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4NCL 2010-2011 2nd weekend 15-16 January

After the split venues at the first weekend caused by the ever-increasing size of the league it was nice to have all three Divisions held at one venue. I am also pleased to report that the hotel was fully booked (albeit I was hoping to find a room on the Saturday night) which bodes well for continued good relations with the hotel.

Thankfully there was no snow this year and so despite a surprisingly large number of players contacting me on the morning of the match (asking me how to get to the venue!) the matches got underway without any problems. A reminder that in the top two divisions after 7 rounds the top four in each section merge to form the Championship/Promotion pool whilst the bottom four form the demotion pool. Four teams are subsequently promoted/demoted. Division 3 will merge with the Northern League and the top four will subsequently be promoted to Division 2.

There are also three European Club Cup places available to the highest teams in Division One that wish to take the places. Whilst they should be teams finishing in the top half of Division One it is likely that this will be relaxed to include teams further down the league.

The awards ceremony for the 2009-10 season took place before the start of the Sunday matches so may have been missed by some players. Congratulations once again to Wood Green Hillmark Kingfisher 1 who were champions of Division 1, Sambuca Sharks who won Division 2, Rhyfelwyr Essyllwg who won Division 3 and also to KJCA Kings and The Full Ponty who won the Division 3 team rating prizes.



GM's Michael Adams and David Howell on boards 1 & 2 for Pride & Prejudice

The big match in round 3 of Section A of Division 1 was between Pride & Prejudice and Betsson. P&P were taking no chances and by fielding Adams, Howell, Jones and Hebden on their top four were able to power to a 7-1 victory. They were joined on 6 match points by Barbican who demolished newly promoted Pandora's Box 8-0. The remaining two matches in the section were thankfully more evenly fought with a potentially crucial match for a Championship Pool place resulting in a 5.5-2.5 win for WGHK 2 against Cheddleton. The ADs won the closest of the four matches; 4.5-3.5 against Warwickshire Select to keep them in contention for a Championship place.

Round 4 proved a lot more competitive with four relatively close matches. Pride & Prejudice won against WGHK2 although Peter Sowray won against GM Chris Ward and Chris Briscoe held Sophie Milliet with black. P&P won their top three whites though and Gawain Jones is now on 4/4. Barbican joined P&P on 4 match wins by beating the ADs 5-3 aided by wins on the top two boards by their GMs. John Richardson secured a consolation victory for the ADs against IM Lorin D'Costa. Betsson won 5.5-2.5 against Cheddleton by winning boards 4-7 along with Richard Bates defeating Keith Arkell on board 1 with black and also look set to qualify whilst Warwickshire Select beat Pandora's Box 5-3 which will probably have greater significance in the second half of the season if, as expected, both teams end up in the Demotion Pool.

Team scores after round 4: P&P + Barbican 8, Betsson 6, ADs 4, Cheddleton, Warwickshire & WGHK2, Pandora's Box 0.

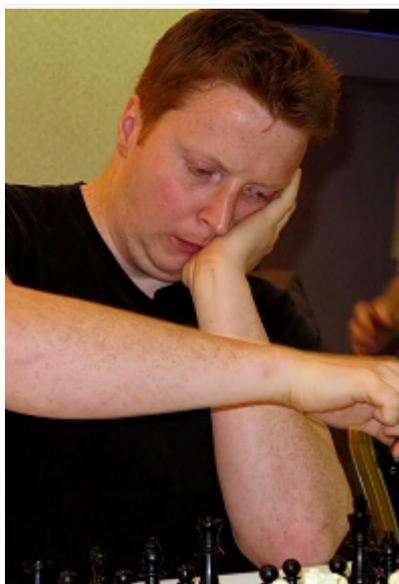
Section B saw WGHK1 pull clear by winning both matches against Barbican 2 and Guildford. Nick Pert now has 4/4 and his



GM Stephen Gordon - WGHK 1

team will be expected to qualify with seven wins and a healthy game points total. The remaining three qualifying places looked wide open although e2e4.org.uk had a great weekend with 4.5-3.5 wins against Cambridge & Oxford to finish the weekend on 6 match points with Yang-Fan Zhou and WGM Diana Arutyunova making their debuts on boards 2 and 3. Having talked up White Rose in my first weekend report it was almost inevitable that they would find the next weekend tougher and they suffered a surprise 5.5-2.5 loss to Oxford and drew with Cambridge on the Sunday. Barbican 2 beat Sambuca Sharks in round 4 to leave the Sharks bottom of the section and facing an uphill battle to make the top 4.

