

## **SCF Fair Play Guidelines for Online Play [DRAFT]**

### **Introduction**

1. There is an increasing number of online chess events worldwide due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Singapore Chess Federation (SCF) and other local organizers have also staged such events in the past, and their popularity combined with ease of access has meant that such events are likely to continue being organized for the foreseeable future.
2. However, the rise in online chess events has resulted in the concurrent global rise of cheating via the use of chess engines, apps and other tools during online tournaments. This is an issue that we have also observed in locally organized chess tournaments.
3. Therefore, the SCF has appointed a Fair Play Commission comprising GMs Kevin Goh, Andrey Kvon and CM Junior Tay to develop a framework for Fair Play that will be applied in all online tournaments that are organized by the SCF or that require SCF registration (such as official representation of the SCF in FIDE events). This framework will be reviewed and updated on an ongoing basis. It is meant as a guideline for other local chess organizers but is not mandatory for non-SCF-related events.

### **General Fair Play Principles**

4. The SCF expects players to adhere to the highest standards of sportsmanship and to follow the rules of any online event in which they are participants.
5. Players must not use any form of external assistance in online tournament games such as electronic devices, computers, books, databases or human assistance.

### **Complying with the Fair Play rules of Online Servers**

6. For SCF online tournaments held on common tournament platforms, players and arbiters are required to be familiar with their respective fair play rules, and players must comply with these for their games. The following are the terms of service/fair play policies for the most frequently used online tournament platforms:
  - a. Lichess – <https://lichess.org/terms-of-service>
  - b. Chess.com – <https://www.chess.com/legal/fair-play>
  - c. Tornelo - <https://tornelo.tawk.help/article/fair-play-policy-and-process>
7. Regardless of platform, the following are specifically not allowed during play:
  - a. Help from any other person;
  - b. Impersonation/use of other people's accounts;
  - c. Use of chess engines, bots, plugins, analysis tools, table-bases, blunder checks or other best-move tools;
  - d. Artificially inflating or deflating ratings by intentionally losing, or arranging with an opponent to win;
  - e. Interference with other members' games;

- f. Be in possession of or have electronic gadgets (digital watch, handphone, extended monitor, wireless headphones, etc.) in the player's vicinity or playing area.
- g. Reference to physical opening books and static (i.e. non-engine based) table-bases.

### **Anti-cheating Measures**

8. Players must agree to their real names being disclosed for online tournaments so that all players in the tournament know who they are playing against.
9. The tournament platforms' (i.e. Lichess, chess.com and Tornelo) anti-cheating algorithms will be the primary source by which external assistance and cheating is detected in all online events.
10. These platforms employ different means of detecting players who might be using computer assistance, including in-house algorithms and a panel of experts for independent review. These are highly accurate and greater than a mere balance of probability – it is not in the interest of commercial internet chess platforms to wrongly close accounts for fair play violations. For example, Chess.com described their method in general terms in the article (<https://www.chess.com/article/view/online-chess-cheating>) and – just like other major platforms – also have an appeal process if a suspended player feels aggrieved that his or her account was closed erroneously.
11. Both lichess and chess.com typically tag the players' account if the respective server detects a violation of terms of service or fair play policies. For the Tornelo server, the tournament chief arbiter or director shall decide on the penalty for possible fair play violations after reading the report provided by Tornelo.

### **Fair Play Violations during Online Tournaments**

12. If a fair play violation arises during an online event, it should, in the first instance be reported in confidence to the tournament director or chief arbiter of the event. The SCF strongly discourages public shaming for online fair play violations, and persons who do so may be subject to disciplinary actions by the Disciplinary and Ethics Committee.
13. If a player is banned or flagged by Lichess, chess.com or Tornelo, the player shall decide whether he or she wishes to contest the ban or flagging. If he or she chooses to do so, an appeal can be made to the server I/Cs. The chief arbiter should be informed and kept updated. The SCF is not involved in either Lichess or chess.com appeals processes, which is between the player and the servers' management.
14. If the tournament director or chief arbiter considers it appropriate, he/she may inform the Fair Play Panel, whose members must have no connection or involvement with the players or teams involved in the issue.

## The Fair Play Panel (“FPP”)

15. For each official and major online tournament organised by the SCF, there will be an independent Fair Play Panel. The FPP’s task is to monitor the tournament in question for the occurrence of violation of fair play. The members of each FPP are appointed by the tournament director and shall consist of at least three people, including one active International Master or Grandmaster. One member shall act as the chairperson of the FPP and have a casting vote in case of a tie. Arbiters of these tournaments cannot be members of the FPP at the same time.
16. The FPP will be empowered to consider all available evidence and recommend to the SCF Disciplinary and Ethics Committee a ruling and, if necessary, action.
17. At all stages, confidentiality must be observed and if the issue is discussed at SCF Executive Committee meeting/s, it shall be done so under conditions of confidentiality and with all names redacted from verbal or written reports or discussion.

## Actions by SCF for Fair Play Violations

18. SCF reserves the right to apply the following sanctions after consideration of each case:

<b>Irregularity</b>	<b>Occurrence</b>	<b>Action</b>
Lichess/chess.com or Tornelo account closure for fair play violations <b>other</b> than computer or other external assistance.	General	No SCF action unless provider flags up a particular concern.
Lichess/chess.com or Tornelo account closure for fair play violations <b>due to</b> computer or other external assistance - unsuccessful or no appeal by player	First offence	Ban from the current event and no entry to any SCF online events or SCF sanctioned international online events for the next 3 months.
	Second offence	Ban from the current event and no entry to any SCF online events or SCF sanctioned international online events for the next 6 months.
	Third offence.	Ban from the current event and no entry to any SCF online events or SCF sanctioned international online events for the next 12 months.

19. The SCF sanctions will be made known to the player via a private meeting (in-person, or virtual) between the player and the SCF Disciplinary and Ethics Committee. Parents of the player shall be invited to join the meeting if the player is below the age of 16. During the meeting, the player shall be provided with an opportunity to appeal.
20. The SCF sanctions may be applied from the round following the closure/flagging by the servers.

21. There will be no SCF publicity of sanctioned players' names.

22. If the server no longer allows the player open an account, the player will not be permitted to play in the SCF online events.

The SCF, its officials, and members of the SCF 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.