

THE MIDDLE GAME

Volume 1, Issue 23

July 2006

CONGRATULATIONS !!

Well done to Ashfield who won the National Club Minor Plate.

Also to -

Nottingham High School on retaining the ECF Schools title they won last year.

Warwickshire U125 team on reaching the County Finals - unfortunately they were narrowly defeated by Bedfordshire

For full results of all these finals see the Events Supplement.

MCCU AGM

Praise be! - A quorate meeting was held at Syston, but not with all counties represented.

REPORTS

Unfortunately our President Roy Woodcock had been taken into hospital, everyone present hoped he would soon be recovered enough to go home (which has since happened) As a result he was unable to provide a report. The Meeting Chairman had nothing to report. The CEO had circulated a written report expressing concern about poor attendance at meetings and poor feedback from delegates and players. This has hampered attempts to move the Union forward.

Audited accounts were produced showing a small profit of just over £115. In addition a budget for 2006/7 was presented with a loss of just over £350. However on closer inspection it was felt that, on the evidence of 2005/6 some areas of projected expenditure could be reduced, without having any appreciable impact. In particular the meeting felt that hard copy versions of the newsletter should no longer be provided free of charge to those clubs who had provided no email contact. It was agreed that this issue of the newsletter would be last FOC copy, and that any club wanting a hard copy sent to them should pay a subscription that would cover the cost of printing and postage. The production of a printed MCCU grading list was also discussed; the budget

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IMPORTANT NOTICE

DO YOU CURRENTLY RECEIVE A HARD COPY OF THE NEWSLETTER THROUGH THE POST? IF SO PLEASE NOTE

If you read the MCCU AGM report you will see that the decision was made to stop providing a free hard copy newsletter to those clubs for whom no email contact is known.

This newsletter is the last free hardcopy that will be sent out.

You can still receive a hard copy for a subscription of £6.00 a year. Cheques should be made payable to Midland Counties Chess Union and sent to me at 105 Central Ave Syston, Leics LE7 2EG

Alternatively, if you can provide an email contact they can either receive a message to alert them that the next newsletter is going onto the website, or can be sent the newsletter & results supplement as attachments.

NEW WEBSITE

Those of you who have visited the MCCU website recently may have noticed it looks rather different. This is courtesy of our new webmaster Sean Hewitt. The site is still very much "under construction". Sean has also managed to secure a new domain name "mccu.org.uk" which was not available when the MCCU first set up a website. As it is now available, it seemed an opportune moment to pick up a shorter easier name to remember.

The old www.midlandcountieschessunion.co.uk address will continue to work for a while yet and will direct you to the new site, but why not bookmark the new www.mccu.org.uk name sooner rather than later?

Sean would welcome feedback on the new site & suggestions for content.

had been drawn up on the basis of no MCCU booklets and thus no profit. Organisations who had subscribed last season had indicated that demand would be down. However, Sean Hewitt indicated that he could produce and get small quantities of lists produced at a reasonable price. These factors would produce a break even budget. The meeting accepted the proposal to leave the county levy unchanged.

The Junior Director Graham Humphries was unable to attend due to both his own and his wife's poor health. He was disappointed in the lack of support for the county U18 team event. Unfortunately the MCCU Junior championships fell foul of a clash of dates at the proposed venue, but consideration is being given to running the event later in the year.

Cyril Johnson gave his apologies for being unable to give much attention to the MCCU events job, pressing ECF matters had left him with little time to devote to the MCCU. Hence he was unwilling to continue in post.

On the publicity front the CEO has continued to produce the newsletter, the number of hard copies has been whittled down still further, but mainly because email addresses have come to light rather than been proffered by some clubs. A volunteer had come forward to take over the website. Neil Beasley has done an excellent job for several years, for which hearty thanks are due, but wanted to hand the reigns on to someone else.

A written county team's report had been circulated. There had been minimal disruptions to this seasons tournaments. Final tables were as published in the previous newsletter. Neil confirmed that 2006/7 will be his last year as controller. No one has yet expressed an interest in taking on the job. Do we really want the prospect of no County Team competitions in 2007/8? If you know of anyone who might be both willing and capable of taking this post please let me know. The ideal would be for any prospective new controller to work with Neil during the coming season.

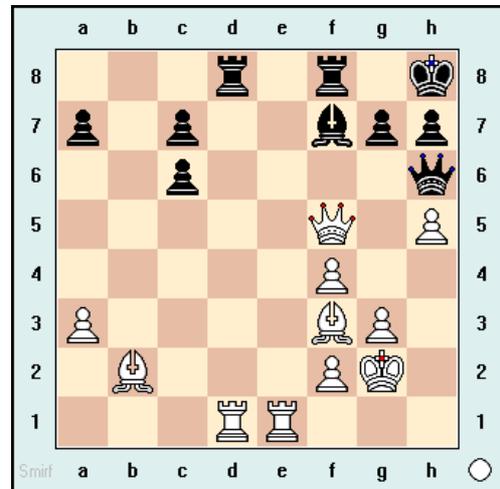
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Here are some chess puzzles from the games of Paul Keres.

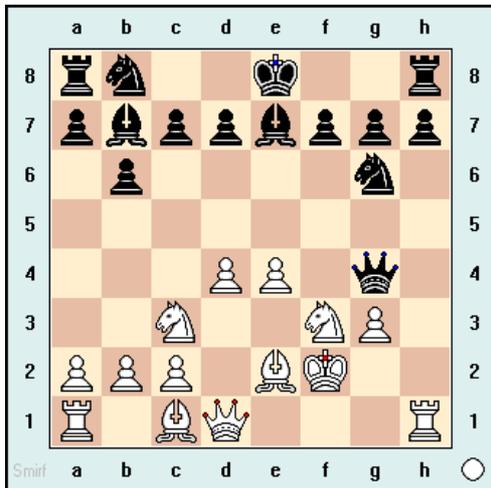
White to move and win except where noted.



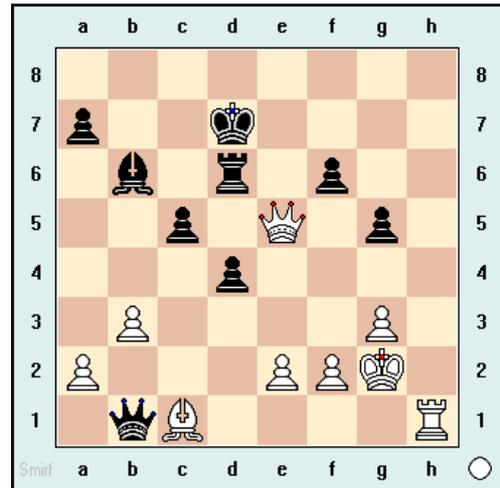
a) White Mates in 3. Keres vs Verbak, corr., 1932



