



# FOUR NATIONS CHESS LEAGUE

## 2009-2010 Season Final Weekend Report by Lawrence Cooper and Claire Summerscale

The 4 Nations Chess League is the UK's premier chess league. Since its inception in 1993 it has grown and thrived and players from all over the world have represented the many teams that compete in the most prestigious team chess event held in the UK.

The final weekend of the 2009-2010 4NCL season took place from May 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup>, with the top two divisions being played at Sunningdale Park and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division taking place at Wokefield Park. Players in the 4NCL are fortunate to have such spectacular surroundings at these venues and we



would like to say thank you to DeVere Venues.

We would also like to extend our thanks to the Barcelo hotel chain who also accommodate us throughout the season.

Congratulations to Wood Green Hilsmark Kingfisher 1, Sambuca Sharks and Rhyfelwyr Essyllwg who won Divisions 1, 2 and 3 respectively.

### Division 1

Division 1 looked to be a two horse race between Wood Green and Pride & Prejudice with the teams being separated on game points at the start of the weekend. However, Barbican and White Rose were only one match point behind and rounds 10 and 11 would see the leaders playing against the teams in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>.

Whilst round 9 saw all four teams win their respective matches Wood Green extended their lead over Pride and Prejudice by winning 6.5-1.5 compared to P&P who won 5.5-2.5. Round 10 saw Wood Green facing White Rose and Pride & Prejudice facing Barbican. Wood Green overpowered White Rose, winning 6-2 despite the odd scare along the way. The Barbican match was truly remarkable. Pride and Prejudice were on

average 120 points higher on every board but despite being led by Mickey Adams and David Howell, Barbican recorded an amazing 6-2 victory.

Wins for Jonathan Parker against David Howell, Mark Ferguson against Glenn Flear, Sam Collins against John Emms and John Cox against Harriet Hunt and four hard fought draws saw them home. Barbican has always been a tough and resilient team who push the professional teams hard every year but I don't think anyone saw this demolition coming.



Unexpectedly, this left us with a title decider in round 11. Wood Green were a point ahead of Barbican which meant 4-4 would be enough for them to retain their title. A hard fought match resulted which ended in a 6-2 victory for Wood Green. Wins for Jon



Ludvig Hammer against Matthew Turner, Nick Pert against Sam Collins, David Berczes against Mark Ferguson and Andrew Greet against Ingrid Lauterbach ensured Barbican were unable to repeat their heroics of the previous day. Andrew Greet also achieved a GM norm with his win on board 8 and I should also mention that he had drawn with Mickey Adams in a hard fought struggle on board 1 in round 9 when he was playing for the Wood Green 2<sup>nd</sup> team!

The demotion pool saw Jutes of Kent and Poisoned Pawns both needing to win all three matches to have a realistic chance of staying up whilst Guildford 2 and South Wales Dragons needed a good weekend to put pressure on Oxford, Barbican 2 and Pandora's Box. Round 9 kept all the teams involved as Jutes of Kent defeated Pandora's Box despite a shock loss for Simon Williams on top board and Poisoned Pawns defeated Guildford 2. Barbican 2 had an important win to ease their relegation fears whilst Betsson made certain of top-flight chess next season.

In round 10, three of the relegation places were effectively decided. Barbican 2 won to leave Pandora's Box looking over their shoulder in the last round, whilst losses for Guildford 2, Jutes of Kent and Poisoned Pawns relegated Jutes, leaving the other two hoping for a mathematical miracle on the final day. In contrast, the wins that Oxford and South Wales Dragons secured meant that their round 11 clash would leave the winner certain of survival, whilst the loser would have to depend on other results to go their way.

Oxford secured their Division 1 status by defeating South Wales Dragons 5-3, thanks to wins on the bottom four boards. Pandora's Box also survived after a tense 4-4 draw with Guildford 2 thanks to wins on boards 2, 3 and 4. Betsson defeated Barbican 2 to top the demotion pool whilst Jutes of Kent were condemned to a surprise bottom place after a 5-3 loss to Poisoned Pawns. I won't embarrass the Jutes player whose mobile made a noise to level the scores at 1-1 by mentioning his name!

Andrew Greet secured his first GM norm and Graham Morrison, Alexei Slavin, Peter Sowray and Ian Thompson made IM norms.

### Division 1 Championship Pool

Team	Won	Drawn	Lost	Points
<b>WOOD GREEN HILSMARK KINGFISHER 1</b>	6	1	0	13
<b>PRIDE AND PREJUDICE</b>	5	1	1	11
<b>BARBICAN 4NCL 1</b>	5	0	2	10
<b>WHITE ROSE 1</b>	4	0	3	8
<b>WOOD GREEN HILSMARK KINGFISHER 2</b>	3	0	4	6
<b>GUILDFORD-A&amp;DC 1</b>	2	0	5	4
<b>CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY 1</b>	1	1	5	3
<b>THE ADS</b>	0	1	6	1

### Division 1 Demotion Pool

Team	Won	Drawn	Lost	Points
<b>BETSSON.COM</b>	7	0	0	14
<b>BARBICAN 4NCL 2</b>	5	0	2	10
<b>OXFORD 1</b>	4	0	3	8
<b>PANDORA'S BOX GRANTHAM</b>	3	1	3	7
<b>SOUTH WALES DRAGONS</b>	3	0	4	6
<b>GUILDFORD-A&amp;DC 2</b>	1	2	4	4
<b>POISONED PAWNS 1</b>	2	0	5	4
<b>JUTES OF KENT</b>	1	1	5	3

