

BAL Chess Rules



2010 – 2011 Season



1) General Rules

1A) Goals

The goals of the Bankers Athletic Chess League are:

- To promote enjoyable chess competition within the financial community and local chess clubs/organizations
- To encourage good sportsmanship and ethical conduct as the foundation of friendly inter-institutional relationships.

1B) Scope

These rules cannot and should not regulate all possible situations that arise during a chess match. It is expected the goals outlined in 1A will govern conduct at all times, even when such conduct may adversely affect the player's team.

1C) Application and Interpretation

- The Tournament Rules of the United States Chess Federation (USCF) as published in *Official Rules of Chess* will apply, and USCF customary rules apply when not published, except as specifically noted herein.
- The Rules Committee consisting of the Division Coordinators, the League President and Vice President will meet to determine the merits of any protests.

2) Organization of the BAL

2A) Captain's Meeting

A Captain's Meeting will be held at the start of the regular season, comprising the Captains (or their delegates) of all teams from the prior season who intend to play in the upcoming season.

Voting –

Voting procedures – The President of the league sets the parameters for fair voting. Unless the President decides otherwise, procedures follow Robert's Rules of Order. Each team is allowed one vote. The team captain or designate votes for his/her team.

The first business of the Captain's Meeting will be to vote on which teams will participate in the upcoming season. Returning teams may be approved either "en masse" (by a vote for or against all teams) or individually. In the latter case, teams are voted upon starting with the first team to the left of the presiding President, and proceeding clockwise around the room. For the purposes of this vote, any member of the league the prior season may vote. Simple majority is used. In the case of a tie, the league president breaks the tie. (Note: It may be appropriate to commence further discussions on a tied vote.).

Non-payment – The league Treasurer will point out if a team hasn't paid dues for the previous season.

New teams may then make a request to be added to the league. Approval will be by majority of the Captains or delegates present. Once former teams ratified or removed, and new teams are approved, the remaining teams constitute voting members until the procedure is repeated at the next year's meeting or at any intermediate captain's meeting held.

Call for a meeting – In the unlikely event that extraordinary circumstances call for a new meeting before the annual meeting, the President can call such a meeting. (This rule is to handle a 9/11 type situation.)

2B) Elected Officials

At the conclusion of the Captain's Meeting, a President, Vice-President, and Treasurer will be elected.

2C) Appointed Officials

The President will then appoint a Division Coordinator for each division. Subsequently, if the division captains wish to have a different division coordinator, they may choose it with a 2/3 vote of the teams in the division.

2D) Match Structure

Unless otherwise voted at the Captain's Meeting, each match will be played on four boards. The number of rounds will be determined by vote of the captains or their delegates, present at the Captain's Meeting. 15 are standard for a 6 team league.

Because the purpose of the league is to promote the enjoyment of chess through the BAL structure, teams and players are encouraged to play extra games matches if players from both teams are available. These extra matches are not official for team purposes. However, the league encourages these games to be rated since the accuracy of ratings is beneficial to everyone. If a rated, unofficial game is played it will also be registered with the league and the website. See 4b and 4C.

2E) Size of Divisions

The number of teams in each division will be determined at the Captain's Meeting by a vote of the Captains or delegates present.

2F) Ratings Caps

The ratings cap (maximum allowed average rating of the players in the match) will be determined at the Captain's Meeting, by a vote of the Captains or delegates present. The league may also impose a rating cap for the top boards in a match, for example, a division may have a rating cap of 1800 for a 4-man team with a top 3 board cap of 2000. However, see rule 2F1 if a team includes players that are unrated.

2F1) Rules for teams with unrated players

If matches have 4 or 5 players/match:

A team with 1 or 2 unrated players must not exceed the cap with the other rated players. A team with three unrated players may exceed the division cap by no more than 400 points

Should the division use a different number of players per match than 4 or 5, the league determines the policy for unrated players for that division. The league is encouraged to use rules with similar effect to those for 4 or 5 players/match.

Clarification: If there are unrated players, the rating limits in this section are used; the top board cap is not relevant (since the unrated player rules are more stringent).

2G) Dues

The league dues will be determined at the Captain's Meeting, by a vote of the Captains or delegates present.

