

THE MIDDLE GAME

Volume 1, Issue 21

March/April 2006

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER !!

Apologies for the delay in the appearance of this issue of the Newsletter. Whilst modern technology is great when it works, when it doesn't, and tracing the reason why is not straightforward, the result is much hair pulling and frustration.

Much to my chagrin it was eventually a case of having to accept that my 90% completed newsletter could not be retrieved, and that I would have to start again.

So here is Issue 21 mark 2.

JOHN M ROBINSON



I am sure everyone will have been saddened by the passing of John Robinson. All those who responded to the news spoke of John as a true gentleman, whose tireless work in arbiting at numerous events was appreciated and will be sadly missed. The following is an adaptation of the eulogy given at his funeral.

John Marshman Robinson was born on July the 31st 1931 at Kettering, Northamptonshire – the only child of Clare and Frederick Robinson of 47, Hawthorne Road Kettering.

He spent his early years at the Hawthorn Road School. Then he was accepted at Kettering Grammar School at the age of eight. Having been endowed with the brains in the family John made steady progress gaining a school certificate in eight subjects followed by a higher certificate in pure and applied mathematics, physics and chemistry being then awarded a place at Birmingham University. His

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 2 ECF County Championship Draw
- 3 Positional Puzzles
- 6 ECF - report on meeting with Unions
- 8 ECF Junior Masters coming to Bromsgrove
- 8 Brief from ECF Board Meeting
- 9 Chess Champions – Anatoli Karpov
- 12 Forthcoming ECF Council Meeting
- 14 England Team News
- 16 "Chess Playing Today" Part I
- + Event supplement

ECF COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP DRAW 2005/6

OPEN

Quarter-finals (A) Warwicks (M2) v Sussex (S2); (B) Salop (M1) v Essex (S3); (C) Yorks (N) v Gtr Manchester (M3); (D) Kent (S1) v bye

COUNTIES

Quarter-finals (A) Surrey (S) v Staffs (M3); (B) Leics (M1) v Wilts (W2); (C) Hants (W1) v Cambs (E2); (D) Norfolk (E1) v Derbys (M2)

U175

Quarter-finals (A) Lancs (N) v Middx (S3); (B) Devon (W) v Bye; (C) Essex (S1) v Beds (E); (D) Leics (M) v Sussex (S2)

U150

Quarter-finals (A) Essex (S1) v Warwicks (M2); (B) Norfolk (E1) v Yorks (N2); (C) Cumbria (N1) v Cambs (E2); (D) Notts (M1) v Sussex (S2)

U125

Preliminary Round (Y) "No nominee" (E2) v Staffs (M3) [We previously had E2 as Cambs, but they must have declined nomination (or something). So Staffs win]; (Z) Notts (M2) v Sussex (S2) playing 29 April with permission
Quarter-finals (A) Hants (W) v Lancs (N1); (B) Warwicks (M1) v Merseyside (N2); (C) Beds (E1) v winner of (Z); (D) Middx (S1) v Staffs (M3)

U100

Preliminary Round (Y) Cheshire (N2) v Warwicks (M3)
Quarter-finals (A) Salop (M1) v Kent (S2); (B) Cambs (E1) v winner of Y; (C) Essex (S1) v Notts (M2); (D) Merseyside (N1) v Norfolk (E2)

DATES

Prelim	April 22
Quarter-finals	May 20
Semi-finals	June 10
Finals	July 1 at Ratcliffe College, Syston, Leics

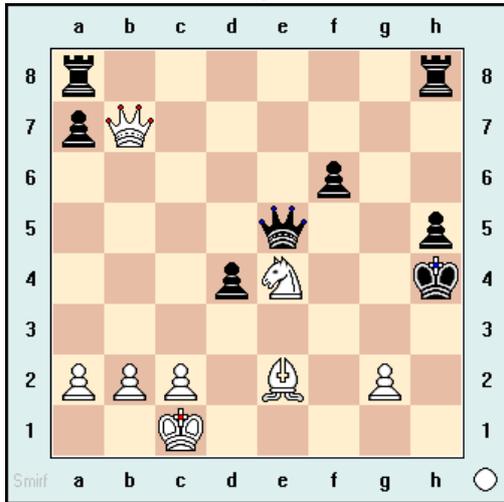
extra – mural activities involved the debating society, fell walking, public reading, photography and chess, he was certainly academically orientated rather than sport. From a young age he was taken regularly to the Lake District by his parents where they all enjoyed the magnificent scenery and walking, giving him the foundation to trek through the Austrian and Continental mountains, subsequently spending time in the high peaks of Nepal. On the 26th February 1995 he added the ascent of Mount Kenya, to over 16,000 feet, reaching Point Lenana, to his achievements. Whilst keen on the outdoors John was not particularly interested in gardening ! his response recently, to the local authority who suggested he do something about the eyesore 'wild garden' at his home was to pull down the blinds ! a true academics approach.

John was awarded a first class degree from Birmingham University specialising in metallurgy, then followed National Service in the REME where, stationed at Honiton he worked on trials and development of a new electro-mechanical gunsight predictor. These qualifications and experience gained him an immediate opportunity to join Stewarts & Lloyds (subsequently British Steel and now Corus) in the research department, where his Father worked at Corby, where again, steady progress was rewarded with the post as a senior manager in the field of research metallurgy. A confirmed bachelor all his life, he and the family moved from Kettering to Stanion where they had a new bungalow built in 1960. His Father Fred was a brilliant practical engineer and model maker in the Stewarts & Lloyds instrument research section. The story goes that the company received a request from the USA nuclear weapons programme to see if they could manufacture a very high grade steel tube of micro – micro bore size. John organised the appropriate steel grade and his Father dealt with the matter of turning and boring in the model shop, returning the sample to the USA in a matter of a few days. The States contacted S & L to say they understood if it wasn't possible to make tubes of that size whereupon the response across the Atlantic was – 'Didn't you look inside your sample!!' John always walked from Stanion to 'The Works' through the Companies extensive woodland (with

