

Selection for International Youth Championships 2012

Motivations for sending juniors abroad to represent England are that they strive to achieve the best result for England and advance their personal development. The distinct honour and great privilege of representing their country at the highest levels should enrich their pride and enjoyment of chess. While keeping these imperatives in mind, we aim to broaden the number of suitably qualified juniors who compete in the most challenging youth tournaments—the World Youth Chess Championships, the European Youth Chess Championships and the World Youth Under 16 Chess Olympiad. Other prestigious international tournaments are included in this policy, because national federation registration is required and they often serve to accelerate junior development.

This policy represents significant change from previous years by increasing opportunities for players to represent England and by addressing crucial support requirements. Two changes from established events flow from this policy. The World Trial tournament is no longer needed. The John Robinson ECF Junior Grand Prix continues to recognise the premier individual youth tournaments with valuable coaching prizes, but winning does not automatically result in an invitation. This policy is effective for specified events in 2012 and will be reviewed after the ECF Council meets in October to elect Board members for the next term.

Objective criteria, tempered with some flexibility, are used to determine invitations to represent England in the World Youth, European Youth and the U16 Olympiad. More subjective judgment is applied for other events where player development is the primary consideration. The source for this judgment is the Player Development and Selection Committee (referred to as the 'Committee' in the rest of this document). The Director of Junior Chess and Education (Junior Director) issues all invitations for players who satisfy event criteria and other general requirements in this document (eligibility, activity, teamwork, finances, parental supervision, agreements, etc.). Understanding this selection process requires reading all three sections of this paper: (1) Major Championships, (2) Developmental Championships and (3) General Requirements and *Italicised Terms*. The Junior Director will act in lieu of the Junior Development Officer until that post is filled.

MAJOR CHAMPIONSHIPS

Players who strive to represent England in major championships must satisfy the *activity*, *eligibility* and other criteria specified in the General Requirements and *Italicised Terms* section below.

European Youth Chess Championships

Prague, Czech Republic, 16-26 August

World Youth Chess Championships

Maribor, Slovenia, 7-19 November

The European Youth and World Youth are traditionally held between June and November. Currently, both championships are organised by age-based sections, U8, U10, U12, U14, U16 and U18. The European Youth competes in separate sections for boys and girls. The World Youth competes in open and girls' sections. Both tournaments require players to be selected by their national federation (or by *personal rights*) and are highly competitive, with the European Youth often attracting higher rated players than the World Youth. The ECF sets the same selection criteria for both tournaments, aiming to represent our best youth chess with three or more suitably qualified players per section. The following players will be invited to:

- Both the World Youth and the European Youth:
 - *Gold medal winners* in the previous year's World Youth or European Youth
 - Players who achieve the *target strength* by *peak FIDE rating*
- Their choice of either the World Youth or the European Youth

- *Gold medal winners* in the previous year's World Schools Individual or EU Youth
- Players who achieve the *target strength* by *peak ECF grade*
- Players who achieve a *norm*
- Either the World Youth or the European Youth, as indicated
 - Players who placed in the top ten in the previous World Youth or European Youth will be invited to return to that tournament if he or she was born in the earlier year of that two-year section. Players born in the latter year of that two-year section will be invited if he or she placed in the top twenty.
 - *Top players from the British Junior Championships* players born in the earlier year of a 2012 *section* will be invited to their first choice of either the European Youth or the World Youth. Players born in the latter year of a section will be invited to the championship not chosen by older birth year player(s).

Where warranted, *wild card* invitations will be issued. After players *reply to invitations* above, *further invitations* will be issued to increase England's representation as described below, where terms in *italics* are explained in detail. The top rated player in each section from the March 2012 FIDE Rating List will be considered the official representative and be entitled to receive whatever financial assistance is offered by tournament authorities.

