

THE MIDDLE GAME

Volume 1, Issue 22

May 2006

ECF

Much has happened since the last newsletter, the NMS issues in the ECF Council report have since been overtaken by events which have culminated in the ECF withdrawing from the existing agreement & an EGM of the ECF has been called for 24th June.

The ECF CEO Roy Heppinstall has been ill for some weeks & was eventually hospitalised. The ECF Board decided that an Acting CEO should be appointed, Cyril Johnson has taken on that role. 2 managers have been appointed for Home Junior Chess & International Junior Chess until the AGM.

The new Counties Championship Controller David Lettington, who was appointed this season, resigned on 31st May. As the semi-finals & finals are still to be played, this presented something of a crisis, especially as the Director of Home Chess was about to go away. Being a glutton for punishment I have agreed to act as firewoman for the rest of the event.

ECF COUNCIL

The first ECF Finance Council meeting took place on 22nd April in Luton. It was unfortunate that this coincided with chaos on the trains caused by power lines falling on the track the day before. It is not the first time that BCF/ECF meetings have been affected by significant rail problems, we can only hope it is the last.

ECF Grand Prix

The future of this event has been under threat since sponsorship was lost. David Welch reported on the consultation process that had taken place leading to a motion reducing the prize money and the number of sections for 2006/7. A new system would simply require a congress wishing to be part of the Grand Prix to say so & provide the results for grading. The ECF will then use the data to produce the section results.

Motions to axe the Grand Prix & for it to be funded by the congresses taking part rather than from ECF monies were proposed & put to the vote, both failed to gain majority support. The original proposal was carried.

Annual Business Plan

It was explained that the Business Plan was an important document in terms of Government funding & it finds favour with the civil servants who review it.

No radical amendments were proposed, just some tinkering around. Much of the plan is simply a restatement of the previous year detail. A useful suggestion was taken on board that future Business

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Across the Board

Around the World in 18 Games

A British Museum Exhibition



Across the Board an exciting and fascinating exhibition from the British Museum opened to the public at THE COLLECTION, Art and Archaeology in Lincolnshire, Danes Terrace, Lincoln LN2 1LP on Saturday 27 May.

The highlight of the exhibition is a number of Lewis chessmen, 12th century, delicately carved walrus ivory chess pieces found on the Isle of Lewis in Scotland. They were used as inspiration for the chess pieces in the famous film Harry Potter and The Philosopher's Stone. The Lewis chessmen were recently voted one of the top ten treasures in the British Museum. To our knowledge it will be the very first time these unique and world famous chess pieces have been on public display in Lincolnshire, so make sure you don't miss this wonderful opportunity to see them.



Across the Board opens at THE COLLECTION on Saturday 27 May and will run until the 3 September. The museum is open seven days a week from 10.00am - 5.00pm with the last entry at 4.30pm. Admission to the exhibition is £1.00 for adults £0.60 for concessions and a family ticket costs only £2.60.

Plans have any new items differentiated e.g by use of italics.

Budget Report

There was some discussion concerning funds being used to support the team "Pride & Prejudice" in the 4NCL. A number of delegates seemed to be unaware that this had been happening, but it was pointed out that it was reflected in the business plan. Originally the money was going to be used for an International women's event, but those involved felt the money would provide better competitive exposure for female players, if use to provide initial support for a team in the 4NCL. The intention is that having used the money to launch the team, sponsorship would be obtained to fund it going forward.

Bill O'Rourke of the NCCU highlighted the financial success of the Northern Members Scheme & had been seeking to get the additional income raised used for specific Northern purposes. The precise level of additional income is open to debate. Irrespective of the actual amount, it was quite rightly pointed out that the organization is a federation & as such should work on the basis of money being spent where needed. Another important point is that the South & Midlands in particular have never suggested in the past that less money should be spent in the North, even though historically the North contributed rather less proportionately than their areas. It could be argued that the additional monies raised by the NMS merely constitute the North catching up with other parts of the country.

1 or 2 flaws in the budget were pointed out, but it was adopted.

Review of NMS

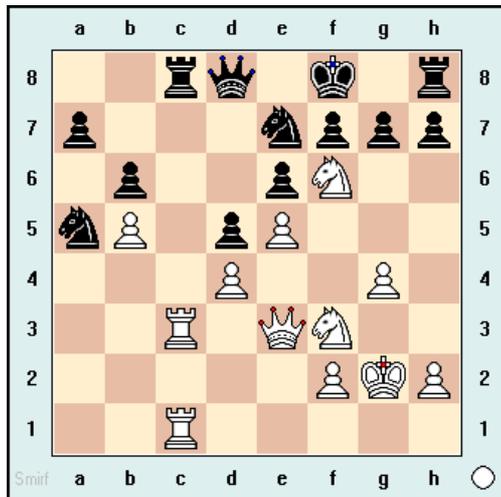
The scheme has clearly resulted in the NCCU area contributing more to the ECF than in recent years. How much more depends on what parameters you use. However, various elements of the agreement had not run according to plan.

Names & addresses of NMS participants had not been passed to the ECF office. There had been concerns from the NCCU about whether data

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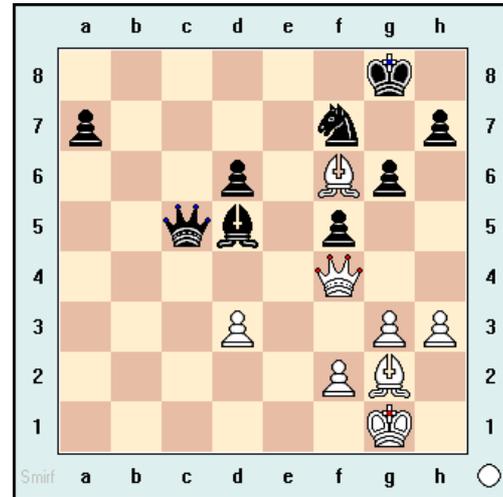
POSITIONAL PUZZLES

White to move & win

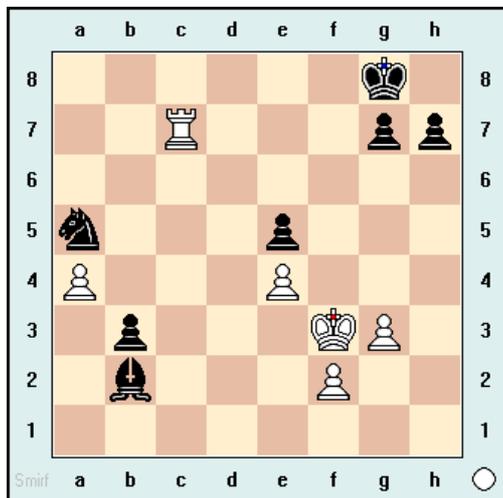


a) Kasparov vs Dmitry Kaiumov, Tbilisi, 1976

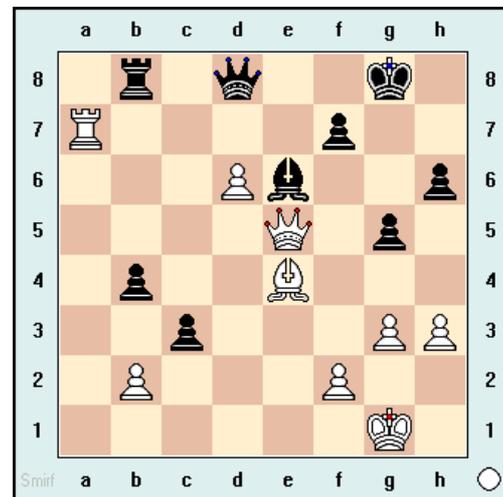
ALL OF THESE ARE KASPAROV GAMES



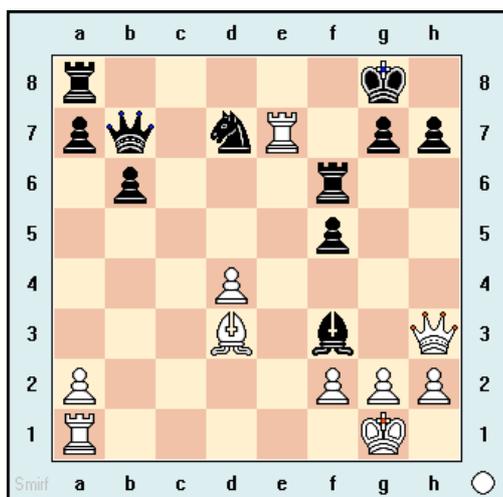
d) Kasparov vs Eduard Mnatsakanian, Moscow, 1979



