

Bury Area Chess League Completion or Otherwise of 2019-2020 Season

Authors Alan Richardson, Paul Kemp and Steve Lovell

Following recent changes to the lockdown regulations in England it is legally possible in principle for over the board chess to be played and the ECF has published some material on this on its web site <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/chess-clubs-and-covid-19/> and included a risk assessment that it recommends for anyone considering holding OTB chess events <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/OTB-Chess-Risk-Assessment-v4.pdf>. The requirements are quite onerous; the risk assessment is complex and the mitigation measures likely to require a lot of work by the management of the location and the chess club members themselves. Although the number of cases has been falling since April in the UK, the situation in the USA illustrates how cases can grow if measures to inhibit the spread are not adhered to.

The first action for completion of the 2019-20 season would be to conduct the risk assessment at all clubs and establish if mitigation measures were feasible (both economically and from the work required) and if the resulting situation was desirable for participants to play.

The Executive considers these measures will make OTB play infeasible for quite some time.

Assuming they do, it is appropriate to speculate what might result in a change in these conditions. The most obvious circumstances would be the widespread availability of a vaccine or the elimination of coronavirus from the UK. Although there are many vaccine projects around the world, none are yet proven and if a vaccine does become available there is likely to be a supply problem that will mean that key workers and the vulnerable may get the vaccine first and others later. So even if one or more of the vaccine projects is successful it will probably be well into 2021 before there is sufficiently widespread vaccination for current measures to be set aside. In the UK at moment there are around 1000 positive tests per day as of August 10 (<https://coronavstats.co.uk/>) and ONS statistics suggest that 70-80% of infections are asymptomatic so not picked up by the testing programme. New cases have been picked up again over the last month though not very quickly. Since lockdown release has at least caused local flare-ups in cases, I think we can conclude that careful measures will still be required if reopening this year and that therefore it is highly likely that some players will not wish to take the risk of playing until the risks are lower.

We therefore consider that any resumption of the 2019-20 season, would be highly artificial since many teams would be unrecognisable from the pre-pandemic teams. Therefore The Executive recommends concluding the 2019-20 season using the first option below:

1. Concluding the season based on all the league order being determined by the percentage scores of teams at suspension. Player of the Year will be awarded with the normal qualification of having played in two thirds of the matches completed and Game of the Season. The advantage of this is there some recognition for the efforts put in over 2/3 of the season that was completed. However, members should be aware that there is unavoidable artificiality to any extrapolation method and different extrapolation methods can produce different outcomes. One such method is to use a match result from a match played between two teams to predict the result of an unplayed match – historically this has not always been

a reliable predictor because of such factors as home advantage, unavailability of players, different colours etc.

2. The alternative is cancelling the 2019/20 season

Whichever approach is taken, we propose there be no automatic promotion and relegation because it is highly uncertain what teams will be fielded when resumption is possible. We would instead recommend that when the core teams are known for resumption that the Executive and Club Representatives meet to form new divisions based on the teams entering, the wishes of the clubs and the expected strength of the teams.

There is an alternative option to conclude the season as and when over the board play is possible. We do not believe in this option. Our current assessment is play will not be possible until January 2021 at the earliest and even then, it is highly likely that vulnerable players will not want to play. Therefore, resuming teams will bear variable relation to the teams when the league was suspended and so it would be an artificial completion. Despite our lack of support for this option, we feel that the AGM should have the right to consider the option.

Appendix – Current League and Roger Goldsmith Positions in Suspended 2019-20 Season

Division 1

Team	Play	Won	Draw	Lost	For	Against	Points
<u>Bury St Edmunds Scarabs</u>	9	5	2	2	22	14	27
<u>Bury St Edmunds Cobras</u>	9	5	1	3	21½	14½	26½
<u>Cambridge Choristers</u>	9	5	2	2	20	16	25
<u>Cambridge Examiners</u>	9	5	0	4	18	18	23
<u>Linton Leopards</u>	8	2	3	3	16½	15½	18½
<u>Linton Llamas</u>	8	2	0	6	12	20	14
<u>Ely Beet Bishops</u>	8	2	0	6	10	22	12

Division 2

Team	Play	Won	Draw	Lost	For	Against	Points
<u>Bury St Edmunds Vipers</u>	12	7	2	3	26	22	33
<u>Cambridge Gowns</u>	12	6	0	6	27	21	33
<u>Linton Lions</u>	12	6	2	4	26½	21½	32½
<u>Cambridge Oddfellows</u>	11	6	2	3	25½	18½	31½
<u>Bury St Edmunds Hornets</u>	11	6	1	4	23	21	29
<u>Linton Loris</u>	12	2	4	6	21½	26½	23½
<u>Cambridge Dons</u>	12	3	2	7	19½	28½	22½
<u>Ely Beet Rooks</u>	12	3	3	6	19	29	22

Division 3

Team	Play	Won	Draw	Lost	For	Against	Points
<u>Linton Lemurs</u>	8	6	0	2	18½	13½	24½
<u>Bury St Edmunds Earwigs</u>	8	4	2	2	17½	14½	21½
<u>Sudbury</u>	8	4	2	2	17½	14½	21½
<u>Linton Lynxes</u>	9	3	3	3	18	18	21
<u>Bury St Edmunds Barracudas</u>	9	2	1	6	16	20	18
<u>Stowmarket</u>	8	1	2	5	12½	19½	13½

Roger Goldsmith Div 1

Team	Play	Won	Draw	Lost	For	Against	Points
<u>Linton Linnets</u>	2	2	0	0	7	1	4
<u>Ely Beet Gargoyles</u>	2	1	0	1	3½	4½	2
<u>Bury Abbey</u>	2	1	0	1	3	5	2
<u>Cambridge Masters</u>	2	0	0	2	2½	5½	0

Roger Goldsmith Div 2

Team	Play	Won	Draw	Lost	For	Against	Points
<u>Linton Larks</u>	4	2	0	2	8	8	4
<u>Bury Cathedral</u>	3	2	0	1	7½	4½	4
<u>Linton Lapwings</u>	2	2	0	0	7	1	4
<u>Bury Beehive</u>	2	0	0	2	3	5	0

Linton Lorikeets

3

1

0

2

2½

9½

2