

ECF Chess Academy

“Excellence in Chess Education”



'Knight's eye view' by Brendan O'Gorman

Prospectus 2017-18

Academy founded July 2015

**With thanks to the ECF, John Robinson Youth
Chess Trust, Chess & Bridge and Gareth Ellis for their support**

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Introduction

The English Chess Federation (ECF) is laying foundations for chess education of the future in developing its chess academy, in stages, over a period of years. This prospectus is in three parts comprising firstly the academy overall, secondly the International Programme offered by the academy and thirdly the Elite Junior Player Programmes. The first part will help you to understand about the academy: its aims; what membership of the academy itself means; how the academy is structured at the moment and how it will be developed in the future to include a range of activities and programmes that will help different levels of players. The second part of the prospectus tells you about the International Programme which is the first programme that members of the academy can apply to join. This programme is an ambitious and challenging 3 year programme which aims to develop chess players who are either already playing at major international events or aiming to achieve that level of play. The third part advises you as to how you can gain support to become a titled player such as an International or Grand Master.

Letter from ECF Director of Junior Chess and Education

This is the 3rd year of the ECF Chess Academy and the numbers of players on the International Programme, the Elite Junior Player Programmes and the “taster days” is increasing. The third cohort of the International Programmes commence in January 2018 and begin their journey on the 3 year programme which will develop them as international chess players. Some will eventually go on to become titled players, just as members of the Elite Junior Player programmes have done.



If you want to see the successes of the Elite Junior Players, you will find the programme reports on the Academy pages of the ECF Junior Website. We are delighted to congratulate so many players on their new titles, norms, ratings and successes in competitions.

We could not have achieved our progress without the support of those working in the background such as the parent volunteers and the ECF Office Staff. Thank you everyone. We are also indebted to the ECF and the John Robinson Youth Chess Trust who have worked so hard to help us to make the Academy a reality. Thank you to Gareth Ellis of Wholesale Chess UK who sponsored our boards and sets this year. Also thank you to Chess & Bridge who enabled us to purchase chess textbooks and software at a discount.

In 2018 we aim to take a further 30 students on to the “International Programme” and launch a further 10 “Elite Junior Player Programmes”. The purpose of the tiers of the Academy, and the programmes within those tiers, is to provide a developmental pathway that a junior can follow, from learning to play chess to potentially becoming a titled player. Eventually we aim to introduce programmes in the national tier for young players to develop the skills needed to become the coaches, arbiters and chess organisers of the future. Above all, we want to encourage a lifelong love and enjoyment of chess, and to see chess thriving in England throughout the 21st century.

To success!

Traci Whitfield

Letter from the Head of ECF Chess Academy

2017 has been a year of steady consolidation for the ECF Academy and we look forward now to year three, where our membership is set to increase again. Training weekends in 2018 could see upward of 90 students attending! Our Elite programme is gathering momentum. Everything is pointing to positive progress.

It is great to see so many of our young players and parents supporting and benefiting from this ECF-led project.

I would like to thank Traci Whitfield, who puts in an enormous amount of hard work on our behalf, the ECF board for support and all the coaches, who really do care about the future of the children.



Let's move forward!

Andrew Martin

FIDE Senior Trainer

International Master.

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ECF Chess Academy website

www.englishchess.org.uk/Juniors



About the Academy

Vision statement

Our vision is to enable junior chess players to develop a lifelong love of chess, reach their playing potential, use chess to enrich other areas of their lives including their education and become the inspirational adult players of the future.

Aims

The ECF Chess Academy aims:

To encourage junior chess players to play at and develop their chess to the level that suits them.

To identify talented junior chess players capable of and motivated to play in international level events.

To develop junior chess players to international standard of play for major junior and youth world/continental events.

To encourage and facilitate juniors with sufficient potential to achieve FIDE titles.

Membership

All junior players (under 18 years) who hold current gold or platinum membership of the ECF also have automatic free membership of the ECF Chess Academy so long as they meet the following two requirements.

