

**Minutes of the**  
**Annual General Meeting of the Bury St Edmunds Chess Club**  
**Held 11 June 2015 at 7:30pm**

**1. Welcome**

*Present:*

Steve Ruthen (SR), Bob Jones (BJ), Colin Roberts (CR), Steve Lovell (SL), John Feavoyour (JF), David Wood (DW), Dave Clark (DC), Dick Myhill (DM), Adam Harvey (AH), Laureano Garcia (LG), Daniel Garcia-Leon (DG).

*Apologies:*

Hugo Smith (HS), Ed Player, Ian Wallis

**2. Matters arising from the Minutes of the AGM held 29 May 2014**

The circulated minutes were agreed as a true record of events. There were no matters arising not already on the agenda.

**3. Reports**

(i) Match Secretary: Bob Jones

BJ summarised the fortunes of the various teams and circulated a summary of the final outcome for each. Overall, we didn't fare well. Between the two leagues, Bury teams comprised three of the four teams relegated, and only narrowly avoided a "clean sweep". However, there were certainly positives. Bury F won BACL Division 3. Chas Szentmihaly was the the joint top scorer with 7/10. Juniors Alan John and Adam John both scored 4/5. Bury teams qualified for the finals in both sections of the Roger Goldsmith. We beat Ipswich in the Suffolk section of the Norfolk and Suffolk cup.

In total 159 matches and 622 individual games were played, with just 18 defaults. SR queried how many players this involved. BJ estimated approximately 40.

DW led the group in expressing thanks to BJ for all his work organising the teams and assisting captains.

(ii) Treasurer: Hugo Smith (in Absentia)

SR summarised the accounts and the report provided by HS. BJ explained the membership rates (£30 standard adult rate, £15 for juniors, OAPs and unwaged). Queries on unpaid membership fees led to discussion of treating club membership as a requirement of playing league chess, which many agreed would be a sensible approach. In practice this is difficult because it isn't team captains that collect the membership fee. SL explained that the ECF would be raising its own membership fees a little for the upcoming season.

In the light of the report and accounts, the meeting approved HS's proposal to leave membership fees at their current levels.

(iii) Club Championship: Colin Roberts

CR explained that, after some discussion, it had been agreed that the deadline for playing Club Championship matches would not be extended beyond tonight, and that therefore the winner in the Open Section was John Feavvour. BJ presented the trophy to JF.

Very few matches were completed in the Minor section and CR proposed that there be no winner. The meeting approved this suggestion.

The current format for the competition seems not to be working, and SR described the club championship as our "Achilles Heel". CR outlined plans for the next competition which the committee hopes will improve things. The exact format will depend on the number of entries, but rounds of specified fixtures will need to be completed within a limited time, expected to be 6 or 8 weeks. Anyone failing to complete two consecutive fixtures will be excluded from the remainder of the competition. DW commented that the club championship at Stowmarket works on much the same basis. Entries will be taken until the end of August.

#### **4. Election of Officers**

With all committee members willing to continue in their roles, and no-one standing against them, SR moved to re-elect the committee en bloc, and all were duly re-elected. The committee therefore remains as follows

Chairman:	Stephen Ruthen
Match Secretary:	Bob Jones
Admin Secretary:	Steve Lovell
Treasurer:	Hugo Smith
Club Championship Organiser:	Colin Roberts

#### **5. Teams and Captains for Next Season**

BJ tabled an outline of planned squads for next season. Discussions between BJ and F-team captain DM had concluded that the F team would not be sustainable in BAFL Division 2, and should therefore be disbanded. DM summarised the situation saying that the club was perhaps fielding too many teams which frequently put captains in a position of begging for players rather than players being in a position of competing for places. SR and others agreed that we are indeed stretched and that this put too much pressure on captains.

BJ explained that our Bury B team (in the Suffolk League) was composed of Cambridge based players, but that as things stand the team would be driverless for next season. They are still hoping to find a driver, but the team may not be viable for 2015-16 season.

