

Report of QC Chair to FIDE Council July 2025

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1. FPL-QC Meeting

On 16 April we had a meeting with the new FPL Chairman and Secretary, Andy and Vincent.

We talked about strengthening cooperation between the two commissions.

There is some overlap in the duties of the two commissions when it comes to tournaments where the results may have been pre-arranged.

It has been agreed that QC can refer cases to the FPL, and they will assist in the investigation.

2. New Councillor

GM Alexander Moiseenko was appointed as Councillor for the Qualification Commission.

We consider that his contribution will be very valuable as he already was supporting QC in the previous years.

3. Rating Officers Letter

In April, QC received the following request from MB:

“Ask Qualification Commission to propose a procedure by which organisers and the Federation Rating Officers would be informed of potential non-rating of the tournament prior to the start of the tournament, with particular focus on Schiller/Scheveningen and RR tournaments.”

A letter was sent to the Federations, containing information about the operation of the rating system, as well as some case studies.

A few examples of which tournaments should not be registered/submitted for ratings were exposed (cases involving result manipulation, sub standard tournament conditions, ‘fake’ tournaments, tournaments designed to subvert the accuracy of the FIDE Rating System).

The letter was written by QC secretary Shaun Press.

It was also posted on QC website.

4. Title Application Process Letter

Over the past few years the FIDE Qualification Commission has received a number of questions concerning the operation of the FIDE Title System. We have collected some of the more important questions and answers into a letter that we have distributed to all FIDE federations.

The letter was also published on QC website as we felt that the updates and cases in the letter would be of interest to the general chess playing population.

5. QC Meeting June 2025

An internal meeting was held on June 22nd.

The new member (Moiseenko) was introduced. Members were updated about recent activities of the commission. The letters previously mentioned were presented.

6. ARB Working Group

The Arbiters’ Commission created a Working Group for the integrity of the IA/FA online exams. They offered to include someone from QC.

IA Edgardo Campora will represent QC.

7. Title Applications

We are submitting our recommendations on title applications.

8. Faster Time Control valid for Norms

MB-2025-029 2025-05-14

Instruct the Qualification Commission to develop specific regulations for the pilot project, which would include four tournaments (one on each continent) with a time control 45-minutes plus a 30-second increment per move, starting from move 1. These tournaments must be preapproved by the Qualification Commission in order to be rated (standard rating) and eligible for FIDE titles and norms. No more than two rounds should be played per day.

E.Sutovsky, A.Martynov, V.Bologan 2025-05-30

A sub commission was formed inside QC to work in this project. The members are Paloma Gutierrez, Aleksander Moiseenko and Edgardo Campora.

They are working on that and the document will be delivered the second week of July.

9. Pending Task: Workshop

MB-2025-021 MB-2025-03-12

Ask Qualification Commission to organise workshops for Federation Rating Officers, during which the Policy on Rating and Titles will be addressed, along with other relevant topics.

7.2025

Sabrina de San Vicente

QC Chair

Dear Rating Officer, once again I would like to thank you for the work you have carried out in the past year in helping FIDE provide a reliable and timely rating service to your Federation members. The FIDE Qualification Commission (QC) recognise that this work is often voluntary, and we appreciate the sacrifice you have made in working with us. Without your assistance, players world wide would not be able to benefit from the important service that the FIDE Ratings System (FRS) provides.

During the past year QC has received a number of questions regarding the operation of the rating system, and I would like to share some of the answers with you, to help make your job easier.

1) I registered an event and initially it was approved, but now it is unapproved. What happened?

Most FIDE events are automatically approved. This includes Round Robins (RR), Swiss, and Team events. However, if the details of the event have been changed **in any way** (eg start/end date, number of rounds etc) then the event becomes unapproved. As we wish to ensure that players have as much correct information before entering an event, registering the event, and then changing the format, dates, rounds etc may prevent players from making an informed decision. As a result we require such changes be approved by QC to ensure fairness and transparency.

2) What events are not automatically approved?

Manual approval is required for a number of reasons. There are some formats which QC has decided need to be checked. These include matches, Scheveningen and Schiller formats, Hybrid events or any events that fall under the 'Other' category of formats on the FRS. Events that are registered less than 3 days before the scheduled starting date (or after the starting date) also need to be manually approved.

3) How long does it take for approval to be granted?