- Resident in the UK.
- Eligible to represent England in international tournaments.

Players who are aged between 18 and 21 years of age, and who are actively seeking FIDE Titles can apply to the Director of junior Chess and Education to become members of the Academy in order to access an "Elite Junior Player Programme". They will still need to meet the above criteria.



Structure

The academy proposes to prepare juniors for an international standard of play appropriate to their abilities and aspirations. In the diagram below you can see how the academy currently (in blue) fits into the broad structure of junior chess in England.



The academy is focussing initially on two main tiers of players — **“National”** and **“International”**. The National level players are those who are already playing national level chess and have reached the standard to play at “developmental” international championships such as the World Schools Chess Championships. The International level players are those who are already playing in “major” international championships such as the World Youth Chess Championships or have reached the standard to play in them.

The first programme in this prospectus concentrates on meeting the developmental needs of players in those national and international tiers and is called the “International Programme” (see page 8). This is a 3 year programme in which the topics taught change in consecutive years and this should lead to a cumulative improvement in your child if he/she completes more than one year of education. (See later for details). Players are taught in groups relating to their ability rather than to either their age or their chess playing experience, so this particular programme will take players from both tiers. The focus is on excellence in chess education.

Learning resources have been developed initially for students on the International Programme but there will be resources for students who are not on the international training programme but aspire to it. This will have password protected online access.

A third tier of **“Elite”** players are supported gain FIDE titles. Rather than a traditional teaching programme, support for “Elite” players to achieve FIDE titles is through:

- 1 “Elite Junior Player Programmes” which are created by the individual to help them develop in order to achieve norms and gain a sufficient rating for a FIDE title (FM/WFM and above). Please see page 16 for details.

- 2 Development of a collaborative and mutual support system among players seeking norms.
- 3 Development of a specific ECF support system for elite players wishing to improve their game. This will include advice and mentorship opportunities.

The academy offers advice and support on accessing appropriate tournaments and encourages its members to seek to develop both their skills in chess and their love of the game. It seeks to support you, the players' parents, in supporting and preparing your child to play at the level to which they aspire.

Underpinning philosophy for learning with the academy

The academy accepts the four principles for learning chess which underpin all learning at the academy:

Resilience

Players are engaged in learning through:

Being absorbed in learning chess; trying new approaches regardless of outcome; persevering and managing distractions.

Resourcefulness

Players learn in different ways through:

Questioning; making links and recognising patterns; using their imagination; reasoning; calculation and making good use of chess learning resources.

Reflectiveness

Players use a variety of strategies for learning through:

Planning; revising; analysing; summarising and reviewing.

Reciprocity

Players learn through:

Balancing self-reliance and seeking help; collaborating; talking and listening; inspiring and being inspired.



The International Programme

Overview

The international programme is aimed at players who have the skill, ambition and dedication to rise to the forefront of junior chess in England. The programme study events are intended to be challenging and require the participant to work hard.

The main principle of the programme is to prepare players to succeed in international tournaments, particularly major tournaments such as the World Youth and Cadet Championships and the European Youth Chess Championships. Where tournaments require selection for the event then it will be based on merit and development. Players who are on the International Programme and have completed at least one year will only need to achieve 80% of the target rating/grade for their age as specified in the ECF Junior Selection Policy.

It is intended that highly successful players completing the programme will be able to move up a tier and seek to gain FIDE titles while still under 21 years of age.

Aims

The aims are to:

Facilitate players to gain the skills to be effective when competing at international events (e.g. use of Chessbase for game preparation; establish solid opening repertoire; build position and game review, and analysis skills; ensure good endgame understanding, develop advanced game skills).

Implement a strong, challenging curriculum which builds on earlier sessions and the players own skills and knowledge.

Encourage players to develop the “stamina” required to train for and play in high level international competitions.