SL said that he'd prefer not to captain a side in the coming season due to his other commitments at the club and in the Bury Area League. AH kindly agreed to step into the vacancy this created.

Other changes at the club include the loss of Somton and Anita (moving to Derbyshire), Peter Massey (moving to Yorkshire), Trevor Webster and Alan Broadway.

DM queried whether we are likely to see Mark Le Vine or Rob Cope again. BJ added Zac Vane to this list of possible returners. They would be approached, but Mark is known to depend on Zac for transport and Zac, who has been at the club a few times over the summer so far, will be in Thailand for much of the season, making his attendance sporadic at best.

SR commented that he'd heard positive reports about likely new members from the Apex club. BJ explained that the next club meeting, 25 June, would be a 15 minute tournament made as friendly as possible to new members. He'd already had promises of attendance from 4 Apex regulars and one other who had previously shown an interest. SL will also be inviting former members and others on the fringe of the club.

Returning to the list of team captains and their squads, CRo said they looked a little light and queried whether players needed to be spread less thinly. In response BJ explained that the document included only those from whom he'd heard back about their intentions for next season. SR questioned the flexibility in the league rules and whether the apparent shortage of players would cause problems. BJ and SL commented that that would be more of an issue in the Suffolk League where the rules on substitution are much tighter.

LG commented that Daniel Garcia-Leon and William Moody should also be added to the list of (junior) members also keen to play next season.

Note from the Admin Secretary: Discussions after the meeting suggested that while the F team wouldn't be sustainable in Division 2, we might need space in Division 3 for our large cohort of juniors and other Division 3 standard players.

## **6. BACL and SCCA Matters**

SL tabled a paper outlining proposals for rule amendments from the SCCA Committee and BACL Executive. The papers form an appendix to these minutes. BJ summarised those from the SCCA. In brief, the SCCA Committee proposes:

- To allow postponement of fixtures by agreement between the captains. [DM suggested a helpful amendment to the wording of this rule].
- To clarify when teams may renominate, specifying that it would be allowed:
  - Within a month of the start of the season.
  - Within three weeks of the publication of January grades.
  - If there is a material change to a team's playing strength (due to the addition or loss of team members).
- To review the new SCCA "Cup and Plate" competition. The format has thrown up a number of issues including extreme mismatches in the first round.

SL summarised the proposals from the BACL. In brief, the BACL Executive proposes:

- To allow the Executive to include two ex officio members rather than one.
- To limit league proposals to clubs and the Executive as a whole, rather than clubs and individual members of the Executive.
- To treat category F grades as estimates subject to revision.
- For players who only had an estimated grade at the start of the season: to use latest grades (estimated or otherwise) for nomination and eligibility (in addition to board order).
- To clarify and amend the rules and processes around disputes and appeals, including allowing captains 14 rather than 7 days in which to lodge an appeal against the decisions of the Match Secretary.
- To review the status and format of the Goldsmith, Rapidplay and Jamboree competitions.

In the light of the events which prompted the proposed changes to rules on disputes and appeals DM queried whether the league rules should also explicitly opt out of the FIDE requirement that both players should sign both score sheets as an accurate reflection of the result. The BACL rules state that FIDE rules shall apply unless superseded by BACL rules, and this one isn't superseded ... but it also isn't followed. BJ and CR agreed. While it is too late to make this proposal in relation to the 2015-16 season, the matter will be brought to the attention of the Executive with a view to bringing it to the following AGM. **Action: SL to pass this to BACL Chairman Ole Bay Petersen.**

**Action: ALL - If you have any comments on these proposals or ideas for the competition reviews, please get in touch with SL & BJ as soon as possible.**

## 7. Club Matters

At the last AGM it was agreed that unless there is some other agreement in place (e.g. reciprocal lift sharing or purchase of drinks), non-drivers should expect to give drivers £2 per away game to assist in meeting petrol costs. A straw poll suggested this has been only partially taken up. The meeting agreed that we should again publicise this informal policy, captains in particular should emphasise it to their squads, and a notice to this effect should be placed on the table with the attendance sheet. **Action: Captains to encourage this.**

## 8. Upcoming Events

- BACL AGM (Monday 22 June at MHCC)
- SCCA AGM (Tuesday 23 June at Ipswich)
- Jamboree (Thursday 10 September at MHCC)

BJ, CR and SL will be at both AGMs. DW, AH and (tentatively) DM also agreed to attend the BACL AGM.

