

Proposed Change to Somerset League rules on Clocks and Time Controls

Frome wish to propose a small change to the Somerset League rules on Clocks and Time Controls. The present rule is given below:

3. CLOCKS

a) Length of matches is at the discretion of respective Captains. Quick-play finishes shall be used in all league matches. Unless both Captains agree otherwise the rate of play shall be 35 moves in 75 minutes followed by a 15 minutes Quick-play finish.

b) If a player is not present at the start of a game his opponent shall start his clock. A player forfeits the game when his flag drops at the first time control, that is after 75 minutes.

Frome consider that as worded above the rule has the following defects:

- a. Quick-play finishes are deprecated by FIDE and are likely eventually to disappear from the FIDE Laws entirely. (In the latest 2017 version of the Laws, QP finishes are relegated to a section called 'Guidelines' that also deals with non-standard variants like Chess960.) Therefore, where clubs have the necessary equipment and the Captains agree, the use of incremental time limits should be permitted. (The Bristol League now permits a time control of 80 minutes plus 10 seconds per move from start of game.)
- b. Some matches in the League have recently (by agreement between the Captains) adopted a 90 minute game time limit without an intermediate time control and QP finish. Strictly speaking, this time control is illegal under the present wording of the rule.
- c. The reference to 75 minutes in b) above applies only to the standard time control and is not applicable if the Captains have agreed some other control.

Frome propose that the rule be changed to the wording below:

3. TIME CONTROLS

a) Length of matches is at the discretion of respective Captains. Unless both Captains agree otherwise the rate of play shall be 35 moves in 75 minutes followed by a 15 minutes Quick-play finish. An alternative time control that meets ECF requirements for grading of standard-play games may be used by agreement between the match captains.

b) If a player is not present at the start of a game his opponent shall start his clock. A player forfeits the game when his flag drops at the first time control.

This wording has the merit that

- i) It permits the use of incremental time controls in accordance with FIDE Laws.
- ii) It clarifies that any time control used must conform to ECF requirements for grading.
- iii) It regularises some non-standard time controls that have on occasion been adopted by agreement between clubs.

- iv) It does not *force* a club to do anything different from its current practice but *enables* two clubs to mutually agree to use a different time control provided it conforms to ECF requirements.