

EPSCA – the Prestatyn Semi-Finals 2011

The English Primary Schools Chess Association held their 'Northern' Semi-Finals at Prestatyn last weekend – a month earlier than usual. Thirteen teams from three NJCA schools took part – I can give the bare results for NPS and St Teresa's, but this report is largely concerned, as I was, with the eight RGS teams. I hope Richard Boddy and Martin Seeber may report in more detail about their teams. There are two Semi-Finals, at Under-9 and at Under-11. Teams had had to qualify for these. In addition there were smaller 'Plate' competitions which were open to non-qualifying teams.

In the Under-11 Semi-Final the RGS 'A' team had been confident of performing well. They started off with two massive 5-0 wins and led the competition after two rounds. This however put them among the other top teams and disappointingly they did not win another match. Two 3-2 defeats were followed by a disappointing draw with old rivals QEGS from Wakefield. They still had an outside chance of winning, only a point behind the leaders. But the last round was a 4-1 disaster. Anthony, board 1, had a hard time winning 2/6 of his games. William (Bd.2) scored an excellent 5/6 as did Joseph on Bd.4. A final team total of 17½/30 placed them 8th out of 34 teams in this section.

RGS 'C' came 22nd with 13½ points; Alex, Abel and Rory did well for this team. RGS'B' came 27th on 12 points. Top board, Omkar and Elliot did best for this team. Harpreet and Rosalind did best for the RGS'D' girls team who came 29th on 11½.

Also in this competition NPS came 17th with 15 points, but St Teresa's, whose team captain, Daniel, was ill and had to return home before playing a game, scored only 8½ and were 33rd

At Under-9 Keshav led the RGS'A' team with 5/6 on top board. However the rest of the team did less well and a final score of 15/30 left them in 9th place out of 26 teams. The RGS 'B' was a man short and despite a heroic effort by captain, Jonny Scott came 25th on just 6½ points. In this competition NPS had two teams; the NPS'A' team came 5th on 17 points – a Gold award performance! Their 'B' team were 17th on 13½ points.

In the Under-11 Plate there were altogether 7 teams. NPS came 6th and RGS a dismal 7th. David and Chris did well for this team which is, in effect the RGS 5th team.

Which brings us to our one microscopic success. It was the team that was very small, not the scale of their victory. The RGS Under-8 team won the Under-9 Plate competition with a massive 2½ point lead over their nearest rivals. Captain, James, won 4/6; Liam 5½/6 on board 2; Mark 3/6 on board 3; Megan 3½/6 on board 4; Louis 5½/6 on board 5 and Elliot 3½/6 on board 6. Let's hope they continue to do as well next year, when they will surely qualify for the Semi-Finals.

Paul Bielby