

## EPSCA England team and National Chess Junior Squad vs Flanders September 2023

This is always a hybrid match as many players transition from the EPSCA England team (1) into the National Chess Junior squad (2) as they move up from their year 6 to their year 7. This year it was even more hybrid – with a couple of older players invited who missed the chance last year to play in this trip due to the usual covid fallout, and a few year 5 players invited who will still be at Primary school in their year 6 this year.

With our Eurostar departing from St Pancras at 11.04 on Saturday, this year the rail unions increased the challenge difficulty of arriving on time with a complete strike the previous day, and the earliest trains cancelled on the Saturday. We also were notified of a last minute dropout on the Friday, and had to find a reserve the day before we travelled. A special thankyou therefore to Siddanth who stepped up to the squad and prevented us defaulting a board.

Fortunately the whole team pulled out all the stops – and we all managed to get through the gates the recommended hour before departure. We were very pleasantly surprised to find our hosts already waiting on the platform as we left the train, and then had the reassurance of 4 adults escorting our team through the Metro to Heysel and then onward by car to the club venue which doubles as the local library and theatre at Grimbergen.

The EPSCA England / NCJS team itself consisted of twelve boards this year and there were strong performances from the whole team. Particularly impressive was the determination and focus in round 1 where our team achieved a clean sweep despite many of the positions being very close earlier in games.



In round 2 there were two wins for the Flanders team, though they should have scored more based on some good play earlier by several others in the Flanders team. The overall match result was therefore a win for England. With the individual results as below.

Board nr	Round 1	Vlaanderen		Resultaat	EPSCA Engeland / NCJS			
1	(white)	Ghisa	Alexander	1	0-1	Kothari	Jai	1
2	(white)	Gilson	Pacôme	2	0-1	Vaidyanathan	Adithya	2
3	(black)	Shchetinin	Mykita	3	0-1	Nguyen	Anh	3
4	(black)	Verspecht	Louis	4	0-1	Catabay	Rezin	4
5	(white)	Martens	Aron	5	0-1	Rastogi	Nayan Keats	5
6	(white)	Kho	Justin	6	0-1	Johnson	Felix	6

7	(black)	Vangansbeke	Wouter	7	0-1	Sui	Yueyue	7
8	(black)	Vanherck	Adinda	8	0-1	Chandrashekhar	Druha	8
9	(white)	Geraerts	Jules	9	0-1	Siddanth	Pai	9
10	(white)	Lot	Nathan	10	0-1	Horwood	Alexander	10
11	(black)	Willocx	Bob	11	0-1	Burnside	Aidan	11
12	(black)	Bolhov	Ivan	12	0-1	Balsari	Emre	12
<b>Board nr</b>	<b>Round 2</b>	<b>Vlaanderen</b>			<b>Resultaat</b>	<b>EPSCA Engeland/ NCJS</b>		
1	(black)	Gilson	Pacôme	2	1-0	Kothari	Jai	1
2	(black)	Ghisa	Alexander	1	0-1	Vaidyanathan	Adithya	2
3	(white)	Verspecht	Louis	4	0-1	Nguyen	Anh	3
4	(white)	Shchetinin	Mykita	3	0-1	Catabay	Rezin	4
5	(black)	Kho	Justin	6	0-1	Rastogi	Nayan Keats	5
6	(black)	Martens	Aron	5	1-0	Johnson	Felix	6
7	(white)	Vanherck	Adinda	8	0-1	Sui	Yueyue	7
8	(white)	Vangansbeke	Wouter	7	0-1	Chandrashekhar	Druha	8
9	(black)	Lot	Nathan	10	0-1	Siddanth	Pai	9
10	(black)	Geraerts	Jules	9	0-1	Horwood	Alexander	10
11	(black)	Bolhov	Ivan	12	0-1	Burnside	Aidan	11
12	(white)	Willocx	Bob	11	0-1	Balsari	Emre	12
Match Result					2 to 22			

Overnight the English team retired to the various hosting families that had kindly agreed to look after us in various groups of twos and threes that carefully catered for both food requirements and any known allergies. They had an evening meal to look forward to – accommodation in the spirit of a foreign exchange trip – and a breakfast with their hosts before they returned for the chess on Sunday.

Sunday was a blitz event and was used as the tie-break between those players who had achieved a perfect score on the Saturday, to determine the winners of the individual trophy for each of the two teams.

After a convincing performance it was Jai who the blitz – but with Jai scoring one out of two on the Saturday it was Andy for the English and Pacôme for the Flemish that won the individual prizes.





