

THE MIDDLE GAME

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CONGRATULATIONS!!!

WELL DONE to NEWARK who retained their BCF National Club Minor title; to GREATER MANCHESTER who won the BCF County Championship; and SHROPSHIRE who won the BCF County U125 crown.

Further details of the National Club event may be found in the Event Results section, a report on the County finals appears later & match score sheets, the Board 1 Open game & photos may be found in a supplement to the Newsletter (posted as a separate file on the website, or at the rear of a hardcopy version)

MCCU AGM MAKES HISTORY

The MCCU held its AGM on 20th June at Syston. The original intention had been to hold the meeting at Birmingham University Students Union, but this proved impossible. No reasonably priced alternative could be found in the area, hence the use of a tried and tested, reasonably priced location.

Unfortunately there were more delegates sending apologies for absence than were present. There was no formal report from the President Roy Woodcock. Lee Collier gave his last report as Chief Executive, thanking everyone involved with the MCCU during his time in office for their help and support.

Andrew Leadbetter presented the accounts and budget, the MCCU had made a profit. The budget for 2004/5 reflects an expected loss on the 2004 Midland Open. Both the MCCU Individual, and the Open, which is run entirely by the MCCU make profits in some years and losses in others. The organisation still has adequate reserves to cope with some years of losses. Hence Andrew was comfortable with a deficit budget. Going forward, there were uncertainties regarding future income from sales of MCCU grading lists. Plans to publish the full grading list on the BCF website had been thrown into doubt over possible issues connected with data protection legislation. (*since then the BCF have announced that the grading list will not go on their website for the time being*)

Graham Humphries, the Junior Director was unable to attend, but sent a written report. He again expressed disappointment that more teams had not entered the U18 county team event, when the evidence was that all counties had sufficient active juniors to enter a team.

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He commended Michael Jones of Lincolnshire, an U18 player, who having found that no more senior person was interested in running a team, set about putting one together himself. More pleasing was the number of juniors entering the individual event. Graham thanked Julie & Cyril Johnson & John Robinson for their assistance in running the junior events.

Wearing his Events Director hat, Cyril Johnson reported that the Leisure Centre in Hinckley had proved a good venue for the very recent Midlands Open Congress. However, the fact that it coincided with Euro 2004, and that the database giving details of previous entrants of the event had not been forthcoming from its creator, had led to entries being well down. Fortunately the effects of this had been partly mitigated by a reduction in costs, although the event will still have made a loss. He wondered whether June was really the best time to hold the event. Historically this timing seems to have arisen in an attempt to provide a final opportunity to gain qualification for the British Championships. (*I have to wonder if providing a small number of players with a last ditch chance should dictate the timing of such an event*)

The Publicity Director was pleased that the hard copy run of the Newsletter had been reduced to 20. She was less pleased at the amount of time and effort spent in achieving the reduction, co-operation from clubs would have eased both. Failure to notify changes of email addresses, officers and postal details had provided additional problems. Some difficulties had arisen due to computer hardware and software problems. Whilst software advances had created greater scope for including diagrams and colour, this had increased the size of the online version. Some people had reported issues with access and downloading times. Various options were being considered, including splitting the file e.g. a separate file for the County results supplement. The option of reducing the level of diagrams and colour, was regarded as a last resort. This seemed to be echoed by many of those at the meeting, a number of whom were unconcerned about longer download times.

Neil Beasley, the MCCU County Tournament Controller sent a written report consisting essentially of the 2003/4 results and tables and successes for Midlands teams in the BCF stages. He commented on the disruption caused by the withdrawal of the Warks

U175 team and the failure of some Staffs teams to complete their fixtures. Chris Lee of Warwickshire explained that his county favoured the splitting of the Open section into 2 divisions based on strength, rather than a geographical east/west split. This generated a good discussion. Cyril Johnson in his capacity as BCF Counties Controller did not feel that such a split would impact on the number of teams the MCCU could put forward for the National stages. However, it was agreed that as a number of the counties that would be affected by any changes were not represented at the meeting, Neil Beasley should be asked to consult and report back, with a view to any change being implemented for the season 2005/6.

Neil Beasley reported as webmaster that the website has had over 6000 hits in the last 12mths. There is still plenty of capacity on the site, so if anyone has any suggestions for additional content they can easily be accommodated. He also echoed the issue of access/download times for the more recent issues of the Newsletter.

There was no report on the Midland Individual Correspondence event. Peter Gibbs, whose trophy is awarded for the winner of this event, expressed concern that it may not in fact have started this year. The Events Director had not been informed of any problems by the person responsible and would make enquiries. Chris Lee reported that the County team correspondence event was in its closing stages and the title looked like being retained by Greater Manchester.

Andrew Leadbetter or Lee Collier had attended BCF Management Board and Council Meetings on behalf of the MCCU. As a BCF director Cyril Johnson had also been present at most of the meetings. They summarised matters which have already been reported in the Newsletter. The meeting came only the week before the BCF EGM at which proposals for a mandatory membership scheme were discussed. Most of the pros and cons raised in the previous Newsletter were aired; ultimately the meeting mandated its representative to vote against the proposed membership scheme.

The election of officers led to the majority of post holders remaining unchanged. However, the Union made history by electing its' first female Chief Executive (*your Newsletter editor was persuaded to allow herself to be nominated – will she yet live to regret it?*)

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Lee Collier was persuaded to take on the vacant secretary post. The Publicity Director post is vacant, but as evidenced by this Newsletter your new CEO agreed to carry on producing The Middle Game.

The Finance Director proposed no change to the county levy.

The meeting discussed the following rule changes -

8) MCCU County Teams' Tournament Rules – proposals by Cyril Johnson.

8.1) Any organiser's change of address, phone number or email must be communicated to the Counties Championship Controller within 14 days of the change occurring.

8.2) When a venue has been agreed for a match, the Controller must be notified.

8.3) In a match to ascertain the participants or winner of a Final, the first tie-break will be that the team defaulting the least number of boards wins.