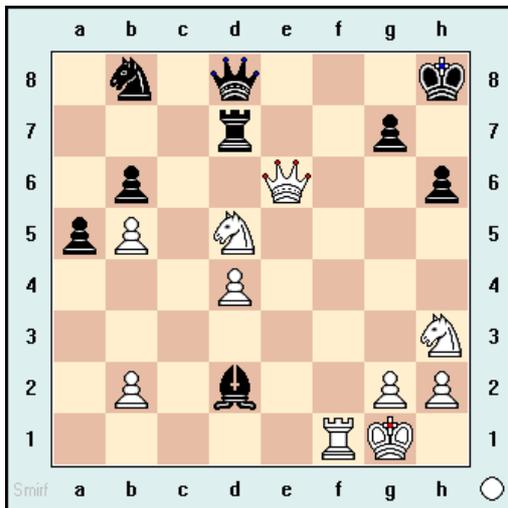
POSITIONAL PUZZLES

A double helping of positions from games of our featured champion Anatoli Karpov

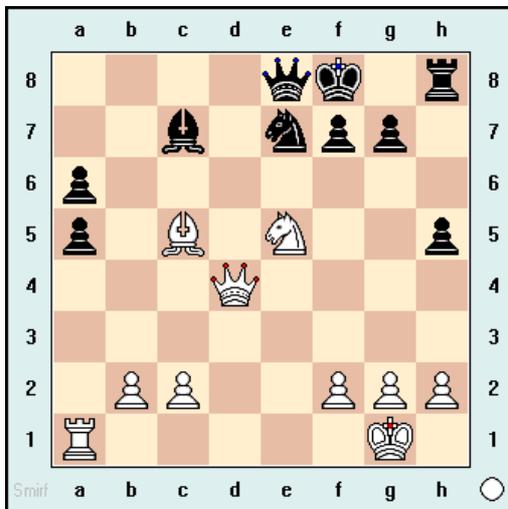
a)



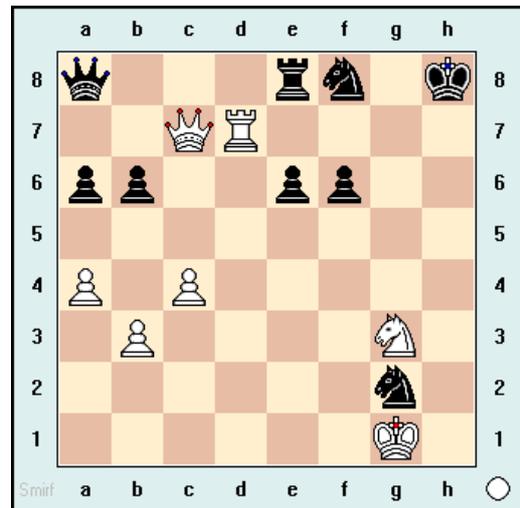
b)



c)



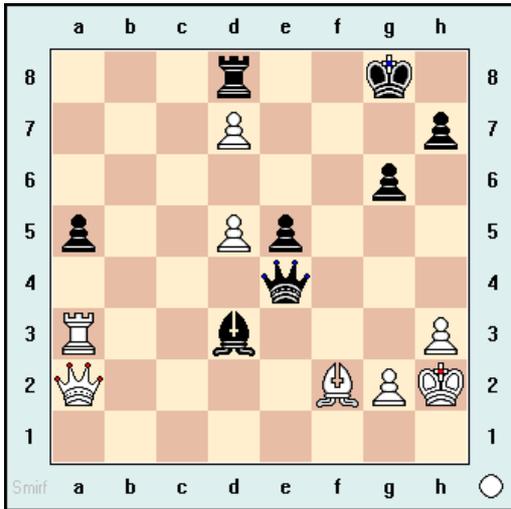
e)



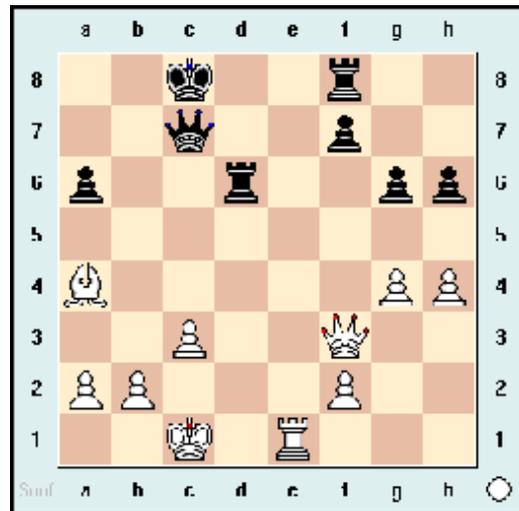
f)



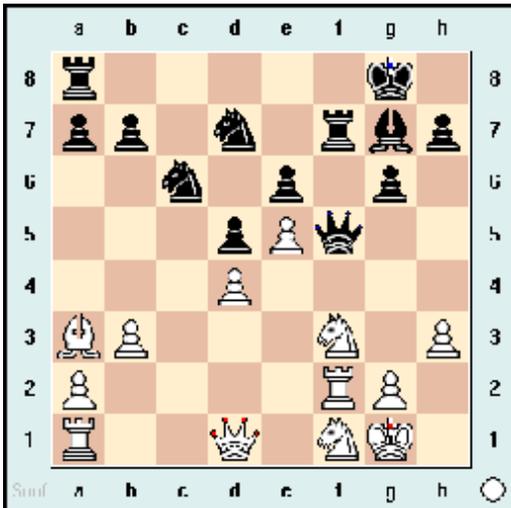
g)



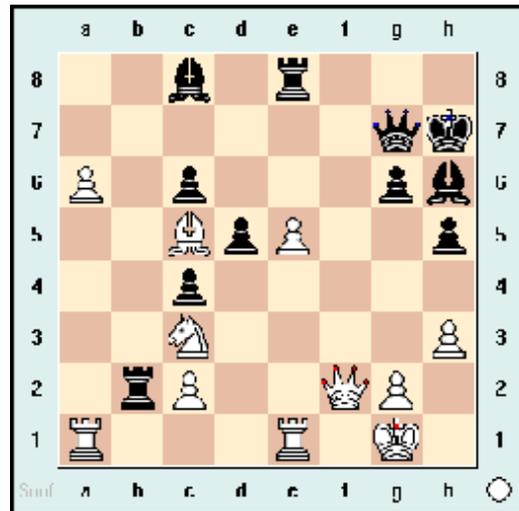
j)



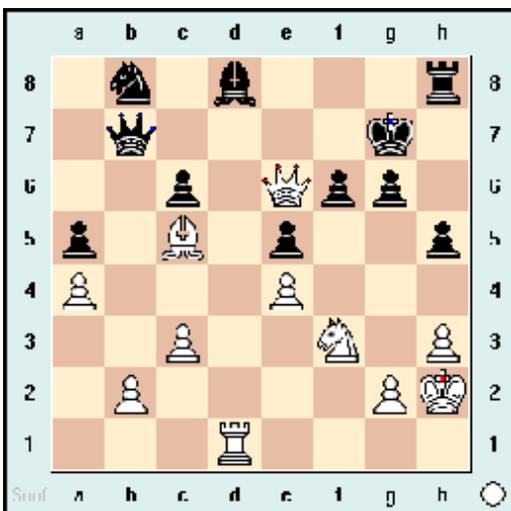
h)



