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4NCL 26-27 March 2011 Staverton Park, Daventry & Crewe

The fourth weekend was split between three venues, Divisions 1 and 2 were played at Staverton Park, Division 3 was played at the Barcelo in Daventry and the Northern League took place at Wychwood Park near Crewe.

4NCL Divisions One and Two held at Staverton Park

Round 7 is the last round before Divisions 1 and 2 split into Championship, Promotion and Relegation Pools so the most important matches were arguably those deciding the outstanding places.

Three teams were already qualified from Pool A of Division One. Pride and Prejudice maintained their 100% record by beating Warwickshire Select 6.5-1.5 whilst Betsson won 5-3 against the ADs to qualify in second place. Barbican 1, who had already qualified, faced Cheddleton who needed to draw 4-4 to join them in the Championship Pool. Despite being outrated on all eight boards Cheddleton took a commanding lead in the match with wins for Jonathan Hawkins against Jonathan Parker, Danny Gormally against Matthew Turner and Jason McKenna against Ingrid Lauterbach whilst Arlette van Weersel drew with Mark Ferguson. Despite a late Barbican rally with Max Devereaux beating Robert Bellin and John Cox beating Paul Wallace, David Eggleston drew with Lorin D'Costa to give them a 4-3 lead and Keith Arkell tried to convert an extra pawn before agreeing to a draw against Sam Collins to clinch the match. This result meant that WGHK 2's 7.5-0.5 win against Pandora's Box was insufficient to get them through and they will join Pandora's Box, Warwickshire Select and the ADs in the relegation pool.



Team	P	W	D	L	GP	Pts
Pride & Prejudice	7	7	0	0	42.5	14
Betsson.com	7	5	1	1	34	11
Barbican 4NCL 1	7	4	1	2	35.5	9
Cheddleton 1	7	4	0	3	31	8
Wood Green Hilsmark 2	7	3	1	3	29.5	7
The AD's	7	2	1	4	23	5
Warwickshire Select 1	7	1	0	6	17.5	2
Pandora's Box Grantham	7	0	0	7	11	0

Pool B was won convincingly by WGHK1 who beat their nearest rivals e2e4.org.uk 1 6-2 despite Yang-Fan Zhou defeating Nick Pert and ending his run of unbeaten rated games which stretched back to the 2008 British. White Rose were almost certain to qualify and made sure with a 6-2 win over Sambuca Sharks. The match that decided fourth place was between Oxford and Guildford. Both teams were on 6 match points but Guildford were ahead on game points. After seven games had finished it was 3.5-3.5 but Marcos Camacho Collados won the final game against Michael White to win the match. Guildford actually won the top four boards while Oxford won on boards 5, 6 and 8 with Sophie Tidman's win against IM Nigel Povah the standout result. Cambridge University beat Barbican 2 4.5-3.5 and while it was not enough to get them into the Championship Pool it



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gives them a great chance of staying in Division One.

Team	P	W	D	L	GP	Pts
Wood Green Hillsmark 1	7	7	0	0	44.5	14
e2e4.org.uk 1	7	5	0	2	30	10
White Rose 1	7	4	1	2	28	9
Guildford A&DC 1	7	4	0	3	29.5	8
Cambridge University 1	7	3	1	3	26	7
Oxford 1	7	3	0	4	25.5	6
Barbican 4NCL 2	7	1	0	6	21.5	2
Sambuca Sharks	7	0	0	7	18.5	0



Barbican Youth finished top of Pool A in Division Two despite a 4-3.5 defeat to White Rose 2. The bizarre score line can be explained by the Barbican default on board 8 for which they were deducted 0.5 of a game point. This meant that White Rose 2 advanced to seven match points but they were still to miss out on the top four, albeit on game points. The big match of the pool was between Jutes of Kent and Rhyfelwyr Essyllwg who both started the day on 7 points in joint second alongside Anglian Avengers. Whilst Anglian Avengers defeated Poisoned Pawns 2 5.5-2.5 to guarantee themselves a top four place Cambridge University 2 (who started the day a point behind) missed out after a 5.5-2.5 loss to South Wales Dragons. Jutes of Kent triumphed 6-2 but the other results allowed Rhyfelwyr Essyllwg to take fourth place, ahead of White Rose 2 by one game point!



Team	P	W	D	L	GP	Pts
Barbican Youth	7	5	0	2	33.5	10
Jutes of Kent	7	4	1	2	31	9
Anglian Avengers 1	7	4	1	2	30.5	9
Rhyfelwyr Essyllwg	7	3	1	3	27.5	7
White Rose 2	7	3	1	3	26.5	7
South Wales Dragons	7	3	0	4	31	6
Cambridge University 2	7	3	0	4	26.5	6
Poisoned Pawns 2	7	0	2	5	17	2



Bristol won Pool B in Division 2 after a 5-3 win over AMCA Dragons that cost AMCA the chance of a place in the promotion pool. Guildford 2 confirmed their place with a 4-4 draw against 3Cs who despite being very strong on the top boards have had a tough season with just one win so far. Wessex qualified in third place with a 7-1 victory over Kings Head whilst Poisoned Pawns 1 had a 4.5-3.5 victory over Sambuca Black Sheep which meant they finished behind Wessex on game points. Despite their



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lowly league position I should mention that this is the fourth match that Sambuca have lost 4.5-3.5.