All of these amendments were agreed

David Pardoe proposed that the MCCU organise a 100 board match related to the BCF Centenary, with say 20 boards from each county. Whilst this was regarded as an attractive idea, those present could foresee logistical problems in finding a suitable venue at a reasonable cost. It was also felt that some counties would not be able to provide 20 boards. As a significant number of clubs are closed during the summer, it was felt it would be difficult to take anything forward until the Autumn.

The Half year meeting will take place on Sunday 21st November.

COMMENT FROM THE CEO

Having been persuaded to step into the breach I will make every effort to ensure MCCU views are represented to the BCF, and try to have a positive influence on what that organisation does. To that end I hope contact players through the MCCU email group and the website, so that I can get a better idea of what your views are. County & MCCU meetings tend to be poorly attended, so do not always provide an accurate barometer. If you are not on email please feel free to

write to me.

I appreciate that many players may be more interested in local affairs than those of the BCF. I have instigated a review of the events held under the MCCU umbrella –

Are we holding the right events and the right time? As an example would the U18 county team event be better held at a different time (currently February)? To assist with the process I am also asking for Midlands Organisers to let me know what events they have planned, so that we can try and avoid major clashes between these and MCCU events.

If you have any suggestions concerning the MCCU and regional chess please get in touch. Even if it is only the gist of an idea, someone else may be able to develop it further.

You can contact me through the Midlands Chess email group if you are a member (you can join it if you are not already a member, just drop me an email), or at juliedjohnson@yahoo.com, or by post to 105 Central Avenue Syston Leics LE7 2EG.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

21-30 Aug 8TH MIND SPORTS OLYMPIAD,
Conference Centre, University of
Manchester Institute of Science &
Technology, Manchester.
T Corfe, Mind Sports Olympiad, 51
Borough Way, Potters Bar, Herts EN6
3HA (Tel: 01707 659080), Email:
tony@msoworld.com

10-12 Sep LEEK CONGRESS, Westwood High
School, Leek, Staffordshire.
R Milner, 411 Cheadle Rd, Cheddleton,
Leek, Staffordshire ST13 7BH (Tel: 01782
550112)

12 Sep LEAMINGTON RAPIDPLAY,
Leamington Spa Centre, Leamington
Jonathan Rashleigh, Longeaves,
Norton Lindsey, Warwickshire CV35 8JL
(Tel: 01926 842523) Email:
jonathan@rashleigh.freeserve.co.uk

EVENT RESULTS

MCCU OPEN

Hinckley Leisure Centre

11-13th June

REPORT FROM CYRIL JOHNSON

Hinckley welcomed the cream of Midlands Chess players to the Leisure Centre.

The Midlands Counties Chess Union held its Championships in Hinckley over the weekend, the first event the town has staged in recent history. The championships were opened by Councillor John Bounds, the deputy mayor of the Borough, accompanied by his wife. The Tournament Director, Cyril Johnson and Chief Controller, John Robinson with assistance from Lee Collier and Peter Cresswell reported afterwards that the players had enjoyed the venue, and the hospitality of the town which was celebrating its Festival. Mr Johnson found time to take on all comers in the Market Square on Saturday. After the dust had settled, the title of Midlands Champion was shared between Mark Hebden, the chess grandmaster from Leicester and Russell James from Birmingham who both scored 5 points from 6 games. 3rd place was won by International Master Simon Knott from Hertford and Jesper Sisask from Bristol University. Mr Sisask was awarded one of the places in the British Championships, as was Martin Burrows from Leicester.

The Minor Tournament saw a clear winner, Graham Ashcroft from Preston scoring 5½ points, with Sean Hewitt of Littlethorpe second on 5. Richard Desmedt of Barnsley and James Thompson of Nottingham shared 3rd place on 4½. Grading prizes were won by Richard Darby of Coventry, Anjali Lakhani of Long Eaton and Ross Bullivant of Whoberley. All were juniors, so with James Guiney of Surrey winning the junior prize and Megan Owens of Chepstow winning the Ladies prizes, Youth triumphed. The most amazing story was that of Andre Cardozo who walked into the venue on Friday, asked if he could enter as a latecomer and won the prize for the best score by a Hinckley resident!

PRIZE LIST

6 Rounds

Open/Major Section

| | | |
|-------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 1st = | Mark Hebden, Birstall Russell James, South Birmingham | 6 |
| 3rd = | Martin Burrows, Wigston* Richard Bryant, Oswestry* Simon Knott, Hertford Jesper Sisask, Bristol | 4.5 |

* Also Smith & Williamson British Championship Bursary

Grading Prizes

| | | |
|------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Under 190 | Peter Mercs, Gedling | 3 |
| Under 170= | David Levens, Nottingham Jim Nicholson, Burton-upon-Trent Thomas Pym, Newport Michael White, Cheltenham | 3.5 |
| Under 150 | Dean Hartley, Chesterfield | 3.5 |

Minor/Julius Silverman Section

| | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 1 st | Graham Ashcroft, Preston | 5.5 |
| 2 nd | Sean Hewitt, Littlethorpe | 5 |
| 3 rd = | Richard Desmedt, Wombwell James L Thompson, Stapleford | 4.5 |

Grading Prizes

| | | |
|----------|----------------------------|-----|
| Under 90 | Robert Darby, Coventry | 3.5 |
| Under 70 | Anjali Lakhani, Long Eaton | 3.5 |
| Ungraded | Ross Bullivant, Whoberley | 3 |

| | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|-----|
| Best Hinckley player | Andre Cadozo, Hinckley | 2.5 |
|----------------------|------------------------|-----|

As provided by John Robinson Chief Arbiter

Details of the BCF County finals, also held at Hinckley, may be found in a supplement to the Newsletter along with details from the local UK Chess Challenge events.

Leek Rapidplay Chess Congress

(Organised by Cheddleton & Leek Chess Club)

June 9 2004 REPORT FROM GUS BRAIN

1st Leek Rapidplay Congress

The 1st Leek Rapidplay Congress, held Sunday June 6 at St Edward's Middle School, Leek, was played, for the first time ever in this country, at a rate of 15 minutes per player and over 9 rounds in the day.

The Congress, organised by Cheddleton & Leek Club, was tough for both the players and the controllers, due to the short breaks between rounds and the number of rounds as well, yet played in a very friendly atmosphere.