Provide an opportunity to help parents and players to get to know each other and to learn what to expect at international events, and to learn what is expected of them by way of preparation in advance of such events.

Develop the players understanding of psychological aspects of chess and playing at international level.



“I believe that winning requires a constant and strong psychology not just at the board but in every aspect of your life”.

Garry Kasparov.

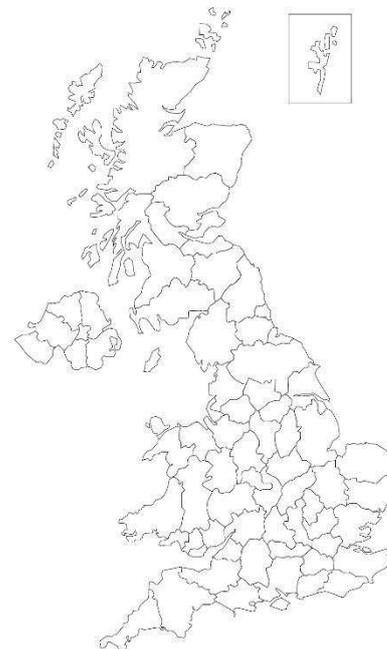
Study weekends

Dates for 2018

The International Programme consists of 4 study weekends per year based on the FIDE syllabus. Subsequent weekends will build on the previous one. Each annual programme will be a component of a proposed 3 year programme of study. Your child will be taught in a group of similar ability players.

For 2018 the dates for the study weekends are:

1. 6-7 January
2. 14-15 April
3. 8-9 September
4. 10-11 November



Taster weekends

If a player meets the entry criteria or is close they can apply to experience a “taster” weekend at the Academy. The cost for 2017 is £120 and is subject to availability of places. The cost may rise in 2018. Spare places are advertised on the Junior section of the ECF Website:

www.englishchess.org.uk

The remaining weekends in 2017 are:

8-9 September 2017 Coventry

11-12 November 2017 Daventry

Coaches

Your coaches will normally be titled players with proven educational experience and be ECF Accredited. The Head of the ECF Chess Academy, Andrew Martin is a FIDE Senior Trainer and a renowned English coach.



There will be 5 to 10 students per coach during the training weekends, the ratio will depend on the session learning activity.

Session topics for the different cohorts

Sessions will include a wide range of chess theory and practical advice. There will be an opportunity to learn to use a database in order to prepare for games at international events. It is expected that some sessions will be guest lectures/seminars via the internet by prominent chess players from around the world. Each training day will include two specific themes, one taught as a MAJOR and one taught as a MINOR topic. Topics will be taught using a range of methods in order to appeal to different learning styles.

January 2018 Cohort

Weekend One

Day 1

MAJOR: Attacking the King.

MINOR: Rook Endings.

Day 2

MAJOR: The Isolated Queen's Pawn.

MINOR: Hanging Pawns.

Weekend Two

Day 1

MAJOR: How to prepare for a game in a big event.

MINOR: Essential Pawn Endgames.

Day 2

MAJOR: The Art of Defence.

MINOR: More on Defence.

Weekend Three

Day 1

MAJOR: Sacrifices: good and bad.

MINOR: Which gambits are sound?

Day 2

MAJOR: General Endgame Strategy.

MINOR: The role of the open file.

Weekend Four

Day 1

MAJOR: Learn from the World Champions.

MINOR: How to build a successful repertoire.

Day 2

MAJOR: Planning.

MINOR: Prophylactic thinking.

January 2017 Cohort

Weekend One

Day 1

- MAJOR: Pawn Structures.
MINOR: Doubled pawns - good and bad.

Day 2

- MAJOR: The Best Games of Bobby Fischer- what can we learn from them?
MINOR: Blocked central pawn structures.

Weekend Two

Day 1

- MAJOR: From the opening into the endgame.
MINOR: Assessing a position.

Day 2

- MAJOR: The Best Games of Anatoly Karpov
MINOR: Opposite coloured Bishops.

