

# THE MIDDLE GAME

Volume 1, Issue 15

Mar 2005

## NEW FIDE LAWS

The finalized English version of the new FIDE Laws have been published and will come into force on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2005. However, the Director of Home Chess has indicated that for both the BCF Counties Finals on 2<sup>nd</sup> July and the National Club Finals on 3<sup>rd</sup> July, the current laws will be used. He feels that as these competitions began under the current laws they should be completed under them.

The last Newsletter highlighted areas of change, the finalized version does not have any impact on these.

The new Laws may be found on the FIDE website , the link is as follows:-  
[www.fide.com/news/download/Laws\\_Chess\\_1PB\\_2005](http://www.fide.com/news/download/Laws_Chess_1PB_2005)

## BCF NEWS

A BCF EGM had been planned for February to discuss proposals for the organisation to become a Limited Company. The BCF AGM in October had agreed in principal to plans being drawn up for an EGM, but wanted the existing structure to be replicated as closely as possible. Unfortunately due to a combination of the complexities of the exercise, and the ill health of one of the advisors offering his expertise FOC, it was not possible to produce the necessary documents within the time frame that had been hoped. As a result the Management Board meeting on March 19<sup>th</sup> at Birmingham University discussed outline documents relating to this issue, these require a little more fine tuning. The Board agreed that the matter should be taken forward to the BCF April Finance meeting to be held on 23<sup>rd</sup> April.

The main reasons behind the proposal to become a Limited Company are -

- 1) Currently the Directors and other members of the Management Board are putting their personal assets at risk.
- 2) Even BCF Council representatives could be financially liable if a dispute arose relating to a Council decision.
- 3) A number of potential sources of finance/grants & the like may well be put off by the lack of Limited Company status.

A number of senior officials indicated that they will not be prepared to carry on as officers unless Limited Company status is sought. In addition a number of applicants and potential applicants for posts have withdrawn on discovering that the BCF is not a Ltd Company.

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## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

10 Apr - [2nd Leicester Rapidplay](#), Countesthorpe College, Winchester Road, Countesthorpe, Leicester [LE8 5PR](#). Sean Hewitt, 2 The Drive, Countesthorpe, Leicester LE8 5PB (Tel: 07859 351731, Email: [info@leicesterchess.co.uk](mailto:info@leicesterchess.co.uk))

16 Apr - [Leicestershire & Rutland Junior Individual Championships](#) (only those qualified for Leics & Rutland can enter), Charnwood School, Nedham Street, Leicester Cyril Johnson, 105 Central Avenue, Syston LE7 2EG (Tel: 0116 260 9012, Email: [bcfhomechess@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:bcfhomechess@yahoo.co.uk))

24 Apr - [National Club Handicap Rapidplay](#), teams of 4, Magdalen College School, Oxford Cyril Johnson, 105 Central Avenue, Syston LE7 2EG (Tel: 0116 260 9012, Email: [bcfhomechess@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:bcfhomechess@yahoo.co.uk))

7 May - [Midlands Junior Individual Championships](#), St Peter & Paul School, Upper Church Street, Syston Cyril Johnson, 105 Central Avenue, Syston LE7 2EG (Tel: 0116 260 9012, Email: [bcfhomechess@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:bcfhomechess@yahoo.co.uk))

13-15 May - [30th Nottingham Congress](#), The Pitchside Diner, Nottingham Forest FC. Geoff Gibson, 29 Lime Grove, Draycott, Derby DE72 3NS (Tel/Fax: 0115 972 9258, Email: [geoff@chessman81.freemove.co.uk](mailto:geoff@chessman81.freemove.co.uk))

5 Jun - [Leek Rapidplay](#), St Edward's Middle School, Westwood Road, Leek, Staffordshire. Robert Milner, 411 Cheadle Rd, Cheddleton, Leek, Staffordshire ST13 7BH (Tel: 01782 550112)

18 Jun - [National County U18 Team Championships](#), St Peter & Paul School, Upper Church Street, Syston Cyril Johnson, 105 Central Avenue, Syston LE7 2EG (Tel: 0116 260 9012, Email: [bcfhomechess@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:bcfhomechess@yahoo.co.uk))

24-26 June – [Midlands Open](#)  
Venue to be finalized as the one used last year is not now available. Requests for entry forms to [midlandscongress@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:midlandscongress@yahoo.co.uk)

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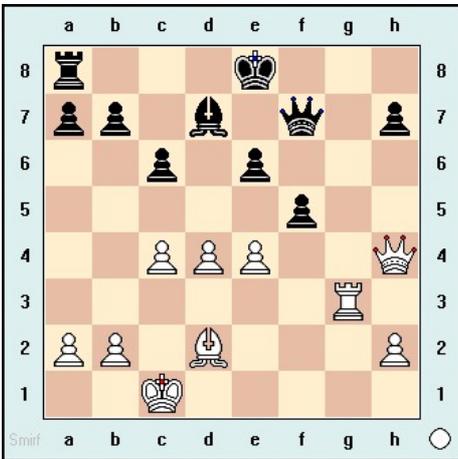
A Board structure mirroring the existing make up is set out, in addition an alternative structure comprising a smaller size Board is also to be put to Council. The working party involved with the project was advised that there were good grounds for hoping that changes to charity legislation could lead to the organisation being able to obtain charitable status, however, the Charity Commissioners do not look favourably on large size Boards. It was therefore felt that Council might wish to take these factors into account and vote for a structure that would fit with Charity Commission preferences.