One pleasing aspect of the event was that players could afford to have an odd bad result and yet still fight their way back into contention – something that a five or six round tournament will not allow.

Most of the players seemed to enjoy it and a larger number than usual came to express their opinions, because of the uniqueness of the event, with only a couple saying the time limit was not for them but the majority saying they will return next year.

The 83 players came from as far afield as Merseyside and Surrey, via Yorkshire and North Wales, playing for a total of £540 prize money.

The Alan Wilshaw Memorial Trophy, in memory of a leading North Staffordshire player, was also awarded for the first time at this tournament.

The top section, which had, unfortunately, to be amalgamated with the middle section, proved to be the most exciting with nothing decided for certain until the very last game had finished.

The other two sections produced some interesting results, with no clear leader in the middle section, but a runaway winner in the bottom section with the main interest in how the chasing pack was going to finish.

Cheddleton section (under 180)
10 players, £180 total prize money

| | | | |
|-------------------|------------------------------|-----|-------|
| 1 st = | Chris Briscoe Kingston | 179 | 7 |
| | Simon Fowler Coddon | 154 | 7 |
| 3 rd = | David Buxton Cheddleton | 178 | 6 ½ |
| | Simon Edwards Cheddleton | 144 | 6 ½ |
| | Geoff Thomas Stourbridge | 153 | 6 ½ |
| | Roger Williamson Hunts Cross | 159 | 6 ½ |
| 7 th = | Malcolm Armstrong Stafford | 174 | 5 ½ |
| | Peter Mercs Gambit | 173 | 5 ½ |
| | James Nicholson Birstall | 156 | 5 ½ |
| 10 th | Anthony Hickey Kynoch | 152 | 4 1/2 |

Grading Prize (Under 155) - Simon Edwards & Geoff Thomas
Alan Wilshaw Memorial Trophy – Simon Edwards

Leek section (Under 140)
28 players, £180 total prize money

| | | | |
|-------------------|------------------------------|-----|-----|
| 1 st | Richard Burton Kynoch | 119 | 6 |
| 2 nd = | Bill Armstrong Cheddleton | 138 | 5 ½ |
| | Chris Hankey Newcastle | 131 | 5 ½ |
| | Sean Hewitt Littlethorpe | 118 | 5 ½ |
| 5 th | David Pritchard Walsall Kipp | 139 | 5 |
| 6 th = | Golam Ali Birmingham | 135 | 4 ½ |
| | Mark Carter Spondon | 125 | 4 ½ |
| | Philip Cattermole Holmes Ch | 117 | 4 ½ |
| | Sam Cloake Northwich | 111 | 4 ½ |
| | Gavyn Cooper Newport | 130 | 4 ½ |
| | Malcolm French Widnes | 125 | 4 ½ |
| | Steve Jukes Stourbridge | 138 | 4 ½ |
| | Chris Simpson Cheddleton | 112 | 4 ½ |
| | Tim Stevens Newcastle | 126 | 4 ½ |

Grading Prize ((Under 120) – Phil Cattermole (Holmes Chapel), Sam Cloake (Northwich), Chris Simpson (Cheddleton) 4 ½

St Edward's section (Under 100)
45 players, £180 total prize money

| | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|----|-----|
| 1 st | Daniel Sullivan Newcastle | 98 | 8 ½ |
| 2 nd = | Michael Barker Ashton-u-Lyne | | 6 ½ |
| | David Dunne Fiveways | 91 | 6 ½ |
| | Stephen Lloyd Chester YMCA | 82 | 6 ½ |
| 5 th = | Andrew Baker Derby/Mickle | 97 | 6 |
| | Kristian Chester Macclesfield | 96 | 6 |
| | Geoffrey Clarke E Cheshire | 88 | 6 |
| | Robert Darby Coventry | 80 | 6 |
| | Martin Gee Cheddleton | 95 | 6 |
| | John Sutcliffe Caergwrie | 99 | 6 |
| 11 th | Megan Moruzzi Cheddleton | 67 | 5 ½ |

Grading Prize (Under 75) Megan Moruzzi

BCF SCHOOLS COMPETITION

MIDLANDS

TEAMS COMPETING

Zone 5: W Midlands

League Group

1. Rushey Mead Secondary School, Leicester
2. King Edwards School, Edgbaston Park Rd, Birmingham
3. Queen Marys Grammar School, Walsall

Knockout Group

1. Nottingham High School (A team)
2. Nottingham High School (B team)
3. King Edward VI Camp Hill School, Birmingham
4. Solihull School
5. Worksop College

The League winners join the Knockout at the semi-final stage.

Zone 6: E Midlands

League Group A

1. Oundle School (A team)
2. Oundle School (B team)
3. Oakham School (B team)

League group B

1. Glead Boys School, Spalding (A team)
2. Glead Boys School (B team)
3. Spalding Grammar School
4. Kings School, Grantham

Knockout Group

1. Oakham School (A team)
2. Queen Elizabeths Grammar School, Alford, Lincs
3. Stamford School
4. Uppingham School

The two League winners will play off for a place in the Zone Final.

ZONE WINNERS & RUNNERS UP

Zone 5

1 King Edwards Birmingham; 2 Nottingham HS A

Zone 6

1 Oakham School A; 2 Oakham School B

Below are results from the post-Zonal stages involving Midlands teams

ROUND 1 PLATE

| Nottingham HS A | | 11.3.04 | Oakham School B | |
|------------------------|------------------------|---------|------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 | Balvinder S Grewal 160 | 1 0 | | Paul Chau 104 |
| 2 | Ankush Khandelwal 131 | 1 0 | | Edward Walsingham 96 |
| 3 | Michael Keetley 128 | 1 0 | | George Pender 80 |
| 4 | Ian Harris 122 | ½ ½ | | Alfred Yan 88 |
| 5 | Dominic Heining 111 | 1 0 | | Michael Hale 76 |
| 6 | Kishan Lakhani 112 | 1 0 | | Julian Willis *79 |
| | (14.6) | 5½ ½ | | (15.11) |

