

Gwent County Chess Association

Rules governing play in the Gwent League, Gwent QP League, and the Gwent Knockout Cup Competitions.

Version 2026.1 Amended according to GCA AGM and subsequent sub-committee June 2026

General Rules

1) League Entry

- a. All clubs meeting regularly in the County of Gwent are eligible for participation in the Gwent Knockout Cup competitions on payment of the entry fee.
- b. Entry into the Gwent League is by the online entry form (see Appendix for links) and on payment of the entry fee.
- c. Entry into the Gwent Quick-play League is by the online entry form.
- d. Newly formed clubs will be exempt from entry fees in their first year of membership of the Association.

2) Fees

The entry fee for a team in each team competition held within the Gwent County Chess Association shall be £3. Entry to the Gwent Quick Play League is free.

3) Teams

Teams in the Gwent League will comprise four players in all divisions. The number of players per team may be altered by the League controller at their discretion. Teams in the Gwent Knockout Open Cup will be composed of six players; teams in the Gwent Knockout U1750 and U1500 Cups will be composed of four players; teams in the Gwent QP league will comprise 4 players.

4) Scoring

Positions in all leagues shall be decided first by match points (2 points for a win, 1 for a draw and 0 for a loss), then on game points (1 for a win, ½ for a draw and 0 for a loss). Ties will be resolved first by match points then game points between the teams involved.

5) Promotion and Relegation

Two teams will be relegated from each division, apart from the lowest division. Two teams will be promoted from all divisions below division 1. Promotion and relegation will be reviewed on an annual basis.

6) Eligibility

Eligible clubs may enter as many teams as they wish, subject to the following conditions:

- a. All players must be registered with their club, the Gwent County Chess Association, and the Welsh Chess Union. The registration fee of the Gwent County Chess Association will be £4 for adults and £2 for juniors.
- b. A player will be regarded as registered only if he or she has paid all the appropriate registration fees, with the exceptions listed below:
 - i. Players aged 75 and over on the 1st of September shall not pay GCCA registration fees.
 - ii. Players who have not been registered with the Association or the Welsh Chess Union at any time in the previous 5 years will be exempt from the Association's registration fee in their first year of membership
- c. The League Controller must be kept informed of any changes to the name and contact details of the captain of each team throughout the season. This must be done via the online Team Entry portal (see appendix).
- d. Players may only represent one club in the League each season, except that:
 - i. The Executive Committee has the authority to set this aside in exceptional circumstances (e.g., to prevent a club from closing).
 - ii. A newly formed club may include one nominated player from another club in its team(s) during its first year of competition. The nominated player will still be able to play for his/her own club, subject to any other provisions of Rule 6.

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- e. Where clubs have more than 1 team in any division, players from that club can switch between any of those teams throughout the season, but not in the same round.
- f. Players graded over 1800 cannot play in division 2. However, this rule may be waived by the League Controller under exceptional circumstances, for example if a club can only field one division 2 team consisting of 3 or 4 low or unrated players and one player above 1800, then they may be permitted to play the higher rated player in that division.
- g. Players can only play 1 game per round in the same division.
- h. Players may only play for one team in each KO Cup. Teams made up of players from different clubs are allowed.
- i. To participate in any club based GCCA competition, clubs must sign and agree to the GCCA code of conduct.

7) **Player Registration**

If a player is not registered with the Gwent County Chess Association within three weeks of playing a match or is otherwise ineligible to play in a match under General Rule 6, his or her team will be penalised by forfeiture of points scored on that board and all boards below it.

8) **Fixtures**

The Controller will determine all fixtures. Matches or individual fixtures may be played prior to the fixture date providing both captains agree. Where a club has more than one team in a division the fixtures between them must be played by the end of February, otherwise they will be scored 0-0. All matches within the league must be completed by 30th April. Failure to do so will result in the match being scored 0-0. The League Controller may extend the season as appropriate.