Another matter which is logically closely allied with a change to Ltd Company status, is a change of name. There would be little point in becoming the British Chess Federation Ltd only to change the name and have to change the Ltd company name. Opinions had been canvassed, including polls being taken which showed that Chess England was not favoured, and English Chess Federation had a slight edge over retaining the existing name. The new Marketing Director Roy Lawrence was asked for his views on the impact of a name change, he felt that there were advantages and disadvantages to both changing the name and retaining the existing one. Even if the name is changed and status is changed to a Ltd Company the BCF name will still be retained to facilitate various elements such as legacies. There would be no implications regarding the running of the British Championships. The Board agreed to recommend a change to English Chess Federation to reflect the more parochial nature of the area the Federation actually covers.

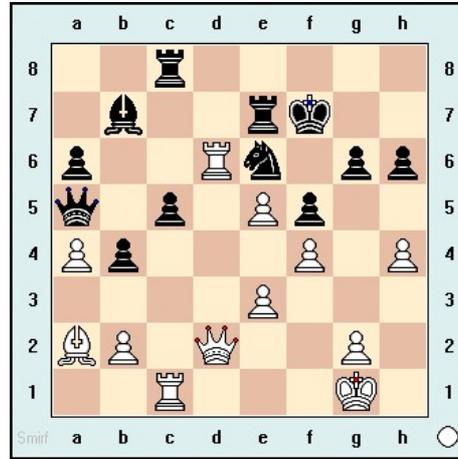
The other significant issue which will also be on the Council meeting agenda, is the Northern Membership Scheme. The NCCU are convinced that a membership scheme is preferable to game fee as the method of raising income from the grass roots chess player, hence their proposal which led to an EGM last July. It was clear from the EGM that whilst the NCCU area was very keen on the membership idea, other areas were not convinced; not happy with the precise proposal on the table, but not averse to the principal of a membership scheme; felt it was too much of a financial gamble; or voted against the proposal for other reasons. It was also clear that the NCCU was extremely unhappy with the outcome of the EGM and did not wish to let the matter lie.

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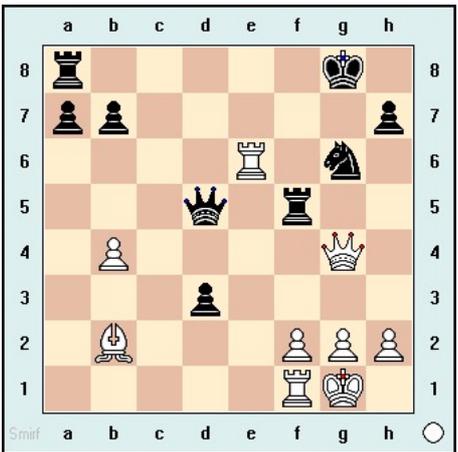
# POSITIONAL PUZZLES



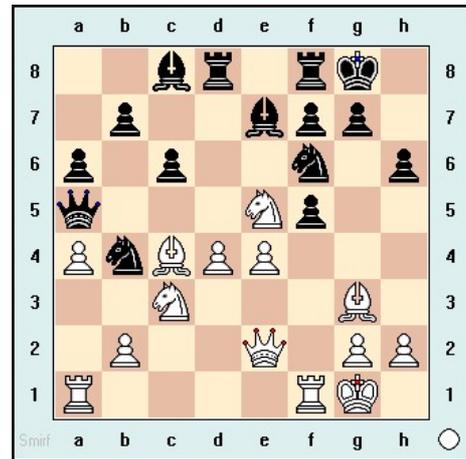
A) Botvinnik vs Mikhail Muchin, Leningrad, 1926



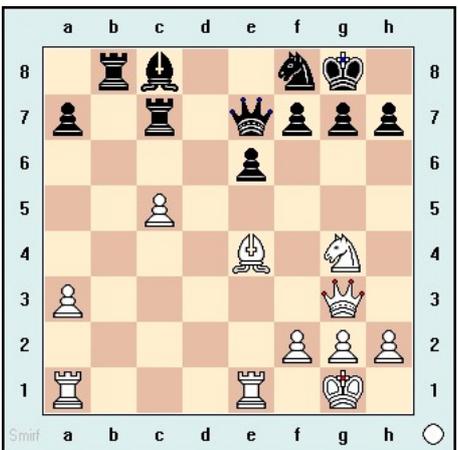
D) Botvinnik vs Grigory Goldberg, Leningrad, 1929



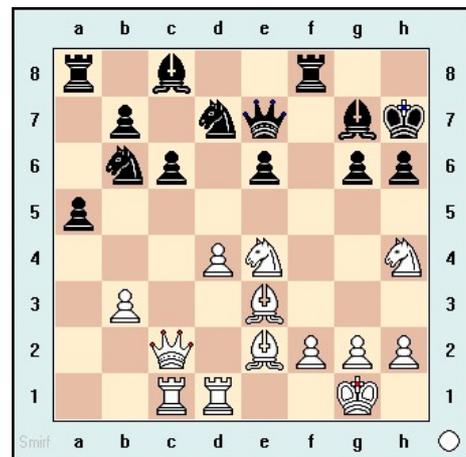
B) Botvinnik vs Viacheslav Ragozin, Leningrad, 1927



E) Botvinnik vs G. Stepanov, Leningrad, 1930



C) Botvinnik vs P. Sharov, Leningrad, 1928



F) Botvinnik vs Mikhail Yudovich, Leningrad, 1933

See page 7 for solutions

*Continued from page 2 column 2*

Whilst the BCF has a variety of memberships available, and indeed the meeting agreed to a proposal going to Council to streamline these, none of these are intended to replace game fee. They are mainly an optional extra for chess players, and have never attracted a significant uptake. Only those wishing to enter the British Championships in recent years, or with FIDE rating aspirations have had any requirement to be members (the latter only because of FIDE rules).

