

Report on the ECF U13/ U18 event

This year we entered two teams in the U13 Minor event. One team made up of 12 & 13 year olds. In particular those who performed well at the recent Leicestershire Chess Championship. We also entered a team of rising stars from Leicestershire to give them experience of playing in such a competition. We also entered a team in the U18 section, mostly made up of over 13s who performed well in the U18 section of the Junior Championship.

We had a bit of set-back when one of the U18 players withdrew the night before the event. This meant that I had to rejig the teams around. Pulling one of the rising stars from the U13 event into the U18 team.

The first round in the U13 section was a bit disappointing as on three boards we were playing ourselves. It is always slightly annoying that we travel to such an event and they don't prevent these internal matches. As this is not really why you play in such an event. The internal match was a draw between our A team and our B team. Anika and Peter drew, whilst Nathanael from our B team beat our A team player & Daniel H (A team) beat Daniel C (B team). Unfortunately our Board 6, 'A' team player had to withdraw from his match as the pressure was too great for him. Thankfully his brother Adam Kerbel agreed to step in and play his match in his place. It was always going to be difficult for Adam, coming in already behind on the clock but he did himself proud and fought to the bitter end. Our 'A' team managed two more wins from Alastair and Ben giving them a reasonable start with 3.5 out of 6. The B finished the first round with 2.5 points, with George the other player to get a win.

There were only four teams entered into the U18 minor section and we played Staffordshire in the first round. We got a bye on bottom board as well which helped. Unfortunately only Harendra also recorded a win, as both Tom & Matthew managed to lose very promising positions. We lost to Staffordshire 4-2.

We had to change the U13 teams around for the second round. Yash joined the 'A' team whilst all the B team moved up one board to enable Adam to fit in on board 5. We had a phenomenal second round, our A team was near perfection with everyone getting a win except Ben who agreed a draw in a completely level bishop endgame where no-one had a chance for anything more. Our B team also excelled managing four wins: Nathanael (now on board one), George and Daniel all got wins whilst Phoenix got a bye.

This left our A team in first place, just half a point clear of Sussex. Our B team were in third place. So, things were looking very promising after the second round. Our U18 team managed a drawn match against Lincolnshire A team with wins from Tom, Drew & Sanaathen. Again this was a result that promised great things as we had the Lincolnshire B team next.

In the third round our A team responded to the pressure of leading by extending our advantage at the top to a full point. We got 4.5 points out of six thanks to wins from Ben, Joseph, Peter & Yash (who got a bye). Our B team dropped down to fourth after a very solid three wins from the six games. Our U18 team only managed a draw 3-3 against the bottom team, Lincolnshire B. This was thanks to wins from the top three players: Tom, Matthew and Drew.

So, going into the final round of the competition I wasn't sure whether the pressure of leading would get to the U13 'A' team as we have never been in that position before. The final round did though prove to be one too many for the B team who couldn't add any more points to their total and dropped down to seventh place. However it was an excellent performance from a young side, every one of whom outperformed my expectations. The pressure of the final round was starting to show

for the A team particularly after Joseph lost to his Lincolnshire 'B' team opponent. It looked very possible that we would be caught by Sussex; we secured three wins from Yash, Peter and Ben but then Alastair lost to his Sussex opponent. Sussex had only dropped half a point so far, we need now to rely on favours from other teams. We needed our Daniel to win his match on board five and Sussex to lose their final match to win to the event. Daniel had come out of the opening in a rather difficult position. However he managed to turn it around and gained a material advantage. Which he carefully and slowing converted to a victory. This left us with 17.5 points but we still needed Sussex to lose their last remaining match. Thankfully the Sussex player fell for a knight fork that left her a rook down. Gradually her opponent converted the extra material but I had to stay until the bitter end to ensure that victory was complete. This left Sussex with 17 points and Leicestershire as the ECF U13 Minor Champions!!

In the U18 section the final round was a jamboree section, we were in third place a point behind Staffordshire at the start. It is looked very unlikely that we would catch them and that we would have to settle for a respectable third place. It all came down to the final game between Rory Haywood and his Staffordshire opponent. The game looked hopeless for Rory as he was in an endgame, and had a knight for 3 pawns but those extra pawns were all passed and looked very strong. However his opponent blundered and Rory took full advantage to win his first game in the competition and secure the runners-up spot over Staffordshire.

Congratulations to all the players. Checking through the ECF website this is the first time that Leicestershire have won any of the sections in the previous 65 years history of the event.

Getting 3 or more out of four in such an event is an amazing result so special congratulations to Benjamin Raine, Peter Mottram-Epson, Daniel Hill, Yash Suribhatla (although two of his wins were defaults), George Worrow-Goodin, Tom Brown & Sanaathen Surendran who all achieved this fantastic result. Special thanks to Adam Kerbel for stepping in for his brother at very late notice, and to all the parents for bringing and supporting their children.

Players Performances are below:

Leicestershire U13 'A' Team						
		Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4	Total
Ben	Raine	1	0.5	1	1	3.5
Joseph	Ward-Langman	0	1	1	0	2
Alastair	Mottram-Epson	1	1	0.5	0	2.5
Peter	Mottram-Epson	0.5	1	1	1	3.5
Daniel	Hill	1	1	0	1	3
Adam	Kerbel	0				0
Yash	Suribhatla		1	1	1	3
	Total	3.5	9	13.5	17.5	
	Position	2=	1st	1st	1st	

		Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4		Total
Yash	Suribhatla	0					0
Nathanael	Jacob	1	1	0	0		2
George	Worrow-Goodin	1	1	1	0		3
Anika	Khare	0.5	0	1	0		1.5
Daniel	Chen	0	1	1	0		2
Adam	Kerbel		0	0	0		0
Phoenix	Colburn	0	1	0	0		1
	Total	2.5	6.5	9.5	9.5		
	Position	6=	3=	4	7		

Teams	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4
Hertfordshire	1.5	2.5	4.5	7
Leicestershire A	3.5	9	13.5	17.5
Leicestershire B	2.5	6.5	9.5	9.5
Lincolnshire A	3	6.5	10.5	13.5
Lincolnshire B	2.5	4.5	5.5	10.5
Sussex	4.5	8.5	12.5	17
Kent	3.5	5.5	8.5	10
Staffordshire	3	5	7.5	11

Leicestershire U18 Team							
		Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4		Total
Tom	Brown	0	1	1	1		3
Matthew	Lo	0	0	1	1		2
Drew	Harbidge	0	1	1	0		2
Rory	Haywood	0	0	0	1		1
Harendra	Surendran	1	0	0	0		1
Sanaathen	Surendran	1	1	0	1		3
		2 -4	3 - 3	3 -3	4 wins		12
		Staffordshire	Lincolnshire A	Lincolnshire B	Jamboree		

		Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4
Leicestershire		2	5	8	12
Lincolnshire A		5.5	8.5	12.5	16.5
Lincolnshire B		0.5	3.5	6.5	8.5
Staffordshire		4	7	9	11