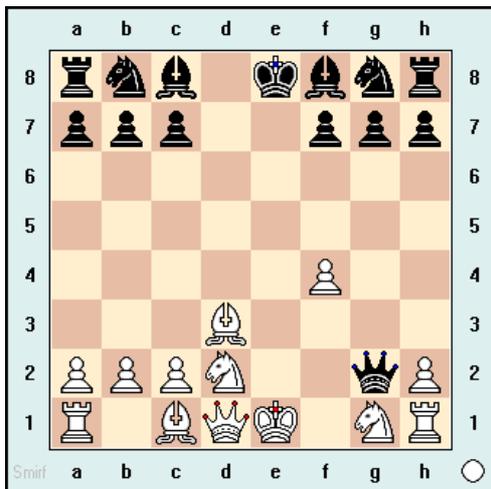
d) White Mates in 5. Keres vs De Moraes Mendes, Munich, 1936



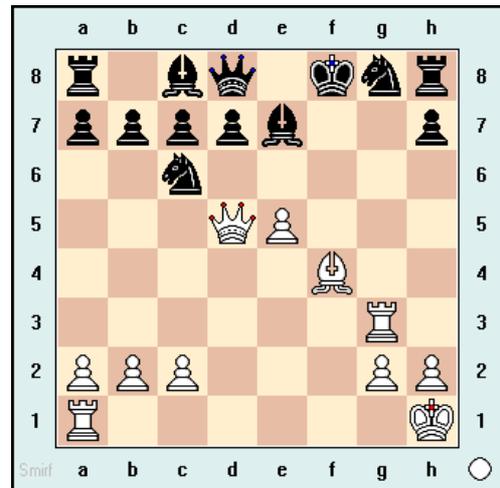
b) Keres vs Toldsepp, corr., 1934



e) Keres vs Efim Bogoljubow, Zandvoort, 1936



c) Keres vs Vladimir Petrov, Tallinn, 1933

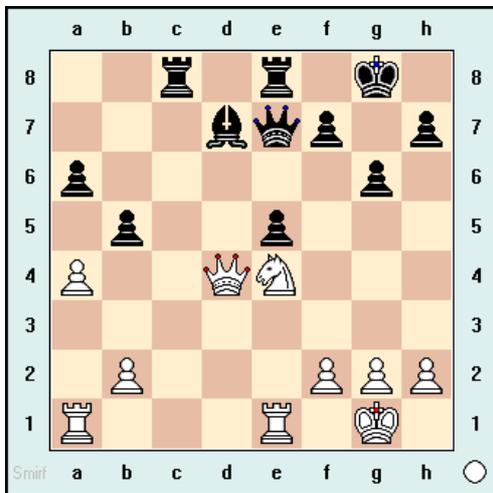


f) Keres vs J Wilkins, corr., 1930

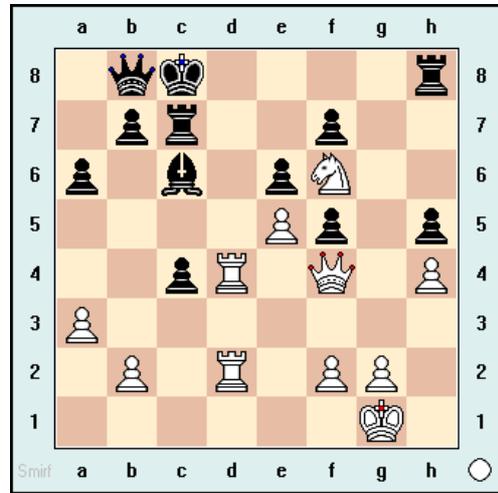
solutions on page 18

More chess puzzles from the games of Paul Keres.

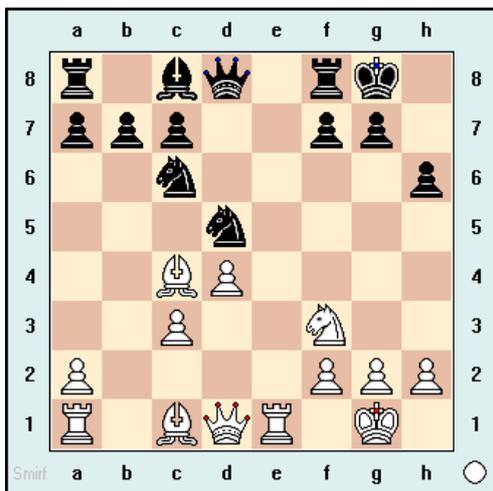
White to move and win except where noted.



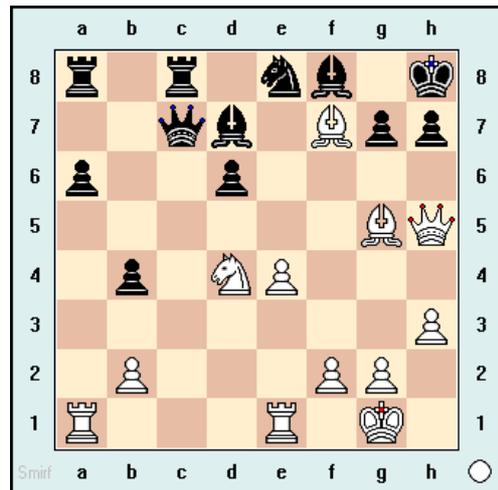
g) Keres vs E Mill, Tartu, 1935



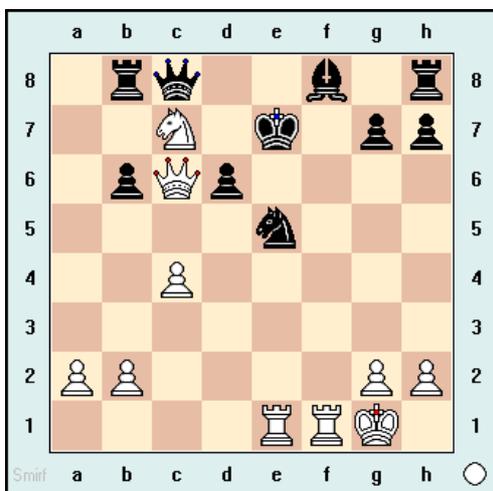
j) Keres vs Wolfgang Hasenfuss, Kemer, 1937



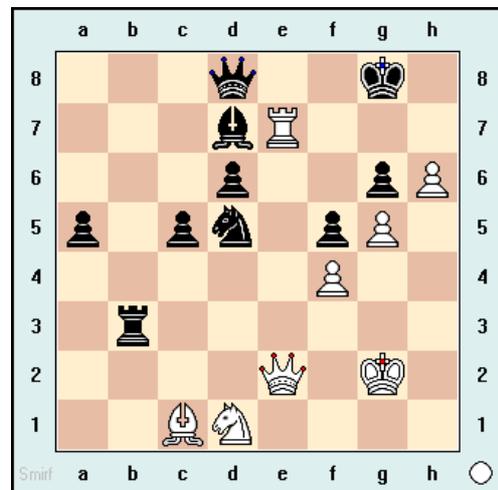
h) Keres vs E Koorm, Tartu, 1935



k) Keres vs Theodore Tylor, Margate, 1937



i) White Mates in 8. Keres vs M Schapiro, corr., 1935



l) Keres vs Karel Hromadka, Prague, 1937

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Cyril expressed disappointment that 2 teams had pulled out of the proposed U175 jamboree that he was due to control for Neil at a late stage. This left the event with only 2 teams, one of which only had 1 player rated over 150. The feeling of the meeting was that there were a relatively small number of players in the 150-174 grading bracket and many of these were already playing for their county in the Open event. A number also played in the lower leagues of the 4NCL, leaving little appetite for an U175 event. It was pointed out that even if we do not have an U175 event, we will still be entitled to nominate a team from the Midlands for the ECF stages. We can but see what entries if any are forthcoming.

