

Chess Scotland Annual Report 2007

President's report

My first year as President of Chess Scotland has contained both disappointments and positive developments.

The greatest disappointment has been a lack of progress in closing the rift between Chess Scotland and Scottish Junior Chess – but I think I may have been too optimistic. Informal contacts I have had with individuals in SJC have been amicable, and I will always be willing to discuss any matter with them on an informal basis. As well as discussions, there have also been events where CS and SJC officials have worked together in harmony. So even though formal meetings appear to be unproductive, I believe there is a willingness to cooperate in both organisations, and I think progress is being made, even if only slowly.

Another disappointment has been the poor turnout at the 2007 Scottish Championships (in progress in Cumbernauld as I write this). It seems that the current format is no longer attractive to enough people, and we must now try something quite different (more on this later).

Turning to the positives, the Report on Junior Chess in Scotland produced by Frances Benton Consultancy contained a plan which I believe can result in a very bright future for chess in Scotland. The coming year will, I hope, see the appointment by the SJCA Educational Trust of a full-time Junior Co-ordinator. And it seems to me that some of the Report's recommendations are as valid for Chess Scotland as a whole as they are in the Junior field: professional fundraising and the use of a charitable trust as a means of boosting the value of donations are steps I think we should take as soon as possible. (Perhaps we should also examine the possibility of abolishing membership fees as such, making membership of CS effectively automatic for all players who contribute through grading fees by playing graded games.)

Our magazine, *Scottish Chess*, has also improved in both content and punctuality since the appointment of the new editorial team. The "paper or electronic" debate continues, and rightly so – like CS itself, *Scottish Chess* exists to benefit the chess community in Scotland, and we must be willing to change the way we provide services to that community.

The Scottish Championships of 2008, to be held in Glasgow and organised by the Glasgow Chess League, should see a new format being tried out, with the introduction of an International Open Tournament incorporating the various national championships. The opportunity to compete with strong foreign players in Scotland must be an incentive for Scottish players to take part.

Contacts with the media in the past year have included some disappointments (a reporter from the *Sunday Post* was quite interested in some "human interest" chess stories I offered him back in September, but his editor rejected them; and in June this year a Belfast company, DoubleBack Films, approached CS for material that might be made into a television documentary for Channel 4 – the film company liked the stories/subjects I suggested, but Channel 4's commissioner lost interest as soon as the word "chess" was mentioned), but also some unexpected good publicity: the Sports Editor of the *Sunday Herald* quoted comments of mine from a telephone conversation in an article on recognition as a sport, and one Saturday in June the *Scotsman* devoted its two centre pages entirely to Junior chess.

Finally, I wish to express my gratitude to the Directors and paid officials of Chess Scotland, and to the volunteers who fall into neither category, for the work they have done over the past year – I am indebted to them, Chess Scotland is indebted to them, and the entire chess community in Scotland is indebted to them.

Donald Wilson
President

Schools development report

I shall keep this brief. The year has been dominated by the Junior Chess Review, about which there have been several prominent reports on the CS homepage. The homepage should now carry the Review's executive summary. Please see my covering comments on that and the summary itself. I will be pleased to field questions on any aspect of the report at the CS AGM on 19 August.

I am pleased to confirm that five Chess Scotland presenters will be delivering presentations at the upcoming conference on chess in schools and communities organised by Aberdeen University. This promises to be a first-class event, with many international contributors. Details about all the Chess Scotland and other presentations can be found at the link to "CISCONN" in the newsbox on the CS homepage.

Supported by Donald Wilson, my own presentation at the conference will provide an opportunity to consider Chess Scotland's future role in developing the schools and junior game. See the abstract below. If in the light of both this and the Junior Review, anyone feels that they have any good ideas, I'd be pleased to hear from them at schools@ChessScotland.com

This debate is so important that I think I shall stop at this stage, having simply flagged it up. We have excellent volunteers in the chess community, but unfortunately not nearly enough of them and not nearly enough financial resource. How do we all move forward?

I gave more detail on a range of other matters in my report to the CS Council meeting earlier in the year – see the minutes of the meeting at the Chess Scotland info link. All of these have moved on more or less as described in that report and as expected. I shall be happy to speak further about any of these, too, at the AGM.