World Youth Under 16 Chess Olympiad

Turkey, probably October

U16 Olympiad teams consist of four players, with an option to include a reserve player. The ECF will form up to two teams from a pool of candidates who meet the following criteria:

- *Peak FIDE rating* of at least 2045 or a *peak ECF grade* of at least 174, which represent the 50th percentile of past U16 Olympiads
- *Norm* or two half-norms with a *tournament performance rating* of 2255 or a *tournament performance grade* of 201, which represent the 80th percentile of past U16 Olympiads

Initial invitations will be issued by rating order from the March 2012 FIDE Rating List (not by *peak FIDE rating*). After consulting with players who accept invitations to form a partial team, lower-rated and lower-graded players may be invited to fill remaining places. Any player who wishes to be considered for a reserve place on a team should write to the Junior Development Officer by 15 March 2012; however, there should be no expectation of playing a game.

World Junior Under 20 Championships

Athens, Greece, 1-16 August

Selection for this event is determined under separate policy by the Director of International Chess. Exceptionally strong Under 18 players may be considered.

The British Championship

North Shields, England, 22 July to 4 August

The Junior Director may nominate a player to compete in the British Championship. The Junior Director will consult with the Committee prior to exercising this prerogative.

DEVELOPMENTAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Promising players may be invited to developmental championships based on general attributes of commitment, attitude and performance in the John Robinson ECF Junior Grand Prix, other youth chess events and adult congresses. Appropriate coaching support is crucial for these events, thus availability coaches may limit the number of invitations. Parents should

express interest in specific events to the Junior Development Officer. Players should be prepared to provide the Junior Development Officer with a database of their games from the past year. A player may be invited subject to becoming an ECF member.

World Schools Individual Chess Championships

Iasi, Romania, 28 April to 6 May

This tournament competes in Open and Girls sections for U17, U15, U13, U11, U9 and U7. Players this year are drawn from the former British Land UK Chess Challenge in 2011 in recognition of a tradition of more than 65,000 players participating in the first stage. Chess Challenge Ultimos, Ultimas, Gigafinal first equals and selected players from the Terafinal Challengers competitions residing in England will be invited. The Committee may recommend other players based on general attributes for developmental championships and availability of coaches. Interested players should contact the Junior Development Officer. All players are required to attend at least one ECF training session and agree mutual expectations. Parents will be asked to respond to invitations with a deposit by 13 February.

European Union Youth Chess Championships

Mureck, Austria, 31 July to 8 August

This tournament is organised in Open sections for U14, U12 and U10 from which girls' prizes are awarded. Up to twelve players may be invited due to hotel accommodation space constraints. Interested players should contact the Junior Development Officer. The Committee will recommend players based on general attributes for developmental championships and availability of coaches.

Glorney Cup, Faber-Gilbert Cup, Stokes Cup, Robinson Cup

provisionally 18-20 July at a venue in the Midlands

Holders of these cups are determined in team competitions with other nations in the British Isles. The Glorney Cup requires a team of five U18 boys. The Faber-Gilbert Cup requires a team of three U18 girls. The Stokes Cup requires a team of six U14 boys. The Robinson Cup requires a team of six U12 boys. The Committee will recommend players based on general attributes for developmental championships.

Other Developmental Championships

The FIDE events calendar ([here](#)) lists other youth tournaments for which registration through national federations is required or encouraged. They are not actively promoted by the ECF primarily due to overlap with more popular events; however, the Committee will review requests to participate as with any other developmental championship, as well as any non-youth championships where U18 players express an interest.

- European Youth U18 Team Championships, Pardubice, Czech Republic, 11 to 19 July
- Commonwealth Championships, India, probably June or July
- European Individual and Team Youth Championships (Rapid and Blitz), Teslic, Bosnia & Herzegovina, probably December
- European Individual Schools Championships, Thessaloniki, Greece, possibly October

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS AND ITALICISED TERMS

Eligibility. The player must be registered with FIDE as an English Chess Federation player or be eligible for initial FIDE registration as an ECF player. ECF membership is required to remain valid through the end of the international championship. Events that occur during scholastic terms may require permission of school authorities. Upon request, the Junior Director will write a letter supporting a parent's request for their child's absence from school. Parents are requested to send a deposit to the ECF office confirming their child's availability and acceptance.

