified the captains of all teams affected in writing of the proposed alteration and the reason for it, has allowed not less than seven days for objection, and either no objection has been received within that period or the alteration has been approved by the MCU Committee.

11.3) No fee shall be payable in respect of an objection under 11.2 b), and Appendix B c) does not apply to it.

11.4) Not less than twenty-one days' notice shall be given of an alteration under 11.2 taking effect. Where a venue has become unavailable at shorter notice, the League Controller may alter the venue forthwith, notifying the captains of all teams affected, and 11.2 and this paragraph do not apply to an alteration so made.

11.5) The published schedule stands unless it is altered under 11.2 or permission is given under 11.6. Neither the League Controller nor the MCU is under any duty to seek, propose or arrange an alternative date, time or venue at the request of a team.

11.6) No match shall be played otherwise than on the date, at the time and at the venue published under this Rule, except with the permission in writing of the League Controller. Permission may be given for a match to be played either before or after the appointed date, and may be given only in respect of a whole match.

11.7) An application for permission under 11.6 —

a) shall be made by the team captain not less than twenty-one days before the appointed date;

b) shall be accompanied by the written agreement of the captain of the opposing team;
c) shall specify a date, time and venue which the applicant has already arranged and which the opposing team has accepted;
d) shall be granted or refused by the League Controller, with reasons, within fourteen days. Permission may be refused without the League Controller being required to propose any alternative.

11.8) No application may be made under 11.7 in respect of an alteration affecting any team other than the two playing the match, and in particular in respect of the date or venue of a whole round. The captains of not less than half the teams in a division may jointly ask the League Controller to consider such an alteration, and the request shall then be dealt with under 11.2.

11.9) Any additional cost arising from permission given under 11.6 shall be borne by the team that applied, and the League Controller may require it to be paid in advance as a condition of permission. Where the match is not played by the date so fixed, the score provided for in Appendix A m) shall be awarded against the team that applied.

11.10) A match played otherwise than at the published time and venue shall be supervised by an arbiter or other responsible person appointed by the League Controller. Where no such person can be appointed, the match may be played only with the written agreement of both team captains, and the games shall not be submitted for FIDE rating.

11.11) The result of a match played before the appointed date shall not be published by the League Controller, nor disclosed by any person taking part in it or reporting it, until every match of that round has been completed. A breach of this paragraph shall be treated as a breach of the Code of Conduct in Appendix N.

11.12) The date appointed for the final round of a division shall not be altered under 11.2 after publication, and no permission shall be given under 11.6 for a match of the final round to be played after the appointed date. Where the venue for the final round becomes unavailable, the venue alone may be altered.

11.13) A clash with the fixtures of another Union's competition is not by itself a ground for an alteration under 11.2 or for permission under 11.6.

12) The current FIDE Laws of Chess shall apply.

13) Players ICU/FIDE membership is set out in Appendix F.

14) Consideration of players rating and board order is set out in Appendix G.

15) Where a club has entered more than one team procedures are set out in Appendix H.

16) Promotion/Relegation is set out in Appendix I.

17) Any change to these rules or their appendices has effect only if made at a general meeting of the MCU, in accordance with Rule 1 and Clause 5.2 of the Constitution. No officer, and no committee, may alter them otherwise.

17.1) The League Controller shall publish on the MCU website every motion

to amend these rules of which the Secretary has notified them, together with the names of its proposer and seconder, as soon as practicable after being so notified and in any event before the commencement of the meeting.

17.2) Where the League Controller invites the clubs to express a view on a proposed change before a motion is put, the invitation, the proposal and the responses shall be circulated to the captains of all teams then registered.