Abstract: Promoting more chess in schools – Chess Scotland's challenges – as drafted April 2007

Craig Pritchett and Donald Wilson propose to present on the above challenges. They will build on an article (by CP) on "Chess in Schools: the Aberdeen Project – a way forward?" (Chess, May 2005 - www.chessscotland.com/junior/cpchessmay05.htm). Written in the light of the University of Aberdeen Rowan Group's research report on the Aberdeen Chess in Schools project (January 2005), the article took stock of the wider prospects of promoting the "visiting chess coach" concept advocated by the Aberdeen researchers.

The article in Chess argued that there were "good chances for roll-out ... but there remain a great many questions about resources." The presenters will argue that this general conclusion still holds but will also point to a number of recent grounds for increasing optimism. Recent experience indicates that more schools and local education authorities may be prepared to finance / part-finance more chess in schools projects if they can be matched with an appropriate "coach". More such coaches also appear to be increasingly active.

Chess teaching currently relies overwhelmingly on volunteers, who themselves overwhelmingly operate for relatively small periods of time in single school clubs. There are still few "coaches" prepared to commit themselves to larger, multi-school / area-wide projects. In part this is because of economic insecurities, career path inadequacies and / or lack of professional recognition. There are also project design, negotiation and quality assurance

issues and within schools, particularly secondary schools, there may be “crowding-out” because of curriculum pressures.

Against this background, in 2006-07, Chess Scotland commissioned consultants, financed by an Awards for All grant, to review the support it offers to schools, local education authorities, volunteers and “coaches”, and its business planning for junior chess. The presenters will outline Chess Scotland’s main responses, which [are likely] to include commitments to: sharpen business planning; appoint professional fund-raisers; create an active charitable Trust Fund; and develop a regional coordinator role to help facilitate more chess in school projects [detail subject to final report by consultants].

The presenters will conclude with a view on how this improved set of developments - at schools / local education authorities, among potential larger chess in schools project “coaches” and within the national federation - is likely to help promote more chess in schools over the medium to longer-term and invite debate and comment.

Craig Pritchett
Schools Development Director

Financial Review

Despite the lack of any sponsorship for the 2006 Scottish Congress at Troon other than the Local Council reducing the rent for the playing venue we managed to organise an event that didn’t require funding from the general account. This was, in the main, due to the generosity of a number of donors, bequest money and organising costs being kept to the minimum. It is all credit to Alex and his team that the last couple of Championships have managed to be organised and run at nearly half the costs of the Championships four or five years previously. The overall deficit for the event was under £300 rather than a possible £2,000 to £3,000 and this left a balance of just £100 as a reserve for the future. This is a major area of concern and it was agreed that £2000 would be transferred this year from the General Account to support the Scottish Championships. This, however, is only a stopgap and a more permanent solution is required.

In the General Account our income for the year was boosted by our successful application for a grant of £5000 from Awards for All and by a number of significant donations. In addition income from members in the way of subscriptions and magazine sales both increased significantly over the year. On the debit side League and Congress income both fell. Although the numbers in some leagues did increase the overall numbers fell by 56 team boards. The fall in grading income is due to the timing of some events and some of the smaller events either not taking place or are struggling to attract the numbers. Club affiliations remained steady although it is disappointing there was no increase in junior club affiliations despite the reduced fee.

As advised last year the costs of the delayed issues of Scottish Chess magazine meant that the publication costs would be inflated in these accounts. The cost of these two additional issues is included in the publication costs. Our international expenditure was much less than anticipated because, for various reasons, we didn’t participate in a couple of events and the costs of one event were much less than originally estimated. Also as reported last year some of the expenditure for the Olympiad that took place early in the financial year was recorded in the previous year’s accounts due to payment being made in that period. Expenditure for schools chess was also much less than expected and our membership secretary, who should be complimented, succeeded in carrying out all his duties well below the anticipated expenditure. One of the main items of expenditure was the Junior Chess Business Plan but the Awards for All Grant plus a donation of £400 covered most of this cost.

Thanks to the Aagaard Training Fund a number of training sessions were held during the year when players benefited from the tutorials given by Yusupov and Marin. The Walter Munn Fund supported the Junior Grand Prix and we also benefited from an additional £200 grant from the Scottish Executive to assist with the costs of inflation.

The overall result is that we ended the year with a healthy surplus rather than the expected deficit.

We are once again indebted to all those who contributed to the funds and to many who gave their time and effort voluntarily without making any claim for the expenses they incurred and, on behalf of Chess Scotland, I thank them all.

