



MetroWest Chess Club

Largest Chess Club in New England

Serving the Metrowest Boston chess community since 1983

News Flash:

This is a special emailing that may occasionally occur between the publishing of the monthly newsletter (which has been suspended until the club resumes activities) to bring you chess related information of general interest to our subscribers that is time sensitive.

Club Hibernation status

The club has been in Hibernation mode since March of 2020.

It has been and continues to be our intention to not return to Over the Board (OTB) chess until we feel that it is safe for our members to play without the need for Masks. Our members consist of both young players at one end of the age spectrum and players in their 50s, 60s, and above at the other end of the age spectrum. Players all along that range, but more at the older end, have underlying conditions that put them at greater risk of lasting health issues should they get Covid or it's variants.

General Considerations

While Covid appears to be less likely to kill as many people as it did at the start of the pandemic and the symptoms of contracting are for most people less severe, the threat of Long Term Covid is still of concern to many people. There also appears to be data supporting the concern that contracting Covid a second time increases the likelihood of Long Term Covid.

We recognize there is a lot of opposing view points, such as if Covid and variants should even really be a concern anymore or even if ever, and about the efficacy of Vaccines and possible risks from the Vaccines themselves

We are taking the position of "**Caution**", thus we are being **conservative** with regards to risk for our members.

It has been our hope for some time that with the 3rd year of the pandemic now approaching, things would settle out to sufficiently safe level for us to re-open. Indeed, the trending since 2020 has

been getting better but holiday spikes and new variants slow the trend. The most recent holiday spikes impact the February re-opening we had hoped for so we are pushing out our re-launch date again.

We recognize that there is pandemic "fatigue" and an impatience to return to "normal". We have seen reports that only about 15% of adults have taken the the most recent booster. Casual observation of behavior in the Natick, Framingham area from which most of our membership is drawn reveals that very few people are masking when doing food shopping and other activities. It appears that staff at these locations are optionally choosing to wear or not wear masks.

Many people have pointed out to us that other clubs in Eastern Mass. have resumed Over the Board Play and that masking is in general, optional. Casual observation has been that most players participating at these other clubs are not masked. For those of you who are not concerned with personal risk of contracting whatever is currently is going around, these other clubs and regional events can provide you with Over the Board play.

Covid tracking:

We are using the: [Wastewater COVID-19 Tracking](#) of the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority as our primary guide.

- <https://www.mwra.com/biobot/biobotdata.htm>

The bulk of our membership comes from:

- Framingham, Natick, Wellesley which are in the South System
- Newton, Waltham, Lexington, which are in the North System

See [Demographics, MCC Player Attributes](#) on the club website. Updates 2020-01 just prior to hibernation. Note that Newton, Natick, Framingham and Wellesley have pretty much always been the core locations. When the time control is shorter which attracts more young players, cities along the 128 beltway, such as Lexington show a significant rise in participation.

Based on the graphs, our observation is that it seems to take about two to three months for the rates to drop back significantly after a Peak.

With this in mind:

- February seems be too soon
- We will need to make a decision in the spring if we feel that we would be ok with having the club open through the 2023 summer probable spike

Location Considerations:

- We have several locations we are considering re-approaching for rental of space
- Some locations have their own criteria for when they will allow unmasked use of their space
 - This may mean it is a great location for us but we may have to wait till they are ok with us moving in

- Based on the club attendance of the one year we had at the church where we were able to have "long" games again, 40/90, SD/30, d5
 - Attendance continued to drop as it had been dropping after four years of us only have games as long as G/60; d5
 - Our conclusion based on this is that the Club is no longer a club of 84 players average but about 60 players average. This makes a huge difference on our ability to find a new location. It makes it easier
- There appears to be "pent up" demand for Over the Board Chess
 - Regional event attendance is up
 - Area clubs that have re-opened have improved attendance
 - Looking at cross-tables of these events, youth seems to make up the bulk of greater attendance
 - Inquiries to the club have been steady from area "newbies", that is, adults new to USCF rated chess
- We will continue to hold strong to Tuesday nights being our night of play.
 - There are a number of reasons for Tuesday nights which shall not be detailed here.
 - It would have to be very compelling rental availability for us to consider moving off of Tuesday nights.

Summary of our current plans:

- We will be looking to find a new location for Tuesday nights
 - We may have to wait for the location to allow us in
- We are planning on an average attendance of 60 players
- We will very likely select a time control:
 - Longer than G/60 (2 hours) but shorter than 40/90, SD 30 (4 hours)
 - Delay, no increment. We need the greater predictability of when the night will end.
- We will not start rounds "earlier"
 - Round will continue to start at 7:30.
 - Staff cannot travel and arrive reliably early enough to start the rounds on time
 - Many players have difficulty arriving by 7:30 to play
- Our greatest need when we relaunch will be TDs (Tournament Directors) who can be relied upon to be present almost every night.
- We will not re-launch before April, 2023
- We will update the home page with what we think our earliest re-launch will be
- We are hopeful that we will feel that we can re-open the club in the spring

We have been in hibernation for almost three years, we will continue to wait till we feel the risk is acceptable for our members.

We absolutely intend to re-open the club, it is just a matter timing.