

Ennis Shield

Happy New Year to all my fellow chess players and I do hope that Santa has been good to all of you, sprinkling some chess ability magic down your chimneys on that most magic of nights. I'm sure you are all studying hard in the mid Xmas and New Year hiatus with a view to improvement in 2016. Personally I'm hoping that my chess rating journey has more ladders and less snakes in the new year and if there has to be snakes, then may they be a lot shorter.

Life in the Ennis League has stormed off to an exciting start. After five rounds, Bray/Greystones and Round Tower are jointly showing their mettle top of the leaderboard on 21 points jointly. Bray/Greystones posted two substantial wins against Dun Laoighaire (a near total wipeout of 5.5 - 0.5) and Drogheda (4.5 - 1.5) which has helped them show their heels to the pack. Occupying the same vantage point in the heels department, but wearing appropriate clothing, Round Tower posted two identical team scores against Dublin and Elm Mount respectively, as well as a decisive 5 - 1 win against Malahide. Impressive stuff, and the gauntlet has been thrown firmly to the ground here at the midway point with six rounds yet to be played. Surely the rest of us must train more vigorously and buy our runners in the same retail outlet.

Close on the leaders heels are Drogheda and Rathmines both on 18 points. Drogheda's two main wins were against Dun Laoghaire and Longford, scoring 4.5 - 1.5 in both. Rathmines had the same score against Dun Laoghaire but had a whopping 5.5 - 0.5 win against Longford.

In the mid group are Curragh (15 points), Longford, and Naomh Barróg (14 points), Dublin (13.5 points), and Cavan (13 points). In this group, the biggest wins were Curragh against Malahide, and Dublin against Elm Mount with a result of 4.5 - 1.5 respectively. On the results thus far posted (27th Dec), Naomh Barróg and Cavan have registered only 4 matches played so this needs to be factored into the mid table for those of you racing off to the bookies to place one euro each way bets.

Trying to keep heads above water, gasping for some air and hoping to avoid relegation are my own team Elm Mount (10.5 points), Malahide (8 points) and Dun Laoighaire (7 points). Hopefully the Xmas break will put some more wind in our sails to see some safely over the Ennis horizon. All of the teams will need sober persons of nautical resolve and good vision in their respective crows nests. Oh yes, and not to forget the runners either.

Some individual results of note thus far are Kenneth Moore of Round Tower on 4.5/5, Brian Gallagher of Naomh Barróg 4/4 and Pat McCarrick of Longford on 3/3. Respect.

Watch this space in the second half of the league season. Who will you put your money on? What team will bring you to that glorious pot of gold at the end of the betting rainbow in Ennis?

Good luck to all in 2016.

Eugene Donohoe.