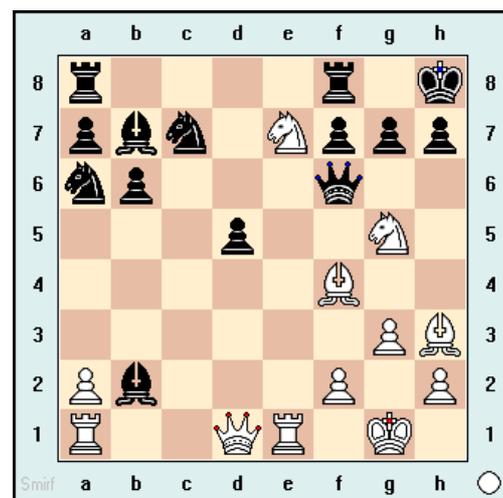
b) Kasparov vs Andrei Kharitonov, Leningrad, 1977



e) Kasparov vs Walter Browne, Benja Luka, 1979

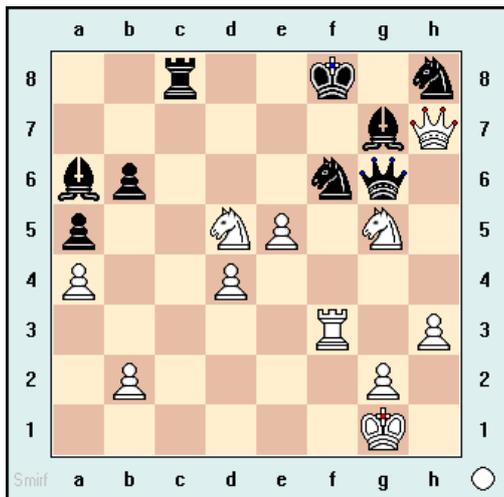


c) Kasparov vs Dariusz Weider, Cagnes sur Mer, 1977

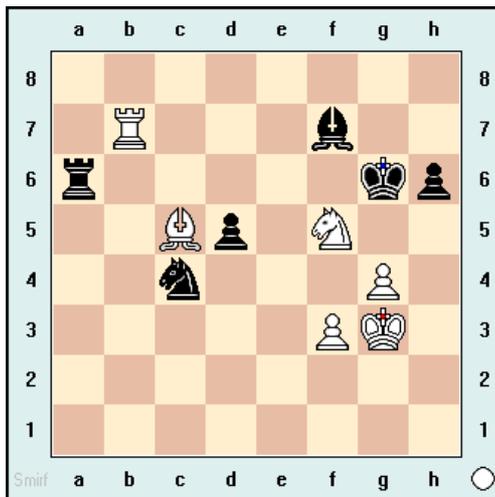


f) Kasparov vs Slavoljub Marjanovic, Malta, 1980

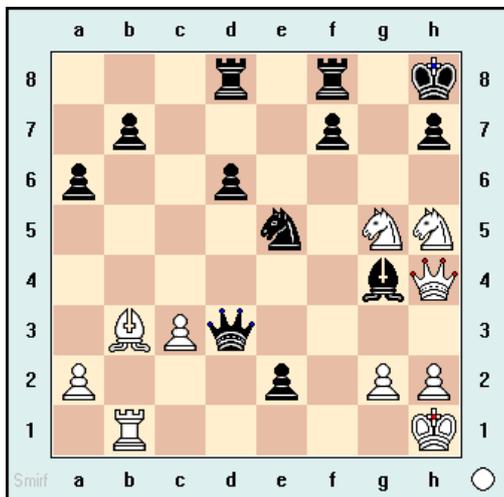
MORE KASPAROV POSITIONS



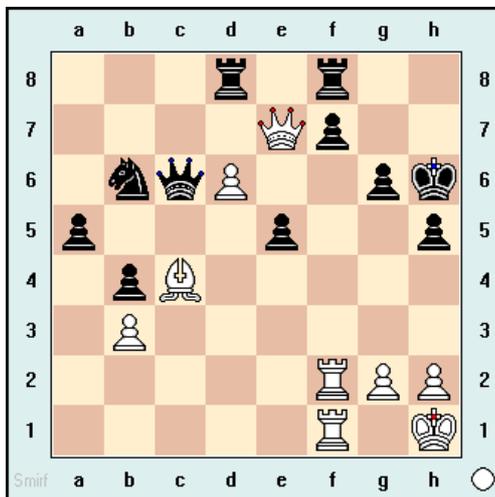
g) Kasparov vs Semyen Palatnik, USSR, 1978



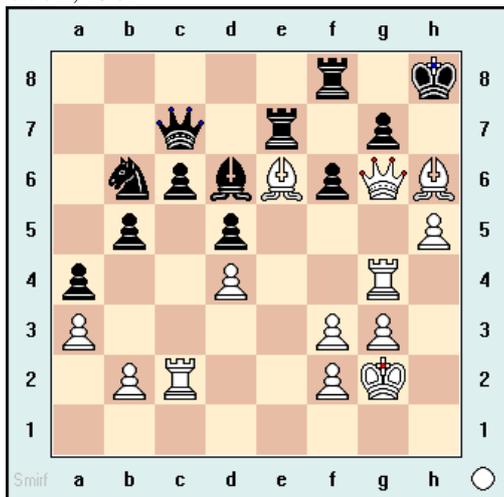
j) Kasparov vs Tigran Petrosian, Niksic, 1983



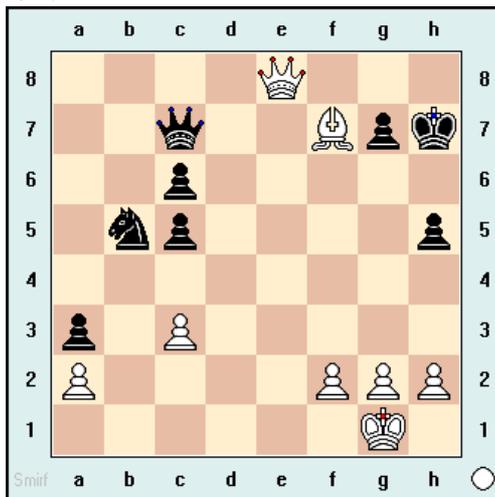
h) White mates in 3. Kasparov vs Elmar Magerramov, USSR, 1982



k) White Mates in 5. Kasparov vs Aldyn Guseinov, USSR, 1976



i) White Mates in 4. Kasparov vs Zakharov, Moscow, 1981



l) White Mates in 6. Kasparov vs Rafael Gabdrakhmanov, USSR, 1977

solutions on page 11

Continued from page 3 col2

protection regulations allowed this information to be passed on. It was agreed that the data would be passed on provided legal assurances were provided that this was okay. Unfortunately although such legal advice was obtained, the person tasked with getting it failed to appreciate that the NCCU could only be expected to act on it if they actually saw the written advice - A matter which only came to light during the meeting! That said, the NCCU representative did question why the information was needed during the Board-Union meeting. I found it rather strange that as an area running a membership scheme on behalf of the ECF, the NCCU should question this. Of course the ECF needs to know who its' basic members are! The lack of names & addresses for NMS players has created problems in establishing who is actually eligible to enter. With the sad loss of John Robinson, who used to process the entries, the ECF office had agreed to take on this additional task, but it is one that they now find they are unable to do, because they don't have the information to do it.

The other problem area was that of ECF membership forms. A number of NMS members appear to have no interest in signing the ECF forms. These are a legal requirement for ECF membership directly connected with company law and the way Council wanted the Ltd company set up. The NMS agreement does specify that NMS members should sign the ECF forms. Coupled with this FIDE regulations specify that a FIDE rating can only be given to a player who is a member of a National chess body affiliated to FIDE. The problem is that English law on company membership confers a different status to a member than that envisaged by the FIDE regulations. In addition games can only go forward for FIDE rating where both players are members.

As a result there are issues relating to the British Championships. The NMS agreement states that NMS members have the right to enter the British Championship sections that require membership. These are essentially the FIDE rated sections. However a NMS player who has not signed ECF membership forms does not fulfill the FIDE rating requirements. Hopefully the initial problem can be

solved by persuading any NMS player entering a FIDE rated section at the British to sign ECF forms.

