

Cheshire and North Wales Junior Chess Championships 2010

Many thanks to everyone who supported our Junior Chess Championships. This is now the third year that the Championships have been run, and this year they returned to Kings School at Chester – a superb venue for a Chess competition.

It's been an excellent year so far for Cheshire and North Wales Chess. The Under 11 and Under 9 teams both qualified for the National finals, and the Under 14 team finished joint sixth in the National final. Better still, the Under 18 team pulled off an amazing victory in the National finals, from Kent in second place and Warwickshire in third ! So now it was up to everyone at the County Championships to keep the momentum going !

The Championships are similar to other Chess tournaments, yet differ from most in the following ways :-

- Instead of players being categorised by age **or** grade, they're categorised according to both. Therefore, there's a 'School' or 'County' prize to go for in each age group, the 'S' or 'C' referring to the level of Chess that they have previously played at. This means that as well as 4 tournament prizes, there are 75 place prizes available on the day (and can be more if there's joint winners !)
- There's a separate coaching and prizes section for children who don't know how to play.
- A large number of players are playing in the tournament for the first time.
- Everyone gets a bye in the first round, and therefore scores a point for their school in the 'Best School' competitions
- It's a 'Closed' County Championships with qualification criteria.
- Every competitor receives a quality certificate and a small prize.
- Coaching and puzzles are available between rounds

All these factors combine to make the County Championships unique in their own way – both a challenge to the competitors and also an enjoyable day win or lose.

This year, another record number of children entered and the turn-out rate was excellent, 153 children attending out of 157 entries.

King's school is also proving to be a terrific venue. Not to be deterred by having work done in the main hall, the tournament transferred to the Junior hall, where there was plenty of room. Just a short walk away was the canteen for food, and classrooms for coaching between rounds.

It was also supported by players from all over Cheshire and North Wales, some players travelling for up to 2 hours to get there. The Wirral Peninsula were well represented as well as the North Wales coast, with a large team of players from Rydal Penrhos. Grappenhall (Warrington) again had some strong players entered in the competition, Alun school in Mold sent a fine team, and of course King's, the home side, were very well represented.

The 4 main tournaments (Under 9, Under 11, Under 14 and Under 21) were all keenly contested, and this year, there were no tie-breaks or Armageddon's – each tournament had a clear winner.

The Under 9 tournament created a surprise winner in Savanna Dickens from Rydal Penrhos. Still only in the Under 8 category, she won every game to take the Championship. Well done Savanna.

She was closely followed by Seth Collinson and Jack Nolan, who shared the Under 9 County award with 6 points, the same as Jacob Foley, who took the Under 9 School title. Riyaan Yeseudian claimed the Under 8 School level trophy.

The Under 11 tournament came down to a last-round battle between Owen Edwards on 6 points playing Johann Power on 5 and a half. Johann came through to win the game and take the Championship, with Owen taking the Under 11 County title. Sean Walker played extremely well to take the Under 11 School title with 6 points, and Carmel Barwick tied with Ethan Hill for the Under 10 County prize, also with 6 points. Matthew Cucchi tied with Max Wade for the Under 10 School prize.

The Under 14 tournament was very keenly contested this year, with many hard-fought games.

Ben Scattergood played superbly, and won every game to take the Championship, and Max Kitshoff shared the County title with last year's winner, Conrad Green.

George Reid finished on an excellent score of 6 points to win the Under 13 County title, and the Under 12 County title was shared between Alex Woodfinden and Alex Kitshoff.

The Under 14 school title was shared between 4 players – Animesh Anand, Ho-wing Ma, Oliver McCarthy and Alan Siu, with Haran Makwana taking the under 13 School title. Frances O'leary finished on a very creditable score of 5 points to take the Under 12 School trophy.

The Under 21 tournament saw 3 members of the victorious National Inter-County Championships team battle it out for the Championship.

Martin Brown of Grappenhall became the Tournament Champion, winning the title for the third year in a row. Edwin Brophy won the Under 18 County title, with Marvin Hayes and Davin Menon taking the Under 17 and Under 16 County awards. Susan Gorman took the Under 15 County title. The School awards were won by Erick Da Silva, scoring an impressive 5 points in the Under 18 category, Matthew Temple in the Under 16 and Oscar Lloyd Williams in the Under 15's.

The **Quick Start** competition was undoubtedly enjoyed by all who played in it, with Matt Battersby mixing coaching with competition. Arjun Balasubramani was the champion by the end of the day, and won the Quick Start Champions trophy. It was good to see 5 players from last year's Quick Start event all battling it out in the main tournament this year, demonstrating how good this tournament is for getting children started with their chess.

The **School trophy** was deservedly won by Rydal Penrhos, who brought a strong team of youngsters over from North Wales.

Ladymount claimed the Primary School prize, and our hosts for the day, King's School (Chester) claimed the High School award.

Many thanks to all the volunteers who ran this tournament :-

Chief Arbiter Jon Maybery for taking charge of the playing room, and John Gorman for controlling the Under 11's – a huge 64-player section. Pat Ridley took on the large and complicated Under 14 section and Eliot Green ran the Under 9's. They were assisted by Jan Kitshoff and Tony McCrave.

With so many children, and not very much time between rounds, the work rate was very demanding, but they coped with the pressure admirably. Well done!

Dave Warrington did a great job with collating the School trophy results.

George Davison, the man behind so many Cheshire and North Wales Chess teams over the years, spent most of the day in the coaching room, where the youngsters were kept busy with puzzles and coaching.

Gareth Ellis supplied all the sets and clocks for the day as well as supporting the event with lots of generously-priced, quality chess equipment.

Thanks also to Sabine Power for running the refreshments stall so efficiently, along with Cathey Harrington, Jill Savidge, Karen and Steve Poyner, Rebecca Laird, Diane Rosof, Anita & Andy Leigh and several more volunteers recruited on the day.

Paul Barwick provided excellent assistance with the presentations, as did Martin Hayes with his additional support. Thanks also to my sister Carolyn Bailey for all her pre-tournament preparation work, and to Steph Burton for the super photos.

Once again, these Championships have proved to be a great success.

Whilst the tournament clearly plays a key role in the selection process for the County Chess teams, it hopefully inspires the next generation of Chess players to participate in this challenging and rewarding game.

Well done and congratulations to all.

Judy Brown Tournament Organiser

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