Team scores after round 4: WGHK1 8, e2e4.org.uk 6, White Rose 5, Guildford & Oxford 4, Cambridge 3, Barbican 2, Sambuca Sharks 0.



GM Simon Williams, Jutes of Kent

Section A of Division 2 looks wide open as the only team to start the weekend with 4/4 South Wales Dragons lost 6-2 to Anglian Avengers in round 3 and then 5-3 to Barbican Youth in round 4. The results were all the more surprising given that they fielded two IMs and outrated their opponents in both matches. Barbican Youth defeated Rhyfelwyr Essyllwg on the Saturday to finish the weekend on 6 match points and I was especially pleased to see that both 12-year-old Isaac Sanders and 16 year old Rhys Cumming scored 2/2 to help their team to victory. Cambridge University 2 won both matches to join Barbican on 6 points and Jutes of Kent, led by GM Simon Williams joined Anglian Avengers on 5 points despite a surprise 4-4 draw with Poisoned Pawns 2 in round 4 after losing their bottom 2 whites despite big grading differences in their favour. Team scores after 4 rounds: Barbican Youth & Cambridge 6, Anglian Avengers & Jutes of Kent 5, SW Dragons 4, Rhyfelwyr Essyllwg 3, Poisoned Pawns 2 & White Rose 1.

Section B is lead by Bristol 1 with 8 match points after two 4.5-3.5 wins against higher rated teams. Wessex won both matches to move to 7 match points whilst the battle for the third and fourth looks wide open. The biggest surprise to me is that 3Cs have yet to get off the mark despite appearing to have one of the strongest teams. It's not too late for them to qualify but they will need 3 wins and other results to go their way.

Team scores: Bristol 8, Wessex 7, Guildford 2 & P Pawns 5, AMCA Dragons 4, Kings Head 3, 3Cs and & Sambuca Black Sheep 0.

The Division 3 swiss remains wide open and is likely to do so until the last weekend of the season. The Braille Chess Association led by IM Colin Crouch now lead with 8 match points with Brown Jack, Celtic Tigers and Oxford 2 on 7. Wessex 2, KJCA Kings, Bristol 2 and Sussex Smart Controls are all on 6 points. Bristol 3 and SCS are the only teams yet to register a match point.

4NCL Northern League 2nd weekend Wychwood Park De Vere Hotel near Crewe



De Vere Wychwood Park provided excellent playing conditions for rounds 3 & 4.

Going into the weekend three teams; Bradford DCA Knights, Cheddleton 2 and Spirit of Atticus led with 4 match points. Atticus defeated Cheddleton 4-2 in round 3 despite being outrated on boards

2-6. Ironically, their top board John Carleton was held to a draw by Alex Richardson despite a 200+ point rating gap while their wins came on boards 2-4.

They then won 3.5-2.5 against Jorvik despite a shock loss for John Carleton on board 1 against Jos Woolley to finish the weekend leading on 8 match points. Bradford A are in second place after a 3.5-2.5 win against Aigburth and a 3-3 draw with Holmes Chapel. Jonathan Blackburn scored a fine result, defeating Ben Hague on board 1 to help deny Bradford their fourth match win. Bradford B secured a morale-boosting win in round 4 against the high rated Aigburth to register their first match points. Team scores: Atticus 8, Bradford A 7, Cheddleton 2 6, Holmes Chapel 5, Jorvik 4, Bradford B 2, Aigburth & Manchester Manticores 0.

My thanks to the Barcelo Hotel for accommodating and hosting the second weekend and to all the arbiters and 4NCL officials for the smooth running of the weekend.

The next weekend takes place from February 19th -20th with the following venues being used:

Rounds 5 and 6 19th & 20th February 2011

De Vere Venues, Wokefield Park, Berkshire Divisions 1 and 2

De Vere Venues, Sunningdale Division 3

Barcelo Majestic Hotel (Harrogate) Northern League

Players are requested to make themselves familiar with the venue addresses and suitable directions beforehand!

Photos: Stephen Connor, Lara Barnes

Text: Lawrence Cooper

See this report on the official site www.4ncl.co.uk/report_weekend2_1516_Jan_2011.htm