L.R. McKenzie
Finance Director

Executive Director's report

Donald Wilson and I agreed it made sense in terms of continuity and support to the new President to remain as Executive Director for a year. I'm delighted to say it was a year in which very little support was needed! I was however glad to be able in my last year as a Director to organise a celebration of the triple British Championships wins by GM Jonathan Rowson, having failed to do so in the previous two years.

On 2 June, Jonathan gave a simultaneous display over 20 boards in the main entrance hall of Glasgow's Art Gallery (winning 19 and losing to Chris Macdonald). In the afternoon, he gave an inspirational talk to the youth squad meeting organised by Donna Officer at the same venue, and played a joint display with Steve Mannion. In the evening, he was guest of honour at a dinner in central Glasgow and gave an entertaining and well received talk on the influences which had brought him to his current strength.

Jonathan also presented the trophy which bears his name to its first winner, Chris Macdonald both at a photo-opportunity in the entrance hall of the Gallery and, more informally, at the dinner in the evening. Chris is the first holder of the Scottish Boy Player of the Year trophy, donated by Donna Officer. Jonathan also presented the Cherie Booth trophy - also twice! - to Amy Officer as Scottish Girl Player of the Year!

I would like to acknowledge the support we received from Glasgow Museums including the provision of the venue free (with only a small charge for the tables we used), and the significant donation towards the event received from the Scottish Junior Chess Association Educational Trust.

On a constitutional point, the Management Board have agreed the maximum continuous term of service for the President should be three years. A constitutional change to give effect to this will be proposed at the AGM.

John Glendinning
Executive Director

Scottish Championship organiser report

This year's Scottish was held at St Maurice's, Cumbernauld. The venue was given by North Lanarkshire Council as part of the the new town's 50th anniversary celebrations. The event had a truly international flavour with players from Denmark, England, France, Germany, Ireland, Norway and Spain as well as Scots competing. The entry was up significantly from the previous year, though higher numbers still would have been appreciated.

Championship

Championship was a ten player all-play-all. It had been decided in advance, as the result of a poll conducted amongst chess players, that in the event of a tie, the title would be shared. Interestingly, had the tournament been run as a Swiss then the vote was in favour of a rapid-play play-off!!

The event itself was a 10 player all-play-all and produced an emphatic victory for Andy Muir with the impressive score of 8/9.

Unfortunately, as there were only 3 titled players no norms were available.

FIDE Open

http://www.chessscotland.com/photos/fideopen_600.jpgThe Open was a keenly contested affair, and whilst there were a number of draws on the top boards these were generally hard fought.

Scottish Senior Champion – Alastair White 6/7

Under 1800 Championship - shared between Donald Heron and Paul McQuillan

Under 1500 Championship - Ali Roy won this event and with it two titles as she also retained her Scottish Girls' title

Scottish Under 1500 Champion and Scottish Girls' Champion:- Ali Roy 5/7

Scottish Under 1500 Boys' Champion – Joseph McGreechin 4½

Weekend Open - 1st= Jacob Aagaard, Harald Borchgrevink 4/5

Weekend Major - 1st Stephen Hamilton

Weekend Minor - 1st David Brodie

Thanks go to the following people/organisations:

North Lanarkshire Council, Staff of St Maurice's, Ronnie Wallace, Donald Wilson, Simon Gillam, Lara Barnes, George Anderson without all of whom I would not have been able to organise the event.

It is certainly time to consider the future of this event in its current format. The Championship is nowhere near as strong as it should be and this is having a knock-on effect on the FIDE Open which loses its top players to the Championship. I for one would welcome an experimental period where an international open event was organised with the title going to the top Scot.

The Scottish Championships in its current format seems to have run its course. The top players do not seem to be interested. Despite a survey saying otherwise, holiday venues are no longer popular with the 'ordinary' chess players. Over the last two years there were a number of requests for a venue in the central belt. St Maurice's in Cumbernauld provided such a venue. Whilst the venue was not ideal it would be a struggle to find a better venue at no cost.

Let me quote Ian Marks in an e-mail

"I didn't get the chance to speak to you before I left, so I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you and all your colleagues for your efforts in organising and controlling such a successful, enjoyable and smoothly run event.

