

Welsh Chess Premier League and U1850 League Rules 2025-26

1. Introduction

The information contained in this document sets out the Constitution, Rules, and Guidelines for the Welsh Chess Union (WCU) League competitions (WCPL and U1850). This document is the only source of such information; any changes or updates to the rules will be circulated to all interested parties by the WCPL Controller as an updated version of this document.

Any team entering the leagues is agreeing to be bound by the stipulations within this document.

It is advised that Captains and interested parties should read and familiarise themselves with these rules prior to competing in the Welsh Chess Union Leagues.

2. Participation

2.1 The WCPL consists of teams of 6 players.

2.2 The Welsh U1850 League consists of teams of 4 players all of whom must be rated Under 1850 on the **FIDE Standard play list, September 1st, 2025**. Should a player not have a FIDE rating then they must have a National Rating of under 1850 on 1st September 2025. To avoid confusion where a player has both a FIDE and National Rating, then the FIDE rating takes precedence for qualification.

2.3 Eligibility Clarification: Players whose ratings rise above 1850 after the September 2025 list remain eligible to play in the Under 1850 League for the entire season. Players rated above 1850 on September 1st, 2025 are ineligible for the Under 1850 League for the entire season, even if their rating subsequently falls below 1850.

3. Laws of Chess

3.1 Except where stated below, the FIDE laws apply to these competitions.

3.2 In the event of a contradiction between FIDE rules and Welsh Chess Union League rules, then Welsh Chess Union League rules shall apply.

4. Rate of Play

4.1 The rate of play is as follows: 40 moves in 90 minutes, followed by 30 minutes to finish the game, with an increment of 30 seconds per move from move one.

5. Start Time

All matches will begin at 2:00 pm.

6. Default Time

The default time is 1 hour after the start of the match (3:00 pm).

7. Team Lists

7.1 For each fixture, captains are asked to submit team lists **before 9:00 pm** on the **day before** the match. This must be by the online submission form:

WCPL: <https://www.welshchessunion.uk/wcpl/2026/team-lists-wcpl.html>

U1850: <https://www.welshchessunion.uk/wcpl/2026/team-lists-u1850.html>

Board pairings will be published on the web site:

Board Pairings: <https://www.welshchessunion.uk/wcpl/2026/board-pairings.html>

7.2 Board orders can be changed until the deadline stated in 7.1, after which pairings will be published and no further changes will be permitted.

7.3 If electronic submission fails, captains must notify the WCPL Controller immediately via alternative means.

7.4 Failure to submit a team list by 9:00 pm will result in boards being filled using the top 6 players from the registration list for that club in the WCPL and top 4 in the U1850. If you have a combined squad, then the top 4 eligible players will be the default for the U1850.

7.5 Publication of the board pairings will be done by 10:00 am on the day of the match.

8. Scoring

8.1 The board scores in a match are referred to as game points.

8.2 The game score in each match is 1 for a win, ½ for a draw and 0 for a loss.

8.3 The team that scores more game points in a match than its opponents receives two match points; the opponents receive no match points. Each team receives one match point for a drawn match.

8.3.1 The rankings will be determined according to match points. The team obtaining the highest number of match points is declared the winner of the competition. In case of a tie, 8.3.2 shall be applied.

8.3.2 The order of teams that finish with the same number of match points shall be determined by the application of the following tie-breaking procedures in sequence:

(a) By the total number of game points scored across all matches - the highest number wins

(b) Board count between the tied teams - The boards on which wins are scored are added for each team and the lowest total wins

(c) Bottom Board Elimination between the tied teams

(d) By the sum of the game points of all the team's opponents, excluding the opponent who scored the highest number of game points and the opponents who scored the lowest number of game points (Sonneborn-Berger) - the highest number wins

(e) Play-off between the teams - either single head-to-head or mini league if 3 or more teams remain tied. The rate of play for the play-off will be all moves in 15 minutes plus 10 second increment. If teams are still tied then (c) and (d) above are applied. If still tied, then a blitz match of 3 minutes plus 2 seconds will decide the outcome. If still tied then (c) and (d) above are applied again.

The play-off will take place after the final round or, in the case of 3 or more teams, it may be scheduled for a later date of the Controller's choosing.

8.4 In all cases where penalties are applied, the integrity of the match will be retained. Board points will continue to total 6 points (WCPL) or 4 points (U1850 League) in all cases, whereby default points are transferred to the non-offending team.

