**LRCA AGM May 22nd, 2024**

**Report of the Congress Committee chairman**

**Andy Morley.**

**COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP & Individual events 2023**

The County individual events were once again held during the summer, each being a Swiss tournament with 5 rounds, and a round mostly every 4 weeks on Thursday evenings. For the first time, the Anstey Chess Club offered their venue, and the Challengers and Minor tournaments were held there. This arrangement was much appreciated by Wigston, who hosted the Championship and Major tournaments, but had an extra free Thursday each month, giving more flexibility for club nights and Summer Cup matches. The events attracted 56 players in total – an increase from the 47 last year.

The 2023 entries were broken down as follows, with the 2022 entries also shown

Championship (open to all ) 13 entries (2022: 7)

Challengers (open to players graded under 1900) 11 entries (2022; 11)

Major (open to players graded under 1750) 20 entries (2022; 16)

Minor (open to players graded under 1600) 12 entries (2022; 13)

Total 56 entries (2022; 47)

The winner of the 2023 County Championship , scoring 4 / 5 was Shabir Okahi of the Syston Club, who retained the title he won in 2022, joining an elite group of 13 players who have retained the County Championship since it was inaugurated in 1911. Only 3 players have gone on to record 3 outright consecutive Championship wins.

Winners of the other tournaments were:

Challengers: Lindsay PYUN (Loughboough) 4 / 5

Major: George GOWERS (Mkt Harborough) 4.5 / 5

Minor: Dominic LENNON (Ashby) 4 / 5 Equal first with Yuvray Sadhra after 5 rounds. The play off rapidplay games were 1 all, and Dominic won the Armageddon play off.

There were a large number of games postponed / rearranged in 2023, and the Challengers in particular suffered from this. It is harder to generate the excitement of a tournament when players do not know where they stand or when key games will be played. Some rearranged games are inevitable, as the events are played over the summer months when players have holiday commitments, but I hope many more of the games will be played on the scheduled date this year.

The 2024 events begin on May 16th, with the Challengers and Minor tournaments once again held at Anstey. The Championship and Major begin on May 23rd, at Wigston. Thanks to both clubs for hosting the events.

Entries this year are up, once again, although the low number in the Challengers is disappointing. The minor, largely due to the encouragement of Ben Vaughan, has attracted a record 26 entries:

The entries for this year are:

Championship (open to all ) 15 entries (2023: 13)

Challengers (open to players graded under 1900) 8 entries (2023; 11)

Major (open to players graded under 1750) 16 entries (2023; 20)

Minor (0pen to players graded under 1600) 26 entries (2023; 12)

Total 65 entries (2023; 56)

**CONGRESS**

See Ben Vaughan’s report. Thanks to Ben, Alan Agnew and Paul Mottram for making sure that this event took place. It was a great success, and the venue was excellent.

**PRESENTATION EVENING and CHARITY QUICKPLAY**

This event was, once again, not well supported. Only 5 clubs put teams into the rapidplay event, which seriously begs the question whether this event is still relevant and wanted. It involves a good deal of work in preparation and on the night, so I think the LRCA and LMC need to consider its future. Is the team quickplay the right format? Is a midweek evening the right time? Etc

This year there were only 9 teams contesting the BTH Smith trophy, which included 3 Syston teams and 3 Wigston teams. Syston 1 and Wigston 1 fielded strong teams, but Syston came out the winners, winning the last round individual contest between them 3.5 – 0.5. So a convincing win for Syston.

Andy Morley