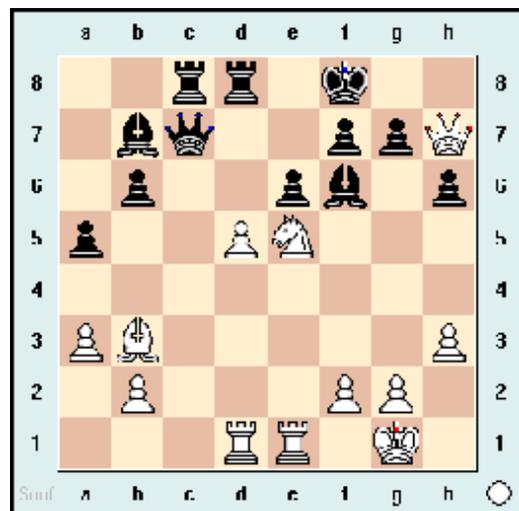
j)



i)



l)



see page 14 for solutions

The Middle Game -4-

hasten to add, written permission from the Directors) and home again! Often seeing unique wildlife at close quarters meeting face to face with wild deer. He was passionately interested in the countryside which was profusely depicted in his multitude of wonderful photographs and slides, for which he won numerous Prizes and accolades. Life at home was subsequently not very easy, as both parents suffered protracted degenerative illness requiring constant care and attention which John did almost single handed – a most commendable and monumental effort displaying the deepest love and affection for his parents. Sadly, the steel industry in the UK declined over the years and Stewarts & Lloyds, from being one of the world leaders in the Bessemer process, cold rolled steel, metal tubing manufacture with extensive associated research and development laboratories bore the brunt of this run – down. John was offered early retirement, as insufficient funding was available to continue the research he was conducting on steel ‘creep testing’ at Corby. He kept in close touch both with colleagues from British Steel and the old boys ‘Citranganians’ Association of Kettering Grammar School regularly attending meetings, lunches and dinners. Increased interest in the complex game of chess then filled the gap created in his life. Having been directly involved in Northamptonshire he was then invited to become an arbiter on the national chess circuit. Having demonstrated his abilities and fairness he was eventually assisting in the organisation of international chess championships and was appointed to the prestigious official position of FIDE arbiter and called upon to oversee matches and tournaments in The Isle of Man, Moscow, Armenia, Istanbul etc. John became an important part of British Chess and took the entries for the British Championship some years. His work on the laws of the game in the mid 90’s has left its mark – being incorporated in the laws in present day use. Rewards came in the form of the prestigious Boxall Salver for his work and the BFC President’s Award for Services to Chess. For many years John gave his time and enthusiasm to teaching youngsters how to play and enjoy the game at Rushton Primary School where, his presence and humour will be sadly missed. As, indeed, it will be, in the local community where he

became Church Warden of this Church St Peters in 1994. Other activities in which he took an active part included swimming, bridge clubs, musical evenings, photography and inter – village quiz team competitions.

Although feeling poorly and somewhat incapacitated with what he thought was a slight stroke he persevered and tied up all the immediate existing matters in the chess world that he was dealing with before submitting himself to be taken by his church friend Ken Gibbard to Kettering General Hospital. An extensive analysis of his condition revealed that in fact he had tumours of the brain which proved to be advanced and untreatable.

Most people would agree that John was a rather quiet man with a somewhat reserved nature, he had, however, a huge depth of knowledge on a wide variety of subjects – which I’m given to believe is why his local quiz team usually won!

I think we would all endorse the notice his friend David Welch, Manager of Congress Chess & Chief Arbiter from Liverpool who states on the English Chess Federation website: -
‘I have never met a person so genuine and dedicated as John Robinson was. It has been a privilege to know him.’

May he rest in peace.

(The above piece doesn’t mention where or when John passed his driving test, but I suspect if like me, you had cause to take more than one slightly hair-raising trip with him behind the wheel, you might have wondered.

His driving aside, John will indeed be sadly missed. As with many tireless chess administrators, the time ordinary chess players truly realize how much they do, is when they are no longer there to do it. I suspect it will take more than 1 person to cover the amount of work he used to do.

If there are chess tournaments the other side of the pearly gates, John will no doubt be first in line to act as arbiter!

May he indeed rest in peace. **Ed)**

ECF MATTERS

The formation of the ECF brought with it a reduced Board with the Unions & large independent Leagues no longer having seats. The intention had been that a brief summary of what had transpired at Board meeting would be issued, and there would also be meetings with the Unions & Leagues to expand on this.

Unfortunately the old adage of the “best laid plans of mice & men” applied, with the result that no communications had been issued & no meetings with Unions had been held – that was until Saturday 4th March.

The President Gerry Walsh had other long standing commitments on that date, and the CEO Roy Hepinstall was unable to shake off illness which had been troubling him for several weeks. That said, the Finance, Home Chess, Junior, Marketing & International Directors were all there & each gave an update for their area.

The Board accepted that the level of communication in these first few months had been poor, those Directors at the meeting undertook to ensure the Board meeting the following week was made fully aware of the dissatisfaction expressed both before and during the meeting.

FINANCE

The projections for 2005/6 financial year are looking reasonable. It certainly will not be a high surplus year like 2004/5, mainly because the British Championships in the Isle of Man could never hope to produce the same “profit” as a mainland event.

Game fee income is holding up to similar levels as last year and the Northern Members Scheme has so far attracted 1600 members, when the projected “break even” numbers required had been estimated at 1300.

The ECF individual membership scheme income is down, but this is probably because some people are now members via the NMS.

There have been savings on Board expenses due to its’ smaller size with lower travelling expenses & meetings fitting into smaller, cheaper rooms.

There will be an under-spend on the Junior budget, but as the separate Junior Trust fund running down, this will be needed for future years.

The future of the Grand Prix is un-resolved, consultations with congress organisers have yet to be completed. It was stressed that a firm decision would be needed at Council so that congresses knew where they stood and could produce entry forms accordingly.

MEMBERSHIP

The Board had discussed the progress of the NMS and were looking to recommend the extension of a similar scheme across the country. There are a number of issues affecting any such scheme, with the possibility of charitable status likely to be revisited by Parliament, possible application of Gift Aid to membership fees, and uncertainty about whether success in either of these areas would impact on the government grant currently received.

Robert indicated that he favoured a timetable where 2007 would act as a consultation period, with outline plans put to the AGM in Autumn 2007, with a view to formal adoption for 2008. The possibility of a “mixed economy” with membership in some areas and game fee in others was not discounted.

There were some arguments that the extension of the scheme should be sooner rather than later, but others felt that only by consulting fully could proposals that were likely to be accepted be formulated. The NCCU already had a clear appetite for a membership scheme when it was introduced, the same is not currently true in all areas, otherwise the original proposals for a National scheme would have met with greater support. Some areas may have revised their attitude having seen the NMS in action, but I think we are some way from a majority in favour.

MARKETING

It was refreshing to see a presentation from a Marketing Director who clearly “knew his stuff”. Roy Lawrence explained that he had spent the first few months in office looking at what the organisation was doing and how. He had concluded that there was a lack of co-ordination and consistency in how the organisation presented itself, different styles of logo appeared on different documents and in different areas, layouts were inconsistent and both tended to be dated.