There was no report from either of the Correspondence event controllers, nor from either of the non-executive directors.

The meeting was updated on changes in who is doing what at ECF level – these appeared in the last newsletter. Motions at the BCF/ECF EGM's a few days after the AGM were discussed. Those EGMs & the views of the MCCU AGM are covered in the report on these meetings.

ELECTIONS

The elections resulted in the following:

President – Roy Woodcock
Chief Executive – Julie Johnson
Secretary – Vacant
Finance Director – Andrew Leadbetter
Junior Chess – Graham Humphries
Grading – Sean Hewitt
Events – Vacant
Public Relations – Vacant
Non-executives – Gordon Christie & Peter Gibbs
County Teams Controller – Neil Beasley
Webmaster – Sean Hewitt
ECF delegates – Julie Johnson & Andrew Leadbetter

(For those who do not know Sean Hewitt, he acted as grader for the County team events for 2005/6 and is the webmaster for Leicestershire & Rutland.)

MOTIONS

The CEO proposed a motion setting out basic rules relating to officers' expenses. The current constitution does not address this matter at all. These had come about because a previous officer had recently made a very belated claim for past expenses. After some discussion about both the late claim and the motion it was agreed that the claim be paid and that the constitution be amended to reflect the motion.

The county team tournament rules needed upgrading to reflect the fact that the BCF is now the ECF and the officer running the event has been referred to as the controller for several years, not the "assistant secretary". The meeting readily approved this tidying up.

A request had been made to revisit the issue of a 3rd place play-off where the Union has 3 places in the ECF National Counties stages of an event. It was agreed that the losing semi-finalists should play-off, but that if such a match had not taken place by the time nominations have to be made, the county with the best losing score would take the 3rd place.

The meeting also agreed to clarification being inserted into rule 9 b). This rule now spells out that neutral venues can only apply where counties do not have a common border. It also provides for any dispute over neutral venues to be referred to the controller.

The outgoing Events Director proposed that the rule covering grading limits be brought into line with the ECF rule. The existing rule only specified that the team captain needed to be satisfied that an ungraded player was within the grading strength for the team. The meeting agreed to the introduction of the requirement for ungraded players to be cleared with the controller before they play, or in exceptional circumstances within 48hrs of the match. This will cover a situation where someone steps into a team at the last minute and the controller is unavailable to clear them.

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The email rules currently used by the ECF were finally adopted, as were the new Individual correspondence rules, both having been a casualty of past meetings. The same was true of Child Protection Policy.

Provisional dates for the next 2 meetings are 19th November 2006 & 17th June 2007, both meetings are due to be held in the West Midlands.

REPORT ON THE ECF AND BCF EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS

These two meetings followed each other, and although many of the same delegates attended those meetings, the mood of the two meetings was very different.

The BCF meeting went fairly smoothly. David Anderton outlined the issues surrounding the tax efficient use of the legacy provided by the John Robinson. A few what questions were raised by delegates and members of the Board, following which the meeting a readily voted in favour of the motions before them.

I found the ECF meeting was a rather strange affair. You will no doubt to be familiar with the term “a perverse the jury”, an equivalent trait was demonstrated in some of the voting displayed by delegates. The bulk are the earlier motions were designed to remove a references to the NMS scheme, from which the ECF has withdrawn with effect from the 1st of September 2006, and replace them with a references to basic and junior members. This ought to have been a straightforward process, but not it seems when ECF delegates are involved. By a very tortuous route, the results intended by those drafting the motions, were achieved.

The ECF Board announced that at their meeting prior to the EGM’s, they had agreed various amendments to the motions originally tabled. The effect of those amendments was to remove the mandatory element in the membership framework scheme, and to increase the prompt

payment discount from 2.5 percent to 10%. Some members of the board and been keen to introduce a different financial incentive element in the framework, but had been advised that legally they could not amend the motion so radically. That being the case, they proposed to look at this issue for the future.

It was unfortunate that some delegates had failed to read the documentation that accompanied the motions, this lead to a good many questions being raised that were in fact covered in the documents issued, had they taken the trouble to do their research before the meeting. Some of the delegates seemed to be more interested in a raking over of the reasons for failure to reach agreement that would have allowed the existing NMS scheme to continue, than in moving forward to a new scheme. It has been obvious throughout that the perceptions of those directly involved about events differ. This is hardly surprising; you only need to read the match reports of several correspondents on the same football fixture to realise how differently the same events can be perceived.

Those who have been following events will be aware that a number of the NMS leading lights felt that the NCCU should be financially rewarded for the success of the scheme. They had essentially tied receipt of such rewards to the release of NMS members’ names and addresses. The ECF Board felt that this linkage was unacceptable and insisted on the member details being produced, they were prepared to look at providing financial support for NCCU projects, but Finance Committee approval is needed for any significant unbudgeted expenditure. It seems to me that one of the main differences in perception has been that where possible solutions have been proposed, some have taken it as read that the solution was an actual given, when in fact any proposal had to be agreed with other parties. The name and address details have since been released to the ECF, the acting CEO announced at the EGM that the Board would be seeking approval from the Finance Committee for £3,000 to be made available for NCCU projects.

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As MCCU CEO I am not entirely happy with the concept of rewarding the NCCU in this way. I have already said in the past, and indeed have said it directly to NCCU representatives; I feel the North has supported the BCF/ECF poorly in financial terms for several years, the NMS has merely brought that region more into line with the likes of the SCCU & MCCU. I am not convinced that rewarding an Organisation for coming “up to speed” so to speak, to the extent proposed, is justified.

Discussion on the various amendments connected with the membership scheme and the scheme basics very much overlapped and intertwined. The amendments as they stood, even with the additional amendments coming from the Board, would have created some potentially anomalous situations. Whilst the NMS pilot provided for all games played by a member outside the NCCU area to be covered by their membership, only games played under the auspices of the body running the scheme seemed to be encompassed by the new proposals. This was one of the main reasons the MCCU AGM suggested an MCCU wide scheme, there are a significant number of players on the MCCU area who play in 2 or more leagues, so an MCCU scheme made far more sense than individual schemes. However, even this would potentially mean that if 2 adjoining areas operated schemes, a player playing in both would be faced with joining twice, and you cannot logically or legally become a member twice. This and similar points were accepted and as a result amendments were made so that all games played by an ECF member would be covered by game fee waiver (except that Congresses cannot be compelled to offer discounts to members)

During the meeting 3 of the individuals who had been heavily involved with the NMS left the meeting, returning half an hour or so later to announce that they were not at all happy with how the meeting was going and that they proposed to leave. They were appraised of the major changes widening the scope of the game fee waiver and invited to reconsider their decision

to leave, which they did. Had they left they would have missed the announcement about the £3,000 award going to the Finance Committee.

