**The MCF Fair Play Rules and Guidelines for online play**

These are the guidelines and rules for fair play in MCF online competitions, including a summary of anti-cheating arrangements. These will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and will be updated as appropriate, based on experience from MCF online events and others.

**1. Scope**The rules and guidelines apply to all players playing in MCF online events.

**2. General Fair Play Principles**

* **Do not cheat** or receive assistance in games (from a chess computer, book, database or another person).
* **Be nice** and courteous to all other players, always.

**3. Complying with MCF Fair Play Rules**Players are required to comply with the MCF’s fair play rules for online play and the MCF shall have no liability in relation to its implementation of the rules as set out in this document.

**4. Complying with Lichess Fair Play Rules**

For MCF online competitions played on the Lichess platform, players are asked to review the Lichess fair play rules as relevant, and make sure they comply with these for their games at all times. Further details can be found here: <https://Lichess.org/terms-of-service>

Please note that the following are specifically not allowed during play:  
• Help from any other person;  
• Impersonation/use of other people's accounts;  
• Use of chess engines, bots, plugins, analysis tools, tablebases, blunder checks or other best-move tools;  
• Artificially inflating or deflating ratings by intentionally losing, or arranging with an opponent to win;  
• Interference with other members’ games;  
• Reference to physical opening books and static (i.e. non-engine based) tablebases.

The above list is not exhaustive and players should refer to Lichess’s terms and conditions and supporting material on their website for the full set of rules and guidelines.

**5. Standards of Conduct**In addition to the above, players should take note of the provider’s requirement to comply with Lichess’s rules in relation to general standards of conduct, sportsmanship and online behaviour.

**6. Staying Connected**Players should familiarise themselves with the rules about making the first move, disconnection and game abandonment.  
Players should make sure they are ready to start playing when their game is started, and should be sure to make their first move within the allowed time.

If players are disconnected for any reason before or during a game they should try to reconnect and log back in as quickly as possible.

Failure to make a move within the allowed time or to reconnect following a disconnect will result in the game being recorded as a loss by Lichess.  
If players are unable to reconnect due to issues with their internet connection, the provider's result will stand for the provider’s online rating purposes, with a win for their opponent where they have disconnected and not been able to reconnect in time.

Where a game is defaulted as a result of the server going down for both players, the MCF organiser should be informed, who will decide the appropriate course of action, which may include a replay.

**7. Resigning**

Players should avoid disconnecting in a lost position. This is bad sportsmanship. Players should make use of the resignation button if they wish to concede the game.

**8. Anti-cheating Measures**It is a condition of entry that players must agree to their real names being disclosed so that players know whom they are playing.  
Lichess’s anti-cheating software will be in place to detect instances of cheating in all games.  
Lichess’s anti-cheating measures are published on their web site as part of their FAQs, which can be found here: https://Lichess.org/faq  
In the event that a player is banned or flagged by Lichess, the player should decide whether they wish to contest the ban or flagging, and if so they should make an appeal to Lichess and inform the MCF Controller that they are doing so.

see section 9 below for fuller details.  
Information on Lichess’s appeals process can be found here:  
https://Lichess.org/contact#help-appeal-cheat  
The MCF has no involvement in the Lichess appeals process, which is between the player and Lichess.

**9. The MCF Fair Play Panel**

In the event of any issue of fair play arising during an MCF league or individual competition, it should in the first instance be reported informally in confidence to the controller of the event (see section 11. below).

If the controller considers it appropriate, he/she will contact the MCF President, who may agree to the setting up of an ad-hoc MCF Fair Play panel, consisting of three MCF Council members or arbiters who have no connection or involvement with the players or teams involved in the issue.

The panel will be empowered to consider all available evidence and recommend to the President a ruling and, if necessary, action. The President will have the option of seeking further advice.

At all stages, confidentiality will be observed and if the issue is discussed at Council it shall be done so under conditions of confidentiality and with all names redacted from verbal or written reports or discussion.

In general, though, the MCF will leave it to Lichess to take appropriate action under their rules.

It is not envisaged that cheating will be a major problem in MCF competitions, but players should be aware that MCF reserves the right to apply the following sanctions:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Offence** | **Circumstances** | **Tariff** |
| Lichess account closure for fair play violations aside from computer or other external assistance. | General | No MCF action unless provider flags up a particular concern. |
| Sanctions applied after unsuccessful appeal or if no appeal made | First offence | Five round ban. |
| Sanctions applied after unsuccessful appeal or if no appeal made | Second offence | Ten round ban. |
| Sanctions applied after unsuccessful appeal or if no appeal made | Third offence. | Permanent ban, possibly including entry to future MCF online events |

The MCF sanctions may be applied from the round following the closure/flagging by Lichess.

MCF sanctions for an offence under these rules in a league competition may also apply to any individual competition taking place in parallel, or vice versa.

There will be no explicit MCF publicity of sanctioned players’ names.  
Players will be informed of the sanction being applied but will have no further right of appeal to the MCF following action by Lichess.

If Lichess will no longer let the player open an account, the player will not be permitted to play in the MCF.  
Results for match card and table purposes may be scored as a loss for the player and as a win for the player’s opponent, at the MCF’s absolute discretion.

Also at the MCF’s absolute discretion, games in which the player was involved during the MCF season in which the player was sanctioned may not be submitted for the purposes of ECF online rating

Once a player’s sanction has been completed, submission of the results of future games in which the player is involved will resume for ECF online rating purposes.

Penalties may be varied at the MCF’s discretion.

There is no right of appeal to the MCF.

**10. User Names**Players may not play in the MCF with a flagged Lichess account.  
Players may play in MCF online events under only one user name during the season, unless they have had a sanction applied under the fair play guidelines and require a new user name to resume playing once the sanction is complete. It is the player’s responsibility to obtain a new user name from Lichess and the MCF will have no involvement in this process.  
User names may be changed between seasons, subject to any sanctions still in place at the end of the previous season being completed.  
A player may not play while an appeal to Lichess is in progress.

**11. Dos and Don’ts**

On no account must any player or captain report any fair play issue directly to Lichess (and especially not during a game or match).

In this regard:

1. a player must communicate only with his or her captain;
2. a captain must refer an issue within three days of the match to the controller and no one else.

Cheating is serious, but making any sort of public accusation of cheating is arguably even more so.

Although In the chain:

*player » captain » event controller* and then, if necessary*, » MCF President » ad-hoc MCF Fair Play Panel*

details will have to be discussed and names may have to be mentioned, strict confidentiality should be observed, by all parties.

Any player or captain who, in the view of the MCF Fair Play Panel, publicly (whether on social media or otherwise) makes an allegation of cheating against another player and in so doing names the player, or otherwise enables the player to be identified, will be subject to the same sanctions as those set out in section 9 of the guidelines: first offence five round ban, second offence ten round ban, third offence permanent ban.

**12. Other**The MCF, its officials, and members of an MCF Fair Play Panel shall have no liability to any player in tort (whether for defamation or any other tort), in contract or otherwise howsoever in relation to or arising from its anti-cheating/fair play arrangements, including the operation of these guidelines. The foregoing shall not limit liability for personal injury or death.

**13.** MCF league games must not be streamed by anyone who is playing a league game at the time. Any player found to have streamed their game will lose the game in question.

**14.** Safeguarding: in any MCF online game involving a junior or vulnerable adult player, the ‘chat’ facility must be disabled. See <https://lichess.org/blog/VStlbikAAK0yJ2UC/new-features-kid-mode-simuls-and-more>

**End.**

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