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4NCL Weekend 5, 30th April – 2nd March, Press Report by Rhys Cumming

Division 1 Championship Pool

The two top teams in the 4NCL this year, Guildford 1 and Cheddleton 1, had both won all 8 of their matches before the final weekend and so it all looked as though the two would face off in a winner takes all match for the title in round 11. Before they were able to get that far however, Cheddleton lost their round 9 game to a strong White Rose 1 side, led by James Adair who achieved his final GM norm with a draw against David Howell. Guildford 1 meanwhile easily dealt with Barbican 1 despite Nigel Short losing to a queen sacrifice from Sam Collins in 18 moves (see below). Round 10 saw each of the top 2 teams win albeit not by large margins. New recruit Lauren Fressinet lost on board 1 to Jon Speelman in Guildford's 5-3 win over Wood Green, while Cheddleton scraped past Barbican 2. This all meant that in the final round Guildford only required 2.5 points to be champions, although they no doubt wanted to make it 11 wins for the season. There was certainly a French feel to the Guildford team in the last round, who supplemented Fressinet, Edouard and Le Roux with current world number 5 MVL. Despite a 4:30am fire alarm, Guildford faced no real trouble as they ran out 5.5-2.5 victors.

Barbican 1 secured third place thanks to a final round victory over White Rose 1 who, despite taking points off Cheddleton, were overtaken into fourth by Wood Green.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	GP	Pts
1 Guildford 1		5½-2½	6-2	5-3	7-1	6-2	6-2	4½-2½	40	14
2 Cheddleton 1	2½-5½		5½-2½	5-3	3½-4½	5½-2½	6½-1½	4½-3½	33	10
3 Barbican 4NCL 1	2-6	2½-5½		4½-3½	4-3	5-3	5½-2½	5½-2½	29	10
4 Wood Green HK	3-5	3-5	3½-4½		4-4	4½-3½	5-3	6-2	29	7
5 White Rose 1	1-7	4½-3½	3-4	4-4		3½-4½	4-4	6-2	26	6
6 Guildford 2	2-6	2½-5½	3-5	3½-4½	4½-3½		5½-2½	4½-3½	25½	6
7 Blackthorne Russia	2-6	1½-6½	2½-5½	3-5	4-4	2½-5½		4-3½	19½	3
8 Barbican 4NCL 2	2½-4½	3½-4½	2½-5½	2-6	2-6	3½-4½	3½-4		19½	0

Division 1 Demotion Pool

Going into the weekend it was clear that there was one team sitting in the relegation places that didn't belong. Along with newly promoted sides Spirit of Atticus A, Sussex Martlets 1 and White Rose 2 were Grantham Sharks 1 on just three points having unexpectedly lost to both Atticus and the Martlets. Grantham strengthened their team significantly in the final weekend however they still needed to win their remaining matches including against the two best sides in the pool in Oxford 1 and 3Cs in order to guarantee survival. They did just that, with a 4.5-3.5 win over 3Cs the crucial result. Both White Rose 2 and Sussex Martlets 1 never really looked like survival and their final round clash proved to be White Rose's only points of the season. Spirit of Atticus meanwhile put up somewhat more of a fight as after beating Sussex on the Sunday played Cambridge University 1 in the last round with both teams on 6 points. Against the odds, they won the match 4.5-3.5, however despite getting 4 wins out of 7, they lost out on game points to South Wales Dragons. That result also relegated Cambridge University 1 who needed to win that final match to stay up and ended up as the only side to go down that were not newly-promoted.



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	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	GP	Pts
1 3Cs 1		3½-4½	3½-4½	5-3	4½-3½	5-3	7-1	6½-1½	35	10
2 Oxford 1	4½-3½		3-5	4½-3½	5-3	3-5	6-2	6-2	32	10
3 Grantham Sharks 1	4½-3½	5-3		4-4	3½-4½	6-2	3½-4½	6½-1½	33	9
4 South Wales Dragons	3-5	3½-4½	4-4		5½-2½	5-3	4-4	4½-3½	29½	8
5 Spirit of Atticus A	3½-4½	3-5	4½-3½	2½-5½		4½-3½	4½-3½	5-3	27½	8
6 Cambridge University 1	3-5	5-3	2-6	3-5	3½-4½		6-2	6½-1½	29	6
7 Sussex Martlets 1	1-7	2-6	4½-3½	4-4	3½-4½	2-6		3-5	20	3
8 White Rose 2	1½-6½	2-6	1½-6½	3½-4½	3-5	1½-6½	5-3		18	2