Weekend Three

Day 1

- MAJOR: How Grandmasters win in the modern game.
MINOR: Why amateurs lose.

Day 2

- MAJOR: The Best Games of Gary Kasparov.
MINOR: Appreciating endgame studies.

Weekend Four

Day 1

- MAJOR: Tactical mastery.
MINOR: Queen endings.

Day 2

- MAJOR: The Best Games of Magnus Carlsen.
MINOR: How to use internet play to best effect. What to avoid.

January 2016 Cohort

Weekend One

Day 1

- MAJOR: The importance of studying classical games.
MINOR: Bishop Endings.

Day 2

- MAJOR: The best games of Mikhail Tal.
MINOR: The importance of central outposts.

Weekend Two

Day 1

MAJOR: The King's Gambit - is it playable ?

MINOR: Knight Endings.

Day 2

MAJOR: The best games of Mikhail Botvinnik.

MINOR: How to play in worse positions.

Weekend Three

Day 1

MAJOR: The Exchange Sacrifice.

MINOR: The Minority Attack.

Day 2

MAJOR: The best games of Tigran Petrosian.

MINOR: Asymmetric endings.

Weekend Four

Day 1

MAJOR: How to mount pressure during a game.

MINOR: Backward pawns.

Day 2

MAJOR: The best games of Boris Spassky.

MINOR: How to train yourself at home.

Resources for the Programme

Electronic and other resources will be available to children on the programme to support the syllabus and to enhance the chess student's development. Although chess related equipment and other resources will be provided at events, you are advised to bring your own electronic devices for supplemental work to get the most out of the weekend.

Parental activity during the training weekend

There will be sessions during the training weekends for parents on subjects such as:

- Helping your child to achieve international player status.
- Supporting your child in preparation for international events.
- Supporting your child at an international event.
- Using learning resources to help your child.
- Finding suitable FIDE rated tournaments for your child.
- Organising international trips with other parents.
- Organising international trips with the ECF.
- Networking among parents for mutual success for your children.
- Applying for sponsorship and grants for your child.



Parents who already have experience will be encouraged to advise and support other parents. Parents may also suggest topics for their sessions.

Homework

Your child will be expected to work on developing their chess and practising what they have learnt in between training events, either online or with their personal chess coach.

Reporting to parents and/or personal chess coaches

A verbal or written report on progress made by chess students on the programme will be available to parents/coaches at least once a year. In addition, if required, advice can be given to your child's chess coach on areas to develop or materials which might help develop specific aspects of your child's chess.

Cost

The cost for the International Programme will be £450 per child per year. This amount includes: enrolment on the programme, 40 hours of coaching per year, text books, equipment, access to advice, student assessment and parents' sessions. It does not include accommodation or food at study events. If you are unable to attend a study event, you will not receive a refund from the £450.

Parents may apply to the ECF Chess Academy for help with subscription costs if they have genuine need. Please write to the Director of Junior Chess and Education in confidence if you wish to apply. In addition there may be grants/scholarships in the future which will be advertised when available.

Admission to the programme

There will be 30 places on the programme. This number may increase or decrease depending on resource availability.

Eligibility is based on ability rather than age although most players will be aged between 9 and 15 years.

Applicants are expected to have an ECF grade of at least 110 or their own age multiplied by ten, whichever is higher. For example, if you are 12 you need to have a grade of $12 \times 10 = 120$ or higher. To calculate this you should use your child's standard play grade in the ECF July 2017 grading list and their age on 31 July 2017.

All applicants must be members of the ECF Chess Academy and committed to representing England and/or the ECF Chess Academy at international events.



All junior ECF gold/platinum level members are also members of the academy, subject to the conditions outlined earlier in the prospectus on page 5.

Priority will be given to applicants showing commitment to attending all the study sessions, to undertaking the 3 year programme and to continue playing chess until they are 18 years old.

