

Cumbria Junior Chess Tournament 2023 Report

On the day

We gained easy and timely access to the venue, and were able to set up immediately.

Due to people now being able to pay the entry fees using online banking, there were less people paying on the day so registration was smoother.

Last year 11 players played in the under 13 group, this year it was 21.

Last Year 7 players played in the under 18 group, this year it was 15.

A very pleasing increase in the numbers for both groups.

Tournament format

Both sections were played as a 7 round Swiss Tournament.

The time was 15 minutes for each player in both sections.

I think that 15 minutes per player and 7 rounds worked very well, and as this is the 2nd year I plan to continue with this format.

I plan to keep these 2 sections for the next tournament and should the increase in numbers continue, I'll be happy to split it into 3 sections thereafter.

Entry Deadline

There was a loose deadline on the form to encourage early entries, but I wouldn't have refused entry to anyone who heard about the tournament late.

Tournament Cost

This has been far more economic than last year's tournament.
We didn't advertise in the press this year which was a huge saving.
The School didn't charge us for the venue, however we did make a donation of some chess books, but it was still a significant saving.
Less trophies were needed this year as some that were ordered last year were used.
This tournament paid for itself.

Pre Tournament publicity

We didn't do a newspaper ad as there was little if any benefit from last year's
All clubs in the league were contacted.
I contacted some schools.
Some flyers/entry forms were placed in libraries and supermarkets.
From the feedback that I've had so far the libraries seem to have been the best.
The Cumbria Chess Association website publicized it.

Staffing Levels

This sort of tournament needs at least 2 controllers and preferably 3.
Peter Hanks and Neil Foxcroft were a great help, and I honestly could not have done it without them.
Most "Adult" Tournaments are 5 rounds spread over 3 days.
7 rounds in a single day means that the bursts of administration come thick and fast.
Many of the children were playing in their 1st ever tournament and therefore needed guidance that adults don't.

Pre Tournament Support

Dave Shaw updated the Cumbria website.
Dave Cole created the entry form/flyer.
Various people in different clubs contacted people that might have been interested.
Peter Hanks helped with the planning, created the certificates and frames, provided the laptop and other equipment.
Neil Foxcroft helped on the day.
Very many thanks to everyone who helped.

Some Issues

Allowing people to pay the entry fees online, made the registration process on the day easier.

However there were some problems prior to the day. Some people sent in entry forms long before making payments which required constant monitoring.

Some sent the entry fees long before the forms. This was the more awkward as I didn't have contact details or know which age group the players would be in.

I don't want to have that sort of issue again.

The obvious solution would be to have an online entry form that requires payment at the time in order to complete the form.

I'll be doing some research to find out what's available and what's involved.

One of the responsible adults queried the final position of her son and claimed that he had a slightly better score than on the final table.

If she is correct then either a result slip was filled in incorrectly, or entered incorrectly. In this case it didn't affect any prizes, so it was agreed that no further action was required.

I have spoken with Peter, and we obviously don't want this to happen again so in future a round by round table with results will be displayed so that any errors can be seen and corrected more easily.

The Under 13 group was decided by tie break.

I knew that at the time, but I didn't learn the exacting details until a day or two later.

The 2 boys both had 6 wins and a draw, the draw being the game they played against each other.

This meant that the scores, scores against each other and cumulative scores were all the same.

As a result the rating of their opponents split them into 1st and 2nd.

I didn't think that was fair, as the boy that had the theoretically easier opponents didn't do so by choice.

I consulted with Peter and we agreed that the best way forward was to override the last tie break level and have 2 joint champions.

I liaised with the parents of one of the boys and they were very happy with this.

I ordered a 2nd winners' trophy to be delivered.

We don't want this to happen again either.

I'll be giving tie breaks some thought, and whatever I decide, I'll put in writing and send to all competitors in advance so that they know of the process in future.

Going Forward

The intention is to hold another tournament next year.

Peter and I have agreed to enter a team in the Pennine Cup so that Cumbria will once again be represented next January.

We managed to attract some press coverage this year and having regular chess coverage will hopefully happen as well.

I'm very happy with how things went, although some issues do need to be resolved.

I would like to once again thank everyone who helped.

John Lydon