

Director of Home Chess: 2016-17 Election Address by Alex Holowczak

Chess CV

- 4NCL Board member (2011 -)
- International Arbiter (2012 -), acting as an arbiter at events such as: 4NCL (2013 -), London Chess Classic (2011 -), Olympiad (2016), World Youth Championships (2014)
- Birmingham League Rapidplay Organiser (2012 -)
- Coach at several schools in and around the West Midlands (2011 -)
- Re-founder and President of British Universities CA (2010 -)
- Warwickshire CA Secretary (2012 – 2016) and Junior Secretary (2010 – 2012, 2016 -)

Achievements in 2015-16

- Organised the largest ever British Chess Championships, in terms of the number of players, in Bournemouth.
- Introduced a new, one-week/two-weekend format for the British Championships for 2017.
- Organised a successful County Championship Finals Day.
- Introduced ECF competition rules to apply from 1st September 2016
- Ensured both grading lists were published on the expected deadlines.
- Inaugurated the English Women's Championships.
- Aligned the ECF Arbiter system with the FIDE Arbiter system.
- Awarded a tender, and initiated the process of, implementing the ECF League Management Software.

Intentions for 2016-17

I intend to work on several key areas of the draft ECF Business Plan, circulated to members in July.

League Management Software

Continue to work towards implementation of the ECF League Management Software. This will involve continuing having monthly meetings with Malcolm Peacock, and arranging for people to test the software to ensure the software complies with the requirements of the tender.

One feature of the LMS will be to enable organisers or graders to be able to log in to their account, and register a tournament for grading. I will work with the grading team, and consult more widely, to come up with suitable regulations for registering events. Once registered, the organiser or grader will be able to upload any grading files for their tournaments. This will allow graders access to the latest version of the Checker, which will help the ECF to minimise the appearance of duplicate players, and will reduce the amount of e-mail traffic and work involved for the ECF Grading Administrator. The intention of all of this is to make life easier for graders.

I expect the software to be ready, in time for the 2017/18 season. The software will only be available to a limited number of leagues initially, but I expect the registration system to be open to organisers and graders in time for 2017/18.

ECF Events

The British Championships has overhauled its format for 2017, but in light of the experience of running it for the first time on the new format, some tweaks may be necessary.

The National Club Championships was overhauled a few years ago, and it is time for a review of those changes to be conducted, and if thought appropriate, propose any further changes that may be necessary.

I am not proposing to make any significant changes to the County Championship this year, beyond those changes agreed by the April Finance Council Meeting.

I will come up with potential ways of organising official ECF internet tournaments. This will involve consultation, and I will find a way of consulting with people who play online but not over the board. Some consideration will also be given to which of the many playing server options should be used, and I will keep in mind the potential use of the server to play Internet matches in the County Championship as a modern equivalent of telephone matches.

Assistance to Independent Organisers

I frequently receive a number of questions about how to organise events, and in particular, which regulations they need to comply with. I will create a “manual” for first time organisers of ECF-graded events, and consider the merits of whether or not this needs to be supported with an ECF Organiser title.

Grading Frequency

As indicated in my election address last year, I am in favour of increasing the frequency of grading list publication to monthly. This is not something that can be undertaken until the League Management Software and registration system mentioned above is available. In the mean-time, the Manager of Grading has been doing some statistical work on the viability both of monthly lists. This involves investigating necessary modifications of the ECF grading calculation and options in adapting Elo for domestic ratings. This work is incomplete but will continue in 2016/17. Any changes of this nature will be brought to Council as a specific proposal.