QC usually begin to approve events in the 2nd half of each month. Checks will be made every few days, although in the final week of the month, this will be every day. As part of the approval process QC checks the uploaded TRF file, so events that do not provide a TRF file will not be approved (NB You can submit tournament results prior to tournament approval)

4) I followed all the steps, but the event was still not approved. Why?

There may be a few reasons for this. FIDE Regulations require events to be submitted in a timely manner. Events scheduled to finish in the last 3 days of the month may be held over to the next month. Events that are more than 3 months old (in practice 100 days) will not be approved. Tournament files submitted in the last 48 hours of the month may result in the event being rated at the end of the next month. (NB All times are based on the time at the FIDE Ratings Office, and so may be affected by your own time zone. Please allow an extra day to be certain of acceptance) There are also events that QC regards as falling short of the necessary requirements for inclusion on the FIDE Rating System. See the next section for examples

5) An event is showing up as unapproved and I don't know why. What should I do?

Contact the QC Secretary (Shaun Press) for an explanation. It could simply be an administrative issue or something more serious. If the tournament has been rejected due to tournament organisation issues, then the next steps to take will be explained to you.

While 99% of FIDE Rated events are processed without difficulty, QC is still required to deal with the 1% of events that fail to meet the FIDE standards. Obvious cases involve result manipulation, sub standard tournament conditions, 'fake' tournaments, and tournaments designed to subvert the accuracy of the FIDE Rating System. Ideally tournaments of this nature should be caught at the

national level, prior to their submission to FIDE. Below are a number of real life cases to help you identify such tournaments and guide you in your own decision making process.

Case Studies

A) In 2023 and 2024 QC received tournaments using the following format: Team A consisted of unrated players while Team B consisted rated players.

In the first case it was teams of 9 players, with Team A being quite young junior players, while team B consisted of highly rated players. They played a Scheveningen format event where all members of Team A played all members of Team B. Members of Team A did quite well and received high starting ratings (placing some players as the highest rated players for their age in the world). QC decided not to rate the event and requested the host federation explain the organisation of the event. The host federation initially did not reply to our questions, and the event remained unrated. Later the host federation revealed that the players on Team B were specifically chosen as they were inactive, and the hope was that they would perform poorly. While QC was correct in assuming that this event was organised solely to generate high starting ratings for players, the Federation Ratings Officer should have refused to submit the tournament.

In the second case, a local organiser ran a series of events with 5 players on each team (5 rated v 5 unrated). QC had declared in early 2024 that such events (Scheveningen's with unrated players) would not be accepted for rating. Nonetheless the event was submitted by the Federation, and the organiser complained when the tournament was rejected. Again, this event should not have been submitted.

The issue with such events is twofold. Firstly, they can be used to generate 'fake' ratings for players. But even if this is not the purpose, the fact that only one group of players is playing for rating (the unrated players), encourages the other players to play below their usual level of ability. Indeed, such players can then play against the newly rated opponents a second time, and gain rating points as an additional reward.

So what should happen instead? QC would accept such events if they were played as a swiss event. 5 rated and 5 unrated players in a 5 round swiss would allow the unrated players to move towards gaining a rating, and assuming the event was correctly supervised and all players played to best of their ability, would be rated by QC. Of course with the small field and limited number of rounds, more than 1 event of this type may be necessary. (NB In general, players wishing to gain FIDE ratings should play against a wide variety of opponents, which a larger swiss event usually provides)

If you have any doubts about the format of the event, please contact QC in advance. It may be the case that QC will decide the event is legitimate, but this should be done prior to the event being held, otherwise the event may not be approved for rating.

B) A series of Scheveningen events were organised in 2024 where teams of young players (Under 20 years) played against teams of elderly players (Over 60 years).

These were DRR events, with the 'Seniors' team significantly higher rated than the Junior team. Nonetheless the members of the junior teams usually gained rating points at the expense of the Senior team. QC declined to rate these events as we felt that the purpose of these events was to simply allow junior players to gain rating points against players who were declining in strength and had no motivation to play their best. Connected with this is the imbalance between the rating gains (due to $K=40$) and the rating losses ($K=10$ or 20).

The organisers appealed this decision to FIDE Council (as part of the established appeal process), but ultimately lost the case.