Continued from previous page

Examples of some options for a new logo to be used on all documents had been produced. The aim is to modernise the logo, the website, the Yearbook, Chess Moves and other documents. This should promote a better image and improve chances of achieving sponsorship. The Yearbook has just gone to print; there was a strong call for exploring the use of the more modern front cover mock up for this edition as opposed to next year.

There have been opportunities for media coverage for chess, which have been grasped whenever they presented themselves, and Roy has been pushing to get better coverage, especially on TV.

JUNIOR CHESS

The schools competition finals (formerly the Times Schools event) for 2006 will be held at Uppingham School. A likely successor venue for the Junior Masters event (the contract with Ampleforth having ended last year) had been visited by the Junior & Marketing Directors, & was hoped would find approval at the forthcoming Board Meeting.

HOME CHESS

Chris Majer has been approached by a party involved with the Chiltern League (this is a county team league involving Berkshire, Buckingham, Oxford & Hampshire) seeking places in the National Counties Competition. Currently only Unions can run qualifying events. Those at the meeting were not in favour of changing the rules, but suggested that the league involved might like to form a Union e.g. The Home Counties Union and apply to the EFC that way. Chris indicated that he would like to test the view of Council on this.

There was some consternation relating to the County Finals Draw. Much of this had been caused because the draw had appeared on various websites without the preamble that extra nominations were invited. Extra teams were nominated, meaning that some counties who had byes then had matches. Chris had not previously been made aware of the concerns raised at the meeting, it was therefore felt quite reasonable that he should go away and consider the views expressed.

The valid comment made at the meeting was that if

anyone has any problem with what a Director or officer has done, they should first take the matter up with the post-holder.

INTERNATIONAL CHESS

Rupert Jones was pleased that both Nigel Short & Micky Adams would be available for the England team. The full team has not quite been finalised.

The Ladies team would be weakened by unavailability of top players, essentially because of University commitments. It does not help that the event clashes with degree finals.

Due to the good offices of a number of people some funding had been secured for these teams, and to assist Jovanka Houska in the Ladies championships.

FIDE

There was some discussion about the forthcoming election for FIDE President. There are well known and respected Englishmen in the camp of both candidates. However, Rupert Jones was well aware that the vast majority of top English players were firmly behind the new candidate Bessel Kok. Whilst the current President Kirsan Ilyumzhinov has put a good deal of his own money into chess, many feel that he has failed in raising outside sponsorship, and in devoting adequate time to the job.



JUNIOR MASTERS COMES TO BROMSGROVE

Ampleforth School had hosted the BCF/ECF Young Masters event for several years, but the contract came to a close last year. The new Junior Director found himself coming formally into post in October, just before the 2005 event, needing to search for a new venue for 2006. Having been in contact with a number of possible hosts the director returned from visiting one of them, where he was accompanied by Marketing Director Roy Lawrence, enthusing over the facilities and outline proposals that had been discussed.

Routh Hall at Bromsgrove School, intended venue for the event.



The EFC Board agreed that Bromsgrove School offered superb facilities, including tennis & squash courts & a swimming pool for the use of parents, siblings and players; a marvellous playing area, catering services provided by trained chefs, all in a scenic 100 acre setting.



On hearing of the venue, a number of parents have commented that the location provides a multitude of options for trips out for them, and non-chess playing offspring. The timing over the August Bank Holiday weekend means that there will be a number of events going on in and around the area, with the makings of a good family weekend break before Autumn & Winter close in.

A new addition will be a separate one day tournament open to all; giving chess playing parents the chance of some competitive chess, along with anyone else from across the region looking for a one day event.

Entry forms will be available shortly for both events.

Brief Report on ECF Board Meeting No. 4

The ECF is now a member of the Games and Sports Division of the CCPR (Central Council for Physical Recreation)

The number of CRB clearances requested so far has been lower than the number likely to be required in the future to retain registration

It was reported that the new Charities Act had gone through the House of Lords. The Director of Home Chess had collated considerable supporting information on the educational benefits of chess and this could be made available via the Office.

The Chief Executive was authorised to seek out and to appoint a Personal Assistant (acting in a voluntary capacity)

Following a successful informal meeting in early March between members of the Board, the Unions and the Leagues, it was agreed to recommend to Council the formation of a Committee, similarly comprised, which would meet twice a year in a consultative capacity. The next meeting was already scheduled for 9th September 06

The Board agreed to adopt a new Logo for the ECF as a signal of positive change

The Board agreed that the ECF should support the Bessel Kok ticket in the forthcoming Election for President of F.I.D.E. in June 2006

The Board agreed that the next ECF Young Masters would be held from 24th to 27th August 2006 at Bromsgrove School, Bromsgrove

The Finance Director was planning to present to Council a balanced Budget for 2006/07. This would entail a rise in Game Fee from 44p to 45p.

The Board would be proposing to Council an amendment to the ECF Bye-laws to allow participation from 2006/07 in a membership scheme by "NCCU and such other organisations as approved by the Board" This was the first step towards the implementation of a National Membership Scheme as from Autumn 2008

The Board would also propose to Council that the number of Representatives to Council of each Constituent Unit be reduced to one

A suggestion would be made to Council that consideration be given to changing the Articles to remove Direct Members from membership of the ECF.

The Board would maintain a neutral stance on this issue.

The Director of Home Chess would be proposing to Council changes in the County Championship Rules to facilitate the participation of the Chiltern Counties.

CHESS CHAMPIONS

The next in our series of champions is a player who is often both admired and despised at the same time.



Anatoli Yevgenyevic Karpov (born May 23, 1951) He is considered one of the greatest players in chess history, especially in tournament play: he is the most successful tournament player in history, with over 140 first-places to his credit. His overall record is 1,118 wins, 287 losses, and 1,480 draws in 3,163 games.

Karpov was born in Zlatoust in the former Soviet Union and learned to play chess at the age of 4. At age 12 he was accepted into Mikhail Botvinnik's extremely prestigious chess school. He became the youngest Soviet National Master in history at 15, and won in his first international chess tournament several months later. In 1967 he

took 5th in the Soviet Junior Chess Championship and won the European Junior Chess Championship several months later. But his career really took off in 1969 when he became the first Soviet player since Boris Spassky (1955) to win the World Junior Chess Championship with a score of 10 out of 11. Soon afterwards he tied for 4th place at an international tournament in Caracas, Venezuela and became the world's youngest Grandmaster.

The 1970s showed a major improvement in his game. His ELO rating shot up from 2540 in 1971 to 2660 in 1973, when he came in 2nd in the USSR Chess Championship and placed first in the Leningrad Interzonal Tournament. The latter qualified him for the 1974 Candidates cycle, which determined who was allowed to challenge the reigning World Champion, Bobby Fischer.

Karpov beat Lev Polugaevsky in the first Candidates match to face former World Champion Boris Spassky in the next round. Karpov was on record saying that he believed Spassky would easily beat him and win the Candidates cycle to face Fischer, and that he (Karpov) would win the following Candidates cycle in 1977.