Division 2 Promotion

Going into the weekend just 2 points separated 1st from 8th, however by the end of the weekend that gap had severely widened. Celtic Tigers certainly showed their intentions for the title with the addition of Matthieu Cornette (2581) on top board and his 3/3 proved vital in Celtic Tigers winning all three matches, earning them the title and their second straight promotion. The second promotion spot went to Anglian Avengers 1 after wins over Barbican Youth and Grantham Sharks 2. The third and fourth promotion spots were a much tighter affair however. KJCA Kings had a poor weekend so never really looked in with a chance, while Barbican Youth were ineligible for promotion meaning that going into the final round, 2 of North East England, Downend & Fishponds, Grantham Sharks 2 and Kings Head would go up. These teams met in head to head matches with the winners very likely going up. Kings Head pipped Downend & Fishponds 4.5-3.5 while North East England won 5.5-2.5 against Grantham Sharks, meaning that Kings Head and North East England will join Celtic Tigers and Anglian Avengers next year.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	GP	Pts
1 Celtic Tigers 1		5-3	2-6	4½-3½	4-4	5½-2½	4-4	5½-2½	30½	10
2 Anglian Avengers 1	3-5		4½-3½	4½-3½	3-5	5-3	6½-1½	4-4	30½	9
3 Barbican 4NCL Youth	6-2	3½-4½		4-4	4-4	4-4	3-5	6½-1½	31	7
4 North East England	3½-4½	3½-4½	4-4		4½-3½	5½-2½	6-2	3½-4½	30½	7
5 Kings Head	4-4	5-3	4-4	3½-4½		3½-4½	4½-3½	4-4	28½	7
6 Grantham Sharks 2	2½-5½	3-5	4-4	2½-5½	4½-3½		5-3	5-3	26½	7
7 Downend & Fishponds	4-4	1½-6½	5-3	2-6	3½-4½	3-5		5½-2½	24½	5
8 KJCA Kings	2½-5½	4-4	1½-6½	4½-3½	4-4	3-5	2½-5½		22	4



Division 2 Demotion Pool

Which sides would go down in the demotion pool was all but decided by the end of round 10 with MK Phoenix, Hackney, Brown Jack Witney and Cambridge University 2 all going down. MK Phoenix had been languishing at the bottom of the table for some time and their fate was sealed after losing to Cambridge University 2 in round 9. Cambridge did not fare much better as despite beating MK Phoenix, a narrow loss to Guildford 3, who would have been disappointed to be in the demotion pool in the first place, put to bed their hopes of survival. The other teams to go down were Hackney and Brown Jack whose shared 4-4 draw in round 9 was what neither team really needed.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	GP	Pts
1 Guildford 3		4-4	3-5	4-4	7-1	5½-2½	4½-3½	4½-3½	32½	10
2 The AD's	4-4		4-4	5½-2½	3½-4½	4½-3½	5-3	5-3	31½	10
3 CSC Dragons [1]	5-3	4-4		3½-4½	6-2	3½-4½	5-3	5-3	32	9
4 Warwickshire Select 1	4-4	2½-5½	4½-3½		4½-3½	4½-3½	6-2	3½-4½	29½	9
5 Brown Jack Witney	1-7	4½-3½	2-6	3½-4½		4-4	4-4	5½-2½	24½	6
6 Hackney 1	2½-5½	3½-4½	4½-3½	3½-4½	4-4		2½-5½	5½-2½	26	5
7 Cambridge University 2	3½-4½	3-5	3-5	2-6	4-4	5½-2½		5-3	26	5
8 MK Phoenix 1	3½-4½	3-5	3-5	4½-3½	2½-5½	2½-5½	3-5		22	2

Collins, Sam E (2439)

Short, Nigel D (2671)

1-0

1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. Nd2 dxe4 4. Nxe4 Nd7 5. Ng5 Ngf6 6. Bd3 g6 7. N1f3 Bg7 8. O-O O-O 9. c3 a5 10. a4 Nd5
 11. Re1 b6 12. Qe2 Ra7 13. h4 N7f6 14. Ne5 Rc7 15. h5
 Nxf5 (Diagram)



16. Qxh5 h6 17. Nxf7 Rxf7 18. Nxf7 1-0

The PGNs for all the games from the weekend can be found here:

<http://www.4ncl.co.uk/downloads.htm>