



# **ECF Chess Academy**

*“Excellence in Chess Education”*



*‘Knight’s eye view’ by Brendan O’Gorman*

## **Prospectus 2015**

***Academy founded July 2015***

**With thanks to the ECF and John Robinson Youth  
Chess Trust for their support**

*The English Chess Federation is a limited company registered in England and Wales (5293039)  
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# Introduction

The English Chess Federation (ECF) is laying foundations for chess education of the future in creating its chess academy. This prospectus is in two parts comprising firstly the academy itself and secondly the International Programme offered by the academy. The first part will help you to understand about the academy: its aims; what membership of the academy itself means; how the academy is structured at the moment and how it will be developed in the future to include a range of activities and programmes that will help different levels of players. The second part of the prospectus tells you about the International Programme which is the first programme that members of the academy can apply to join. This programme is an ambitious and challenging 3 year programme which aims to develop chess players who are either already playing at major international events or aiming to achieve that level of play.

## Letter from ECF Director of Junior Chess and Education

### INSPIRING AND DEVELOPING THE CHESS PLAYERS OF TOMORROW

As we celebrate the launch of the ECF Chess Academy, I am mindful that the ECF is motivated by a strong sense of duty to impart high quality knowledge and skills to its junior players and to provide them with the best opportunities for playing and developing. Therefore I am delighted to tell you that the academy has the full support of the ECF and the John Robinson Youth Chess Trust both of whom are investing significant funding into this project in order to support and develop its junior players.



The academy education must at all times be an enriching journey of exploration and discovery, providing opportunities for junior chess players of all backgrounds to explore new knowledge, experience the complex and interdependent nature of learning, and push personal development boundaries with new found confidence. For the player this means that the journey to becoming a better player is at least as important as the end result and the academy intends to ensure that its education supports this.

We recognise that we have to offer innovative and exciting programmes of study within a distinctive learning environment. There is a need to actively promote a strong sense of individuality, creativity and skills development in all our juniors as they will be the keys to our future success as a chess community. The ECF Chess Academy expects that its programmes and activities will increase the standard of chess playing amongst juniors in England and raise the profile of the country in the world of chess. For your child it will mean the chance to become a better player, maybe even an elite player with a FIDE title.

Whilst these are challenging times for chess in England, the ECF Chess Academy aims to be an exciting place to study and teach, with excellence at the forefront. We embark upon the first phase of our development, establishing the Academy and providing education through the "International Programme" with considerable confidence and ambition. I hope that chess players, family members, supporters and sponsors will join us in a shared vision for our Academy's future.

My personal thanks go to everyone who has worked so hard to make this possible.

To success!

Traci Whitfield

## Letter from the Head of ECF Chess Academy

Welcome to the newly-founded ECF Chess Academy

We will provide high level coaching, guidance, inspiration and advice for our best chess players.

We will try to help parents and coaches to make informed decisions.

We aim to improve performance in International youth events by providing excellent support.

We aim to develop chess among young people in England.



Throughout this prospectus you will find more detailed information about our programme. I am sure that the chess community will give unequivocal, positive support to this project and I look forward to working with all of you to move chess among young people forward

Andrew Martin  
FIDE Senior Trainer  
International Master.

## Contact details

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## ECF Chess Academy website

[www.englishchess.org.uk/Juniors](http://www.englishchess.org.uk/Juniors)



# About the Academy

## Vision statement

Our vision is to enable junior chess players to develop a lifelong love of chess, reach their playing potential, use chess to enrich other areas of their lives including their education and become the inspirational adult players of the future.

## Aims

The ECF Chess Academy aims:

To encourage junior chess players to play at and develop their chess to the level that suits them.

To identify talented junior chess players capable of and motivated to play in international level events.

To develop junior chess players to international standard of play for major junior and youth world and continental events.

To encourage and facilitate juniors with sufficient potential to achieve FIDE titles.

## Membership

All junior players who hold current gold or platinum membership of the ECF also have automatic free membership of the ECF Chess Academy so long as they meet the following two requirements.

- Resident in the UK.
- Eligible to represent England in international tournaments.

## Benefits

Members of the academy have access to all current and future programmes run by the academy subject to them meeting the admissions criteria for each programme. They are eligible to take part in the 5 day training tournament (see page 11) without being a student on the International programme. They will also have access to selected online learning resources from 2016 onwards. Academy members will have preferential selection for ECF registered international championships over non-members in the 2016 ECF Junior Selection Policy. Other benefits of membership will be added as they become available.



## Structure

The academy proposes to prepare juniors for an international standard of play appropriate to their abilities and aspirations. In the diagram below you can see how the academy currently (in blue) fits into the broad structure of junior chess in England.



The academy is focussing initially on two main tiers of players — “**National**” and “**International**”. The National level players are those who are already playing national level chess and have reached the standard to play at “developmental” international championships such as the World Schools Chess Championships. The International level players are those who are already playing in “major” international championships such as the World Youth Chess Championships or have reached the standard to play in them.

