

Scottish Selection Criterion

Introduction

The following selection guide has been created to clearly define the criteria to be used by selectors when selecting players for Scottish Junior international games and is designed to improve the quality and efficiency of the selection process. The aim is to create a process that is fair, consistent, transparent and robust.

The present Chess Scotland junior selection criteria guideline provides a broad framework of criteria but falls short in recognising the complexities that uniquely affect junior selections. These factors can cause inconsistent results in selections as each selector may hold differing importance to each factor.

The new criteria provide a step by step process to guide selections along a consistent pathway. Selector input will still be important in the selection process as the measurement of individuals playing strength cannot be measured by statistics and grading alone.

Objective

The selection criterion has been designed to:

- Select and support the strongest players available to play for Scotland at International events.*
- Uphold the status of Scottish representation by ensuring selection is based purely on chess merit.*
- Include all players who are deserving of the chance to play at International level without exceeding the constraints of the Chess Scotland budget or coaching capacity of the travelling squad.*

Proposals

- Introduce a Scotland Squad system of players.*
- Introduce a two tiered team selection.*
- Introduce a coherent and precise grading and ranking process*
- Introduce a single annual selection process*
- Introduce a fairer distribution of funding.*
- Introduce a methodology for determining player strength*

Creation of a Scotland Squad

The addition of a squad to the selection process presents a number of advantages. A squad list will capture the names of all players identified by selectors as having the required quality or potential, to compete on the junior international stage. Once a player is included in the squad their profile such as date of birth, contact details, availability for upcoming international events, selector and coaching feedback etc can be amassed in the selection template. Players making the squad will be aware that they are in contention for selection and will be motivated to push for full selection.

Two Tiered Scottish Team Selection

It is important that all children who deserve the chance to play for their country through hard work and talent are given the opportunity to gain experience from playing in top international events. Conversely it is important that the kudos of winning Scottish selection is not devalued by opening selection to all. Taking large player numbers to a tournament can overwhelm the coaching capacity and travel logistics of a Scotland chess team. The solution to this dilemma is to travel with two teams. The Scotland 1st team will contain the top players based on playing strength and will receive the full support of the Chess Scotland Head of Delegation and coaches at the event. The second team will be drawn from the remaining Scotland squad members who have exceeded the minimum criteria for international selection and will have access to any surplus Chess Scotland resources not used by the Primary team at the event.

Scotland 1st Team

The Scotland 1st team structure will be based on the optimum number of players, coaches, travelling party size for each tournament as determined by the selection committee. Once the number of places has been decided the top players based on playing strength will be invited to join the team. The selections will not be influenced by age, gender or funded places etc, but purely on their selection ranking as determined by the selectors.

Scotland Squad Players

The second tier Scotland team will comprise of children who have gained sufficient Scottish selection ranking to meet the minimum international qualification standard. This standard is set as 90% of the lowest player TPR from the last five World and European junior tournaments.

The Scotland squad players will travel with the Scotland 1st team but may travel individually or arrange to appoint and self fund their own Head of Delegation and coaches.

Scottish Grading

Each junior Scottish player's playing strength will be primarily measured by their Scottish live grade. If any selector believes a player's live grade is inaccurate due to factors such as lack of games played, 200 up rule etc, they will flag the player's grade for further analysis by the selection committee. Once flagged a player's average TPR from their best four Scottish Congress results during the last twelve months will be used instead of their Scottish live grade. If a player has played less than four Scottish Congress games then each selector will make an assessment

of their grade based on all information available to them and submit an estimated grade for that player. Once all selector assessed grades have been submitted the highest and lowest estimates will be discarded and an average of the remaining selector assessed grades will be inserted to make up the shortfall in the four Scottish congress games.

Scottish Ranking

It is possible for a player to have a lower Scottish grade than older Scottish players but have a higher ranking on the international stage when compared with their international peers of the same age and gender. When ranking our best Scottish players for selection it is important that we consider this factor.

A player's approved Scottish grade will be measured against their international peers grading profile which will relate to their position in range for their age category in international tournaments. i.e. a female Scottish player who was ranked 10th amongst her international peers in the U12 girls category would have a superior Scottish selection ranking than a male Scottish player in the U16 category who was ranked 11th against his peers. The international grading used for Scottish ranking is based on the average grades for each age category in the World and European tournaments from the last five years. The end result will be a Scottish team selected with the greatest potential to win points at international events.