**Action: SL to canvas for other possible attendees.**

## 9. Any other Business

JF noticed that the newly awarded trophy did not carry his name. SL explained that the club agreed not to engrave the body of the trophy, but that we could engrave the base. **Action: SL to have the trophy engraved and return it to JF.**

SL outlined a number of vacancies in the leadership of both leagues and said anyone in the club was welcome to stand for these or indeed other positions in those teams.

SL also brought attention to a club "flyer" produced in the previous season, and business cards produced several years ago, and invited members to take a few for their local meeting places or places of work.

SL read from an email from the Bury Library. To celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first publication of "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" they are holding an event in the Abbey Gardens on 4<sup>th</sup> July (10am to 3pm). Chess features heavily in the second of these books and they'd like to involve the club as the local representatives of chess. In addition to being an enjoyable diversion, this could be a useful advert for the club. **Action: All - If you'd be interested in coming along please get in touch.**

BJ mentioned the upcoming Suffolk Closed Championship (11 & 12 July). Those interested in entering the Challengers section of this event should contact Tim Lunn.

**Close of Meeting: 8:53pm**

# Appendix on SCCA and BACL Proposals

## SCCA Committee Proposals

### Postponement by agreement

The SCCA committee recommends the introduction of the following new rule to allow postponement by mutual agreement between the captains.

A match may be postponed **by agreement** between the two captains, provided they agree on a new date and notify the Competitions Secretary before the original date for the fixture. The date for the rescheduled match must not be later than 30 April. Note that a captain is under no obligation to agree a new date, and at any stage in the negotiations may decline, in which case the match will be played on the original date.

### Nominations

The existing rule 5.2 reads as follows

5.2 Nominations can be changed during January, following the publication of the new ECF grades, by notifying the Competitions Secretary. At other times, teams may apply to the Competitions Secretary to re-nominate if there is material change to the club's playing strength. Changes to nominations will be published by the Competitions Secretary when they occur by e-mail to the club secretaries.

The SCCA committee recommends the following three changes

- (1) 'Nominations can be changed during January, following the publication of the new ECF grades'  
*to be replaced by:*  
'Nominations can be changed during a three week period following publication of the new ECF grades in January.'

*The reason for this change is that the new grades are not published until close to the end of the month, leaving almost no time for re-nominations under the existing rule.*

- (2) 'to the club's playing strength'  
*to be replaced by:*  
'to the team's playing strength'.

*It is the team's playing strength, not the club's, that is intended here.*

- (3) To add: 'Changes to nominations will also be allowed within one month of the start of the season where it is clear that a nominated player does not intend to play for that club during the season.'

*This allows for the situation where a previously nominated player does not re-join the club, or is unable to play for any reason. Another player can then be nominated in his place.*

### Review of the Cup & Plate

The SCCA will also include a review of the Cup & Plate competition which was new for 2014-15 with opportunity for clubs to raise concerns, and make suggestions.

# BACL Executive Proposals

## Ex-Officio Members of the Executive

The Executive would like the option of having two ex-officio members, and so proposes a revision to rule 1.4.

Existing: The League Executive will consist of the League's officers, together with one ex-officio member elected at the AGM. The League Executive will normally meet in the spring to prepare for the AGM, and it may meet at any time at the request of the Chairman or any two members. Five members of the Executive must be present at any meeting for it to be quorate. The Executive will consider such matters and take such decisions as may be necessary for the running of the League between AGMs.

Proposed: The League Executive will consist of the League's officers, together with **up to two ex-officio members** elected at the AGM. The League Executive will normally meet in the spring to prepare for the AGM, and it may meet at any time at the request of the Chairman or any two members. Five members of the Executive must be present at any meeting for it to be quorate. The Executive will consider such matters and take such decisions as may be necessary for the running of the League between AGMs.