Team	P	W	D	L	GP	Pts
Bristol 1	7	6	0	1	34	12
Guildford A&DC 2	7	4	2	1	28	10
Wessex 1	7	4	1	2	32.5	9
Poisoned Pawns 1	7	4	1	2	31	9
AMCA Dragons	7	2	3	2	27.5	7
Kings Head	7	1	3	3	23.5	5
3Cs 1	7	1	1	5	25.5	3
Sambuca Black Sheep	7	0	1	6	21	1



Divisions 1 and 2 will therefore continue in round 8 after the league split with the following tables:

Division 1 Championship Pool:

Wood Green Hilsmark 1	3	3	0	0	19	6
Pride & Prejudice	3	3	0	0	18	6
White Rose 1	3	2	0	1	11	4
Betsson.com	3	1	1	1	10.5	3
e2e4.org.uk 1	3	1	0	2	10	2
Cheddleton 1	3	1	0	2	9	2
Barbican 4NCL 1	3	0	1	2	10.5	1
Guildford A&DC 1	3	0	0	3	8	0



Division 1 Relegation Pool:

Cambridge University 1	3	3	0	0	14.5	6
Wood Green Hilsmark 2	3	2	1	0	16.5	5
The ADs	3	2	1	0	14.5	5
Oxford 1	3	2	0	1	11.5	4
Barbican 4NCL 2	3	1	0	2	11.5	2
Warwickshire Select 1	3	1	0	2	11.5	2
Sambuca Sharks	3	0	0	3	10.5	0





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Pandora's Box	3	0	0	3	6	0
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Division 2 Promotion Pool:

Anglian Avengers 1	3	2	1	0	13	5
Bristol 1	3	2	0	1	14	4
Barbican Youth	3	2	0	1	12.5	4
Guildford A&DC 2	3	2	0	1	11	4
Jutes of Kent	3	1	0	2	13	2
Poisoned Pawns 1	3	1	0	2	12.5	2
Wessex 1	3	1	0	2	10.5	2
Rhyfelwyr Essyllwg	3	0	1	2	9.5	1



Division 2 Relegation Pool:

AMCA Dragons	3	2	1	0	13	5
South Wales Dragons	3	2	0	1	16.5	4
Cambridge University 2	3	2	0	1	12.5	4
Kings Head	3	2	0	1	12.5	4
White Rose 2	3	1	1	1	12	3
3Cs 1	3	1	0	2	13	2
Sambuca Black Sheep	3	0	1	2	8.5	1
Poisoned Pawns 2	3	0	1	2	7	1



Round 8 saw the first matches in the Championship and Relegation pools. Whilst this should lead to closer matches I was surprised at how close the matches involving both WGHK1 and P&P were.

Although Cheddleton were again outrated on all eight boards they proved very stubborn opponents for WGHK. Jonathan Hawkins continued his impressive form with a win against Stephen Gordon to take his season's rating performance to 2622 from 8 games and this means that a draw in his next 4ncl match against a 2476 or higher will be enough for a GM norm. WGHK won with white on board 6 and 8 thanks to Andrew Greet and Lawrence Trent defeating Paul Wallace and Jason McKenna but with Cheddleton strengthening their team further for the final weekend they must have an excellent chance of obtaining one of the three European places.



Pride and Prejudice beat Guildford 5-3 to move within one game point of WGHK. P&P won three of their four whites on boards 1, 3 and 5 and suffered only one loss with Meri Grigoryan defeating WIM Sheila Sahl on board 8.



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Barbican overcame e2e4.org.uk 5.5-2.5 but Yang-Fan Zhou remains well placed for his final IM norm having performed at 2549 from his six games and he may well have a chance of a GM norm if he continues his current form. This weekend saw him beat Nick Pert and draw with Matthew Turner. White Rose edged home 4.5-3.5 against Betsson to consolidate them in third place.

In the relegation pool Barbican 2 had an important 5.5-2.5 victory against The ADs to give themselves a good chance of avoiding the drop whereas Warwickshire Select, Sambuca Sharks and Pandora's Box are all in grave danger of being relegated unless they can produce something special at the last weekend. Sophie Tidman of Oxford took her season's rating performance to 2293 from six games and she has a good chance of a WIM norm if she can play at least two titled players (WFM or higher) at the last weekend. Kanwal Bhatia also has a chance of a norm although to achieve this in round 9 would probably require a win against a 2300+.