### Division 2

The promotion pool of Division 2 was more about who won the title than promotion, as 5<sup>th</sup> placed Barbican Youth could only be promoted if Barbican 2 in Division 1 were relegated! This meant that barring a late surge from AMCA Dragons, the top four teams would go up even if one slipped into 5<sup>th</sup> place. Cheddleton and Sambuca Sharks went into the weekend with very strong sides whilst e2e4.org.uk looked capable of giving them stern opposition. Ultimately, the Sharks ran out deserved winners of the league with 4.5-3.5 victories against Warwickshire Select, e2e4.org.uk and Cheddleton. Warwickshire Select defeated AMCA Dragons 4.5-3.5 in round 11 to ensure they held onto fifth place and were therefore promoted as Barbican Youth, despite finishing 4<sup>th</sup>, could not be promoted as Barbican already have two teams in the top division.

The demotion pool in Division 2 was all about two relegation places as Guildford 3 and FCA Solutions were already relegated and Brown Jack became the third team to go after losing to Celtic Tigers in round 10. The scores prior to round 11 saw Bristol & White

Rose 2 on 9 points, Anglian & Wessex on 8 and Celtic Tigers on 7. Anglian & Wessex ensured their safety with comfortable wins against the bottom two teams. Bristol lost narrowly to Brown Jack, which left Celtic Tigers needing to beat White Rose to survive. They duly won 5.5-2.5. Had they won 5-3 this would have left three teams on 9 match points and 32 game points each!

### Division 2 Promotion Pool

Team	Won	Drawn	Lost	Points
<b>SAMBUCA SHARKS</b>	5	1	1	11
<b>CHEDDLETON</b>	4	1	2	9
<b>WARWICKSHIRE SELECT 1</b>	3	2	2	8
<b>E2E4.ORG.UK 1</b>	4	0	3	8
<b>BARBICAN 4NCL YOUTH</b>	3	2	2	8
<b>AMCA DRAGONS</b>	2	2	3	6
<b>KINGS HEAD</b>	2	1	4	5
<b>POISONED PAWNS 2</b>	0	1	6	1

### Division 2 Demotion Pool

Team	Won	Drawn	Lost	Points
<b>ANGLIAN AVENGERS</b>	5	0	2	10
<b>WESSEX 1</b>	5	0	2	10
<b>CELTIC TIGERS 1</b>	4	1	2	9
<b>BRISTOL 1</b>	4	1	2	9
<b>WHITE ROSE 2</b>	4	1	2	9
<b>BROWN JACK</b>	3	1	3	7
<b>GUILDFORD-A&amp;DC 3</b>	1	0	6	2
<b>FCA SOLUTIONS 1</b>	0	0	7	0

### Division 3

Division 3 looked very close at the start of the weekend with many teams capable of claiming one of the four promotion places. When the dust had settled, Rhyfelwyr Essyllwg won the league, ahead of Sambuca Black Sheep on game points and 3Cs claimed third place to make a welcome return to the top two divisions. Cambridge University claimed the final place ahead of Wessex 2. Amongst the many teams that narrowly missed out, Warwickshire Select 2 appeared the unluckiest, losing to Wessex 2 3.5-2.5 and dropping to sixth when a win would have seen them edge out Cambridge for the final promotion place.

### Division 3 Championship Table

Team	Won	Drawn	Lost	Points
<b>RHYFELWYR ESSYLLWG</b>	8	1	2	17

<b>SAMBUCA BLACK SHEEP</b>	7	3	1	17
<b>3CS</b>	8	0	3	16
<b>CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY 2</b>	7	1	3	15
WESSEX 2	7	1	3	15
WARWICKSHIRE SELECT 2	6	2	3	14
KJCA KINGS	6	2	3	14
FCA SOLUTIONS 2	6	1	4	13
THE FULL PONTY	5	3	3	13
SUSSEX SMART CONTROLS	6	1	4	13
E2E4.ORG.UK 2	5	3	3	13
ICENI	4	4	3	12
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE 1	5	2	4	12
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE 2	5	2	4	12
OXFORD 2	4	3	4	11
AMCA RHINOS	5	1	5	11
BRAILLE CHESS ASSOCIATION	4	3	4	11
AMCA HIPPOS	5	1	5	11
GLOUCESTERSHIRE GAMBITS	4	2	5	10
BRISTOL 2	4	2	5	10
KJCA KNIGHTS	4	1	6	9
GUERNSEY MATES	4	0	7	8
BRISTOL 3	3	2	6	8
SCS	4	0	7	8
HACKNEY	3	1	7	7
E2E4.ORG.UK 3	3	1	7	7
BEAUTY AND THE BEASTS	3	1	7	7
CELTIC TIGERS 2	3	1	7	7
OXFORD 3	3	0	8	6
HALESOWEN	2	1	8	5
GUILDFORD-A&DC 4	1	2	8	4
AMCA CHEETAHS	1	0	10	2

You can view results and information about the 4ncl here: <http://www.4ncl.co.uk/>