The first programme to be run by the academy concentrates on meeting the developmental needs of players in those national and international tiers and is called the “International Programme” (see page 8). This is a 3 year programme in which the topics taught change in consecutive years and this should lead to a cumulative improvement in your child if he/she completes more than one year of training. (See later for details). Players are taught in groups relating to their ability rather than to either their age or their chess playing experience, so this particular programme will take players from both tiers. The focus is on excellence in chess education.

Learning resources have been developed initially for students on the International Programme but there will be resources for students who are not on the international training programme but aspire to it. This will have password protected online access.

A third tier of “**Elite**” players will be identified within 12 months and then supported to gain FIDE titles. Rather than a traditional teaching programme, support for “Elite” players to achieve FIDE titles will be through:

- 1 Financial and/or other ECF support to assist selected players to secure initial norms.
- 2 Development of a collaborative and mutual support system among players seeking norms.
- 3 Development of a specific ECF support system for elite players wishing to improve their game. This will include advice and educational opportunities.

A foundation tier of “**Local and Regional**” players (see the green part of the diagram) will be developed in the future. Players up to national level already have some provision through other organisations and the ECF intends to develop a structure that works harmoniously with this.

The academy offers advice and support on accessing appropriate tournaments and encourages its members to seek to develop both their skills in chess and their love of the game. It seeks to support you, the players’ parents, in supporting and preparing your child to play at the level to which they aspire.

## **Underpinning philosophy for learning with the academy**

The academy accepts the four principles for learning chess which underpin all learning at the academy:

### **Resilience**

**Players are engaged in learning through:**

Being absorbed in learning chess; trying new approaches regardless of outcome; persevering and managing distractions.

### **Resourcefulness**

**Players learn in different ways through:**

Questioning; making links and recognising patterns; using their imagination; reasoning; calculation and making good use of chess learning resources.

### **Reflectiveness**

**Players use a variety of strategies for learning through:**

Planning; revising; analysing; summarising and reviewing.

### **Reciprocity**

**Players learn through:**

Balancing self-reliance and seeking help; collaborating; talking and listening; inspiring and being inspired.



# The International Programme

## Overview

The international programme is aimed at players who have the skill, ambition and dedication to rise to the forefront of junior chess in England. The programme training events are intended to be challenging and require the participant to work hard.

The main principle of the programme is to prepare players to succeed in international tournaments, particularly major tournaments such as the World Youth and Cadet Championships and the European Youth Chess Championships. Where tournaments require selection for the event then it will be based on merit and development. Players who are on the International Programme and have completed at least one year will only need to achieve 90% of the target rating/grade for their age as specified in the ECF Junior Selection Policy.

It is intended that highly successful players completing the programme will be able to move up a tier and seek to gain FIDE titles while still a junior.

## Aims

The aims are to:

Facilitate players to gain the skills to be effective when competing at international events (e.g. use of Chessbase for game preparation; establish solid opening repertoire; build position and game review, and analysis skills; ensure good endgame understanding, develop advanced game skills).

Implement a strong, challenging curriculum which builds on earlier sessions and the players own skills and knowledge.

Encourage players to develop the “stamina” required to train for and play in high level international competitions.

Provide an opportunity to help parents and players to get to know each other and to learn what to expect at international events, and to learn what is expected of them by way of preparation in advance of such events.

Develop the players understanding of psychological aspects of chess and playing at international level.

*“I believe that winning requires a constant and strong psychology not just at the board but in every aspect of your life”.*

Garry Kasparov.



## Training weekends

The international training programme consists of 4 training weekends per year based on the FIDE syllabus. Subsequent weekends will build on the previous one. Each annual programme will be a component of a proposed 3 year programme of study. Your child will be taught in a group of similar ability players.

For 2016 the dates and venues for training weekends will be:

### Weekend

1	2-3 January	Liverpool
2	9-10 April	Daventry
3	27-28 August	St Catherine's, Bramley
4	12-13 November	Daventry

\* Subject to change.

## Location of venues for 2016



## Coaches

Your coaches will normally be titled players with proven educational experience and be ECF Accredited. The Head of the ECF Chess Academy, Andrew Martin is a FIDE Senior Trainer and a renowned English coach.

There will be 5 to 10 students per coach during the training weekends, the ratio will depend on the session learning activity.

## Timetable

The format of a training weekend can be seen in the table below.

### Saturday

10.00-11.00	session 1
11.20-12.50	session 2
13.30-14.30	session 3
15.00-16.30	session 4

5 hours actual coaching

### Sunday

09.00-10.00	session 5
10.20-11.50	session 6
12.30-13.30	session 7
13.50-15.20	session 8

5 hours actual coaching



## Session topics for the first year

Sessions will include a wide range of chess theory and practical advice. There will be an opportunity to learn to use a database in order to prepare for games at international events. It is expected that some sessions will be guest lectures/seminars via the internet by prominent chess players from around the world. Each training day will include two specific themes, one taught as a MAJOR and one taught as a MINOR topic. Topics will be taught using a range of methods in order to appeal to different learning styles.