## Handling of Estimated and Category F Grades

League rule 5.2 and RGT rule 6 are identical. The following proposal therefore applies to both rules.

Existing: For the purposes of nomination and eligibility, a player's grade will be his slowplay grade or estimated grade at the start of the season, and this continues to apply after the ECF publishes mid-season grades. (The only exception is when, under rule 5.3, the grader rules that an estimated grade was not accurate and a revised estimate is issued.) However, a week after the new grading list is published the latest grade should be used to determine board order (subject to the permitted 10 point tolerance).

Proposed: For the purposes of nomination and eligibility, a player's grade will be his slowplay grade **[delete "or estimated grade" here]** at the start of the season, and this continues to apply after the ECF publishes mid-season grades. However, a week after the new grading list is published the latest grade should be used to determine board order (subject to the permitted 10 point tolerance).

**Estimated grades function in the same way, but are subject to revision either by the grader or by the publication of mid-season grades. In those cases the latest grade shall be used for nomination, eligibility and board order.**

New category F grades are based on fewer than 9 games. Previously we would have had to use estimated grades for these players, and we would like to continue to do so since being based on so few games they sometimes vary significantly from a person's real playing strength. The Executive therefore proposes the addition, in red, to rule 5.3

Where a player is ungraded or the club secretary will provide the Match Secretary with an estimated grade, which should be used for the purposes of these rules. The estimate should be based on all known data, including old grades from a previous list and games held by the grader. Should the grader consider the estimate to be significantly different to the player's performance (either when first submitted or during the course of the season) he will notify the Match Secretary and club secretary, and the grader's estimate should be used thereafter. **The grader will treat all category F**

grades, which are based on fewer than nine games, as estimated grades and therefore subject to revision.

## Rights of Officers and the Executive

The Executive would like to somewhat limit the powers of individual members by restricting the bringing of proposals at the AGM to clubs and the Executive as a whole rather than clubs and officers. This is handled in rule 1.2

Existing: If a club or officer wishes to include an item on the AGM agenda they should notify the Administrative Secretary at least three weeks before the meeting. This includes any proposal to change the rules, which should specify the proposed wording, though amendments may be considered at the AGM. The Administrative Secretary will circulate agendas and papers at least seven days before the AGM.

Proposed: If a club or **the executive** wishes to include an item on the AGM agenda they should notify the Administrative Secretary at least three weeks before the meeting. This includes any proposal to change the rules, which should specify the proposed wording, though amendments may be considered at the AGM. The Administrative Secretary will circulate agendas and papers at least seven days before the AGM.

## Disputes and Appeals

Following a rather unfortunate dispute this season, the Executive would like to expand rules 10.1 and 10.2 to add additional guidance to those involved in resolving such matters. They would also like to extend the time allowed to captains for appealing the decision of the Match Secretary.

### Existing

10.1: The Match Secretary will adjudicate on any dispute, if necessary seeking advice from an independent ECF arbiter. Should the dispute involve the Match Secretary's club(s) he will nominate another officer who is independent of both clubs (normally the Chairman, Vice-Chairman or Administrative Secretary) to handle the dispute on his behalf.

10.2: A captain may appeal against a decision of the Match Secretary or his nominee within seven days of being notified of the decision. The Executive will decide the matter after consulting the captains involved and the Match Secretary (or his nominee). No member of the clubs involved may vote on the appeal. The Executive's decision will be final.

### Proposed

10.1: The Match Secretary will adjudicate on any dispute, **having obtained statements from the players involved and their respective captains. If necessary the Match Secretary may also seek advice from external sources.** Should the dispute involve the Match Secretary's club(s) he will nominate another officer who is independent of both clubs (normally the Chairman, Vice-Chairman or Administrative Secretary) to handle the dispute on his behalf.