DEVELOPMENTS SINCE THE EGM

The 3 MCCU parties may have stayed until the end of the EGM, but were clearly not happy with the outcome. In speaking to them afterwards I felt that they hadn't really taken on board some of the important points made during the meeting, and hadn't accepted that as a Ltd Co and a democratic body, the ECF has to operate within defined rules. The ECF Board and its officers have to work within those rules, no one committee, official, or group of officials can simply decide to do something that lies outside their official remit, the rules of the Federation, or decisions of Council. Whilst officials, including the Board can make proposals, no one can, or should, be able to force them on the Federation.

Various proposals seem to have floated around the North. These have included the NCCU running it's own membership scheme independent of the ECF and declaring UDI, or alternatively paying game fee out of the membership fees. These options do not seem to have found favour in a number of parts of the Union, with some looking at running their own ECF linked membership scheme in the absence of an ECF linked NCCU membership scheme.

A number of you may have recently received an email from Martin Reagan indicating that he is looking to stand as ECF CEO and have a full complement of candidates for the other Board posts that will be up for election at the AGM. My understanding is that they intend to operate as a combined “ticket”, none of them intending to take up post unless all of them are elected. To me this would make a mockery of any elections, if someone is elected and then resigns virtually immediately, that would leave the remaining Board members to appoint people to vacant posts. In my view this would disenfranchise Council in an area where it expects to be enfranchised. If

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people seeking election to a post are only prepared to take up the post if specific others are also elected, what does that say about their willingness to work with anyone across the Federation who may not agree with their agenda? If someone is genuinely seeking election to try and bring about change for the benefit of the whole Organisation, they should be willing to work with whomever Council elects into the various posts. To do otherwise is to deny the collective will of Council, and to deny the will of Council is deny the principal that the ECF is a FEDERATION and as such a democratic Organisation.

A draft version of the ECF membership scheme agreement has been circulated for comment and will be discussed at an ECF Board meeting 5th August. For those who haven't seen it, it may be found on a number of websites including the ECF & MCCU sites. I am aware of several counties who have expressed an interest in being part of the membership scheme. As I indicated earlier the main drive behind an MCCU based scheme was the original limitation on game fee waiver to events played within an organisations area. Some interested parties have indicated that they would prefer to deal direct with the ECF scheme, but others may prefer to use the MCCU umbrella.

I have become aware that a number of players do not feel they understand the pros and cons of membership so this newsletter includes a separate article on that subject.

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Since 1993, there has been no consensus on who owns the title. Vladimir Kramnik is World Champion by natural succession (having defeated the last undisputed World Champion Garry Kasparov in a match, and not having lost a match since), while Veselin Topalov is the official FIDE World Champion, having won the FIDE World Chess Championship 2005. In April 2006 it was announced that these two would play a match in September 2006 to decide a unified title.

The World Champion is not necessarily the highest-rated player in the world. However, FIDE champion Topalov is in fact number one on the current FIDE rating list.

FIDE World Champions since 1993

- Anatoly Karpov, 1993–1999, Russia
- Alexander Khalifman, 1999–2000, Russia
- Viswanathan Anand, 2000–2002, India
- Ruslan Ponomarev, 2002–2004, Ukraine
- Rustam Kasimdzhanov, 2004–2005, Uzbekistan
- Veselin Topalov, 2005–present, Bulgaria

PCA "Classical" World Champions

- Garry Kasparov, 1993–2000, Russia
- Vladimir Kramnik, 2000–present, Russia

Not long after Kasparov became champion, the Soviet Union collapsed, freeing Kasparov from the grip of the Soviet state. This set the stage for a more lasting set-back to FIDE's system when in 1993, Kasparov and challenger Nigel Short complained of corruption and a lack of professionalism within FIDE and split from FIDE to set up the Professional Chess Association (PCA), under whose auspices they held their match. The event was orchestrated largely by Raymond Keene, who has been at the centre of much off-the-board chess activity for a long time now. Keene brought the event to London (FIDE had planned it for Manchester), and England was whipped up into something of a chess fever: Channel Four broadcast some 81 programmes on the match, the BBC also had coverage, and Short appeared in television beer commercials. However, Kasparov crushed Short by five points, and interest in chess in the UK soon died down.

At the same time, FIDE held a championship match between Karpov (who had been champion before Kasparov) and Jan Timman (who had been defeated by Short in the Candidates final) in the Netherlands and Jakarta, Indonesia. Karpov emerged victorious. Ever since that time there have been two simultaneous World Champions and World Championships.

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Kasparov went on to defend his PCA title against Viswanathan Anand, who had qualified through a series of events similar to those in the old FIDE system. It seemed his next challenger would be Alexei Shirov, who won a match against Vladimir Kramnik to apparently secure his place.

However, plans for a match with Shirov never materialised, and he was subsequently omitted from negotiations, much to his disgust. Instead, Anand was lined up to play Kasparov once more, but here too, plans fell through (in somewhat disputed circumstances). Instead, Vladimir Kramnik was given the chance to play Kasparov in 2000. Kramnik won the match with two wins, thirteen draws, and no losses.

FIDE, meanwhile, after one more traditional championship cycle which resulted in Karpov successfully defending his title against Gata Kamsky in 1996, largely scrapped the old system, 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. Very fast games were used to resolve ties at the end of each round, a format which some felt did not necessarily recognize the highest quality play. (Kasparov refused to participate in these events, as did Kramnik after he won Kasparov's title in 2000). 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 defended his title in the first of these championships in 1998, but resigned his title in anger at the new rules in 1999. Alexander Khalifman took the title in 1999, Anand in 2000 and Ruslan Ponomarev in 2002.

This left a chess world with two distinct championships: one extending the Steinitzian lineage in which the current champion plays a challenger in match format (a series of many games); the other following FIDE's new format of a tennis-style elimination—or "Knockout"—tournament with dozens of players competing. In addition Kasparov had claim to be the strongest player, both because he had the highest rating, and because he won several major tournaments after losing his title to Kramnik.

In May 2002, under the terms of the so-called

"Prague Agreement" masterminded by Yasser Seirawan, several leaders in the chess world met in Prague and signed a unity agreement which intended to ensure the crowning of an undisputed world champion before the end of 2003, and restore the traditional cycle of qualifying matches by 2005.

The semifinalists for the 2003 championship were to be Ruslan Ponomarev (FIDE champion) vs. Garry Kasparov (highest rated player), and Vladimir Kramnik (successor to Kasparov's title) vs. a challenger to Kramnik (this challenger cycle had been organised before Prague, and was subsequently won by Péter Lékó). The latter match was originally to be held in Budapest, but funding collapsed and it was called off. The match was rescheduled as a fourteen game match held in Brissago, Switzerland from September 25 to October 18, 2004 and billed as the Classic World Chess Championship sponsored by the cigar company Dannemann. The match was drawn after Kramnik won the last game when a point behind, which meant that Kramnik retained the title.

