

Following Cheshire and North Wales's declination to stage the 2010 NCCU Championships, this year's event was held in the county of Cleveland. The Congress chosen was the newly revived Middlesbrough Congress, which was held for the first time in some five or six years. The congress was held on the weekend of 16th – 18th July.

The new venue for the Middlesbrough Congress was Middlesbrough FC's football stadium, which was generally well received by most of the participants. The venue had excellent playing conditions with good lighting and plenty of space to move around between the tables. Other positive comments from the players were the ease of access to the stadium and the ample parking just outside the hall.

It is hoped that many more summer congresses can be held at this venue, especially as this year's event attracted the unexpected high attendance of 109 players.

A welcome visitor on the Sunday of the event was ECF president, CJ De Mooi, who addressed the players and informed them all what he was doing to improve chess in the UK for all. Many thanks to CJ for taking valuable time out of his busy schedule to attend the congress.

The Chess

The NCCU Championships

The Open section of the congress had a fairly large entry level of 23 players, with six players graded over 200. Out of the 23 entries, 18 were Northern Counties eligible.

Top graded Jonathan Hawkins from Consett, Co. Durham, made a superb performance winning all four games, after taking a half-point bye on the Friday evening. Jonathan took the title, finishing just half a point ahead of nearest rival David Eggleston, also from Durham.

Placings

1st. Jonathan Hawkins (231) (Consett) 4½ / 5

2nd. David Eggleston (212) (Durham City) 4

3rd = Jos Woolley (206) (York) & Chris Ross (199) (b. Cleveland) 3½

The ECF advised that two British Championship places could be awarded at this event and that these places could be taken in either the 2010 or 2011 championships.

Ordinarily the first place would go to the winner of the NCCU title however, in this case, Jonathan Hawkins had already qualified as IM, so this place was then awarded to runner-up, David Eggleston.

The second place was awarded to Chris Ross, who just pipped Jos Woolley on a tie-break rule.

Both David and Chris have opted to use their award of a place in the 2011 British Championships. Good luck to both of them for next year.

The NCCU Junior Championships

Only two players in the Open were under 18 years old on the 1st September 2009, which is the principal criterion to be considered a junior, according to the NCCU rules. These were Daniel Fernandez and Martin Brown.

Daniel is a FIDE master currently residing in Singapore however, he was actually born in Stockport and, initially, it was thought that Daniel would qualify. However, after some investigation it was discovered that Stockport is now part of Greater Manchester and, as those living in the area will know, this is no longer part of NCCU.

So, congratulations to Martin Brown of Warrington, Cheshire, who finished on 3/5 in the Open and is this year's NCCU Junior Champion.

The main congress prizes

Rather more prize categories were awarded at the congress than those advertised on the entry form. This was due mainly to some unexpected sponsorship and a higher than expected entry level.

Cleveland Chess Association donated £100 to the event so that £25 could be awarded to the highest placed Cleveland registered player in each section. Also an anonymous sponsor donated £25 to be used in the Minor section as 'the organiser saw fit'. It was decided to award this money to the player who had a win against someone graded higher than themselves, by the largest margin.

The Open

1st. J. Hawkins (4½ / 5) (Consett) (231) - £180

2nd. D. Eggleston (4) (Durham) (212) - £80

3rd=. C.Ross (3½) (Huntingdon) (199) - £20

J. Woolley (3½) (York) (206) - £20

M. Round (Leeds) (170) won the U180 grade prize of a £10 Chess Direct book token.

The winner of the highest placed Cleveland registered player prize went to V. Szekely (Guisborough) (196e).

The Major

1st. R. Mounce (4½/5) (York) (155) - £180

2nd =. A. Nezis (3½) (York) (168) - £24

D. James (3½) (Durham) (162) - £24

H. Mohanpuria (3½) (Sunderland) (159e) - £24

D. Richardson (3½) (Middlesbrough) (158) - £24

A. Corbyn (3½) (Guisborough) (139) - £24

M.Connor (Bolton) (147) won the U155 grade prize of a £10 Chess Direct book token.

The highest placed Cleveland registered player prize was shared between D. Richardson (Middlesbrough) (158) and A. Corbyn (Guisborough) (139) - £12.50 to each player.

The Intermediate

1st. M. Fernandez (4½/5) (Singapore) (139e) - £180

2nd =. J. Cawston (3½) (Selby) (140) - £40

M. Carter (3½) (York) (142) - £40

S. Cranmer (3½) (Kirkby-in-Ashfield) (143) - £40

D. Peardon (Seaham) (126) won the U135 grade prize of a £10 Chess Direct book token.

The highest placed Cleveland registered player prize went to S. Cassidy (Stockton-on-Tees) (128).

The Minor

1st =. Z. Zhang (4/5) (Newcastle upon Tyne) (123e) - £100

K. Boxall (4/5) (Peterlee) (121) - £100

R. Berry (4/5) (Bishop Auckland) (110) - £100

F. Stobbart (Hetton le Hole) (97) won the U100 grade prize of a £10 Chess Direct book token.

The highest placed Cleveland registered player prize was shared between F. Brown (Stockton-on-Tees) (112) and G. Garnett (Stockton-on-Tees) (107) after K. Boxall generously declined the prize, as he was a major prize winner. Both players received £12.50 each.

The biggest upset prize of £25 was won by Mr. J. Fozard (Barnsley) (75), when John defeated a player graded some 43 points higher than himself in round 3 of the congress. N.B. Estimated grades were excluded in the determination of this prize.

Sponsors

Congress organiser, Mr. Brian Whitaker, would like to thank the following for their generous sponsorship.

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