Looking longer term there is the problem of whether to insist on ECF forms being completed, or to accept that if a player does not wish to have the specific benefits that can only come with signing ECF membership forms, they can have the other benefits afforded by simply joining the NMS. Alternatively, whether NMS members can be given a status within the ECF Ltd co rules that would satisfy FIDE regulations. The resolution put forward at the meeting only sought to bar FIDE rating from NMS players who had not signed ECF forms, which would not have addressed the rating issue outlined earlier. This proved to be academic as the meeting decided to move to next business without putting the motion.

I personally cannot see the point in risking the sacrifice of the NMS by dogmatically insisting on ECF forms being signed by NMS members. Provided a player accepts that by not signing they will not be able to get a FIDE rating, or play in a FIDE rated event, what is the point on getting hung up on forms being signed merely to give someone benefits they do not want?

There had clearly been communication problems between ECF & NCCU and a certain amount of frustration was apparent to delegates not directly involved. It was sensibly suggested that the 2 parties get together to resolve any issues. As the NCCU one of their own general meetings arranged for the following Saturday, it was agreed that such a meeting would take place either immediately before or after that meeting.

The proviso "subject to the signing of a mutually satisfactory agreement between the NCCU working party & the ECF" was added to the motions which would enable the NMS to continue for a 2nd year.

Game Fee

The Finance Director recommended a 1p increase to 45p. A card vote is always taken on this with delegates indicating their preferred figure, the resulting median being the "winner".

The outcome of a card vote was as follows:-

£1.00 – 34
50p - 7
48p - 2
45p - 105
44p - 35
40p - 1

45p being the median is the revised game fee for 2006/7.

Extending the NMS

Several proposals had been made to amend the Bye-laws & allow the ECF Board to accept other areas adopting a membership scheme. Norfolk in particular wanted the opportunity to operate a similar scheme. Discussion on this topic and a later agenda item seeking to consult over rolling out a National membership scheme akin to the NMS rather intertwined at this point.

There were concerns about extending the scheme when the NMS was still in its' pilot stage & was clearly not running as it was envisaged. Some felt that extensions should only be considered once issues with the NMS had been resolved.

Delegates agreed with the conclusion of the Board reached in their earlier meeting, that a standard template for use in all future membership schemes was desirable. There was some disagreement as to whether Council or the ECF Board should approve such a template.

The initial "show of hands" vote was in favour of the motion, but a card vote was requested which narrowly rejected it. I was surprised that Bill O'Rourke, who carried a significant number of proxies from the North, voted against, as a strong proponent of extending membership schemes one would have expected him to support the motion. However, I understand that he was unhappy about the Board approving new areas as opposed to Council.

There were concerns expressed about making any scheme mandatory, particularly for rural counties where a limited amount of games are played. The paper prepared by Robert Richmond did not discount a mixed economy where both membership & game fee existed. It also recognized that there were a great deal of issues to be considered, & a good deal of consultation would be required.

Constituent Unit Representation

The meeting did not feel that the motion put forward actually said what John Dunleavey intended it to, a point which the latter conceded. The issues of number of representatives & number of votes was therefore referred back to the Governance Committee.

Protocols

These were designed to address issues relating to players in locations where county boundaries had changed.

Cyril Johnson explained that during his last year as Counties Championship Controller he had received queries concerning player eligibility because of county boundary changes. On researching the issue he had found that there had been at least 50 boundary changes since World War II. The issue therefore effected rather more areas than people may have presumed.

Delegates agreed with the proposal which was as follows:

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 and was 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 Rules

The motion attempted to allow the Chiltern League inter-county competition to qualify for places in the County Championship. However the Director of Home Chess had since found that there was little support for this, even from the Chiltern League. The motion was quickly dealt with by a unanimous vote against.

The AGM is scheduled to be held in the WECU area, Swindon is the likely location.

CHESS CHAMPIONS

The next in our series brings us to a player who decided to retire from competitive chess when very much at the top, and whilst still relatively young.



Garry Kasparov was born as Garry Vajnshtejn in Baku, Azerbaijan (at that time republic of Soviet Union) to an Armenian mother and a Jewish father. He first began the serious study of chess after he came across a chess problem set up by his parents and proposed a solution. When he was 7, his father died, and he adopted his mother's surname as soon as was legally possible, at the age of 12. His mother Klara is an Armenian woman whose surname is "Kasparian", and "Kasparov" is the Russified version of this name.

After leaving Tiffin School at the age of 8, Kasparov trained at Mikhail Botvinnik's chess school. He won the Soviet Junior Championship at Tbilisi in 1976, scoring 7 points out of 9, at the age of 13. He repeated the feat the following year, winning with a score of 8.5/9.

In 1978 Kasparov participated in the Sokolsky Memorial tournament at Minsk. He had been invited as an exception but took the first place and became a master. Kasparov has repeatedly said that this event was a turning point in his life, and that it convinced him to choose chess as his career. "I will remember the Sokolsky Memorial as long as I live", he wrote. He has also said that after the victory, he thought he had a very good shot at the World Championship.

Kasparov rose quickly through the FIDE rankings. Starting with an oversight by the Russian Chess Federation, Garry Kasparov participated in a Grandmaster tournament in Banja Luka while still unrated (the federation thought it was a junior tournament). He emerged from this top-class encounter with a provisional rating of 2595, enough to catapult him into the top group of chess players. The next year, 1980, he won the World Junior Chess Championship in Dortmund, West Germany. Kasparov sought to challenge

world champion Anatoly Karpov — a firm favourite of the Russian Chess Federation. But first Kasparov had to pass the test of the Candidates Tournament to qualify. His first Candidates match was against Alexander Beliavsky, from which Kasparov emerged surprisingly victorious (Beliavsky was an exceptionally tough opponent). Politics threatened Kasparov's next match against Viktor Korchnoi, which was scheduled to be played in Pasadena, California. Korchnoi defected from Russia in the late 1970s, and was at that time the strongest non-Soviet player. Various political manoeuvres prevented Kasparov from playing Korchnoi, and Kasparov forfeited the match. This was resolved by Korchnoi's allowing the match to be replayed in London. Kasparov won. Kasparov's final Candidates match was against the resurgent Vassily Smyslov (who was randomly selected to advance after a 7-7 tie against Huebner by the spin of a roulette wheel at the quarterfinals, but soundly defeated Hungarian GM Zoltan Ribli at the semifinals). Smyslov was the seventh world champion in 1957, but later years saw his willingness to fight for wins greatly diminished. Kasparov won with 4 wins and 9 draws.

The 1984 World Championship match between Anatoly Karpov and Garry Kasparov had its fair share of ups and downs, as well as the most controversial finish to a competitive match ever. Karpov started off in very good form, and after nine games Kasparov found himself 4-0 down in a "first to six wins" match. Fellow players predicted a 6-0 whitewash of Kasparov within 18 games. Kasparov dug in, with inspiration from a Russian poet before each game, and battled with Karpov into seventeen successive draws. Karpov duly won the next decisive game before Kasparov fought back with another series of draws until game 32, Kasparov's first win against the World Champion. At this point Karpov, twelve years older than Kasparov, was close to exhaustion, and not looking like the player who started this match. Kasparov won games 47 and 48 to bring the scores to 5-3 in Karpov's favour. Then the match was ended without result by Florencio Campomanes, the President of FIDE, and a new match was announced to start a few months later.

The termination of the match was a matter of some controversy. At the press conference at which he announced his decision, Campomanes cited the health of the two players, which had been put under strain by the length of the match, despite the fact that both Karpov and Kasparov stated that they would prefer the match to continue. Karpov had lost 22 lb over the course of the match and had been hospitalized several times. Kasparov, however, was in excellent health and extremely resentful of Campomanes' decision, asking him why he was abandoning the match if both players wanted to continue. It would appear that Kasparov, who had won the last two games before the suspension, felt the same way as some commentators — that he was now the favourite to win the match despite his 5-3 deficit. He appeared to be physically stronger than his opponent, and in the later games seemed to have been

playing the better chess.

The match became the first, and so far only, world championship match to be abandoned without result. Kasparov's relations with Campomanes and FIDE were greatly strained, and the feud between the two would eventually come to a head in 1993 with Kasparov's complete break-away from FIDE.

The second Karpov-Kasparov match in 1985 was organized as the best of 24 games, where first player to 12.5 points would claim the title (in the event of a 12-12 draw, the title would go to Karpov as the reigning champion). Kasparov showed he had learned some valuable lessons in the previous match, and although the score was quite even down to the final wire, a few spectacular games involving the Sicilian defence secured the World Championship for Kasparov at the age of 22 by a score of 13-11. This broke the existing record of youngest winner held for over twenty years by Mikhail Tal (he was 23 when he beat Botvinnik in 1960).

