

## EPSCA Team Tournament 1<sup>st</sup> Round: Northumbria Zone

Played in the Fenwick Hall at RGS, Newcastle on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> February

<u>Under 11 Section</u>		<u>Under 9 Section</u>	
1. RGS 'A'	21½	1. RGS 'A'	23
2. RGS 'C'	15	2. NPS 'A'	17½
3. NPS 'A'	14½	3. RGS 'B'	13
4. RGS 'B'	13½	4. NPS 'B'	12
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5. RGS 'D'	12	5= RGS 'C'	11
6. Kings	11½	5= St Teresa's	11
7. NPS 'B'	6½	7. RGS 'D'	8
8. RGS 'E'	5½	8. Kings	4½

Sixteen teams of 6, 96 children in all, took part in this zonal tournament to determine which teams qualified to play in the semi-finals of the English Primary Schools Team Championships at Prestatyn in June. The numbers made up a section of 8 teams in each age-group. Disappointingly 13 of the teams were based in Lambton Road and only one came from a state school. The top four schools in each section are qualified to play in the semi-finals – 5 teams altogether from RGS and 3 from NPS.

RGS 'A' (Naman Garg; Akhil Gupta; Abhishek Kamath; Thomas Posner and Tabitha Burnett) easily won the U-11s with their 'C' team, all under-10s coming second. I felt sorry for 9-year old Hugo Meecham of Kings, who, winning all his games on top board was clearly the best player in the tournament on the day. His team let him down and they failed to qualify by a couple of points. Both RGS 'C' and RGS 'B' who did qualify, likewise owed much to a single player – Will Murgatroyd who scored 4½/5 for the 'Cs' and Peter Wilson, 5/5 for the Bs

Again at U-9, RGS 'A' (Manav Gupta; Anthony Lai; William Wilkinson; Joseph Dalton and Hamish Burnett) dominated. Indeed I was disappointed in their score – they ought to have won all their games! NPS 'A' were clear second, but the two final qualifying places were closely fought. The two fifth placed teams could have qualified until the last round was finally decided. St Teresa's were particularly unlucky when RGS 'A' cost them a qualifying place by dropping a point to NPS 'B' in the final round. (If three teams had tied for 4<sup>th</sup> on 11 points, then all three would have qualified)

We were fortunate in having Alex McFarlane and Lara Barnes to run the event – two of the leading chess arbiters in the country. RGS parent, Mrs Byatt, ran a very popular tuckshop and her stock was almost sold out by the end of the day. Lara commented at the end on how well all the children had behaved and how their play, though competitive, had been thoroughly sporting. No tears on the day; win or lose, everybody had seemed to enjoy it.

*Paul Bielby*