3) Team Eligibility and Rosters

3A) Eligibility

Financial institutions and local chess clubs/organizations are eligible to enter teams, subject to the approval of the Captain's Meeting. All teams must have a home site, preferably in Manhattan, where matches can be scheduled on Thursday nights.

3B) Roster Size

A maximum of fifteen players may be included on a roster during the season

3C) Additional Players

No more than two players may be added after Round 2 until the roster is frozen as defined in 3D. Adding these players does not require approval from the other captains or president as long as the roster size limit described in 3B is not

exceeded. The team captain adding players should enter them on the website if technologically possible; otherwise, he/she should contact the league President. In practice, the league president will often delegate the maintenance of rosters to the website coordinator.

If a team wishes to add more than 2 additional players, or it wishes to exchange players (remove a player from the roster to add additional players) it must get the majority vote of the other teams in the league. However, BAL practice has been for years that the vote is taken from the other teams in the division of the team wishing to add players. The league President should also be contacted in case he/she wishes to discuss the matter with the team captains. Approved roster changes are registered with the President, and are then sent to the website coordinator assuming that a website is being maintained. A team change is official once the procedures are approved by the President, even if not entered on the website.

- 3C1) Clarification: Implementing rule 3C means that:
- i. Players must be on the roster before round 1 to play in round 1
 - ii. Every other player to be used during the season must be added by round 2, except:
 - iii. You can add 2 players between round 2 and round 10 (for a normal 15 match league, see rule 3D)

3D) Rosters Frozen

No players may be added after Round 10, unless agreed by unanimous vote of the other captain's in the division.

If a division does not have 6 teams, and 15 rounds are not used, the league president will set the cut-off time as close to 2/3 of the season as is practical, based on the final schedule.

Note to new captains: Since the maximum roster size is currently 15, and two players can be added without approval, most veteran teams start with at most 13 players. In that way, they have flexibility if players leave, new players enter, etc. without needing approval to make changes.

4) Matches and Ratings

4A) Captain

The Captain is the spokesman for all matters concerning his/her team. The role is both an administrative one, presenting the line-up of players before the start of a match, reporting results via the web site or sending them to the website coordinator, voting on matters at League Meetings, etc. as well as serving as the Co-Tournament Director (CTD) at each match. As CTD, the Captains should

resolve questions concerning correct play and rules interpretation. If agreement cannot be reached during play, protests may be filed.

Each team captain must register his/her name, address, and contact telephone number with the league, and e-mail address which should maintain this information on the league website. This information should also be registered with the President, in case the website is down.

Teams may wish to parcel out duties to different people. Note, however, only one person is the 'official' captain. Should another person be delegated to handle these responsibilities, the official captain should notify other parties that a designee is acting as captain for a particular role on a particular day. Teams may also list a secondary captain, who can act as captain in every way unless overridden by the primary captain.

Example: It is fairly common to have an official captain handling administrative details but not necessarily attending the match. Therefore, the opposing team's captain must be notified as to who is serving as team captain for the functions during the match. The designated team captain then, for example, serves as the CTD as stated above.

4A1) Captain's constraints

The Captain must abstain from direct intervention during play. The Captain cannot provide advice to a player, on either side, based on his own playing strength. For example, a Captain may suggest "Offer a draw" or "Accept a draw" based on trying to win the match, this information should not be based on the Captain's evaluation of the state of any chess game going on during the match.

A player does not have to abide by advice given by the Captain. The Captain cannot act on behalf of a player without the knowledge and consent of that player.

A Captain should stop his clock when needed to act as either CTD or Captain during disputes.

Captains must remember that they are serving as a CTD, and in that capacity represent the league, not their team. Although it is human nature that Captains favor their team, they are honor bound (see 1A) to act as a neutral TD once play starts. Specifically, their role is NOT to advocate for their players.

4A2) Co Tournament Director

Note that together, the two CTD's are effectively the TD. Under USCF rules, the TD has tremendous powers; therefore, the mutual assent of the CTD's allows other rules to be overridden, unless otherwise forbidden (see 4A). So, for instance:

(i) They can play at a different day, time, or venue; however, they must reschedule any match consistent with rule 6B.

Example: Inclement weather is predicted. The Captains agree to play a different night.

(ii) They can agree to different time controls, clock usage, etc.

(iii) They can agree to switch which boards play which colors.

(iv) They can agree to ban cell phones.