PLATE QUARTER FINAL

| Philip Morant School | | 29.4.04 | Nottingham HS A | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|---------|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 | Emmanuel Blondel | 0 1 | | Balvinder S Grewal 160 |
| 2 | Lawrence Knight | 0 1 | | Ankush Khandelwal 131 |
| 3 | Ashida Dhanatunge | 0 1 | | Michael Keetley 128 |
| 4 | Nicolas Blondel | 0 1 | | Ian Harris 122 |
| 5 | Kiaz Shipton | 0 1 | | Alex Rossiter 121 |
| 6 | Tom Sizer-James | 0 1 | | Kishan Lakhani 112 |
| | (14.1) | 0 6 | | (14.11) |

Played at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge

PLATE SEMI FINAL

| | | |
|--------------------------|---------|------------------------|
| Lancaster RGS | 26.6.04 | Nottingham HS A |
| 1 James Hanley 168 (W) | 1 0 | Balvinder S Grewal 160 |
| 2 Stephen Ho 88 | 0 1 | Ankush Khandelwal 131 |
| 3 Andrew Hodson 73 | ½ ½ | Michael Keetley 128 |
| 4 Alistair Williamson 76 | 1 0 | Ian Harris 122 |
| 5 Richard Gardner | 0 1 | Dominic Heining 111 |
| 6 Andrew O'Connor 82 | 0 1 | Kishan Lakhani 112 |
| (16.4) | 2½ 3½ | (14.9) |

PLATE FINAL

| | | |
|--------------------------|---------|--------------------------|
| Nottingham HS A | 26.6.04 | Commonweal School |
| 1 Balvinder S Grewal 160 | 0 1 | Daniel Hall 145 |
| 2 Ankush Khandelwal 131 | 1 0 | Joshua Hall 129 |
| 3 Michael Keetley 128 | 1 0 | Robbie Dams 115 |
| 4 Alex Rossiter 121 | 0 1 | Aidan Glennie 78 |
| 5 Dominic Heining 111 | 1 0 | Toby Hall 77 |
| 6 Kishan Lakhani 112 | ½ ½ | Nathaniel Garner 45 |
| (14.11) | 3½ 2½ | (14.2) |

CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND 1

| | | |
|-----------------------------|--------|----------------------------------|
| K Edwards Birmingham | 8.3.04 | Magdalen College School A |
| 1 Ameet Ghasi 225 | 1 0 | Jonathan Lappage 202 |
| 2 Dani Malik 108 | 1 0 | Oliver-James Dyar 129 |
| 3 Alex Pavlaki *101 | 0 1 | Ti Chen 110 |
| 4 Kaiser Malik 85 | 1 0 | Jeffrey Levicki 78 |
| 5 David Yao | 1 0 | Daniel Rey 97 |
| 6 Dan Price *110 | 1 0 | Beau Schofield 88 |
| (15.6) | 5 1 | (14.7) |

CHAMPIONSHIP QUARTER FINALS

| | | |
|-----------------------------|---------|---------------------------|
| Haberdashers A | 24.3.04 | Oakham A |
| 1 Vedantha Kumar 124 | 0 1 | William Bennet 175 |
| 2 Senthuran Sathyanandha 98 | ½ ½ | Adam Eckersley-Waites 172 |
| 3 Lakshman Ruthirapathy 102 | 0 1 | Alex Mapletoft 141 |
| 4 Mithun Kailavasan 118 | 1 0 | Andrew Foster-Yeow 133 |
| 5 Gajern Kailavasan 88 | 0 1 | Matthew Moore 118 |
| 6 Saravanan Sathyanandha 85 | 1 0 | Tom Gasson 71 |
| (13.3) | 2½ 3½ | (15.10) |

Haberdashers won on age handicap & were the eventual champions

| | | |
|--------------------------|---------|-----------------------------|
| Monmouth School | 24.3.04 | K Edwards Birmingham |
| 1 Douglas Spencer 136 | 0 1 | Ameet Ghasi 225 |
| 2 Christopher Arnold 125 | ½ ½ | Dani Malik 108 |
| 3 Joseff Thomas 139 | 1 0 | Alex Pavlaki *101 |
| 4 Jac Thomas 117 | 1 0 | Kaiser Malik 85 |
| 5 Calum Kinloch 88 | 1 0 | David Yao |
| 6 Matthew Kinloch 83 | 1 0 | Dan Price *110 |
| (14.8) | 4½ 1½ | (15.7) |

BCF NATIONAL CLUB MINOR FINALS

The results of the semi-finals meant that a team from the Leeds area played a London team and one from Nottinghamshire played another London team. The Controller, Julie Johnson invited all 4 teams to sample her hospitality at Syston, which all were glad to.

The Minor Final saw Newark defending their hard won title against a good side from

Hammersmith, who lost board 3 very early on, and never really recovered from that. The battle of the secretaries on Board 2 was drawn and time scrambles saw Newark retain their title 3 1/2 - 1 1/2.

The plate also saw defending Champions, Alwoodley against Hayes. Here the Leeds team were never in danger and ran out easy winners by 4-1. Julie was thanked by all present for her work during the season, and congratulated on her recent appointment as CEO of the MCCU.

See scores below

MINOR

HAMMERSMITH

NEWARK

| Code | Grade | Player | Score | Player | Code | Grade |
|---------|-------|------------|-------|-----------|---------|-------|
| 172558A | 148 | J C Hannot | 0 - 1 | K Shutt | 194215D | 159 |
| 127090E | 148 | J H Wooley | ½ - ½ | G Ladds | 113979E | 139 |
| 173127A | 132 | M C Price | 0 - 1 | D Wells | 231112E | 107 |
| 121494K | 114 | J R White | 1 - 0 | M Angrove | 130223B | 113 |
| 187633J | 78 | C Hooper | 0 - 1 | R Myers | 233342K | 85 |
| 1½ - 3½ | | | | | | |