9) **Postponement Requests**

Applications for postponement of any match must be lodged with the Controller and the opposing captain, and such requests may be granted at the Controller's discretion. Two possible dates for the re-arranged match must be given by the home team (via text or email) to the away team within a week of when the League controller agrees to the postponement; one of these dates must then be accepted by the away team (via text or email) within a further week, or at least one week before the re-arranged date, whichever is earlier. The two dates will fall on the normal club night of the home team unless agreed by both teams. Failure to re-arrange will result in a n-0 match loss for the non-complying team, where n= the number of players in a team. Except for reasons of inclement weather, matches shall not be cancelled later than the day before the opposing team's club night of the previous week. Any internal matches within a club (A v B etc.) which are postponed, must be re-arranged, and played within 6 weeks of the original match date and by the end of February. Failure to do so will result in the match being scored 0-0. The re-arranged date will be supplied to the League Controller by the home team once agreed.

10) **Playing Conditions**

It is the responsibility of the home club to ensure that playing conditions are suitable for the playing of chess and any club failing to provide adequate amenities will forfeit its right to hold home matches. Changes of venue must be notified to the League Controller and to the County Secretary.

11) **Rating Lists**

All ratings referred to in the above rules are the published WCU July ratings. This list will apply for the duration of the league. Any rating list updates will not be considered.

12) **Mobile Phones**

Players will be allowed to take mobiles into the playing room but are requested where possible to have ringtones switched off. Where the sound of a player's mobile phone interrupts a game, this does not automatically incur a penalty but a second occurrence for the same player in the same match will result in a default win for the opponent.

13) **Matters Arising**

On all other matters arising from these rules, the League Controller's decision shall be final.

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Playing Rules

1) Rules

Except as otherwise provided in these rules, all games shall be played in accordance with the current FIDE Laws of Chess as accepted by the Welsh Chess Union. The time limit for classical games is all moves in 1 hour, plus a 20 second increment per move for the whole game.

2) Team Board Order

- a) Where there is a difference of more than 100 rating points in the latest published rating list (150 if the lower rated player is a junior) between two players, the higher-rated player must play on a higher board than the lower-rated player. Any protest against a team's board order must be made to the opposing captain prior to the start of the match, and a written complaint must then be sent to the Controller within three days of the match being played. If the complaint is upheld by the controller, the team infringing the rules will be penalised by forfeiture of all points scored in the match concerned with effect from the highest incorrectly graded board downwards.
- b) A player may only be substituted into a team after the start of a match if the player does not exceed a 100-point (150 points for Juniors) difference between boards.
- c) The restriction in 2b), does not apply to the Gwent QP League.

3) Quick Play League Rules

- a) The time limit is all moves in 10 minutes plus a 10 second increment per move.
- b) There will be 4 games per board, per round.
- c) Each game will see colours reversed.
- d) The away team will have white in the first game.
- e) The games will not be rated.
- f) There are no rating restrictions on board order but once assigned a player must stay on that board for the whole round.

4) Clocks

Digital clocks shall be used on all occasions. Clubs who cannot provide clocks for all boards shall advise their opponents not less than two days before the match to allow the visiting team to make arrangements in order to supply their own clocks should they wish to do so. If clubs fail to comply, those boards without clocks shall be forfeit.

5) Start Times

Play in each match shall begin no later than 7:15PM

6) Defaults

- a) Classical time limits: Each player shall be allowed 1 hour to elapse before defaulting the game, unless the player has been substituted within that time by an appropriately graded player (see Playing Rule 2(b)).
- b) Quick Play League:
 - i) Each player will be allowed 15 minutes to arrive after the match starts. Captains should note and agree the match start time.
 - ii) Where a player is absent, clocks will NOT be started during this time.
 - iii) The clock will be started 15 minutes after the agreed start time.
 - iv) After the first flag fall, the game is scored as a loss for the absent player.
 - v) Colours are then reversed, the clocks will be reset and immediately started for round 2.
 - vi) If the player still hasn't arrived at the second flag fall and a substitute player is not possible, then the result is scored as a 4-0 loss for the absent player.
 - vii) If a substitute player is found, then they can only start in a round where the flag has

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not fallen.

7) **Colour Allocation**

Colours will be allotted alternately from board one downwards with the away team having white on board 1. In the Gwent Knockout Cup competitions, the captains shall toss a coin for choice of colour.

