

To captains and players (*captains please circulate to your squads*)

Firstly, a reminder of the **Captains' meeting** this Wednesday at 9pm on Zoom. Links to follow tomorrow (I have gone professional for this !). Stocktake on group stages, season 2 planning, loose ends for Championships, U100 National 100 and North v South. Your continued engagement has been crucial and instrumental to the success of this first venture online for county chess.

Unsung heroes

Commiserations to Cheshire & North Wales, Leicestershire, Surrey Open, Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire, Warwickshire, Derbyshire and Hampshire who have missed out on qualification for the knockout Championships stages. I thought that there were some very spirited performances, particularly from those teams that have played throughout these stages with a very limited pool of players and still managing very few defaulted boards considering along the way. You should be an inspiration to some of the larger counties that did not enter this time round. A huge thank you to the captains here, particularly for getting teams off the ground and motivating your teams against some tough opposition. Some excellent performances along the way too.

Not over yet..... North v South – the oldest counties challenge

There is however one more longer play match this summer for your players (as well as from the rest of England) to participate in and that is the North v South match where northern counties take on southern counties after a 126 year wait. Saturday 5th September, 6:30pm. A mega board match for all abilities – Grandmaster to beginner (all will play). Full details and how to sign up when ECF memberships have been renewed or Supporterships (upgrades by payment of the difference are now possible) taken out are contained in the links below. Registration is centralised so the order is renew membership, go to the Chess.com site for your chosen team (ECF North or ECF South) fill in form available from REGISTER HERE – CLICK ON ME, and then after acknowledgement press JOIN (top right) on the Chess.com club page.

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/new-season-but-the-oldest-challenge/>

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/online-north-v-south-challenge-2020/>

The National 100 (U100s all-play-all regions league on 8th, 15th and 22nd August)

For the U100 players in your squads there is a regional league with 3 matches on 8th, 15th and 22nd August. Again at the slow play rate of 60 + 15. Not just for your squad players but for all U100 ECF members/Supporters in your county. Please do circulate the [attached flyer](#) to your county clubs and junior organisers. Inspired by their presence in the National Challenge (the pool matches), I have introduced a national county regional competition for them running alongside the County Championships. Again this is open to all current England ECF members/supporters (old or new memberships- new memberships taken out now give you August 2020 free plus all of the 2020/21 season), whether or not played for a county team. Act quickly as only a week before the first match and there are plenty of new players to this slow play format to attract !! The more the merrier.

The Regional Teams

East Saxons: Bedfordshire; Berkshire; Buckinghamshire; Cambridgeshire; Essex; Hertfordshire; Norfolk, Oxfordshire and Suffolk

Midland Outlaws: Derbyshire; Herefordshire; Leicestershire & Rutland; Lincolnshire; Northamptonshire; Nottinghamshire; Shropshire; Staffordshire; Warwickshire and Worcestershire

Northern Raiders: Cheshire & North Wales; Cleveland; Cumbria; Durham; Greater Manchester Lancashire; Merseyside; Northumberland; and Yorkshire.

The South: Cornwall; Devon; Dorset; Gloucestershire; Hampshire; Kent; Middlesex; Somerset; Surrey; Sussex; and Wiltshire.

County Championships Update – end of group stages – Knockout Finals stage here we go.....

8th August – Semi Finals; 22nd August – Finals night

The LMS has [League tables](#) and Championships [fixtures](#). Scroll down to 8th August.

Also.....

For league and cross-tables for each section go to your Group Event in the left hand side panel from the LMS [competition home page](#).

For your Championships fixtures go to the relevant Championship also from that [side panel](#).

Your **player lists** are now closed. Only those players who have played in or appeared on a matchcard for one game in any of the preliminary round, 13th June rated (aborted round 1) and the group stage matches are eligible for the Finals.

I know some teams have been hit by player withdrawals, one county devastatingly so and I am also conscious of finer weather, greater freedoms for some and the holiday season. I am considering a limited relaxation of the finals eligibility rule to allow new U150 players to play in the 4 Open Championships and new U120 players to play in the U1825. To do so we need a consensus from among the qualifiers. **This is on the agenda for the captain's meeting** along with grading lists for board orders (Jan 2020 applies for eligibility).

NB In the **Open Challengers** Cumbria and Shropshire have qualified from Group B to play one of Middlesex B and Oxfordshire in Group A. Who plays who depends on two arbiter rulings in Shropshire's final group stage match (qualification is assured but group finishing order is dependent on the match result).

Group results, Qualifiers and Championships Semi-Final pairings

In conjunction with our Chief Arbiter, Lara Barnes, we are pleased to formally announce the **Championships qualifiers** below. Links to **group league tables** and **cross-tables** provided along with your **new Event Championships competition fixtures**. In reverse order, **pairings for the Semi-Finals** reproduced below. First named county has white on odd boards and black on even boards.

U1825 Competition

League Tables: [Group A](#) | [Group B](#) **Cross-tables:** [Group A](#) | [Group B](#)

[U1825 Challengers Championship](#) - 8th August, 6:30pm

Oxfordshire v Norfolk

Greater Manchester v Surrey

[U1825 Championship](#) - 8th August, 6:30pm - the U1825 Championship contenders

Northumberland v Essex

Middlesex v Lincolnshire

Division 2 Open Competition

League Tables: [Group A](#) | [Group B](#)

Cross-tables: [Group A](#) | [Group B](#)

Minor Open Championship - 8th August, 6:30pm

Gloucestershire v Somerset

Worcestershire v Berkshire

Open Challengers Championship - 8th August, 6:30pm

Middlesex B v [*either Cumbria or Shropshire*]

[*Either Cumbria or Shropshire*] v Oxfordshire

Division 1 Open Competition

League Tables: [Group A](#) | [Group B](#)

Cross-tables: [Group A](#) | [Group B](#)

Major Open Championship - 8th August, 6:30pm

Devon v Essex

Greater Manchester v Yorkshire

Open Championship - 8th August, 6:30pm – the Online County Championship contenders

Lincolnshire v Norfolk

Northumberland v Middlesex A

The future.....

Plenty of chess still for all upto and including the Season 1 finale on 5th September with the English Online North v South 2020 Challenge.

Season 2 planning starts with this Wednesday's Captains' Meeting – this is your competition; it is what you have made it and will continue to be what you choose to make it.....

Mark Murrell

ECF Controller, Counties Championships

2nd August 2020.