

# Nottinghamshire Chess Association

## General (Rules Revision) Meeting

Meeting held at West Nottingham CC, 7:30pm, Monday 23rd May 2011.

*Glossary:* AGM: Annual General Meeting; BCM: British Chess Magazine; CC: Chess Club; EC: Executive Committee; ECF: English Chess Federation; FIDE: International Chess Federation; LMC: League Management Committee; NCA: Nottinghamshire Chess Association; RRM: Rules Revision Meeting; SGM: Special General Meeting.

Present were R. J. Richmond [President, in the Chair], A. N. Walker [Secretary], S. J. Burke [Treasurer], J. G. Collins, R. Dawson, R. Dyce, N. Graham, D. Griffiths, B. M. Hayward, M. J. Hill, C. Holt, D. G. Levens, T. Lewis, A. E. Morrey, B. T. Redburn, C. Sargeant, J. T. Swain, D. Sudar, T. D. Walker, J. K. Walters.

Meeting opened at 7:31pm.

### 1. Apologies; minutes of previous meeting; matters arising.

Apologies were received from G. Ladds, W. Place and J. Tait.

The President reported the deaths of P. B. Dodson, an Honorary Life Vice-President and formerly President and holder of many other offices within the NCA, Dr G. Stein, who had been closely associated with the development of Ashfield CC, and P. A. Todd, formerly Secretary of the NCA. The meeting stood for a minute in their memory.

The minutes of the 2010 AGM were accepted without comment, and no matters arising, other than those under item 2, were raised.

### 2. Matters arising.

- (a) *Bank mandate:* The President spoke to his paper. The bank mandate was reserved to a general meeting of the NCA, meaning that the new Treasurer, whose name had not been added to the permitted signatories at the AGM, could have been in limbo until this meeting. In fact, EC had taken the necessary action. His preferred option, from those in his paper, was to assert that the AGM had implicitly approved the authorisation as writing cheques was part of the day-to-day duties of the Treasurer. This option was approved *nem. con.* after a brief discussion.
- (b) *Anniversary events:* The President reported that no Congress would be possible over the August bank holiday weekend—the anniversary of the 1936 tournament—due to lack of suitable venues. He had submitted articles to BCM, and would organise a lecture at the University—the site of the tournament—if there was demand. He had recently contacted local counties about a 75-board match, and his book was nearly ready. D. Sudar asked about the money that had been set aside as a guarantee for the congress; N. Graham suggested that this might be discussed at the AGM.

### 3. Proposed changes to League Rules.

[For the proposals, proposers, seconders and rationales, please refer to the papers for the meeting.—ANW]

The proposed changes to rules A2b, A5b and B1 were passed *nem. con.* The Secretary pointed out that A5b laid a duty on him which was not constitutional; this was a problem of principle rather than practice. This was referred to EC. B. T. Redburn said that the change to B1 could be a problem if home matches were scheduled into May, when venues might be unavailable. D. Sudar said that any problems could be expressed on the entry form.

The proposed changes to rules C2 and D6 were withdrawn when most of those present failed to see a useful distinction for these rules between ‘played’ and ‘selected’. In the same vein, the first proposed change to rule C4 was amended to [merely] add ‘or won by default’ to the current rule, after which the proposal was passed

*nem. con.*, as was the proposed similar change to C5.

The proposed change to D9 was defeated 10–3 after discussion. D. Sudar gave an example of how the change could work in practice, but the circumstances had never actually happened, and the proposal further penalised clubs that defaulted two boards.