Appendix A (Structure)

a) The league shall be divided into a number of divisions as follows:
b) Divisions
   b.1) Division 1, Consisting of 8 teams, as follows:
      - All teams that finished on top 6 places in Division 1 in the previous season;
      - The 1st- and 2nd-ranked teams from Division 2 in the final standings of the previous season.

      b.1.1) If there are fewer than 8 eligible teams, the MCU Committee reserves the right to consider other teams for inclusion in Division 1, based primarily—but not exclusively—on the final standings of Division 1 and Division 2 in the season immediately preceding.

      b.1.2) Division 1 will be played as a single round robin (all teams play each other once).

      b.1.3) The winner will be awarded the title of "Champion of the Munster Chess Union Club League" for the current season.

   b.2) Division 2, Consisting of 8 teams, as follows:
      - 2 teams relegated from Division 1 in the previous season;
      - Teams ranked 3-6 from Division 2 in the final standings of the previous season;
      - For the purpose of the season 2026/27 only, teams ranked 7-8 from Division 2 in the final standings of the 2025/26 season. Those 2 places will be fulfilled by top 2 Division 3 teams in the following seasons.

      b.2.1) If there are fewer than 8 eligible teams, the MCU Committee reserves the right to consider other teams for inclusion in Division 2, based primarily—but not exclusively—on the final standings of Division 2 and 3 in the season immediately preceding.

      b.2.2) Division 2 will be played as a single round robin (all teams play each other once).

      b.2.3) The top two teams will be awarded the titles of "Munster Chess Union Division 2 Winner" and "Munster Chess Union Division 2 First Runner-up"

   b.3) Division 3,
      - Consists of all teams eligible to play in the League but not participating in Division 1 or 2, with no limit on the number of entries.
      - Division 3 will be played as a 7-round Swiss Team tournament.

      b.3.1) The top two teams will be awarded the titles of "Munster Chess Union Division 3 Winner" and "Munster Chess Union Division 3 First Runner-up"

c) For each match the away team shall have White on odd boards and Black

on even boards.

d) Team's eligibility for inclusion in the league shall be decided on their standing at the end of the previous season.
e) New teams applying to join the league shall enter the lowest division.
f) Matches to be played on the appointed date and at the appointed venue as per the schedule published by the League Controller, save as permitted under Rule 11.
g) Departures from the published schedule are governed by Rule 11.
h) No individual game shall be played otherwise than as part of its match. The penalty for breaching this rule will be the forfeiture of the game by both parties.
i) Walkovers
   i.1) All walkovers must be awarded from the bottom board upward.
   i.2) This rule must be applied in conjunction with the sitting order regulations.
   i.3) Failure to follow this procedure will result in forfeiture of the games affected by the error.
   i.4) Walkovers may be given without explicitly specifying player names.
   i.5) Items i.1)--i.3) apply to walkovers declared by a team in its match-day line-up. Where a game has been played by a player who was not registered or not eligible, the walkover shall be recorded on the board on which that game was played, and item i.3) shall not apply.
j) Time controls:
   j.1) 90 minutes + 30seconds increment from move 1 for FIDE rated divisions. All divisions are FIDE rated when practical.
   j.2) All rapid games shall be played as 10 minutes + 5 seconds increment from move 1.
k) All team captains will report results of matches within 48 hours of the completion of the match and must use the MCU Website (http://www.munsterchessunion.org/login.php) to report the results.
   k.1) Game points are recorded on the official match protocol.
   k.2) At the end of the final game, the team captains or their appointed deputies must sign the match protocol.
   k.3) If neither the captain nor deputy is available, the last finishing player, provided they are at least 16 years of age, shall sign on behalf of the team.
   k.4) Match results signed by both teams are considered final, even if individual game scores recorded on the paper are incorrect.
   k.5) Any such discrepancies described in m.4) do not affect the individual game results submitted to the ICU or FIDE for rating purposes.
l) A team captain may nominate another MCU member to act as their reporter in updating their results on the MCU website. The team captain shall send the reporter's name and email address to the League Controller with the request to add them as the team reporter.

m) A 5-0 score shall be awarded against any team that fails to appear for a match. Notice of such a claim should be given to the League Controller within 3 days of the match using the e-mail account: **leaguecontroller@munsterchessunion.org**

m.1) A team that knows it will be unable to field a full team for a match shall notify the League Controller and the captain of the opposing team as soon as it knows, and in any event not later than forty-eight hours before the appointed starting time.

m.2) Where a team fails to appear for a match without having given notice under m.1), the match points deducted from that team, in addition to the score awarded under paragraph m), shall be two for a first such failure in a season and four for any subsequent failure.