Again, the organisers have alternative formats when organising events. An open swiss involving this mix of players would be acceptable, or even a round robin with a mix of adult and junior players. Again the principle that all players should be playing for the same rewards applies here.

C) A player had earned a direct title in a previous event, but had not achieved the necessary rating to be awarded the title.

QC then received a complaint that subsequent tournament results (and participation) had been falsified to allow the player to reach the required rating. Investigating the case QC discovered some result irregularities (forfeits being recorded as wins), as well as the player being allowed to skip rounds to only play lower rated opponents. QC then declined to approve the title due to these irregularities. The Federation was informed that the player could apply for the title on the condition that they reach the rating limit, but that some events must be played outside the Federation. Subsequently the players rating returned to the level achieved prior to the tournaments in question. In this case Ratings Officers should try and be aware of situations such as this. As you are better placed than QC members to follow internal events, such incidents are likely to draw your attention before the complaints reach FIDE. QC may also withhold approval of the title until the player concerned has played a mix of events (RR+Swiss or teams) in reaching the rating threshold.

D) FIDE QC is often contacted by organisers who have difficulty in having their events approved by their national federation.

The issue is almost always an internal Federation matter between the organiser and the Federation. FIDE policy is not to intervene in internal federation matters, but there are some guidelines you still need to be aware of.

FIDE regard the rating of chess tournaments as desirable, and encourage all federations to rate as many events as possible. As long as the event fulfils the FIDE requirements for a rated event, and the results are submitted in a timely manner, then your federation should try and rate the event. Federations are allowed to impose their own conditions on organisers, but these conditions should not be onerous, or only applied to a subset of organisers. Federations are entitled to charge a fee for the rating of events, to cover FIDE charges and Federation costs, but these fees should be paid to the official federation account. Requesting the payment of fees to be paid directly to the Rating Officer or another federation official is not permitted, and may result in further action by FIDE. Refusing to rate an event without an official decision by the federation is also problematic, and again should not be done without a valid reason.

E) QC also receives complaints from players concerning the conduct or conditions of an event.

In all cases our first action is to contact the organiser and the national federation. In some cases the complaint concerns the tournament conditions (eg poor venue, noise or rain effecting the event) while in other cases it is the tournament itself that is questioned (eg not playing the advertised number of rounds, decisions by the arbiter). Normally these issues are resolved at the local level, with the federation (or even the event organiser) removing the event from the FIDE Rating System. Again be aware of the minimum standards expected by FIDE for rated events, and assist organisers in keeping to those standards.

It is important that as a Federation ratings Officer you are aware of the rules and regulations for the submission of events. As the point of contact between the FRS and your local federation, the successful operation of the FRS does depend on you. If you are unsure of an event, or require guidance on rating matters, please contact QC Secretary Shaun Press (shaunpress@gmail.com) with any questions you might have.

FIDE Title Application Process

Dear Federation Rating Officer and Title Officials, I would like to thank you for the work you have carried out in the past year in helping FIDE provide a reliable and timely title service to your Federation members. The FIDE Qualification Commission (QC) recognise that this work is often voluntary, and we appreciate the sacrifice you have made in working with us. Without your assistance, players world wide would not be able to benefit from the important service that the FIDE Titles System provides.

During the past 2 years QC has received a number of questions regarding the operation of the Titles System, and I would like to share some of the answers with you, to help make your job easier.

1) The Chief Arbiter signed off on a players title norm and submitted it to FIDE. Is that norm automatically valid?

No. The validity of norms is checked by FIDE QC when a title application is made. While submitted norms are listed at https://ratings.fide.com/titles_page.phtml, it states at the top of the page "The Norms are not confirmed by FIDE Qualification Commission." Title applications and norms may be rejected by QC as part of the application process.

2) Why would a seemingly valid norm be rejected?

There are a number of reasons for a norm being rejected. The most obvious reasons are for administrative defects. These include missing signatures (Host Federation Official or Chief Arbiter), incomplete or incorrect information (dates don't match tournament registration), or wrong norm regulations are being followed. Norms may also be rejected due to issues with the tournament itself. Two main issues are (a) the pairings for the event were altered to benefit one or more players. Even if it does not effect all players, norm from the entire event are invalid (b) failure to meet the exemption for foreign player requirements for all rounds.

Also, other issues about number of rounds, wins and losses by default, and the level and licensing status of the Chief Arbiter need to be checked.

