

Worcestershire Megafinal 8 May 2011

Organiser – Ray Collett

There were about 130 entries from 23 Schools and 3 junior clubs in Worcestershire, Dudley and parts of South Birmingham formerly part of Worcestershire. The distribution of schools and clubs was: Worcestershire (current boundaries) 13; Birmingham 10; Dudley & Stourbridge 3. Over three quarters of players were attending primary schools, just over a quarter were girls, and there were 12 players under the age of 7.

Seventeen Worcestershire Supremi titles – including one each for league players James and Joseph Friar - were awarded and a further 25 players qualified for the National Gigafinal at Derby. Awards were presented to Primary school children by chess book author Tim Onions and prizes for secondary school age players were presented by Andrew Farthing. At the Gigafinal, players can win £200 and qualify for the Terafinal with a top prize of £2000. The geographical distribution of players qualifying for the Gigafinal was: Worcestershire (current boundaries) 19; Birmingham 13; Dudley & Stourbridge 5 with the remaining qualifiers travelling from other counties playing *hors concours*.

The organising team without which the megafinal could not have been held, was: Lorraine Cooper (St Joseph's Stourbridge, reception and announcements), Malcolm Cooper (St Joseph's Stourbridge, Controller), Linda Southerton (St Columba's, Birmingham) on reception, John Collett (Reception, setting up and clearing venue), Alex Holowczak (Controller, Warley Quinbourn CC) Jim Friar (Kidderminster CC, Controller and clearing venue), Matthew Carr (Staffs CA, Controller), Andrew Moore (Hagley CC, Tournament Director), Jeremy Greenow (WJCA, Photography), Andrew Farthing (Worcester City CC, Controller, setting up and clearing venue), Tim Onions (Bookstall), Sheena Payne-Lunn (WJCA, assistant controller), Penny Wood (Redditch CC, Relief controller). Also I am grateful for the good service from the Facilities Management team and Aramark caterers at the University. Equipment for the event was provided by Worcestershire Chess Association, Ray Collett, Worcester Junior Chess Academy, Kidderminster Chess Club, and Worcester City Chess Club. Nationally the UK Chess Challenge is organised by IM Mike Basman whose support in resolving difficulties and keeping organisers up to scratch is what makes the UK Chess Challenge the biggest junior chess tournament in the world with over 60,000 participants.

Sponsors were: the University of Worcester for providing the venue free of charge (worth about £300), British Land plc for trophies, and the English Chess Federation for book prizes.