The other semifinal suffered greater problems. Organised by FIDE, it was scheduled for September 2003, but called off when Ponomarev refused to sign his contract for it in disputed circumstances. Instead it was suggested that Kasparov play the winner of the FIDE World Chess Championship 2004, a knockout event held in June–July 2004 in Tripoli, the capital of Libya, a controversial event in a controversial venue which saw several prominent players denied entry visas (officially or not) and others withdrawing in protest. The secondary venue of Malta, originally proposed to solve the visas issue, was removed by FIDE claiming Muammar al-Qaddafi had assured no problems related to players with Israeli passports and visa stamps (in contrast to the ardent claims of his elder son, Muhammad Qaddafi, head of the Libyan Olympic Committee). In the event, the little-known Uzbek Rustam Kasimdzhanov won the event, but neither Kasparov nor Kramnik would ever play him for the title; Kasparov-Kasimdzhanov matches were mooted for Dubai and Elista, but nothing came of these approaches and all hope was lost when Kasparov retired from competitive chess in early 2005, still ranked #1 in the world.

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Soon after, FIDE dropped the short knockout format for World Championship event and announced the FIDE World Chess Championship 2005, a new 8-player double round robin tournament to be held in San Luis, Argentina. With the stated intent of removing confusion over who the true World Champion should be, FIDE invited anyone with a conceivable claim to either the title or a challenge for the title - Kasparov as world No1, Kramnik as classical world champion, Kasimdzhanov as FIDE world champion, Anand as ranked 2 behind Kasparov, and several other top-rated players. However, both Kasparov (retired) and Kramnik (who insisted on a traditional match format) declined their invitations to participate. As a result, FIDE considered Kramnik to have abdicated all rights to the world championship title while the Kramnik camp maintained that the descendant of Steinitz was as yet unbeaten, and so the impasse still remained.

The dominant winner in San Luis was the Bulgarian Veselin Topalov. Moves were quickly made by Kramnik and his team to arrange a Kramnik-Topalov unification match; this fell apart after neither side would be swayed on crucial issues (most notably whether the match should be played under the auspices of FIDE, which the sponsor Kramnik had found did not want to give any money to).

On April 13, 2006, FIDE announced a World Championship match between Topalov and Kramnik, to be held September 21 - October 13 in Elista over 12 games, with a rapid playoff if necessary. The winner will take Topalov's place in the 2007 World Championship tournament, with the loser eliminated from the 2007 FIDE World Championship cycle.

While being seen as a chance to finally have a unified world chess championship, the circumstances of the announcement (just one month before the FIDE presidential elections), the venue (the capital of Kalmykia, governed by the FIDE President himself) and absence of a sponsor could raise some doubts over the match.

Meanwhile, encouraged by the success of San Luis, FIDE announced that they would conduct another 8-player double round robin for the

FIDE World Championship in 2007. In April 2006 FIDE announced that this tournament would be held in Mexico. The top 4 San Luis finishers qualify, along with 4 of 16 Candidates.

I LOST THE GAME BECAUSE

- Forgot to say "j'adoube".
- My opponent did not follow my plan.
- I wanted to adjourn, but he made me play a move.
- My opponent foolishly declined a draw.
- My position deteriorated while I was in the toilet.
- I had a clear advantage, and then my opponent found this lucky checkmate.
- Every single one of my pieces was optimally placed; unfortunately it was my turn to move.
- It was stalemate, but then he played an illegal move, and I decided to play on because I thought I could mate him.
- I'd always thought that en passant was just another word for castling.
- I wanted to see if the refutation worked, and I was proved right.
- My perpetual check didn't last very long.
- The position was dead level apart from the fact that she could win a piece by force.
- Everyone agreed I was winning, except my opponent.
- She idiotically blundered away her queen without realising that it was in fact a brilliant sacrifice.
- I played the French Defence without realising that my opponent was a staunch Euro-sceptic.
- He played the Exchange Variation of the French Defence, which everybody knows is drawish, but he played it all wrong.
- I played Alekhine's Defence, but placed too much faith in the principle of not moving the same piece twice in the opening.
- Thought I'd try the King's Gambit, but became demoralised when I went a pawn down on move two.
- It was a theoretical draw, but my opponent wasn't smart enough to realise this.
- I would've won on time if he hadn't have checkmated me.
- Afterwards he admitted that if it wasn't for my two blunders he might not have won.
- He was extremely fortunate to win as earlier he had missed a mate in two.
- After a great deal of thought I sacrificed a piece, but next move I forgot why.
- It was a rook and pawn ending, but he had the rook.
- I played all the right moves, although not necessarily in the right order.
- She was in complete zugzwang, but then she found a way out of it.

ECF MEMBERSHIP SCHEMES

It is clear from some of the correspondence that I have received that, with the prospective expansion of the membership scheme, there is a demand to go over old ground, in terms of membership & game fee and expand on the pros and cons.

WHY CONTRIBUTE AT ALL?

Perhaps of the first basic question that needs to be addressed, is why pay any contribution to the ECF at all? What does the ECF actually do? To summarise matters briefly, it runs National teams, organises Inter-County and club events, various junior events, the British Championships, the grading system, and acts as the focal point for information about chess. It obviously costs money to do all of these things and more, some of the money comes from a Government grant, some from entry fees paid by participants in the various events, some from sponsorship, the rest from grassroots chess players. Over the years different methods have been employed to quantify and collect contributions from chess players. Whatever the system, a common argument for grassroots chess players paying nothing to the central body is; I am not interested in the national teams; I don't play county chess; I don't play in any national event; I only play local league chess; the only thing I get from the ECF is my grading and somebody locally calculates that anyway. If a player takes this narrow view then persuading them that they should pay any sort of contribution is difficult. If a player is only interested in what they personally get out of making a financial contribution, and has no regard for the wider good of the game, then any argument about a whether they pay a membership or game fee, is likely to boil down to "which is the cheaper option for me".

Similar arguments can be made in connection with any central umbrella body for sports, games and the like. The narrow view fails to recognise that without National and International participation the potential for new people becoming involved in the activity is reduced. In a number of instances it has been proven that International success in an activity, or a high profile event taking place locally,

generates an influx of new players. The Short-Kasparov match was a classic example for chess. If players are happy so long as they get a few leagues games, even if it is essentially against the same players year in year out, then such an argument is likely to fall on stony ground. If on the other hand a player is keen to see new blood coming into chess, to put something back into the game that has given them pleasure, then it becomes logical to support the ECF financially.

I am not going to argue that the ECF is perfect, that it uses every penny it gets efficiently. I would simply say that most organisations are imperfect and are guilty of wasting resources to some extent, especially where they are essentially run by unpaid volunteers who only have limited time available. However, I would refute the suggestion from some quarters that money is being drained out of the ECF like water through a sieve, e.g. by officials taking foreign "jollys", or by the few salaried staff at the ECF office being paid high wages.

THE CURRENT GAME FEE SYSTEM

If the argument for grassroots players making a financial contribution to the ECF is accepted, the question is then by what method. Those who have been involved with chess for long enough will remember the BCF Levy system, which was based on perceived chess activity within each county. The current game fee system was based on the concept of payment by actual chess activity, and on the principle "the more you play the more you pay". In essence a fee is due for each game played and put forward for grading. The practical application of the system has led to most players who play only league chess paying the same for their chess, irrespective of how many games they actually play. This is because the majority of organisations produce their budget by working out the total of their expenses including the game fee element, and charge a fixed amount per team to enter their league. The clubs in turn work out their own total costs and often charge the same fee to all their players. I appreciate that this is not a universal approach, but it is the most common. Yes, some clubs charge a weekly fee, so those players who turn up more often, pay more; some clubs charge a match fee so the more competitive games you play the more you pay. The point is that it is not a case of

each individual player paying the specific game fee relative to the number of games they actual play to the ECF via their county or league.

