

32nd Nottingham Rapidplay 29 January 2023

Thanks are due to all those who made this year's Rapidplay one of the best from the perspective of the Tournaments Committee (Steve Burke, Simon Scott and John Swain) fellow arbiters and organisers.

We did wonder what the effects might be with two clashing events in Stockport and Norfolk but we were reassured having welcome support in the form of a loss guarantee from the Nottinghamshire Chess Foundation and very generous sponsorship once again from arbiter Marcel Taylor. As it happened, we reached capacity (160) a couple of days beforehand, a record for the Rapidplay and regrettably had to turn away sixteen late applicants. At least the NCF's loss guarantee did not need to be applied.

Unusually, the Playing Hall was set out for the needs of a bobbin lace group (!!) on the Saturday, with many of the tables and chairs not in their usual places. This turned out to be ideal, because we were able to place tables where we wanted them in a different configuration, with the control desk at the far end of the Hall, which meant more players could be accommodated under the low ceiling lights. Thanks are due to those who helped set up on Saturday evening, including arbiters Simon Scott, Marcel Taylor and Hambel Willow, and those who completed the setting up on Sunday morning, especially the very willing players who turned up early and set up many of the pieces.

As for the chess? I cannot recall a more major-incident-free and good-humoured event! It was certainly helpful, compared to the Rapidplay in 2022, allowing spectators to stay in the Playing Hall, provided they did not switch on gadgets until the last game in each round was completed. Some needed to be reminded about this.

These same people, together with arbiter Mike Naylor, cash administrators Steve Burke and Graham Neil and further player-volunteers made packing away a lot easier at the end. Thanks are due to Ed Jones and Nottinghamshire Primary Schools Chess Association which provided all of the sets and boards and about half of the clocks and West Nottingham Chess Club for the use of their clocks. Parents, Stephen Humphreys, Marc Richmond, Pat and Caroline Sykes assisted by Graham Neil cheerfully supervised the urn; donations to Ukrainian Relief, including some from players when paying their entry fees, amounted to a very impressive £185 including Gift Aid.

Finally, a big thank-you to Barry Jones, caretaker at Nottingham High School for his cheerful and willing help and other school staff who helped in numerous ways.

John Swain