

# Welsh Chess Chat

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

JULY 2024

ISSUE #1



The Cuenca's made a holiday of it here, left to right; FM Grzegorz Toczek, FM Daniel Kozusek & GM Pepe Cuenca enjoying some social chess & food in Cardiff Bay. Photo taken by IM Jose Camacho!

## Welsh chess players & tournament updates

**JONATHAN BLACKBURN**



EDITOR

Welcome to the first ever edition of this e-Newsletter. I want this to be a (hopefully) monthly overview of what has gone on in Welsh chess, keeping you informed of player successes, tournaments and any other fantastic work done in the Welsh chess landscape. This is not something that can be done alone and I am seeking contributions from our readers; whether it be a regular or a one-off report.

### The latest news Alex Golding & Harry Grieve win South Wales International

by Jonathan Blackburn

The South Wales International has been the strongest event in Welsh chess over the years and provides the opportunity to play against Grandmasters. Our top level players therefore have an opportunity to gain norms if they do well.

This year featured 3 GM's, 6 IM's, 6 FM's, 2 CM's & 1 AGM with a good mix of returning faces, English border crossers and some new names representing Spain, Argentina & Singapore. The biggest event of the Welsh calendar year is also excellent training for the upcoming Olympiad in September and so 4/5 of the Open team were in participation as well

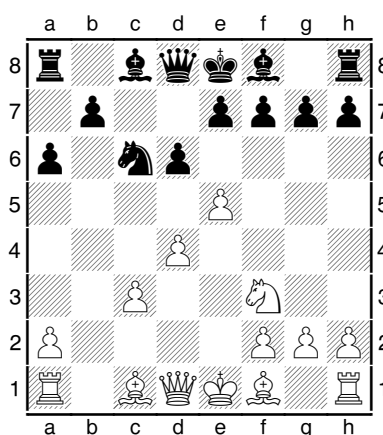
as 2/5 of the Women's team. With myself being the 1 member of the open to miss out.

The tournament was jointly won by surprise package 21 year old FM Alex Golding (who looks to also have secured an IM norm) and IM Harry Grieve both from England on 7/9points.

Throughout the tournament Alex seemed to play freely, focusing on activity for his pieces and not placing much value in material. This win against young IM Yichen Han is one of the best, but I could have chosen many more.

**Golding,Alex (2296) - Han,Yichen (2414) [B28]**

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 a6 3.c3 Nf6 4.e5 Nd5 5.d4 cxd4 6.cxd4 d6 7.Nc3 Nxc3?! 8.bxc3 Nc6?



It's unlike Han to be inaccurate so early, I can only think it was from rushing or not expecting his opponent to take advantage.

**9.e6** Golding latches on to his chance using this typical idea to blunt blacks development of the lightsquared bishop as well as open up the black king

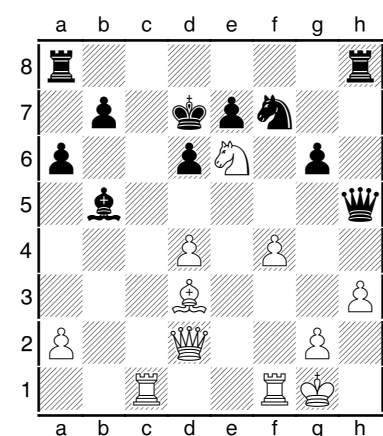
**9...fxe6 10.Ng5?! 10...Qa5 1.Bd2 g6 12.Bd3**

**Bh6 13.Nxh7** [13.h4 was the way to continue although white's advantage has shrunk] **13...Bxd2+ 14.Qxd2 Qh5?**

It is extremely difficult to play this for black 14...Rxh7 15.Bxg6+ Rf7 16.0-0= it might be only a rook and pawn against the knight and bishop in the end, but white's king is safe and the h-pawn could be very fast coupled with black still needing to untangle I can understand why Han didn't go for this line

**15.Ng5** now it is one way traffic, white has a lot of weaknesses to target

**15...e5 16.h3 exd4 17.0-0** true to style! **17...Ne5?! 18.f4 Nf7 19.cxd4 Bd7 20.Rac1 Bb5?! 21.Ne6 Kd7**



what a beautiful position for the white knight, keep that king in the centre!

**22.Rc7+ Kxe6** [22...Ke8 23.Ng7+ Kf8 24.Nxh5] **23.Qe3+ Ne5 24.fxe5 Kd5** [black is checkmated in all lines and so resigned] **1-0**

The Welsh threat was extinguished in the penultimate round when Jose, Daniel & Grzeg all lost. Daniel won his last to have a share of 3<sup>rd</sup> place alongside A. Balaji (IM Norm), GM J.Cuenca, IM Y.Han & GM B.Chatabashev.