8.5 Contrary to Rule 8.4, matches in which there are double defaults occurring on the same boards will result in the overall board point total dropping below 6 points (WCPL) or 4 points (U1850 League).

9. Clubs & Teams

9.1 Clubs may assemble teams from a collection of players provided all players are registered members of the WCU at the time of registration. Players must be registered with WCU prior to playing their first game.

9.2 The teams shall be composed of 6 players in the WCPL or 4 players in the U1850 League.

9.3 A player may only play for one Welsh Chess League club in a season.

9.4 Each club should appoint a "Club Nominee" to act as a representative for that club, or a nominee for each team should a club enter teams in both WCPL and U1850 League. As the main point of contact, the Club Nominee **MUST** have access to email facilities and communication with the WCPL Controller and other club nominees. Clubs are responsible for their own internal communications.

10. Squad Lists

10.1 This is a list of eligible players for a club. This list is to be provided on the online form by **August 31st, 2025**.

10.2 If a club enters a team in **ONLY** the WCPL or Under 1850 League at the start of the season, the number of players in the squad must not exceed 15 players (WCPL) or 10 players (U1850).

Clubs who have entered teams in **BOTH** WCPL and Under 1850 may provide either a squad for each section based on the numbers stated in 10.2, or a combined squad list which shall not exceed 20 players at the start of the season. These players are allowed to play in either team, subject to the rating restriction for the Under 1850 league.

Where a club submits one joint squad, it is a requirement that should there be any defaults, then these must occur in the Under 1850 league team first.

10.3 There will be one opportunity to add or delete players from a squad. This transfer window will occur between Rounds 3 and 4 (exact dates to be announced with fixture list). Only players who have not played in the WCPL during the 2025-26 season are free to join a squad, or transfer from one squad to another. At this point each team may increase their squad to 17 players (WCPL), 12 players (U1850) or 22 players (combined squad, both leagues).

10.4 Any club playing in the current WCPL must lodge any objections or queries on a player's eligibility prior to the next round of matches.

10.5 The squad list shall include all information requested.

10.6 A player may not play until clearance has been given by the WCPL Controller (or appointed nominee).

10.7 It is the responsibility of the club to provide the evidence of qualification credentials of its players.

10.8 All players must be registered with FIDE before they play their first match.

11. Ratings & Board Order

11.1 All games played in the WCPL are subject to rating. Games will be rated by both FIDE and the WCU.

11.2 The ratings used for board order in both leagues will be assigned in the following order:

BOTH LEAGUES

- Latest available FIDE list (e.g., for a match in November 2025, the November 2025 FIDE list will be used; for a match in February 2026, the February 2026 FIDE list will be used)
- Latest available WCU Rating
- Latest available National Rating
- Nominated Rating (estimated by the WCPL Controller)

11.3 The team for a match shall be arranged in rating order. However, a player may play above another player who has a higher rating provided the rating difference is not greater than 80 ELO points, based on the rating lists in operation at the time of the match.

Where players have multiple ratings, the rating system used for both players must be the same when calculating the 80-point difference. FIDE ratings take precedence where available.

12. Fixtures

12.1 A league schedule for the WCPL season will be issued by the WCPL Controller as soon as practically possible.

12.2 All matches will be played on Sundays selected by the WCPL Controller.

12.3 Should there be an exceptional reason why a match needs to be cancelled, a request must be made to the WCPL Controller at least 21 days before the match date, except for weather emergencies or force majeure events. The WCPL Controller will decide whether to approve such requests.

12.4 The first named team in each fixture shall have white on odd boards.

12.5 All matches must be fulfilled.

13. Postponements

13.1 In exceptional circumstances (e.g., extremely bad weather, venue emergencies, transport strikes) the match may be postponed with the agreement of the WCPL Controller. Both teams should attempt to agree on postponement before contacting the Controller.

14. Penalties and Reserve Players

14.1 Defaulting a Match: Should a team default a match, then the opposing team will be awarded 2 match points and full game points (i.e., 6 for Premier League and 4 for Under 1850 League).

14.2 If a team defaults 2 matches they are withdrawn from the competition, and all their results are discounted for the competition. However, games played will still be rated.

14.3 If a club is unable to raise a team of 6 (WCPL) or 4 (U1850 League) to fulfil a fixture, then the available players must play on the highest boards, i.e., defaults shall start from board 6 (WCPL) and 4 (U1850 League) upwards. Each board thus defaulted shall be scored as a loss (0-1).