However, instead of a bland one-sided rout everyone expected, the Spassky-Karpov match was spectacular. Tenacious and aggressive play from Karpov (who wasn't hurt by the fact that Spassky's chief opening analyst, 1955 Soviet Champion Efim Geller, defected to Karpov's side several months before the match) secured him a memorable win (an exquisite Sicilian Scheveningen was probably the game of the match). The Candidates final was against fellow Russian Viktor Korchnoi, a notable fighting player. Intense games were fought, including one "opening laboratory" win against the Sicilian Dragon, and Karpov had won the right to challenge Fischer for the World Championship.

Though everyone was eagerly anticipating the world championship match between the young Soviet prodigy and the incomparably dominant American Fischer, the match never came about. However, Fischer made demands which FIDE refused to accept, & he resigned his crown, to the huge disappointment of the chess world, which

had been waiting for the much-hyped Fischer-Karpov match. This thrust the young Karpov into the role of World Champion without beating the reigning one. There was always the thought that Karpov was just a paper world champion—he earned it in a ceremony, not over a chessboard as a true Candidate.

Shamed that he had become the twelfth world champion in this manner, and desperately trying to prove he was worthy of the crown, Karpov participated in nearly every tournament for the next ten years. He created the most phenomenal streak of tournament wins against the strongest players in the world the chess world had ever seen. This tournament success even eclipsed the pre-war tournament record of Alexander Alekhine. He held the record for most consecutive tournament victories (9) until it was shattered by Garry Kasparov.

In 1978, Karpov's first title defence was against Viktor Korchnoi, the opponent he beat in the previous Candidates tournament. The situation was vastly different from the previous match. In the intervening years Korchnoi had defected from the Soviet Union. The match was played in Baguio in the Philippines, and a vast array of psychological tricks were used during the match.

The off-board antics are better remembered than the actual chess match. Karpov took an early lead, but Korchnoi staged an amazing comeback very late in the match, and came very close to winning. Karpov narrowly won the last game to take the match 6-5, with 21 draws.

Three years later Korchnoi re-emerged as the Candidates winner against German finalist Dr. Robert Huebner to challenge Karpov in Merano, Italy. This time the psychological trick was the arrest of Korchnoi's son for evading conscription. Again the politics off the board overshadowed the games, but this time Karpov easily won (11-7) in what is remembered to be the "Massacre of Merano".

Karpov's tournament career also reached a peak at the exceptional Montreal "Super-Grandmaster" tournament in 1979, where he ended joint first

with Mikhail Tal ahead of a field of superb. Meanwhile, he had also won the prestigious Linares tournament in 1981 (and again in 1994), the Tilburg tournament in 1977, 1979, 1980, 1982, and 1983, and the USSR championship in 1976 and 1983 (and again in 1988).

Karpov had cemented his position as the world's best player and world champion when Garry Kasparov arrived on the scene. In their first match in 1984, Karpov suffered a mental and physical breakdown, having lost 22 pounds (10 kg) over the course of the match. The FIDE President controversially terminated the match, which had lasted an unprecedented four months with five wins for Karpov, three for Kasparov, and a staggering forty draws. A rematch was set for the following year. In a hard fight, featuring an incredible blunder by Karpov in the final game, Karpov lost his title 11 to 13 in the 1985 match, ending his ten-year reign as champion.

Karpov remained a formidable opponent for most of the eighties. He fought Kasparov in three more World Championship matches in 1986 (held in London and Leningrad), 1987 (held in Seville), and 1990 (held in Lyon and New York City). All three matches were extremely close (the scores were 12.5 to 11.5, 12 to 12, and 12.5 to 11.5). In all three matches Karpov had winning chances up to the very last games. The five world championship matches between them are considered the finest in history.

It came as a surprise, then, that Karpov lost a Candidates Match against Nigel Short in 1992. Everyone had expected a sixth Kasparov-Karpov match. But in 1993, Karpov reacquired the FIDE World Champion title when Kasparov and Short split from FIDE. Karpov crushed Jan Timman—the loser of the Candidates final against Short. Once again he had become World Champion, and once again he did so controversially. He defended his title against Gata Kamsky and Viswanathan Anand in 1996 and 1998, respectively. However, in 1998, FIDE largely scrapped the old system of Candidate Matches, instead having a large knock-out event in which a large number of players contested short matches against each other over just a few weeks. In the first of these events,

champion Karpov was seeded straight into the final (as in previous championships), but subsequently the champion had to qualify like other players. Karpov resigned his title in anger at the new rules in 1999, upon which Alexander Khalifman became World Champion.

In 1991 Karpov temporarily dropped to third in the FIDE ranking list, the first time since 1971. Though he quickly recovered, many said that Karpov had lost his edge, and that his playing level had declined. However, Karpov decisively proved the naysayers wrong in one incredible performance against the world's strongest players in the super-strong tournament Linares 1994 (average ELO rating 2685, the highest in history). Impressed by the strength of the tournament, Kasparov had said several days before the tournament that the winner could rightfully be called the world champion of tournaments. Perhaps spurred on by this comment, Karpov played the chess of his life and dramatically won the tournament. He was undefeated and earned 11 points out of 13 possible (the best world-class tournament winning percentage in 64 years). This astonishing performance against the best players in the world put his ELO rating tournament performance at an unbelievable 2985, the highest performance rating of any chess player in any tournament in all of chess history.

However, Karpov's outstanding classical tournament play has been seriously limited since 1995, since he prefers to be more involved in politics of his home country of Russia. He had been a member of the Supreme Soviet Commission for Foreign Affairs and the President of the Soviet Peace Fund before the Soviet Union broke up.

Karpov's "boa constrictor" playing style is solidly positional, taking no risks but reacting mercilessly to any tiny errors made by his opponents. As a result, he is often compared to his idol, the famous Jose Raul Capablanca, the third World Champion. Karpov himself describes his style as follows: ***"Let us say the game may be continued in two ways: one of them is a beautiful tactical blow that gives rise to variations that don't yield to precise calculation; the other is clear positional pressure that leads to an endgame with microscopic***

chances of victory.... I would choose the latter without thinking twice. If the opponent offers keen play I don't object; but in such cases I get less satisfaction, even if I win, than from a game conducted according to all the rules of strategy with its ruthless logic."

People believed Karpov's style was always bland, but he was capable of brilliant attack (for example, Torre-Karpov, Bad Lautenberg 1976 shows Karpov provoking his opponent to overextend then counterattacking through the centre with a pretty pawn sacrifice). Though he keeps his opening repertoire relatively narrow (he likes to stick to the Queen's Indian and Caro-Kann Defences), his middlegame is solid and his mastery of the ending in particular unparalleled. He thinks quickly and rarely gets into time trouble. It is also said that he exploits even the smallest advantage in space better than anyone else in history.

