

Notts News

Newsletter of the Nottinghamshire Chess Association

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UK Chess Challenge Megafinal

Notts juniors, as usual, performed well at the Trent Megafinal of the British Land UK Chess Challenge, held once again at Foremarke Hall School, Derbyshire, on 5 May. The competition is a national tournament for schoolchildren, of which the Megafinal is the second stage. Successful players qualify for one of two Gigafinals, which leads to the national Terafinal. A total of 348 players competed in the Trent Megafinal.

Qualifiers from NCA clubs were (section winners in bold type):

- ♦ **Under 8 Boys: Saaras Mehan** (West Nottingham), Daniel Thurgood (Nomads)
- ♦ **Under 9 Boys:** Sohum Dhir (West Nottingham)
- ♦ **Under 10 Boys: Lucien Holliday**, Graham Garside (both West Nottingham)
- ♦ **Under 10 Girls: Mathilda Pynegar** (Nomads)
- ♦ **Under 11 Boys:** Andrew Garside, Arun Maini, Tom Wild, Ross Mackay, Arjun Nehra (all West Nottingham)
- ♦ **Under 11 Girls:** Ella Macleod (West Nottingham)
- ♦ **Under 12 Boys:** Michael Zhang, Mohammad Mozaffari, Jordan Nicholson (all West Nottingham), Henry Justice (Ashfield)
- ♦ **Under 12 Girls: Heather Garside** (West Nottingham)
- ♦ **Under 13 Boys: Eamonn Lim** (West Nottingham), Sam Clayton (Long Eaton), Toby Thurgood (Nomads), Vijay Maharajan, Aarav Gupta-Kaistha, Keshav Nehra (all West Nottingham)
- ♦ **Under 14 Boys: Oliver Exton** (Nomads), Daniel Lin (West Nottingham), Henry Pynegar (Nomads)
- ♦ **Under 14 Girls: Anjali Lakhani** (Long Eaton)
- ♦ **Under 15 Boys: Christopher Ford** (West Nottingham)
- ♦ **Under 16 Boys: Ankush Khandelwal**, Edwin Justice (both Ashfield), Ted Pynegar (Nomads)
- ♦ **Under 17 Boys: Luke Robins** (Long Eaton)
- ♦ **Under 18 Boys:** Nigel Wright (Ashfield)

In addition to these qualifiers, the Under 9, Under 10 and Under 11 sections (boys and girls) were dominated by members of the NPSCA squads (14 of the 19 qualifiers from the Under 10 Boys, for example).

EPSCA Inter-Association Under 11 Final

Nottinghamshire hosted the climax of the English Primary Schools Chess Association's season at the Trinity School in Apsley on 12 May. Seventeen teams of 20 competed, along with a number of reserves, bringing the total number of players to well over 350.

With home advantage and a strong team, Nottinghamshire's Under 11s had their sights set on breaking the south's dominance of this competition, and expectations were raised even higher by an excellent first round, in which the wins swiftly piled up, resulting in a narrow lead for the home team.

Things looked even better when three quick wins were posted at the start of Round 2, but that was to prove the high water mark. One by one, the losses started to come in, and by the end of the round not only had the lead vanished, but so too had any realistic prospect of a top three finish. Barnet, in particular, had a barnstorming second round that took them from fourth to first, and it was clear that the trophies would go to one of three teams: Wey Valley (Surrey), Sussex and Barnet.

The battle proved to be exceedingly close. The three contenders all had moments in the lead, and only towards the end of the session did it become clear that Barnet's narrow advantage was not going to survive – Wey Valley and Sussex both had three or four games still in progress, while Barnet had just one. Sussex caught Barnet, but by that time Wey Valley had pushed their noses in front to win by a point. Sussex edged out Barnet for second place on tie-break.

Nottinghamshire improved a little on their poor second round, but a strong finish by Hertfordshire pushed them down to fifth place – one place higher than last year. There was some consolation, however, in that Nottinghamshire won the Reserve tournament quite convincingly, showing their strength in depth.

In the Audio Chess Grand Prix, which measures the performance of the counties in all three EPSCA tournaments (Under 11, Under 9 and Girls), Nottinghamshire's regional dominance, coupled with consistent results in the national finals, resulted in a fine third place.