A spreadsheet held on the Selectors Google drive has been created to simplify the selection process. The Scottish ranking can be determined by simply entering the player's age and Scottish approved grade. The spreadsheet contains formula that average the range of grades of World and European championships from the last five years for each category. A player attaining a ranking of 1 from the spreadsheet would equal the top seeded grade of their international championship section, where as a player ranked 100 would equal the lowest graded player of their championship category. Any player ranked greater than 100 would be unlikely to score points at international events based on their grading and would not meet the minimum standard for international selection. The spreadsheet formula can be easily calibrated to account for the known discrepancy between Scottish and FIDE grades and an additional buffer of 10% has been added to lower the bar for minimum selection.

Once the ranking process has been completed the allocation of Scotland 1st team places will be made. Starting from the top ranked player down, each player will be given the opportunity to choose which tournaments they wish to attend from that years junior international calendar. If an event is not chosen then the top ranked squad player will be promoted to the primary team for that event.

Introduction of a single annual selection

The change to a single selection date offers a number of improvements to the selection process. The selection process becomes simpler and less time consuming for selectors to administer and the allocation of selections/funding for all events for the coming season becomes clearer. Assessment of players will be made during the twelve months prior to selection and tournament dates will be finalised in advance of selections.

Set selection date

Setting one date for finalising all selections for the coming calendar year will enable a structured allocation of player selections across all events. In the event that ranking between two or more players is indiscernible, the allocation of Scotland 1st team places over the forthcoming year can be assessed prior to any one player being allocated a confirmed place.

Selections will no longer be delayed to allow players the opportunity to impress at the next upcoming tournament or selections rushed through due to the last minute introduction of a new tournament to the Chess Scotland junior calendar

The selection date will be set sufficiently early in the year to allow time for parents of selected players to book time off work, obtain lower travel costs, obtain passports, visas etc.

Having one selection date will streamline the whole selection process and allow selectors to apply greater emphasis on monitoring and developing the squad of players rather than repeated ranking of the same group of players throughout the year.

Adding tournaments to the junior chess calendar

Tournaments should be chosen at the earliest opportunity by the selection committee and added to the selection template and Chess Scotland web site to allow as much time for heads of delegation, coaches, players and parents to make necessary arrangements if they believe they may be in contention for selection to an event. Players already part of the Scotland squad can be canvassed prior to selections being made to determine their availability for each event.

Once the tournaments have been selected the selectors will set the composition of the Scotland 1st team for each event. The number of coaches, head of delegation and players will be decided from the onset to ensure that the correct player coach ratio is not exceeded.

Last minute additions of tournaments to the Chess Scotland Junior international calendar should be avoided. Untimely changes to the calendar would cause a significant disruptive effect to the overall selection strategy. For that reason all tournaments dates should be set prior to the selection date for that year.

Every effort should be made to avoid clashes with the domestic Chess Scotland calendar of events.

Funding

Funding is allocated to Chess Scotland by FIDE as one payment for each event in respect to how many age/gender categories are represented by Scottish players. Chess Scotland allocates this funding to the best player in each age category. This method can reward players of lower playing strength, particularly if a certain age category has a shortage of good chess players.

Funding should be awarded to our best players who have achieved the highest ranking through ability and endeavour regardless of which category they will be playing in at FIDE events. I propose that a first past the post system is deployed for funding. This is not dissimilar to most sports where the best competitor wins 1st prize. If a player has been selected for the 1st team and is the highest ranked player then they should receive full funding. If further funding is

available then the next ranked player would receive funding and so on until all available funding is allocated. Split funding may still be applied if two or more players are deemed inseparable in playing strength by a majority of selectors. If Chess Scotland attracts more FIDE funding through the attendance of the secondary team then funding can be awarded to the highest ranked player who is next in line to win funding. Ideally the Primary and Secondary teams would obtain funding for a greater number of categories due to the increased size of player numbers attending and our top players will receive a more proportionate reward for their achievements.