(vi) General: These rules are intended to encourage the Team Captains to make arrangements that would be helpful in making the best, most enjoyable playing experience (see 1A). However, changes are not encouraged to help out opposing teams facing difficulties. They are intended to promote mutual benefit, not to have one Captain impose on the other Captain in the name of 'sportsmanship'.

4A3) The Scorecard

The home team Captain should have an official scorecard of the match with the players' names and board order, in accordance with rule 4E, displayed in a place where players can see it. After a game finishes, the players should fill in the results. If the teams line-up card as described in 4E has contingencies, the home captain can set-up the scorecard before the match.

Having the scorecard displayed allows players to know the exact name of their opponent, and give the 'official' line-up. Displaying the score allows players to see how the match results are going to determine strategy. This step then avoids the need to ask the Team Captain, who may be playing, adjudicating, or potentially giving improper information.

Furthermore, if a player is using a time delay clock with the delay feature active, he should note it on the scorecard so that it is clear to all people present.

4B) Initial Player Ratings

All players must have a FIDE (either Provisional or Established), USCF rating (either Provisional or Established), a rating (either Provisional or Established) from another chess league (i.e. CCL or LIICL) or they will be considered Unrated (UNR). Captain's Estimates will no longer be used in BAL play. Provisional USCF, FIDE or CCL/LIICL ratings will be treated as Established BAL ratings.

4B1) Ratings to be Used – If a player has a previous BAL rating, the BAL rating is considered the most accurate (unless the player is inactive, see 4B2 below, for

two consecutive years), USCF rating is next (unless more than 2 years since last ratings change), FIDE rating the next choice to determine one's rating (unless more than 2 years since last ratings change), and another Chess League rating is the last alternative to determine a player's rating (unless more than 2 years since last ratings change). Should a player rejoining the BAL after more than two years without a more recent USCF, FIDE or other chess league rating, the player's most recent BAL rating is to be used.

4B2) BAL Inactivity - If a player plays less than 3 rated games during a year, the BAL player is no longer considered active.

4B3) Rules Committee Override

At the Captain's Meeting of 2009, the league voted to vest the Rules' Committee with the power to override ratings. In 2009, The Rules Committee established criteria and procedures to effect this procedure. These rules can override sections 4B1 and 4B2 and even 4B.

4C) Official Player Ratings

Official BAL Ratings will be updated periodically. In the case of a 15 match season, updates will be done after rounds 5, 10 and after the play-offs. In the event of a 12 or 14 match season, updates will be done after rounds 6 or 7, respectively and the end of the play-offs. If technological problems or other issues prevent a ratings update, the last official BAL ratings remain as the official BAL rating. If an odd number of matches are being played, the league president will determine the update period in consultation with the website coordinator.

4D) Updated Ratings

The most recently updated ratings must be used for preparing line-ups and playing in ratings order.

4E) Exchange of Line-Ups

Captains must exchange line-ups before the start of the match. Players in the line-ups must be on the roster of the team, be authorized to play, and the average rating of the players in the line-up must be below the ratings cap for the division; and if applicable, the top boards must be below the top board cap. If unrated players are being used, follow the rules on unrated player line-ups.

Procedures on Exchange of Line-ups:

Given the modern day Security needs of some teams, as a practical matter, the home team often needs to have the roster ahead of time. For this reason, the league has instituted procedures favoring the home team.

Procedure: The visiting team must present the roster of players for the next match a day ahead of time. Email is the preferred method. If the visiting team has some uncertainty in the line-up, they need to send in to the home team Captain all possible players so the home team can notify Security. The visiting team should notify the home team of all of the possible line-ups. THESE RULES ARE MADE SEPCIFICALLY TO DISCOURAGE SENDING PLAYERS NAMES TO SECURITY THAT ARE UNLIKELY TO APPEAR SIMPLY TO KEEP THE HOME TEAM FROM KNOWING WHO WILL PLAY.

If a particular team needs to notify security further ahead of time, please contact the League President.

Once the visiting team line-up is set, the home team Captain should send his/her line-up to the visitor. Should the visiting team send the line-up in more than 24 hours earlier than the match, the home team captain must send the line-up in 24 hours ahead of the match. The home-team lineup can also contain the contingencies listed; that is, the line-up can be dependent on the line-up the visiting team uses. The home team may also include contingencies. The final line-up card players listed are the official line-up, however contingencies are allowed as long as they are notified in advance as described above. This line-up must have a rating in accordance with rule 2F unless overridden by rule 4F.

