

17 October 2015

International Director's Report by David Openshaw

Introduction

We have had a busy season despite not having a major team championship for our Open and Women's teams.

Two clubs competed in the European Clubs Cup in Spain, three teams entered the World Seniors Team Championship, four teams were in the European Seniors Team Championship, a number of individuals competed in the World and European Seniors Events, David Howell played in the European Championship.

I spent a considerable amount of time on fund raising during the year. I would like to thank all those members of the ECF who have made donations to help fund our teams, individuals and coaching programmes.

Perhaps the two highlights of the season was the play of David Howell who had number of great results and is now in the select band of players rated over 2700 and Keith Arkell who won the silver medal in the World Seniors Championship. Many congratulations to them both.

We had a number of successes in various seniors' events and a very good level of participation.

More of our arbiters have gained international recognition and we have been active in FIDE training.

Outside funding has allowed us to do some important elite development.

European Clubs Championship

This is a seven round Swiss event for European Clubs held in Bilbao Sept 2014. We were represented by two clubs White Rose and Grantham Sharks. The event was won by SOCAR from Azerbaijan quite a strong team with Michael Adams on Board 3! They won all their matches. Grantham Sharks scored 6 points with three wins and White Rose scored five points with 2 wins and a draw. Highlights were a successful first round for Grantham which then against an Italian team who went on to win the silver medal. Caruana was board 1 for the opposition. Grantham achieved commendable draws on boards 2 and 3 through Thomas Rendle and Ben Purton against GMs Barcot and Fressinet both rated over 2700 but lost the match 5-1. But with two further matches won Grantham achieved an overall result was substantially higher than their seeding. White Rose also had some good results: Peter Wells beat the German GM Naiditsch (2715), Mathew Webb on Board three scored 3.5/6 and Jim Burnett on Board 6 scored 4/5. My thanks to Mike Truran and 4NCL for again providing support for the entry fees for our teams

World Seniors Team Championship Dresden March 2015 We had three teams in this event held in Dresden. Two in the over 50 category and 1 in the over 65 category. England 1 was a very strong team of Short, Nunn, Speelman, Arkell and Terry Chapman. This event was won by Slovakia with Germany second. England 1 won the bronze medal. On boards 1 and 2 Nigel Short and John Nunn both won the individual gold medals.

Our Second team captained by Glen Flear finished a very creditable 8th. In total 45 teams competed.

Our team in the 65+ event finished in 31st place, Russia won the gold medal and a total 42 teams competed.

European Seniors Team Championship Vienna July 2015 This event is for 60+ players. It is pleasing to note we had four teams in this event with 18 players. England 1 performed very creditably with six wins and three losses to finish in 7th place. Geoff James on Board 2 scored our best individual result with 6.5 out of 9. Our other teams finished in 26th 38th and 40th places out of a total of 42 teams. The event was won by St Petersburg with 7 wins and two draws.

World Seniors Individual Championships Katerini Greece October 2014 In the Seniors 50+, Zurab Sturua of Georgia and Keith Arkell both scored 8.5 points in 11 rounds. The Georgian won the gold medal on a better tie-break. Many congratulations to Keith who took the silver medal and to John Nunn who won the bronze medal. Mark Hebden was 8th. In all we had nine players in the events.

European Seniors Individual Championships Eretria Greece May 2015

Zurab Sturua (Georgia) won the Seniors (50+) individual event with 7.5/9. John Nunn was in second place with 6.5 and Keith Arkell was 3rd with 6/9. We had five competitors out of a total of 45.

In the 65+ section Jan Rooze (Belgium) won with 7.5/9. We had three players out of a total of 42. Michael Stokes scored our best result with 9th place.

English Seniors Championship I worked closely with the Home Director to ensure this event continued in our calendar. It was held in August at Coulsdon, South London as a 5 round event. Ian Snape was the winner. We will continue to look at ways to expand this event.

International Arbiters and FIDE Commissions.

David Sedgwick in his role as Manager of Arbiters (International) has been very actively and successfully representing our interests in many areas. I have also valued David's general advice on a range of international topics

A FIDE Arbiters' Seminar was held in Preston in September 2015, organised by David Clayton with David Welch and Lara Barnes as lecturers. Seven arbiters took the examination and all passed. The successful English candidates were David Clayton, Michael Forster, Geoff Gammon and Robert Tinton.

The recent FIDE Congress in Abu Dhabi approved the applications for the award of the International Arbiter Title to Matthew Carr and for the award of the FIDE Arbiter Title to Kevin Thurlow.

FIDE classifies International Arbiters into Categories A, B, C and D, with a large majority being in the D Category. The FIDE Congress approved applications for Lara Barnes and Sean Hewitt to be upgraded to Category B and for David Eustace to be upgraded to Category C. The full list of English arbiters in Categories A, B and C is now as follows: Category A: David Sedgwick, Gerry Walsh, Category B: Lara Barnes, Sean Hewitt, Stewart Reuben and David Welch Category C: David Eustace

During the year eight further arbiters were licensed with FIDE under the Arbiters' Licence Fee Scheme. A total of 54 English arbiters are now licensed.

At present there is a minimum age of 21 for both the International Arbiter and the FIDE Arbiter Titles, and a minimum age of 17 to be licensed as an "Arbiter at National Levels" (NA). The ECF supported a proposal from the Welsh Chess Union to reduce the minimum age for NA from 17 to 16 and the minimum age for FA from 21 to 18, with the minimum age for IA remaining at 21. The FIDE Arbiters' Commission accepted the proposal relating to NA, but rejected the second (and more important proposal) relating to FA.

Women's Chess I have worked with our stronger Women Chess players and Alex Holowczak to develop a new competition which should help to improve the strength of our players and provide opportunities for all women players. This is the English Women's Championship which is currently planned for October. I am also pleased to say that working with Lawrence Cooper we have our first ever Women's team (the Midland Monarchs) in the European Clubs Championship again in October.

Elite Development David Howell and Gawain Jones benefitted from coaching from the world renowned coach Artur Jussupow. In conjunction with the Junior Director we selected Alex Golding for the John Robinson Fellowship to help fund his further development.

Financial Result against Budget for the financial year ending August 2015

I estimate net spending against the International and Seniors budget will show a saving of approximately £3500 against budget for the year just ended.

Thank you.

I would like to thank again all those members of the ECF who have made donations to help fund our teams. This is a very important contribution to the health of English Chess.

I would also like to thank the John Robinson Trust and Friends of Chess for their continued support.

I have had help from many people and I thank them all, in particular, Andrew Walker, Gary Willson, Terry Chapman, Lawrence Cooper, Sean Hewitt, John Philpott, Stewart Reuben, Ian Reynolds, Natasha Regan, Jonathan Parker, David Sedgwick, Jonathan Speelman, Mike Truran, Paul Townsend, William Watson, all my fellow Board Members and players in our teams.

David Openshaw September 2015