MINOR PLATE

ALWOODLEY

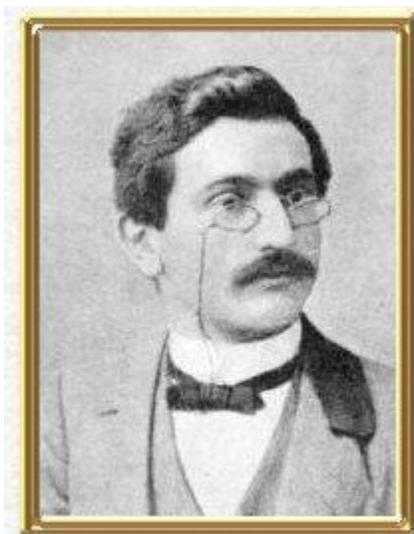
HAYES

| Code | Grade | Player | Score | Player | Code | Grade |
|-----------|-------|----------------|-------|-------------------|---------|-------|
| 1 241408F | 154 | C Wright | 1 - 0 | Peter Ackley | 165369G | 154 |
| 2 180278B | 151 | Rupert Jones | ½ - ½ | Neville Blackie | 230790L | 151 |
| 3 113717H | 118 | Stuart Johnson | ½ - ½ | Chris Fewtrell | 110547E | 124 |
| 4 241399B | 95 | Nik Shaklevich | 1 - 0 | Ted Black | 249713L | 113 |
| 5 110869E | 93 | John Frankland | 1 - 0 | Richards Westlake | 210939G | 71 |
| 4 - 1 | | | | | | |

CHESS CHAMPIONS

The 3rd in our series looks at Emanuel Lasker

Emanuel Lasker



1868 - 1941

Emanuel Lasker was born in the Prussian province of Brandenburg into a Jewish family. His mother was Rosalie Israelsohn while his father was Adolf Lasker, a cantor in the synagogue. Emanuel was sent to attend school in Berlin when he was eleven years old, and was taught to play chess by Berthold his older brother who was a student in the medical faculty there. He made some money playing chess in the local cafés, but he did not become a serious chess player until about the age of fifteen.

In fact Emanuel's parents were so worried that he was devoting too much time to chess and not enough to his school work that they found another school for Emanuel. However, the head of this new school was president of the local chess club and the mathematics master was the local chess champion, so in his new secondary school Emanuel continued to show remarkable talents at both mathematics and at chess.

Lasker studied mathematics and philosophy at the universities in Berlin, Göttingen and Heidelberg but he combined his studies with playing chess. In 1889 he won his first chess tournament in Berlin and, a month later, he won the Hauptturnier in Breslau which earned him the German title of Master of Chess. One of the judges at this event, Leopold Hoffer, commented:-

The young master will be a formidable opponent in future contests.

Although he failed to win the tournament at Amsterdam shortly afterwards, Hoffer reinforced his opinion:-

Young Lasker only confirmed the opinion we expressed about him when we watched him in Breslau. He is only 21 years of age, but possesses already the qualities of a first-class master - erudition, judgement of position, quickness of conception, imagination, great enthusiasm for the game, and above all, he is a man of culture and more than average intelligence.

Lasker had an extended stay in England in 1891-92, playing many fine chess games and beating the best players in that country. In 1893 he went to the United States and continued to win all the matches that he played. He won the New York International tournament, winning every game despite some top players competing, and he defeated the American chess champion. His remarkable wins in the United States put Lasker in a position to challenge Wilhelm Steinitz, who was 58 years old at this time, for the title of World Champion. A match was arranged which would take place in three venues, New York, Philadelphia and Montreal, with victory going to the first player to record ten victories.

The match began in New York on 15 March 1894 and was fairly even with two victories to each player in the first six games. However, Lasker then won five consecutive games winning impressive victories in Philadelphia and, despite Steinitz recovering after this, Lasker won in Montreal. He gained his tenth win there on 26 May 1894, having by this time played four draws and having five losses. However despite now being World Champion, many doubted that he deserved the honour. Tarrasch said:-

In my opinion the match with Steinitz does not have the great importance that they themselves attribute to it. For Steinitz has grown old, and the old Steinitz is no longer the Steinitz of old.

Lasker had returned to Germany by the end of 1894 but he contracted typhoid fever and became seriously ill. His brother Berthold nursed him back to health but it was a slow process and he was still recovering in 1895 when he took third place in famous Hastings Tournament in England described as:-

... the most important tournament of the 19th century, which assembled the entire cream of world chess.

While in England he gave a series of lectures on chess which he wrote up for publication as *Common Sense in Chess*. The book was published in German in 1896 with the English translation appearing in the following year.

Over the next few years Lasker played in relatively few chess tournaments. He had a famous win in St Petersburg in 1895-96 and in a tournament in Nuremberg in the summer of 1896. In 1896-97 he played Steinitz again in a world championship match and was again victorious. This time he reached ten victories having lost only twice and drawn five times. In London in 1899 Lasker had one of his most impressive tournament victories, winning 20 of the 28 games he played, losing only one game. In the following year in Paris he was equally impressive winning 14 of his 18 games, again with only one loss.

Chess was certainly not the only interest for Lasker over these years. In fact he was concentrating more on mathematics than chess which explains why he played in so few tournaments. He was awarded a doctorate in mathematics in 1902.

Lasker moved to the United States in 1902 and lived there until 1907 but only played in one chess tournament during these years, namely at Cambridge Springs in 1904. Lasker was second equal in this tournament, the winner Frank Marshall went on to challenge Lasker for the world championship. However, Lasker set high financial stakes for such a match and Marshall, young and comparatively unknown before the Cambridge Springs tournament, had little chance of finding backers to put up Lasker's asking price. Marshall had to take on other opponents which, indeed, he did.

In 1907 Lasker returned to Germany and, challenged again by Marshall, he now dropped the price to a figure that Marshall could find backers to put up - the World Champion was back to playing chess in a big way. During the years 1907 to 1910, he defended his World Champion's title in six matches, one against Marshall in 1907 in which Lasker never lost any of the 15 games played (8 wins and 7 draws), one match against Tarrasch in 1908, three matches against David Janowski in 1909 (two matches) and 1910, and one against Carl Schlechter in 1910. He only played in one tournament during these years, coming first equal with Akiba Rubinstein in St Petersburg in 1909. He also played exhibition matches, which could be lucrative, and in the same year he played two such matches against Janowski.

Lasker married Martha Cohn, the daughter of Emil Cohn, in 1911 and they lived in Berlin.