Note that if the visiting team sends their line up very close to the deadline, the home team of course will be given extra time to send their line-up back. If there are uncertainties as to whom will play, the visiting team must state their line-up first and the home team may adopt their line-up in accordance.

4F) Once Valid, Always Valid

No line-up that is submitted for play without forfeits during the season will become invalid due to changes in the ratings of the players in that line-up if all four active players had an active rating. A rating UNR is not an active rating. The board order of the four players may be required to change based on Rule 4H. This rule may be countermanded by rule 4B3.

4G) Colors

The home team will have black on odd-numbers boards and the visiting team will have white of the odd number boards. Board color will then be reversed on even number boards. This rule holds even if there are an odd number of boards in the match.

4H) Board Order

The highest-rated player in any line-up must play Board 1, the second-highest Board 2, etc. that a lower rated player may play a board above a higher rated player if the difference in their ratings does not exceed 50 points. Unrated player(s) must play the bottom board(s) until an Established rating (4 BAL games) has been reached.

4I) Forfeits

If one or more of the players listed in the line-up does not appear, the missing player will have forfeited the game if he/she does not appear 45 minutes after the start of the match. The opposing team will get four game points if their player appears. A team's other players should not otherwise be affected by one of their own players forfeiting a game.

If no designated player was listed on the line up card at the time of notice, boards must be played in strict board order. Therefore, a forfeit of a higher board automatically forfeits all lower boards.

A player who forfeits two games during a season is ineligible to play for the remainder of the season. The League President may also look to exclude the player in the future. He or she may bring the matter of reinstatement of the person at the next Captain's Meeting.

4J) Repeated Forfeits and Illegal Stacking

If a team violates this rule by having {2} or more players forfeit twice under this rule, the League President may declare that the team is not suffering unfortunate circumstances but is illegally stacking. In these cases, the President may declare that some of the forfeits constitute an out of board order violation of rule 4H and forfeit some of the matches. If the President has a potential conflict, this designation will be passed to the Rules Committee. The president can mention the forfeits at the next annual Captain's Meeting as a factor in potentially disallowing the team into the league the following year.

4K) Starting Time

The official starting time for all matches is 6:30 PM.

4L) Game/Match Points

In a match, a team scores four Game Points for each won game, two Game Points for each drawn game, and zero games points for each forfeited or lost game. The team scoring the most game Points in a match is awarded four Match Points. If

the teams have the same number of Game Points, each team is awarded two Match Points.

4M) Illegal line-ups

If a team fields an illegal line-up (over the cap, a player not on a team plays, etc.) the offending team will lose 4 – 0.

It is illegal for a team to pay a person specifically to play for the BAL chess team. Of course, financial institutions as a whole pay for their employees, but payment specifically to play in the BAL is forbidden. Any match with a paid player automatically forfeits the team 4-0 unless the President decides this outcome is against the best interests of the league.

4N) Team Drop Outs

After a team drops out, all game results will stand. Their opponents will be awarded 4 – 0 forfeits wins in all remaining matches. However, unanimous mutual agreement by captains in a Division is allowed to be used to make a different result.

4O) Protests

If the CTDs are unable to agree on the resolution in question, the players should continue the game under protest. If either side refuses to continue to play a game under protest, that player shall lose the game by forfeit.

All protests should be made in writing to the League President (who may delegate it to the division coordinator), who will promptly request a meeting or other form of communication of the Rules Committee. The Rules Committee will be made up of each Division Coordinator, the League President and the Vice President. The Division Coordinator for the teams making the protest will reclude him or herself

The Rules Committee, after receiving written statements from both sides, will deliberate the matter and make a decision in the case.

The decision made by the Rules Committee is final. Rules Committee members will NOT disclose displeasure of the results or comments to other captains or players.

4P) Smoking

Smoking is not permitted at a chess match by any individual listed on any BAL roster or any BAL Official.

4Q) Cell phones and blackberries

Cell phones and blackberries do not have to be turned off during match play. The active use of either should be done outside the playing area.