There has never been a membership scheme with a compulsory element to it, or providing benefits that replace significant payments to the BCF, thus nothing to use as a measure of take up. This was perhaps one of the reasons that some representatives at the EGM felt a membership scheme was too much of a financial risk. In order to take account of the aspirations of the NCCU area, it was suggested that they be invited to formulate proposals for Membership scheme to be run in their area. This would potentially both ease the disaffection felt in that area regarding the method of collecting funds for the BCF, and provide an opportunity to trial a scheme that might be adopted nationally.

An NCCU working party has put a considerable amount of time and effort into coming up with a scheme and addressing various issues brought up in consultation with those outside its area. Essentially they propose that for £10 (£5 for juniors) "Northern Members" would gain basic BCF membership, have all their games played in affiliated/registered events graded, exempt of game fee. Some counties in the NCCU area will adopt a mandatory approach to membership; others will go down a voluntary route. Where a county or league does not require membership, the games of non-members will either be subject to game fee, or will not be graded. You may recall that the initial Northern tack in 2004 was a firmly mandatory line. Some may not be happy with the idea of a mix of compulsory and voluntary, but others may argue that this will provide a comparison between the 2 options.

There would be a financial risk to the BCF in agreeing that the Northern Members Scheme be run, but this would obviously be a considerably smaller risk than last years' proposal for the whole country. There is a danger that only those players who play more than around 20 games a year will become members in those areas taking a voluntary line, those who play

less games will pay game fee or not have games graded. However those on the NMS working party are convinced that players will join the scheme and will be encouraged to play more chess as a result. Whereas without the scheme they argue that leagues/events will stay outside the BCF grading system, and will be joined by other events opting out and paying no income to the BCF because they are unhappy about the game fee charges.

Following on from the MB meeting the NCCU will be fine tuning the NMS detail and are having special NCCU meeting in early April. I would urge players to discuss the issues concerning the NMS and Limited Company proposals, ask your county representative for more information and let them know your views. I will attempt to put the finalized details out via the MCCU Group when they are available, and would welcome comments in order to assist in deciding how the MCCU votes are cast. These votes are your votes, not those of your MCCU delegates, so it is up to you to influence how they are used.

The Council Meeting is a budgetary meeting. Robert Richmond the Finance Director was able to report to the MB that the BCF seems to be in a happier position this year with a forecast surplus in excess of £20K, due in the main to a profitable Congress and to success in obtaining sponsorship for the Olympiad Team last year. The proposed Budget for next year was little changed from this year. Robert recommended Game Fee at the 44p level agreed last year prior to its reduction to 43p due to difficulties in placing the Grading List on the Website, a proposal the rest of the Board supported along with the overall budget.

The Grading Director proposed changes to the way the grading list is published and the timetable for production of the printed version. The printed version, produced ready for the British Championships, has always been overtaken by amendments made when people have seen the published list raised queries, some of which lead to amendments being required. For the next list, the details will be published on the BCF website first, with the printed version timetabled for the beginning of September, when the main flush of amendments will have been made. The website will contain later amendments, with a timetable drawn up so that Congress organizers know when changes are scheduled and can decide what cut off point to apply. His proposals were felt to be a sensible step and were approved wholeheartedly.

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There had been some discussion concerning whether non-registered events should be included in the BCF Calendar. A proposal was before the meeting that all events be included, but that those not registered should be marked accordingly. There were those who felt that the BCF should not advertise unregistered events, however a counter argument that organizers of events that were registered should be aware of all planned events to enable them to make the best judgment of when to schedule their own event, and congress competitors enabled to decide whether to enter a registered or unregistered event, held sway.

Your editor unfortunately missed the tail end of the meeting having received a phone call from the Director of Home Chess that he had had an accident. He had confirmed that the human forehead is not as hard as a concrete paving slab, but did he really have to carry out the experiment of tripping over and landing head first to prove it?! Unfortunately he didn't come out of the experience with any more sense than he had before, but fortunately he only spent an hour in the hospital A&E department before being given the all clear.

## **OBITUARIES**

It is always sad to report the loss of fellow chess players, even sadder to report 2 significant losses in the same Newsletter.

### **Ian Cowen**

Ian was born on April 12<sup>th</sup> 1950 in Wakefield, Yorkshire and was always proud of his Yorkshire roots. Whilst still at primary school he moved to Manchester and gained a scholarship to William Hulme's thus giving him a foot on both sides of the Pennines. He then moved on to Warwick University doing a degree in History during which he spent time in Venice and Ghana. He then did his teaching qualification before taking up his first post in Wolverhampton. He was interested in teaching chess from the start of his career and when he moved to Northamptonshire he became involved with the English Primary Schools' Chess Association. His next job was as deputy head in Sutton on Sea, Lincolnshire and in the mid 1980s he got the headship of Fishtoft School near Boston.