Top 10 Welsh Chess Union ratings for 11<sup>th</sup> July 2024

Player	zone	Grade	Title	Pld	New	Diff	Last played
<a href="#">Jose Camacho Collados</a>	E1	2448	IM	9	2438	-10	10/07/2024
<a href="#">Daniel Kozusek</a>	E1	2423	FM	9	2426	3	10/07/2024
<a href="#">Grzegorz Toczek</a>	E1	2337	FM	9	2342	5	10/07/2024
<a href="#">Ioan Rees</a>	E1	2341	FM	0	2341	0	
<a href="#">Howard Williams</a>	D1	2320	FM	0	2320	0	
<a href="#">Richard Dineley</a>	N1	2312	CM	0	2312	0	
<a href="#">Alexis Harakis</a>	D1	2297	FM	0	2297	0	
<a href="#">Jonathan LB Blackburn</a>	G1	2295	FM	0	2295	0	
<a href="#">Elijah Everett</a>	N1	2281		0	2281	0	
<a href="#">Alex Bullen</a>	E1	2243	CM	9	2240	-3	10/07/2024



## WELSH CHESS OLYMPIAD BOUND

The Olympiad takes place from September 11<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> in Budapest Hungary and the Welsh Chess Union are finalising selection for this event.

The Open team: IM Jose Commacho Collados, FM Daniel Kozusek, FM Grzegorz Toczek, FM Jonathan Blackburn and CM Alex Bullen with IM Marcos Camacho Collados as coach.

Full details of the Women's team to follow once it has been officially announced.

You can follow Olympiad games and results online and I do my utmost to do daily video catch-ups on twitch and youtube: @welshchesschat

Follow us on X, youtube and twitch – the handle for all accounts is @welshchesschat

**Got a report? Want to let us know about an event? Email: [WelshChessChat@gmail.com](mailto:WelshChessChat@gmail.com)**

## Upcoming Events

### 23<sup>rd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> July Glorney Gilbert Cup - Hull

The Welsh juniors team up to take on England, Scotlands & Ireland in 4 different sections. Good luck to all taking part.

### 25<sup>th</sup> July – 4<sup>th</sup> August British Chess Championships – Hull

While we have plenty of Welsh qualifiers for the main championships many choose not to play due to accomodation costs. Currently we have nobody in the main event, however we will have plenty playing in the other tournaments including the juniors.

### 13<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> August – ICCF Conference Llandudno

Our correspondance team are somewhat superstars fresh from winning the European title they host the conference to meet many of their opponents over the years. Llandudno used to host a regular weekend congress and has even held the British champs beforehand. One day we hope these events can return.

### 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> August Newport Chess Congress and the 8<sup>th</sup> Welsh Seniors Championships – Rougemont School, Malpas, Newport

This event was full last year and we are hoping for more of the same again with a fantastic effort from David Norris and team.

As I complete this article the final round of the World Seniors Championships has concluded and should feature in the next issue.

## Junior News

Junior Rapid Ratings Top 10 July 2024:

Name	R1	Pld	New	+/-
Ethan Chung	1902	5	<b>1888</b>	-14
Yuxuan Wu	1860	5	<b>1876</b>	16
Bence Szakmany	1862	5	<b>1867</b>	5
Yaroslav Sharhorodsky	1848	0	<b>1848</b>	0
Ellison Smith	1796	5	<b>1800</b>	4
Emma Kong	1693	10	<b>1747</b>	54
Daniel Chung	1744	0	<b>1744</b>	0
Tom Davies	1727	0	<b>1727</b>	0
Farouq Nasir	1680	5	<b>1721</b>	41
Lucas Zheng	1621	40	<b>1718</b>	97

The South Wales International reported on above had fewer junior entrants than last year but Olympiad bound Emma Kong performed exceptionally after a tough start. Emma finished on 4/9 gaining 76.8 FIDE rating

### EJCOA Finals & Northern Gigafinal

The EJCOA finals aptly named from the 'English Junior Coaches & Organisers Association' held its finals on the 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> July. While being named English it doesn't prevent Welsh players from entering and we had Adam Sarwar U12 and Arush Murthy U14 flying the Welsh flag. Adam scored a credible 2.5/5 and Arush 1/3 playing on the first day. We look forward to seeing this event grow and hopefully hosting a Welsh zonal qualifier in the future.

There was a clash with the Northern Gigafinals on 6<sup>th</sup> July where we had several entrants:

Constantine Popov U8 5/7, U8G Ada Etchells 3/7 (with at least 2 more years at this age group) Lucas Zheng U10 4/7, Arush Murthy U12 4/7. Very well done to all with some impressive performances.