At the time, the FIDE rules granted a defeated champion an automatic right of rematch. Another match between Kasparov and Karpov duly took place in 1986, hosted jointly in the cities of London and Leningrad. At one point, Kasparov opened a three-point lead in the match, and looked to be well on his way to a decisive win. However, Karpov battled back by winning three consecutive games to level the score late in the match. At this point, Kasparov dismissed one of his seconds, Evgeny Vladimirov, accusing him of selling his opening preparation to the Karpov team. In any event, Kasparov scored one further win in the match and kept his title by a final score of 12.5-11.5.

A fourth match for the world title took place between Kasparov and Karpov 1987 in Seville, as Karpov qualified through the Candidates' Matches to once again become the official challenger. This match was very close, with neither player holding more than a one-point lead at any point in the match. The finish was dramatic, as Kasparov was down one point in the final game, needing a win to hold his title. He proved to be up to the task and won the final game, retaining his title as the match was drawn by a score of 12-12.

A fifth match between Kasparov and Karpov was held in Lyon and New York in 1990. Once again, the result was a close one with Kasparov winning narrowly by a margin of 12.5-11.5.

With the World Championship title in his grasp, Kasparov switched to battling against FIDE. He created an organisation to represent chess players, the GrandMaster's Association (GMA) to give players more of a say in FIDE's activities. This stand-off lasted until 1993, by which time a new challenger had qualified through the Candidates cycle for Kasparov's next World Championship defense. The new challenger was Nigel Short, who had defeated Karpov in a qualifying match. The world champion and his challenger

decided to play their match outside of FIDE's jurisdiction, under another organisation created by Garry Kasparov called the Professional Chess Association (PCA). This is where the great fracture in the lineage of World Champions began.

Kasparov and Short were ejected from FIDE, and they played their well-sponsored match in London, which Kasparov won convincingly by a score of 12.5-7.5. FIDE organized a World Championship match between the loser of the Candidates final, Jan Timman, and previous World Champion Karpov, which Karpov won. (Nigel Short beat both of these players in the Candidates matches before facing Kasparov.) So Kasparov held the PCA World Chess Championship, and Karpov held the FIDE World Chess Championship.

Kasparov defended his title in 1995 against the Indian superstar Viswanathan Anand, which was held at the World Trade Center in New York City, before the PCA collapsed when Intel, one of the major backers, withdrew its sponsorship. Kasparov won the match by 4 wins to 1 with 13 draws. The match had 3 clear phases: a cautious beginning with 8 draws, mostly short; a violent middle phase with a win by Anand being responded to by a crushing sequence of 4 wins in 5 games by Kasparov; and a quiet finish with 4 quick draws after the match was beyond doubt.

In February 1996, IBM's chess computer Deep Blue defeated Kasparov in one game using normal time controls, in Deep Blue - Kasparov, 1996, Game 1. However, Kasparov famously retorted that upon the next games he "would tear Deep Blue to pieces with no question" and proceeded to gain three wins and two draws, soundly winning the match. In May 1997, an updated version of Deep Blue defeated Kasparov in Deep Blue - Kasparov, 1997, Game 6, in a highly publicised six-game match. This was the first time a computer had ever defeated a world champion in match play. An award-winning documentary film was made about this famous matchup entitled *Game Over: Kasparov and the Machine*. It should be noted that several factors weighed against Kasparov in this match. He was denied access to Deep Blue's recent games, in contrast to the computer's team that could study hundreds of Kasparov's. The relatively fast time control, lack of rest days and other match rules also favoured the machine.

After the loss, Kasparov said that he sometimes saw deep intelligence and creativity in the machine's moves, suggesting that during the second game, human chess players, in contravention of the rules, intervened. IBM denied they cheated, saying the only human intervention occurred between games. The rules provided for the developers to modify the program between games, an opportunity they said they used to shore up weaknesses in the computer's play revealed during the course of the match. Kasparov requested printouts of the machine's

moves but IBM refused. Kasparov demanded a rematch, but IBM declined and retired Deep Blue.

In November 2003, he engaged in a four game match against chess playing computer program X3D Fritz (which was said to have an estimated rating of 2807), using a virtual board, 3D glasses and a speech recognition system. After two draws and two wins respectively, the X3D Man-Machine match ended in draw. Kasparov received \$175,000 for the result and took home the golden trophy. Kasparov continued to criticize the blunder in the second game that cost him a crucial point. He felt that he had outplayed the machine overall and played well. "I only made one mistake but unfortunately that one mistake lost the game."

Kasparov tried to organise another World Championship match, under yet another organisation, the World Chess Association (WCA) with Linares organiser Rentero. Alexei Shirov and Vladimir Kramnik played a candidates match to decide the challenger, which Shirov won in a surprising upset. The WCA collapsed, however, when Rentero admitted that the funds required and promised had never materialised. This left Kasparov stranded, and yet another organisation stepped in — BrainGames.com, headed by Raymond Keene (who was also involved in bringing Kasparov to London for his replayed Candidates match against Korchnoi, half of the first Kasparov-Karpov match, and the Kasparov-Short PCA match). No match against Shirov was arranged, and talks with Anand collapsed, so a match was instead arranged against Kramnik. This match, Kasparov-Kramnik, took place in London during the latter half of 2000. A well-prepared Kramnik surprised Kasparov and won a crucial game 2 against Kasparov's Grünfeld Defence after the champion missed several drawing chances in an opposite-colour bishop ending. Kasparov made a critical error in game 10 with the Nimzo-Indian Defence, which Kramnik exploited to win in 25 moves. As white, Kasparov could not crack the passive but solid Berlin Defence in the Ruy Lopez, and Kramnik successfully drew all his games as black. Kramnik won the match 8.5-6.5, and for the first time in fifteen years Kasparov had no world championship title. He became the first player to lose a world championship match without winning a game since Lasker lost to Capablanca in 1921.

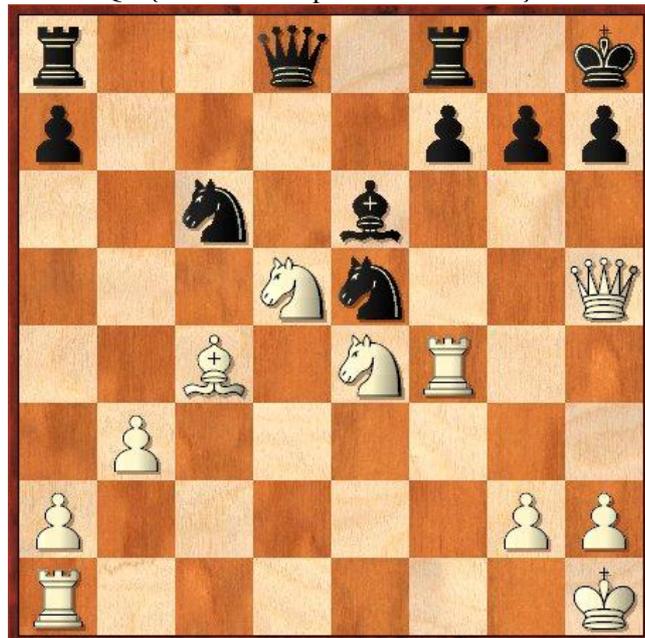
As part of the so-called "Prague Agreement", masterminded by Yasser Seirawan and intended to reunite the two World Championships, Kasparov was to play a match against the FIDE World Champion Ruslan Ponomarev in September 2003. However, this match was called off after Ponomarev refused to sign his contract for it without reservation. In its place, there were plans for a match against Rustam Kasimdzhanov, winner of the FIDE World Chess Championship 2004, to be held in January 2005 in the United Arab Emirates. These also fell through due to lack of funding. Plans to hold the match in Turkey instead came too late. Kasparov announced in January 2005 that he was tired of waiting for FIDE to organise a match and that

therefore he had decided to stop all efforts to regain the World Championship title.

After winning the prestigious Linares tournament for the ninth time, Kasparov announced on March 10, 2005, that he would be retiring from serious competitive chess. He cited as the reason a lack of personal goals in the chess world (he commented when winning the Russian championship in 2004 that it had been the last major title he had never won outright) and expressed frustration at the failure to reunify the world championship.

