



ECF Online Fair play and Anti-Cheating rules – V2.1, May 2020

These are the current guideline and rules for fair play in ECF online events including a summary of anti-cheating arrangements. The rules are being reviewed on an ongoing basis and will be updated as appropriate based on experience from ECF online and other events.

1. Scope

The rules and guidelines apply to ECF members or supporters playing in online events which are organised by the ECF or otherwise ECF online rated, and for International team events where the ECF has organised participation.

2. General Fair Play Guidelines

Complying with Provider Fair Play Rules

ECF club members and participants in ECF online rated events are asked to review the chess.com, lichess, or other provider Fair Play rules as relevant, and make sure they comply with these for their games on the platform at all times.

Players in ECF online rated events are required to comply with the ECF's fair play rules and the ECF shall have no liability in relation to its implementation of the rules as set out in this document.

Further details can be found here:

<https://www.chess.com/community>

<https://support.chess.com/article/648-what-do-i-need-to-know-about-fair-play-on-chess-com>

<https://lichess.org/terms-of-service>

Please note that the following are specifically not allowed during play:

- Help from any other person, player, or coach
- Impersonation/ use of other people's account
- Use of chess engines, bots, plugins, analysis tools, tablebases, blunder checks or other best move tools
- Artificially inflating or deflating your rating. (This is where a User purposefully loses, or has arranged with an opponent to win. As a result, the User's rating will artificially increase or decrease).
- Interference with other members games.

Reference to physical opening books and static (ie non-engine based) tablebases are allowed for chess.com 'daily' games or lichess 'correspondence' games only and must not be used during live games.



The above list is not exhaustive and you should refer to the provider terms and conditions and supporting material on their web sites for the full set of rules and guidelines.

Standards of Conduct

In addition to the above please do take note of the provider requirement to comply with platform rules in relation to general standards of conduct, sportsmanship and online behaviour.

Staying Connected

<https://support.chess.com/article/338-how-does-game-abandonment-work>

Players in ECF online rated events should familiarise themselves with the rules on time to make your first move, disconnection and game abandonment.

Please make sure you are ready to start playing when your game is started, and be sure to make your first move within the allowed time which may vary by time control and platform. If you are disconnected for any reason before or during a game you 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 the provider.

If you were unable to reconnect due to issues with your internet connection, then the provider's result will stand for online rating purposes, with a win for your opponent where you have disconnected and not been able to reconnect in time. Where games are defaulted as a result of the server going down for both players please speak to the event organisers who should be able to rule on the game result for ECF online rating purposes.

Please also avoid disconnecting in a lost position and do make use of the appropriate resignation button if you wish to concede the game.

3. Anti-cheating Measures

ECF Club members' Member IDs will be known to the ECF but these will not be disclosed without permission and/ or acceptance of entry conditions for relevant events which require names to be disclosed.

It will be a condition of entry to tier 1 events that a player must agree to their real names being disclosed so that players will know who they are playing.

A tier 1 event is defined as an International Team Match, the final stages of a National Competition, a National league, the ECF Counties Championship, or the National Clubs Championship. A tier 2 event would be the weekly club tournaments, a local league event which is ECF rated or a local online congress or club competition.

As is normal for internet chess providers including chess.com and lichess, the provider's anti-cheating software will be in place to detect instances of cheating in all provider rated (and potentially provider unrated) matches, tournaments and events.

Chess.com's measures are outlined below on their web site.



<https://www.chess.com/article/view/chess-com-fair-play-and-cheat-detection>

There is also a process for users to report anyone suspected of breaching fair play as below:

<https://support.chess.com/article/209-how-do-i-report-someone>

Lichess's anti-cheating measures are also published on their web site as part of their FAQs which can be found here:

<https://lichess.org/faq>

The reporting process and form can be found here:

lichess.org/report

In the event that a player is banned or flagged by the provider, the player should decide whether they wish to contest the ban or flagging, and if so they should make an appeal to the provider in the first instance as soon as is practical after the allegation has been made or sanction applied.

The ECF will have no involvement in this process which is between the player and the platform provider.

Information on the providers' appeals processes can be found here for chess.com:

<https://support.chess.com/article/648-what-do-i-need-to-know-about-fair-play-on-chess-com>

and here for lichess:

lichess.org/contact#help-appeal-cheat

The ECF has considered additional measures for detecting cheating such as requiring webcams for major events (as FIDE have done with a number of their events). There are no plans to implement such measures because the gains are felt to be marginal and would be outweighed by the practical difficulties of implementing such a system.

4. ECF Sanctions

A player with a closed or flagged account as a result of cheating or breaching fair play guidelines will be subject to ECF sanctions as set out in the table below, which vary depending on the nature of the offence, the player's circumstances, and the number of occurrences.

Before any sanctions are applied a player's games will be reviewed using Dr. Ken Regan's independent analysis software, and the results shared with the player on request.