Arrangements were put in place for Lasker to defend his title again. The plan was that he play Rubinstein for the World Championship, then that the winner would play José Raúl Capablanca. However, due to World War I, the matches could not be played. After World War I ended,

arrangements were again worked out, with a world championship match between Lasker and Capablanca being set up. However, Lasker wrote to Capablanca resigning his World Champion title before the match was to be played. However, he was persuaded to play and the match took place in Havana, Cuba, in the following year. After fourteen games Lasker retired because of ill health and his reign of 27 years as World Chess Champion was over.

Despite losing the title, Lasker still won the New York International Tournament in 1924 with Capablanca coming second with Alexander Alekhine in third place. Lasker now took up Bridge and Go, going on to represent Germany at Bridge.

In 1933, being Jewish, Lasker was forced to emigrate and went to England where he lived until 1935. Gareth Williams, writing in *Chess Monthly*, describes Lasker's last few years:-

... the Laskers were forced out of their comfortable retirement. The regime confiscated the Laskers' Berlin apartment, their farm at Thyrow and their lifetime savings. Emanuel and Martha Lasker, in their old age, suddenly found themselves destitute, without money home or homeland.

He was forced to come out of retirement and to play chess again to make enough money to live:-
In order to survive Lasker had once again to build a career in chess. The first tournament he was invited to after nine years retirement was Zurich. Lasker was invited to Moscow in 1936 to participate in another great international tournament. ... The Laskers were encouraged to stay on in Moscow after the tournament and Dr Emanuel Lasker, mathematician, was invited to become a member of the [Moscow Academy of Science](#). The offer was accepted and the Laskers took up permanent residence in Moscow. Emanuel became absorbed with his mathematical studies at the [Moscow Academy](#).

He played in the Nottingham International Chess Tournament from 10th to 28 August 1936. W H Watts, writing an Introduction to the book of the tournament, wrote:-

Lasker, throughout the tournament gave me the unmistakable impression that he was not extending himself. There may be a very good reason for this. He made his name a generation ago and although winning a high place would be a very fine performance, the strain of a long tournament with fifteen long arduous games would be unwise for a man of nearly seventy years.

In 1937 the Laskers moved yet again, after their patron Krylenko had been disgraced, this time taking up residence in New York in the United States. There Martha Lasker took ill and they were advised not to travel; she died later that year. Lasker gave lectures and demonstrations over the next couple of years but, in 1939, during a lecture, he became dizzy. This was the start of an illness which slowly worsened until his death. Nathan Divinsky, himself an exceptional mathematician and like Lasker most famous for his results in ring theory, writes:-

In that great roll-call of tournaments, St Petersburg 1896, St Petersburg 1914 and New York 1924, Emanuel Lasker always won. In 1896 it was by a two-point margin over his leading contemporaries, 18 years later again by a two-point gap in the final and ten years further on (three years after he conceded the title to Capablanca) 1 1/2 points ahead of a mighty field. Such results surely indicate something truly remarkable about Emanuel Lasker.

Mikhail Botvinnik, who became World Chess Champion in 1948, wrote:-

The first time I saw Lasker, he was an elderly man. His appearance was not impressive. His movements were very slow. ... He was a very wise man - he was the first one who studied all the practical sides of a chess game: how to prepare for a tournament, when to play in it, how to rest, eat, etc. He perfectly understood all these practical aspects.

A quotation from Lasker shows how he approached games. He was once asked after giving a lecture why he almost always chose variations in openings which his opponent had declared unsatisfactory. Lasker replied:-

I did not study anything but the variations in question consisted of developing moves which were so sound and reasonable that they could not be so bad as my opponent thought. I was therefore convinced that he had misjudged these variations, and his understanding of them was faulty. I wanted to take advantage of this state of affairs.

His philosophy of life and of chess are compared:-

Lasker's conception of life, as expounded in his writings, was that of a fight or struggle and as a chess player he was probably the greatest fighter that the game has seen. Supremely wary and tenacious, he would deliberately involve himself in difficulties to complicate the struggle and give himself chances of outplaying his opponent; and once he had the advantage, he would push it home with relentless vigour and decision.

E Lasker- M Euwe Nottingham 1936.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.e3 Bf5 5.Bd3 e6 6.cxd5 Bxd3 7.Qxd3 exd5 8.Nc3 Bd6 9.0-0 0-0 10.Re1 Nbd7 11.e4 dxe4 12.Nxe4 Nxe4 13.Qxe4 Re8 14.Qxe8+ Qxe8 15.Rxe8+ Rxe8 16.Kf1 Nb6 17.Bd2 f6 18.Re1 Rxe1+ 19.Nxe1 Kf7 20.Ke2 Ke6 21.h3 Nc4 22.Bc1 Bc7



23.Kd3 Ba5 (retreating the N would have been better. The move played loses) 24.b4! Bxb4 25.Nc2 Bd2 26.Bxd2 Nb2+ 27.Ke2 Kd5 28.Bc1 Nc4 29.Kd3 Nb6 30.Ne3+ Ke6 31.Nc4 Nc8 32.Na5 Nd6 33.Bf4 1-0

E Lasker- W Steinitz St Petersburg 1895

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 a6 4. Ba4 d6 5. d4 Bd7 6. c3 Nf6 7. Nbd2 Be7 8. O-O O-O 9. Re1 Re8 10. Nf1 Bf8 11. Ng3 g6 12. h3 Bg7 13. Bc2 Bc8 14. d5 Ne7 15. Be3 Rf8 16. Qd2 Ne8 17. Bh6 Kh8 18. Rad1 Ng8 19. Bxg7+ Nxg7 20. c4 f5 21. Qc3 fxe4 22. Bxe4 Nf6 23. Qe3 Nxe4 24. Nxe4 Rf4 25. c5 Bf5 26. Nfg5 Qd7



27. Qxf4 exf4 28. Nf6 Ne6 29. Nxd7 Nxg5 30. Re7 Kg8 31. Nf6+ Kf8 32. Rxc7 1-0

BCF EGM

Nottingham 26th June 2004

An EGM had been called to discuss the membership proposals which the Council meeting in April did not have time to fully cover.