Event "Moscow"
Date "1981"
White "Geller, Efim P"
Black "Kasparov, Garry"
Result "0-1"
ECO "B83"
WhiteElo "2615"
BlackElo "2625"

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 e6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nc6 5. Nc3 d6 6. Be2 Nf6 7. O-O Be7 8. Be3 O-O 9. f4 e5 10. Nb3 exf4 11. Bxf4 Be6 12. Kh1 d5 13. e5 Nd7 14. Nxd5 Ndx5 15. c4 Bg5 16. Nc5 Bxf4 17. Rxf4 b6 18. Ne4 b5 19. b3 bxc4 20. Bxc4 Kh8 21. Qh5 {A somewhat speculative sacrifice}



21Bxd5 22. Bxd5 Qxd5 {Good play. rejecting the sac by 22...f6 would have been better for White.} 23.Rh4 h6 24. Rd1 Qa5 25. b4 Qxb4 26. Nf6 Qe7 {26...Qxh4 would have made the game last longer} 27. Rf1 Rfd8 0-1

QUOTE-

"We like to think."

Gary Kasparov, asked by Hans Ree why he and Karpov got into time trouble so often.

Advanced Chess

(sometimes called cyborg chess) is a relatively new form of chess, first introduced by grandmaster Garry Kasparov, with the objective of a human player and a computer chess program playing as a team against other such pairs. Many Advanced Chess proponents have stressed that Advanced Chess has merits in:

- increasing the level of play to heights never before seen in chess;
- producing blunder-free games with the qualities and the beauty of both perfect tactical play and highly meaningful strategic plans;
- giving the viewing audience a remarkable insight into the thought processes of strong human chess players and strong chess computers, and the combination thereof.

History

The former world champion grandmaster Garry Kasparov, who retired from competitive chess in 2005 but is still considered by many the strongest chess player in the world, has a long history in playing "Man vs. Machine" events. Among the most important are his matches against IBM's research computer Deep Blue, which Kasparov defeated in February 1996, scoring 4-2 in a 6-game match, and lost to, 3.5-2.5, in a May 1997 rematch. The first game of the former match remained famous though, as it was the first game in the history of chess in which a world champion had been defeated by a computer. Though the Deep Blue computer is now defunct, IBM still maintains the website for it and the associated famous match at www.research.ibm.com/deepblue. After this spectacular match, and many other matches against computers, Garry Kasparov came to an idea to invent a new form of chess in which humans and computers co-operate, instead of contending with each other. Kasparov named this form of chess "Advanced Chess".

The first Advanced Chess event was held in June 1998 in León, Spain. It was played between Garry Kasparov, who was using Fritz 5, and Veselin Topalov, who was using ChessBase 7.0. The analytical engines used, such as Fritz, HIARCS and Junior, were integrated into these two programs, and could have been called at a click of the mouse. It was a 6-game match, and it was arranged in advance that the players would consult the built-in million games databases only for the 3rd and 4th game, and would only use analytical engines without consulting the databases for the remaining games. The time available to each player during the games was 60 minutes. The match ended in a 3-3 tie. After the match, Kasparov said: "My prediction seems to be true that in Advanced Chess it's all over once someone gets a won position. This experiment was exciting and helped spectators understand what's going on. It was quite enjoyable and will take a very big and prestigious place in the history of chess."

Regular Advanced Chess events have been held since in León each year, with a little inconsistency after 2002. The Indian grandmaster Viswanathan Anand is considered the world's best Advanced Chess player, winning the three consecutive Advanced Chess tournaments in León in 1999, 2000 and 2001, before losing the title to Vladimir Kramnik in 2002. After the loss to Kramnik, Anand said:

"I think in general people tend to overestimate the importance of the computer in the competitions. You can do a lot of things with the computer but you still have to play good chess. I more or less manage to do so except for this third game. In such a short match, against a very solid and hard to beat opponent, this turned out to be too much but I don't really feel like that the computer alone can change the objective true to the position."

Advanced Chess strengths

It has been stressed that the strength of an Advanced Chess player does not come from any of the components of the human-computer team, but rather from the symbiosis of the two. This means that, even if a human chess player is stronger than the computer program he is using, he will be able to increase his playing strength even further with good Advanced Chess play, and vice versa: if a human player is weaker than the computer program he is using, he will still be able to play with a strength that is even greater than that of the computer. The strength of an Advanced Chess player lies in the combination of the computer's tactical accuracy and the human's creativity and sagacity, provided that both team components do possess these qualities.

The individual strengths of a computer chess program lie in:

- being able to calculate at a fascinating speed - on an average PC of today, a chess program is able to calculate a few million positions per second, making it tactically superior to any human in complex tactical positions;
- having access to a database of millions of tried and thoroughly tested opening moves and variations, with the ability to retrieve information from such a database very quickly, and to store such a database on hardware resources available to most modern PCs;
- having built-in hash tables for endgames, allowing the program to play perfect chess in certain endgames.

The individual strengths of a human chess player lie in:

- the intuitive ability to construct meaningful long-term strategic plans which even the fastest PCs cannot foresee;
- being able to quickly discriminate meaningful moves from the meaningless, without wasting time on deeply calculating the combinations which can be deemed meaningless at first sight;
- being able to critically judge and analyze a chess game, plan, opening or endgame.

In short, a computer program is tactically superior, whereas a human chess player is strategically superior, making the combination of the two a completely superior chess player. However it is entirely possible for the computer to become strategically superior, and recently Rybka has outperformed other chess engines by large margins because of its programmed chess knowledge.

How it is played

Both players sit in a typical chess-playing room, equipped with fast PCs of equal hardware strength. It is the duty of the tournament organizers to make sure that the players are familiar with the pertinent hardware and software. Unlike the traditional face-to-face chess, the players usually face to their respective computers. Each player is typically allotted one hour of thinking time (as was the time control used in all

Advanced Chess events in León), though the particular tournament regulations may vary regarding this matter. During the match, the players will typically form strategic plans in their minds, then enter the candidate sequences of moves into the computer to analyze and make sure there are no blunders and other possible holes. The human player will compare the merits of each candidate sequence after having seen the computer's analysis, and may even introduce a new variation if time permits. The player will typically play out the move which he has established (with computer help) to be strongest. If there are two or more moves which the computer considers to be of equal strength (such situations are frequent), the human player will use his own strategic skills and experience and analytical judgement capabilities to decide which move to play. The human is in charge during the whole match, and is formally free to play any move he considers the best, at his own discretion. During the opening, the players may consult a large database of opening moves and variations, containing information about who played a particular variation, when it was played, and with what success, though a particular tournament's rules may prohibit using databases in such manner.

During the whole game, the players' computer monitors are projected onto large screens, making it possible for the viewing audience to watch how the strongest players decide about their moves and make their plans. Typically there will be a commentator in a separate room, equipped with the identical hardware as players, which he will use to help him provide a commentary to the audience - this way the audience is given the real insight into the thought processes of the strongest players.

Although Advanced Chess play is at the highest level when performed by the top grandmasters, it is not limited to them. Anyone can play Advanced Chess, sometimes with the same success as the strongest grandmasters. Occasionally, average players have been able to achieve a performance rating higher than the one of the computer programs they were using, and on rare occasions higher than the ratings of top grandmasters.

Advanced Chess teams?

It has been debated, due to the peculiarities of the human-computer team, whether the human should be considered the Advanced Chess player, or rather the team itself should be considered the Advanced Chess player. It is the prevailing view that, due to the fact that the human subordinates the computer in a meaningful intent to win a chess game, and that the human is the one who makes the final decision about the move to be played, the human should be considered the Advanced Chess player. Some have also argued that the term "computer-assisted player" should not be used for an Advanced Chess player, as the key element is Cupertino, not assistance.

Advanced Chess on the Internet

The ubiquity of the Internet and a high number of commercial and free Internet chess servers have made it possible for anyone to play Advanced Chess over the Internet. There has not been organized Internet Advanced Chess play in quite a while, though, and few Internet chess systems have regulated rated Advanced Chess play. The world's largest organization

for Advanced Chess on the Internet is the Advanced Chess Organization - CCO (this organization used to be known as Computer Chess Organization, and therefore kept the acronym CCO for historical reasons). CCO organizes regular Advanced Chess events, most of which take place on The Free Internet Chess Server (FICS) or the correspondence website <http://www.cowplay.com>. One need not be a CCO member to participate in its tournaments, though the organization stresses that membership is highly desirable. CCO Advanced Chess events on the Internet usually employ unrated play, due to the fact that rated Advanced Chess play is still unregulated by most Internet chess systems, and use of computers in rated games is considered cheating and ruled out. CCO proposes that Internet chess servers introduce a third category of player - the "Advanced Chess player", among the existing human and computer players, latter of which usually labelled by "(C)", and that Advanced Chess players should be associated with a special Advanced Chess rating category. CCO points out that most Internet chess servers already have software-driven mechanisms which allow players to choose the types of the opponents they wish to play, therefore making it possible for a particular player to exclude all Advanced Chess players, should he/she not wish to play them.

