COVID-19 Policy - SCCU OTB Chess Events

Version 3 - 27th September 2021

Principles

Match conditions in the SCCU counties competition will:

* meet any government legal requirements in relation to COVID
  + as of 19thJuly there are none relevant to the setting/activity of chess, guidance only
  + If HM Government introduces new legislation, clearly we would be obliged to follow it
* meet each home venue’s terms and conditions of use
  + as of 19thJuly most venues ask for nothing beyond legal compliance and that the room be cleaned afterwards. However at least one home venue is asking for mask wearing at all times, social distancing and use of hand sanitiser as mandatory.
* put in place mitigation measures at each playing venue that are;
  + reasonable to ask of its volunteer officials
  + maximise space per board
  + provide ventilation
  + lower the risk of transmission through contact with surfaces
* not engage in discretionary events where those represent a higher COVID risk
* not mandate conditions on participants over and above the legal and venue requirements
* provide advice to its participants consistent with HMG guidance
  + however, it will not be mandatory to follow such advice
* Each County Team can reserve its position on whether it participates or continues to participate in OTB chess if it is believed that either ECF, SCCU, government conditions or the course of the pandemic, indicate that the overall COVID risks of participation are unacceptably high

Specific Plans

Each Home County at SCCU matches will:

* at match venues
  + use the largest hall/room available
  + only book one match in that hall for any given time
  + use one board per table (instead of two per table) with players at least 1m apart.
  + maximise the ventilation in the hall consistent with acceptable levels of noise from the outside and temperature conditions inside
  + provide hand sanitiser & masks
  + ensure captains and their helpers sanitise hands prior to setting up boards/clocks
  + request players sanitise their hands prior to starting their game/touching the pieces
  + not provide or allow refreshments in the playing area
  + encourage participants to consider wearing a mask/face covering.
  + Ask players to leave the playing area when finished and resist spectating.
  + While HM Government and/or Local Authority guidance is advising mask wearing, then the SCCU also recommend mask wearing but will not make this mandatory. One cannot be certain everyone will be wearing a mask, unless it is a requirement from the venue that masks shall be worn.
* provide advice to its participants based on the prevailing government guidelines at the time
  + current HM Government advice is here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-coronavirus-covid-19-measures-for-grassroots-sport-participants-providers-and-facility-operators/guidance-on-coronavirus-covid-19-measures-for-grassroots-sport-participants-providers-and-facility-operators>
  + this will be further provided a week or so prior to the start of OTB chess, ca. mid-late September 2021
  + Players need to be aware players need to be aware of their responsibility to take appropriate measure to keep themselves and others safe from the Covid-19 infection.

The best protection is to get vaccinated and not to participate if feeling unwell or displaying any Covid-19 symptoms.

* The SCCU understands some players are happy for their opponent not to wear a mask but some would be more comfortable, not only wearing a mask themselves, but would only play if their opponent also wears one.

Therefore item 15 in the SCCU County Match Rules:

**15. Before the time fixed for play, match captains shall exchange team lists arranged in descending order of known current playing strength. If a list includes defaults, these must be on the lowest boards.**

Is to be varied such that it also includes;

**Captains are to give notice a few days before a match if they have players who can give good reason they cannot play unless their opponent is wearing a mask. Therefore, captains may ask to have players placed on boards with opponents who will wear one. Board order requirements can be varied for this purpose. This request to be not unreasonably refused.**

Based on the current (19th July) government legal requirements the SCCU will not:

* mandate vaccination status
* exclude minors or medically exempt persons who are unable to be vaccinated
* mandate mask wearing

Communication

* The SCCU will provide a specific area on its website wherein the conditions required at each county venue can be published so that they can be evaluated and anticipated in advance of away matches