

MCCU Junior Director's report 2017

Andrew Davies (12 June 2017)

Firstly, thank-you to everyone who gives their time and effort to help encourage young chess players in the MCCU region; the future of our game. Some of you receiving praise and recognition, but many quietly giving time and effort to encourage young players in the game we share.

Some Midland counties are busier than others in junior chess but, as you will discover below, the region is active. There is a thriving mix of competition and counties working together to support and encourage young players.

Individual players are competing in local events, county championships, and succeeding at prominent national events like the London Chess Classic and London Junior Chess Championships. Teams of young players from across the MCCU are competing at local and national level, at events including EPSCA, NYCA and Junior 4NCL. For the future, the ECF Under 13 and Under 18 National Championships may be held in the MCCU area during 2018.

Players and parents at all levels from this area give their time and effort to help players, organise events and teams at local, regional and national level. Traci Whitfield, the ECF's director of Junior Chess and Education is from this region. She lives in Staffordshire, coaches at a junior club near to where she lives and has given much time and effort to set up the ECF's Chess Academy which is now helping some of the best players in the country, including those from the MCCU area, develop their skills to/at international level. Some with FIDE titles.

We should be proud of what we do here in the MCCU and celebrate it; it shows junior chess is being supported, encouraged and is thriving.

2017 Midlands Junior Championships

The MCCU is delighted to let you know that the Midlands Junior Chess Championships have been reintroduced and will be held at Leicester Grammar School on Saturday 22 July. There are six sections, with Midlands Junior Champion titles to be won by the highest scoring eligible boy and girl in each one. Results will be posted on the MCCU website.

This year's Midlands Junior Championship is being run as a one day rapidplay, but there have already been suggestions on how it might be improved; one being to run it as a two day standardplay competition.

For your interest, here is a short review of some of the highlights from junior chess across the MCCU region during the past twelve months.

Derbyshire

Thirty-nine Derbyshire juniors took part in the South Yorkshire and Derbyshire Megafinal. The best result by a Derbyshire player was Joseph Acons, who finished with five out of six.

Herefordshire

Players from seventeen schools in Herefordshire have competed in a range of competitions, some of them at the Mercia Megafinal, held in Hereford.

Leicester & Rutland

Daniel Chen from year 5, and Anika Khare competed in the trials for a place on EPSCA's England Under 11 team. At this year's Megafinal, Daniel scored six out of six.

It was also good to find players from schools in Rutland competing at that Megafinal.

This season, Leicestershire competed in Junior 4NCL. They finished third in division two the first weekend, and won the division in both the second and third weekends.

Half of Leicestershire's U100 Inter-County team for 2016/7 are junior players, and that team is through to the National semi-finals.

At the London Chess Classic Festival, Leicestershire's Shyam Modi (aged 12) competed in the FIDE rated Open section. 37 players there had a higher rating than his, but his only loss was to the eventual winner. His results earning him a FIDE competition rating of 2262 for the tournament.

Kishan Modi (aged 13), also competed in the Open section of the London Chess Classic. At the start 46 players had higher ratings than his but he finished in sixteenth place, with a FIDE competition rating of 2062. Twelve of the forty-nine players taking part in that Open section had FIDE ratings over 2100.

Three Leicestershire players competed in the London Junior Chess Championships between 28 and 30 December 2016. Shyam Modi finished eighth in the U18/21 Open section with a score of 3½/6. In the U16 section, Tom Brown finished sixth with an impressive 4/6 and Kishan Modi sixteenth with 3/6. Following that result, Tom Brown was called up to the England squad, joining Shyam and Kishan Modi, who are already part of it.

Lincolnshire

In April, Bourne Grammar school competed in the finals of the ECF's Team Chess Challenge for secondary schools.

In May, Jackson Quickly, Joseph Seaborn and Joshua Webb all scored six out of six at the Lincolnshire Megafinal.

Manchester Chess Federation

In the EPSCA U9 team championship, Manchester finished second in north zonal, with Paavana Sugumar, Edward Correa and George Hitchman all finishing with three out of three. Despite problems raising a team for the final, their team manager was very proud of his players on the day, where Peter Fedotov won all his three games and Alexander Burke scored a very creditable two from three.

In the north zone of EPSCA's U11 team championship, Edward Correa scored three out of three, with Samuel Hunt and Paavana Sugumar both scoring two out of three. Manchester had problems raising a team for that event, but can be very proud of taking part.

In March, a team from Manchester Grammar School finished third in the ECF's Team Chess Challenge. Their school won the event last year.

Two Manchester teams competed in Junior 4NCL this season.

Amrit Mishra from year 5 and Vibhav Sugumar competed in the trials for a place on EPSCA's England Under 11 team.

Northamptonshire

In September, Northants finished fourth in the National Youth Chess Association's Under 14 Championship, with Samir Sheikh winning their team prize.

Twelve Northants players travelled to London for the East zone of EPSCA's U9 team championships, where Louis Balding scored a very creditable two points out of three.

In the East zone of EPSCA's U11 team championships, Garv Agraval and Abigail Coombs both scored two out of three.

At EPSCA U11 girls' championships final in Twickenham, Saarah Javid finished with two wins from three games.

Northampton finished top of division 2 in weekend one of Junior 4NCL.

Toby and Ben Cox both won grading prizes at the National Chess Junior Squad championships in April.

Sohum Lohia and Alexander Richards scored six out of six at the Northants and Leicestershire Megafinal. Max Miller scored five and a half out of six.

Nottinghamshire

In September, Nottingham finished second in the National Youth Chess Association's Under 14 Championships, with Jonah Willow winning their team prize.

At the North zone of EPSCA U9 Team Championships, Jonah Thomsett, Thomas Matthew, James Sehat and Adam Bradley all finished with a very creditable two points out of three, helping the team secure a place in the national finals where Rueben Evans won three out of three.

