

# THE IRISH CHESS UNION

Cumann Fichille na hÉireann

PATRON: Michael D. Higgins, PRESIDENT OF IRELAND



## PRESS RELEASE

Dublin, Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> April 2020 - Irish Chess Union confirm safe return of chess players from Murmansk, Russia

The Irish Chess Union is pleased to confirm the safe return from Russia of the last member of the Irish Team that played in the 4<sup>th</sup> Chessmates tournament on the world's first nuclear powered Ice-Breaker 'Lenin' in Murmansk harbour from 13<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> March last. Given the absence of restrictions up to the time of departure from the authorities in either Ireland or Russia, 6 of the original team of 10 had elected to travel as did the parties from Estonia, St Petersburg and Paris.

The player, Alex Goss (19), was one of a number of players and officials who were tested by the local health authorities in Murmansk during the event. Alex was subsequently detained at Murmansk Airport as having tested 'preliminarily positive' for the Covid-19 virus. The remainder of the Irish party was allowed to continue home to Ireland. Alex was then required to spend 14-days in quarantine where he was visited by the local Mayor and supported by the tournament hosts, Murmansk Chess. The 14-strong French delegation also remained in quarantine in Murmansk returning to Paris earlier this week. Having twice tested negative Alex was released from the hospital and allowed to fly home via Moscow and London on a special repatriation flight. He arrived into Dublin on Thursday.

Alex says of his experience:

"My extended stay in Russia wouldn't have went as smoothly if it wasn't for a few people, who I would like to thank. To the staff and doctors at the Regional Hospital in Murmansk, the tournament hosts at Chessmates who provided me with extra supplies in hospital, the Irish Chess Union, my team members and of course my parents, family and friends who were a great support every day.

Given travel restrictions that were in place during my stay, I would like to particularly recognise and thank the staff at the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Irish Embassy in Moscow, who were with me and helping me all the way from the moment I was put in quarantine until I landed in Dublin. Their assistance was invaluable.

The goal of Chessmates is to bring young players from across different countries and give them memorable, lasting experiences through chess. Mine was certainly that, and the tournament was very enjoyable. I look forward to supporting the Irish Chess Union as hosts of the 6th Chessmates festival in 2022.

For all the support I received when I was in Russia, I would like to say thank you."

ENDS]