I must point out, however, that my performance owed nothing at all to poor play but was due entirely to the lousy location (Nightlife!? Golden sands? The lap dancers? How can you possibly expect chessplayers to do well if they can't party till dawn or dance the night away?), the shabby venue (Windows, for God's sake! How can we concentrate with *natural light* streaming in?), the quietness (Where were all the screaming juniors, chattering masses, piped muzak, banging doors? Call this a chess venue?) and, most odious of all, the horror of the nightmare five-minute daily commute! If there had been any B&Bs I'd have been better off in one!! Oh – and what happened to the dedicated sauna suite which, I was led to believe, the venue possessed? It is a well-known fact that I only perform at my best if I can have a steam bath every fifteen minutes while enjoying the ministrations of bare-breasted young nubile. Be assured that I shall be asking some pretty searching questions at the AGM."

Other positive comments also appeared on the CS Noticeboard.

Again most of the criticism came from those who were not present. As a result of adverse comments on the noticeboard a potential weekend congress in Cumbernauld has taken a step back and is now unlikely to be organised!!

The Board/AGM should consider the future of the event.

A weak championship means that no title norms are possible. It also has a knock-on effect on the Open, with players who should be at the top end of the Open competing in the Championship then the Open is a less attractive option for 1800+ players.

I would suggest the following:

The Championship should normally alternate between venues in Edinburgh and Glasgow, with occasional visits elsewhere.. (The next two events should show if this is a feasible long term objective)

The Championship should be contained within an International Open. The Scottish Champion would be the highest placed Scot. I believe that as this may result in several players on the same score there should be some form of tie break. Ideally, with sponsorship this should be a play-off. As there is unlikely to be sufficient funds for this my second preference would be for the player with the best tournament performance.

Fees for titled players should be awarded according to title and rating.

Whilst this requires some more thought the basic idea would be:

GMs £75; IMs £50; FMs £25.

2301-2350, £25; 2351-2375, £50; 2376-2400, £75; 2401-2425, £100; 2426-2450; £125;

2451-2475, £150; 2476-2500, £175; 2501-2525; £200; 2526-2550, £225;

2551-2575, £250; 2576-2600, £300; >2600, £500

The money would be allocated on a first come first served basis until exhausted.

Next year's Scottish will be held in Glasgow with the venue provided by the Glasgow Chess League as part of its centenary celebrations. Edinburgh is being investigated for 2009.

At present I am considering that the 2009 Congress could be my last as organiser. If anyone is willing to take on the post they may wish to work with me during the next two years. I am willing to consider forming a congress committee for this reason.

Alex McFarlane

Scottish Congress Organiser

Home Director (Junior) Report

Junior chess in Scotland is in a pretty healthy state at present and junior chess activity has increased over recent years. There are numerous opportunities for young people to play in individual and team events during the year in local, regional, open, SJC or Chess Scotland events. In addition, a number of Scottish juniors have acquitted themselves absolutely superbly in various national and international events. For example, Scotland has 2006 British Champions at both senior and junior level and won the Faber Cup in 2007 for only the 3rd time since 1968. Many Scottish juniors competed superbly in the UK chess challenge gigafinal in Manchester in July with many reaching the final stage of this national event. Also, many juniors will have recently competed in (and hopefully won) various events at the 2007 British Championships. Well done to them all! When I first came to Scotland in 2000, there was a minimal Scottish junior presence in the final stages of the UK Chess Challenge competition or the British Championships but now Scottish junior players are a real force and this should be celebrated by all. Also, junior events and players have received significant coverage in the media and many events have been supported by councillors, MSPs or MPs. The fact that chess is on the radar screen of the media and politicians must be good for junior chess in Scotland and should be built upon in the future.

Regarding Chess Scotland affairs, Amy Officer has continued her excellent work maintaining her excellent Chess Scotland Juniors website which contains a very entertaining and

informative mix of reports, pictures, anecdotes and reminiscences. I am sure that juniors and 'older people' will continue to send her material for the website.

Stephen O'Donnell continues to send information regarding CS events to schools including the Junior Scene Newsletter and is the organiser for the Scottish Secondary Schools Team Championship (the Scotsman trophy). The 2007 event was composed of 22 teams and is fiercely competitive as it contains some of the strongest junior players in Scotland.