This job he held until his death and, from personal experience, I know what an excellent job he did there. In 1983 Scotland challenged England to an international match and Ian was voted in to manage the team. He continued in the job for the next 22 years, possibly the longest tenure of an England manager in any sport. He approached the job with great enthusiasm and was always looking to expand the scope of the team. In 1984 a four-way match was held, at Southampton University, with Denmark, France and Scotland. England were successful, as they continued to be when playing a team of comparable age. The original size of the team was 45 but, unfortunately, this number had to be cut due to the lack of opposition for that number. One of Ian's worries was that too many players were giving up the game after leaving primary school and so he worked to try to encourage players to keep up the game during the transition to secondary school. It was at this stage that I started working much more closely with Ian. He got a contact in Jersey and we agreed to take an U12 team over there. This was in 1992 and there has been an U12 trip abroad every year since. This led to Ian getting involved with the Junior Squad of which, eventually, he became a trustee. He also became squad manager and, although he could not go on every squad trip, between 1992 and 2005 was manager on at least 28 foreign trips. He had returned from a successful trip to Jersey less than a week before his death. As well as these trips Ian took his job as team manager very seriously visiting many junior tournaments and, as he was a BCF Arbiter, helping run many of them. He did not miss a British Championship in 20 years and often paid his own way so as not to deplete finances. He was also a BCF Junior selector and saw more of his players than anyone else. He had a close relationship with his players and cared passionately for them. He always tried to see the good in a child and would always find time to help someone. His death will leave a great hole in English Junior Chess, one that will prove difficult to fill. I feel sure he will be remembered by chess players throughout the country for a very long time.

With thanks to Peter Purland

## MIKE FOX

For those of you who didn't know Mike Fox, I can assure you your lives were emptier for not having known him.

As well as being the co-author of the Chess Addict books and column he was, in 1975, the co-founder of Richmond Junior Chess Club, and ran the Checkmate! junior club in Birmingham for about 15 years.

He was a larger than life personality with a tremendous sense of humour, ebullience and joie de vivre, and his death came as a great shock to all his many friends.

He also had, like all great teachers, the gift of inspiring confidence in others. Without him there would certainly have been no Chess Addict books or column, and probably no Richmond Junior Club. Many hundreds of chess players in London and Birmingham owe their chess careers, either directly or indirectly, to Mike. If I've ever done anything worthwhile in my life it happened because of Mike's encouragement.

Away from chess, he had a very successful career in advertising and in recent years also lectured in creative writing at Birmingham University. He was also one of the worlds leading middle-distance athletes of his age, having won many medals in world and european veterans' athletics championships.

One of his friends, former BCF Publicity Director Robin Mackley, emailed me as follows:

"A hundred adjectives wouldn't be enough to describe Mike in all his facets, but here are my dozen: literate in the extreme, intelligent, athletic, rude beyond belief (without ever being offensive), observant, caring, self-deprecating (when it suited), principled, decent, occasionally magnanimous, appreciative. But, above all, very very funny.

"The world is a less cheerful place without him"

Mike was a former Warwickshire county player and confidante of the great AJ Miles. If there is blitz being played in heaven, I hope the two are paired pretty soon.

With thanks to Anon.

## SO YOU THINK YOU KNOW THE OPENINGS?

To lighten the mood – the following quiz gives the moves related to particular openings along with a cryptic? clue which, depending on your general knowledge, might help you to identify the name.

a) 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 Nf6 4.O-O d6 5.d4 Bd7 6.Nc3 Be7

You could get yourself into a prickly situation here.

b) 1.c4 f5 2.e4 fxe4 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.g4

An even pricklier prospect.

c) 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.c3 Nf6 5.b4

Alfred Hitchcock might have played this.

d) 1.e4 g5 2.d4 Bg7

Captain Jean Luc Pickard of the Starship Enterprise would not have liked this.

e) 1.e4 c5 2.Nc3 Nc6 3.Nge2

A southern Italian employing the art of camouflage.

f) 1.d4 Nf6 2.f4

Parlez-vous francaise, me duck?

g) 1.Nh3 e5 2.f3 d5 3.Nf2

A hot tin roof would do this, think of a 1950s film.

h) 1.e4 d6 2.d4 Nf6 3.Nc3 g6 4.f4 Bg7 5.Nf3 c5

St George wouldn't have approved.

i) 1.Nh3

This might also describe an inebriated St George.

j) 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 Nf6 4.O-O Ng4

A piscine trap is involved.

k) 1.e4 e5 2.Nc3 Nf6 3.Bc4 Nxe4 4.Qh5 Nd6 5.Bb3

Nc6 6.Nb5 g6 7.Qf3 f5 8.Qd5 Qe7

Mary Shelley had an influence here.

l) 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.Ng5 d5 5.exd5 Nxd5 6.Nxf7

The frying pan might be of use.

m) 1.e4 e5 2.Nc3 Bc5 3.Qg4

You should stick your neck out in this case.

n) 1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Qb6

A naked ride on horseback is involved.

o) 1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.Bc4 Qh4+ 4.Kf1 g5 5.Nc3 Bg7

6.d4 d6 7.e5

A brotherly fairytale might help.

