

## Cambridge City Chess Club – issues and process for a decision to resume activities



Since the suspension of all over-the-board (OTB) chess events in mid-March, the question of how and when to decide to resume our activities has remained unresolved. Clubs and the Leagues in which we participate face a classic “boot-strapping” problem: neither can confidently commit to resume until the other does. This brief memo sets out some background information and proposes a decision time-line for us.

Clearly today it remains still too early to make an informed decision. By the end of June, it may be more clear whether the easing of UK lockdown on 1<sup>st</sup> June was timely, or precipitous. Global factors are at play too: in the Southern hemisphere (e.g. in Brazil) where it is now winter and therefore “high flu season”, the pandemic is exploding. Until a vaccine is available, one might fear a biannual North/South oscillation of the pandemic.

Though nobody can yet predict whether a second wave awaits us, decisions will be needed by end of summer about re-opening the Club in September. This involves commitments to our landlord for hiring our venue, and it interacts with whether the Leagues in which we participate will resume ( - the “boot-strapping” problem). The Leagues have said only that they will hold special AGMs in early August to decide those and other matters, including how to determine outcomes of the 2019-20 season (or if to complete it). They will need our input. You can participate in Bury League discussions on these matters directly, via an online forum, using this URL: <https://www.buryleaguechess.org.uk/discuss> . In Cams League email discussions, one officer proposed that OTB matches should complete the season, but with players maintaining a 2 meter distance, and wearing masks or visors, and gloves. This proposal was not received with much enthusiasm. (One may imagine how it could affect the style of play without gloves: e.g. reluctance to capture any piece, as that would entail touching it...)

For our part, Cambridge City Chess Club hopes to hold an AGM by early September, after polling our members by mid-July to ascertain intentions and desires for a 2020-21 season. That questionnaire or poll will enable us (“The Committee” of 5 officers: SP, DC, PF, OBP, JD) to arrive at an informed decision about commitments to resume the hire of our venue, and to participate in Leagues if they continue, considering costs, our subs, etc. Meanwhile, with attention to news about the pandemic as it unfolds, you may wish to formulate your views or the decision criteria that you would use (e.g. to rejoin and resume OTB play if, say,  $R < 0.5$  by September).

It may be worth mentioning again the option of online chess, if that suits you. Several forms of competitions, with a variety of time controls, are freely available via <https://lichess.org/> among others. Also, now the ECF (English Chess Federation) sponsors online chess leagues and teams: <https://englishchessonline.org.uk/>

Hoping to see you all again in September in good health, and with all best wishes,

[on behalf of the Committee of Cambridge City Chess Club]