

CHESS

by Alan Dommett

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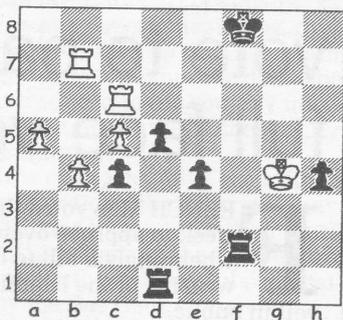
TROPHY WINNERS: Sir George Meyrick with the Mayor of Bournemouth, Cllr Barry Goldbart, and the St Mark's team

THE finals of the second annual Mayor of Bournemouth Schools competition were held last week at the Highcliff Marriott Hotel, St Michael's Road, West Cliff, where the presentation of the Sir George Meyrick trophies was made by the Mayor of Bournemouth, Cllr Barry Goldbart, together with Sir George Meyrick to Portchester School and St Mark's School.

The Senior Section turned out to be a rerun of last year's final and defending champions Portchester won both matches against Bournemouth School to retain the trophy. Patrick Hurley, who won his two games on top board for Portchester, was one of only two team members to play in both finals of this fledgling tournament, but this was to be a last appearance for his present school as he will be joining BS Boys in the new year.

Good support was provided on the remaining three boards by Callum Axford, Kris Koos and Tom Holroyd, as the team took the first match 2.5-1.5 and then secured a 3-1 victory in the second to close out the contest.

In the Junior Section a hard-fought competition went into the final round with St Mark's and St John's A level at the top of the table and set to meet in what amounted to a deciding match for the trophy. The closeness of the teams was reflected in the performances of the players on top board where George Wright (St Mark's) and Joseph Foster (St John's) both threatened checkmate before Wright inflicted the fatal move. Although Sean McQuin suffered his first defeat of the tournament on board 2 to Lewis Valler, further points were provided by Thomas Sharples and James Barham, to give St Mark's a 3-1 trophy-winning



score. This margin of victory moved St John's A down to third place and elevated Bethany School, for whom Nikita Romanov remained unbeaten on top board throughout, into the runners-up position.

The diagram reflects the position in the Foster-Wright top board match referred to above and Black is faced with the problem of avoiding 1.Rc8 mate. This can be achieved by a) ...Rf7, to provide a shield for the king b) ...Kg8 to allow a rook to interpose at f8 or c) ...Rg1+ deferring a decision with a spite check. After 1...Rf7 2.a6 Kg7 3.b5, White's pawns look unstoppable and if 1...Kg8 2.Rc8+ Rf8 2.Rxf8+ Kxf8 3.c6 a similar situation arises. Therefore Black settled on 1...Rg1+ and was immediately rewarded with the reply 2.Kxh4?? which turned the game on its head, as he was able to respond with 2...Rh2 to end the game with a mate of his own!

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