Sanctions are only applied if the review supports the provider's conclusion that there is a very high probability of cheating in an ECF event based on information from the provider, independent statistical evidence from analysing the game moves as above, and following a review of the specific circumstances of the case.



Offence	Circumstances	Tariff for Tier 1 Events	Tariff for Tier 2 Events
Chess.com or lichess account closure for fair play violations aside from computer or other external assistance.	General	No ECF action unless provider alerts a particular concern.	No ECF action unless provider alerts a particular concern.
	Junior		
Chess.com or lichess account closure for computer or other external assistance, or lichess account flagging as computer assisted.	General	6 month Clubs exclusion and delisting for a first occurrence.	4 month Clubs exclusion and delisting for a first occurrence.
	Junior (U16)	3 month Clubs exclusion and delisting for first occurrence.	2 month Clubs exclusion and delisting for first occurrence.
Chess.com or lichess account closure for machine or other external assistance, or lichess account flagging as computer assisted.	Second offence	Longer periods of exclusion (up to double the first offence periods).	Longer periods of exclusion (up to double the first offence period).

Bans and rating list exclusions in excess of two months will be reduced by a third if the player recognises the offence and agrees not to do it again.

Tier 1 events are major championships, or any events with monetary prizes. Tier 2 Events are regular club tournaments or local league events.

Sanctions will apply from two weeks after the closure/ flagging or immediately after an unsuccessful appeal. Exclusion from ECF Online Clubs will apply to ECF Online Clubs on both sites (chess.com and lichess.org). There will be no impact on ECF membership or OTB grades which are completely separate from online ratings. There will also be no explicit ECF publicity of player names.

Players will be informed of the sanction being applied and will have the right of appeal with the appeal being heard before any sanction is applied over and above the provider sanctions.

The Organiser will be asked to manage any changes to results etc in such a way as to avoid or minimise any publicity for the sanctioned player.

The player's games will not be rated in the ECF online rating lists for the period of the sanction during which time the names will not appear on the list.

Player identities and related ECF members club removals/ delistings will not be published in any explicit way by the ECF and the usernames or rating entries will just be removed from the lists for the relevant period. A player may reapply for ECF online once their provider ban has been lifted



and they have an active provider account and following the relevant ban and delisting, at which point they must agree not to use computer assistance or breach the fair play guidelines.

The ECF will take more stringent action for a second or multiple occurrences, with such occurrences handled on a case by case basis.

The removal and delisting will be reviewed by the ECF at the end of the period and generally lifted at that point.

Jurisdiction - Sanctions will only be applied to ECF members taking part in ECF-online rated events or Internationals where participation has been organised by the ECF – eg International team events.

5. ECF Appeals

Player may make an appeal against the ECF sanction to an ECF Committee consisting of a technical expert on anti-cheating, a legal expert, and a player not directly involved in the competition(s) where the events have occurred. If the appeal is successful then the player will not be banned from ECF members clubs or removed from the ECF online ratings.

The process will be as follows:

- The player should appeal the platform ban or flagging within two weeks of the sanction occurring;
- The player should make an ECF appeal within a week of an unsuccessful appeal as above or two weeks of the platform sanction being applied if there has been no appeal to the provider;
- Bringing an ECF appeal involves a financial cost of £25, refundable if the appeal is successful;
- The appellant will be provided with the results of the Regan analysis of their games and any further information relating to the ban which the provider is prepared to provide and have shared.
- At appeal the onus will be on the appellant to show that the decision was wrong or unfair and provide clear grounds for bringing the original suspension into doubt;
- A case will be considered in the first instance by the ECF online manager and/ or organiser who will advise the player of the proposed sanctions before setting up a panel to hear the case should the player wish to appeal;
- The appeal will be heard by an appeals committee/panel consisting of a technical expert on anti-cheating, a legal expert and a player not directly involved in the competition(s) where the events have occurred;
- The panel of 3 will be drawn from a wider pool of 5-10 people;
- Those in the pool would need to recuse themselves from an appeal if:
 - The event is one of their events;



- They know the person well;
 - They could be seen to have a vested interest in the outcome;
 - They have taken part in a non-ECF appeals committee for the same offence.
- Grounds for considering an appeal might be:
 - Mistaken identity (eg another player using account without the players knowledge);
 - The player being able to demonstrate recent performances in OTB events significantly higher than grade or ELO rating to an extent that would materially reduce the likelihood of external assistance having been used;
 - Other mitigating circumstances.
 - If the appeal is successful then the player will not be banned from ECF Online Clubs or removed from the ECF online ratings.
 - There will be no right of further appeal at the national level.

FIDE are currently looking at establishing a cross-federation appeals committee to provide a higher level court of appeal with a small team who would have signed NDAs with the providers including lichess and chess.com. The ECF may wish to consider this as a potential court of appeal for cases where the appellant is not satisfied with the ECF decision and wishes to take the matter further.