

Leicestershire and Rutland Chess Association Junior Chess Committee Report 2016-17

The committee took a decision at the beginning of the year to investigate the depth of current teaching of chess in LRCA schools (particularly primary) and found some 20-25 claiming to have chess clubs - though some did not run all year round and most did not want to entertain external coaching.

This was split geographically between committee members but was hampered at the beginning of 2017 by the resignation for personal reasons of Parag Kotecha (since then, 2 Fairfield parents have been voted onto the committee).

A national phenomenon in junior chess is the lack of secondary school age children playing chess in school clubs (due to other interests, according to Loughborough Grammar School - though they have two of the strongest juniors in the Modi brothers !). Loughborough GS themselves also used to stage the national final of the Delancey junior chess tournament, and indeed did run a mini-tourney of 4 local schools in February which Delancey won against them, Holywell and Sacred Heart schools. There has also been some success with Leicester GS who have staged 2 congresses for us and provide a number of children up to Yr6 (u11) for Saturday training at Westleigh.

It seems likely however that the days of conventional inter-school matches sufficient to constitute a league are over, due to Health and Safety and Protection issues with children, though Fairfield have managed matches against Woodhouse Eaves and Holywell. Logistic issues also make these difficult to organise.

The Chess in Schools and Communities organisation headed by IM and Daily Telegraph columnist Malcolm Pein ran a tournament at De Montfort University between Sparkenhoe and Anesby in July. Though the standard was low, it was well-attended and arranged by Dammy Akintade, a PhD student there. Dammy also helped to stage a CSC course there for prospective chess tutors in February which attracted attendees from across the country, including no less than a Northern Grandmaster, Joe Gallagher ! As a result, Ben Vaughan is now running a CSC course in a local library at Anstey.

Shaun Cope has taken over from me in coaching at Woodhouse Eaves

Mike Salisbury has offered compensatory coaching to Bishop Ellis as a result of the Paul Findley fiasco but it has not been taken up, so I consider our moral duty has been performed and the matter closed.

Brooke Priory coaching in Oakham has been returned from the hands of former Notts coach David Levens which I have taken on, since no other coach expressed interest, although George Sims took the initial course.

Another IM, Mike Basman, went bankrupt in the wake of a £300,000 bill from HMRC over unpaid VAT from his Delancey-sponsored national children's tournament, which attracts over 40,000 children annually. Fortunately, Sarah Hegarty (a past winner) and Alex Longson, her husband, have taken the helm. When I spoke to Alex at the recent Northants/Leicestershire Megafinal , he told me that Sarah has taken on the task full-time now. Leicestershire children dominated the Megafinal and took over 60% of the places at the next stage (Gigafinal) in Manchester.

Milly Kotecha was awarded the John Robinson trophy in July for most improved child as a result of improving her grade by a whopping 50+ points over the year and was rewarded with a place in the England u-11 team. Anika Khare has followed her this season into the same England team as has Tom Brown also in his section .

Training this year has condensed from 4 centres (Melton, Loughborough, Ashby and Braunstone) into 1 at Westleigh in Leicester itself and is addressed in detail within Paul Mottram's report. Thanks go to coaches used - Neil Roberts, John Mitchell, Jim Bingham, Shaun Cope, Bob Taylor, Dave Walton and Paul Mottram and also to Paul's wife, Marjorie, for handling finances and assisting at the 2 congresses as did Andy Morley and John Pattinson.

Bob Wallace
Chairman
JUne 2017