### Weekend One

#### Day 1

MAJOR: Attacking the King

MINOR: Rook Endings

#### Day 2

MAJOR: The Isolated Queen's Pawn

MINOR: Hanging Pawns

### Weekend Two

#### Day 1

MAJOR: How to prepare for a game in a big event

MINOR: Essential Pawn Endgames

#### Day 2

MAJOR: The Art of Defence

MINOR: More on Defence

### Weekend Three

#### Day 1

MAJOR: Sacrifices: good and bad

MINOR: Which gambits are sound?

#### Day 2

MAJOR: General Endgame Strategy

MINOR: The role of the open file

### Weekend Four

#### Day 1

MAJOR: Learn from the World Champions

MINOR: How to build a successful repertoire

#### Day 2

MAJOR: Planning

MINOR: Prophylactic thinking

## Resources for the Programme

Electronic and other resources will be available to children on the programme to support the syllabus and to enhance the chess student's development. Although chess related equipment and other resources will be provided at events, you are advised to bring your own electronic devices for supplemental work to get the most out of the weekend.

## **Parental activity during the training weekend**

There will be sessions during the training weekends for parents on subjects such as:

- Helping your child to achieve international player status.
- Supporting your child in preparation for international events.
- Supporting your child at an international event.
- Using learning resources to help your child.
- Finding suitable FIDE rated tournaments for your child.
- Organising international trips with other parents.
- Organising international trips with the ECF.
- Networking among parents for mutual success for your children.
- Applying for sponsorship and grants for your child.

Parents who already have experience will be encouraged to advise and support other parents. Parents may also suggest topics for their sessions.

## **Homework**

Your child will be expected to work on developing their chess and practising what they have learnt in between training events, either online or with their personal chess coach.

## **Training tournament**

Your child is encouraged to take part in a 5 day training tournament which will mirror conditions and time controls in major international events such as the World Youth and Cadet Championships. Players often find major international events are extremely demanding in terms of stamina and concentration and this event seeks to prepare them for this. The schedule will include pre-game preparation, post-game debriefing, healthy eating opportunities, rest activities and an expectation that your child will get a good night's sleep to prepare them for their next game. The training tournament is expected to take place on 11–15 July 2016 at St Catherine's in Bramley. This will also be open to academy members not on the international programme in order to increase the diversity of potential opponents.

## **Chess Advisory Panel**

Your child will be allowed to ask a limited number of questions to a chess advisory panel each year to aid their development in between training events. These questions, for example, could include advice on how a game could have been played to achieve a better outcome. The panel will be led by GM Glenn Flear and will consist of a group of coaches who are highly experienced and knowledgeable international players.

## **Reporting to parents and/or personal chess coaches**

A verbal or written report on progress made by chess students on the programme will be available to parents/coaches at least once a year. In addition, if required, advice can be given to your child's chess coach on areas to develop or materials which might help develop specific aspects of your child's chess.

## **Cost**

The cost for the International Programme will be £400 per child per year. This amount includes: enrolment on the programme, 40 hours of coaching per year, access to the advisory panel, student assessment and parents' sessions. It does not include accommodation or food at training events.

There may be an extra cost associated with the training tournament to cover costs relating to its organisation. For example arbiter expenses, trophies and certificates.

*Parents may apply to the ECF Chess Academy for help with subscription costs if they have genuine need. Please write to the Director of Junior Chess and Education in confidence if you wish to apply. In addition there may be grants/scholarships in the future which will be advertised when available.*

## **Admission to the programme**

There will be 30 places on the programme. This number may increase or decrease depending on resource availability.

Eligibility is based on ability rather than age although most players will be aged between 9 and 15 years.

Applicants are expected to have an ECF grade of at least their own age multiplied by ten. For example, if you are 11 you need to have a grade of  $11 \times 10 = 110$  or higher. To calculate this you should use your child's standardplay grade in the ECF July 2015 grading list and their age on 31 July 2015.

All applicants must be members of the ECF Chess Academy and committed to representing England and the ECF Chess Academy at international events. All junior ECF gold/platinum level members are also members of the academy, subject to the conditions outlined earlier in the prospectus on page 5.

Priority will be given to applicants showing commitment to attending all the training sessions and to undertaking the 3 year programme.

The academy year runs from 1 January to 31 December each year.

Payment for the first year of the programme will be on confirmation of your child's place. Details of payment will be provided.

Applications are accepted until 15 October 2015 for the year beginning 1 January 2016, using the online application form on the Academy section of the ECF (Junior) Website. The internet address for the application form is

<https://britchess.wufoo.com/forms/international-programme-application/>

## **Spare places at the training weekends and training tournament**

Occasionally places may become available on a training weekend due to students on the programme being unable to attend. If this happens, places will be advertised on the ECF (junior) website. The cost will be £120 per weekend and will only include coaching. Applicants will still be required to meet the grading requirement and be a member of the academy.

Entry to the tournament will be open to Academy members and advertised on the ECF (junior) website.