

On the Giving of Trophies

Paper and Proposal from Steven Lovell (SL) and Norman Hutchinson (NH).

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It has been the custom of the league to award trophies to the winners of each division, to the players of the year in each division, to the winners of the Roger Goldsmith tournament(s), and to the winners of the Jamboree.

While acknowledging the importance of recognising the efforts of competition winners, SL and NH feel that the administrative and cost overheads of this practice outweigh the benefits of the current approach. We would ask that the league consider adopting one or more of the following proposals.

- (1) That all team trophies be retired, and not re-awarded
- (2) That all team trophies other than for Division 1 be retired and not re-awarded
- (3) That all team trophies other than for Division 1 and Roger Goldsmith Division 1 be retired and not re-awarded
- (4) That the giving of Player of the Year trophies be discontinued

The executive is in favour of option (1), with option (2) a second favourite. The Executive is against option (4).

In the following pages we outline the reasons for wishing to change the current arrangements, outline possible alternative approaches and provide some ideas for how the trophies could be decommissioned.

The Trophies Themselves and Alternative Recognition

Many of the trophies are in truth not that attractive, and this is not helped by the poor state of repair of some. While tastes vary, anecdotally we believe this is a view shared by many, perhaps most, of the league's players.

As such, while we would like the efforts of competition winners to be recognised, we don't believe the current trophies do very well in this respect. Winners could be recognised in other ways.

- Winners are already named on our "Honours List" on the website. For some competitions, or perhaps even all competitions, this may be enough.
- Clubs may be offered a "digital badge" or "banner" to be displayed on their website confirming they were the competition winners in the relevant year.
- A specifically chess related prize could be offered. It may be possible to get such prizes for "free" in return for advertising via our website.
- An engraved "plaque".
 - For the EACU Team Championship, winners receive a pre-engraved plaque, which can be used by clubs as they see fit. We could do the same. This would retain much of the expense but remove the main administrative burden.

The Administrative Burden

The trophy officer is responsible for collecting trophies between seasons, getting them engraved and distributing them at our prize giving (normally the league Jamboree). Where repair, replacement or purchase of trophies is required, this would also be the trophy officer's responsibility.

Firstly, locating trophies between seasons is not always straightforward. The rush at the Jamboree often makes it difficult to record details of who collects them. Indeed, the giving of the trophy for the Jamboree itself usually takes place ad-hoc at the end of the evening and can easily be missed. Another factor is simply knowing everyone who collects a trophy. Even those who know the most names and faces will not know everyone at the prize giving.

We should find some assistance from the league records in terms of who won each competition. But these do not record captains' names or contact details, and so it is necessary to supplement those records with details from the league handbook or other local knowledge. Of course, if the captain wasn't present at the Jamboree, or has since left the club, further investigative work may be required to track down the trophy. People sometimes need reminding of the appearance of their trophy to be able to locate it at home or at their club.

Trophies are generally returned at the AGM. However, relatively small numbers attend the AGM, and even with the best intentions people would sometimes forget the trophy they'd agreed to bring to the meeting. Collecting the trophy can then become quite problematic, depending on transport arrangements. Occasionally we resort to the current holder arranging engraving and making sure the trophy makes it to the Jamboree. However, this doesn't allow for inspection, cleaning or repair (or replacement) of the trophy.

The practicalities of the engraving itself can also present problems. While engraving is possible on the high street, the results are often not as good as with a specialist and the prices are generally higher. However, finding and getting to a specialist engraver can be difficult. Not everyone will have such an engraver within easy travelling distance, and indeed what counts as "easy travelling" will depend upon one's own access to transport.

The Financial Burden

In years when the engraving has been done on the high street, it has cost approximately £100 for the season. When done with a specialist, the figure has been closer to £60. This assumes, of course, that no repairs or replacements have been required or have been carried out without incurring any expense.

However, as the arrangements as described above are somewhat fragile, the potential for loss of and damage to trophies should not be ignored. At present we do not have any insurance against such things, and assuming this remains the case, we believe that if we continue to present trophies, we should be prepared to see occasional significant extra expense. If any replacements were expected to include engraving of the details of all historical winners, replacement costs could run into hundreds of pounds in addition to the cost of the trophy itself.

For an organisation such as ours, these are not insignificant costs. The funds could be spent elsewhere or simply put aside to stave off future increases in team fees charged by the league.

What Should be Done with Retired Trophies?

Supposing that some or all of the league's trophies are retired, what should be done with them? The Executive makes the following proposal:

- (a) Trophies to be offered to those clubs who have won them most often, for possible use in internal awards ceremonies or photo opportunities.
- (b) Clubs are to be given priority based on (i) having received fewer trophies in this process, and (ii) having won the trophy in question on more occasions.

The result of (b) is that no club will receive a second trophy unless all clubs have already been offered a trophy.

If any trophy remains unclaimed, the Executive will dispose of it as it sees fit.