Activity. This requirement applies to candidates for all major championships. In the twelve months prior to invitation:

- U10 to U18 players must play a minimum of 30 standard games. The Junior Director may, on an exceptional basis and recommendation of the Committee, reduce this requirement to 20 games provided the rationale is published on the ECF website. Reasons to reduce the activity requirement include revision for academic examinations, although not for two consecutive years, and extenuating personal circumstances.
- U8 players must complete in a minimum of 20 standard games; however, the Committee may recommend an invitation on condition that the player and parent commit to the U8 child playing a minimum of 20 standard games prior to departure for the major championship.

Leadership. This requirement applies to candidates for all major championships. Players eleven years old and older must have completed, or agree to complete by 31 December 2012, one chess-related activity that develops age-appropriate skills expected of champions in any sport or game. Such activities may include giving a supervised lesson to friends or younger children, giving a simultaneous display, participating in a public fundraising event, being interviewed on the radio or publishing an article. Players are encouraged to initiate their own activities in a club, school or in their community; however, opportunities to satisfy this requirement will be offered in pre-tournament team building and training events.

Teamwork. Although chess is fundamentally an individual discipline, the practicalities involved require a team approach to enable each player to play at his or her best, with a champion's attitude in every round. Therefore, players, accompanying coaches and parents who form an official England delegation are expected to operate as a mutually supporting team under the leadership of an ECF-appointed Head of Delegation. Teamwork in recent years has been very good; however, the Junior Director may decline to invite players or parents to future championships whom the Head of Delegation reports for behaviour detrimental to good teamwork.

Coaching. In-tournament coaching support is essential to gain maximum benefit from these competitions. Coaching relationships at these special events often continue throughout a player's career. Parents are invited to recommend coaches, which the Committee will consider based on their presence on the ECF accredited coaches list, availability, fee, and coaching specialities. The ECF attempts to maintain an overall ratio of four players to one coach and will assign players to specific coaching groups. The Head of Delegation may adjust coaching groups once training begins. Coaches will contact parents to discuss options for working with players as soon as possible. An initial task should be to develop training goals in consultation with existing coaches. A team-building and training event will normally be organised soon after teams are formed. For ethical reasons, ECF coaches will not assist any England player prepare to compete against any other England player. Costs associated with team coaches will be shared equally among the parents.

Parental Supervision. Support required at these events requires a parent or guardian to accompany each child. Private supervision arrangements among parents are possible with agreement of the Head of Delegation and the Junior Director. ECF officials cannot accept *in loco parentis* responsibilities beyond the British Isles, with the possible exception of players traveling to the U16 Olympiad. U18 players who have reached the age of majority will be treated as adults and may nominate an accompanying person.

Finances. Financial responsibility for participation rests with parents. The ECF actively encourages and accepts donations for specific events to defray costs shared by families. The ECF also coordinates business sponsorship for teams, not restricting donations or sponsorship for individual players. Parents are encouraged to organise and pursue opportunities for their teams and themselves. Limited grants are available from chess charities, principally for those with financial need but also on merit. The ECF attempts to ensure invited players have access to international championships, but the ECF is not in a position to take financial responsibility from parents. In the event a player withdraws for any reason, the deposit and other funds received by the ECF will not be returned unless and until

the ECF is credited with whatever refunds may result from cancelled arrangements. The ECF maintains a travel insurance policy that may cover a portion of financial loss; however, travellers should consider purchasing additional private travel insurance.

Travel and Accommodation. The prospect of larger number of players than in previous years opens options for both group and individual travel. Players and accompanying persons are generally required to use official hotels, but options may exist within bounds set by the tournament organisers. The Junior Director, in consultation with parents and the Junior Directorate Business Manager, will make decisions based on group cohesion, logistics and cost.

