

WORLD SENIORS CHESS TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS

Radebeul, DRESDEN , Germany 7th – 15th July 2018

The sixth edition of the World Seniors Team Championships returned to Dresden, the popular venue of the 2013 and 2016 events, the championships having been held in Crete in 2017. A total of 128 teams (67 in the 50+ section and 61 in the 65+ section) brought over 600 players from all over the world to the beautifully restored Saxon city.

In addition to those teams representing national chess federations there were many regional and club teams of which a substantial proportion, naturally enough, were German. Some teams had four players but the majority rotated from a five-man squad, giving each player a couple of rest days. For the teams of four this meant playing in all nine rounds, a tough task.

England are always one of the best represented countries and with five teams in the 50+ section and a further four in the 65+ section this year was no different. The England 1 squads could realistically hope to be in medal contention while for the other teams the target was to finish higher than their initial seeding place. Much interest in the “junior” section centred on whether England 1 without Nigel Short and John Nunn could improve on last year’s performance. The favourites and top-rated teams were the USA (average 2539) in the 50+ and Russia (2546) in the 65+.

England teams:

50+

England 1: Speelman, Emms, Plaskett, Hebden, **Arkell** (average 2465) (seeded 5th finished 2nd)

England 2: Lewis, Page, Frostick, Fegan (2153) (21st/21st)

England 3: Fraser-Mitchell, Bowmer, **Homer**, Thurstan (2039) (34th/39th)

England 4 : Parker, Stern, Rogers, Cross, Lawrence (1787) (64th/60th)

England Women: Jackson, Lauterbach, Frostick, Fink-Nunn (2062) (34th/34th)

65+

England 1: Bellin, Berry, Povah, Stebbings, Emerson (2283) (5th/5th)

England 2: James, Quinn, Baruch, Farrand (2083) (25th/24th)

England 3: Cromblehome, Ewart, **Thynne**, Denning (1859) (56th/50th)

England 4: Reuben, Reynolds, Cooper, Scowen, Emerton (1895) (48th/42nd)

(the England 4 squad consisted of players who preferred to play in a five-man squad)

In addition to the English there were teams from Wales, Scotland and Ireland. Furthest travellers were the Mongolian Women, Canada and South Africa. Other non-European teams included Israel, Iraq, Algeria, the USA and a team from Hong Kong. There was a second American team in the 50+ consisting of four brothers!

The excellent organization and the high-quality hotel accommodation together with a busy programme of excursions made this an event to remember. Certainly for the humble club player to take part in a competition which included such giants as Sveshnikov, Hort, Shabalov, Ehlvest and Yusupov was a big thrill.

Full results of the championships can be accessed on the official website (www.schachfestival.de) so I will concentrate here on the performance of the Devon representatives.

Keith Arkell had a brilliant tournament for the England 1 team in the 50+ scoring 6.5/7 and winning the Board 5 Best performance prize.

Stephen Homer, playing board 3 for England 3 in the 50+ section, had an exceptional performance of 6.5/9 easily the best in his team. In round 1 he lost narrowly to USA GM Jan Ehlvest but in round 5 he scored a great victory over Russian WGM Nina Fatalibekova and remained in good form to the end.

Trefor Thynne, playing board 3 for England 3 in the 65+ section, also had a good tournament remaining unbeaten with 3 wins and six draws. His wins were over a Welsh player, Peter Bevan, a Dutchman graded 2057 and a German from a local team while the draws included one against the top-scoring Mongolian woman player.

Michael Marshall who had played for Exmouth CC and Devon in 2016-17 before returning to live in Copenhagen represented a Danish side SK1968 on board 5 in the 65+ group. He did very well to finish unbeaten with 5/7.

It is worth mentioning that the policy of the England manager for Seniors Chess, **Stewart Reuben**, is to enter as many teams as possible. Any player with an ECF of 140 or over would be likely to enjoy some success. It would even be possible to enter a Devon team of seniors though entries have to be made through the national federation.

In conclusion, I can again report on a memorable chess experience, one not to be missed. Next year the Championships are likely to be back in Crete though for those who cannot wait that long there is the possibility of entering the World Seniors Individual Championships to be held in BLED, Slovenia in November 2018!

Trefor Thynne

18th July 2018