Finally, a word on the organisation and the venue. John Crawley did a fantastic job of mobilising the NPSCA's coaches and volunteers to produce a tournament that ran like clockwork. Trinity School also proved to be an excellent

	Team	R1	R2	R3	Total
1	Wey Valley (Surrey)	15	15	16	46
2	Sussex	14½	15½	15	45
3	Barnet	13	17½	14½	45
4	Hertfordshire	12½	12	14½	39
5	Nottinghamshire	15½	9	10	34½
6	Berkshire	10½	11	12	33½
7	Kent	11	9	13	33
8	Richmond	11	12½	9	32½
9	Yorkshire	9½	11	10	30½
10	Oxfordshire	8½	12	9	29½
11	Oldham	9½	6	9½	25
12	Devon	7	8½	9	24½
13	Cheshire & North Wales	10	7	6½	23½
14	Manchester	4½	6	8½	19
15	Wiltshire	6½	5½	6½	18½
16	Essex	4½	8	3½	16
17	Liverpool	7	4½	3½	15

Sussex take second place after elimination of bottom board

choice of venue: the school's staff took care of all the moving of tables and chairs, and also looked after security and car parking. A group of the school's parents took on the task of providing refreshments, resulting in them raising over £500 for the school's marching band.

Rules Revision Meeting

There being nothing on the agenda, the Rules Revision meeting, scheduled for 4 June, will not take place this year. Cross that one off your list of things to do, but don't make any alternative arrangements for that evening – see the next item.

NCA Blitz Championship

The 2007 NCA Blitz Championship will take place at West Nottingham Chess Club on Monday 4 June. More details next time.

Summer Chess

Dave Griffiths (Fiveways) suggested that it might be a good idea to publish a list of the clubs that are open during the close season, for the benefit of anyone who might fancy a few friendly games even if their own club closes down for the summer. A quick email survey produced the following list (thanks to Alan Morrey, Kevin Harvey, Tim Walker, Barry Redburn and Maurice Hill for the information).

Open

- ♦ **Ashfield:** open every Wednesday evening at the Summit Centre for the months of May, June and July but closed throughout August.
- ♦ **Bunkers:** should be open as usual, though turnout might be sporadic. There are usually a couple of us at the club from 8–8:30 p.m. onwards. All are welcome to attend. It's nice at the Navigation in summer since you can play chess outside next to the canal.
- ♦ **West Bridgford:** most weeks there will be people present, but there may not be every week, and it may be worth ringing Tim Walker or Frank Hill beforehand.
- ♦ **West Nottingham:** open every Monday except for Bank Holidays; closed in August. There will be some special events (including the NCA Blitz).

Closed

- ♦ **Radcliffe & Bingham:** closed, but reopening on 21 August.
- ♦ **Nomads:** closed until the first Monday after the August Bank Holiday.

No information yet on the other clubs. I'm pretty sure that Gambit will be open, but please correct me if I'm wrong.

NCA Best Game Prize

Entries are invited for this year's NCA Best Game prize. Any game played by any NCA player in any competition since the end of May 2006 is eligible.

Historically, the number of games entered for this competition has been very low – just nine last year, for example. I suspect that there is an assumption that only the stronger players have a realistic chance of winning, but that isn't necessarily the case – in fact, it's only true if they're the only players who enter!

Please send your entries to Ian Kingston by the end of June. All reasonable formats, printed or electronic, are acceptable. Annotations are welcome, but will be removed before the games are judged. All games will be anonymised before judging. Entries may (and probably will) be published on the NCA web site at some stage.

ChessBase Light 2007

At the risk of sounding like a salesperson for ChessBase, I think it's worth mentioning that a new free version of ChessBase Light has just been released. The program is limited in many ways compared with its bigger siblings, ChessBase 9 and ChessBase Light Premium, not least because it cannot save games to a database or create new databases. However, it's useful as a tool for viewing existing databases or game files (up to 32,000 games) that you might find on the Internet, and it comes with a version of the Fritz analysis engine for studying games. It also includes a database of important games from the past (major tournaments, World Championship matches etc.).

The download is available from <http://www.chessbase.com/download/cblight2007/index.asp> (40 Mbyte; Windows only).