The proposed change to D7, to increase the fine for defaulting a match to £30, was discussed extensively. D. Sudar said that there had been an increase in the number of matches being defaulted for unacceptable reasons, which showed disrespect to opponents and to the League. He pointed out that the LMC could reduce or revoke fines and other penalties when appropriate. M. J. Hill suggested that the fine should perhaps relate to the costs of the other team. C. Sargeant said that £30 was a severe problem for students. University had defaulted a match, but this had happened after the normal end of the season, with absolutely nothing at stake, with several strong players unavailable and with the agreement of the opposition. The Secretary said that he would normally have been unavailable for that match, but as the only driver he would have played if necessary; he felt that in all the circumstances no disrespect had been intended or had occurred. However, many of those present seemed to feel that the match should have been played regardless. An amendment of the fine from £30 to £20 was proposed by C. Sargeant and seconded by T. D. Walker; the amendment was carried 9–8, after which the substantive rule change was carried 12–5.

The proposed change to rule C6b was also discussed extensively. D. Sudar explained that the LMC had discussed a case where a club attempted to introduce a strong player in order to stave off relegation. The concern was that where the rule effectively covered the top divisions, a somewhat weaker player could have a serious effect in lower divisions; so the proposal was to lower this grade boundary. The President said that he didn't like the rule, and M. J. Hill proposed that a better solution might be a 'transfer deadline'. The Treasurer suggested that this should cover the last few weeks of the season; N. Graham said that such a rule might be unfair if someone moves to the area. The proposal before the meeting was defeated heavily; however, a straw poll on whether we should have a 'transfer deadline' was passed by 11–8.

The second proposed change to rule C4 concerned the special case made for Division 1. Several clubs had found difficulties when their second teams were promoted to Division 1, to the extent that some were refusing promotion. Of the two alternatives proposed, to register top players for the first team or simply to delete the special case, the President said that he preferred the second. The first proposal was withdrawn; the second proposal was then passed by 14–1.

#### 4. ECF Membership

The President said that major changes in ECF funding were possible. A vote at an ECF meeting on moving from game fee to a membership scheme had been strongly in favour, and the support had, if anything, been understated; but it would need a 75% majority for change. This was prompted by a funding gap caused by loss of government grant, around one-third of ECF income. This had been closed by increases in game fee and economies in the office, but there was a head of steam for substantial change. The ECF proposal was short on detail, but it was inevitable that NCA would administer this scheme if it was introduced.

The Treasurer said that Leicestershire were running such a scheme already. It was pointed out that the scheme would involve a substantial increase in League fees, and that there would be problems with players and clubs that played in two or more counties, and more generally with smaller clubs. C. Holt said that Grantham subsidised game fees out of club membership fees. D. Sudar said that it was necessary to re-educate people that NCA fees are not all going to NCA. N. Graham said that a large part of the country paid nothing to ECF. B. M. Hayward said that game fee was easier to administrate. D. Sudar asked whether there would be any concessionary memberships; the President said this was not proposed.

B. M. Hayward said that ECF was not being clear, and was not doing much for ordinary members. What did they get for their £18? D. Sudar said that he paid £385 for his Derby County season ticket and got rather little in return. The Secretary said that it wasn't the money, but value for it; ECF needed to be more imaginative. He would rather pay £30 for £15 of real value in goods and services that could be advertised as worth £45 than £15 for nothing. The Secretary also said that he had been asked by J. Tait to remind the meeting that not all players wanted to pay large sums if the only recognisable benefit was a grade, which players in his club did not really need; and by G. Ladds to say that the impact would fall heavily on small clubs such as his.

The President called for a straw poll. This resulted in 11 votes broadly in favour of a membership scheme, 3 votes preferring the *status quo*, and 6 votes undecided or awaiting more detailed proposals. C. Sargeant asked about the time scale; there would be no change, other than the increase in game fee from 54p to 58p, for the

coming season. The meeting agreed that now the matter had been aired, it would be left to EC to keep it under review and to call an SGM when appropriate.

**5. Any other business**

The Secretary asked West Nottingham CC to confirm that their venue was available for the AGM, to be held on July 11th, and asked that officers reports and other agenda items for circulation be sent to him by June 20th.

The Treasurer asked for expenses claims to be e-mailed to him as soon as possible.

Meeting closed at 9:53pm.