3) A player has just made their third title norm. How long do they have to wait until the title is awarded?

Once the required number of title norms has been met there is still a process to be followed. Firstly, all tournaments from which norms are awarded must be rated on the FIDE Rating System (FRS). Then any title submission must be made 45 days before the next scheduled FIDE Council Meeting (FC). During this time FIDE QC will check the validity of the application, including the validity of each norm certificate submitted as part of the claim. If the claim is valid (and all other conditions have been met), then QC will recommend to FC that the title is to be awarded. New titles will be listed against a players rating profile when the minutes of the FC meeting are published.

NB This process is also followed for direct titles. QC will be informed by the Chief Arbiter of Direct Title events which players have earned direct titles. QC will then check the results to confirm this, and send the FIDE Titles Office the list of players who are eligible for direct titles (or titles conditional upon rating). The players Federation is then informed, and the player can apply for the title, which will be confirmed upon the payment of the title fee.

In both cases, all applications must be made by the players Federation. Only if the federation refuses to do so then a player may use regulation B.01.1.10.4 "If the player's federation refuses to apply, the player can appeal to FIDE and apply (and pay) for the title." But even in this case QC will consult with the Federation on why they have declined to apply for the title.

4) How do 'Live' ratings work for titles?

Titles that are awarded when a player reaches a required rating, can be awarded based on live (or interim) ratings. These are ratings that are achieved in the middle of a rating period, rather than ratings that are published at the end of each rating period. The purpose of this is to avoid a situation

where a player feels compelled to stop playing an event (or events) to maintain a rating for title purposes. For live ratings to be used, a player must specifically apply to FIDE QC for this to be checked. Only events that have been rated (and published on the FRS) can be used. QC officials will then check the rating reports of the event (and other simultaneous events) to see if the required rating has been achieved. If QC is satisfied that the rating has been achieved, then they can confirm the title, even if the next published rating is below the required rating.

5) Regulation B.0.1.4.1e allows players to ignore games played after a norm has been achieved. Does this apply to all events (eg Round Robin)?

Further reading of the regulation also states that this cannot be done in events with ‘pre-determined pairings’. Round robin events (individual) falls into this category, so no. Attempts to circumvent this regulation by withdrawing from such an event after a norm has been achieved will result in QC rejecting such a norm.

Case Studies

A) A player in a large open swiss event requested he not be paired against players from a specific federation. This request was agreed upon by the Chief Arbiter, and subsequently certain pairings in the tournament were changed. The decision by the Chief Arbiter breached the FIDE Title Regulation concerning altered pairings. Regulation B.01.1.4.2 excludes events from awarding title norms where “Tournaments in which changes are made which have the effect of benefiting one or more players (for example by altering the number of rounds, or the order of rounds, or providing particular opponents, not otherwise participating in the event).” NB This regulation invalidates all norms from the tournament, not just those involving affected players. A large number of title norms (and subsequent title applications) were rejected as a result.

B) FIDE Title Regulations allow for a valid norm to be achieved even if the player received a forfeit win (B.01.1.4.1c). However this only applies to a 9 round event (In events of more than 9 rounds, the player can simply ignore the unplayed round). A player took part in a 7 round Continental Club Championship, but only played 6 games, receiving a final round forfeit. His federation applied to QC to recognise the norm from the event. QC rejected this claim on a number of grounds. QC does not confirm norms, but only checks them as part of a title application. Secondly, the regulations regarding forfeited games only applied to 9 round events. Finally, no norm certificate was signed by the Chief Arbiter for the player concerned.

C) QC and FIDE Titles have received applications for FM and CM titles from players who started with initially high ratings, or as a claim for a Direct Title from an eligible event (eg Zonal Championship). We have rejected a number of these as the players have not played a minimum of 30 rated games (Regulation B.01.0.6.2). If the player maintains the required rating after playing 30 rated games, then the title will be approved.

D) A player applied for a GM title based on historical results from over 20 years ago. Despite attempts by QC to find authoritative sources for both the results, and interim ratings for the player, we were unable to do so, due to the passage of time. Regulation B.01.1.5.5 states “Title norms gained before 01/07/2005 must have been registered with FIDE before 31/07/2013 or they will be considered to have expired.” While QC is sympathetic to such cases, this regulation is in place to cover this issue.