



B.S.C.C.

The Bishop's Stortford Chess Club



Secretary's Report 2020

An unusual ending to this season, due to the lockdown, meant no teams were going to get promoted or demoted. The season was only witness to individual performances, some quite special, others, less so. Not only did the 3 main HCA and H&D leagues remain incomplete, but the lockdown also had a major impact on our internal competitions. Those early in the chess year took place successfully but many, pushed in to the second half of the season didn't happen at all.

HCA + H&D League + Cup Competitions

The club started the season challenging across several familiar fronts. This year included a team taking part in the U120 Cup Competition; the first time in 8 years. No real highlights, however, the saga with Watford's team for the U160's competition continued – details are hazy but involved an ill-fated dalliance with a female relative of the opposing captain which led to rising tensions between the 2 teams culminating in some singing, dancing, the clicking of fingers in unison, and eventually a flick-knife fight under the M25 underpass. A tragic end was inevitable but, importantly, we won the match (#1). Again, check for specific details with Tim (#2).

Internal Competitions & Days/Nights

2 internal competitions took place and were well received. Ieuan's Simultaneous got played, as did the Blitz. Reports from tournament organisers to follow. Alas no Rapid Play, Consultation Match or End of Season Blitz.

B.S.J.C.C.

The Junior section continues to be well received. The monies made have really helped the finances for the club.

Online Chess

Perhaps the major event to this season has been the advent of the B.S.C.C. club *online*.

Given the early ending to OTB Chess on club nights, playing matches online was probably inevitable. Actually, this originated from 'WhatsApp' messaging between Darren (ex-Hoddesdon member) & myself. Options were reviewed & Lichess.com chosen. Soon after, it was extended to involve all club members and BSCC 'Team' was formed.

Some initial teething issues, such as trying to decipher the online names members used and connect them to their physical forms (#3). Membership was then extended to ex-members and to a couple of (ex)members of other local clubs. Last count, 26 members, including an Eastern European luggage handler!

Several match options were trialled with a final staple of a double header settled upon in the form of a 3 minute Blitz & 10 minute Rapid Play. These were generally well received by most although the quick play style was not conducive to some, so these would continue to play individual games, such as Hewitt matches, organised between themselves and, later, with Swiss like precision, by Charles.

#1 - We did then proceed to lose the semi-final less than 2 weeks later (but that's not important, damn-it!)

#2 - For the cinematic ignorant, I wrote this section with 'West Side Story' playing in the background.

#3 - 'Who's 'ChessLeveller'? 'TMG1956'? I don't know anyone with those initials? 'Sacbutt'!? Who's that!?! Oh, he's sent me an email...'

Other match play options were utilised at various points: leuan hosted an online simultaneous match. Fischer chess was used. A handicap tournament was also trialled which was universally adored by all that took part (#4).

Overall, this has been reasonably successful. It did rely on an adequate number of participants which wasn't always present and it could also depend on the types of games people preferred to play online. The Blitz and Rapid play tournaments for the majority with its quick and easy style against a smaller, but far more resilient, group preferring longer games afforded them with the 'Hewitt' (#5).

While everyone will enjoy the return of OTB chess (#6), the development and use of online chess for the club is potentially big enough not to discount in the future for the clubs' organisation.

Data / All Time Points List

While teams didn't have a formal end to their season, individual stats did move on. As ever, there are several highlights to the season:

- leuan's season performance average took him to 220, way above his standard average grade.
- Robert looks to have had a great season, averaging wins from players 40+ points higher graded, giving him a hefty new season grade jump of 7 points! Tim punched well above his weight, with a fantastic performance average of +13. He also, quite unsurprisingly, earned the club more points too; 10.5 from a possible 17 (62% success rate).
- Greg impressed with a rise in his average grade of 11 points given his estimated grade at the start of the season.
- Despite the curtailed season, both Lara and Charles still played 18 games – absolutely crucial when keeping the integrity of the teams they have represented.

Which leads to some nice changes in our 'All Time Points List': the first thing to note is the addition of 3 new 'Centurions' to the 100 club. This takes the total to 12 which will probably stay the same for a while with Lara the nearest current member (on 70 points).

Charles still sits imperious at the top of the table with more points and games played than anyone else, past or present. (Laurie is the nearest of our current members but still 85 games behind while Nigel is 42.5 points behind Charles's score).

leuan now has close to 100 games under his belt with a 66% success rate which is truly astonishing. Tim's winning streak of 10.5 points in an incomplete season is quite remarkable as is Andrews 24 position jump up the 'All Time Points List'. The introduction of Rob Davies and Michael Dunsire has taken us to 114 players to have represented the club.

In Conclusion

A peculiar season where games and a season may have been lost but other, previous unused outlets thrived. Isolation may have been prevalent but it was nice to be able to still congregate, converse and play chess.

Adam Hirst

**Adam Hirst
Club Secretary**

#4 - most notably Billy, whose care-free, 'Everything is Awesome!' attitude, shone brightly while warmly embracing the rules and the use of 'Zoom' during the entire competition.

#5 - Billy, I suspect, simply enjoyed the socially misanthropic nature of any online chess.

#6 - With the possible exception of William.