Cheating

Computer cheating in online chess games is a problem, and should not be confused with Advanced Chess play. CCO argues that playing Advanced Chess is not cheating, because it is done with the fully informed consent of one's opponent. Many factors indicate that a large number of players are secretly using their chess programs to aid their play against the chess servers' rules of play, and there is no perfect mechanism to prevent this and ensure fair play on the Internet. Some have suggested that, for these reasons, online rating systems should be abolished completely, or that computer assistance in human rated play should be allowed for all rated games. Many oppose these views, CCO among them, arguing that it would make the otherwise sharp line between computer cheating and Advanced Chess rather blurred, and that chess servers do possess fairly good mechanisms to ensure fair play. CCO also adds, that if a new separate category of chess - Advanced Chess - were introduced into rated Internet play, it would significantly reduce the number of cheating players, as they could then legitimately play Advanced Chess, without the need to secretly use their computer chess programs to their advantage.

Solutions to Kasparov Positional Puzzles

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| a) RxC8 | b) Rc5 |
| c) Bxf5 | d) Qa4 |
| e) Bh7+ | f) Nxf7 |
| g) Rxf6 | h) Nxf7+ |
| i) Bxg7+ | j) Bd4 |
| k) Rxf7 | l) Bg6+ |

BURY CHESS CLUB CELEBRATES 50 YEARS

The club originated at a meeting at the Textile Hall following an advert in the Bury Times asking anyone interested in forming a club to attend. This took place on 24 October 1955. Current club President, Bernard Sharples, attended the meeting with a school friend, AJ (Tony) Booth, who is now in New Zealand. There was then a meeting on 31 October, at which a constitution was adopted and officers were elected. Chess was played at the first actual meeting of the club on 2 November 1955.

Originally having a nucleus of players who had played chess at the Athenaeum Club, others were attracted to the club because of its intentions to play competitive chess. The club formed a Bury League, which is still in existence as the Bury and Rochdale League.

The major competition in the area has always been the Manchester League, however, and the club soon entered teams in that league. Over the years we have won the A division championship, and the premier cup competition, as well as having success in lower divisions with our 2nd and 3rd teams.

We have played abroad, visiting Poland, Granada in Spain and the Isle of Man for matches.

We have run congresses from time to time over the years. For several Years in the 1960s we ran the Lancashire Easter Congress at Bury Technical College. Fashions change in all things, and congresses nowadays are largely one-day affairs. This is the format of the annual Rapidplay Congress, which we currently run each December.

We started this current series of rapid play events in 1995 with a two-section congress, which attracted about 80 entries to the Mosses

Centre, where the club then held our ordinary weekly meetings. By expanding over the years to a three-section congress, with an Open Section, we are able to attract over 100 entries each year, including grandmasters and international masters, plus several other strong entries. We have moved from the Mosses Centre to the Elizabethan Suite at the Town Hall, a larger and much more prestigious venue.

CHESSMEN FEEL THE DRAUGHTS

As part of the Bury Chess Club 50th Anniversary celebrations, the club accepted a challenge from the Lancashire Draughts Association to a combined chess and draughts match on 2nd May 2006.

The Draughts Association can trace its history back to the 19th century, so that they were by far the senior party. They also had an advantage in having two county chess players in their line-up.

The evening took the form of one game at each discipline, with 25 Minutes each on the clock for each game. The draughts match went very much as expected, with only Bury's Martin Bryant, himself a former county draughts player, able to salvage half a point.

The teams adjourned briefly for drinks and sandwiches, and then set off to play chess! This produced a closer contest, and on top board Bury's Mick Norris was taken to the time limit by an experienced opponent, and lost on time.

The final scores, after an entertaining evening were -

Draughts - Lancashire 7.5, Bury 0.5

Frank Bednall 1 - Mick Norris 0 ; Ron Taylor 1 - Bernard Sharples 0 ; Anthony Boyle 1 - Jim Litherland 0 ; Fred Gill 1 - John Grindrod 0 ; Philip Jackson 0.5 - Martin Bryant 0.5 ; Steve Duffy 1 - Peter Logan 0 ; John Reade 1 - Brian Forrest 0 ; Keith Rogers 1 - Lee Baron 0.

Chess - Lancashire 2, Bury 6

Ron Taylor 1 - Mick Norris 0 ; Anthony Boyle 0
- Bernard Sharples 1 ;
Fred Gill 0 - Jim Litherland 1 ; Philip
Jackson 1 - John Grindrod 0 ;
Steve Duffy 0 - Peter Logan 1 ; John Reade 0 -
Brian Forrest 1 ;
Keith Rogers 0 - Lee Baron 1 ; Frank Bednall 0
- Steven Press 1.

A rematch is intended for 2007, although
whether the chess players will be any better
at draughts by then is doubtful!

WITH THANKS TO MICK NORRIS FOR THESE ARTICLES

JOHN ROBINSON'S LEGACY

I think that those who knew John Robinson felt that he would always be remembered in chess circles for his sterling work. Little did they know that he would leave his mark even more significantly on English & British Chess than anyone could have expected.

In his will John has left a considerable sum to the BCF (which still exists as a body to administer bequests). He has specified that £10,000 a year be used to support the British Championship, with which he had long affiliations.

Due to changes in inheritance tax regulations, the Treasury could take a significant cut in inheritance tax. However, there are avenues open to the BCF that would mitigate the situation. In essence the setting up of a Charitable Trust should lead to the full £650,000 left by John remaining with the BCF. However, under existing law the only charitable trusts that are recognised are those relating to juniors (i.e. those under 21).

Proposals are being put to a BCF Extraordinary meeting on June 24th that would allow such a Charitable Trust to be set up.

Whilst a BCF Youth Trust already exists it only has £17,000 left in it, so it coming to the end of its life. The proposal for the new trust is that the income accruing from the capital would be used to make grants, rather than using the capital itself. This would give the trust a much longer life than the existing youth trust.

There are those who would like to see more significant expenditure from the bequest, and those who are unhappy about a large part being put into youth chess. However, I cannot see that it makes any sense to sacrifice £366,000 in inheritance tax for the sake of having complete freedom on the use of the considerably smaller sum that would remain.

ANY IM/GM FOR FOOTBALL?

With the country is about to be gripped by World Cup fever, no doubt a few chess players will be paying more attention to football than to chess for a while. It may be surprising to some to learn that not only are there chess players interested in football, but footballers with more than a passing interest in chess.

Perhaps the most notable chess player/footballer, (or should it be footballer/chess player?) is Simen Agdestein who once laid claim to being the worlds youngest Grandmaster. At the same time as earning his GM title, he was also representing Norway's under 21 football team, & later went on to represent their full international team.

Danish GM Lars Bo Hansen played international football, as did Romanian IM Bela Soos. Torkil Nielsen featured in the soccer upset of the 1990 European Championships, scoring the winning goal for the Faroe Islands against Austria; he was also their chess champion.

The claim for the most dedicated untitled chess playing footballer rests with Ossie Ardilles who is reported to have spent 10-12hrs a week playing & studying chess, & to have played correspondence chess at quite a high standard, at the same time as playing for, then managing, Spurs. He is also a friend of GM Quinteros.

Jimmy Greaves challenged Terry Marsh (boxer & chess player) to a game when the latter was featured on the "This is Your Life" TV program. The report of this does not say whether the challenge was accepted. Whilst 2 Oxford United players Gary

Smart & Ceri Evans were involved in a charity simul against Kasparov – no prizes for guessing which Gary won.

Other top-flight footballers reputed to be, or have been, decent chess players are Alberto di Stefano, Alan Ball & Rodney Marsh. A little questionable is a report that Paul Gascoigne drew a speed game with GM Jon Speelman. I suspect the football skills of the latter may well be somewhat better than the chess playing skills of the former!

The whole of the Zurich football team of the sixties were said to have found chess a compulsory part of their training – apparently it didn't catch on.

Of course footballers are not the only sportsmen amongst which good chess players may be found, but that as they say, is another story for another newsletter.

ECF EXTRAORDINARY MEETING

An ECF meeting has been called for the same day as the BCF meeting. This is to allow motions connected with membership schemes to be considered.

