

## YCA Grading Report, 2018-19

### The Transition for ECF Grading to YCA Grading

All local leagues in Yorkshire, as well as the Yorkshire league itself, are now having their results entered into the ECF's League Management System. LMS enables the creation of a grading data submission file. It is currently still necessary for that file to be processed by an official ECF grader, to check things (new players' grading references often get omitted) then submit the file to the ECF. Hull and Sheffield have their own ECF grader but for other leagues the ECF Grader function is currently being performed by me as "YCA Grader". This has ensured as smooth as possible a transition for leagues switching from YCA grading, entering data into Chessnuts, to ECF grading, entering data into LMS.

All congresses held in Yorkshire which hitherto relied on John Griffith to process results for ECF grading have also had their results processed by me. Whilst congress results *can* be entered into LMS, most congress organisers now use pairing software, usually either *Swiss Manager* (from which results can be fed into the chess-results.com website) or *Sevilla*. I wrote software at the start of the season to process data stripped out of the chess-results.com website and data contained in *Sevilla* files. Some such pairing programs have facilities to generate ECF grading files (which still need further data adding in), but my own approach enables the additional creation of result tables for the YCA website. A few congresses and club championships still need to submit results in manual form. I similarly wrote software to speedily enter results from Swiss pairing cards and/or round-by-round (or similar) batches of games.

Thus the transition from YCA Grading to ECF grading seems to have gone as smoothly as possible, and apart from having to pay, Joe Public will probably not have noticed the difference.

### Possible ECF Grading Changes

The ECF has conducted a survey as to whether players would welcome a move to monthly, rather than the present 6-monthly, grading lists, the main advantages of which would be the faster introduction of grades for "new" players, and better monitoring of improvement of juniors. There was also a question as to whether a move to 4-digit grades (comparable with FIDE ratings) rather than the present 3-digit grades would be welcome. Whether 4-digit grades would necessarily be tied to a different calculation method was not clear. Little research as to if and how such changes could be implemented was published beforehand (as with Brexit).

The membership survey was, overall, in favour of monthly grading.

A survey was to be held among ECF graders, which would be likely to throw up more opposition due to the increased workload, but that has not taken place yet, perhaps due to reality "hitting the fan".

There has been a suggestion that grading data might be extracted from LMS directly, without being processed by an intermediary ECF grader, though that would put greater pressure on those entering data into LMS, both to get data entered promptly, and to ensure accuracy and completeness or player identification. If there is a move to monthly grading, and data extraction does not become automated, then I would suggest local leagues need to appoint their own ECF graders to handle the monthly processing (not difficult). Under the present system, monthly grading would severely limit ECF graders' opportunities to go away on holiday!

Steve Mann, 02/06/2019