

Cheshire and North Wales Junior Chess Championships 2008

A really big **WELL DONE** to everyone who supported our Junior Chess Championships !

The children, particularly those for whom it was their first event, behaved really well.

The control team did a tremendous job.

And the parents were fantastic with their support.

Altogether, a total of **108** children entered the event – an excellent total given that it's the first time that the event's been run for many years.

Birchwood High School in Warrington was the venue, and the staff there couldn't have been more helpful. In addition, the playing fields and nearby shopping centre provided plenty of opportunities for players to 'take a breather' between rounds.

The players themselves, came from near and far – some from the local Christchurch Primary School in Padgate, and others swapped the beauty of Anglesey and the North Wales coast, for a day at least, with the hurly-burly of busy Birchwood, and the thrills and spills of a County Chess competition.

The Wirral peninsula were well represented with a good turnout from Ladymount and several other neighbouring schools, and both Alun school in Mold and Kings of Chester turned out healthy-sized teams who all played good competitive chess.

The standard of the players also spanned across a wide spectrum – 2 current National Junior Squad champions, a further 3 England Junior squad members, and 3 members of the Welsh squad as well, all there to inspire the many children who were playing competitive chess for the first time.

The unusual and complicated system of having children in a 'County' category or 'School and Club' category, therefore, worked really well, with everyone having a prize that they had a realistic chance of winning. Our four main arbiters proved worthy of the challenge, and everyone (we think !) went home with the correct prize.

In essence we had four main tournaments (Under 9, Under 11, Under 14 and Under 21), and it was good to see that the biggest section was the Under 14's, proving that there's plenty of life in chess after you've finished primary school.

In addition there was a trophy for the best school, which was one of the reasons why everyone started on 1 point !

The **Under 9** tournament saw Mihai-Tiberiu Dima become the tournament champion with 6.5 out of 7, and Johann Power of Grappenhall deservedly winning the Under 9 school level trophy with 6 pts, whilst Imogen Turvey-Cross and Joe Tobyn shared the Under 8 school category with 4 points. Seth Collinson played really well to win the Under 7 category with 5 points, and Carmel Barwick and Tom Williams both became the County level champions in the Under 8 and Under 9 category respectively.

The **Under 11** tournament was a really close-run affair, with little to choose between the Grappenhall trio of Isaac Hutt, Alex Poyner and Jack Owen, along with Dmitri Whitmore of King's in Macclesfield. In the end, it went to sum of progressives, and Isaac became the Under 11 tournament winner, with Dmitri and Alex sharing the U11 County prize. A fine performance of 5.5 by Alex Kitshoff saw him to victory in the U10 County section, and Tom Gideonse and Matthe Gilroy took the school titles with 4.5 points and 4 points respectively.

The **Under 14** tournament was large and competitive, with several junior international players participating.

George Fortune, the 2008 National Junior Squad champion, played brilliantly to take the title with 7 out of 7, whilst Conrad Green (under 12) and Peter Gerlagh (Under 13) won the County titles with 6 and 5.5 points respectively. The Under 14 County title was a 5-way tie between Lawrence Worswick, Oliver Manley, Davin Menon, Arthur Fearnall and Ben Harrington, all on 5 points.

In the school level section, Hyun Gyu-Ku shared the title with Ben MacInnes on 4.5 points, and Joshua Hollins played extremely well to take the Under 13 title on 6 points. Aamid Ashraf, John Thompson and Animesh Anand all shared the Under 12 title on 4 points.

Last but not least, the **Under 21** section, small but certainly not lacking in quality, was a competitive event and a chance for players to test themselves against some of the top Junior County players.

Martin Brown won every game to take the Under 21 tournament title, with Chris Chadwick finishing as the Under 16 County level champion, and Marvin Hayes as the Under 15 champion in the County level category.

In the school level section James Carr was the Under 17 winner on 3 points, Ryan Barker the Under 16 victor with a very creditable 4.5 points, and Thomas Warrington took the Under 15 title.

The **School trophy** was won by Kings of Chester from Alun school in Mold and Ladymount (Wirral) were third.

Two additional, annual trophies were presented by George Davison :-

George Fortune won the Cheshire and North Wales Under 12 Shield.

Robert Warrington won the Thomas & Williams Cambrian Safety Lamp for the best performance by an Under 14 Welsh player.

Additional **badge prizes** went to Dmitri Whitmore (maze puzzle), Richard Vickers (first entrant), John Thompson (longest journey – Anglesey) and Edward Oulton (playing really well at 6 years old)

A final thank you to all our helpers :- Ian Campbell controlled the event superbly, whilst Glynn and Sam Towse handled the largest, most complicated section with apparent ease.

John Gorman and Tony McCrave were kept on their toes by the younger and less experienced players, but coped with it all admirably.

George Davison was master of the coaching room, passing on his high-level chess skills to the next generation of Cheshire and North Wales Chess players.

Gareth Ellis generously trusted us with 50 + chess sets and chess clocks for a day. As usual he was a marvellous support , and his chess stall complimented the event superbly.

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

Thanks also to Jan Kitshoff, George Manley, Martin Hayes, Eliot Green and Stephen Bailey for all their additional support.

The refreshments team of Anna Fearnall , Stephanie Burton, Pip Horne, Steve Williams, Cathy Harrington, Carolyn Bailey , Julie Green and Lisa Hutt were always keen to help when asked, and often volunteering when not asked. What a team !

In summary, a tournament which, given this novice organiser, and numerous first-time-tournament chess players, ran far smoother than expected !

Hopefully, we achieved our objective of introducing a new generation of players to the joys of competitive chess, whilst also gaining further insight into the relative strengths of our County players for future Inter-County events.

Well done and congratulations to all.

Judy Brown October 2008