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p) 1.e4 Nc6 2.d4 e5 3.dxe5 f6

Handy Andy or Tommy Walsh might try this.

q) 1.e4 Nf6 2.e5 Nd5 3.d4 d6 4.c4 Nb6 5.c5

Recent legislation might mean this one is banned.

r) 1.e4 e5 2.f3

Charles II would appreciate his back.

s) 1.d4 d5 2.e4 dxe4 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.f3 Nc6

Hannibal would like you to be quiet.

t) 1.d4 d5 2.e4 dxe4 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.f3 exf3 5.Nxf3 g6

6.Bc4 Bg7 7.h4

Noel Coward sang about Englishmen and the sun.

u) 1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g5

Be careful or you might turn to stone.

v) 1.e4 d6 2.d4 Nf6 3.Nc3 g6 4.Nf3 Bg7 5.Be2 O-O

6.O-O Bg4

You might feel like a bit of a ham playing this one.

w) 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 d6 5.c3 f5

Now don't go to sleep, especially in Mexico.

x) 1.e4 g6 2.Bc4 Bg7 3.Qf3 e6 4.d4

An archbishop's seat?

y) 1.d4 Nf6 2.f3

What the Indians called the cowboys.

z) 1.e4 e5 2.f4 c5

The Godfather might help you.

*See page 12 for answers*

## Chess

by Daniel Stanfield

Six paces King to King,  
From a millennium before  
Every time the battle runs,  
Same men, same place, same war  
Boundaries set, never change,  
Men that never die.  
Never a lasting victory,  
Never a reason why  
Black and white,  
For conflict's sake.  
Rank and file,  
Eight by eight.

POSITIONAL PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

A) Bb6 B) Rxc6 C) Nf6 D) Rxe6 E) Bxf7 F) Nxc6

## CHECK THE CHECK

White: Kg2; Be5; Ps f3, g4, h4.

Black: Kg7; Be6; Ps f7, g6, h7.

Black is, indeed, in check, but it is hard to imagine a more thoroughly drawn position that still has mating material on the board. But gently, gently, dear reader -- you cannot expect to rise to the dizzy heights of the following bit of cheapness. {Forgive me; it is not your fault -- until now, no-one has opened your eyes and ears.}

Both Black and White were in mild time pressure. Black quickly moved 1. ... Kh6, eluding check.

The continuation was [2. Bf4+](#) Kg7 [3. Be5+](#) Kh6 [4. Bf4+](#) Kg7. White now raised this game into its honoured position in the history of the Piranha Club by playing [5. Bd6](#), and loudly announcing check! Black picked up his King and put it onto h6, saying, as he did so, the immortal words:

["That's not check, stupid."](#)

There are moments in history that one wishes that he could have seen. I wish that I'd been present to see Black's face when White hereupon played [6. Bf8 mate](#).

## LEICESTERSHIRE TSUNAMI EVENT

The county used it's A v B U100 county match as a fund raiser in response to the recent Tsunami disaster. Chess in Sri Lanka was particularly badly hit, with the Federation losing many of its organisers. A combination of profits from refreshments and sales of chess books from a "bring and buy" stall raised £70. The BCF President Gerry Walsh will be presenting this to the Sri Lankan Federation.

## MCCU v EACU MATCH

This was postponed at the request of the EACU. Hopefully it will be possible to rearrange this for a future date.

## CHESS WORLD CHAMPIONS

The next in the series of World Champions leads us to Botvinnik

### MIKHAIL BOTVINNER (1911-1995)



In 1948 Mikhail "Iron Mike" Botvinnik won The Hague-Moscow world championship tournament to fill the title vacancy left by the death of Alexander Alekhine in 1946. His three-point margin of victory over a field with Vasily Smyslov, Samuel Reshevsky, Paul Keres and Max Euwe showed that Soviet chess leaders had chosen the right man back in the 1930s to bring the world title to the U.S.S.R. Both his chess and personal styles have been likened to Star Trek's Mr. Spock, who would have approved of Botvinnik's statement that chess is the art that complements the science of logic.

Although Botvinnik received unheard of competitive favours from the Soviet hierarchy (competitions were arranged to rectify less than spectacular earlier performances) and may have been the beneficiary of thrown games by Keres in the 1948 title tournament, this dour and loyal "New Soviet Man" combined an impressive talent with a revolutionary training regime of theoretical, physical and psychological preparation to produce the best tournament record of the 1940s. He was not a dominant world champion in the mould of a Bobby Fischer or an Alexander Alekhine. Moreover, in 1955 he lost a short match to Reshevsky, whom Fischer once called the world's best player from 1946 to 1956. Still, Botvinnik's self-description as *primus inter pares* is a reasonable estimation of his status while champion.

By his own stratospheric standards, Botvinnik did not view himself as a chess genius. And true enough, unlike Paul Morphy and Jose Capablanca, he did not

emerge as a chessboard Pallas Athene fully armed from the head of the chess goddess Caissa. He first had to serve an apprenticeship in numerous Soviet competitions. In 1927 he came fifth in his first attempt at the Soviet Championship, which he would eventually win seven times. After several setbacks, he won his first important event in 1930, taking first in the Leningrad Masters. By winning the Soviet title in 1931 and 1933, as well as sharing first prize in two strong master events in Leningrad in 1932 and 1933, Botvinnik became the Soviet chosen one.

