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Dear Member

Welcome to the December eNewsletter of 2019. In this edition we lead with a tribute to past ECF Chief Arbiter Dave Welch, who died on November 9th. We also feature an op-ed on the no-castling exhibition games as part of the London Chess Classic and a report on the Chess and Female Empowerment Conference.

In the past month I have had the privilege and pleasure of playing non-competitive games in two very different settings. After going through a lengthy vetting process and training I did my first chess session at Isis Young Offenders Institute (YOI) in south east London. The Isis sessions are part of a Chess and Schools in Communities initiative which includes nursing homes, libraries and prisons as well as over 2,000 schools. Across the board I was pleasantly surprised by the levels of the players, a couple of whom took games off me (one with a Knight sac that came from virtually nowhere) and a third who took me to a draw in an exciting Queen and Pawn ending. Without computers these guys have honed their chess skills through the prison library and would easily negotiate the lower divisions of leagues and hold their own in individual tournaments (one of the guys told me he would join a club on his forthcoming release). A special mention to Peter Sullivan and his team who run the Isis project.

The second match-up was at the London Chess Classic when I played comedian and writer Josie Long after she had made the ceremonial opening move in the Gawain Jones-Luke McShane 'no castling' exhibition match, part of the British Knockout Championship. A keen junior player, Josie has been coming back into the game in adulthood and was at the Classic recording for a forthcoming Radio 4 documentary on chess which will be broadcast on 28.12. More here - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000cnby>. Like my opponents at Isis, Josie played a very decent game which took me time and energy to win.

This year, the Hastings International Congress has a spring in its step (or should that be winter?) with its new sponsor Caplin Systems and with 19 GMs (including David Howell) participating. This is the strongest field in many years, and promises to be a cracker. Our thanks go to Caplin for restoring the tournament to its status as one of the UK's top events. More here - <http://www.hastingschess.com/>

Wishing ECF members a Happy Christmas and New Year!

--- Mark Rivlin

### **Tribute to Dave Welch**

Dave died in November following a long illness, and such was his stature in English chess that we lead with a fitting tribute to his long-standing service to the ECF and home and abroad. Dave's funeral took place at Landican Crematorium, Wirral on 6.12.19. ECF Director of Membership Dave Thomas, Alex McFarlane, Peter Purland and John Saunders write about Dave here - <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/david-welch-rip/>

### **Classic rocks**

Tim Wall writes --- the 11th London Chess Classic, held from November 29th-December 8th, marked an impressive 10 years of top-class chess and schools events at the Olympia London Conference Centre for the UK educational charity Chess in Schools and Communities. The \$350,000 Grand Chess Tour Finals culminated in an impressive win for Chinese superstar Ding Liren, who dominated the final match versus France's Maxime Vachier-Lagrave, who in turn had knocked out World Champion Magnus Carlsen in the semi-finals. In the third place playoff match, Carlsen defeated Armenia's Lev Aronian.

The accompanying British Knockout Championship saw a win by British Champion Mickey Adams, who defeated David Howell in the final. Earlier in the tournament, Adams faced a tough challenge from FM Marcus Harvey, who narrowly missed a win in their Armageddon game.

In the other events, 14-year-old Indian prodigy R. Praggnanandhaa won the FIDE Open with 7.5/9, just ahead on tie-break from Australia's Anton Smirnov.

Gawain Jones won the Super Blitz, after defeating France's Tigran Gharamian in a final Armageddon game.

In addition to these high-level tournaments, Olympia also hosted a total of 2,500 schoolchildren from CSC

programmes in schools, and the children enjoyed a combination of a Grandmaster Show in the main auditorium, tutor-led training and a 5-round tournament with prizes for individuals and school teams. Said Tournament Director Malcolm Pein, 'The 11th London Chess Classic was one of the best yet with great chess from the elite and huge enthusiasm from the 2500 primary school children who came from all over the country. Congratulations to Ding Liren on his success in winning the GCT title and to Michael Adams for taking the British KO.'