To ensure funding for international events is shared among more than the top ranked players, tournaments are to be categorised by the selection committee as primary, secondary and team events. e.g. the Worlds, EYCC and Olympiad would be classed as primary events and the Euroyouth, European Primary Schools etc as secondary events. Once the player and tournament ranking process has been completed the top ranked players will be given the opportunity to choose which tournaments they wish to attend from the junior international calendar. If one or more primary events are not chosen then the player can choose to play at lower ranked tournaments up to a maximum number of three (equal to the number of primary ranked tournaments). The second ranked player will be given the second pick, the third player the next etc, until all places are taken or there are no players of sufficient calibre left.

Team events such as Glorney and Liverpool will be chosen within the constraints of the age categories for each team based on ranking. Funding is not generally available for these events.

Selecting players

Determining player strength

The primary task for selectors is to determine the playing strength of junior players. This can be difficult to quantify due to the rapid changes in chess development and inconsistent performances inherent in junior play.

There are numerous statistics and measurements available to help selectors make such an assessment but unfortunately none provide the perfect answer to fit all players. After careful consideration of the most readily available means of measuring playing strength, the use of a combination of live grade, Scottish congress TPR and selector assessment is proposed. The live grade provides a quick and readily available, approximate measure of all junior's playing strength. The Scottish congress TPR provides a bench mark to filter out factors affecting the live grade such as those created between players who play in different chess environments such as international or primary school games. The selector assessment allows selector judgment to arbitrate when statistics are unreliable or unavailable.

Scottish congress games have been chosen as the most suitable benchmark for comparing players. The congress games are often attended by Scotland squad players and the standard of opposition is generally well known and consistent.

The following sections describe the pros and cons of some of the principal methods for determining playing strength and of which selectors should all be aware.

200 Up Rule: When assessing junior players for international selection, it is important to be aware of the 200 up rule as it can create a marked difference in live grading between two players of similar playing strength.

The Rule: Junior players are likely to improve their playing strength over the course of a season, whereas established players grades are generally stable. Fast improving players can quickly find that their published grade is out of date and understates their current strength. To quickly boost improving players to a more appropriate level and avoid their opponents unjustly losing grading credit the 200 up rule was invented. If a grade goes up by 200 points on the first of the (Nov 2006) final grading runs it will be set to zero and recalculated as if the player was an unrated player. The temporary ratings thus calculated will replace the old published grade. Grades will then be recalculated and opponents will get credit for the temporary rating rather than the old published grade.

Live Grading: Grading is a good general guide of a player's progress but is not always an accurate measure when comparing two junior players who have played a different number of games or against opponents of different strength. At junior level, players live grades can vary considerably as the 200 rule or imported international FIDE grades etc are applied.

Incorporated FIDE grading: Incorporating grading performance from tournaments where player grades are generally higher than equivalent Scottish grades can alter a junior's grade considerably. Games lost in international competition against ungraded players are not transferred to the Chess Scotland grading. e.g. A player may play nine games, lose eight and win one at an international event. If the one win was against their only FIDE graded opponent then a 100% win performance against one player will be record in the Chess Scotland grading system. Grading between different countries can vary, particularly at junior level. A TPR performance in one country is rarely comparable to a TPR played in another.

TPR: Tournament Performance Ranking is a measure of a players performance over the number of games played at a particular tournament. The TPR can reflect the current form of a player more accurately than the players live grade. This indicator is a valuable indication of a player's progress from one tournament to another. However the range of player grades at junior tournaments can play a significant factor in the TPR calculation. E.g. A junior player with a grade of 1200, playing against a player with a grade of 100 would have their graded performance and TPR calculated with the opponent attributed an inflated 800 grade once the maximum grading gap is applied. ($1200 - 400 = 800$).

Rate of grading change: Can indicate the progress made by a player but should not be used as a means of selection. The rate of grading rise decreases as a player's grade reaches the players actual playing strength. A 200 grading rise between 200 to 400 is not comparable to a 1500 to 1700 grading rise.

Chess Scotland Statistics: The "average opponent played", "average player when I win/draw and lose", "top 5 wins", clarify how a players grade has been formed and is a good insight to the calibre of opponents played. Unfortunately the list of opponents is limited to domestic games only. International opponents are not included. "my top 10 tournament performances" is a good indication of tournament performance but the calibre of tournament may not be inconsistent at junior level.

