Southend Masters 2025 Report

The Southend Masters, known to be an Easter weekend attraction for norm seekers and chess enthusiasts has just concluded.

The festival took place between 17th-21st April at the Southend Adult Community College, alongside the annual Southend Easter Chess Festival. This year marked the 67th edition of the Southend Easter Congress, and 5th edition of the Rapid tournament organised by GIANT chess.

This was the third consecutive year that the Southend Masters has been organised. The first edition in 2023 was a GM round robin which produced two GM norms & one IM norm. 2024 was a 28-player high category open that provided two IM norms. This year, the event hosted GM and IM round robin tournaments.

The tournaments had a total of nine English norm seekers out of 20 participants. Headlined by a mass of talented juniors.

GM Tournament: Chess-Results Server Chess-results.com - Southend Masters 2025 - GM Round Robin
IM Tournament: Chess-Results Server Chess-results.com - Southend Masters 2025 - IM Round Robin

The norm targets were as follows:
GM Tournament: GM norm = 7/9, IM norm = 5.5/9 (5/9 for Khoury)
IM Tournament: IM norm = 6.5/9

The targets were set in stone for a gruelling five days of fighting chess. On top of that, a very tight day one schedule with rounds one & two commencing at 10:30 and 15:00 respectively. Due to the venue closing earlier that evening, the afternoon round had to be scheduled at 15:00 instead of the expected 16:00 start. The following days resumed with 10:30 morning rounds and 16:00 afternoon rounds respectively.

GM Tournament starting rank

Starting rank list of players

No.			Name	FideID	FED	Rtg
3		GM	Teclaf, Pawel	1185934	POL	2555
1		GM	Janik, Igor	1159259	POL	2520
6		GM	Plat, Vojtech	325740	CZE	2479
9		IM	Harvey, Marcus R	400092	ENG	2474
7		FM	Lacan Rus, David	651023075	FRA	2378
4		FM	Golding, Alex	427241	ENG	2369
10		FM	Lohia, Sohum	5819369	ENG	2354
5		FM	Lim, Zhuo Ren	5702488	MAS	2331
2		FM	Badacsonyi, Stanley	486973	ENG	2320
8		CM	Khoury, Theo	480703	ENG	2164

IM Tournament starting rank

Starting rank list of players

No.			Name	FideID	FED	Rtg
4		IM	Zwardon, Vojtech	325511	CZE	2444
10		IM	O'Gorman, Tom	2508249	IRL	2391
7		FM	Ruzhansky, Elias	472824	BEL	2332
6		FM	Hobson, Kenneth	480819	ENG	2331
1		FM	Bezuidenhout, Roland	14304562	RSA	2311
9		IM	Fitzsimons, David	2501961	IRL	2303
3			Li, Wenxiang	8609748	CHN	2260
8		FM	Kalavannan, Koby	425753	ENG	2252
5		CM	Shearsby, Jude	462527	ENG	2152
2		FM	Badacsonyi, Frankie	460400	ENG	2150

The tournaments ran very smoothly thanks to the expertise of Matthew Carr (Chief Arbiter) and John Bowley (Deputy Chief Arbiter) pictured below with Lance Leslie-Smith (tournament director).



Matthew graced his presence by providing the live board equipment and adding his own humorous twist on the announcements before each round. The Masters tournaments were all broadcasted live as well as the Rapid & Congress tournaments. It was fitting to have John as the deputy being the up-and-coming arbiter from Essex. We had not realised that he teaches French and German. Something that was rather very handy at times whenever we required a translator. Thank you both for your commitment to the tournaments.

Broadcast links:

Lichess:
GM Round Robin: 67th Southend Easter Chess Festival 2025 | GM Round Robin • Round 1 • lichess.org
IM Round Robin: 67th Southend Easter Chess Festival 2025 | IM Round Robin • Round 1 • lichess.org
Congress FIDE Open: 67th Southend Easter Chess Festival 2025 | FIDE Open • Round 1 • lichess.org
Congress U1900: 67th Southend Easter Chess Festival 2025 | Leigh-on-Sea U1900 • Round 1 • lichess.org
Rapid Open: 67th Southend Easter Chess Festival 2025 | Rapid Open • Round 1 • lichess.org

Rapid U1700: 67th Southend Easter Chess Festival 2025 | Rapid U1700 • Round 1 • lichess.org
Rapid U1400: 67th Southend Easter Chess Festival 2025 | Rapid U1400 • Round 1 • lichess.org

Chess.com
All tournaments: GM - Live Games - Chess.com

RESULTS

Congratulations are for Alex Golding (ENG), Sohum Lohia (ENG), & Wenxiang Li (CHN) for achieving IM norms! For Alex and Sohum, these were their final norms for the IM title, and both having crossed 2400 before. They are now IM-elects.