m.3) Paragraph m.2) does not apply where the failure was caused by circumstances beyond the team's control, of which the League Controller shall be the judge.

n) Should a team withdraw from the League, their score shall stand if half or more of their total number of matches have been played and they will forfeit all their un-played matches 5-0. If they have completed less than half their matches at the time of withdrawal, then all their scores shall be cancelled but the games played will be rated.

o) The default time is 60 minutes

Appendix B (fees)

a) Registration fees are as follows:

a.1) €150 for all teams

b) Registration fees cover the registration of 10 players per team. Any additional player costs €15 / player.

c) Fee for appeals is €25 / case.

Appendix C (Scoring and Tie-Breaks)

a) The primary scoring mechanism will be match points where each team receives two points for winning a match and one point for a drawn match.

b) If two or more teams tie for any title, promotion or relegation place, a tie-break system will be used.

c) If two or more teams are tied for any title, promotion, or relegation place, the following tie-break system shall be applied in the order given:

c.1) Total game points scored by each team (1 game point for a win, 0.5 game point for a draw)

c.2) Result of the individual match(es) between the tied teams

c.3) Weighted game points scored by each team (5 points for a win on Board 1, 4 points for a win on Board 2, etc.)

c.4) All walkovers shall be discounted, and then

i) Result of the individual match(es) between the tied teams.

ii) Weighted game points

c.5) Elimination of the bottom board in each match, then repeat the tie-break process from step c.1) This elimination may be repeated, removing the next-lowest board each time, until only board 1 remains; if the teams remain tied, item c.6) shall apply.

c.6) Drawing of lots.

d) If more than two teams are tied, and one of the tie-break rules in Appendix C point c) separates one team from the others, that team's placement shall be set by this distinction. The remaining tied teams shall then be considered separately, starting again from tie-break step c.1).

Appendix D (teams)

a) Teams will consist of 5 players

b) These players must not have played for any other club in any division in the current season.

c) In these rules a guest player means a player who is eligible to play in the MCU Leagues but who does not meet the residency requirement in paragraph e). Long-term members, who played at least 6 games in at least 2 seasons in the Munster Club League are not required to meet the residency requirements.

d) A team may field not more than one guest player in any round, and not on board 1 or board 2, and not more than two different guest players in a season. These are limits on fielding a guest player in a match; the number of guest players who may be registered on a team's panel is not limited.

e) Any player living in Munster or Connaught or have a record of minimum 6 Munster League games in at least 2 seasons may play in the MCU Leagues otherwise than as a guest player. This paragraph is to be reviewed if Connaught establish their own FIDE rated League. Any other eligible player may play only as a guest player.

f) All players used by a team must be added to the team panel on the MCU Website no later than forty-eight hours before the appointed starting time of the match.

g) Any game by a player not on the team panel will be treated as a walkover for scoring purposes. Clubs must register a sufficient number of players to ensure substitutions are available if one or more players are unable to play, in order to avoid walkovers. Each club must register at least two additional players which may include players who are permitted to "play up" for a higher team when required.

h) Where a club has more than one team in the chess league, the names of the five players comprising each team must be submitted to the League Controller before commencement of round 1. If this is not done, the team sheets from round 1 will be taken to identify the teams.

Appendix E (captains)

Each team must appoint a captain. This person (or his/hers deputy) must qualify as an individual member of the MCU.

Duties of the captain:

a) Prepare a team sheet for each round and submit it to the controller.
b) Deal with all matters concerning the team during the competition.
c) Submit results as required on the web site.
d) Ensure that their team supply 3 digital clocks (capable of using the Fisher Incremental System), sets and boards for each of their matches.

Appendix F (FIDE/ICU membership)

a) All players must be current members of the ICU
b) Any player not registered with FIDE who plays in a FIDE rated game shall be then registered with FIDE with IRL as their federation.