A match was arranged with Salo Flohr in 1933, which ended in a draw. Botvinnik became famous overnight, and Nikolai Krylenko, Soviet chess boss who was executed by Stalin in 1938, wrote, "The Flohr-Botvinnik match ... has shown that in our standard of play we have caught up with bourgeois Europe." In truth, not yet. Botvinnik was the only Soviet master of the mid-1930s who could compete reliably against the best in the West, and his first international outing at Hastings 1934-35 found him a mere fifth equal among 10 competitors. Krylenko then organized Moscow 1935 in which Botvinnik finished first equal with Flohr ahead of Emanuel Lasker and Capablanca, and Moscow 1936, a strong double round robin won by Capablanca, a point ahead of Botvinnik, who was in turn 2 ½ points clear of Flohr in third. At Nottingham 1936, Botvinnik finished joint first with Capablanca, ahead of everyone of stature (Alekhine, Euwe, Lasker, Reshevsky, Reuben Fine *et al.*).

The issue within the Soviet Union was who would be the anointed, financially backed challenger to the amateur Euwe or the ageing Alekhine, one of whom would obviously emerge as champion from their rematch in late 1937. When Grigory Levenfish won the 1937 Soviet Championship, which came after a good 6th-7th place finish at Moscow 1935, Botvinnik demanded a match to settle the question of Soviet top dog. Levenfish (b. 1889) was from the pre-Revolutionary generation and had competed at the great Carlsbad 1911 tournament, where he finished 14th-16th. Botvinnik was an enormous favourite, but the match was drawn. In the 1940 Soviet Championship, Botvinnik finished 5th-6th, scoring only 50 percent against the top half of the crosstable. Botvinnik then prevailed upon Soviet chess leaders to organize an "absolute championship" of the USSR in 1941, which he won by 2 ½ points over a captive Keres, whose country had been annexed by the Soviets. "It is clear," wrote Botvinnik afterwards, "who should play Alekhine."

Clear? Botvinnik's international record included not a single undivided first prize. Further, Keres and Fine had finished joint first, a point ahead of Botvinnik in

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third, at AVRO 1938, an unofficial qualifier to play Alekhine for the title. The story goes that Keres bought his life following World War II, after again falling into Soviet hands, by agreeing to relinquish to Botvinnik his claim for playing a match with Alekhine.

The 1940s was the Botvinnik Decade: seven first prizes in seven tournaments (1941 Leningrad-Moscow USSR "absolute championship"; Sverdlovsk 1943; USSR Championship 1944; USSR Championship 1945; Groningen 1946; Moscow 1947; and The Hague-Moscow 1948).

From 1951 to 1963 Botvinnik played seven title matches, winning twice, drawing twice and losing thrice. He did not win an undivided first prize in a major international tournament during his title years, his best result being equal first with Smyslov at Moscow 1956.

Botvinnik held the world title from 1948 through 1957 without winning a championship match. His victories over Smyslov and Mikhail Tal were in revenge matches, which also means that he never won a match while defending his title. Yet his name unquestionably adorns the era from 1948 to 1963, partly the result of rules favoring the sitting champion and partly because of his enormous contributions to the art of chess. His One Hundred Selected Games, 1926 - 1946 edified two generations of chess players, both East and West; and his articles on chess preparation detailed the hard work necessary to attain excellence. He scored nearly 70 percent in his overall career total of +610 -139 =453 (a total of 1,202 games).

"Iron Mike" continued to compete in tournaments during the post-championship years, scoring his best result at Wijk aan Zee 1969 with a shared first. At Palma de Mallorca 1967 and Monte Carlo 1968, he finished just behind Bent Larsen. Clearly no longer able to squelch the best in the West, Botvinnik retired from competitive chess in 1970. He spent time on programming computers to play chess (in the 1980s these efforts were swamped by the computer revolution in the West) and established the world's most famous chess school. His most successful students were Garry Kasparov and Anatoly Karpov.

There is an outsized grandeur about Botvinnik's 50 years in chess. His imposing figure of severe mien - the chess worker who came to every match with a thermos bottle and a dark suit - combines with an oeuvre of heavy-duty chess masterpieces to create an heroic vision of power unleashed. The Botvinnik of, say, 1955 would not have been out of place in a socialist realist painting of steelworkers or in

*Continued next page*

Ostrovsky's novel *How the Steel Was Tempered*.

Botvinnik's chess style reflected the man. "Iron Mike" loved iron logic. He divided the chess world into "research players" such as himself and lesser purely practical players, talented though they might be. Rather than puttering around trying to find one-shot TNs, Botvinnik devised opening systems that could sustain a career. He mastered the Rubinstein Variation of the Nimzo-Indian Defense and the Winawer French as no one else has. He also produced major theoretical work in the Anti-Meran Gambit, English Opening and Gruenfeld Defense. His goal was to elaborate entire playing systems from the opening through to the endgame, typically featuring a blocked center leading to a complicated struggle with plenty of flank maneuvering.