But Karpov's greatest strength is his mastery of prophylaxis, pioneered by Tigran Petrosian and Aron Nimzowitsch. He can anticipate and frustrate his opponent's plans before they do any damage. This leads to a safe, though slightly passive, position. Usually, his opponents become frustrated and try to create something out of nothing. They would become overly aggressive and overextend their forces. Karpov then pounces relentlessly and crushes his opponent.

Here are a couple of examples of Karpov masterpieces

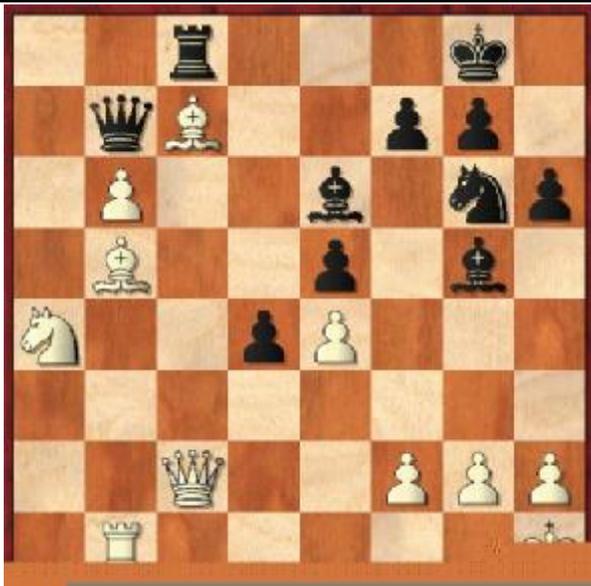
Event "URS-ch39"

Site "Leningrad"

White "Karpov, Anatoly"

Black "Stein, Leonid"

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 d6 6. Bc4 Qb6 7. Nxc6 bxc6 8. O-O e6 9. b3 Be7 10. Bb2 O-O 11. Qe2 e5 12. Kh1 Qc7 13. Rae1 Nd7 14. Na4 Bb7 15. Bd3 Rfe8 16. c4 Bg5 17. Qc2 h6 18. b4 a6 19. Qb3 Rab8 20. a3 Bc8 21. Qc3 Bf6 22. Qc2 a5 23. Bc3 axb4 24. axb4 Nf8 25. b5 cxb5 26. cxb5 Bd7 27. Rb1 Rec8 28. b6 Qb7 29. Bb5 Ra8 30. Qb3 Be6 31. Qb4 Be7 32. Rfc1 d5 33. Qb2 d4 34. Bb4Bg5 35. Rxc8 Rxc8 36. Qe2 Ra8 37. Bd6 Ng6 38. Qc2 Rc8 39. Bc7 {The start of a very complex combination, designed to give White a strong passed B pawn}



39.Bd8 40. Nc5 Rxc7 41. Nxb7 Rxc2
42. Nxd8 Bc8 43. g3 Rxf2 44. Rc1 Rf6 45. Rxc8
Rxb6 46. Bc4 Kh7 47. Nxf7 1-0

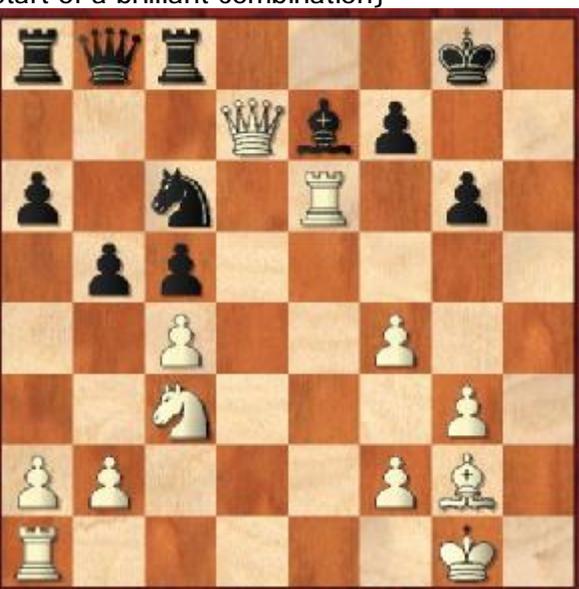
Event "Linares"

Site "Linares"

White "Karpov, Anatoly"

Black "Topalov, Veselin"

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 c5 3. Nf3 cxd4 4. Nxd4 e6 5. g3
Nc6 6. Bg2 Bc5 7. Nb3 Be7 8. Nc3 O-O 9. O-O d6
10. Bf4 Nh5 11. e3 Nxf4 12. exf4 Bd7 13. Qd2
Qb8 14. Rfe1 g6 15. h4 a6 16. h5 b5 17. hxg6
hxg6 18. Nc5 dxc5 19. Qxd7 Rc8 20. Rxe6 {The
start of a brilliant combination}



20.Ra7 21. Rxc6+ fxc6 22. Qe6+ Kg7
23. Bxc6 Rd8 24. cxb5 Bf6 25. Ne4 Bd4 26. bxa6
Qb6 27. Rd1 Qxa6 28. Rxd4 Rxd4 29. Qf6+ Kg8
30. Qxc6+ Kf8 31. Qe8+ Kg7 32. Qe5+ Kg8 33.
Nf6+ Kf7 34. Be8+ Kf8 35. Qxc5+ Qd6 36. Qxa7
Qxf6 37. Bh5 Rd2 38. b3 Rb2 39. Kg2 1-0

FORTHCOMING ECF COUNCIL MEETING

The first council meeting of the ECF is being held in Luton on 22nd April. Below a summary of the papers received. The paragraphs in *italics* do not appear on the papers & represent my personal concerns/comment.

GRAND PRIX

The future of the Grand Prix is on the agenda. Since the meeting with the Unions & leagues already reported on elsewhere in the Newsletter, further surveys have been conducted. The upshot of these and earlier deliberations is that a simpler, more modest scheme is proposed. This is in recognition of the fact that the Grand Prix does not have the prestige it once did, does not generate the publicity it once did, and only benefits a small number of players who are frequent congress goers.

BUDGET

The main features of the budget proposals for 2006/7 are

- £4K saving on the Grand Prix
- An extra £1.5k on Marketing
- An extra £1.8k for International
- An extra £5.5K for Management Services to cover salary increases
- A reduction of £1k for Board expenses.

Expectations for 2006/7

The British Championship finances should reflect the fact that the same event in Swansea in 1995 was a financial success.

Direct Membership fell in the current year, though this was to be expected with transfers to the NMS. The British, 4NCL & other FIDE rated events requiring membership should lead to an increase next year.

Prospects for support of the Olympiad teams is promising and there is £2k from 2004 sponsorship still to be used.

It is hoped that the NMS will do better next year and Norfolk have expressed an interest in similar arrangements.

