



Praise for the ECU...from the USA

By Jirina Prokopova | 5th July 2020

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On May 3rd I attended the online ECU Arbiter Seminar held just before the 74th Internet-based FIDE Arbiters' Seminar. Being a National Arbiter from the USA, I had no previous exposure to the ECU Arbiters Council.

I'm impressed specifically with how the ECU Arbiters Council has made evaluating and selecting Arbiters as objective and professional as possible.

The Council provides a clear rubric and points system, even if some may disagree with it. This also gives an incentive for Arbiters to not only stay active, but also refresh their knowledge.

In the USA we have nothing like the extensive review the ECU uses. I would love to see the US Chess Federation adopt something similar. It would provide a performance "paper trail," and help Tournament Directors (our name for Arbiter) improve in the future.

The "open call" for Arbiters is a splendid idea. And the ECU publishes the results! This is amazing transparency.

Major USA events seem to have the same circle of TDs — especially when it comes to leadership positions on a staff. The USCF also does not publish an explanation of why staffing choices were made.

To be clear, I have no grievance with the USCF, and have not pursued staff positions for major events for more than a decade. Still, the contrast between the ECU and USCF struck me.

A more open process would force our Directors to sharpen their skills and meet the highest standards in order to work future events.

A smaller thing, but something for us to aspire to as well: the smart "uniforms" provided to ECU Arbiters! IAs Tomasz Delega and Jiřina Prokopová were kind enough to "model" these cool blue outfits for us!

American chess has been on a good path for several years and has a lot to be excited about. But we should still search for ideas to improve, anywhere we can find them.

Keep up the great work European Chess Union and ECU Arbiters Council!



André Harding

The ECU Arbiter's council thanks Mr. Harding for his kind words.

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