Flexibility and Judgment. The Player Development and Selection Committee and the Junior Directorate Business Manager assist the Junior Director with required decisions. Selectors serving on the Committee include the Director of International Chess, Junior Development Officer, Junior Ratings Officer, Managers of Women's Chess, Manager of Coaches (International), Manager of Coaches (Home) and the Manager of Schools, Junior Clubs and Counties and assistant managers. Observing members include the three ECF Member Representatives with the word, 'Junior' or 'Student' in their title and representatives from the National Chess Junior Squad and the Junior Four Nations Chess League. Names of selectors and non-voting members will appear on the ECF Juniors website.

Agreements. Players and parents will be asked to formally agree to above expectations.

Section. This term refers to the competitive groupings in the 2012 championships addressed in this policy.

Personal Rights. This term refers to the right granted by World Youth and European Youth authorities to players who may register directly with the tournament, outside the purview of their national federation. Personal rights are usually offered to gold medal winners in the previous year's championships. The ECF will invite these gold medal winners to both the World Youth and European Youth if they satisfy the general requirements and wish to be part of the England delegation.

Gold Medal Winners. This term refers to players who place first in a championship.

Top English Players from the British Junior Championships. This term refers to results from the British Junior Championships 2011 (Sheffield):

- The highest placed English player (and joint highest placed) who competed in the title category (Junior and Girls', Under 8 and older) most appropriate based on age. For purposes of this criterion, finishing places of younger players are not considered.
- English players who place highest (or joint highest) of all English players in a title category most appropriate for older players.
- The highest placed English boy (and joint highest placed) where an English girl places first in a British Junior title category.

The Junior Director will explore options for establishing a set of future English Youth Champions; however, the Board envisions the British Junior Championships in North Shields to be a source of invitations for 2013.

Target Strength. This term refers to the *peak FIDE rating* or the corresponding *peak ECF grade* criteria for a player to be invited to a major championship on that basis. It is set in relation to the forecast strength of opposition derived from analysis of rating data from previous tournaments. Setting the target strength at the 50th percentile of ratings from previous tournaments, for example, would ensure that players have demonstrated the average strength of the forecast opposition. Worksheets showing the analysis of historical rating data are available on request from the Junior Director. Due to low number of players holding ratings in past U8 sections of major championships, a statistically meaningful forecast of U8 opposition is not possible.

Peak FIDE Rating. This term refers to the highest rating of a player based on a minimum of 30 games, published in any FIDE Rating List from May 2011 to March 2012. These lists are published bi-monthly.

Peak ECF Grade. This term refers to the highest Category A grade published in the ECF Grading Lists of July 2011, August 2011, January 2012 as may be amended and published on the ECF Grading Database on 1 March 2012.

Tournament Performance Rating (TPR). This term refers to the value resulting from calculations conducted by the ECF; however, players may approximate a TRP using a [calculator](#) provided on the ECF Juniors website or applying the formula: $TPR = \text{average of opponents' rating} + 800 \times (W - L) / (2 \times n)$, where W = wins, L = losses, n = number of games played.

Tournament Performance Grade (TPG). This term refers to the value resulting from calculations conducted by the ECF; however, players may approximate a TPG using a [calculator](#) provided on the ECF Juniors website or applying the formula: $TPG = \text{average of opponents' grades} + 100 \times (W - L) / (2 \times n)$, where W = wins, L = losses, n = number of games played.

