

Ponteland Junior Chess Tournament (12/12/2009)

The Ponteland Junior Chess Tournament marked the end of an era for Northumbria Junior Chess Association. Paul Bielby has been a Trustee of the organisation since it began, and has given a lifetime of service to Junior Chess. He has decided that now is the time for him to step back a little, and leave the organisation in new hands. I have known Paul since I was about seventeen, when I met him at my first chess tournament.

He is a lovely man and he has helped a lot of youngsters as a chess mentor and star organiser in our region. Everyone in NJCA wishes Paul well, and we hope he enjoys taking things a bit easier with a reduced schedule. We owe him a massive debt of gratitude.

Ponteland junior chess tournament was well supported by children from different schools in our area. The school provided comfortable playing conditions for our young chess stars.

Competition was fierce. For seven rounds both age groups fought tooth and nail for advantage.

In children's chess the positions reached are remarkable as the young guns often lose pawns and attack. On the open board everything becomes razor sharp. So I witnessed some great attacks on the kings. 'Is this winning Martin?' they seemed to ask endlessly.

Some of the finishes to the games were very original and many of the young players had great technique, already finishing with Rook and king against the king. Some attacks were brutal, with many heavy pieces murdering the king as a group!

The children showed fantastic sportsmanship and I only had two or three disagreements all day.

We used clocks for some games so that we could keep the rounds moving quickly and the children helped by being so well organised about finding their seats and opponents.

Lots of people helped to make this event a success in all sorts of ways.

Congratulations to the winners (please see the accompanying table of results) and I hope you will play in the next tournament and keep practising chess and go on to play in the UK chess challenge later in the year.

If you didn't do as well as you wanted I hope you are going to find ways in which to improve for the next tournament because sport is amazing when it is very close and when you just can't tell who might win.

Some tips might be:

- join a new chess club - some of the adult clubs have junior sections.
- Buy a new chess book (Amazon or Chess Direct on the internet would be good sources)
- Beat your Dad or Mam more often at home.
- Invite your friend around your house and beat him or her a few times midweek.
- Get an easy chess computer and challenge it.
- Play against yourself, then you are sure to win! (Bobby Fischer, some people's choice as greatest chess mind ever, started this way as he thought his sister wasn't the best opponent)
- Play a lot and talk to your friends about stuff including chess stuff.
- Get plenty sleep and always do your homework!

I really enjoyed the day and I'm looking forward to running the tournaments with the new Trustees and helpers.

Have a lovely Christmas and Best wishes for the New Year.

Martin Seeber