It will be proposed on behalf of the Management Board:

"that this Council recommend that a mandatory Membership Scheme based on grading be introduced to commence on 1st September 2005. Council instructs the Board to produce detailed proposals for submission to the next AGM/Council meeting in October"

The following amendments will be proposed by the Northern Counties Chess Union and by the Durham County Chess Association:

- (a) to replace "grading" with "withholding from publication the grades of non-members"*
- (b) to replace "1 September 2005" with "1 May 2005"*
- (c) to add at the end: "Council directs the Board to postulate first, that the minimum membership fee will be £8, second, that it replace the Game Fee Scheme entirely"*

This was the first BCF meeting for your editor in her capacity as MCCU CEO. Not surprisingly considerable debate ensued. Much of it covered the arguments outlined both ways in the last issue of the newsletter. There were however some interesting new angles and views.

The issue of the additional cost of collecting a membership fee as opposed to the game fee was raised. The Finance Director had made the assumption that there would be no increased costs to the BCF; the leagues etc would collect the fees from their players. Some of those present indicated that their organisations would not be willing to do so. Several long standing administrators harked back to the days of registration and the difficulties they had experienced in collecting those fees from individuals. Significant logistical problems could be foreseen.

It also emerged that a number of delegates felt that a Membership scheme was in principle a good idea, but they did not feel that such a scheme could be sold to their players. With this in mind they did not feel the take up would be sufficient to generate income on a par with

the game fee. They felt the membership scheme on offer was too much of a financial gamble and thus could not vote in favour.

Bill O'Rourke gave a slick presentation in support of a Membership scheme. However, it was heavily slanted towards the issues for Congresses. Bearing in mind the majority of the delegates were more directly involved with leagues, and more players are involved with league chess than congresses, it would have been interesting to have heard why a membership scheme would be better for those players. He pointed out that game fee was suffering because less games are being played, and therefore to retain a similar income the fee per game had to keep increasing. He argued that a membership scheme was the answer. (However one has to wonder - If less games are being played, is that not because there are less chess players? If the number of chess players is going down then the number of potential members also goes down)

The reason some favoured a membership scheme seemed to be that they didn't like the current Game Fee with its year on year increases. (Surely any membership fee would have to increase – unless of course BCF related expenses are immune to inflation?) For others it was a case of, most other organisations have a membership fee, usually somewhat higher than what was being proposed, we ought to go down that route.

The precise wording of the MB motion came under scrutiny, after considerable discussion over whether it was permissible for it to be amended, it was

"That this Council recommend that a Membership Scheme be introduced. Council instructs the Board to produce proposals for submission to the next AGM/Council meeting in October".

There was also debate on whether the amendments be put before the main motion, eventually the Chair decided that the amended MB motion should be put first.

On a card vote, this proposal was lost by 55 votes to 100.

None of the amendments received a positive vote.

This is undoubtedly not the end of the matter. The rumour mill suggests that the North might propose a pilot scheme as a way of demonstrating that a membership scheme can work. Another suggestion is that the current voluntary scheme be stripped of its frills, so that it brings in more net profit. We can but wait and see what develops.

BCF MANAGEMENT BOARD

A BCF Management Board meeting wrapped itself around the EGM at Nottingham.

Matters are progressing relating to both the status of the BCF changing to that of a company limited by guarantee (it is currently an unlimited company) and a change of name. There are possible issues involving parts of North Wales and of the former British Commonwealth. It seems logical to link the change of status and name, if this is possible. It is hoped that proposals will be put forward at the October Council meeting with a view to them being adopted in the New Year.

Good feedback had been received from the Government sponsored Schools project. Likewise the reaction to the Junior Game fee had been mainly positive. Following the EGM the importance of Junior chess was highlighted in any effort to expand chess activity, along with the need for local leagues to become involved with development in schools in order to generate future players for their clubs.

The plan to put the BCF Grading list on the Website in the Autumn had run into Data Protection problems and advice was being sought from the Information Commission. In the meantime a normal print of the 2003/4 gradings was being organised. A proposal from the Gradings Director to reduce the game fee for 2004/5 by 1p was passed (1p had previously been included to counterbalance loss of grading book income in setting the fee) It is hoped that the grading list can be published on the website next year, this may require consent from players, an issued which hopefully can be dealt with.

The Chief Arbiter recommended that BCF events should have a Senior Arbiter attached to them with a view to producing draft rules, this was accepted.

Directors' job descriptions had been enshrined in a proposed "Responsibilities" document put before the Board. A number of changes were suggested. In particular, with Bruce Holland being unable to carry out the Membership Development & ICT role due to ill health, it was agreed that the Membership

duties would revert to the Finance Director and the ICT would be handled by the Office with supervision from the President. Bruce was thanked for the work he had done prior to his health problems. A further proposal was adopted following discussion on attendance , basically Directors are expected to make every effort to attend, or if they cannot they must send a proxy to report on their activity.

SNIPPETS FROM THE HISTORY OF LEICESTER CHESS CLUB

FROM THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE CLUB

They seem to have had a taste for the unusual!!

On the 4th February 1862 the club staged its first simultaneous display, but it was a rather unconventional one as it was given by a Mr Lumbley who was blind. He played six games without the aid of any equipment, he simply sat at an elevated table in the corner of the room without the use of a chess board keeping the games "in his head". All the more amazing as the session lasted from 7.00pm til 1.30am!

Plans for a simul in 1864 fell through, the club approached Herr Lowenthal the Hungarian master, who was resident in London at the time. They carefully booked rooms and arranged refreshments, but then someone realised they had forgotten something. A hasty telegram was sent to Herr Lowenthal asking "if he played not seeing his opponents boards" and requesting an immediate reply if he did not. The reply came back that he was not a blindfold player himself, but could provide one for 5 guineas. The club accepted, but on 4.30pm on the day of the event he telegraphed saying that "the time allowed did not permit him to engage for his substitute" Clearly an ordinary simul was not good enough for the club.

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"I am still a victim of chess. It has all the beauty of art - and much more. It cannot be commercialized. Chess is much purer than art in its social position." - Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968)

BCF COUNTY FINALS DAY

The National Counties Championship final was held in Leicestershire, at the Hinckley Leisure Centre on 3rd July 2004.