NMS MEMBERSHIP FORM

To become a member of the ECF, a legal requirement associated with being a Ltd Co is that a form is signed. The NMS began before the change to Ltd Co status and various Direct Members also have renewals that span the change of entity. Getting these members to sign the relevant form to fully transfer their existing membership has been a problem. The Direct Membership system is paper driven whilst the NMS membership system is electronic, whilst renewing & new direct members will sign the relevant forms; the NMS has difficulties in this area.

The Board is therefore seeking guidance from Council regarding the treatment of NMS players who have not signed the form. The main issue is that, if they are not ECF members (and they cannot be unless they have signed the form), under FIDE rules they cannot have a FIDE rating. In addition, the ECF requires British Championship entrants to be EFC members to enter a wide range of sections.

A proposal has been made that NMS members not fully signed up to ECF will have all the ECF membership benefits except that of a FIDE rating. Further, that the existing Basic Members & Basic Junior Members categories continue until August 2007, and such members do not pay game fee..

On paper this sounds like a simple solution, however, it overlooks an important issue. For a game to be graded for FIDE purposes, both players must be ECF members. Thus if an ECF member & an NMS member play each other in those British Championship events that require membership, that game cannot count for FIDE grading purposes.

EXTENDING THE NMS SCHEME

The ECF Board agreed a long term objective of a national membership scheme, along the lines of the NMS. Norfolk have already expressed an interest in adopting such a scheme. To permit any extension of such schemes the EFC Membership & Game Fee rules (or bye-laws as they are legally called) need to be amended by adding “and other organisations as

approved by the Board” to the existing NCCU reference. The Board suggest 3 conditions for approval of an extension:

1. The scheme extension should cover a defined geographical area. (In practice this probably restricts it to Counties, but could include leagues largely co-terminus with a local government area)
2. The extension should cover the majority of league chess played in that geographical area.
3. Such leagues should apply a mandatory membership policy. (This has been the key reason for the success of the NMS. Practice across the NMS varies, with membership being required after between 2-5 league games)

Resolutions to amend the byelaws to allow extension of the NMS placed before the meeting reflect the above criteria.

REPRESENTATIVES

An amendment will be put forward so that the Unions & large independent leagues will have only 1 representative at Council. Currently the link between votes and reps for these organisations bears no relation to logic (or anything else for that matter).

PROTOCOLS

This was originally proposed some time ago, it was crowded out of agenda for previous council meeting.

Any player has the right to play for any team he wishes, provided he is eligible to play for that team or club.

Any club has the right to play in whichever competition it wishes, provided that that participation complies with the rules of the competition.

If a player is qualified by birth or long term residence or membership of a club, for a county by virtue of the relevant address being in that county, that qualification remains valid if that address is transferred to another county or equivalent administrative area.

Conversely, the player may seek to play for the geographical entity in which they find themselves. They are deemed to be eligible to play for that area.

COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP

Chris Majer has put forward a proposal to allow the Chiltern League, an inter-county team competition to put teams forward to the ECF County Championship National stages. Currently only the Unions can do so.

NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP SCHEME

The long term goal of a National Membership Scheme has already been mentioned. There are no specific resolutions being put before the meeting, but a discussion paper has been produced. The NMS has been a success financially, and if replicated across the country would represent significant benefits for the ECF. In addition obtaining charitable status and establishing a Gift Aid scheme would make those rewards even greater.

The “if” in the above paragraph is a big “if”. There is no guarantee that the membership levels obtained in the NCCU, which actively sought to bring in such a scheme, would be achieved elsewhere. There is also no certainty that charitable status will be obtained, or a Gift Aid Scheme agreed with HMR&C. Another concern is whether any of these factors would affect the grant currently received from government in the shape of the DCMS.

It is suggested that these 3 areas be looked at during 2006/7 along with some preliminary consultations with Unions. A full consultative document is to be put to the April 2007 Council meeting, which would allow consultation with all member organisations. April – Sept 2007 consultation period. October 2007 Council meeting report on consultation and seek approval in principle. April 2007 put forward necessary amendments to Articles & Bye-Laws. Autumn 2008 implement scheme.

The possibility of living with a “mixed economy” where game fee could still operate in some areas is not discounted. However, this would present issues with Gift Aid rules, but could be dealt with by leagues and other events operating as either membership based or game fee based, but with no refund of game available to members playing in game fee events.

The main area of concern with membership has been identified as its’ unfairness to players who only play a small number of games. Consideration might be given to having a nationally agreed number of games before membership was a requirement.

I feel that this represents a much more considered approach to a National Membership scheme. With the NMS it was rather a case of “preaching to the converted”, I believe that for a National Scheme to be agreed, it has to be fully thought out, and will need to be “sold” to other areas. This can only be done if ECF constituents feel they have been fully consulted. This means that representatives will have a responsibility to attend meetings, so that they know what is going on, and to pass information on. That said, chess players will also have a responsibility to ensure that they make their views known those who represent them at ECF meetings. I usually get very little feedback in response to requests for views, and will say again that if you do not make your views known, at the appropriate time, to the appropriate people, you have no right to complain about the outcome.

Having harped about representatives attending meetings, I appreciate that this is not always possible, so if any ECF representatives are unable to attend the Council meeting, I am quite happy to take their views and proxies to the meeting and to undertake to vote in accordance with instructions from them.

KARPOV POSITIONAL PUZZLE RESULTS

- a) Karpov vs Victor Korchnoi, Leningrad, 1971 g3+
- b) Karpov vs Sergey Shestakov, Kuibyshev, 1970 Nh4
- c) Karpov vs Pronin, Moscow, 1968 Re1
- d) Karpov vs Karen Grigorian, Leningrad, 1971 Nxf6
- e) White Mates in 6. Karpov vs Istvan Csom, Bad Lauterberg, 1977 Nf5
- f) Karpov vs Ken Rogoff, Mayaguez, 1971 Nh4
- g) Karpov vs Svetozar Gligoric, Milan, 1975 Rxd3
- h) Karpov vs Eugenio Torre, Leningrad, 1973 g4
- i) Karpov vs Boris Spassky, Leningrad, 1974 Rxd8 w/Be7
- j) Karpov vs Gyula Sax, Linares, 1983 Re7
- k) Karpov vs Helmut Pfleger, Hannover, 1983 Ra7 w/Ba3
- l) Karpov vs Jan Timman, Moscow, 1981 dxe6

ENGLAND TEAM NEWS

England Teams announced for World Chess Olympiad
Turin 19 May to 5 June 2006

The England Teams' selection has been confirmed for the World Chess Olympiad, 2006. The England Teams include a combination of experience and impressive ability, featuring many of the country's top players.

Selection:

Men's Team

Board 1 Michael Adams - England's strongest ever player and previous World title challenger (Groningen 1997) and the nation's number one since the late 1990's. Mickey has been established in the world's top twenty for many years. Adams has represented England in every Olympiad since 1990 (9 times).