The Finance Council meeting considered issues relating to the extension of the NMS and decided that, subject to satisfactory agreement with the NCCU, motions that allowed game fee to continue to be waived could continue. Unfortunately satisfactory agreement was not reached and the ECF issued notice of termination of the current NMS.

The following background summary has been produced for the meeting & is reproduced here.

HISTORY OF NMS and BCF/ECF

In March 2004, at Peterborough, Brian Bainbridge spoke at the MB in favour of a "Grading membership" scheme to be implemented in County Durham. It was agreed at this meeting that Robert Richmond write a paper on the pros and cons of such a scheme. The following motion was passed, "that this Council recommend that a mandatory Membership Scheme based on grading be introduced to commence on 1st September 2005. Council instructs the Board to produce, detailed proposals for submission to the next AGM/Council meeting in October."

in June 2004, at Nottingham, Bill O'Rourke gave a presentation in favour of a membership scheme which was voted down by a Special Council Meeting.

In April 2005, it was agreed that the NCCU run a pilot scheme (NMS) the agreement for which was signed by Bill O'Rourke and Roy Heppinstall at the AGM at the CCPR in London in October. The agreement, which is in full on the ECF website at

<http://www.englishchess.org.uk/organisatioii/general/nms2005.htm> spells out the agreement between the two bodies. It might not have been the clearest of documents but those involved in the process could not have been in any doubt about what was agreed.

The contractual relationship is covered in three clauses.

"2.2 Membership Applicability date

A player joining NMS will become a Basic Direct Member of BCF. Benefits of NMS apply from the date at which payment is made to NCCU, but see section 10 below for the date at which membership of ECF commences.

10. ECF

It is recognised that the Memorandum and Articles of Association, Bye Laws and the Regulations of the ECF must cover all ECF aspects of NMS and the provisions of the same prevail in the event of any conflict with the terms of this memorandum and its Appendix. In particular NMS members must formally become members of ECF by completing and signing the individual application for membership. Such applications must be submitted to BCF on a regular basis, it being recognised that under the Companies Act NMS members cannot become members of ECF until their application for membership has been received and approved by the ECF Board, though benefits of ECF membership accrue to NMS members from the date shown in paragraph 2.2.

6.2 Information flow

The full names, addresses and BCF reference numbers of NMS members will be kept up to date, and will be supplied to the BCF at regular intervals, at least monthly, in the format required for it to be copied into the BCF database, together with the original completed and signed application forms for ECF Direct Membership. BCF will supply congress organisers in NCCU with lists of BCF members shortly before each congress is scheduled to take place. BCF will also supply NCCU with a full list of BCF members on a quarterly basis. BCF are currently reviewing the format in which member information is to be held."

This meant that the following chain of events should take place:

A player joins NMS, pays their money and signs their ECF membership form. The NCCU sends the monies through to ECF on an agreed schedule, and sends the names and addresses and signed forms to ECF.

Whilst credit must be paid to the efforts of Bill O'Rourke and his colleagues in obtaining so many recruits there have been insuperable problems in the implementation of the Agreement.

On the link,
<http://www.nccii.org.uk7ncciiembershipscheme.htm>, we find the following statement:

All members (of the NMS), will automatically become basic members of the BCF (British Chess Federation) and will be entitled a free electronically downloadable copy of 'Chessmoves'. (N.B. - This is dependent on BCF Council endorsement in April). Membership per year = £10 per adult, £5 U18 (as of 1/9/05) and will remain so for three years except in very exceptional circumstances.

On the same page, we find via
<http://www.nccu.org.uk/NMSentiyforms.doc>, entry forms which do not mention the ECF/BCF.

The NCCU refused to give the names and addresses of those who had joined NMS. They did not hand over any Company membership forms to the ECF. The only information ECF could access was the list of names on the NCCU website.

The ECF Finance Council on 22nd April resolved that the NMS Scheme should only continue beyond 31st August 2006 if a satisfactory agreement on these issues was concluded between the NMS Working Party and ECF. This had to be achieved before 31st May as 3 months notice of termination was required by the Agreement.

A meeting was held in Leeds on April 29th between the NMS working party and 4 members of the ECF Board.

The NMS working party said that the names and addresses would only be provided if ECF agreed to make cash grants to NCCU of £1,000 for chess sets, £1,400 for an NCCU Grand Prix and £600 for a Northern Club Championship and also reassurances were forthcoming from ECF as to the exact usages of NMS players' personal information.

This was reported to a specially convened ECF Board Meeting on 13^{* May}.

The Board resolved that it could not accept the proposal of "cash grants for names and addresses" which the NCCU

were in any event already contracted to supply. It was however indicated that ECF would deal with applications for cash grants in accordance with its normal constitutional arrangements and noted that it was clearly right in principle for there to be spending on areas that had shown increased commitment to ECF. An e-mail was sent to Bill O'Rourke on 17th May outlining the reasons why the names and addresses and the membership forms were needed. An explanation was given as to the exact usage of the NMS players personal information. The ECF's stance on the cash grants was explained and it was indicated that the ECF Director of Junior Chess & Education had already resolved to provide 100 chess sets to NCCU. Because of the time constraints about any notice of termination it was however made clear that the Agreement would be terminated if the names and addresses were not received by the ECF Office by 4pm on Monday 22nd May. There were further exchanges of e-mails subsequently but the names and addresses were not received by the deadline or at all.

At 19: 30 hours on 22nd May an email was received from Bill O'Rourke to the homes of the ECF Directors and the NMS working party. No database was attached. Instead further financial proposals namely that the ECF and NCCU equally split the increase of revenue from the NCCU as compared to 2004/2005. This would in effect require a renegotiation of the Agreement.

In the circumstances the ECF have regretfully terminated the Agreement.

An EGM will be called by the ECF in London on 24th June at which Resolutions will be tabled to put in place powers for the Board to negotiate new agreements, principally with Counties, for Basic Membership of ECF for their own members. The Framework for these agreements will be set out in a new Schedule to the Direct Members Bye Laws. The essence of such agreements is that the County (or other body) would agree that all its members would become ECF Members (with minor exceptions for players playing a couple or so games a year). These could be Basic Members at £10 per annum or Basic Junior Members at £5 per annum or if they wished to do so they could be in a different Membership category at a higher rate. In exchange not only would they get the benefits of ECF Membership but the County would gain exemption from Game Fee on its competitions including playing in the Union stages of the County Championship. It is envisaged that multiple party agreements could be negotiated to cover for example 2 or 3 Counties and the Leagues within their boundaries. These Agreements could be in place as early as 1st September 2006. There is an added incentive of a discount of 2.5% for prompt payment by 31st October.

Motions are before the meeting to remove the references to the NMS from the ECF bye laws.

However, as has been indicated elsewhere, the ECF Board do not wish to abandon the idea of membership schemes. Hence the second stage of the meeting involves motions to allow a schedule to be added which sets up a Framework Agreement for future membership schemes to be set up with Constituent Units, Counties or Leagues.

The Schedule to the Direct Members Bye Laws Framework Agreement for Scheme entered into by the Company with a Constituent Unit or a County Association or a Chess League ("The Member Organisation")

1. The Member Organisation shall make it a condition that all its members and all participants in its competitions (with de minimis exceptions) shall become ECF Direct Members.

2. ECF will waive Game Fee for all games played by Members of the Member Organisation who are ECF Direct Members or Members of another Chess Federation affiliated to FIDE played under the jurisdiction of the Member Organisation.

3. The Member Organisation as agent for ECF shall collect and account for the membership fees for Basic Members and Basic Junior Members by 31st October in every year and shall submit to ECF by such date applications for membership of ECF duly signed. The Member Organisation shall be entitled to a 2.5% discount for prompt payments made by such date for the year commencing on the preceding 1st September. New members after 31st October shall be similarly accounted for at the end of each following month but without such discount.

4. Either party may terminate this Agreement on or before 1st March in any year effective as at 31st August following.

(If any delegate cannot attend the meeting, but would like to see their vote cast, either myself or Cyril would be happy to take your proxy & undertake to vote in accordance with any instructions given. – Julie)

Comment on the NMS situation

As MCCU CEO I was disturbed to hear the NCCU representatives in effect calling for the extra monies they had generated through the NMS to be spent in the North.

Some of our northern cousins seem to conveniently forget that for years many of their leagues opted out of game fee, (indeed there are still some that will have nothing to do with the NMS or game fee). As a result northern counties contributed less pro-rata to BCF coffers in comparison to other Unions.

