

Address to ECF concerning post of Chairperson

With wide experience in the chess world, fluent French, and exposure to key ideas in the interaction of chess with society (safeguarding, promotion of women, cheating by use of chess engines, tournament commentary), I am a strong candidate for the post of ECF Chairperson.

I have been involved in chess since school days, aged 8, playing with my father; participating in junior tournaments during secondary school; then in the Nottingham University C-team playing local industry teams. I once played for Nottingham county B-team. More recently I have played for Peterborough Chess Club in Cambridgeshire league, played once for U-120 Cambridgeshire match against Hertfordshire, and participated once in Cambridgeshire chess tournament in Peterborough.

I have been involved in education most of my career with some exposure to journalism (including press liaison), copy editing for book publishing, auxiliary nursing (now called care assistance), and general social work (visiting the sick and elderly; day centre for the homeless and unemployed). As for administrative experience I was head of department (Software/Computer Engineering) 2010-2013 in a starting Turkish university. In 1982 I had been one of the founding members of the Bosphorus University Computer Engineering department. I have been librarian for a choral society.

My absence from UK for 20 years is explained by being a member of a Roman Catholic Religious Institute with missionary outreach in Kenya and Turkey. I was able to obtain posts in secular universities on my own merits. Residence abroad has made me develop an overall resilience, and exposure to different cultures and languages has enriched me. Chess has helped bridge gaps of understanding.

I had long conversations with the late Alistair Summers of Peterborough Chess Club about chess in general, and chess instruction, in particular. I attended a taster training course for tutors with the organization Chess in Schools and Communities, instructor Sean Marsh. I held back from committing as a tutor because of making myself available for a possible university post in the Middle East.

I participated in the 2019 December London Chess Conference, where I shared some of my ideas about the names of chess pieces and operations. I was pleased to meet some ECF officials, international players and chess world movers. I enjoyed the new film "Fahim" and welcomed its brief forays into chess strategy.

Currently I am playing chess in the Peterborough U3A. This gives me interaction with chess players who do not play chess competitively. Admittedly there is not much opportunity for chess formation, but there are always issues of courtesy and safe environment. I am pleased that there is an above-average participation of women.

I am ready to engage with the ECF's long-term awareness campaign in making employers measure the benefits of employing chess players. As a mathematician/computer scientist I am ready to help ECF assess the mathematical derivatives of chess.

As a resident of Peterborough I have organized events related to Katharine of Aragon, including a

chess-themed Tudor period history session. I am currently investigating Shakespeare's play "The Tempest" especially its hidden chess game.

I follow many chess championships online, for example using twitch.tv. I am ready to explore the interest in variations such as Chess 360, Hand and Brain, and even combinations of chess with sport. I know enough about programming to consider starting to write a chess engine. Meanwhile I am content to benefit from the game elucidation they allow.

James Conlon, Peterborough