

JUNIORS at the PARKS CONGRESS (25/9/05)

24 boys and one girl took part in the Junior Section of the Northumberland County Chess Congress. Gerry Beldon and I were experimenting with a new computer program for running the tournament. After using 'PROTOS' for many years, 'SEVILLA' is a nicer looking and more powerful program, but it will take some getting used to. We haven't fully mastered it yet.

It was nice to see so many kids there all enjoying their chess. As usual most came from RGS but groups from Austin Friars (Carlisle), King's (Tynemouth) and Hetton Comprehensive were very welcome. So too was 10-year old Russell Edwards, all the way from Sheffield – he had been placed second in last years competition.

For the first five rounds Russell was winning everything whilst the RGS boys were beating each other in turn. In R6 top-graded Andrew Douglas won against Russell to take the lead. It was short lived however – in the very next round Andrew lost to John Brooker. Russell made no more mistakes and held the narrowest of leads right to the end.

Every body scoring four points or more won a prize. All the visting schools except King's had at least one prizewinner to celebrate. Alex Gardner – green bandana-boy – managed a couple of wins for King's against RGS. I was impressed with Saathvik Shetty from Austin Friars who played thoughtful chess. Andrew Dodds did best of the group brought by Fred Stobbart from Hetton. With a bit more practice all the Hetton boys showed promise.. And whilst I am used to how well the regular team members at RGS do, I was very encouraged to see Will Atkinson and Joe Hicks taking their time, thinking and scoring well

Overall though it was Russell's day – after a five o'clock start in the morning for his long trip North he played well and kept his concentration. He seemed fast asleep on his feet by the end of the day, but a very happy young man.

Here are the final scores:

1	Russell Edwards (SASCA, Sheffield)	7
2	Andrew Douglas (RGS)	6½
3=	Gavin Minty (RGS)	6
3=	John Brooker (RGS)	6
5=	Jack McHugh (RGS)	5
5=	Saathvik Shetty (Austin Friars, Carlisle)	5
5=	Thomas Gholkar (RGS)	5
5=	Joseph Hicks (RGS)	5
5=	William Atkinson (RGS)	5
10	Andrew Dodds (Hetton Comprehensive)	4½
11=	Paul van Iterson (Austin Friars, Carlisle)	4
11=	Matthew Turnbull (Hetton Comprehensive)	4
11=	Patrick Foxworthy (Austin Friars, Carlisle)	4
11=	Camas Miller (Austin Friars, Carlisle)	4
11=	Andrew Louw (RGS)	4
11=	Jack Taylor (Hetton Comprehensive)	4
11=	Martin Donohue (RGS)	4
18=	Callum Ballard (King's, Tynemouth)	3
18=	Alex Gardner (King's, Tynemouth)	3
18=	Lewis Ford (RGS)	3
18=	Anna Shukurova (Tynemouth JCC)	3
18=	Lewis Gardner (King's, Tynemouth)	3
18=	Ben Hodgkiss (Austin Friars, Carlisle)	3
24	Mark Rowdon (Tynemouth)	2
25	Dominic Reed (Kings)	1

Also two juniors took part in the main congress

Terence Nabbs (Austin Friars) won a grading prize in the Major
Theon Rogers (RGS) took a grading prize in the Minor and also won the Alex Perry Award for the best performance by a NE Junior.