

SHROPSHIRE CHESS ASSOCIATION

February 2025 EGM – Future of the Online League



To Members of the Shropshire Chess Association:

Notice is hereby given that an Extraordinary General Meeting will be held on Microsoft Teams on Thursday 14th March 2025 starting at 7.30pm to debate the future of the online leagues.

Link: <https://teams.live.com/meet/9393299379143?p=kgWXt0Oudw7dR59bNW>

AGENDA

- 1. Welcome and Apologies for absence** **19.30 (5 mins)**
- 2. Background (see appendix a)** **19.35 (15 min)**

The online league was established in response to the COVID lockdowns. The rules were written at a time when the only chess being played was online and clubs had no issues fielding Shropshire players. As the online league has evolved these rules are no longer fit for purpose, especially around player registration and eligibility where the rules are too strict for most clubs and not enforced in practise.

<https://www.shropshirechess.org/league/rules/online-league-rules/>

The acting league controller (Chris Lewis) notes that no teams have registered or nominated players this season and the list of nominated players on the website has not been updated in 2 years:

<https://www.shropshirechess.org/league/online-captains-and-nominated-players/>

This season the league was only supported by a few clubs. A new club – Shropshire & Friends (Now Salop & Friends) was established entering 4 teams, without which the league wouldn't have been viable. This teams features a number of players who do not participate in the Shropshire OTB leagues. A number of objections have been raised that this club is ineligible to play in the league as no vote took place under the Shropshire Rules governing all competitions:

<https://www.shropshirechess.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/General-Rules.pdf>

“7.1 To be eligible to compete in the Shropshire League or any of the other competitions hosted by the Shropshire Chess Association, clubs/teams must be based within the historic borders of Shropshire. By majority vote a general meeting can allow clubs/teams from outside Shropshire to participate in any of the leagues or competitions”

Under a strict interpretation of the rules, most matches played by most teams this season should be defaulted by both teams which would not be to the benefit of anyone.

3. Proposal – Current Season: 19.50 (40 mins)

The acting league controller believes that any rule breaches to date have not been made with the intention of breaching the rules to gain an advantage, but rather in the spirit to ensure that matches get played. Therefore he proposes.

The current league continues with the existing teams. All rule breaches prior to today shall be ignored.

This meeting formally approves Salop and Friends to participate in the Shropshire Online League.

4. Should the online league continue? 20.30 (40 mins)

The executive feel that at present the online league creates work for themselves that are currently far exceeding its benefits to Shropshire players and thus questions whether it is beneficial to continue with the league at all. This work arises not only from complaints over ineligible teams but also formal allegations of cheating which cause friction between members and take the executive considerable amounts of time to investigate.

There are alternative national online leagues that clubs can enter including the 4NCL or the World Chess League.

On the other hand, the executive recognises that the online league is a benefit to often older or rural players who are less able to attend OTB league matches.

The executive thus asks the question – should the online league continue?

5. Appointment of a permanent league controller 21.10 (15 min)

The Acting League Controller is stepping down immediately after the meeting but is willing to assist any new controller in their first season. If a new controller is not found at or shortly after this meeting the online league will be ended.

6. Revised league rules 21.25 (10 min)

If the online league is to continue then prior to next season the new league controller will need to present a draft set of rules to the AGM. These rules shall consider and loosen the player eligibility requirements to reflect the difficulties clubs have in fielding teams. The acting league controller suggests removing nominated player rules entirely and introducing an average team rating would add to the flexibility when fielding teams.

7. AOB.

21.35 (5 min)

Meeting closes at 21.40