Other important Chess Scotland junior events include the very successful Primary Team Championship organised by Christine MacGregor. Primary teams qualify from regional heats while the P5 and Under teams gain direct entry to the final. This year Grangemouth Community Education Centre hosted 12 qualifying primary teams and 13 P5 and Under teams (100 players in total). John and Lynsey Shovlin organised the Scottish Girls Team and Individual Championship that was held at the delightful Beatrix Potter Centre in Birnham. I organised the Chess Scotland Scottish Schools Individual Chess Championship that was held at George Heriot's School. This free invitational event consisted of 100+ competitors who had qualified on merit from various junior events across the country by achieving a 50% score. This event therefore acts to link many junior events throughout Scotland and I am delighted that the Association of Certified Public Accountants of Great Britain (APCA) sponsors this national final. Kevin Henry, chief executive of APCA, made a special trip to Edinburgh to open the tournament and we will see him again next year. I also helped to organise the Chess Scotland Primary Individual Championship that was held in a very wet Donnolly Adventure Centre in Aberfeldy with Norrie and Maureen Mathie, Donna and Amy Officer and Jim Anderson in attendance. This is a very tough event and comprised 32 top juniors from primary schools right across Scotland.

Chess Scotland acknowledges the achievements of juniors through the Jonathan Rowson and Cherie Booth QC awards. This year's winners were Christopher MacDonald and Amy Officer who are both superb role models for juniors throughout Scotland.

I have been involved along with many others in several meetings over recent months as part of the Junior Chess Business Review funded predominantly by a successful application to the Awards for All fund. I think that this has been a very useful exercise and I am convinced that junior chess in Scotland will significantly benefit in the future from implementation of the recommendations made.

Lastly, I would like to thank all of the junior chess organisers chess in every chess organisation, club and school throughout Scotland (including the parents of players who support their children so well) who give up their time to generate opportunities for young people to play chess. In particular, all those involved in running the various Scottish 'megafinals' are to be particularly praised - these events are daunting in size (200+ children) but are key events that facilitate Scottish juniors playing in the national stage of the biggest junior chess event in the UK.

Jeremy Hughes
Home Director (Junior)

Membership Report

Individual Membership

The table below gives the Membership numbers for this year and last at the 30 April.

Membership Type	Apr-07	Apr-06	Increase
Basic	110	106	4
Family A Basic	27	26	1
Family A Full	63	46	17
Family J Basic	11	7	4
Family J Full	4	6	-2
Full	177	147	30
Life	140	139	1
Patron	5	5	0
U/14 Basic	23	24	-1
U/14 Full	7	9	-2
U/17 Basic	11	12	-1
U/17 Full	10	11	-1
Total	588	538	50

At last I can report an increase in membership numbers and a healthy one at that of 9%. As the significant increases are in Family Adult Full and Full membership the credit must be given to our editors of the magazine. However with our focus on School Chess it is disappointing that we do not see an increase in membership in the junior member categories.

Last year we were able to mention the introduction of the facility for using PayPal to pay membership subscriptions. Over the full year 1 May 2006 to 30 April 2007 members made payments of £ 11702 of which £2916 (25%) were made through PayPal. Possibly some of the increase in membership is due to the ease of making payments by this method.

Club Membership

Currently we give details of 71 Clubs in Scotland on our Web Site (down 4 on last year). 35 with 1 still to pay are members of CS (1 down on last year). Only seven clubs now take up the benefit of insuring through the CS insurance scheme.

The number of club secretaries with email addresses has dropped from 59 to 51 which reduces the effectiveness of emailing club information to clubs at the start of the season. Not sure why this has happened.

Calendar

Although the main calendar showing the next 12 months events is fairly easy to maintain I have not found a good method of showing a projected calendar to help organisers avoid event clashes. Organisers could help with this problem by giving the dates of their events a year in advance. Even provisional dates would help organisers to avoid potential clashes. It would be easy to extend the Calendar to 15 months if it was thought that this would help.

Player of the Year

Jonathan Rowson was voted Player of the Year. Arrangements to present the trophy are still to be made. For the first time members were allowed to vote by email and this more than doubled the votes cast, 92 in total of which 35 were for Jonathan.

CS database

Recently there has been discussion between some council members (by email) regarding what data is held on members and how this information is made available. This may mean adding more groups of people (example like list of Arbiters) and determining who gets access to this information.

George Anderson
Membership Secretary

Chief Grader's report

The new grading list is scheduled to be available from the printer on July 31. Alex Bisset, who developed the current grading program in 2001, had indicated earlier this season that his time to support the program would be limited. However the quality of the program produced by Alex has been sufficiently robust that it has now completed another season successfully.