In conclusion the diversity of games played by juniors can affect statistics markedly. It is important that selectors identify and filter out these discrepancies when making an assessment of a player's grade.

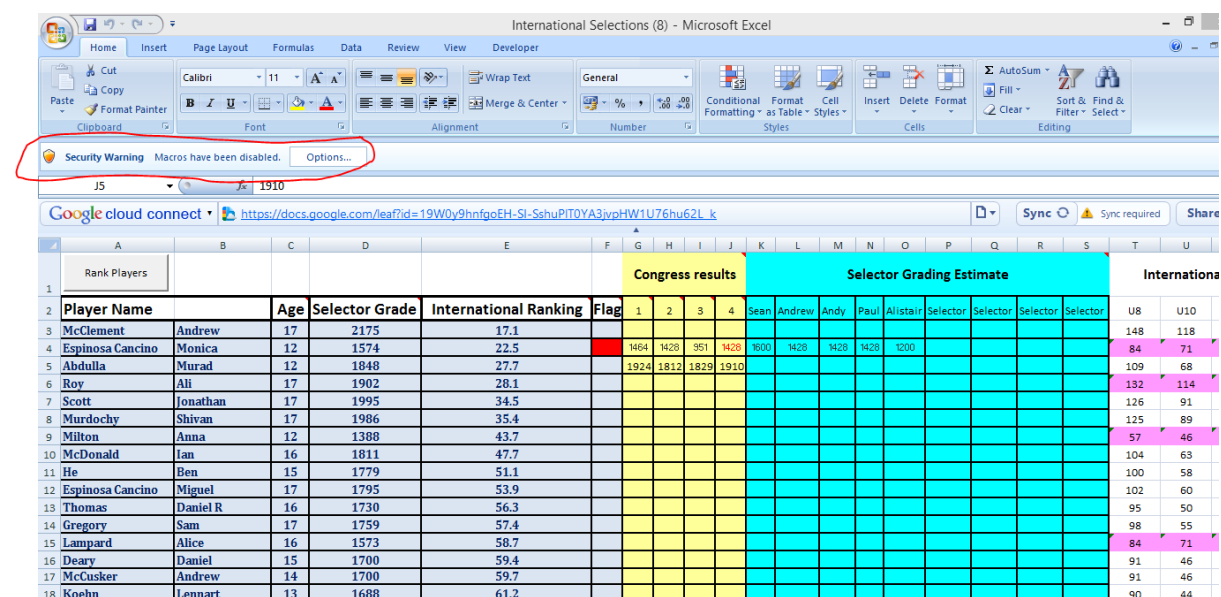
Selection of Siblings

On occasions we may have chess playing siblings travelling together when attending international chess tournaments. One player may have been selected whilst the other siblings may have just failed to meet the selection criteria. It is often argued that places should be offered on the team by CS selectors as the child will be at the event anyway? I believe Scottish selections should be earned and players not meeting a minimum playing strength should not have that honour bestowed on them by virtue of them travelling with their sibling. Setting a minimum qualification would make it clear for selectors and parents whether any player has earned the right for Scottish representation.

Scottish International Selection Tool

Selection Tool Operating Instructions

Open and download the selection tool from the Google drive.



