

9th September 2010

To Each Club Secretary

Re : O' Connell Cup - Novices Chess League 2010/11 Season.

Dear Club Secretary

The Executive Committee of the LCU adopted a proposal at last year's AGM to establish a Novices League to provide an opportunity for relatively new players to participate in a team event and thus to encourage the overall development of the game of chess in Leinster. The new league commenced last season and involved 8 teams. Gerry O' Connell, from the St. Benildus Chess Club very kindly donated a cup for the league which was won by Ballinasloe Chess Club. I am writing to you to invite entries for the 2010/11 season.

The arrangements governing the operation of the league are set out in detail in this letter. Based on experience from last season, with particular regard to the geographically dispersed nature of the teams entered in the league and potential travel difficulties, it is intended to schedule multiple rounds of matches for a particular day at a relatively central location. Depending on the level of entries received, it is expected that the entire league will be played over up to three separate Saturdays during the course of the season. If it is feasible, consideration might also be given to splitting teams into regional groups. Clubs will be consulted about any possible decisions to be made in this regard once the level of entries is known.

The main rules governing the operation of the Novices league are as follows:

- The time control for games will be 30 minutes per player (maximum game duration of one hour);
- A "Novice" means a player who has a rating of 1000 or less or no rating;
- Teams will consist of 4 players and can include up to two players who are not novices;
- Any player who plays in the Novices League can also be declared on a team in a higher division; and

- The Novices league is not division 7 of the Leinster Chess League. It is a stand alone division with no relegation/promotion to any other division.

Points to note about the Rules.

It has been decided that the Novices League will be separate and distinct from the other chess leagues run by the LCU. Accordingly, players participating in the Novices League can be declared on another club team competing in one of the LCU's 6 divisions, without affecting their rights to play in as many games as they wish for the Novices Team. If clubs are entering more than one team in the league it is suggested that the teams be called, Rooks, Knights etc rather than "A" and "B" teams, e.g., "Elm Mount Knights", "Elm Mount Kings" etc.

Most of the teams that competed in the Novices League last season were made up of young people/junior players. The rating "cut-off" suggested above is designed to give clubs some clarity on what a "novice" is for the purposes of the league. It is also designed to give clubs maximum flexibility in entering teams. For example if a club has insufficient new unrated players available for a team, it can make up Novice team numbers through more experienced players as provided for above.

Rating and Colours.

The Novices League will not be rated. In common with the arrangements in other leagues, the team designated as the "home team" for a particular match will have white on the even numbered boards.

Prizes

There will be prizes for first, second and third place in the Novices league. Board prizes will be awarded to all players who achieve a 50% or greater score during the season. (The score has to be at least 50% of the total available points rather than 50% by reference to the number of games a player actually plays. So if there are 10 rounds of matches, a player needs at least 5 points to get a board prize). Where no player on a team achieves a 50% score, one board prize will be awarded to the highest scoring player on that team. In the event of two or more players having the same score, the Board prize will go to the player who played most often on a higher board. If this does not separate tied players due to the fact that they changed board order regularly, then the player who played most games for the team will get the Board prize. If there is still a tie, then the players involved will each get a board prize.

Use of Clocks and Recording Moves.

Players will be required to use clocks. They will not be required to record their moves, although it is obviously desirable that they should learn to do so as game analysis helps players to improve their chess. There is no objection to third parties (coaches, parents etc) observing and recording games for players for this purpose.

Illegal Moves and Touch/Take Rule.

There is a provision in the current Leinster Chess League Rules that if during the last five minutes of a player's time where moves are not being recorded s/he makes an illegal move, such as leaving the king in "check", the opponent can claim the game if s/he notices the illegal move and claims the game before touching a piece for his/her next move. Given the nature of the majority of the players likely to be competing in the Novices League, the strict enforcement of this rule would seem to be particularly harsh. Accordingly, where this occurs in a game, and is noticed :

- the illegal move should be corrected;
- the offending player should be allowed to play another move, and;
- the offending player's opponent should be given two additional minutes on the clock. (Please note that the additional time will only be provided if both players are in the last five minutes of their time).

Where a player touches a piece, s/he has to move it provided it is legal to do so. Where a player has touched an opponent's piece with the intention of capture, s/he must capture the opponent's piece where it is legal to do so. A player cannot move his or her piece somewhere else on the board if s/he has touched an opponent's piece in the act of moving his/her own piece.

Spotsmanship and Chess Etiquette.

Players should also be advised of the general rules of good sportsmanship and chess etiquette, i.e., to shake hands with their opponents at the beginning and end of games, to be quiet during games and while watching other games and not to interfere with other games still going on when they are finished their own. This latter requirement is particularly important as younger players can be more prone to get caught up in the "heat of the moment" and think aloud about other games !

Entry Requirments and Contact Details.

There is a fee of 10 euro per team and cheques should be made out to the "Leinster Chess Union" and sent to the LCU Treasurer, Gordon Freeman

along with the entry fees for teams in the other leagues. Gordon will be issuing the request for the payment of fees in the next couple of weeks.

Any clubs intending to enter teams in the Novices League should send the following information to:

Pat Fitzsimons,
Novices League Controller,
216 Glasnevin Avenue,
Dublin 11.

Phone - 087 419-5253

Email – Mastergame100@hotmail.com.

Name and Address of Club :

Number of Teams and Team Names (if more than one (Knights, Rooks etc)) :

Contact details for Team Manager/Coach : Name, Address, phone and email details to be included.

Other points to Note.

There is no need to name the players on teams entered at this stage.

It is also intended to circulate the relevant contact details received above to all of the contact persons for the Novices League.

Any comments or views on any aspect of this letter and the Novices League in general should be sent to Pat at the above email address. Please provide the information sought in this letter to him not later than Friday 8th October 2010.

Thank you for your cooperation in the matter.

Yours sincerely

Bryan Tobin
Secretary
Leinster Chess Union.