Where a player also plays county chess they may or may not contribute towards the game fee element of these games. Some counties set their league and other fees based on their county teams being subsidised by all, others recoup all the cost through a match fee from the team members, others work on a combination of match fee and subsidy.

Those who play congress chess will have the game fee element built into the entry fee, if the event is to be put forward for grading. Those who are already ECF members will find that many congresses offer a discount on the entry fee on production of membership details. This is because they do not have to pay game fee to get members games graded. The discount may equate closely with the actual game fee amount, or it may be just a nominal reduction, or in a few cases it is more.

MEMBERSHIP

INITIAL ARGUMENTS

The initial basic argument for a membership scheme was that the vast majority of National bodies operate on a membership fee system. One of the most basic questions asked of such bodies is, how many members do you have? The current ECF direct members scheme has a relatively small number of members and is no reflection of the number of chess players contributing to the Federation. The feeling in some quarters was that a membership scheme would allow players to identify more closely with the Federation and a membership database would allow direct communication with players. Others doubted that becoming a member would draw players closer to the Federation and suggested that a database of players could be created for communication purposes, irrespective of whether a membership scheme was operated. Since then other arguments have been that the cost of game fee is damaging chess, particularly Congresses; is actually restricting the amount of chess played; that game fee is unpopular; and a number of events have opted out of game fee

affecting the integrity of the grading system. Others would counter these arguments by saying that congress chess costs have been more significantly damaged by increased venue costs than increased game fee; that less chess is being played due to other factors such as increased work commitments; that game fee is has merely become unpopular in some quarters in the same way that a Government becomes unpopular when it has been around for several years; and that the impact of ungraded games on the grading system is limited.

THE PROPOSED SCHEME

The proposed membership scheme would mean that a flat annual fee would be due for each player who joined the scheme. No game fee would be due for games played under the auspices of the Organisation operating the membership scheme for the ECF. As now, congresses would not have to pay game fee on members' games, but could not be compelled to offer discounts equivalent to the game fee (though I suspect that the more members there are, the more they would come under more pressure from players to do so). I have raised some queries about rebates for players for whom game fee is played in one league, when they have become ECF members via another Organisation and am awaiting the outcome on this issue.

The membership fee we are talking about is £10 for adults & £5 for juniors. If prompt payment discounts were passed on to players by their Organisation, those who join early would save 10%. What can you get for £10 these days? If your club plays on licensed premises a round of drinks for a team might well set you back more than this. If you join a social club or the like you might pay this sort of membership fee or more. If you join a golf club, a tennis club or a gym, you will certainly pay a lot more than £10 a year.

HOW IT MIGHT WORK

The most likely scenario is that individuals would pay their £5 or £10 ECF membership fee via their club, the organisations' league or other fees would then be based on their residual expenses. Thus it is not a case of adults paying an extra £10 on top of what they have already been paying. Whilst this is

what is envisaged, the practical application might be different. A county or league could decide that they want everyone to become an ECF member, their budget calculation could then be based on replacing the game fee element of their costs with membership fees, and still charging a team entry fee out of which membership fees would be paid. A County Association may be running a winter league, summer league, county teams, individual county championships, one or more congresses etc. Currently they will be paying game fee for all of these, for ECF members all of these would be encompassed by the membership fee. There is also the less obvious benefit to those members of game waiver &/or rebate for other games. An important point for some is that whilst the amount an ECF member pays the Organisation they join through to play chess might increase, the amount they pay overall to play may well decrease.

COST COMPARISONS

A basic cost comparison for a player, is that based on current game fee of 45p, a player playing more than 22 games a year will pay less by becoming a member, a player playing less than 22 games will pay more. That said, bearing in mind that most players do not actually pay the 45p per game (because of the costing system operated by most leagues as outlined earlier) the comparison is really theoretical rather than actual. It is therefore impossible to produce an accurate like for like comparison. An Organisation could take the view that they do not wish to get involved with a membership scheme, because many of their players play less than 22 games, so they do not expect they will want to become members. A more positive view is that more events could be run for players without incurring additional game fee. So take for example a county currently with a winter league and county teams. A summer league could be run as well as a winter league, if all players in the event were ECF members no game fee would be due and the additional expenses involved would be minimal. Similarly County individual championships could be run; if existing club venues were used, entry fees would only need to cover prizes. Likewise rather than a player simply saying - I play less than 22 games so I won't join the membership scheme, a more positive view would be - I can play more chess without it costing me a lot more to do so.

MANDATORY OR VOLUNTARY?

It is for an Organisation to decide whether they wish to operate a mandatory approach e.g. to play in our events you have to become a member after playing 2 games. It could be argued that a mandatory scheme is the easiest to administer. The only residual game fee to worry about would be very small amounts from very occasional players.

A voluntary membership scheme creates a more significant residual game fee. It also means that a decision has to be made about how the game fee is collected for non-members games. The logical argument here is that the non-member should pay, because if the residual game fee is left as part of the residual expenses, members could be paying part of the game fee for non-members, though this would depend on how the individual club chose to pass on its costs. A possible way of dealing with residual game fee for those who do not become ECF members would be to charge a county or league membership fee out of which the residual game fee would be paid. This would clearly be easiest to administer. Even within a voluntary scheme, some clubs could decide to make ECF membership mandatory and calculate their club charges on that basis.

The calculation of residual game fee is not as horrendous a prospect as might at first seem. Organisations already have to estimate the number of games for game fee; the residual game fee would be the total estimated number of games, less the estimated number of games for ECF members. The latter would logically be based on the number of games played in the previous season by those who have become members. Local graders will have access to this information. As the residual game fee does not have to be paid until well into the winter season, those who are members will have been identified. But there is no escaping the fact that it is not as straight forward as a mandatory membership or wholly game fee based system to administer.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

There are other benefits in becoming a member, and areas where membership is required. Any FIDE rated event requires a player to be a member of a National Federation. The British Championship &

4NCL are the best-known FIDE rated events, but not the only ones. The number of FIDE rated events in the UK is on the increase and the FIDE rating system no longer covers just the highly rated players. However, the number of players playing in FIDE rated events at this stage is still going to be quite modest. A member will have access to the ECF newsletter FOC. Potentially a good take up on membership could allow the ECF to negotiate other benefits for members from outside sources. The potential for gaining sponsorship increases the larger the membership base, if the ECF could secure better sponsorship it could do more to support chess activity and keep membership costs down. I know there are those who will be cynical about this potential being realised, but even the cynics accept that the potential is there.

THE MEMBERSHIP AGREEMENT

As indicated in the follow up to the EGM report a draft membership scheme is available for perusal on several websites the ECF & MCCU included. This covers areas such as how monies are to be dealt with; when payments and member details are to be sent to the ECF; how the member details will be protected and for what purposes they will be used. It is not simply a rehash of the NMS agreement, but a completely new draft that has had a proper legal eye passed over it.