The North was not exactly starved of support from the BCF/EFC, with 2 British Championships in Scarborough in recent years, the Young Masters Event at Ampleforth for 5 years, the British Rapidplay Championships held in the north for many years, and the Blackpool Congress given financial support in the past, to name several things that immediately spring to mind.

Have either the MCCU or SCCU had British Championship in recent years? No. True the Young Masters has moved down from the North to the Midlands this year. True the South has the Hastings Tournament (not an ECF event by the way). Have the SCCU & MCCU ever suggested during the "lean" years in terms of NCCU game fee that the North should receive less support? Not to my knowledge.

The Northern Counties argued for a National membership scheme & when that did not find favour, persuaded delegates to agree to a pilot membership scheme being run in the North. One of the principal claims they made was that they could deliver better income levels for the BCF/EFC from their area than the existing game fee system. If the ECF had in effect given them the additional income back, the net result would have been no improvement in ECF finances. At £10 NMS was considerably cheaper than the £16 players elsewhere in England have to pay, so one could argue that the NCCU were already gaining much from the ECF.

Okay the BCF/EFC did not hold up their end of the agreement to the letter. Reviews that should have been held were not. But, the NCCU signed an agreement saying they would supply names & addresses, they did not do so. Why did they sign agreeing to do so if they had concerns? If someone raised the issue after the scheme had started, why wasn't it raised with the BCF/EFC immediately? Having received the letter covering the data protection legalities (granted it should have been passed on sooner than it was), was the data forthcoming? No, further prevarication ensued. Why did the ECF want the names & addresses, what were they going to do with the information? Contrary to what some of you may have heard, the ECF did actually spell out what they wanted the information for, but it was still not forthcoming.

The NCCU signed an agreement saying they would get NMS players to complete ECF forms, why did they not flag up the reluctance of players to sign these forms as soon as it became apparent? Yes, these are issues which in theory could have been raised had review meetings taken place, but they could & should still have been raised, even in the absence of such meetings. That said, when approached by various others in the North, a number of NMS members were quite happy to sign ECF forms.

The NCCU representatives gave the impression that there had been extensive consultation in their area concerning the NMS. The emergence of these fundamental problem areas begs the question of how extensive or effective the consultation was, or whether as is not unusual for chess players, few actually bothered to engage in the process, and have only raised these issues after signing up for the scheme. If this is what happened, why did the NCCU not raise this sooner? Why ask what the ECF wants the names & addresses for, when surely the reasons are obvious? The tangible problem that came to the fore was how on earth anyone who needed to, was supposed to be able to verify who was eligible to enter events requiring membership, when there was no central record covering all eligible members held by the ECF. Did the NCCU expect people to check with both the ECF office & the NCCU, or did they expect the ECF office to check with the NCCU on behalf of others? - both quite ridiculous propositions in my view.

If the NCCU wanted to change some aspects of the agreement, why did they not say so well before the April Council meeting? This would have allowed any such matters to be looked at & put to Council, instead of which there has been a mad rush to try & do so before the 31st May, the deadline by which either party needed to notify withdrawal from the scheme for the year commencing 1st September.

It is regrettable that some in the NCCU are now painting the ECF as entirely the villains in this situation, and have stooped to making claims about events that are patently untrue. It appears that there is now talk of the NCCU continuing with the NMS as a stand-alone scheme, retaining the monies themselves and in effect splitting from the ECF.

For me the failure to adhere to the NMS agreement; the late raising of issues; the prevarication about names & addresses; the demands for money; the shifts in position; and issue of false information; all taken in combination, beg the question whether the NMS pilot was always

intended by some in the NCCU as a method of engineering a split from the national body. I do know of others, including NMS members, who are wondering the same thing, and who do not want a “divorce” from the ECF, as they genuinely see the NMS as a pilot scheme for the ECF/BCF.

I know that various County AGMs are in the offing up north, along with an NCCU meeting. I know there are those in the NCCU area who have been prepared to look at all sides of the situation & have concluded that a split from the ECF is not what they want. I can only hope their voices will be heard.

To those reading this article, I would stress that these are my own views on the subject, not an official MCCU line, nor those of the ECF Acting CEO using me as a mouthpiece. He is quite capable of stating his own views in his own name, just as I am quite capable of coming to my own objective conclusions.

MCCU AGM

A reminder that our own AGM is on 18th June, as this falls before the BCF/ECF meetings, there will be a rare opportunity to discuss the BCF/ECF issues & ensure the delegates are aware of county views.

The AGM agenda is posted on the MCCU website, so I do not propose to repeat it here. A copy will accompany the few hard copy editions of the newsletter.

I would draw your attention to the advance notice relating to the meeting, also on the website. There are vacancies which do need to be filled if the MCCU is to continue to run all its' events.

A number of motions appear on the agenda because the absence of a quorum of delegates meant they could not be dealt with at the half-year meeting.

I would again urge counties to ensure that they are represented at the AGM. If any MCCU player has any views & cannot contact their own delegate, please feel free to contact me.

A reminder of my contact details –

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PORTRAIT OF A PURIST by David Simpson

A pusillanimous pedant of the board,
Perversely pleased so long as he can play
Precise, positional and pluckless moves,
Placidly pushing pawns upon their way.

You'd think such paltry practices would pall;
Such pallid pleasures surely must wear thin:
But not for this professional poltroon,
Primly pronouncing that he plays to win.

He places pieces with prodigious care;
A proffered pawn he'll piously refuse;
Plodding, pernickety, with every move
Perfection he persistently pursues.

A pale professor of the passive style,
Perplexing poorer players who decry
His prudent plans as petty paltering:
Such is the purist - and such am not I.

THE ADVENT OF THE TIME LIMIT

The following is an extract from a Victorian chess article about chess, & deals with the advent of time controls & timing devices.

One very satisfactory outcome of all this match-playing has been a very much wider application of the "time limit," which had only been enforced in great masters' tournaments and in isolated games of any special importance. In the ordinary way a player might take ten minutes--and as many more as he pleased--over every move; in many games he can and does still. This is all very well if you have a whole evening and a night before you, but otherwise one of two things will probably happen: either the game will result in a draw for want of time to develop it, or the faster player will throw it away in sheer disgust. After analyzing a position for any length of time, a player ought to be able to proceed for the next few moves with tolerable rapidity, and in order to prevent him from examining every possible variation after every move, the "time limit" is introduced. The standard varies according to the quality of the chess expected. In the great masters' tournaments twenty moves in the first hour and fifteen moves an hour afterwards is the general limit. In the league matches twenty-four moves an hour is the rate, and in some contests even thirty is not considered to be too fast.

A "time limit" of twenty-four moves an hour means that each player has one hour at his disposal wherein to complete his first twenty-four moves, an hour and a quarter for his first thirty moves, an hour and a half for thirty-six moves, and so on. If he has made more than the required number in the hour, the time he has gained is added on to the time allotted for the next series of moves. For instance, supposing a player has made thirty-six moves in the first hour and he has a difficult position to analyze, he can if he likes examine it for half an hour, and yet will not have exceeded his limit of thirty-six moves in an hour and a half. On the other hand, should a player exceed his "time limit"--that is, should he have failed to complete twenty-four moves in the first hour, or six additional moves for every quarter of an hour afterwards--he forfeits the game.

Hour-glasses or "sand-glasses" were formerly used for the purpose of measuring time at chess matches, but now specially constructed clocks are in general use for this purpose. These clocks consist of two clocks mounted on a common base, which moves on a pivot, the two clocks therefore being on the arms of a sort of see-saw. The beam or base is so constructed that when one clock is elevated it stands perfectly perpendicular, whilst the depressed clock lies over at an angle. But as the mechanism of each clock is so constructed that it only moves when the clock is perfectly perpendicular, it follows that when the upright clock is going the depressed clock is at rest.

Another and more modern variety has the two clocks fixed on the same level, but with a small brass arm reaching from the top of one to the top of the other. This arm acts as a pivot, and can be brought down into actual contact with one clock at a time by a touch of the finger. When it is thus in contact, by an ingenious device the clock is stopped, and the desired result is attained. The working of the clocks during a match is simplicity itself. At the commencement of the match the hands of each clock point to twelve, then at the call of "time to commence play," the clock of the first player is started. Then as soon as he makes his first move he stops his own clock, either by depressing it or by touching the arm referred to, the same motion starting his opponent's clock; so it goes on during the entire course of the game, each move being marked by the stopping of one clock and the starting of the other.

(I wonder what the writer of this article would have made of today's digital clocks?)