Norm. This term refers to a tournament performance sufficient to qualify for the British Championship (not entry on the Reserve List or nomination, see [here](#)) or a tournament performance described below. The purpose of a norm is to identify and reward an outstanding performance, which is set at the 75th percentile of player ratings from past tournaments. A player must claim a norm (or two half-norms) no later than 2 March 2012, by which time the Junior Ratings Officer, Junior Development Officer or the Junior Director must be in possession of appropriate documentation. Players intending to claim a norm from a tournament concluding after 1 February 2012 should facilitate direct communication between the tournament director and the Junior Ratings Officer. Players should calculate their own TPRs or TPGs using the [calculator](#) on the ECF Juniors website before asking the ECF to validate a norm or half-norm. A norm may be claimed for performance in a tournament of at least nine rounds. A half-norm may be claimed for performance in a tournament of at least five rounds. Only one in a pair of half-norms may be achieved outside the area where the ECF governs chess. Norm calculations include all games played in a tournament against FIDE rated or ECF graded players, as applicable (i.e., games against unrated or ungraded opponents excluded). In addition, calculations must be based on a minimum of four games in a tournament of five or six rounds; a minimum of five games in a tournament of seven or eight rounds; a minimum of six games in a tournament of nine rounds; or a minimum of seven games in a tournament of ten or more rounds. The player must complete the tournament according to tournament rules within the twelve months prior to 1 March 2012. Calculations must use the opponent's standard rating or grade as published in the applicable list valid at the time the game was played. The ECF-to-FIDE conversion formula published on the ECF Grading Database site ([here](#)) may be used if the opponent does not have a published rating or grade. For U8 players only, a norm may be awarded on the basis of two tournament performances (standard or rapidplay) where the Committee recognises exceptional strength of the tournament and assesses the candidate suitability prepared for the rigour of a major championship.

Wild Card. This term refers to players who are invited to a major championship who do not meet the published criteria. Players and parents may write to the Junior Development Officer requesting an exceptional invitation for any reason. Parents must agree that in the event their child accepts a wild card invitation, a summary of their child's case will be posted on the ECF website. The Committee will normally defer action on early requests until March.

Reply to Invitations. This term refers to a parent's response to an invitation, but also to non-receipt of a reply by the date specified in the invitation. The primary means of communicating invitations is email. In the event a reply is not received, the ECF will normally attempt to contact parents by telephone. If a player does not respond to an invitation, that player may lose the privilege of a future invitation.

Further Invitations. This term refers to invitations issued to increase the number of players in a World Youth or European Youth section. If fewer than four players accept invitations to any section, players who previously accepted invitations to one tournament will be invited to the other tournament in order of *peak FIDE rating* followed by *peak ECF grade*. After exhausting these players and as a measure to increase the number of players with international experience, if fewer than two players accept invitations for any section, players who meet the minimum strength of the 25th percentile of the forecast opposition will be invited in order of *peak FIDE rating* followed by *peak ECF grade*. Minimum strength values are available on request to the Junior Director, but are not published. Players should focus on their *target strength*.

		Forecast Strength of Opposition			
		Target Strength (50 th Percentile)		Norm Criteria (75 th Percentile)	
Birth Year	WYCC / EYCC Section in 2012	Peak FIDE Rating	Peak ECF Grade	Tournament Performance Rating	Tournament Performance Grade
1994	U18 Open / Boys	2215	196	2352	213
1995	U18 Girls	2004	169	2134	185
1996	U16 Open / Boys	2110	182	2251	200
1997	U16 Girls	1908	157	2044	174
1998	U14 Open / Boys	1973	165	2115	183
1999	U14 Girls	1807	145	1918	158
2000	U12 Open / Boys	1840	149	1959	164
2001	U12 Girls	1694	130	1771	140
2002	U10 Open / Boys	1715	133	1828	147
2003	U10 Girls	1590	118	1650	125
2004 and later	U8 Open / Boys	-	-	Committee	Committee
	U8 Girls				

Selection criteria and procedures in this policy are predicated on traditional rules and arrangements for the particular championships, many of which are beyond the ECF's control. The ECF reserves the right to change selection criteria without advance notice and to not issue any invitations for any particular event. Invitations are a privilege, not afforded to any player by virtue of his or her status as an ECF member.