Final Ranking after 9 Rounds

Rk.	SNo			Name	FED	Rtg	Pts.	TB1
1	3		GM	Teclaf, Pawel	POL	2555	6,5	2543
2	4		FM	Golding, Alex	ENG	2369	6	2522
3	10		FM	Lohia, Sohum	ENG	2354	5,5	2479
4	6		GM	Plat, Vojtech	CZE	2479	5,5	2465
5	1		GM	Janik, Igor	POL	2520	5,5	2460
6	7		FM	Lacan Rus, David	FRA	2378	4,5	2396
7	5		FM	Lim, Zhuo Ren	MAS	2331	4	2358
8	2		FM	Badacsonyi, Stanley	ENG	2320	3	2278
9	9		IM	Harvey, Marcus R	ENG	2474	3	2261
10	8		CM	Khoury, Theo	ENG	2164	1,5	2147

Sohum and Alex achieved the minimum score of 5.5/9 for the IM norm, with TPRs above 2450. Pawel Teclaf won the tournament with 6.5/9.

Final Ranking after 9 Rounds

Rk.	SNo			Name	FED	Rtg	Pts.	TB1
1	3			Li, Wenxiang	CHN	2260	6,5	2462
2	8		FM	Kalavannan, Koby	ENG	2252	6	2422
3	6		FM	Hobson, Kenneth	ENG	2331	5,5	2368
4	4		IM	Zwardon, Vojtech	CZE	2444	5,5	2356
5	9		IM	Fitzsimons, David	IRL	2303	4,5	2291
6	7		FM	Ruzhansky, Elias	BEL	2332	4,5	2288
7	2		FM	Badacsonyi, Frankie	ENG	2150	4	2265
8	1		FM	Bezuidenhout, Roland	RSA	2311	3,5	2211
9	10		IM	O'Gorman, Tom	IRL	2391	3,5	2202
10	5		CM	Shearsby, Jude	ENG	2152	1,5	2035

Wenxiang achieved the minimum score of 6.5/9 for the IM norm with a TPR above 2450, and winning the tournament.
Koby Kalavannan came very close, fighting to the bitter end, but subsequently was held to draw in the final round. Missing out on the IM norm by half a point.

The final rankings can be found here:
GM Tournament:
https://chess-results.com/tnr1078871.aspx?lan=1&art=1&turdet=YES&flag=30

IM Tournament:
https://chess-results.com/tnr1078870.aspx?lan=1&art=1&turdet=YES&flag=30

Congress FIDE Open:
1st £450 Alistair Hill 6/7
2nd £250 Matthew Dignam 5.5/7
=3rd £50 each FM Bob Eames Simeon Bott and Ilia Malinovskii 5/7
Rating Prize Under 1900 = £55.00 each - Jaszkiwskyj, Peter and White, Russell P 4.5/7

Congress U1900:
£300 Mark Murrell 6/7
£150 each William Lin and Reyansh Saxena 5.5/6
Rating Prize Under 1670 = £70.00 = Saharkar, Sharvari 5/6

Congress U1600:
Tied 1st:
David J Gilbert
Mark Finch
Jon Hunt
Jason Ren
Rating - Stephen Simpson

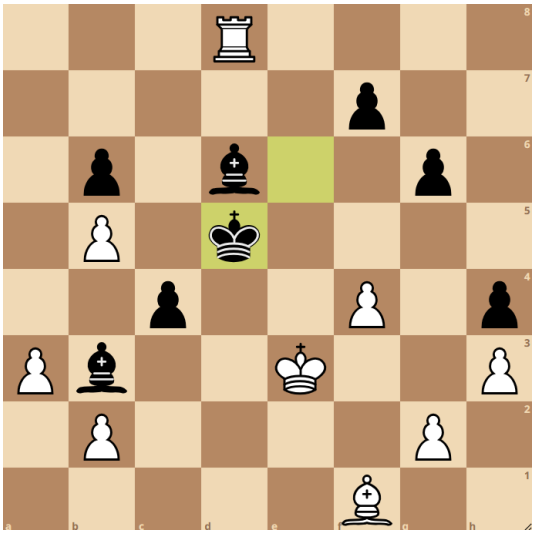
Congress U1300:
1st - Prakhar Saxena
2nd- Animesh Saxena
3rd- Ethan Ricketts
Rating- Kiaan Jakhria

Rapid Open:
1st £60 Vikas Sajanani and FM Bob Eames 5/6
=3rd £7 each to Nguyen, Lam Vy Le, Matthew Dignam and Advik Saxena 4/6

Rapid U1700:
1st £80 Sharvari Saharkar 5.5/6
2nd £40 Andrew Offord 5/6
3rd £20 Jason Ren 4.5/6

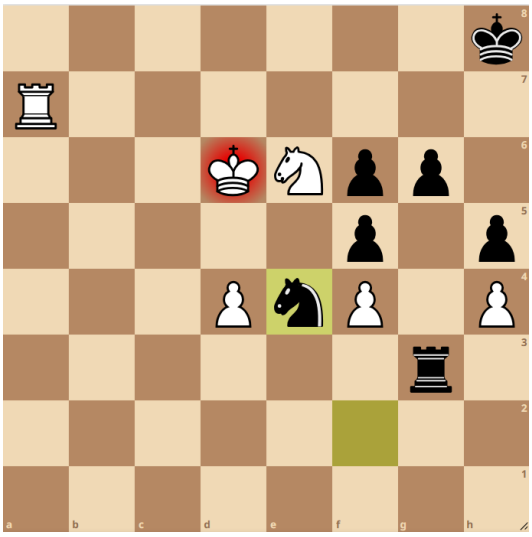
Rapid U1400:
Thomas Farmer, Anto Jawahar Roy, Jim Calvin and Joshua Kenny 5/6 win £47.00 each for joint first place.