8) **Recording Moves**

a) Full Notation with ≥ 30 s Increment

If the time control provides an increment of 30 seconds or more per move, all moves must be recorded by both players from start to finish.

b) Partial Notation with < 30 s Increment

If the per-move increment is less than 30 seconds, then as soon as a player's remaining time in that period falls below five minutes, that player may stop recording moves for the remainder of that period, even if subsequent increments later raise their clock back above five minutes.

Notation resumes only at the start of the next time-control period (or, if there is no next period, it is no longer required once the game ends).

c) In the Gwent QP League, recording of the moves is optional.

9) **Results**

a) Home captains must send the results of each match to the Controller not more than three days after the match using the online results card.

b) Each club shall forward a complete and up-to-date set of results should the controller so request.

10) **Unfinished Matches**

a) In the event of a match being started but not finished through exceptional circumstances, the Controller shall make arrangements as are necessary to resolve the unfinished games.

b) Teams or individual players will not be penalised for lateness or non-arrival due to severe adverse weather conditions if the controller is satisfied that such conditions prevailed.

11) **Tie Breaks**

In the event that a match in the Gwent Knockout Cup competitions should end with scores equal after the conclusion of all games, the method of board count shall be used to determine the winner. If board count fails to decide between the teams, then Board Elimination shall be used. If both methods fail to secure a result, the match shall be replayed at the venue of the away team with colours reversed.

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Appendix 1

Web Links

Gwent County Chess Association:

<https://gwentchess.org.uk/>

Gwent League Web Site:

Contains match cards for reporting results and full league results

[Gwent Chess League](#)

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Appendix 2: Managing Your Club and Teams Online

A short guide for club secretaries and team captains

Your club enters and manages its teams through the Gwent Chess League website. One person — usually the club secretary, or a captain acting for the club — fills in the club's details and all of its teams once. After that, everything is managed through a single private link that is emailed to you, so nothing ever needs typing twice.

Entering your club and teams

1. On the league website, click the **Team Entry** tab at the top.
2. Fill in the **Club details**: your club's name, its venue address, and the night you play.
3. Fill in the **Club secretary** — the name, email and phone number of the club's main contact.
4. Fill in your first team under **Teams**: the team's name, the captain's name, email and phone, and the division you would prefer. To add more teams, click **+ Add another team** and fill in each one. If you add one by mistake, click **Remove this team**.
5. Check everything is correct, then click **Submit entry**.

Keep your confirmation email

As soon as you submit, the league controller emails the club secretary confirmation of entry. It contains a **private link** to your club's entry. Keep this email safe — the link is the only thing you need to make changes later. Treat it like a password: anyone who has it can change your entry.

Changing your details or teams later

Use this whenever you need to add a team, change a captain, or correct any detail.

1. Open the **private link** from your confirmation email. Your entry appears with everything already filled in.
2. Make your changes — edit any detail, click **+ Add another team**, or remove a team.
3. Click **Save changes**.

The website and the public Club Directory update immediately. You can use the same link as often as you need.

If you lose your link

1. Go to the **Team Entry** tab.
2. Under **Already entered?** type the club secretary's email address.
3. Click **Resend my link**. The email will be sent to that address again.

A few things to know

- The division you choose is a **preference, not a guarantee**. The League Controller sets each team's actual division once all entries are in, and seedings follow the previous season's placings.
- Your club and captain **contact details are shown on the public Club Directory**, so that opposing captains can arrange matches.
- Anyone with your private link can change your entry, so keep the confirmation email safe.

Need help?

If anything does not work as expected, please contact the League Controller.

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Version Control

Date of Change	Reason for Change	Change Authority	Version
23/7/2025	Amendment to Playing rule 1 to change the rate of play.	AGM	2025.1
25/7/2025	1. Changed Playing rule 8 to clarify the recoding of moves. 2. Added Version table	AGM	2025.2
3/7/2026	Removed references to division 3. Changed the number of players per team to 4 across all divisions. Added promotion and relegation details. Added Appendix 2, managing clubs and teams.	League Controller	2026.1