"Chess is the art which expresses the science of logic." - Mikhail Botvinnik

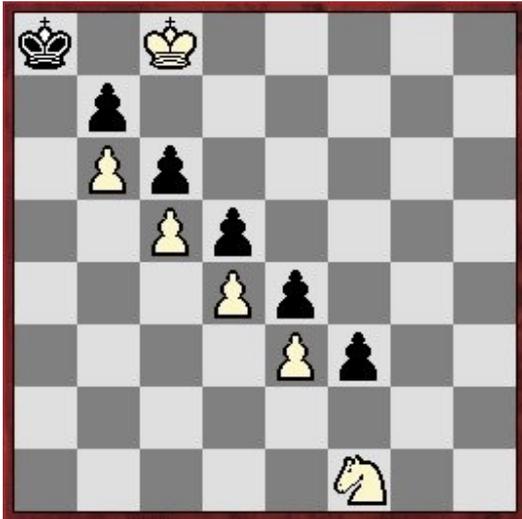
"Chess is the art of analysis." - Mikhail Botvinnik

Here are 2 of Botvinnik's games -

Event: Nottingham  
Date: 1936  
White: Botvinnik, Mikhail  
Black: Thomas, George Alan

1. c4 e6 2. Nf3 Nf6 3. Nc3 d5 4. d4 Nbd7  
5. e3 a6 6. c5 c6 7. Na4 Ne4 8. Bd3 e5  
9. Nd2 Nxd2 10. Bxd2 e4 11. Be2 Be7 12.  
O-O O-O 13. f3 f5 14. fxe4 fxe4 15.  
Rxf8+ Qxf8 16. Ba5 Nf6 17. Bc7 Be6 18.  
Qb3 Bg4 19. Bxg4 Nxd4 20. Bf4 Qf7 21. h3  
Bh4 22. hxg4 g5 23. g3 gxf4 24. gxh4 Qe6  
25. Kh2 Rf8 26. Rf1 f3 27. Qc2 Kh8 28.  
Qf2 Qxg4 29. Rg1 Qd7 30. Nc3 Rf6 31. Nd1  
Qe7 32. Qg3 Rg6 33. Qb8+ Kg7 34. Rxg6+  
Kxg6 35. Kg3 Qg7 36. Kh2 Kh5 37. Qg3 Qg4  
38. Qxg4+ Kxg4 39. Nf2+ Kxh4 40. b4  
Kg5 41. Kg3 Kf5 42. Nh3 Kf6 43. a4 Kf5  
44. Nf4 Kf6 45. b5 axb5 46. axb5 Ke7 47.  
b6 Kd7 48. Nh5 Kd8 49. Nf6 h6 50. Ng4 h5  
51. Nf2 Kd7 52. Kh4 Kd8 53. Kxh5 Ke7  
54. Kg4 Ke6 55. Kg3 Kd7 56. Nh3 Kd8 57.  
Nf4 Kd7 58. Nh5 Ke6 59. Ng7+ Kd7 60.  
Nf5 Kc8 61. Nd6+ Kb8 62. Nf5 Kc8 63. Kf4  
Kb8 64. Ke5 Kc8 65. Ke6 Kb8 66. Kd7  
Ka8 67. Ng3 Kb8 68. Nf1 Ka8 69. Kc8 1-0

See the next page for the board at the close of this game, very curious indeed!



Event : Absolute Championship  
 Place : Leningrad/Moscow  
 Date : 1941.  
 White : Bondarevsky, Igor  
 Black : Botvinnik, Mikhail

1. d4 d5 2. Nf3 c6 3. e3 Bg4 4. c4 e6 5. Nc3 Nd7 6. Bd3 Ngf6 7. O-O Be7 8. b3 O-O 9. Bb2 e5 10. Be2 e4 11. Nd2 Bxe2 12. Qxe2 Bb4 13. a3 Bxc3 14. Bxc3 Re8 15. f3 Nf8 16. Rf2 Qd7 17. Raf1 exf3 18. Rxf3 Re6 19. Qd3 Rae8 20. Nb1 Ng6 21. Be1 dxc4 22. Qxc4 Rxe3 23. Rxe3 Rxe3 24. Bf2 Nd5 25. Nd2 Ngf4



26. h3 {Bg3 would have been better} Rc3  
 27. Qa4 Ne2+ 28. Kh2 Rxh3+ 0-1

## The History of Chess Notation

by Robert John McCrary

The number of books on chess is greater than the number of books on all other games combined. Yet, chess books would be few and far between if there were not an efficient way to record the moves of games. Chess notation is thus the special written "language" of chess players, making it possible for a single book to contain hundreds of games by great players, or thousands of opening variations.

Surprisingly, however, chess notation was slow to evolve. As late as the early nineteenth century, many chess books simply wrote out moves in full sentences! As a result, very few of those early games before the 1800's were recorded and preserved in print, and published analysis was correspondingly limited.

In Shakespeare's day, for example, the standard English chess book gave the move 2.Qf3 as follows: "Then the black king for his second draught brings forth his queene, and placest her in the third house, in front of his bishop's pawne." Can we imagine recording a full 40-move game with each move written out like that!

Nevertheless, the great 18th century player and author Andre Philidor, in his highly influential chess treatise published in 1747, continued to write out moves as full sentences. One move might read, "The bishop takes the bishop, checking." Or the move e5 would appear as "King's pawn to adverse 4th." Occasionally Philidor would abbreviate something, but generally he liked to spell everything out.

In 1737, however, a Syrian-born player/author named Philip Stamma introduced the shorthand notation that we now call "algebraic" in his book of composed problems, published in France. In 1745, he issued an expanded edition in English that included opening analysis and retained the algebraic notation. Stamma's system was almost identical to modern algebraic notation, with the files of the board designated "a-h" and the ranks numbered "1-8." However, he tried to make the notation completely international by using standard piece names as well

as standard letters and numbers for the squares. Thus, the king's rook was written as "H" instead of "R" throughout the game, because it began on the h-file; for similar reasons the king was always "E" and the queen "D," the queen's knight was "B," etc., with each piece being named for its starting file.

