

Cotswold Chess Congress 2025 Report

Michael Ashworth – June 2025

During the May bank holiday weekend, 24-26 May, the 55th Cotswold Chess Congress was held at King's School in Gloucester. The Congress being in the centre of the Gloucester provides an ideal location, with players able to enjoy the local bars, restaurants and sights of the city in between rounds, making for an enjoyable weekend both on and off the board.

130 players competed across three well-contested sections (Open, Major and Minor), with all three sections being both FIDE and ECF rated. There were a total of 23 juniors taking part in the Congress (8 in the Open, 6 in the Major and 9 in the Minor). As a result of a generous grant from the John Robinson Youth Chess Trust, the Congress has been able to provide a bursary to the juniors who took part this year. Two of the three sections were won, either outright or jointly, by junior players.

Here is a round-up of each of the sections.

Open Section

The Open had a total of 43 players taking part, with 17 eligible for the title of Gloucestershire Champion, which is awarded to the highest-placed Gloucestershire player in the Congress. The competition was very tight going into the last round, with Zack Norris picking up 1st prize and the Gloucestershire Champion title. At the age of 12, Zack is one of the country's strongest junior talents and his performances in this tournament demonstrated a tremendous amount of chess maturity.

A summary of all the Open prize winners is as follows:

1st: Zack Norris (5/6) (Gloucestershire County Individual Champion 2025)
=2nd: Oliver Stubbs & Joe Varley (4.5/6)
=4th: David Spence, Ben Ogunshola, Michael Ashworth, Chris Beaumont, Daniel Gomez, Stephen Homer, Bruce Baer & Robert Ashworth (4/6)

Rating Prizes

Under 2050: Robert Ashworth (4/6)
Under 1900: Spencer Lawrence (3.5/6)

Other notable mentions

Top junior score by a non cash prize winner: Finn Schell (3.5/6)
Top score by a female player: Shambavi Hariharan (3.5/6)

Major Section

The Major was the largest of the three sections this year, consisting of 46 players. The eventual winners were Hayden Griffiths and Tommy Wilkins, both of whom represent the University of Bristol. A summary of the prize winners in the Major Section is as follows:

=1st: Hayden Griffiths & Tommy Wilkins (5/6)
=3rd: Alexis Kristoff Malibiran, Laurence Tarbuck & Kevin Winter (4.5/6)

Rating Prizes

Under 1721: David Rogers (4/6)

Under 1650: Aarav Swansh Mehta (3.5/6)

Other notable mentions

Top junior score by a non cash prize winner: Anay Misra (3.5/6)

Top score by a female player: Lynne Fursman (3.5/6)

Minor Section

The Minor had 41 competitors taking part. As with the other two sections, the top score was 5/6, which was shared by three players, two of whom are juniors. The complete list of Minor Section prize winners is below:

=1st: Aviraj Bhaduri, Paul Foster & Dexter Wildsmith (5/6)

4th: Tom Cleverley (4.5/6)

Rating Prize

Under 1500: Gary Brown (4/6)

Under 1360: Jenny Gartside (3/6)

Other notable mentions

Top junior score by a non cash prize winner: Noah Taylor (4/6)

Top score by a female player: Christine Constable (4/6)

Christine was also the winner of the book prize as the top score by a female in any section. **(other than any cash prize winner)**

We look forward to hosting an equally successful Congress in 2026.