Appendix G (rating)

a) For the purposes of team selection, there is a 200 rating points tolerance, that is to say that a player may NOT play on a higher board than a teammate if current FIDE rating is more than 200 points below his team-mate's rating.
b) Unrated players or players left out of the rating list in error may be given a provisional/estimated rating by the Controller for the League use only.
c) For the purposes of the MCU FIDE rating will be used for all leagues.
d) After the panel for a round has closed, the League Controller shall determine each team's board order in order of rating, highest first, and shall publish it under Appendix J a).
e) A team's players shall be placed on boards in the order in which they appear on the panel so published.
f) Paragraph a) does not apply to a team whose players are placed in accordance with paragraph e).

Appendix H (2 teams)

Where a club enters more than one team (no matter which division) the following shall apply:

a) No player may be a member of two teams. Where a club has more than one team in the chess league, the names of the five players comprising each team to be submitted to the League Controller before commencement of round 1 to the above e-mail account. If this is not done, the team sheets from round 1 will be taken to identify the teams. There is no limit of the number of players who may play for a team during a season as long as it stays within Appendix D above.
b) Where a club has two or more teams competing in the League, players are not allowed to substitute downwards.
c) Players are deemed to be a member of the team that they first play for unless specified otherwise in advance by the team captain to the League Controller. This includes guest players.
d) Members of lower teams are allowed to substitute up twice to each team

above them. They may not substitute up more than twice. If they substitute for a third time they are deemed to be a member of team.

e) The substitution rules apply equally whether the teams involved be in the same division or different divisions.

f) For the purposes of the substitution rules, first, second, third and subsequent teams will be identified by the average rating of the players on those teams. Where a club uses a pool of floating substitutes from time to time to fill in for absent team members, the substitution rules outlined above still apply.

Appendix I (promotion/relegation)

a) A team's eligibility for inclusion in a division shall be determined by its final standing at the end of the previous season.

b) The bottom two teams in the final standings of Division 1 shall be relegated to Division 2 for the following season.

c) The top two teams in the final standings of Division 2 shall be promoted to Division 1 for the following season.

d) The bottom two teams in the final standings of Division 2 shall be relegated to Division 3 for the following season.

e) The top two teams in the final standings of Division 3 shall be promoted to Division 2 for the following season.

Appendix J (Match-Day Eligibility)

a) Not less than twenty-four hours before each round, the League Controller shall publish for each team the panel of players eligible to play for that team in that round. The panel shall state, for each player, their board order under Appendix G, the number of guest appearances they have used, and the number of substitutions upward they have used.

b) Before publishing a panel the League Controller shall satisfy themselves that each player on it is eligible under Appendices D, F and H and under Rule 8.

c) A player not shown on the published panel for that team and that round shall not be seated, and the board shall be treated as a vacancy and dealt with under Appendix A i) before the clocks are started.

d) Where a team sheet does not conform to the published panel, the arbiter shall require it to be corrected before the clocks are started.

e) Where a player has been published as eligible under paragraph a), no game played by that player shall afterwards be set aside on the ground that the player was not eligible.

f) Any objection to the eligibility of a player, or to a team's board order, shall be made to the arbiter before the end of the round, or to the League Controller within twenty-four hours of its conclusion. An objection made later shall not be entertained.

g) No result recorded for a round shall be altered after the pairings for the

following round have been published.

h) Where it appears that a player was published in error, or that a club obtained publication by giving false or incomplete information, the results already played shall stand and the League Controller shall instead — according to the seriousness of the case — remove the player from the panel for the remainder of the competition, deduct match points from the team, or refer the matter to the MCU Committee under Clause 6.1 of the Constitution. A deduction takes effect from the date it is notified and does not alter any result already recorded.

Appendix K (registration)

a) Eligible clubs may enter one or more teams by registering their intent to be considered for inclusion in the League in writing to League Controller no later than 1 October in the year in which the season commences, stating
   - a.1) the name under the club to be registered,
   - a.2) contact information of the club manager (email, mobile phone).
   - a.3) the number of teams to be registered - otherwise alphabetical ordering is used (A, B, C, …)
   - a.4) divisions for each team to be considered where applicable. Mentioning no divisions are considered as inclusion for Division 2.

