

Croydon Chess Club – President’s Report 2018

A Brief Introduction

Throughout my life I have participated in many activities and have seen the organisation of these activities from an outside perspective. The level of organisation I’ve observed has varied greatly and often defines how successfully a club is run. Notably, I have been a member of Croydon Chess Club for 14 years and have never wavered in my faith that it is by far my favourite community group.

The welcoming environment of Croydon Chess Club that I grew up around is the reason that I wanted to transition from an outside observer to a dedicated committee member. Further, after my first year as a general committee member I wanted to do more for the club and hence took up the position of President for this year. I wanted to contribute to the club goals of encouraging the enjoyment of chess within the Croydon community by coaching participants to improve their chess skills whilst maintaining the aforementioned welcoming environment that I enjoyed myself so long ago.

To achieve this, I began the year by coaching the Youth Club. Unfortunately, scheduling conflicts with my second semester university subjects prevented me from doing so for the remainder of the year. Despite this setback, I tried to take a bigger role in the organisation of the senior club events. Whilst not major, I hope that my contributions to the club have played a part in the successes the club has seen over this year that I will now discuss further.

State of the Club

Club membership in 2018 continued to follow the trend of past years by increasing a further 17% to achieve a record-breaking 124 financial members; split across 22 adults and 102 juniors. As was the case in the latter half of last year, to accommodate the vast number of juniors the majority of the junior club continues to operate at Swinburne Uni whilst the Youth Club is held at the RSL.

As noted, the largest contributor to our club membership numbers is the growing Junior Program and has resulted in the junior club growing so large that it necessitates two venues; Swinburne Uni and Croydon RSL. An additional consequence to this increase in juniors is the necessity to employ additional coaches to take some of the groups. Whilst the availability of particular coaches varies due to other commitments, we were lucky enough to find several dedicated coaches to take over coaching duties when necessary. However, the increased number and hence increased cost of hiring these coaches will require the upcoming committee to determine the effects of this cost on future budgeting.

In talking of budgeting, the club is currently in a financially sound position, however the aforementioned pressure on the budget may require a small increase in the junior/youth fees next year.

Member Achievements

During January of this year, the 2018 Australian Juniors were held in Victoria where many juniors from our club participated. Exceptional performances were seen from Gavyn Sanusi-Goh in winning the Under 12 blitz competition and Tiger Zhao coming 3rd in the Under 8 Open section.

Later in July the 2018 Vic Juniors were held where again many juniors from our club participated. Another astounding performance by Tiger Zhao earned him equal first in the Under 8 Open shared with another club junior; Jayden Zhang in addition to one other player.

It's only fitting that the coaches of these juniors have also achieved amazing results throughout the year. Particularly, our Youth Club coach John Nemeth became the 2018 Victorian Champion whilst Bill Jiang achieved a respectable 5th place.

Recently "retired" IM Guy West having won the Croydon Club Championship many times, took a trip to Europe and won the annual Chess Train rapid play tournament run by the Prague Chess Society.

Closer to home I would like to congratulate the winners of our roster of tournaments. To begin the year was the 7 round Croydon Open that was won by aforementioned IM Guy West on 6/7.

Second term saw two five round tournaments, the first of which being the President's Cup won by Ian Birchall on 4.5/5. Whilst the second tournament of this semester was the latest iteration of the Fixed Opening tournaments, in this case focusing on the King's Gambit once again won by Ian Birchall on 8.5/10.

Term 3 again saw two tournaments, although both following conventional play. The Frost Winter Warmer was convincingly won by Ian Birchall with a perfect score of 5/5. Earning his first gold in a Croydon tournament, Chris Potter won the Spring Cup with 4.5/5.

Returning to a single 7 round tournament, term 4 saw the Club Championship saw some intense final rounds where a tie between multiple players was a looming possibility. However, as the dust settled, the tournament was won outright by myself on 6/7.