The blitz results:

P.	Name	Ctry	G...	W	D	L	Score	Val	PVal	B	S	Rtg	TPR	SRtg
1	Jai Kothari	United Kin...	7	7	0	0	751.0	100.0	100.0	-1	-1	1798	2345	1775
2	Anh Nguyen	United Kin...	6	5	0	1	654.0	99.0	99.0	0	-2	1647	1825	1616
3	Felix Johnson	United Kin...	7	5	0	2	548.0	98.0	98.0	-1	1	1639	1617	1640
4	Nayan Keats Rast...	United Kin...	7	5	0	2	546.0	97.0	95.0	-1	-1	1583	1479	1594
5	Adithya Vaidyanath...	United Kin...	6	4	0	2	529.0	96.0	97.0	0	1	1576	1446	1587
6	Rezin Catabay	United Kin...	7	5	0	2	503.0	95.0	92.0	1	1	1545	1550	1541
7	Yueyue Sui	United Kin...	7	4	1	2	502.0	94.0	96.0	-1	-1	1527	1565	1520
8	Emre Balsari	United Kin...	7	4	1	2	489.0	93.0	94.0	1	2	1567	1567	0
9	Justin Kho	Belgium	7	4	1	2	465.5	92.0	90.0	-1	-2	1313	1347	1312
10	Pacome Gilson	Belgium	7	4	0	3	425.0	91.0	88.0	1	1	1322	1463	1307
11	Wouter Vangansb...	Belgium	7	4	0	3	412.0	90.0	93.0	1	1	1429	1429	0
12	Alexander Ghisa	Belgium	7	4	0	3	401.0	89.0	85.0	1	-1	1536	1489	1541
13	Jonik Shala		6	3	0	3	399.0	88.0	83.0	0	-1	1214	1214	0
14	Druha Chandrashe...	United Kin...	7	3	1	3	396.0	87.0	91.0	-1	-1	1376	1376	0
15	Aron Martens	Belgium	7	4	0	3	388.0	86.0	82.0	1	1	1274	1257	1279
16	Siddanth Pai	United Kin...	7	3	0	4	352.0	85.0	89.0	-1	1	1435	1435	0
17	Louis Verspecht	Belgium	6	2	0	4	329.0	84.0	87.0	2	2	1351	1292	1358
18	Ivan Bolhov	Belgium	7	3	0	4	316.0	83.0	86.0	-1	-1	1253	1253	0
19	Jules Geraerts	Belgium	6	2	0	4	316.0	82.0	79.0	0	-1	1294	1369	1289
20	Bob Willocx	Belgium	7	3	0	4	311.0	81.0	84.0	1	2	1184	1184	0
21	Aiden Burnside	United Kin...	7	3	0	4	310.0	80.0	76.0	-1	1	1293	1330	1289
22	Wout De Maesene...		6	2	0	4	301.0	79.0	78.0	0	-1	496	496	0
23	Alexandr Thielemans		6	2	0	4	299.0	78.0	77.0	0	-1	411	411	0
24	Adinda Vanherck	Belgium	7	3	0	4	294.0	77.0	74.0	-1	-1	1277	1277	0
25	Mykyta Shchetinin	Belgium	7	2	1	4	282.0	76.0	81.0	1	-1	1283	991	1312
26	Alexander Horwood	United Kin...	7	2	1	4	270.5	75.0	80.0	-1	-2	1199	1056	1212
27	Nathan Lot	Belgium	7	2	0	5	224.0	74.0	75.0	-1	1	1098	593	1109
28	Ruben Verreth		7	1	0	6	145.0	73.0	73.0	1	1	600	600	0
29	Honore De Dedec...		7	0	0	7	72.0	72.0	72.0	1	2	426	426	0

After the prizegiving the hosts also treated us to lunch on the Sunday and provided refreshments to take back with us on board the Eurostar. From a personal point of view, since we were covering the trip for the first time this year due to various illnesses within our normal organization – we were very impressed by the Flanders chess club and their entire organization. They were very well prepared for all the activities and ensured that both the hosting, the chess and the transportation of our 12 players included great attention to detail to make this both fun and safe.

At St Pancras all the parents arrived in good time and all our players were collected safely. The children were still very enthusiastic about the weekend. Hopefully the children will have fond memories of this trip for many years to come.

Mike Forster and Debbie

1. [EPSCA England U11 Team — EPSCA](#)
2. [National Chess Junior Squad - Home \(ncjs.co.uk\)](#)



*The NCJS is a Registered Charity No 1084293. The trustees are A Webster, P Purland and S Howell The squad exists to help encourage junior chess by providing trips and tournaments for promising juniors All players have a chance of qualifying*