

Election Statement – Non-Executive Director

The future of chess in England is brighter than it has been for several years. The ECF is adopting charitable status to encourage more diverse funding - it can take the lead in transforming chess in England both as a competitive mind sport and as an educational intervention. More children are learning chess in our schools; educationists have a greater awareness of the positive impact of chess.

The role of a NED is to monitor the Board individually and collectively. This requires the incumbent to have senior business experience as well as knowledge of the chess world. I believe I meet these criteria. I ran a business strategy consultancy for a decade working with organisations to clarify their objectives and to devise new products, services and methods of distribution. Prior to that, I worked at PwC where my role was to structure complex investments. I can draw on this variety of skills and experience to assist ECF to achieve financial sustainability whilst providing high quality services to members. I would like to see us improve our organisation and how we deliver our services. We all value the grading system, the national championships and international representation. ECF could offer more services, improve junior development and increase diversity.

As a chess organiser, I run a four-team squad in the 4NCL chess league. I am chairman of Kingston Chess Club for whom I play in the Surrey and Thames Valley Leagues. I negotiated the arrangement with ASDA whereby Kingston has a well-lit and spacious playing room in a superstore as part of ASDA's splendid community outreach initiative. In the London League I play for Wimbledon having switched from the Drunken Knights. I play for county chess for Surrey (and for Lancashire when I resided there) and for the Law team (I am a barrister) in the London Business Inter-League competition. I occasionally play in tournaments at home and abroad. As a webmaster, I won the ECF chess Website of the Year award before reverting to a Facebook page. I have restricted my writing energies to my Twitter feed @ChessScholar.

I am the Director of Training and Education for the charity Chess in Schools and Communities. Over the last four years, I have trained well over a thousand teachers and tutors from around the country in the fundamentals of teaching chess in primary schools. I am editing a forthcoming teachers' resource guide. The basic idea is that chess improves thinking skills – the challenge is to find the right exercises. This August, I organised the Baltic Summer Chess Camp in Riga, Latvia – a place with a famous chess tradition. Enthusiastic children from England, Wales, Latvia and Lithuania got together for the love of the game, to learn and to play – it was great fun.

Before I had an extended chess career break, I was junior champion for Middlesex and London. I won the Oxford University championship in the course of which I defeated Dominic Lawson in a game that gave me an enormous amount of pleasure at the time.