Nottinghamshire finished third in the EPSCA Girls U11 Championships final, where Lavanya Maladhar and Rebecca Ekwuru both won all their games.

Notts won the North zone of the EPSCA U11 team championships, held in Chester, with Daniel Chen, Anika Khare, Amarveer Johal, Robert Goodwin, Jacob Corne, Dean Stapleton, Aiden Elston and Harry Elwick winning all their games. At the final, in Oldham, Robert Goodwin, Harry Elwick and Aman Chahal won all their games.

In April, a team of three players from Nottingham High finished fifth in the final of the ECF's National Schools Girls' U11 Chess Championships. The school has also qualified for the final of ECF's National Schools U19 Chess Championships in July.

Nottingham High school competed in the ECF National Schools Chess Championship Blitz. Michael Fletcher won and Aditya Munchi finished third in the individual championship, held in the morning. In the afternoon, Nottingham's four players won the team championship at the same event.

In March, Aditya Munchi was a surprise winner in the Open section of the Notts Congress, with GM Keith Arkell finishing second, half a point behind.

Zayan Baig, Kian Chan, Joseph Hurst and Lavanya Maladkar took part in the trials for EPSCA's England Under 11 team.

Lavanya Maladkar, Oliver Drew, Jamie Wood and Jonah Willow all scored six out of six at the Nottingham Megafinal.

Shropshire

Edison Xu, from year 5, played in the EPSCA U11 team championships, where he plays for the neighbouring county of Staffordshire. In the zonal, he won three out of three and in the national final, two out of three.

Edison also took part in EPSCA Under 11 trials and is now part of their England Under 11 team.

Seventeen Shropshire juniors competed at the Staffordshire Megafinal in May, where Edison scored six out of six. At the Mercia Megafinal, Skrzypnik Bartek scored five. Shropshire schools are involved in supporting and encouraging junior chess.

Staffordshire

In the North zone of the EPSCA U9 team Championships, Bobby Pahal finished with three out of three.

Staffordshire finished third in the North zone of the EPSCA U11 team championships, played in Chester. Edison Xu (from Shropshire), Ivan Prikazchikov, John Moughtin-Leay, Mia Sepe and Bobby Pahal all scored three out of three for the team. At the finals, in Oldham, Edison Xu, John Moughtin-Leay, Sebastian Crawford and Dylan Rehman all won two games out of three.

St Edward's Academy, Leek finished fourth in the northern semi-final of the ECF's National Schools Girls' U19 Chess Championships. In April, a team of three players from the Academy finished fourth in the final of the ECF National Schools Girls' U11 Chess Championships. St Edward's also reached the final of the ECF's Junior Team Chess Challenge. In July, a team of six of their players will compete in the final of the National Schools U11 Chess Championships.

Edison Xu, who is sponsored by Staffordshire, has been accepted for the young junior elite programme and the international programme of the ECF Chess Academy. Thivyaa Rahulan is in year two of the international programme and is also being sponsored by Staffordshire.

Jacob Boswell, Thivyaa Rahulan, Arnav Rajinkanth and Edison Xu all scored six out of six at the Staffordshire Megafinal this year.

Warwickshire

In September, a Warwickshire team competed in the National Youth Chess Associations, Under 14 Championships, with Vishwanedha Nalabotu winning their team prize.

Warwickshire were the only Midlands team competing in the National Youth Chess Association's, Under 18 Championships, The team finished fifth, with Robert Kale winning their team prize.

A Warwickshire team travelled to Cheshire and finished top in the North zone of the EPSCA U9 team championships. Of the team's twelve players, Silas Bowcott, Kanav Monga, Jude Shearsby, Ethan Vas, Zain Amir and Anuraag Guha all scored three out of three. At the national finals in Nottingham, the team finished third making team manager Alex Holowczak, who is also Director of Home chess for the ECF, very proud of his players. At those finals, Silas Bowyer-Terry, Jude Shearsby and Ethan Vas all finished with three wins from three games.

At the EPSCA U11 Girls team championship final, Aparna Chaganti scored two wins and a draw.

Warwickshire finished second in the North zone of EPSCA's U11 team championships, played in Chester, with Tristan Wong, Sarthak Sanyal, Sai Darshan Nadella, Gokulkrishna Sivakumar, Kanav Monga, Ojas Mishra, Ryan Munnummal, Karan Kukreja and Harry Green winning all their games. At the finals, Karen Kukreja won all her games.

King Edward's school Birmingham have qualified for July's final of the ECF's National Schools U19 Chess Championships. Hallfield school, Edgbaston have qualified for the final of the National Schools U11 Chess Championships.

Warwickshire competed in Junior 4NCL.

Alessandra Belli, Astrid Gibara, Jude Shearsby and Prasanna Sivakumar all scored six out of six at the Warwickshire Megafinal.

For the future, Warwickshire are hoping to host the ECF Under 13 and Under 18 National Championships in 2018.

Worcestershire

In the Worcestershire Winter Junior Tournament, Finlay Bowcott-Terry (of Leasowes school) was winner, with five wins and Chinmay Monga (from King Edward's school, Edgbaston) runner up.

Two young players helped Worcestershire win their first U120 game of the Inter-County season when Daniel Arkell (of St John's Middle school, Bromsgrove) and Monty Woodhouse (King Edward's school Worcester) were both asked to play for the team at short notice. They both won and helped the team secure its first win of the season.

Alex Howett, Ralphie Howett and Joy Ching Li scored six out of six at the Worcestershire Megafinal. Bary Luke scored five and a half at the Mercia Megafinal.

In conclusion

If you know of any county successes for junior chess in the MCCU region which should be celebrated, I would love to hear about it.