The academy year runs from 1 January to 31 December each year.

Payment for the first year of the programme will be on confirmation of your child's place. Details of payment will be provided.

Applications are accepted until 13 October 2017 for the year beginning 1 January 2018, using the online application form on the Academy section of the ECF (Junior) Website. The internet address for the application form is

<https://britchess.wufoo.com/forms/international-programme-application/>

Neil Carr Scholarship

This prize is a one-year scholarship for 2017 for the ECF Chess Academy International Programme. The scholarship is awarded to the highest eligible player in the Under 10 British Championship at Llandudno in 2017. Eligibility is published at the British Chess Championships and includes the eligibility criteria for the International Programme published in this prospectus.

The winner of the award will receive admission and one year's fee for the ECF Chess Academy International Programme for the year commencing January 2018 (paid to the academy direct). If the winner is already a student on the International Programme, then they will receive one year's fee as above.

The Elite Junior Player Programmes

Aim

The aim of the programme is to help you to achieve one of the following titles: GM, WGM, IM, WIM, FM, WFM (as applicable). The programme is written by you to meet your own chess development needs. Therefore you can choose how the £1000 is allocated from your account.

For example

1. You could use the whole amount for coaching or other support such as mentoring by the person of your choice
2. You could split the amount, using part to buy/access development resources and part to fund a development opportunity such as entry or registration fees for international tournaments.
3. You could use the money towards a bigger, more expensive development opportunity.

It is important to think carefully about the best way to develop your chess before writing your proposed programme, as you need to justify it.

Please note that expenses such as hotel costs and travel cannot normally be covered by the programme, however there may be exceptions e.g. where it is an integral part of an educational package.

Programmes will be offered each year and gaining one this year does not mean that you cannot apply for one the following year. The applications for programmes available for September 2017 close on 31st July 2017, therefore the dates below refer to programmes being offered in September 2018.

Conditions

1. The programmes are part of the provision of the “Elite” Tier of the ECF Chess Academy. Therefore, an applicant must be a member of the ECF Chess Academy – All junior players who hold current gold or platinum membership of the ECF also have automatic membership of the ECF Academy so long as they are:

- i. Resident in the UK
- ii. Eligible to represent England in international tournaments (FIDE “ENG” registered).
- iii. Eligible to compete in ECF English national championships.

*If you are an adult gold or platinum member of the ECF you simply need to request to be a member of the ECF Chess Academy for the year in your application and confirm that you are registered as an England player with FIDE.

There is no cost for your membership of the Academy

2. You should not be a member of another FIDE Academy

2. You must be under 21 on 31.8.18. (This corresponds to the ECF financial year ending August 2019.)

3. You must be actively and demonstrably seeking one of the following titles: GM, WGM, IM, WIM, FM, WFM (as applicable).

4. For IM/WIM titles and above you should normally have a minimum FIDE rating of:

Male: 2200

Female: 2000

For FM/WFM titles

Male: 2100

Female:1900

5. If awarded a programme, you must produce a report by 01.08.19 to show your progress.

6. Application for a programme does not guarantee that one will be awarded. The applicant must agree to accept the decision of the ECF in its awarding of programmes based on the quality and appropriateness of applications received.

7. Applicants agree to accept the above conditions.

Application:

You should write to the Director of Junior Chess and Education (Traci Whitfield) director.juniorchess@englishchess.org.uk with the following information:

- Full Name
- Date of Birth
- Contact details
- Confirmation that you are registered with FIDE as an England Player (ID code)
- Your current FIDE Rating
- ECF Membership number
- Request to be a member of the ECF Chess Academy if you are not an automatic member (see *)
- The FIDE title that you are seeking
- Identify what you are currently doing to achieve the title
- Detail your programme. Include costings if you can.
- Justify your programme- Identify how it will meet your development needs and contribute to you achieving your title.

Closing date for the 2018 awards is 31.7.18.