That system for piece symbols would have totally eliminated language differences across countries, but it failed and each country now uses its own piece symbols in algebraic notation although retaining standard names for the squares. Nevertheless, modern figurine algebraic (with printed piece symbols instead of names) is coming into use as a new way of reviving Stamma's old idea of a totally international notation.

Philidor and Stamma were rivals both as players and authors. Philidor soundly defeated Stamma in a match, after which Philidor's book became more popular than Stamma's book in England and his notation system therefore became dominant. However, Stamma's book also continued to enjoy popularity, and by the 19th century Stamma's simple system had become the norm in some European countries. Thus began the battle between descriptive and algebraic notations that continued into modern times.

Clearly, however, Philidor's way of recording moves had to be made more efficient if English chess literature were to have room to grow. A major innovation in that respect occurred in 1817, when an edition of Philidor's works introduced a system of abbreviations into Philidor's ponderous notation. Those abbreviations, by the way, were introduced rather timidly with suitable apologies to the reader. Over the next few decades, more use of abbreviations occurred, and the descriptive notation of modern

times slowly took shape. As notation simplified, chess books were able to include more information, and the number of chess books began to increase exponentially.

Following is a sampling of ways of giving the move N-KB3 (Nf3 in algebraic) in descriptive notation, taken from books of different years to illustrate the slow evolution of that notation system. Notice the subtle changes that creep in virtually one letter at a time; apparently too much change could not be tolerated all at once!

1614: The white king commands his owne knight into the third house before his owne bishop. 1750: K. knight to His Bishop's 3d. 1837: K.Kt. to B.third sq. 1848: K.Kt. to B's 3rd. 1859: K. Kt. to B. 3d. 1874: K Kt to B3 1889: KKt -B3 1904: Kt-KB3 1946: N-KB3

In the 1970's, The US Chess Federation began a campaign to convert the US to algebraic notation, which had by then become standard in nearly all countries. The arguments for the change were several: that US books would then enjoy a bigger international market; that algebraic was less ambiguous and therefore produced fewer irretrievable game scores; that algebraic took less space and more games could therefore fit into fewer pages.

In spite of these persuasive arguments, a fierce battle raged for years until algebraic gradually won out. Now descriptive is on the road to becoming an extinct "language" understood in the future only by historians. We now have books containing huge numbers of games, and computers that "speak" only algebraic.

We have come a long way from " the white King commands his owne knight into the third house before His owne Bishop" to the simple "Nf3," and chess literature has come a long way as well!

## MCCU U18 TEAM EVENT

A week before the event it looked like half a dozen teams would be competing at Syston St Peter & Paul School on February 5th. However late withdrawals, and a bus breakdown on the day, led to only 2 teams appearing on the day. Northamptonshire had not fielded a team in the event for several years. Their efforts in getting players together did not go unrewarded, as they defeated a Leicestershire team weakened by the absence of several first choice picks.

The Junior Director Graham Humphries was not surprisingly disappointed by the turn out. He has pointed out on more than one occasion that the BCF grading list shows that all MCCU counties have enough juniors to enable them to field a team. It is sad that some counties seem to have no one to organise a team, and others have players who are unwilling or unable to devote a day to play for their county at this level. The matter of how to increase the number of juniors playing chess, and competing in county team competition at youth level, has been discussed at more than one MCCU meeting in recent years, without any real palliative coming forth. The situation is clearly not helped by concerns about child protection, an issue which I hope all counties will seek to address with formal Child Protection Policy. The MCCU will be formalizing such policy for the 2005 AGM, but this will only have a limited effect on the team situation.

## OPENINGS QUIZ ANSWERS

- a) Hedgehog Defense, Ruy Lopez
- b) Porcupine Variation
- c) Bird Attack
- d) Borg Gambit
- e) Chameleon Sicilian
- f) Canard Attack
- g) Crazy Cat
- h) Dragon Formation
- i) Drunken Knight Opening
- j) Fishing Pole Variation, Ruy Lopez
- k) Frankenstein-Dracula Var, Vienna
- l) Fried Liver
- m) Giraffe Attack, Vienna
- n) Godiva Variation, Sicilian
- o) Grimm Attack, KGA
- p) Hammer Gambit, Nimzovich Defense
- q) Hunt Variation, Alekhine
- r) King's Head
- s) Lamb Defense, BDG
- t) Mad Dog Attack, BDG
- u) Medusa Gambit
- v) Parma Defense, Pirc
- w) Siesta Variation, Ruy Lopez
- x) Monkey's Bum, Pirc
- y) Paleface Attack
- z) Mafia Defense, KGD

## Little Fishes

There once was a fish,  
who splashed in the sea,  
his heart was in Zugswang,  
his mind was en prise.  
Down the exchange,  
but on the attack,  
damn the torpedoes!,  
he went for the sac.  
A pawn, then a bishop,  
a rook and a knight.  
It was a glorious moment  
and a beautiful sight.  
His slack-jawed opponent  
just drooled in a trance,  
God couldn't save him,  
he hadn't a chance.  
King on the fifth,  
a forced mate in three  
his humbled stone silence,  
was my ecstasy.  
And then something happened  
that I'll never forget,  
when he offered his hand  
and our bloodshot eyes met.  
Three little words,  
even now make me gag,  
a polite little whisper:  
"Sorry, your flag".

William Larsen

Utica, New York

(appeared in February 1995 issue of "Chess Life")

..... and they say chess is an intellectual game