10.2: A captain may appeal against a decision of the Match Secretary or his nominee within **14** days of being notified of the decision. The Executive will decide the matter after consulting the captains involved and the Match Secretary (or his nominee). **The Executive may also wish to involve an independent ECF arbiter, whose verdict will guide the Executive.** No member of the clubs involved may vote on the appeal. The Executive's decision will be final.

# **BACL Competitions Review**

(Draft of Paper for the AGM)

At the 2014 AGM we agreed to bring a review of the revised Roger Goldsmith to the 2015 meeting. Noting that the BACL Summer Rapidplay has been very poorly supported for the last two seasons, the BACL Executive is also keen to consider the future of that event. Having reflected on the matter, they concluded it was best if these reviews were combined and incorporate all competitions other than the league itself.

The competitions in question are therefore:

- The Roger Goldsmith
- The Rapidplay
- The Jamboree

For each of the tournaments, we have the following options:

- A) Discontinue the tournament
- B) Continue the tournament in its current format
- C) Continue the tournament in a new format

The last can be further subdivided into at least three ways the tournaments could be altered

- C1) Combine the tournament with another
- C2) Alter the format of the tournament
- C3) Alter the tournament's position in the calendar

In relation to the Jamboree in particular, some of the options we may wish to consider could be too radical to be implemented in time for this season.

## **The Rapidplay**

A few years ago, the Rapidplay went from 4 player teams to 2 player teams then to a two evening event primarily for individuals. The first such competition was popular but numbers for the last two have been very disappointing.

For this competition, option A would be unfortunate and option B doesn't seem viable, unless we think it is factors external to the event which have made it unpopular - such as level of publicity given to the tournament or the lack of notice for the dates on which the event would run.

If we want to change things, the following options suggest themselves:

- RP-C1) Combine with the Jamboree
- RP-C2) Run as a "whole day" on a weekend, run as a closed congress.
- RP-C3a) Bring it into the season (Christmas?)
- RP-C3b) Schedule the event directly at the end of the season

Clearly these options are neither exhaustive nor mutually exclusive.

## **The Roger Goldsmith**

The table below shows the take up for this event over the last four seasons, with the reformat having taken place after the completion of the 2011-12 event.

Season	Entries	Div 1 Entries	Div 2 Entries
2011-12	6 teams / 4 clubs		
2012-13		6 teams / 3 clubs	4 teams / 4 clubs
2013-14		5 teams / 2 clubs	4 teams / 4 clubs
2014-15		5 teams / 3 clubs (*)	4 teams / 4 clubs

\*One of these was a joint effort between Ely and Newmarket, counted here as one team and one club.

It seems incontestable that more chess is being played in the new 2 division format.

This is the BACL's main "non-league" event. As such discontinuing the event seems almost unthinkable.

If we do want to change things, the following options may be worth considering:

RGT-C1) Combine with Rapidplay / Run as Rapidplay

RGT-C2a) Revert to a single division

RGT-C2b) Alter the grading limits

RGT-C2c) Run the event as a (two section) knockout.

RGT-C2d) Handicap event. Time / Material / Score required for win (based on player grades)

RGT-C3a) Run the event in consecutive weeks rather than spread out.

### **The Jamboree**

There is some feeling that attendance at this event has also declined in recent years. However, in addition to providing an enjoyable evening of chess, the Jamboree clearly signals the beginning of the season and serves both as our prize giving event and an opportunity to distribute the league handbook. I think therefore that options A) and C3) should not be considered in relation to the Jamboree.

The following options may act as a spur to discussion:

J-C1) Combine with the Rapidplay

J-C2a) Have the games graded

J-C2b) Run as an individual rather than team event

J-C2c) Pair teams in Swiss style rather than in advance

Again, these options are neither exhaustive nor mutually exclusive.

### **A Not Entirely Serious Suggestion: Combine Everything**

We could have a Saturday or Sunday at the beginning of the season, run a closed congress and call it the "The Roger Goldsmith Rapidplay Jamboree". A more reasonable option would be to run much the same event, call it the "The BACL Rapidplay Jamboree" and continue to run the Goldsmith either unaltered or in a revised form.