

## ECF Election Statement – Silver Category Representative, 2020

Satish Gaekwad

Good Day

Hope you are all keeping safe in these challenged times. Most sports and particularly playing over-the-board chess have been a huge casualty over the last few months - but as you will agree that in moments of such crises, opportunities arise, and thankfully the lockdown situation has helped promote online chess exponentially.

I have been drawn to chess since early days and even had an opportunity to play a tournament alongside Viswanathan Anand in India where he won his first Sub- Junior's title way back in 1983. Of late, I have been accompanying my young son to various chess events (like most parents) and trying to reignite my passion for chess. As a result, I became a certified chess tutor from Chess in Schools and Communities and the European Chess Union. I am a volunteer at Delancey chess & an active member of the Kent Junior Chess Association that run chess Grand Prix' throughout the year & am also the point contact for London Junior Chess Championship for them. I volunteer to run a regular weekend chess club for juniors in a local library.

Chess in England has had a chequered trajectory of late at the competitive levels – perhaps this could be due to the partially realised **strategic initiatives** for **attracting and retaining the best available talent**. Another well acknowledged reason is the lack of sufficient **corporate sponsorships** to promote the game. As a Sales and Marketing adviser in the start-up ecosystem helping develop new products, I regularly observe & foster entrepreneurs to solve unique problems/issues using different lenses, by adapting disruptive approaches – as a result, I think I am well positioned to actively collaborate and drive innovative ideas amongst the chess fraternity, corporates, well-wishers of chess and the ECF organisation & to continue to address the **issue of talent and sponsorship** to help **elevate the level and uptake of chess** in the country.

The third area that merits greater attention is the creation, recognition and nurturing of **good chess tutors** as part of a community initiative, be it at schools, chess clubs, chess coaching venues to help engage a large number of young and experienced practitioners of chess (*children, adults, women, retired & less able members*) who have either moved away from the game or are fence sitters. The latter is largely due to the lack of awareness of the full potential of chess & the poor **customer experience** occasionally at events that suffer from funding at various levels. Another major issue affecting the game's popularity is the **low level of women & girl's involvement** – more events on lines of the 2019 London Chess Conference (with the theme “Chess & Female Empowerment” ) need to be encouraged for their increased engagement through the social & collaborative modes of chess. Coming from a management background and having led large teams, I think I can meaningfully contribute to the effective & efficient planning, organisation, collaboration and streamlining of various new and current initiatives run by the ECF.

Strong & well-funded **chess academies** need to be supported (on lines of the ECF Academy) across the country to provide guidance & opportunities to all those with potential and desire to take their game to the next level. Continued strong advocacy by the ECF organisation with active support from parents, players & members is desired for making the study of **chess as part of the school curriculum** by impressing upon the government & the masses in general about the positive emotional and intellectual impact of chess on lives.

I strongly believe in exploring all avenues to augment the number of active ECF members & volunteers / supporters of the game. We must also collectively rise above any challenges that may currently beset the ECF organisation and strengthen it further with a greater sense of purpose, innovative ideas, energy, leadership, and execution capabilities. Although I may not be known to many of you, I think I possess the credentials, enthusiasm & passion to help further the cause of my fellow members at the ECF - my LinkedIn profile appears [here](#). If elected, I will strive to collaborate with members across all categories to help further develop new ideas / initiatives that can promote the above causes, with the ultimate objective in mind of obtaining the **official status of a sport for chess in England** that could completely alter its profile for good. I humbly seek your support.

Many Thanks

Satish Gaekwad

(ECF Silver Member)