Pembrokeshire keeps putting on junior chess events and will benefit in the long run. Red Hill Prep hosted 14 schools and plans to host another event in the Autumn. Thanks to Vicky Brown for the report and photo.





WCPL						
	P	W	D	L	Gp	Mp
Cardiff	6	6	0	0	24.5	12
Morrison Plus	6	4	0	2	21.5	8
North Cardiff	6	4	0	2	23.5	8
White Knights	6	3	0	3	16.5	6
Newport	6	2	0	4	14	4
Abergavenny	6	1	1	4	13	3
The Full Ponty	6	0	1	5	13	1

U1850						
	P	W	D	L	Gp	Mp
Castell Nedd	7	5	2	0	21.5	12
White Knights	7	5	0	2	19	10
Cardiff Tigers	7	5	0	2	16.5	10
The Full Ponty	7	2	2	3	11.5	6
North Cardiff Lions	7	2	1	4	12	5
North Cardiff Pumas	7	1	3	3	10.5	5
Morrison Extras	7	2	1	4	11.5	5
Abergavenny	7	1	1	5	9.5	3

**Cardiff clinch WCPL title with 6/6**

**Castell Nedd claim U1850 in 3 way tie**

## 10 QUESTIONS WITH....

### CM ALEX BULLEN

**Q When did you start playing chess ?**

Age 9. I had a computer game called 'Lego chess' which I used to play which is where my interest came from.

**Q What do you like about chess?**

How the game can take many forms (theoretical battle, tactical, positional, endgame grind) and each player tries to steer their games in different directions. You need to be ready for all of them! One day you can checkmate your opponent in under 20 moves, and the next you're playing a rook endgame for 7 hours.

**Q If it wasn't chess, what would you be doing?**

Definitely still something competitive! I used to play a fair bit of table tennis so maybe that.

**Q Regular job?**

Data analyst for a Healthcare Consultancy Firm.

**Q Can chess make you happy?**

I think so. Probably these days my happiness comes more from seeing people at tournaments than playing the game itself. Though when a tournament goes very well then I'm definitely in a good mood for the next week or so.

**Q Favourite game?**

Bullen – Kozusek, Welsh Championships 2022 (Sorry Dan!)

**Bullen,Alex (2079) - Kozusek,Daniel (2315) [D02]**

66th ch-WLS 2022 Cardiff WLS (2.2), 15.04.2022

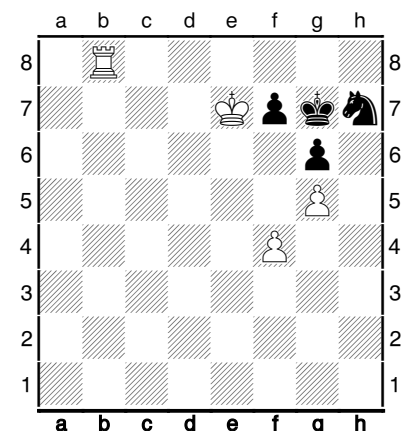
**1.d4 d5 2.Nf3 e6 3.c4 Nf6 4.e3 b6 5.b3 Bb4+ 6.Nbd2 0-0 7.Bd3 Bb7 8.0-0 Nbd7 9.Bb2 Ne4 10.a3 Bd6 11.b4 f5 12.c5 Be7 13.Nb3 Bf6 14.Rc1 c6 15.Ne5 Bxe5 16.dxe5 bxc5 17.bxc5 Qc7 18.f3 Ng5 19.f4 Ne4 20.Bxe4 fxe4 21.Nd4 Rfe8 22.Qg4 Nf8 23.f5 exf5 24.Nxf5 Bc8 25.Nh6+ Kh8 26.e6 Bxe6 27.Rf7 Bxg4 28.Bxg7# 1-0**



Photo from FIDE Olympiad 2022, Rd11 v Jersey, by Mark Livshitz

**Q Favourite move?**

Bullen,A – Mooser (Pfalz Open, 2022)



Playing Rh8 here, feeling like a boss! 1-0

**Q Favourite player?**

In general I prefer the humble players. Aronian a big favourite but I also have soft spots for Michael Adams and David Navara. Then the Muzychuk sisters from the women's side.

**Q Future chess goals?**

Individually I'd like to win the Welsh championships one year. Other than that it would be nice to win more Welsh caps and get our 4NCL team (The Audible Checks) into division 1. Most of all though, I want to keep enjoying playing for a long time to come.

**Q Advice for other chess players?**

Don't stress out about ratings. It's very easy to do but I think that over time your rating will always naturally reflect your playing strength if you play enough!

Thanks for reading and keep your eyes peeled for Issue #2.