### **No castle, no hassle**

Tim Wall on an interesting variation of chess rules [here](#)

Director of **Women's Chess**, Chris Fegan reports ---

December 2019 has been one of the most exciting in the history of the ECF and female chess, as we held the first ever joint education conference with FIDE, the European Chess Union, ECF and CSC. Entitled 'Chess and Female Empowerment', it was held at the Irish Cultural Centre in Hammersmith as part of the London Chess Classic. The Conference was a truly international event and attended by delegates from around 40 countries and was headlined by Judit Polgar who also made several media appearances in connection with the Conference including on the BBC here - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m000bxhk>. A full report will be published in due course, but in the meantime I encourage ECF members to look at the Conference website for more information on what occurred here - <https://londonchessconference.com>

One of the most instructive messages for ECF members generally was the achievements of our colleagues in the United States Chess Federation, who sent a strong delegation and shared many examples of good practice and success. One of the key outcomes for the ECF was the formal launching of the new ECF Board's consultation document on the Future of Women's Chess in England -- <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/development-of-womens-chess-progress-plan/>

I was also delighted with the London Chess Classic event and the fact that we had hundreds of female players involved, including of course CSC schoolchildren receiving daily chess lessons and playing in tournaments. A major new initiative this year was the English Open for Women and Girls Rapidplay which had an entry of around 50 players. The event was keenly contested and eventually won by Madara Orlovska - many congratulations to her.

### **Justin time**

GM Justin Tan won the UK Open Blitz championship in Solihull with a 13/15 performance. IM Ameet Ghasi came second with 12/15 and GM Danny Gormally came third with 9.5/15. In the Women's championship, GM Ketevan Arakhamia-Grant took first place with 14.5/15; WGM Katarzyna Toma was second with 13/15 and Madara Orlovska came third with 12.5/15. More here, including links to GM Simon Williams' excellent commentary --- <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/uk-open-blitz/>

### **Just in Times**

GM David Howell's tweet on his new Saturday job --- Pleased to announce that I will now be writing for [@thetimes](#) every Saturday. First column out today! [7.12.19]

### **National Schools Girls' Chess Championships 2020**

Entries can be made at the [National Schools website](#) for the January semi-finals. More [here](#) ...

### **Heavy medal**

Leonard Barden's Guardian column on Gawain Jones's 2019 medal hauls. More here, including Magnus Carlsen's unbeaten classical play run - <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2019/nov/22/chess-magnus-carlsen-wont-count-norway-league-games>

### **Malta Open**

English players at the Malta International Open - our thanks to the excellent research by folks on the ECForum for this information as the results were not available on the Chess Results site. More here - <https://www.ecforum.org.uk/viewtopic.php?f=31&t=10501>

### **English players at the World Senior Chess Championship**

<http://chess-results.com/tnr449485.aspx?lan=27&art=1&rd=11&fedb=ENG&turdet=YES&flag=30>, <http://chess-results.com/tnr492825.aspx?lan=27&art=1&fedb=ENG&turdet=YES&flag=30>

### **Celtic Tigers at the European Club Cup**

<http://chess-results.com/tnr462794.aspx?lan=1&art=20&fed=ENG&turdet=YES&flag=30>

### **Ravens: Spassky vs. Fischer play offer**

London-based Hampstead Theatre is currently showing Tom Morton-Smith's new play, which dramatises the 1972 'Match of the Century', until January 18th 2020. Receive a third off top-band tickets by entering promo code LCC2019 at checkout here - <https://www.hampsteadtheatre.com/whats-on/2019/ravens-spassky-vs-fischer/>

### **ECF Online Service ready for launch**

Nigel Towers writes - the ECF Online Service will be going live within the next few weeks. The service is currently in beta test and once live, will allow members and supporters to take part in regular ECF organised internet tournaments and events, and to receive an ECF online rating. The internet service is based on ECF clubs which have been set up on different provider platforms and which are open to all ECF members and supporters. Club tournaments are being held for the beta test group on a weekly basis with rapid and blitz time controls and will continue once we go live. The ECF internet service will also support participation in Federation endorsed international team events against other Federations and/ or national clubs. Once the service is live, the club online tournaments will be ECF rated with a monthly Elo rating published for club members, based on results from rated ECF club events, and a Grand Prix competition for games played in the ECF events. Please email the

ECF Office at [office@englishchess.org.uk](mailto:office@englishchess.org.uk) if you are interested in joining the beta test group to take part in some of the remaining beta test events. Otherwise we look forward to seeing you at the online tournaments once the system is live.