The promotion pool in Division 2 produced some surprise results looking at the average ratings. Whilst the powerful Jutes of Kent side led by Simon Williams defeated Wessex 5.5-2.5 Bristol lost 4.5-3.5 to Rhyfelwyr Essyllwg and Guildford 2 held Anglian Avengers to 4-4. Poisoned Pawns beat Barbican Youth 4.5-3.5 in an entertaining match with seven decisive results. Sam Franklin had an impressive result defeating Stephen Swanson on board 1 for Barbican but they lost on boards 2, 3, 6 and 7. Whilst Anglian Avengers remain top of the table it looks wide open and only one point separates 2nd and 6th.

The demotion pool is also very competitive with three teams on 2 points, two on four and three on six. Of the teams on two points, 3Cs appear to have a strong enough side to escape, albeit they will need to win at least two matches and possibly even all three.

On behalf of the players and officials I would like to thank Staverton Park for providing excellent playing conditions and accommodation.

4NCL Division Three at the Barcelo, Daventry

At the start of the weekend there were three teams on 10 match points out of 12, namely Wessex 2, Celtic Tigers and Oxford 2, with Brown Jack a point behind.

Such is the competitive nature of the league that none of the leaders managed two wins but Brown Jack were able to do so with a 4.5-1.5 win against The Full Ponty and 4-2 against FCA Solutions. They now lead with 13 match points on game points from Wessex 2 who drew with Oxford 2 before defeating Celtic Tigers 3.5-2.5 on the Sunday. Celtic Tigers and Oxford 2 are now on 12 match points whilst Anglian Avengers 2, KJCA Kings & e2e4.org.uk 2 are all on eleven match points.

Of course it's worth bearing in mind that the Northern League teams will join Division 3 at the final weekend and that Bradford DCA Knights A (with 15 points) and The Spirit of Atticus (14 points) will therefore be the leaders going into round 9. It will be interesting to see how those and the other six teams fare when part of the same division.

Amongst the many individual results over the weekend 14 year old Amy Hoare, playing on board 3 for Sussex Smart Controls, won both games. On the Saturday she won against a player 250+ points above her with black while on Sunday she beat a player 100+ above her. Her team are on 9 points so it is unlikely they will be able to get promoted this year but it is nice to see the team giving her (and other juniors) opportunities to play on higher boards. Cosima Keen also made her debut for the team.





Elsewhere, AMCA Hippos fielded Tarun Malhotra and Matthew Wadsworth, two of our most promising younger juniors, on their top two boards and both scored 1.5/2.

On behalf of the players and officials I would like to thank the Barcelo for providing excellent playing conditions and accommodation.

4NCL Northern League weekend held at Wychwood Park near Crewe:

The fourth weekend was held at Wychwood Park, part of the De Vere group located near to Crewe. This was the final weekend of the Northern League as all eight teams will carry forward their scores when they join Division 3 at the final weekend in Hinckley on April 30th – May 2nd.

The weekend saw Bradford DCA Knights and The Spirit of Atticus re-confirm their dominance of the league. Bradford won 5-1 against Jorvik on Saturday whilst Atticus had a much closer match against Holmes Chapel, winning 3.5-2.5 despite being outrated on the bottom five boards. Cheddleton suffered a shock 3.5-2.5 defeat to Bradford B despite out rating them heavily on every board. Manchester Manticores finally got off the mark against Aigburth with a 3.5-2.5 victory.

Round 8 was played as a jamboree with each team playing a player from one of the opposing teams. Teams scoring 3.5 or more would receive two match points; 3 points would score 1 match point and 2.5 or less no points.

Ironically the team who had lost its first seven matches, Aigburth, scored 4 points and therefore recorded their first match points of the season. Bradford A scored 4.5 and Atticus scored 4 to increase their tally of match points to 15 and 14 respectively while Jorvik were the fourth team to pick up two match points. It was somewhat surprising to see Cheddleton 2 and Holmes Chapel not pick up any match points over the weekend and this will make it much harder for them to be promoted to Division 2 at the final weekend.

As the first season of the Northern League draws to a close I would like to think everyone involved in the league for getting it off the ground and I hope to see more teams playing next season. Bradford and Atticus are well placed for promotion to Division 2 so it will be interesting to see if this occurs who will fill the void that would be left behind.

On behalf of the players and officials I would like to thank Wychwood Park for providing excellent playing conditions and accommodation.

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The final weekend for all divisions will be held from April 30th – May 2nd at the Barcelo Hotel, Hinckley Island, Watling Street (A5), Hinckley, Leicestershire, LE10 3JA. Telephone number: 01455 631122, Fax is 01455 898579. Room rates are £47 for a single and £59 for a twin/double.