

Election Address of Natasha Regan for Non-Executive Director Position on ECF Board

Background

I am a Woman International Master at chess and have represented England internationally on numerous occasions including in the English Women's team in two Olympiads. I have played chess in the UK both competitively and socially for all of my life from the age of 8.

I have captained teams including Barbican 1 in the 4NCL, a London League team, a junior 4NCL team, and in 2020 I was deputy captain of the England team in the online Olympiad. I also ran a chess club at my children's school. This gives me some perspective from the very top levels of play through to junior and novice levels.

Throughout 2018 I worked with GM Matthew Sadler and UK Artificial Intelligence research company, DeepMind, and co-authored "Game Changer" about self-taught AI AlphaZero. This won the ECF Book of the Year in 2019 and generated immense interest in the chess world. Matthew Sadler and I gave a series of talks at chess clubs, tournaments, dinners, an AI conference and a prison which has again broadened my knowledge of the huge variety of settings in which people play chess.

Outside of chess I have wide experience in other games – I have represented England at both Go and Shogi, and my son represents England at Bridge. I regularly play in the Mind Sports Olympiad and have won medals in the Women's Pentamind (where results are aggregated across multiple games). Where the ECF works in conjunction with other games organisations I would look to bring a good understanding of approaches used for other games and also personal contacts.

I am a qualified actuary and have worked in the insurance industry for over 20 years in both technical and commercial roles including specialisation in governance and risk management.

Experience

My experience also includes:

- Support for the ECF's online chess initiatives, including commentary for the Counties Final and North v South matches
- Interviewing chess players for the "Chess for Life in the time of coronavirus" video series to understand how coronavirus is affecting players
- Good knowledge of Women's chess in England
- Over 20 years' business experience in industry, consultancy and regulation
- In my role at the Financial Reporting Council I was part of the Executive for the Actuarial Council which oversaw the governance of the Actuarial Profession.

What I can bring to the ECF Board

2020 has been an unprecedented year with the onset of the coronavirus. This has required chess clubs and tournaments to suspend their over-the-board activities for some time and there has been

massive growth in online activities including online competition, casual play and chess entertainment such as videos, streaming and commentary.

I see 2021 and beyond as a time of rapid change and development for chess in the UK as over-the-board activities resume, and on-line opportunities continue to be developed. The ECFs diversity and inclusion agenda continues to be fundamental to promote inclusion across age, gender, race and disability groups. The current crisis affects players in various ways and groups may need support as the “new normal” is established, for example professional players may have lost income, vulnerable groups may not feel able to return to over-the-board play, and some may have less familiarity with online play.

My business background brings me experience of stakeholder management, risk management and working in Committees, including in these times of change as my organisation responds to coronavirus.

I would seek to bring balanced, practical and constructive challenge to the ECF based on my business experience and my breadth of playing and organising chess and other games at different levels, settings and contexts of play.

Natasha Regan

10th September 2020