

Report by Director of Ratings and Counties Championship Controller 2025

Stephen Smithson 11 June 2025

The 2024-2025 season saw growth and progress in Midlands Counties Chess.

The previous season, there were 6 teams in 3 rating sections, from only 3 counties. There were 3 fixtures in total, but 1 of those ran with only 7 boards.

This season, 5 counties fielded 10 teams at all 4 of the main rating levels. There were 10 fixtures in our Regional Stage, and 7 Midlands teams played in the Quarter-Finals or Semi-Finals of the National Stage.

Most of these fixtures in both stages were competitive, although one team proved unable to field a complete team at the Midlands Championship (Minor Counties) level.

All 5 counties are likely to enter teams again next season, with at least one expecting to add an extra team.

In addition to these 5 counties, 4 others have expressed interest in either entering next season, or in some other kind of regional competition likely on a Jamboree basis.

Having requested feedback from all our County Captains, everyone seems satisfied with the arrangements and the team spirit this season, with of course some suggested improvements. Questions over ratings were resolved amicably, and there were no complaints.

I have greatly appreciated the dedication and enthusiasm from all our hardworking Captains and wonderful Team Members. I would encourage many more MCCU members to consider whether County Chess might suit them, and to consider becoming a Captain in due course.

The way forward must surely be one of increasing collaboration between all who love County Chess.

I would be willing to serve next season if that is the wish of MCCU Delegates.

It seems to me that if still serving 2 years from now, the interests of County Chess continuing to innovate and grow would then be best served by a new person taking the baton. To that end, I would welcome a Deputy working closely with me this season and will consult all Captains accordingly if the AGM would like me to.