### **World Online School Chess**

This tournament begins in April 2020 and continues to March 2021. More details in [this PDF](#) and here - <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/world-online-school-chess-tournament/>

### **Forthcoming 4NCL events**

24th 4NCL Congress Friday 17.1 to Sunday 19.1.2020 at The Old Swan Hotel, Harrogate -

[http://www.4ncl.co.uk/fide/information\\_24.htm](http://www.4ncl.co.uk/fide/information_24.htm)

Junior 4NCL 18th-19th January 2020 at the Holiday Inn, South Normanton -

[http://www.4ncl.co.uk/j4ncl/jn\\_entry\\_1920.htm](http://www.4ncl.co.uk/j4ncl/jn_entry_1920.htm)

### **ECF Academy, Reading weekend**

Mimi Khan and David Gray report here - <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/Juniors/ecf-academy-weekend-4-november-2019/>

### **Joining the Academy**

Pauline Whitehead writes - The ECF Academy is the English Chess Federation's flagship training programme for young chess players. Each year around 100 players are selected for the program which is designed to support and nurture hard working chess playing families to help the child develop their talent and enjoyment of the game. The programme is structured around a number of training weekends (players can select between 2 and 4 weekends) where high quality chess training is provided by some of the country's top chess coaches including Grandmasters and International Masters. The training takes place in comfortable hotel facilities so parents can relax whilst their children are mastering various chess topics. There are also presentations and talks available for the parents including the opportunity to discuss their child's progress with our mentors and coaches. Please find further information below and how to apply here -

<https://www.delanceyukschoolschesschallenge.com/training-academy/>. For any further information please contact Alex Longson or Pauline Whitehead at [academy@englishchess.org](mailto:academy@englishchess.org)

### **European Youth Rapid and Blitz in Tallinn, Estonia**

ECF Head of Delegation Neil Jackson reports - the facilities were excellent and generally rooms and food were fine and the tournament was professionally run (although some children were concerned about unresolved disputes and not all the arbiters could speak English). We can be proud of all the English youngsters whose behaviour was impeccable. Results were I think as expected. While I was encouraging the England squad, the Russian delegation had GM Valerij Popov (winner of the 2018 adult championship) as a state-funded team coach. In the U14 blitz 8 of our 12 players finished on half points or higher and in the U14 rapidplay 4 of our 7 players finished on half points or better. There were outstanding results from Conall McBrinn finishing on 6.5/9 in U100 rapid and Billy Fellowes 6.5/9 in U80 rapid. In the team event our top U10 and U14 boys finished in the top half with several impressive individual performances. The youngsters left enthused by chess, it was a huge positive experience and influence on British junior chess. The team event was a particular success with new friendships forged. I encouraged the teams to hang out together as groups of 4 between rounds and observed a lot of England players encouraging each other and discussing games. More here -

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/Juniors/european-youth-rapid-and-blitz/>

**Senior opportunities 2020** - <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/Seniors/senior-opportunities-2020/>

### **Vacancies**

Awards Committee Chairman - <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/vacancy-chair-of-awards-committee/>

Chair of Council vacancy - <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/nominations-sought-for-post-of-chairman-of-council/>  
Manager, Disabled Chess - expressions of interest in this post should be made to the ECF office - [office@englishchess.org.uk](mailto:office@englishchess.org.uk)

**CHES** magazine teaser [here](#)

### **Chess Tweet of the Month**

From Nishith Pandya



Nishith Pandya  
@nishith\_pandya

The world chess champion – Magnus Carlsen is 2nd in Fantasy Premier League (once his auto substitutions kick in)!!!! #FPL

### **Obituary**

Martin Costley - <https://www.ecforum.org.uk/viewtopic.php?f=46&t=10511>

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