Alex indicated towards the end of July that software changes at his work site of Aberdeen Harbour would make it impossible for this to be used as the long term host of the online grading system developed by Alex as a key feature of the new program.

Gordon Rattray of Polytechnic CC, assisted by comments from other programmers, has been developing a substitute PHP based server for online grading which he intends to go live using the facilities of the web package already purchased to host the CS website. Initially the new online system may not offer all the functions of the Harbour site. Development will be ongoing. Many thanks to Gordon for his work which had already provided programming solutions to create output in the new formats required by the CS Grand Prix and FIDE Rating reports.

At the most recent Council meeting there was some discussion on the purchase of software licences to enable new programmers to make adjustments to the existing program. However as yet progress has been made without spending any additional funds.

For next season the focus of grading will be to concentrate on trying to secure a longer term programming and hosting solution. Many interesting ideas are suggested on the noticeboard such as calculation modifications and multiple lists during the grading year but any discussion on these must wait until the basics are back in place.

FIDE Rating: There has been some improvement in FIDE working procedures. FIDE now allow event registration and allocation of FIDE Pnums to be controlled by the Scottish Grader. If any ungraded player is going to play in a FIDE rated event outside Scotland either as an individual or as a team member they should request a FIDE Pnum from the Scottish grader. The time spent in allocating Pnums should avoid time on fixing player identity errors later.

Grand Prix: The format of the Grand Prix was changed to Best 10 events. This worked well and kept more tension in some of the sections. Thank you to new sponsor for 2006-2007 season Quality Books and to Chessbase who have agreed sponsorship for 2007-2008.

Douglas Bryson
Chief Grader

Webmaster's report

The front page of the website continues to be updated regularly. Grading results, tournament adverts and reports, Grand Prix updates, CS news info and links to events currently underway are the staple fare.

George Anderson, CS membership secretary, has continued to devise database solutions to improve the accuracy of website information. Club contacts, Arbiters, Coaches, CS Contacts and the Calendar are all generated directly by George's membership database. This means

that updates to the website are automatic when someone provides updated membership information to George.

Amy Officer provides a lively junior dedicated news and information service on the CS juniors page. Alan McGowan continues his historical researches which can be viewed from the archives link on the front page and the links to former Scottish champions. Crawford MacNab updates the game download page. Thanks to all who provide reports and updates for the website.

Andy Howie changed the Noticeboard format to a PHP style board at the start of the year. Initial reservations have subsided and like any unfamiliar software most users have now adapted to the new set up. The CS noticeboard must be one of the more active chess forums in the world.

The new CS Online shop, i.e. a portal to Amazon, has generated £116 commission in the last 8 months. The 100 Club Lottery, updated monthly on the website generates about £550 profit per year.

Douglas Bryson
Chief Grader

Editors' Report – Scottish Chess

We have now completed seven issues of the magazine. We are satisfied with its quality, and are also happy to take the overall lack of complaints we receive as a statement of our readers' satisfaction.

The magazine is on time and on budget, though if Mac would like to give us some more money we wouldn't complain.

It was agreed at the Council Meeting in February – partly at my (Robbie Coleman's) suggestion – to implement a fee for putting 'inserts' out with the magazine. The fee would go some way towards covering the extra postage needed because of the extra weight or the forms. This fee has discouraged one congress from distributing entry forms through *Scottish Chess*, and been commented upon as expensive by a one-day allegro. Logically we think it seems fair to charge less for one-day events as their forms are usually lighter. Generally though we think the question is whether Chess Scotland should simply support congresses by allowing them to use the service free, or not. We don't have a position on this.

We are both going to begin university next year. Although we believe we will still be able to produce to magazine on time and at a high quality, we would like to have the option to expand the editorial team occasionally where it is helpful to us attaining these goals.

Robbie Coleman and David Oswald
Scottish Chess Editors

Technical director's report

The Arbiters' Committee met in February and reviewed the activity of qualified arbiters. Full minutes are on the website. Prior to the meeting, the CS Guide for Arbiters (an important text for the arbiters' course) was revised and updated, and is now also available on the website.

A one-day course for arbiters was held at Perth in March with assistance from Donna Officer. Eight candidates attended. So far, only one has taken the exam, resulting in a pass for Amy Officer.