Board 2 Nigel Short - Former world title challenger to Gary Kasparov in 1993 and a Grandmaster since 1984. Nigel Short received the MBE in 1999 in recognition of his contribution to the Royal game. Nigel is also an active chess journalist.

Board 3 Jon Speelman - Former World Championship candidate and three Times British Champion, in a rich vein of form and fresh from his most impressive tournament performance in several years, in Gibraltar 2006. Jon made his debut for England in the European Team Championship of 1977. This is Jon's 14th consecutive Olympiad since Malta in 1980. Jon is also a chess journalist.

Board 4 Danny Gormally - England's newest Grandmaster achieving his title in Gibraltar in 2005, Danny is a welcome addition to the Olympiad team. Danny performed impressively on board 4 on his England debut at the European Team Championships in Gothenburg.

Board 5 Stuart Conquest - Former World under 16 Champion, Stuart is an England regular and plays a brand of exciting crowd pleasing double-edged chess. Stuart is an accomplished linguist speaking French, German and Spanish fluently. Stuart also represented England in the Olympiads held in Erevan 1996 and Bled 2002.

Board 6 Nick Pert - One of our most promising young Grandmasters and World under-18 Champion in 1998. Nick performed excellently on his debut at the European team championships in Gothenburg scoring an unbeaten 5/8. This will be Nick's first Olympiad appearance.

Team Captain is the richly experienced and respected Allan Beardsworth. Allan, 44, also captained the England team in Majorca in 2004 and is a considerable contributor to the game.

The teams are funded by a financial contribution from the English Chess Federation and the attendance of Michael Adams and Nigel Short is aided by the generous contribution of David Norwood, who is thanked for his Personal generosity and support.

Women's Team

Board 1 Jovanka Houska - England's latest International Master, the Only English Woman to have qualified for the Women's World Chess Championship 2006, a former European Girls Under 20 Champion, and a regular in the England Women's Team, for which she was captain at the European Team Championships in 2005.

Board 2 Jessie Gilbert - The youngest member of the team and one of England's most promising juniors, Women's World Amateur Champion 1999 And bronze medallist in the European Under 14 Girls' Championship, 2001. This will be the second time she will play for the team.

Board 3 Jana Bellin - Awarded the Women's Grandmaster title in 1982 and eight times British Women's Champion, Jana has played many times for the national team to which she now makes a welcome return.

Board 4 Sophie Tidman - A former England junior international in team and individual events, Sophie captained the Oxford Varsity team in 2005. She is making her debut for the England Women's Team.

Team captain and coach is the highly respected Grandmaster, Mark Hebden, a member of the Men's Team at the Olympiads in 1998 and 2004, and coach for the BCF at World and European junior and youth championships 2000-2005.

Official site: www.chessolympiad-torino2006.org

CHESS-PLAYING TO-DAY (PART I)

Chess is generally regarded by the uninitiated as being the dullest and most selfish of games, an opinion which is by no means carefully withheld from the players themselves. Truly, as an amusement or a mirth-provoking pastime it does leave something to be desired, and even such a remark as "Just look at them, they have been sitting there for hours without speaking!" is often perfectly justified. It is hard to say why a quiet and unobtrusive demeanor should evoke sarcastic comment, but most chess-players become well accustomed to it, and after all the game survives. And not only does it survive, it gains in popularity year by year, and the extent to which it is played to-day as compared with ten years ago is most remarkable. Wherein does its fascination lie?

For one thing, chess has the reputation of being an intellectual game, and who does not like to be the follower of that which is intellectual? It is, moreover, one of the few games in which the players find themselves on a perfectly equal footing at the start. The element of chance does not enter in; the one who plays best wins. Further, though much has been said to the contrary, the game played in moderation is a real recreation. Mr. Potter, writing in the "Encyclopaedia Britannica," puts this very well. He says it "recreates not so much by way of amusement, properly so termed, as by taking possession of the mental faculties and diverting them from their accustomed grooves." Anyone who knows what it is to have a mind worried by business or harassed by care of any description can understand the value of a pastime which can do that.

But all these are the more subtle attractions to the game. The one supreme attraction is the inexhaustible beauty of the game itself. The writer has often been asked: "Don't you find that you continually repeat games you have played before?" Well, it has been computed that there are 318,979,564,000 possible ways of playing the first four moves on each side, and, play as often as you will, it is not likely that there will be much sameness about your games. A calculation as to the number of ways of playing the first ten moves on each side--less than one-third of an ordinary game--yields a modest total of thirty figures, which would convey nothing but bewilderment to the average mind. But put in another way we can dimly perceive their significance. "Considering the population of the world to be 1,483,000,000" (twenty years ago), "more than 217,000,000,000 of years would be needed to go through them all, even if every man, woman and child on the face of the globe played without cessation at a rate of one set of ten moves per minute." Further comment on the inexhaustibility of the game is perhaps superfluous.

On the beauty of chess it is difficult to speak with sufficient

reverence. It has had at least a thousand years in which to develop, and no player regards it otherwise than as perfect. The keen delight with which a hot attack is repelled is only exceeded by that which follows the discovery of a weak point in your opponent's defence, and by the joy of concentrating an attack upon that weak point and of pushing it to a triumphant issue. Only those who know can understand!

No wonder that a game with such a character should be ardently practised all the year round in one way or another by players of every degree. For those who are fortunate enough to find an opponent in the home circle, what better pastime can there be? For those who can seldom find an adversary, there is the delight of problem solving, or the even more useful study of some published game. Others again can fight a distant opponent by correspondence; while for those who wish to do battle more promiscuously, there are chess clubs and resorts innumerable.

To such an extent has chess developed in popularity during the last ten years that the number of recognized chess clubs in London is about three times what it was, and cannot now be far short of 120. This is without reckoning the numerous chess clubs which form adjuncts to various institutions, such as political clubs, working men's clubs, church institutes and the like. And London does not stand alone in this respect. In the provinces a similar increase has taken place. An equally significant fact is that the average membership has also rapidly grown, showing that the new clubs have been called into existence by the popular demand.

In the early eighties there was very little inter-club organization either in London or the provinces. In the metropolis a few club matches were played, but the only one of much importance was the annual encounter between the St. George's and the City of London Clubs. Then the offer of a cup, called the Baldwin-Hoffer trophy, after its donors, induced six or seven of the stronger suburban clubs to enter into rivalry one with another. This was followed by the institution of the Surrey trophy, to be competed for by the Surrey clubs only. These competitions infused new life into the clubs, and developed a desire for regular inter-club competition within the metropolitan area. This was duly arranged, the clubs being divided into two classes, senior and junior. Later a still further step was taken by the formation of the London Chess League, and the organization of a yearly contest to be played in three divisions, A, B, C. The clubs in the A division have to furnish teams of twenty players, in the B division twelve, and in the C division eight. Naturally the interest centres round the struggle for supremacy in the A division, where the chess played is of a very high order, many of the games on the top boards being worthy of the foremost masters.

part II next time – but what period is this referring to?