TO SUMMARISE

So to summarise the arguments that have been made by various people –

FOR –

It is logical for an Organisation such as the ECF to operate a membership scheme; it is the usual way this type of body works.

At £10 for adults & £5 for juniors the proposed membership fee is modest.

Membership would provide players with a more direct link with the Federation.

The resulting membership database would allow the ECF to communicate directly with players.

A good membership base would assist in gaining sponsorship.

Game fee is becoming increasingly unpopular.

Game fee costs are stifling the amount of chess played.

Membership would lead to an increase in the amount of chess played as organisations could run more events without incurring further game fee costs.

AGAINST -

A membership fee is unfair, it makes no difference whether you play in lots of events or only a few, you still pay the same fee.

A mandatory approach to membership would be difficult to enforce.

A voluntary approach would mean a mixture of both membership fees and game fee being paid; it wouldn't be as straightforward as game fee to administer.

Membership isn't going to give me anything that I don't already get from game fee.

If those who play less than 22 games don't join the ECF, and those that play more than 22 do, the ECF will end up with less money from players than it is getting now.

A player database could be created for communication purposes; we don't need a membership scheme to do that.

NOT BOTHERED

So long as what I pay for my chess isn't excessive I don't care whether it includes game fee or membership.

I just want my chess to cost me as little as possible.

I don't care what goes on elsewhere so long as I get my chess in my local league.

IN CONCLUSION

The above is a cross section of views, it is for you to decide how valid they are and what weight you give to them. I feel that it is important for the Union to act as an enabler, so that where a part of the Union wishes to operate a membership scheme through the Union, or an individual player wishes to become a member, they are empowered to do so. The comment has been made to me that some feel that the NCCU was too bullish in it's approach to signing people up to the pilot scheme. Whether this was the case or not, I would assert that it is perfectly possible to use "best endeavours" to promote membership, whilst respecting the wishes of those players and organisations who want to remain with game fee, and that is the approach I would see the MCCU adopt.

I have harped on several times about the lack of feedback and input from MCCU players. I do not pretend to have covered all bases in this article, there are bound to be issues that haven't occurred to me. So please let me have your queries and comments.

CHESS CHAMPIONS

I deliberately used the title "Chess Champions" for this series rather than "World Champions" knowing that the series would not then have an end. A Chess Champion does not necessarily have to have been a world champion. Rather than move on to players in the disputed world champions era (who are all still very active, and thus whose careers could still take various turns), I now turn to those players who many expected to become world champion, but that title eluded them.

Paul Keres



Paul Keres was born on January 7, 1916, in Narva, Estonia. He was an Estonian chess grandmaster and one of the strongest chess players of all time, apart from the World chess champions. Many claim him to be the strongest modern player (since the line of official World Champions started with Steinitz in 1886) never to play in a world championship match. He was dubbed "The Crown Prince of Chess".

He first learned about chess through solving chess puzzles in a newspaper column. It wasn't until later that he found out the puzzles came from an actual game. In his early days, he was known for a brilliant attacking style. His playing matured after playing correspondence chess extensively.

In the years 1936 – 1940, Keres was the editor-in-chief of the journal "Estonian Chess".

In 1938 he won the all-star AVRO tournament tied with Reuben Fine (with equal total score, but beating Fine 1½-½ in their individual two games), ahead of chess legends Mikhail Botvinnik, Max Euwe, Samuel Reshevsky, Alexander Alekhine, José Raúl Capablanca and Salo Flohr. It was supposed that the winner of this tournament would be the challenger for the World champion title, but the outbreak of the Second World War brought negotiations with the current champion, Alekhine, to an end.

In the 1948 World Championship tournament, arranged to find a champion following Alekhine's death in 1946, Keres finished joint third, with 10.5 out of 20 points. This, probably his main disappointment, must be seen in the context of his difficult personal situation after the end of WWII. His native Estonia had been successively occupied by the Soviets, Germany and then in 1944 the Soviets again, and he had participated in several tournaments in Europe during the German occupation. Upon the Soviet invasion of Estonia in 1944 his attempt to flee the country failed, and as a consequence he was harassed by the Soviet authorities and feared for his life.

It is often believed that Keres through his career was forced to lose or draw important games in international events, in favour of more "politically correct" Soviet players (specifically, Botvinnik). His chess career may have been hampered, but Keres

did manage to avoid deportation to Siberia or any worse fate during the Soviet occupation.

He won the strong USSR Chess Championship three times (1947, 1950 and 1951), and finished a runner-up in the Candidates Tournament four times, never qualifying for a world championship match. He was one of very few players who had a plus record against Capablanca. Through his long career, he played against no less than ten world champions, beating nine (his games with Karpov were drawn). He was ranked among the top 10 players in the world for close to 30 years, between approximately 1936 and 1965, and overall he had one of the highest winning percentages of all grandmasters in history.

At the Chess Olympics in Nice in 1974, a proposal was made to set up Paul Keres as the candidate for FIDE president. One of the initiators, the well-known chess-player Milunka Lazarević asked Keres, "How much can you independently, without Moscow, make decisions?" The answer was, "Independently, I can only write books...". In the Soviet Union time, sports, just like the arts were politicised. This meant that an athlete's (or chess player's) career was very dependent upon the opinions and decisions of Party and government bureaucrats.

He died of heart attack on June 5, 1975 in Helsinki, Finland at the age of 59. The respect with which he was held in his homeland was marked at his funeral which was attended by over 200,000 of his countrymen....



and by the five kroons (5 krooni) Estonian banknote which bears his portrait, (this has not been done for any other chess player in the history of the game, as far as we know) along with the statue honouring him found on Tõnismägi in Tallinn.

An annual international chess tournament has been held in Tallinn every year since 1969. Keres won this tournament in 1971 and 1975. Starting in 1976 after Keres' death, it has been called the Paul Keres Memorial. There are also a number of chess clubs and festivals named after him. In 2000, he was elected the Estonian Sportsman of the Century.



The bank note bearing Keres head.

Ex-champion Boris Spassky, Keres's most devoted "disciple", in his memoirs:

"I loved Paul Petrovitch with a kind of special, filial feeling. Honesty, correctness, discipline, diligence, astonishing modesty – these were the characteristics that caught the eye of the people who came into contact with Keres during his lifetime. But there was also something mysterious about him. I had an acute feeling that Keres was carrying some kind of a heavy burden all through his life. Now I understand that this burden was the infinite love for the land of his ancestors, an attempt to endure all the ordeals, to have full responsibility for his every step. I have never met a person with an equal sense of responsibility. This man with internally free and independent character was at the same time a very well disciplined person. Back then I did not realise that it is discipline that largely determines internal freedom.

For me, Paul Keres was the last Mohican, the carrier of the best traditions of classical chess and – if I could put it this way – the Pope of chess.

Why did he not become the champion? I know from personal experience that in order to reach the top, a person is thinking solely of the goal, he has to forget everything else in this world, toss aside everything unnecessary – or else you are doomed. How could Keres forget everything else?"