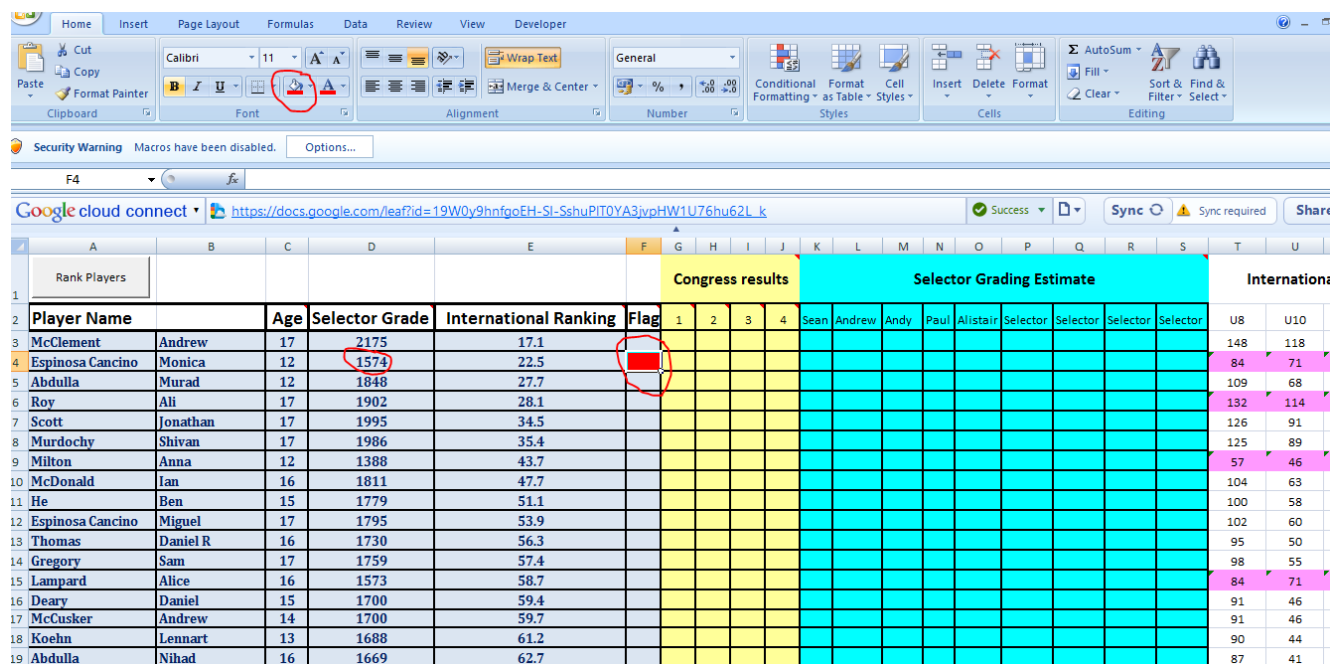
The screenshot shows a Microsoft Excel window titled "International Selections (8) - Microsoft Excel". A red circle highlights a "Security Warning" bar that states "Macros have been disabled." with an "Options..." button. Below the warning, the spreadsheet is visible, featuring a "Rank Players" tab and a "Congress results" section. The "Congress results" section includes a "Selector Grading Estimate" table with columns for various selectors (Sean, Andrew, Andy, Paul, Alistair, etc.) and rows for players. The "Rank Players" tab shows a list of players with their names, ages, selector grades, and international rankings. The "Congress results" section also includes a table for "Internationals" with columns for U8, U10, and U12.

Rank	Player Name	Age	Selector Grade	International Ranking	Flag	1	2	3	4	Sean	Andrew	Andy	Paul	Alistair	Selector	Selector	Selector	Selector	U8	U10
1	McClement	Andrew	17	2175	17.1														148	118
2	Espinosa Cancino	Monica	12	1574	22.5														84	71
3	Abdulla	Murad	12	1848	27.7														109	68
4	Roy	Ali	17	1902	28.1														132	114
5	Scott	Jonathan	17	1995	34.5														126	91
6	Murdoch	Shivan	17	1986	35.4														125	89
7	Milton	Anna	12	1388	43.7														57	46
8	McDonald	Ian	16	1811	47.7														104	63
9	He	Ben	15	1779	51.1														100	58
10	Espinosa Cancino	Miguel	17	1795	53.9														102	60
11	Thomas	Daniel R	16	1730	56.3														95	50
12	Gregory	Sam	17	1759	57.4														98	55
13	Lampard	Alice	16	1573	58.7														84	71
14	Deary	Daniel	15	1700	59.4														91	46
15	McCasker	Andrew	14	1700	59.7														91	46
16	Koehn	Lennart	13	1688	61.2														90	44

If the "security warning" appears in the task bar, select options and "Enable" to allow macros to function on the spreadsheet.