14.4 Reserve Players

(a) Reserve Nomination

- Up to two players who must be registered to play for the team may be nominated as reserves
- Reserves must be named on the team list submitted by the deadline in 7.1
- No last-minute additions or changes to reserves permitted after the deadline in 7.1
- Reserves must be eligible squad members
- Reserves should make reasonable efforts to be present at the 2:00 pm start time

(b) Substitution Procedure

- After the deadline in 7.1, should a player become unavailable or fail to arrive for the match, then a substitution from the reserves listed can be made with the prior approval of the Match Arbiter (or WCPL Controller if no arbiter present)
- The reserve shall directly take the place of the player they are substituting, with no change to the rest of the board order for either team.
- Substitution must occur not more than 55 minutes after the scheduled start of the round or such later time as the two captains concerned and the Match Arbiter at the venue may have agreed before commencement of the game

(c) Clock Adjustments for Reserve Players

- Actual elapsed time is always deducted from the reserve's clock - No time compensation is provided

(d) Improper Use The improper use of reserves includes:

- Listing ineligible players as reserves
- Attempting substitution after the 55-minute deadline
- Substituting for reasons other than non-arrival

The WCPL Controller may impose a penalty as they deem appropriate on the offending team for improper use.

(e) Original Player Arrival

- If the original player arrives after a substitute has begun play, the substitute must continue the game

14.5 Where a team defaults a board other than the lowest board(s), then they shall be penalised by the loss of ½ game point for the match.

14.6 Captains may verbally notify the Match Arbiter of eligibility concerns at any time during the match. The Match arbiter should make a note on the results form that a protest is pending. Verbal protests must be confirmed in writing within 24 hours. Formal written complaints must be submitted to the WCPL Controller within 7 days of the match.

If the complaint is upheld by the Controller, the team infringing the rules will be penalised by forfeiture of all points scored in the match concerned with effect from the highest offending board downwards.

14.7 If a team plays a player on a board which violates the 80-point difference rule, they will be treated as an ineligible player. See rule 14.6.

14.8 If a team violates the team composition rules, then starting at board 1 and working to board 6, the player on the first board on which the violation occurs shall be treated as ineligible. See rule 14.6.

15. WCPL Controller

15.1 The League Controller is Kevin Staveley.

15.2 The Deputy League Controllers are Nathan Trickey and Hannah Richmond.

15.3 The WCPL Controller and Deputy League Controllers shall not play in the WCPL. This will ensure that all remain impartial.

15.4 The WCPL Controller may seek advice from other members of the WCU Management Board, Welsh Arbiters and Rating Officers. The Controller may also seek external help regarding rule infringements and similar league enquiries from such bodies as the ECF, ECU and FIDE.

15.5 The WCPL Controller's decisions are final, subject to the appeals process outlined in Section 16.

16. Appeals Process

16.1 Right of Appeal

Teams may appeal Controller decisions to an Appeals Panel within 72 hours of the decision being communicated.

16.2 Grounds for Appeal

- **Game Appeals:** Disputes about specific game incidents, rule interpretations during play, or arbiter decisions
- **League Rule Appeals:** Disputes about eligibility, league regulations, penalties, or administrative decisions

16.3 Appeals Panel Composition

For Game Appeals

- Panel of 3 independent arbiters (not necessarily restricted to WCU arbiters)
- Arbiters must not have been involved in the original incident
- At least one arbiter should be FIDE-certified if available

For League Rule Appeals

- Panel of 3 WCU Management Board members (not 2, to avoid tied decisions)
- Panel members must not be connected to clubs involved in the dispute
- The WCU President or Executive Director selects panel members (or Home Director if there's a conflict)

16.4 No panel member may

- Be connected to teams involved in the dispute
- Have been involved in the original decision
- Have a declared conflict of interest

16.5 Appeals Timeline

- Appeal submission: Within 72 hours of Controller decision
- Panel acknowledgment: Within 24 hours of receipt
- Panel decision: Within 72 hours of receiving the appeal (extensions may be granted for complex cases)
- Appeals Panel decisions are final

16.6 Appeal Submission Requirements

- Must be submitted in writing (email acceptable) to the WCPL Controller
- Must clearly state whether it is a Game Appeal or League Rule Appeal
- Must include all relevant evidence and documentation
- Must specify the remedy sought

Date Changed	Version	Rule	Reason
7 th Oct 2025	1.0		First Release
9 th Dec 2025	1.1	14.4.b	Added clarification to the reserve player substitution rule.