5) Rules for Individual Play

5A) Time Control

Time Control will be G-75 if a sudden death clock is in use. It is G-70 with a time delay clock.

5B) Clocks

USCF rules are followed for clock use. Specifically, if either player has a time delay clock, that player can require its use. However, if a player is late, the player present can start the game with whatever clock is available and the other player cannot require the clock be replaced when he appears.

5C) Scorekeeping

Each player is required to record both his/her moves and the moves of their opponent. Electronic score sheets, such as Mon Roi, are allowed. Scores must be kept current until if either player has five or less minutes on their clock, then neither player is required to keep score. Alternatives are available if allowed in the USCF (for blind players, players without hands, etc.)

5D) Other Chess Rules

All other chess rules will be found in the *Official Rules of Chess*. Note that if time delay clocks are not used, the Insufficient Winning Chances rule is in effect and players and teams are encouraged to understand this rule and how it works. .

6) Regular Season

6A) Schedule

The Schedule will be produced by the League President after the Captain's Meeting and distributed to all Captains and/or posted to the web site before the start of the season or in any other form should the website not be available. All games will be scheduled for Thursday nights in general.

6B) Rescheduled Matches

Matches may be postponed if both Captains agree to play at another time as stated in rule 4A1. The President may postpone matches due to inclement weather or similar reasons (9B). Matches must be made up prior to the next intra-season issuance of new ratings.

6C) Standings

Will be determined by the total of Match Points

6D) Tie-breaks

Ties are broken by (in order of application)

- 1) Total Game Points
- 2) Match points against the other tied team(s)
- 3) Game points scored against the other tied team(s)
- 4) Game points scored on Board 1, then on subsequent Boards
- 5) Coin toss

7) Play-offs

7A) Eligibility

Only players who have played at least 3 games during the season are eligible to play for their team during the play-offs. If a player appears when an opponent forfeits, it is considered 'playing' for purposes of this rule.

7B) Making the Play-offs

When there are six teams in a division, the top three teams will make the play-offs. The third place team will play at the site of the second place team, with the home team winning a drawn match. The winning team will then play at the site of the first place team, with the home team winning a drawn match.

When there are eight teams in a division, the top four teams will make the play-offs. The third place team will play at the site of the second place team, with the home team winning a drawn match. The fourth place team will play at the site of the first place team, with the home team winning a drawn match. The winning teams will then play at the site of the higher-seeded team, with the home team winning a drawn match.

The league President will decide play-off procedures for different sized divisions.

8) Trophies

8A) Team Performance

The team that finishes first in each Division at the end of the regular season will receive the Division First Place trophy. Members of the team that wins the Division First Place trophy will receive individual trophies. Up to six trophies will be provided by the BAL. Additional trophies may be purchased by the team, at cost.

The team that wins the Play-offs will receive the Division Champions Trophy. Members of the team that wins the Division Champions trophy will receive individual trophies. Up to six trophies will be provided by the BAL. Additional trophies may be purchased by the team, at cost.

If the Division Champions are also the Division First Place Team, the team will receive a larger combined trophy.

8B) Individual Performance

8B1) Most Valuable Player

The player scoring the most points during the regular season in the fewest games played, regardless of Division or Board assignment, will be designated the BAL “Most Valuable Player”, and will awarded the BAL MVP trophy.

8B2) Team MVP

The player scoring the most points during the regular season in the fewest games played for each team, regardless of Board assignment will be awarded a team MVP trophy. However, the team captain may designate another player as team MVP.

8B3) Best in Class

The League will award, based on start of season rating, a trophy for “Best in Class among all players in his/her rating class (U2000, 1800-1999, 1600-1799, 1400-1599, U1400) regardless of division. The tiebreaker will be the player who played the fewest games. If still tied, performance rating will be the final tiebreak.

8B4) Financial override – If the league is facing financial difficulties, the trophies may be reduced or scaled back. For 2010, the captains decided that people must affirm that they will pick up trophies they have earned, or affirm that the trophy will be picked up by designee; otherwise, the trophy will not be issued.