Rank Players						Congress results				Selector Grading Estimate								Internation	
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Lampard	Alice	16	1573	58.7														84	71
Deary	Daniel	15	1700	59.4														91	46
McCusker	Andrew	14	1700	59.7														91	46
Koehn	Lennart	13	1688	61.2														90	44
Abdulla	Nihad	16	1669	62.7														87	41

The spread sheet above has been populated with the latest CS live grades (Selector grades) and player ages. The International ranking is automatically calculated using the international tournament calculations positioned to the right of the page. By pressing the "Rank Players" macro button positioned in the top left corner, the players are listed in order of international ranking.



Rank Players						Congress results				Selector Grading Estimate								Internation	
Player Name	Age	Selector Grade	International Ranking	Flag	1	2	3	4	Sean	Andrew	Andy	Paul	Alistair	Selector	Selector	Selector	Selector	U8	U10
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Looking closer at the ranking list a selector may query the grade of 1574 and the subsequent position of the second best ranked player in Scotland. The selector would flag the grade by colouring the flag column as shown. Once flagged the best four Scottish congress TPR results will be entered as shown below.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U
1	Rank Players							Congress results				Selector Grading Estimate								Internationals	
2	Player Name	Age	Selector Grade	International Ranking	Flag	1	2	3	4	Sean	Andrew	Andy	Paul	Alistair	Selector	Selector	Selector	Selector		U8	U10
3	McClement	Andrew	17	2175																148	118
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17	McCusker	Andrew	14	1700																91	46
18	Koehn	Lennart	13	1688																90	44
19	Abdulla	Nihad	16	1669																87	41

If as in this case, the player has played only three congress events in the last 12 months, the forth cell remains blank. As a result all selectors will be asked to make their own assessment of the players grade.

		Congress results				Selector Grading Estimate							
International Ranking	Flag	1	2	3	4	Sean	Andrew	Andy	Paul	Alistair	Selector	Selector	Selector
17.1													
22.5		1464	1428	951	1428	1600	1428	1428	1428	1200			

The selection committee enter their best assessment of the players grade in the cells shown. The highest (1600) and lowest (1200) grades are discarded and the average of the remaining estimates (1428) is entered into the cell 4 in the Congress results column. e.g. If a player has played only one congress game then cells 2,3 and 4 would also be populated by the selectors average estimated grade.

Rank Players				Congress results				Selector Grading Estimate								Internationa			
Player Name	Age	Selector Grade	International Ranking	Flag	1	2	3	4	Sean	Andrew	Andy	Paul	Alistair	Selector	Selector	Selector	Selector	U8	U10
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Milton	Anna	12	1388															57	46
McDonald	Ian	16	1811															104	63
He	Ben	15	1779															100	58
Espinosa Cancino	Monica	12	1317		1484	1428	951	1428	1600	1428	1428	1428	1200					46	37
Espinosa Cancino	Miguel	17	1795															102	60
Thomas	Daniel R	16	1730															95	50
Gregory	Sam	17	1759															98	55
Lampard	Alice	16	1573															84	71
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McCusker	Andrew	14	1700															91	46
Koehn	Lennart	13	1688															90	44
Abdulla	Nihad	16	1669															87	41
Pannwitz	Kai	11	1529															71	20
Roy	Kiron	15	1586															77	28
Milton	Carl	15	1573															76	26

Sheet1

Sheet2

Sheet3

Average: 1317.75

Count: 4

Sum: 5271

90%

The average of the 4 congress results (3 results +1 selector estimate) is entered as the new adjusted selector grade. After pressing the "Rank players" button, the player is repositioned as shown.

Rank Players						Congress results				Selector Grading E					
Player Name		Age	Selector Grade	International Ranking	Flag	1	2	3	4	Sean	Andrew	Andy	Paul	Alistair	Selecto
McClement	Andrew	17	2175	17.1											
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Milton	Anna	12	1388	43.7											
McDonald	Ian	16	1811	47.7											
He	Ben	15	1779	51.1											
Espinosa Cancino	Monica	12	1317	51.8		1464	1428	951	1428	1600	1428	1428	1428	1200	
Espinosa Cancino	Miguel	17	1795	53.9											

If the same process was applied to a player who has played in more than 4 congress events during the last 12 months an average of 1868 would have been produced which compares closely to his live grade and confirms his position as second ranked Scottish player.