

Irish Junior Chess Championship 2017 Report

Thanks To Paul Carroll DI, this year's Irish Junior Chess Championship was kindly sponsored by CPL Resources plc and took place in the Clayton Hotel Sligo from th 7th – 9th April. The Weekend began with 424 Connaught primary school children being crammed into the main playing area for the grand final of the ComharLinn sponsored Schools Checkmates Event that John Conlon and his team ran over the winter months. Two lucky classes won €500 for their school to invest in chess material. On Sunday, there were 2 further additions to the 'Festival of Chess' calendar: A rapid event for U14, U12, & U10s that had never played in a tournament before and an 'adult and all others' competition for parents, relations and friends of the players who wanted to try out their own chess skills.

A couple of photos from the Checkmates Event



The main event had a record attendance of 173 juniors spread over the 6 sections. The previous highest attendance was 165, when the Irish Juniors took part in Longford in 1985. Gerry Graham was the chief arbiter this time round and was assisted by his wife Mel. Together, they did a very effective job in ensuring the smooth running of the 6 round tournament over the 3 days. Gerry has a lifetime of experience running Junior Events at this level and so all possible problems had been foreseen and were quickly dealt with.

The hotel itself seemed very suited for a chess tournament. The staff and management were obliging, friendly and on hand. The spacious playing area was well away from the bar and reception and the players had a comfortable environment to play in with very low levels of noise interruption. Desmond Beatty, the Irish Chess Union's Junior Officer was ever-present throughout the weekend and it was his choice of table-plan for the section layouts that proved very successful and efficient to manage. The organizing committee are still praising him for his tireless work behind the scenes that meant the whole thing flowed smoothly and without any hitches.

There were plenty of other volunteers who gave generously of their time and without whom the event wouldn't have been a success. To mention only a handful, David Grant, Mel Ó Cinnéide, April Cronin, John Conlon, Brian Ó Suilleabháin, Brendan Buckley, Jonathon O Conner, Alice O Gorman, Luke Scott and Peter Carroll, all were invaluable.

There were familiar and new faces among the players and for many of the Connaught contingent, it was their first ever classical chess-tournament. Gerry's last-minute grind for new-comers on "How to notate your chess game", was priceless and he was constantly in demand for revision classes for the first few rounds. Each section had its own exciting games and as always, there was a blend of euphoria and disappointment on the faces of the children coming out the door to their anxiously waiting parents. At the end of the day, there have to be champions and the Lord Mayor of Sligo, Marie Casserly was there to award the prizes. Marie herself is passionate about chess and is also a champion of volunteering. She also donated a trophy "The Marie Casserly Cup" to be awarded to the U16 girls's champion from now on.

List of winners: Girls U8 Laavanya Srivastava, Girls U10 Gemma Mulholland, Girls U12 Admira Kecskemeti, Girls U14 Leire Plaza Reino, Girls U16 Kynesha Ryder, Girls U19 Eibhia Ní Mhuireagáin

Open U8 Rafael Renji, Open U10 Patryk Brozynski, Open U12 Daniel Dwyer, Open U14 James Naughton, Open U16 Zalan Nemeth, Open U19 Denis Ruchko

Next years Irish Junior Championship will be in Ennis, Co. Clare where there will hopefully be an even greater turn out.

Below are some of the winners' photos. If anyone has better versions or missing ones, please send them in and we will update the page.



