

Restructure of Merseyside Chess Proposal

Proposal to distribute the strength of higher level chess across more Merseyside clubs and develop stronger chess communities and ensure the future of smaller clubs

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MCA Restructure Agenda

- Chess on Merseyside is Broken!! - Why?
- “Stop” big clubs “right” to own chess on Merseyside!
- Restore smaller clubs pride, future and appeal to top players
- How would this affect me?
- Transform league chess clubs to communities for all!
- Why is too much focus on league chess bad for clubs and players?
- What should clubs be doing instead of league games?
- Proposal - Its time to stop, reflect and change!

Chess on Merseyside is Broken!!

- Questions?
 - Which clubs have a chance of winning the first division next season?
 - Which clubs have a chance of winning the first division in the next 5 years?
 - Which clubs are at risk of dissolving in next few years?
 - How many clubs will be represented in first division next season?
 - How many clubs believe if they gain promotion they may win Div 1?
 - How many clubs believe if they gain promotion to Div 1 they will likely be relegated again in next 2 years?

Chess on Merseyside is Broken!! - Why?

- Too many larger clubs now dominating most places in Division 1 leaving smaller clubs to decline and maybe cease to exist in near future
- Larger clubs set up to continue to grow and introduction of ringers further reducing the number of league places available for Merseyside players in top flight
- Prior to 2000 usually 8 clubs in first division and 7 most years since, now only 5 and likely to stay that way!
- Far too many league matches dominating time of players instead of developing a chess community/events for all other/new players
- League match overkill - many examples of player burn out, lack of enjoyment
- No season time for blitz nights, simuls, lessons, consultative games, hand/brain, casual chess, internal games

“Stop” big clubs “right” to own chess on Merseyside!

Big clubs attract big players - When is this dominance going to change??

- **Atticus 1 or 2**
 - 2000 - 2022 have won the league 12 times out of 20 (minus COVID)
 - 1992 - 2022 have won John Ripley 21 times out of 28 (minus COVID)
 - Atticus 1 and 2 have both taken up 2 places in Division 1 since 2000
 - 2012 Atticus had 3 teams in first division and will try to again!
- **Liverpool** return to top flight has made life worse for smaller clubs
 - 2 places in Div since 2022 and declined L3 promotion to Div 1 in 2023
- **John Littlewood** now a force in Div 1 (Manchester Ringers) pushing nearly all smaller Merseyside clubs and players from top flight
- **Wallasey** now grown stronger and have 2 teams in Div 1 pushing more teams out of Div 1
- **Extremely selfish or ignorant of big clubs to think their own prestige is more important than survival of smaller clubs and the future of chess across the whole of Merseyside - why is this allowed by MCA??**

Restore smaller clubs pride, future and appeal to top players!

Why not have 10 clubs represented in Division 1 next season??

- As many clubs as possible with pride and stature of presence in Division 1
- Every club should ideally be in Div 1 or Div 2 with chance of promotion to attract stronger players
- Smaller club players will thrive and improve playing against big clubs regularly
- Smaller clubs will attract stronger “local” players rather than seek big clubs (most MCA players don’t live in city centre!)
- **Smaller clubs are only 1 or 2 strong players away from challenging for Div 1 title!**
(Remove Roger from John Littlewood - title challengers to weakest team on Merseyside)
- Encourage greater number of clubs will start competing for top places over next few years
- 9 of larger leagues in UK have already switched to only one team per club in top division. Expected more will follow this example once aware of benefits for their Association.

How would this affect me?

Impact on teams/players and promotion/relegation

- Smaller First teams in Division 1 will now compete and grow for highest possible place rather than looking down to avoid relegation every year
- Second team players will compete for the Division 2 title every year which will become far more prestigious and competitive than before
- Second team players will also be able to play for their clubs first team in Division 1 when called upon
- Club first teams in second division will only have to finish as the highest first team to gain promotion to Division 1
- Stronger Clubs first teams will become even stronger by combining the strength of first and second teams and avoid the need for ringers for big matches.

Transform chess league clubs to communities for all!

Switch match only centric players to mentors/ambassadors for others

- Review of English chess leagues reveals teams play 6 to 14 league games per season - all MCA league teams play 14 games which is the max anywhere - why?
- Average number of games per team per season in England is 10 leaving more time for more casual chess and non-chess interests
- Also have JR and KA Cup, 7200 and 6000 leagues available if clubs really want more league chess
- Option to also join Wirral, Warrington, Cheshire leagues like Atticus do today
- League chess only focused players are not engaging with the wider club community, often arriving for match, playing their game in their bubble then going home - will never really feel part of club family or help others!

Why is too much focus on league chess bad for clubs and players?

- **** AVOID REGULARLY OCCURRING PLAYER BURN OUT ****
- Huge churn of new chess players as too busy for them
- Very little time for engagement in clubs between league players and new/non-league players who become isolated
- Most league (especially stronger) players only turn up at club for match nights as too many games
- Stressed captains - often begging players to play/travel right up to last minute or let team down makes them feel forced to play when would rather not - soon lose them forever!
- Regular defaulting of matches and boards especially for away games!

What should clubs be doing instead of league games?

- Internal tournaments - get everyone involved
- Blitz nights/Simul events
- Masterclasses/coaching/league game reviews/advice
- Casual fun chess - Consultative games - Hand brain - quad tournaments
- Socialising between league players and new non-league players
- Social (Non-chess) evenings!! - Quiz/music nights?? Get to know people!
- **MAKE ALL CLUB MEMBERS FEEL PART OF THEIR COMMUNITY!!**
- ****Meeters and Greeters**** - Rota 1/2 people week to look after newer members

Proposal - Its time to stop, reflect and change!

Welcome more clubs to top flight chess and make ALL club members feel part of a special community - Feel proud of your club and Improve marketing of it!

- **Make Clubs feel special:**
 - Maximise the number of clubs in Division 1 - why not 10/11?
 - Every club to ideally at least be represented in Div 2 and fight for Div 1 place
 - Maximum of 1 team per club in Division 1
- **Have time for ALL club members:**
 - Play less league chess and help your club thrive and survive!
 - Promote more fun and inclusive casual chess experiences for everyone!