9) Roles of the President

These rules outline most, but not necessarily all, of the roles of the President:

9A) The President prepares the agenda and runs the annual Captain’s meeting

- 9B) The President can declare that a match date will be rescheduled for inclement weather or other factors (subway breakdown, terrorist attack, etc.)
- 9C) The President appoints Division Coordinators, but this can be amended by the division captains under rule 2C.
- 9D) Protests are made to the President who presents them to the Rules' Committee
- 9E) The President appoints officers if the members voted at Captain's Meetings cannot serve their function, because of quitting, disability, etc.
- 9F) The President rules on, or brings to the attention of captains, issues that cannot be handled within the normal rules, such as procedures for teams needing substantial lead time for security, teams not able to play on given dates (like a College Team out of session during a normal night), etc.
- 9G) The President is responsible for the use of the league funds, and the Treasurer serves as the handler of league funds. League funds are used for expenses (the website, for instance), trophies, and advertising.
- 9H) The President can call for a Captain's Meeting if deemed necessary.
- 9I) The president keeps the official list of captain's and contact numbers, which is especially important if the website is down.
- 9J) The President validates more accurate rating claims under rule 4B1. If the President views that the player involved may cause the validation to be subject to conflict, the President must ask the Rules' Committee to validate.
- 9K) The President may declare a team that is repeatedly forfeiting is illegally stacking under rule 4I1. If the President has a potential conflict, he/she must pass this duty to the Rules Committee.
- 9L) Generally, the President makes decisions for the league as a whole that aren't possible to be done at the Captain's Meeting and are not within these rules.

Example: A bank that sponsors a team had a terrorist threat in the morning of a scheduled match. The employees are ordered to evacuate the building. The threat turns out to be a hoax. The President does not cancel all matches since only the one team is affected. However, the President may say that the bank team does not forfeit because of the nature of the events and requires the teams to reschedule.

- 9M) If the President cannot serve his/her function, the Vice-President becomes the new President, and should appoint a new Vice-President (see 9E).

- 9N) The president often must speak for the rules committee if decisions are needed in 'real time' and gathering the Rules Committee is not practical; this rule will usually come from events occurring on the night of the match.

10) The Rules Committee

- 10A) Rules' disputes are brought by a team captain to the league President, who brings them to the Rules' Committee
- 10B) If the members of the Rules committee are associated with a team, they do not vote on any matters related to the division for which their team participates
- 10C) The Rules Committee generally presents a written response to a rules issue, citing the reason for their ruling. However, they may decide not to.
- 10D) Captains not associated with a match may protest results from other matches; however, in general agreement from the two captains about a specific match will rarely be overturned as described in 4A. In the USCF, tournament director decisions are rarely overturned, and are usually entertained only if the tournament director is perceived to have a conflict of interest. Similar principles will be applied in the BAL.
- 10E) Not a Police Force - The Rules' Committee does not 'seek out' conflicts. The Rules Committee responds to a protest filed by a Team Captain.
- 10F) The Rules Committee may make decisions on principles as opposed to direct rules.

Example: A team plays at the opponent's home site. A person unaffiliated with the home team nonetheless appears at the match and intimidates the visiting players. The visiting players leave the match and the home team declares a forfeit. The visiting team declares that the home site was not secured.

If the facts here are not disputed, the Rules Committee may decide that the visiting team did not forfeit even though there is no written rule saying that people not associated with the team are not allowed to harass the opposing team. The Rules Committee may decide that the rule saying that the home team must provide a valid home site means they have to be able to prevent intimidation from non-team members and view that the home team is at fault.

Annex for 2010- 2011 Season

These rules are not general changes to the rules but are in effect for the 2010 – 2011 Season.

The A Division and B division have 5 teams. They have 16 games, 4 against other teams in the division. They will have 20 rounds with each team getting 4 byes. Games have 4 players/match. The B division has a cap of 1750 and a top board cap of 1850.

The C division has 6 teams, with the normal three rounds against each team and normal playoff rules. They have 4 players/match. The team cap is 1600, top three board cap is 1700.

Official ratings updates are at the end of rounds 6 and 12 (of the 20 week schedule). Rosters are frozen at the end of round 15 (April 7) for the A and B division, and March 10 for the C division.

President – Bruce Jurin

President Emeritus – Serves rules as a ‘senior’ Vice-president – Carl Aridas

Website Coordinator – Adam San Marco

Treasurer – Carlos Rodriguez

Division coordinators:

A division: Dave Diamond

B division: Larry Rostoker

C division: Dennis Karlovich

Dues are \$120/team.

