

Proud to be a Yorkshireman

While travelling down to Leicester for the ECF County Championship finals we noticed that the Battle of Bosworth was to be re-enacted on the same day. In more ways than one we mused, as Yorkshire were due to play Lancashire in the Open and U175 sections. The Yorkshire U150 team were up against Warwickshire.

Yorkshire had two Richards playing, Palliser on top board of the Open team and Archer on top board for the U175 team. We could not find another 'Richard' (Richard III) nor did we know of a 'Henry' in the Lancashire side so considered this to be a good omen.

The lines were drawn and we readied our forces as we looked into the worried eyes of our Lancastrian foes. At the appointed hour battle commenced.

Within a few minutes one of our young knights in the U150 section had drawn first blood. Pierre Weller, who appropriately enough comes from York, trounced his opponent in only six moves. News of this inspirational victory soon spread through the ranks.

The Open team match was a tense affair with many matches evenly poised but Andy Ledger gave Yorkshire the upper hand. There followed a number of games where hostilities ceased with pride intact for both sides. The Yorkshire Open team lead remained intact.

Meanwhile the U175 team were storming to a big lead with early wins from captain Jeremy Hamm, Phil Watson and Sean Culkin. Mark Birkin's U150 team also looked to have the upper hand in their match.

In the Open team we received a severe blow to one of our men, but Peter Shaw soon put Yorkshire back on the ascendancy with his well controlled victory. Steve Barrett added to the Yorkshire win total with a well executed tactical finish which left Yorkshire needing only a draw with three games remaining.

News was coming in that both the U175 and U150 team had triumphed in their matches and John Cooper from Hull forced the vital draw to ensure a third victory was coming back to the White Rose county.

It was left to Jos Woolley to win his game with only seconds remaining, in front of a crowd second only to the fields of Bosworth, and crown one of the most the most historic days of Yorkshire chess.

Looking at the ECF records it appears that this is the first time a county has won three sections in the county championships, a unique and highly significant treble.