

DIRECTOR of JUNIOR CHESS – David Levens Candidacy statement

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It seems to me that the ideal candidate for this important ECF post needs to possess many attributes. He or she should first have a wealth of experience **working with children and young people**. Though not a trained teacher I have worked with children and young people almost all my adult life. These experiences include 10 years running a boys football team; 10 years running a Youth Club and 10 years running a Sunday School for the Salvation Army; this last included **ORGANISING** outings, Pets Services and writing and producing Nativity plays each Christmas. I've been a professional coach for the last 13 years and Head Coach to the NPSCA for the last six; I'm a qualified Athletics Coach and have spent several years coaching young people while my wife and I fostered delinquent and troubled teenagers for three and a half years.

The profile of chess in the UK remains poor with the British public, so the **ability to raise funds and gain publicity** would also be a useful asset. As Publicity Officer for the Notts Chess Association I gained a sponsorship deal with the Nottingham Post of £3000, paid in instalments over 3 years. Part of the bargain was that I would write a weekly chess column for the sports page. This also gained the NCA valuable publicity every year the Post receives articles and photographs from me that it gladly publishes. Outside of chess I also founded a Half Marathon in my local town that raised much needed money for the church. Subsequent to this I then founded Heanor Running club and remained its chairman and coach for most of its first 15 years. I was also instrumental in gaining a sponsorship deal with Matthew Walker, a local Christmas pudding manufacturer. My other effort was to found the NCH relays to raise money for a children's charity, now called Action for Children. During the same period Derby Writers Guild elected me its Chairman. During my 4 years in office I introduced a series of writing competitions judged by professional writers, akin to a chess Grand Prix. I then **gained three sponsorships** from local business and organised an annual dinner and awards night..

Communication skills both written and verbal are a must. When I worked for the BCF as its Marketing Director, many years ago, the publisher, Hamlyn approached me to write a chess primer called "Basic Chess" but before it awarded me the contract I had to prove I could write! As I had already **sold over 20,000 children's storybooks** called "Bedtime Stories," books that received very good reviews in the Guardian Education supplement, I soon passed Hamlyn's test. "Basic Chess" still sells all over the world, though Hamlyn has changed the title to "Chess Basics".

Born in London and educated in Harrow Weald, Middlesex I later trained as an electronics technician and, at the age of 22, I was sent to live in the Nottingham area, where I was employed to maintain electronically controlled printing equipment. A few years later this firm lost its agency to a rival company, but within a year of working for my new employer I was appointed senior engineer, employed not only **to manage** my own area but also to solve technical problems that other engineers could not. After this I was persuaded to make a total career change and began **managing** pop groups!! For the next two years I kept several bands in regular work, gained a recording contract for one with DJM music and a touring contract with Mecca for another. At the end of this period several members of different groups joined together to form "Showaddywaddy!" I then began employment with Unit Marketing Ltd and ended up its **second most successful salesman**; I still hold the record for the most sales in one week. After that I joined Sesco Security Ltd as a Sales Engineer, employed as its **Midlands Manager** I doubled the area sales turnover in my first year. After that the company invited me down to London to solve its problems. Sadly, I soon discovered that Sesco was in financial difficulties and I left to set up my own company, turning over £100,000 in my first year in business.

When I joined West Nottingham Chess Club, 18 years ago, it had a total membership of six and was on the verge of collapse. By persuading its members to move out of its pub venue into a local well-lit church hall the club began to prosper; we now have approximately 60 members, half of which are juniors, and have teams in all five divisions of the Notts League and a team in Division one of the Derbyshire League. WNCC has also won the BCF Small Club of the Year and Club of the Year. During this period Langley Mill, where I now lived, appointed me chairman of a committee to raise funds to build our own community centre. Under my leadership we **raised £1,000,000** that allowed us to buy an old Co-op building and employ staff to run The Bridge Centre!

All of this requires **ENERGY**, something I seem to have been blessed with. I have completed 22 marathons with a personal best time of 2 hours 43 minutes. Twice I have run the Nottingham Marathon whilst playing chess against several county juniors by mobile phone. **These efforts also raised a lot of money for charity and gained chess much needed publicity in Notts**. At the age of 70 I cycled from Lands End to John O'Groats with my eldest son and **raised £3,000** for The Leprosy Mission.

When I was **appointed Coach to Nottingham Boys Junior High School**, it had never reached the National finals once. Under my guidance it has reached the finals every year but one, won the Under 11 title twice, been runners-up three times and also won the under 9s title 4 times. Since the **NPSCA appointed me Head Coach** several years ago. Notts Juniors are always in the final; have won the Under 11 championships twice and been runners-up twice; and always finish in the top six, and our girls are the reigning National Champions! For the last three years I have been the MCCU Junior Director and have helped resurrect Leics Juniors and Derbyshire Juniors too. **I have also coached several juniors to a standard where they were selected to represent England**.

I am passionate about junior chess and I believe I have a lot to offer the ECF: much experience working with children and young people; success as a chess coach; **Management experience** at many levels; **organisation and fund-raising** skills; experience of **gaining good publicity** and **bags of energy** to carry out the work necessary

David Levens