The event was opened by the Director of Home Chess, Cyril Johnson.

The Open Championship for the Lowenthal Trophy was won by Greater Manchester 8½ -7 after recovering from a quick loss on top board to GM Daniel Gormally of Kent, who then had to watch his lead pulled back and then overtaken after 5 hours of chess.

The Minor Counties had become an East Anglian affair which was won by the higher rated Bedfordshire team 9-7 against Norfolk. Devon faced regular finalists Essex in the U175 but fell short by 10-6.

Cambridgeshire did not know their opponents in the U150 final until the Sunday before but still defeated Lancashire 9-7. Middlesex made their first appearance in any final for 10 years against Shropshire, but lost 10-6. The U100s was very close with Essex failing to do a double as Norfolk won 6½ to 5½.

All matches were hard fought, with none being concluded in less than 4 hours!

The Chief Executive of the British Chess Federation, Roy Heppinstall, thanked the controlling team of David Welch, John Shaw and Cyril Johnson, whom he remarked, had a very quiet day. The administration team of Francesca, Nathan, Aiden and Jacob Brown ensured that the results were collected promptly helping harassed captains keep up to date with the score. Roy also commented that the Hinckley Leisure Centre, which was making its debut as a national venue was excellent, and he hoped that other events would be coming to the town in future.

One might have expected the Board 1 game in the Open Championship to have provided something of a classic. However you will see from the moves and diagram below that it actually served to demonstrate that even a county Open board 1 player can have an off day!

Danny Gormally v Ali Reza Jaunooby

1d4 c5:2 d5 e5: 3 e4 d6: 4 g3 g6:5 Nc3 Bg7: 6 h4 h5: 7 Bh3 Nd7: 8 Nf3 Nh6: 9 Ng5 b6:(9 ... Qb6 would be better): 10 Nb5 Ba6: (Black has to acknowledge the threat on d6 and either play Bf8 or Ke7): 11 Nxd6 Ke7: 12 Ndx7 Nxf7: 13 Ne6 Qg8 (the wrong way, Qb8 would have been stronger):14 d6+ (an excellent sac)



14.Nxd6: 15 Nxg7 Qxg7: 16 Bg5+ Nf6:17 Qd5 Nxe4:18 Qxe4 Kf7:19 Qc6 Rae8:20 0-0-0 Re7: 21 Rd6 winning material

POSITIONAL SOLUTIONS

No 1 Black should play Nf3++ Mate

No 2 1.... Rxd1+ 2. Rxd1 Qxd1+ 3. Qxd1 Rxd1++ Mate

No 3 1. Qxh7+ Kxh7 2. Rh3++ Mate

No 4 1. Nf6+ Kh6 2. Bf8++ Mate

No 5 1. Nf7+ Kg8 If ...Rxf7 then Qd8 forces mate in 2 2. Nh6+ Kh8 3. Qg8+ Rxf7 4. Nf7++ Mate This is known as Smothered Mate.

No 6 1. Nf6+ Kg7/Kh8 2. Ng4+ Nd4/Ne5 3. Bxd4+/Bxe5+ Kg8 4. Nh6++ Mate

HISTORY OF GRADINGS

With the publication of the latest grading list, it seemed like an opportune time to add to the "History of" series by looking at how the current BCF grading system came about. Thanks to Cyril Johnson for contributing this article.

"WHAT'S MY GRADE?"

In CHESS of December 1952, K Whyld of Nottingham, who went on to write a series of articles on "Quotes & Queries" for the British Chess Magazine, wrote an article arguing for a National Ranking System in Britain. His reasoning included making team selection easier, raising of standards, and helping players identify with the BCF. He acknowledged after discussion with Bob Wade that the mechanics of such a system would not be simple and would depend on finding willing competent volunteers. He referred to the ranking system used in the USA, into Master, Class 1, Class 2, Class 3 and Class 4 which spanned a given range of ranking.

BH Wood reported that the BCF's development committee at their meeting in early December had decided to inaugurate a ranking list after the "National Chess Week" in February 1953, with Mr Buckle having volunteered to tackle the mathematics. Unusual speed from the BCF!

Of the three letters in Jan 1953 Chess, Hugh Courtney was supportive. An anonymous letter argued against a ranking system in favour of a form of self-assessment using Reinfelds "Chess by yourself" book and Harry Tharp, a well known organiser from Wigston Chess, shared with the world his rating system. In March Mr Whyld came back with a further suggestion, that being that FIDE should consider having its own ranking system although Engelhardt had produced a ranking list based on major tournaments. An Australian gentlemen wrote 2 months later to complain about a suggestion for making masters, half-masters etc. He remarked that in Australia "there is a mysterious system of grading for the purposes of selecting teams for international events. No-one knows how it works". How things remain the same!!!

CHESS of March 1954 announced "THE FIRST BRITISH RANKING LIST", actually two lists. The first covered the whole of the post war period up to June 1953, and the second covered the three years to the same date. Players were grouped together in Grades, 1a, 1b, 2a, etc. The leading players in the most recent list were C H O'D Alexander. R Broadbent, A Klein and D Yanofvsky. The comment made by BH Wood was that it would have been nice to see these arranged in grading order, not alphabetical. Ratings were based on 24 games minimum in the period.

The 1963 list saw the gradings year become the one we all know and love, May till April, changed from October to September. This helped county captains sort their teams out. A well known name P C Gibbs was rated in 3a in this list.

The 1964 list saw the numeric grades for each player published. 1970 saw the 1a system retained only for the top players, whilst the 1972 list saw its total demise to be replaced by British Master, Candidate Master, etc.

Latterly, Wales, Ireland and Scotland have all espoused the ELO rating system, leaving the BCF driving on the 3 number side of the road. We are still using competent, in the main, volunteers of which your editor was one. The collation of grades is now computerised, with a former database being replaced by the modern one some 10 years ago. Some would like a six monthly grading system, others would like a monthly updates. I remember coming back from Wales in the early 70s with a grading of 66, courtesy of grading errors. It was nice to have a reign of terror in Leicestershire seeing players' faces as they realised the effect of losing to such a low rating.