Alongside each of these senior tournaments, Transition Tournaments occurred consisting of up-and-coming juniors keen on playing more chess! These tournaments with a more conservative time control allowed those interested to develop their chess skills further without having to stay out too far past their bed time. Juniors Felix Chen, Eric Zheng, Hayden Ma, Lucas Cheong and Colin He were constantly amongst the top of the standings in these tournaments. Of these juniors, Felix Chen and Eric Zheng took the next step in furthering their chess careers by joining the senior tournaments midway through the year. As a club we want to encourage more juniors to take this path as a way to develop and improve their chess skills further.

Not to be forgotten, the numerous groups within the junior club program hold many tournaments throughout the year. The most prestigious event in their roster of tournaments is the Junior Club Championship. Defending champion Gavyn Sanusi-Goh held onto this title in similar fashion to last year by not losing a game throughout the entire tournament!

Another major highlight on the junior program calendar is the Croydon Junior Chess Open held over two days in the April school holidays. This 7 Round Allegro event ended in a three way tie between our juniors Tiger Zhao, Jayden Zhang and Chengyun Xu. These juniors also passed through the transition tournament program last year and have achieved the important milestone of having now competed in the adult section for a full year.

Thanks

A chess club like ours can't continue to operate without the continued and ongoing support from community groups and their members. In saying that I would like to give particular thanks to our sponsors; Bendigo Community bank continues to support our juniors by awarding five \$50 bank accounts. Northern Star Chess run by our dedicated treasurer Pearl Yung in supplying all we could want in terms of coaching material and as mentioned, sometimes the coaches themselves! And most recently, Swinburne University for continuing to offer the free use of their facilities to operate the junior club in allowing for the membership numbers to be as they are.

In addition to these groups, I would like to thank my fellow coaches; Richard Goldsmith, Cameron Yung, Bill Jiang, Ian Birchall, John Nemeth, Pearl Yung, Mel Goldsmith and Guy West (Senior Club) for their continual dedication to wellbeing of the junior club.

By operating the club over two different locations, sometimes the setting up and packing up of the club each week is a little shorthanded. So to those who help in these times, notably Lucas Cheong, Hayden Goldsmith, John Vergunst, Lindsay Newsome, Garry Lycett, Chris Potter, Hatti Zhao and Timon Xu thank you for helping the club run as smooth as possible.

It goes without saying that the committee members are the people who make the club the welcoming environment that appeals to all our members. I have already thanked many of these people above, but I would like to do so again as they truly are the people to thank for the successful running of all club activities.

In Summary

In 2018 Croydon Chess Club has continued to provide the community with the welcoming space for chess that it has done for so many years before. This is reflected in the increased membership numbers again reaching an all-time high for the club. The junior program continues to develop with the transition tournaments proving a successful route for those intent on improving further.

Looking towards 2019, the finances related to this increase in members must be heavily considered particularly in regard to the necessity for more coaches. Whilst the junior club continues to flourish, the senior membership numbers remain steady and could be an avenue for further developing the club.

On a more personal note, I am incredibly grateful to have been given the opportunity by both the committee and club member to represent Croydon Chess Club as its President. Whilst I haven't achieved anything ground-breaking during my time as president, I hope that I have at least achieved my outlined goals of continuing to uphold the values of the club. I look forward to maintaining my involvement with the club to the best of my abilities in many years to come!

As detailed below, 2019 resumes with the AGM on the 31st of January, whilst Junior and Senior Club tournaments being the following week on the 7th of February. As has hopefully been made clear, this club thrives due to the input of those committed to it. So if you're interested in contributing to this club in any way big or small, I would be ecstatic to see you at our AGM. Otherwise, I look forward to seeing everyone for more chess at the resumption of general club activities in 2019!

Kyle Gibson (President)

Your Committee: Kyle Gibson (President), Mathew Cooke (Vice President), Pearl Yung (Treasurer), Ian Birchall (Secretary), Richard Goldsmith, Cameron Yung, Ion Kloprogge, Ken Minty.

2019 Resumption:

31 st Jan	7:30pm	Annual General Meeting at the RSL – All welcome! (Note: no Junior or Youth Club this week)
7 th Feb	6:30pm – 7:30pm 7:40pm	Junior Club at Swinburne & Youth club at RSL Senior Club - Croydon Open R1