

## ECF quarter final U120 Herts v Warks

This match was scheduled to start at 2 – 2.15pm, but the Warks team were missing three players and after rather a lot of obfuscation and faffing about, we got underway at 2.30, and the last players arrives at 2.40pm.

Along with groans and laughs, Ed finished first with a draw, after his game seemed to go in several different directions at once. This gives Ed the amazing score of 6.5 out 7, so a round of applause please and Ed wins the County Trophy for best player U120; one imagines that is a record that will stand for some time to come. Kidge, against a weaker player, launched a full board pawn attack, which finally opened the h file for a successful rook attack, leading to a resignation. Bob then consulted twice over a draw for different coloured bishops, where no progress could be made - this was against one of Warks players with an 80% record.

On the other boards there were significant swings in fortune, from which it was impossible to read outcomes. As planned we held our own versus their best record players; but somehow we let their weaker performing boards do rather too well. Harold made a good draw, Corinne appeared to be short of time for her 35<sup>th</sup> move, also agreeing a draw, after having to ask me twice !

Mark, after falling behind materially, somehow then fought back for a draw, his opponent perhaps tiring ? - but again this was evens with a 62% success rated foe. Good. John on board 2 had a tough one, with his opposite number prevailing in the end. Ray tried a bit too hard to win and then couldn't manage a draw. Andrew came down to a pawn race, which ended with his pawn just one square short, the opposing pawn queened and he had no way to escape. Arthur, however, did very well with his pawns, finishing with two pawns and his king in the right place to defeat a king and rook; well done.

Matt seemed to have chances with two pawns for a piece, but just as things were looking bad, he staged a recovery and a draw was agreed. This left Peter playing black against their best performer with an 87% success rate, on shaky ground; but he found a successful way to exchange out to an endgame with a wider spread of his 4 pawns to 3 white ones, from there it was easy. This left the scores all square at 6 – 6, but with Warks winning on the higher boards, they prevailed on 'board count'.

We are the Southern Counties Champions this year; our record over the last four years is: Winners; Finalists; and twice Quarter-finalists, so take pride in your achievements and look forward to the seasons ahead.

Kidge.