

**Director of Home Chess Report** Nigel Towers writes

ECF Online continues to grow steadily with over 1,300 members in the chess.com ECF members club, around 1,100 members in the lichess English Players club, and over 3,000 in total across the ECF Members Clubs, Junior Club and Women's club. We also have around 4,500 additional club members in the chess.com Open Club. You can find the latest events schedule for the week at the link here:

<https://englishchessonline.org.uk/upcoming-club-events/>

ECF Members club tournaments are all ECF online rated along with registered league, club and congress events including 25 or so local leagues as you can see from the Events list for February online rating.

<https://englishchessonline.org.uk/ecf-online-ratings-february-2021/events-during-january-rated-in-the-february-list/>

The chess.com Nations League season II continues on Sunday afternoons and evenings and we are now in sixth place (ie mid-table) following wins against Pakistan, Cape Verde and Greece, a draw against and USA (which we drew after a loss in the blitz segment followed by a comeback win in the Rapid), and losses against league leaders Romania and Poland and the Canadian Federation. We have four matches left and are aiming to get back into the top four.

<https://www.chess.com/clubs/matches/live/english-chess-federation-members>

<https://www.chess.com/news/view/nations-league-round-7-results-standings>

We are also taking part in a series of friendly internationals against other federations on lichess on Saturday afternoons and evenings including rematches against Finland and South Africa, the February Nations Cup, and the regular Saturday Masters International League.

<https://lichess.org/team/english-chess-players/tournaments>

Online Events Calendar for 2021 - We are planning a schedule of ECF online events during the course of 2021 as shown at the link here:

<https://englishchessonline.org.uk/ecf-national-events/ecf-online-national-events-calendar-2021/>

These include a number of ECF English Online Championships at different time controls, a Commonwealth Team Event supported by the ECF, the ECF Online Blitz and Rapid Grand Prix starting this month, a Summer Season of Online County Competitions, and of course the 2021 North v South Online match following on from last year's successful team event.

ECF Online Grand Prix - The ECF Online Blitz and Rapid Grand Prix started this month. These consist of a series of monthly tournaments in the English Grand Prix clubs on Lichess running from March to November 2021 at 2:00pm on the first Sunday of each month (for the Blitz Tournaments) and the third Sunday of each month (for the Rapid Tournaments).

The first blitz tournament was well attended with results shown here and GM Keith Arkell leading the field followed by FM Harry Grieve.

<https://lichess.org/team/ecf-online-blitz-grand-prix-series-2021/tournaments>

We will be publishing a leader board which will be updated monthly, with prizes for the winners in eight categories at the end of each series including Open, Women's, Senior, Junior, U2000 U1700, U1400, and U1100. Prizes will be based on points at the end of the season calculated on a player's highest six results across all events.

Please see the links here to enter either Series.

Online Blitz Grand Prix - <https://britchess.wufoo.com/forms/m1umalxs00wt7hj/>

Rapid Grand Prix - <https://britchess.wufoo.com/forms/mn0wucv0iq3nkv/>

British Championships 2021 - As announced in the editorial we will not be running an OTB British in Torquay this August, and have carried the venue booking forward to 2022. We will however be organising a British Online 2021 in August together with an Over-the-Board Championships at a number of venues in October.

New to Chess - As well as the elite events we are also looking at how we can support new players who are looking to take up the game following the Queen's Gambit Netflix series. The latest version of our New to Chess Page now includes general advice, web and coaching/ educational resources and can be found here:

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/new-to-chess/>

Arbiters - We have an arbiters course scheduled for April covering Over the Board and Online arbiting and using the new set of ECF Online Arbiter qualifications which are in development and will be published shortly.

Registered Coaches Scheme - The ECF is pleased to announce the appointment of Andrew Martin as Manager for coaches and the launch of our new registered coaches scheme which provides more information on listed coaches. You can find further details here:

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/list-of-ecf-registered-coaches/>

Return to Over the Board - Following the government's Spring plan the ECF has published guidance on the return to over the board and have established a working group to provide support and sharing of good practice as we look forward to a return to over the board events as this becomes possible during the course of the year.