

Cheshire and North Wales Junior Chess Championships 2011

Many thanks to everyone for supporting our Junior Chess Championships.

The Championships, in this format, are now in their fourth year, and are proving to be a highly-enjoyable event for all the participants.

Juniors playing in the Championships are awarded prizes not only according to their school year, but also according to the level that they have previously demonstrated in Chess competitions. Those that have previously demonstrated a County standard are level 'C', whilst level 'S' (School/ Club) is given to the rest of the players in that year group. Each category (eg 10C, 14S) has a minimum of 3 prizes, more if there are joint winners.

This means that everyone has the chance to win something, even players that haven't had a large amount of experience. Some of these players will also do well enough to be selected to play for Cheshire and North Wales for the first time.

For the experienced County level players, there's the opportunity to become the Cheshire and North Wales Tournament Champion, move themselves up the County ranking ladder, and to play on higher boards in inter-county events.

For the Welsh players, it was good to see the Welsh Chess team manager Ian Eustis in attendance – always on the lookout for new talent appearing.

This year, there was another high attendance, with over 140 children participating on the day.

The 4 main tournaments (Under 9, Under 11, Under 14 and Under 21) were all keenly contested, and this time, there were 2 exciting 'Armageddon' finishes, so that each tournament had a clear winner. Also very close was the School Championship, between the home side Kings, and last year's winners, Rydal Penrhos.

The Under 9 tournament was a battle between Arjan Bolina from Rydal Penrhos, and Riyaan Yeseudian (The Firs). They both won all their games until they played each other, when the result was a draw. They then went on to win their final game. The rules of the competition state that for younger players, sum of progressives and head to head are used as a tie-break before an 'Armageddon' is used as a decider. However, with the sum of progressives being equal and the result of their match being a draw, it was the only way to decide it. Arjan went on to win the play-off and take the Championship, with Riyaan settling for the Under 9 County trophy. The Under 9 School level trophy was won by Macey Taylor, from the highly-impressive Sandycroft team, with an excellent total of 5 points. Ifan Rathbone Jones, also from Sandycroft, took the Under 8 school title with an excellent score of 5 and a half points, and Iniya Anand of Queens became the Under 7 Champion.

The Under 11 section, again the largest by far with 60 players, hosted an impressive line-up with 20 County-level players participating. The tournament provided a fine opportunity for players to stake a claim for a place in next year's County team.

After six hard-fought rounds, Rohan Yeseudian became the champion with a perfect score. Daniel Savidge, Imogen Camp, Catherine Savage and Joshua Williams all played superbly to finish with 6 points and become the County level Champions.

Below them on 5 points, were no less than 9 players – all winners and stretching the tournament trophy resources to their limit !

Well done to Mahesh Vallabhaneni, James Lee, Alexander Forrester, Rafeez Mortuza and Hannah Young on becoming the Under 11 School / Club Champions, and to Under 10 County Champions Seth Collinson, Ewan Herd, Jack Nolan and Oliver Anderson. Robbie Fisher and George Berry triumphed in the Under 10 school category, both of them scoring a very creditable 4 and a half points.

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

Impressive newcomer Thomas Kelly, who played his first game for the County only a few weeks ago, won all his games except for one, where he drew with last year's tournament winner, Ben Scattergood. Ben also won all the rest of his games, and, as sum of progressives is irrelevant for the older age groups, the tournament went to an Armageddon play-off. After a tense battle, Ben made his experience count to take the title for a second year. Thomas became the Under 13 County Champion.

Manchester Grammar School player Alex Poyner impressed to take the Under 14 County title with 6 points, and Johann Powell and Charlotte Carroll both had excellent tournaments to finish on 5 points and claim the Under 12 County title. Finishing on the same score was Callum Johnston of Grappenhall in winning the Under 13 school title, and Patrick Hudson and Christopher Nixon claimed the Under 14 and Under 12 School level trophies with a very creditable 4 and a half points.

The Under 21 tournament title was going to have a new winner, with the Tournament Champion for the last 3 years, Martin Brown, absent due to leaving for University.

Davin Menon, demonstrating again his excellent improvement, won the tournament with a very impressive 6 and a half out of 7, closely followed by Conrad Green, with whom he drew. Conrad became the Under 15 County Champion.

The Under 16 County trophy was won by Susan Gorman.

The School level trophies were won by Matthew Temple, Samuel Arshad-Roberts and Hugh Kinnear in the Under 17, Under 16 and Under 15 categories respectively.

Hugh was particularly impressive, scoring an excellent total of 5 points.

The **Quick Start** competition was undoubtedly enjoyed by all who played in it, and also of course by the person coaching it, Matt Battersby. Again this year, we saw several players from last year's event playing in our main competition, after getting off to the best possible start by spending a day with an excellent Chess coach. The tournament was won by Robert Littler, who won the Quick Start Champions trophy.

After a close, see-saw battle, the **Best School Shield** was won by home side Kings of Chester, whilst Rydal Penrhos won the Primary School award and Wirral Grammar were the surprise winners of the Best Secondary School Shield.

The tournament, unlike so many who hardly have a female player in sight, was well attended by many promising female players. And whilst it was great to see so much enthusiastic, competitive Chess from everyone, how refreshing it was also to see so many girls playing so well, seven of them winning trophies for being the best for their age and level.

This report cannot be concluded without thanking the fantastic team of volunteers who worked so hard to make this tournament possible.

Pride of place can go only to ECF arbiter Ian Campbell, who managed the largest section of 60 players, producing the pairings in record time, and ensuring that the event kept to time. He also took on the role of Chief Arbiter, important for all the players and particularly important for the ones that hadn't played in a tournament before. In addition, he supervised the play-offs. Well done and thanks to Ian.

Gareth Ellis, a great supporter of this tournament from its inception, supplied all the sets and clocks for the day. He was presented with an award for his fantastic efforts over the last 4 tournaments.

Thanks also to George Davison who worked as hard as ever in the coaching room, keeping dozens of youngsters busy between rounds with coaching and puzzles, and no doubt, as ever, inspiring them to want to play a lot more.

Pat Ridley, Eliot Green and George Scattergood all did an excellent job with the Under 14, Under 9 and Under 21 tournaments respectively, and John Gorman, Jan Kitshoff, Paul Barwick and Syringa Camp, all played their part in assisting with the running of the tournament.

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 – a particularly testing job when there's two schools close together on points.

Thanks also to Sabine Power for managing the refreshments stall so efficiently, along with Jill Savidge, Karen and Steve Poyner, Mark Rosof-Williams, Diana Rosof, Ginny Chorghade, and Emma Anderson. Karen and Diana also did excellent work with the presentations, enabling them to flow smoothly and all the players to receive the correct prize in spite of the complicated prizing structure ! Thanks also to my sister Carolyn Bailey, and friend Julie Mainwaring for all their pre-tournament preparation work, which helped considerably come the day of the tournament.

A big thank you is also owed to King's School, Chester, for allowing us to use this fantastic school as our venue for the third year in a row.

Finally, thanks to all the parents for coming from far and near to attend, and to all the Chess coaches from the schools attending the tournament. Good to hear so many positive comments and 'looking forward to next year already' quotes.

Well done and congratulations to all.

Judy Brown - Tournament Organiser

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