

YARM CHESS FESTIVAL
Played at Yarm School on Saturday, 27th September

This, the first school team tournament of the new season in the North-East, has been run by Andrew Killick, Classics teacher at Yarm School, and Chess Coach, Sean Marsh, every year since 1997. As well as local schools from the Teesside area, QEGS from Wakefield and RGS Newcastle took part - 7 teams of four played in the secondary schools and 17 in the primary schools section.

At the start of the final round QEGS led in the Secondary section by half a point from the RGS Newcastle 'A' team. QEGS had to play the RGS 'B' team, whilst RGS had the seemingly harder Yarm 'A'. Well RGS 'A' won their match by 4-0 and it was up to RGS 'B' to take a point off QEGS. Fatheha Essa, the first girl to play chess for an RGS senior team, scored that necessary point allowing the RGS 'As' (Dan Lai, Tom Glover, Asef Zahed and Max Jones) to retain the Championship trophy.

Secondary Championship:

1. RGS Newcastle 'A'	17
2. QEGS Wakefield	16½
3. Yarm 'A'	11½

The Primary school tournament, like the Secondary, was again a two-horse race, but this time between the Yarm 'A' and RGS 'B' teams. The RGS 'A' team came third, a long way behind. - they had been seriously weakened as three of their top four year 6 players were unavoidably absent (A rugby tournament at Alnwick on the same day) The RGS' B' team (Arjun Anilkumar, Naman Garg, Akhil Gupta and Abhishek Kamath) are all year 5.

As in the Secondary competition they were a point behind at the start of the final round. All depended on the RGS 'E' team - all 8-year olds playing for the experience - to give them a chance. Daksh Sharma took the critical point from Yarm and Yarm almost dropped a second but survived. RGS 'B' won the last round by 4-0. So there was a tie for top place and a play-off match was needed. Desperately tense the play-off resulted in a 2-2 draw. Sean Marsh decreed a second play-off! Yarm won the first game to finish, but then the RGS' battling 'Bs' took three games in a row to win the Championship. RGS have won this trophy for 5 years in a row, but never before has it been won by a 'B' team.

Primary Championship

1= RGS Newcastle 'B'	16
1= Yarm 'A'	16
3. RGS Newcastle 'A'	13

First Play-Off match ~	Yarm 'A'	2 - 2	RGS 'B' "
Second Play-Off match~	RGS 'B'	3 - 1	Yarm 'A'

Paul Bielby