Ken Stewart
Technical Director

Annual Report from International Director (Open)

Nothing to report from me.

*Jacob Aagaard
International Director (Open)*

Junior International Report

During the course of the year Chess Scotland has sent juniors to a variety of International events as follows:

European Community Youth Championships in Mureck, Austria
We sent 1 player, Matthew O'Donnell, accompanied by his father.

European Youth Chess Championships in Herceg Novi, Montenegro
We sent 6 players to this event accompanied by coach, Esben Lund. The event was very well run and our players fared well.

The Trinations tournament which Scotland hosted this session was held at Haven Holiday Resort, Craig Tara. Scotland won the U/16 and U/14 team sections.

The Quadrangular tournament was held in Liverpool and Scotland fielded a team in the U/16, U/14 and U/12 sections. Scotland won the U/16 and U/14 events. This event was organised by Jacob Aagaard who had taken over the role of International Director for Juniors.

European Youth Team Chess Championships

We sent a boys and girls team to this event accompanied by chaperone Donna Officer and coach, Esben Lund. Faced with very stiff competition from some strong European countries, our players performed very well and gained some very valuable experience.

Glorney/Faber/Trinations

This is a trial combination of the events this year. The event is being hosted by Ireland and in addition to the usual teams of 5 boys and 3 girls for the Glorney and Faber, we have been invited to send along an U/12 and U/14 team to compete in the Trinations tournament. This means that there is no U/16 team participating which is quite unfortunate. It was hoped that other European countries could be enticed into playing in the event but this has not materialised. England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales will be competing in both events. Norrie and Maureen Mathie and Donna Officer are attending as chaperones and Jacob Aagaard is to coach the Glorney and Faber teams.

I am in the process of organising entries for two events, the European Youth Championships in Sibenik, Croatia and the World Youth Chess championships in Antalya, Turkey. Chess Scotland is sending squads to both events and the coaches are Graeme Kafka and Esben Lund.

We have a very healthy **Junior Youth Squad** with around 40 players aged between 8 and 18. Plans are being finalised for the creation of a development squad of less experienced players who are showing potential for improvement. This squad will be coached by a group of more experienced juniors who have expressed an interest in sharing their knowledge and experience. This group will be supervised by Stephen Mannion who has shown a great interest in helping to develop the skills of junior chess players. Training days will be held using a similar setup to the Youth Squad Training Days.

The Youth Squad has met two times in 2007, once in February and again in June. The latter training day was held in conjunction with the simultaneous event presented by Jonathan Rowson at the Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum.

Jonathan gave a talk to the Youth Squad members and then played a simultaneous in tandem with Stephen Mannion. Jonathan also presented the new Jonathan Rowson Award

for the Boy Chess Player of the Year to Christopher Macdonald and the Cherie Booth Award for the Girl Chess Player of the Year to Amy Officer.

Jacob Aagaard kindly continued his Internet Coaching sessions with a group of coaches willing to present sessions with the junior players.

Thanks must be given to the coaches who have given their time and effort to coach our juniors and assist with the selection process. The coaches for this session were Jacob Aagaard, Stephen Mannion, Neil Berry, Graeme Kafka, Duncan Grassie, Gunnar Jacob and Phil Thomas.

Thanks also to Norrie and Maureen Mathie who have given endless help, support and encouragement.

The International Director for Juniors has a very large remit and it is an extremely time consuming job: one which can be very rewarding and enjoyable as Scotland is blessed with a very dedicated and committed group of juniors. Unfortunately the job has its 'down side' too, often the Director is the one who is blamed by parents for perceived wrong selections and can often be targeted for unfair and unjustified criticism. Although I declined to stand for the 2006/7 session, I felt obliged to step in when Jacob announced his resignation. Since I took up the position again in early January I have worked relentlessly to meet the requirements and time constraints of the job but have found myself swamped by the various duties the position entails. I am increasingly aware of the need to give more of our junior players exposure at international level but increased flight and accommodation costs mean that the budget allocated to Juniors Internationals can no longer fund the players but is spent on entry fees and providing coaches and chaperones. I also physically do not have the time to devote to booking more international events. For this reason, I have decided that I will not stand for the position for the forthcoming season unless arrangements are made to reduce/share the duties

My thanks go to the parents and players who have supported me throughout the past four years.

Donna Officer
International Director (Junior)

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