

ADVICE REGARDING UNRATED PLAYERS

Revised 21 September 2021

The MCCU rules on unrated players require the captain to be clear that an unrated player is of a strength that does not exceed the upper limit for the section concerned. In addition such players must be cleared with the controller before they play, except in exceptional circumstances. In effect this means both that the captain must be satisfied of the playing strength of the player and that they are able to satisfy the controller that this view is sound.

Any estimated grade allocated by the Union County Championship Controller is only applicable to MCCU County Championship competitions. Teams that reach the ECF national stages must seek permission from the National County Championship Controller to play any unrated player in accordance with ECF Rules. Grades allocated by the MCCU will not carry forward into the ECF national stages.

It is incumbent on a captain to provide all relevant information to the controller. Simply asking for Joe Bloggs to be cleared will not suffice. The following are some of the questions that a captain should be able to answer

- Is the player new to chess?
- If so, when did he/she start playing?
- If not, how long ago did they last play competitively over the board, and do they know what their grading was?
- If they don't recall, which club did they play for at the time?
- If a junior is involved, how old are they?
- What games have been played by the player? Standard play games take precedence, but if there are none or very few of these, rapid play details should be provided. Details of any games that are not available on the ECF database should be given i.e. opponents rating & result. Local raters &/or results secretaries may be able to help with this information if the player doesn't keep their own details. See further notes below regarding the ECF grading database and results.
- If they were graded elsewhere, where was this, when, and what was their rating?
- Where does the player play within his/her club, school or county junior team?
- The rating of the players they commonly play above or below in team matches, or in competitive events such as internal club tournaments where they stand, will help support a view of their playing strength.

Using the ECF rating database

The information now available includes actual results, even for those players who do not have a published rating because they have played too few games. Captains should check the database, or get someone with internet access to do this for them if they don't have access themselves. The ECF rating database can be accessed from the main website englishchess.org.uk Click on the heading ECF database, when the page has opened scroll down and enter name in the name box, also click on the box next to it to include unrated players. A list of all matching entries will be displayed. Please bear in mind that a player may not appear under the exact name or spelling you know them by e.g. Jack Holmes may have the proper name John Holmes, or Tony Clark may be Charles A Clarke. Click on the rating reference for any entries that could relate to the person concerned, you can then either click on the standard games tab, or scroll down the page, any grading list that has some games for the player will show "view". If you click on "view" details of the games will be displayed. Please give the controller the rating reference from the database when asking for clearance.

In the absence of a published rating the indications of any factual information available have to take precedence. That a player may be considered to have had a fluke result that may have distorted matters cannot be taken into account; this can happen to any player, and lead to someone with a published rating being say a point over the limit for a section.

There will be cases, particularly in the lower sections, where in desperation a captain will look to play someone who has little chess history. In such cases tell the controller what little is available.

It is for the captain to provide the controller with information, not for the controller to go hunting for it.