Appendix L (Rapid Games)

a) Any team eligible for inclusion in Division 1 or Division 2 is also eligible to participate in the Rapid Games Team Tournament. In addition, any club affiliated to the MCU may enter one or more teams whether or not it has entered a team in the League.
   - a.1) The Rapid Games Team tournament shall be played as a 6-round Swiss Team competition.
   - a.2) The winning team shall be awarded the title of "Champion of the Munster Chess Union Rapid League" for the current season.
   - a.3) Entry shall be by separate registration in writing to the League Controller not later than twenty-one days before the date appointed for the tournament, stating the matters set out in Appendix K a.1) and a.2).
   - a.4) The entry fee shall be €____ per team, payable in addition to any fee due under Appendix B a).
   - a.5) Save as otherwise provided in this Appendix, Appendices A to N apply to the Rapid Games Team Tournament with the necessary modifications.

Appendix M (Match day team registration)

a) Submission Deadline
   - For each round, teams must submit their list of players in writing to the appointed arbiter no later than 20 minutes before the round starts.

b) Eligibility
   - Every player registered to play in a round must be eligible for that team

according to the league's eligibility rules.

c) Failure to Register on Time
   - A list submitted late but before the expiry of the default time shall not of itself be treated as a failure to appear; the default time in Appendix A item o) applies to each individual game. A team that has not submitted a list by the expiry of the default time shall be recorded as having failed to appear for that round.

d) Withdrawal for Non-Appearance
   - Any team failing to appear for two rounds in two different match days in a season shall be withdrawn from the league.

Appendix N (Code of Conduct)

a) Chess in MCU events is intended to be a recreational activity primarily for enjoyment.

b) Understand and play by the rules. Understanding and playing by the rules is the players, the teams', and the clubs' responsibility in that order. The rules of Chess, as set out by FIDE, exist for good reasons and if everyone learns and abides by them this will ensure the enjoyment of all people involved in Chess.

c) It is not allowed to use outside aid to help your game while it is in progress. The use of any of the following is strictly forbidden: Assistance from another person, unless this assistance is approved by the Arbiter.(usually where a disability is involved) Assistance from printed material. Assistance from any electronic device. A second chessboard to analyse your game It is also forbidden to have any electronic device which could aid a player on his person in the playing area without the Arbiters consent.

d) Respect Arbiters, Organizers and other officials. Arbiters, Organizers and officials have a difficult task to perform. They are there to enforce the rules of play but, like all people, they cannot always be right. Accept their decisions graciously. You may have the right to appeal their decisions and if you use this right, do so without causing problems. Abuse of Arbiters, Organizers and officials is unacceptable behaviour. Where appropriate, the MCU Committee as an acting Players Appeal Committee decisions are final and binding on all.

e) Verbal abuse of officials is a serious offence against the rules of Chess. Verbally abusing other players or deliberately distracting or provoking an opponent is also not acceptable. Loss of temper distracts opponents and other players and is not acceptable.

f) Be respectful. It is important to give each and every opponent proper respect during the game as well as before and after it. Everyone involved in any way in Irish Chess owes a special duty of care to children who play the game. Anyone who neglects this duty will be in serious breach of this code. Any form of abuse of any child, be it verbal or physical, will be viewed as the most serious breach of this code of conduct and will be firmly dealt with by the Munster Chess Union, and if that

requires the Irish Chess Union.

g) When playing against a minor, we expect players to act as a role model;
   - Display high standards of language, manner, punctuality, preparation and presentation;
   - Ensure that children respect the rules of the game. Insist on fair play and ensure they are aware that you will not tolerate cheating or bullying behaviour;
   - Encourage the development of respect for opponents and other Organisers and avoid criticism of them;
   - Avoid the use of alcohol and tobacco products during games and generally the event where children are playing;

h) Facilities, equipment and venues provided by the organisers cost money and need to be respected by all participants in Chess events. Failure to do so will be considered a breach of the Code of Conduct.

i) All members of the MCU need to realise that it is extremely important to maintain the public image of Chess in Ireland. Any member who publicly jeopardises this may be subject to disciplinary action by the executive committee of the ICU.