Further details and news about the Congress + Rapid can be found here: https://southendchesscongress.org/



Lohia – Harvey. Can you find what white played in this position?

Rxd6+ simplifying the position. After Kxd6, Kd4 1-0. The C pawn will fall, and white will be up two pawns in a commanding endgame.

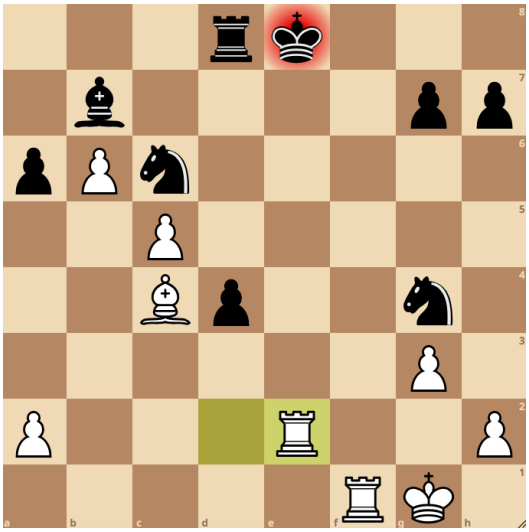


Golding – Harvey. White played Ke7 and black replied with Kg8?? What did Black miss?

Two moves work very well here… In the game, white played d5 (advancing the passed pawn) Rd3, Rd7. Black's king is vulnerable, unless g5 is played. White is threatening Rd8+ Kh7, Nf8+ with Kf7 to follow.

The other option was Ra8+, threatening the same idea.

1-0



Kalavannan – Fitzsimons. Black played Nce5?? What resource did white find?

Rf5! Highlighting the pin, but additionally required some calculation, giving up the two knights for the rook and counting on the D pawn. However, after d3, Rfxe5+ Nxe5, Rxe5+ Kf8. White has Bb3, with the intent to go to d1 to stop the pawn from promoting. 1-0

PGN Database:

GM Tournament:
https://chess-results.com/PartieSuche.aspx?lan=1&id=50023&tnr=1078871&art=3
IM Tournament:
https://chess-results.com/PartieSuche.aspx?lan=1&id=50023&tnr=1078870&art=3
Congress FIDE Open:
https://chess-results.com/PartieSuche.aspx?lan=1&id=50023&tnr=1078866&art=3
Congress U1900:
https://chess-results.com/PartieSuche.aspx?lan=1&id=50023&tnr=1078865&art=3
Rapid Open:
https://chess-results.com/PartieSuche.aspx?lan=1&id=50023&tnr=1078869&art=3
Rapid U1700:
https://chess-results.com/PartieSuche.aspx?lan=1&id=50023&tnr=1078868&art=3
Rapid U1400:
https://chess-results.com/PartieSuche.aspx?lan=1&id=50023&tnr=1078867&art=3

Photo Galleries (Masters)

Brendan O'Gorman: Southend Masters 2025 - Brendan O'Gorman

Congress & Rapid (Yuri Krylov): Yuri's Gallery – Southend Easter Chess Festival

A special thanks to the tournament sponsors and partners. Without them, the Masters tournaments would not have been possible!

English Chess Federation
The Chess Trust
The John Robinson Youth Chess Trust
The Friends of Chess
Adam Raoof's Chess England

The sponsorship allowed the tournament to go ahead by covering the running costs and player expenses.

Chess England: The Chess Circuit

Some more pictures:



All players and officials in the Masters tournaments



In round 9, we were honoured to have Agnieszka Milewska (ECF Director of Women's Chess) make the ceremonial first move. Pictured with the GM tournament winner (Pawel Teclaf) on the bottom right.



Playing room



Fair play measures being conducted by John Bowley who also achieved an International Arbiter title norm. Congratulations!



Sohum Lohia (ENG) achieved his final IM norm



Alex Golding (ENG) achieved his final IM norm



Wenxiang Li (achieved an IM norm)

What lies in the future?

The next event I have organised with Jake Hung will be the V Mindsports International Chess Festival from the 13th-18th August at the London Mindsports Centre in Hammersmith. It is our biggest event yet and will feature an International Open like last year's edition, but with a £4,000 prize fund, three-night blitz tournaments each with £300 in prizes, a new 15-minute second period after move 40, and more conditions for IMs/GMs.
For anyone playing in the British Championships just before this event. You can use the British Championship as a warmup!

More details here:
https://chess-results.com/tnr1151321.aspx?lan=1

To enquire about conditions or any other matters. Please contact Lance directly:

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I would like to express my gratitude one last time to everyone that made the Southend Masters success this year!

Lance Leslie-Smith
(Tournament Director – Southend Masters 2025)