KERES GAMES

[Event "AVRO"]

[Site "Amsterdam"]

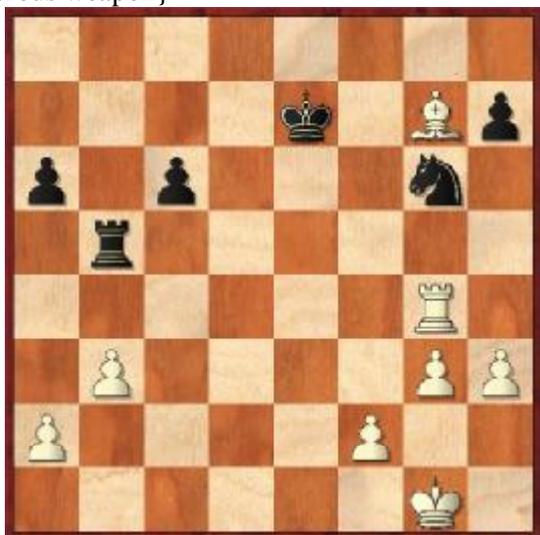
[Date "1938"]

[White "Keres, Paul"]

[Black "Capablanca, Jose Raul"]

[Result "1-0"]

1. e4 e6 {Opening = C09 - French Def-Tarrasch Variat}
 2. d4 d5 3. Nd2 c5 4. exd5 exd5 5. Ngf3 Nc6 6. Bb5
 Qe7+ 7. Be2 cxd4 8. O-O Qc7 9. Nb3 {Increasing the
 pressure on the isolated pawn on d4} Bd6 10. Nbx4 a6
 11. b3 {last book move} Nge7 12. Bb2 O-O 13. Nxc6
 (13. Re1 Re8) 13... bxc6 14. c4 Be6 15. Qc2 dxc4 (15...
 Rfe8 16. Bd3 Ng6 17. Qc3) 16. Bxc4 Bxc4 17. Qxc4
 Rfb8 18. h3 Rb5 19. Rac1 Rc8 20. Rfd1 Ng6 (20... Bf4
 21. Rc2) 21. Nd4 {The pressure on the isolated pawn
 grows} Rb6 22. Ne6 Qb8 23. Ng5 {Threatening mate...
 how?} Rb7 24. Qg4 (24. Re1 Bh2+ 25. Kh1 Bf4)
 24...Bf4 25. Rc4 Rb5 (25... Re7) 26. Nxf7 Re8 (26...
 Kxf7 27.Rd7+ Ne7 28. Qxg7+ Ke6 29. Qxe7+ Kf5 30.
 Qf6#) 27. g3 Qc8 (27... Bxg3 28. Qxg3 Qxg3+ 29. fxg3
 Kxf7 30. Rf1+ Kg8 31. Rxc6 Rg5) 28. Rxf4 Qxg4
 29.Rxg4 Kxf7 30. Rd7+ Re7 31. Rxe7+ Kxe7 32. Bxg7
 {The passed pawn on f2 will quickly become a
 dangerous weapon}



.....Ra5 33. a4 Rc5

34. Rb4 (34. Rc4 Rxc4 35. bxc4 Kf7) 34... Ke6 35. Kg2
 h5 36. Rc4 Rxc4 37. bxc4 Kd6 (37... Kf7 38. Bc3) 38. f4
 (38. f4 Ke6 39. Kf3) 1-0

[Event "Margate SN"]

[Site "Margate SN"]

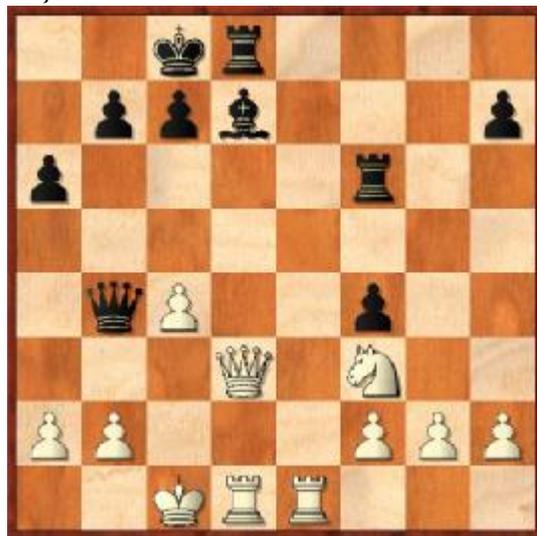
[Date "1937."]

[White "Keres, Paul"]

[Black "Alekhine, Alexander"]

[Result "1-0"]

1. e4 e5 {Opening = C71 - Ruy Lopez-Modern Steinitz
 Def} 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 a6 4. Ba4 d6 5. c4 Bd7 6. Nc3
 g6 (6... Nge7 7. d4 Nxd4 8. Nxd4 exd4 9. Bxd7+ Qxd7
 10. Qxd4 Nc6 11. Qd2 Be7 12. Nd5 O-O 13. O-O Rae8
 14. b3 Bd8 15. f3 f5 16. exf5 Qxf5 17. Bb2 Ne5 18.
 Rad1 c6 19. f4 Ng6 20. Qd4 Rf7 21. Ne3 {Shabalov,A
 Goldin,A/Philadelphia World op 1991/TD 91\09/0-1
 (53)}) 7. d4 Bg7 (7... exd4 8. Nxd4 Bg7 9. Be3 Nf6 10.
 f3 O-O 11. O-O Nxd4 12. Bxd4 Bxa4 13. Nxa4 b5 14.
 cxb5 axb5 15. Nc3 c5 16. Be3 b4 17. Na4 Nd7 18. a3
 bxa3 19. Rxa3 Ne5 20. Qd5 Ra6 21. Rfa1 Qc7 22. Nc3
 {Koch,J-Anic,D/FRA-ch 1996/EXP 54/1/2-1/2 (85)})
 8. Be3 (8. Bg5 f6 9. Be3Nh6 10. dxe5 Nxe5 11. Nxe5
 fxe5 12. c5 Nf7 13. cxd6 Nxd6 14. Bb3 Bc6 15. Qg4
 Qc8 16. Qh4 Qd8 17. Bg5 Qd7 18. O-O h6 19. Be3 g5
 20. Qh5+ Kd8 21. Rfd1 Rf8 22. Rac1 a5 {Zagrebelny,S-
 Adler,V/Groningen op 1993/EXP 38/1-0 (32)}) (8. d5
 Nd4) 8... Nf6 (8... exd4 9. Nxd4 Ne5 10. Bxd7+ Qxd7
 11. b3) 9. dxe5 dxe5 10. Bc5 {White traps the enemy
 king in the center} Nh5 11. Nd5 Nf4 12. Nxf4 exf4
 13. e5 (13. Qb3 Na5 14. Qb4) 13... g5 14. Qd5 Bf8
 15. Bxf8 Rxf8 16. O-O-O Qe7 17. Bxc6 (17. Nd4 Nxd4
 18. Bxd7+ Qxd7 19. Qxd7+ Kxd7 20. Rxd4+ Ke6 21.
 h4) 17... Bxc6 18. Qd3 Bd7 (18... g4 {is interesting} 19.
 Nd4 Ba4 (19... Bxg2 {Taking that pawn is naive} 20.
 Nf5 Rg8 21. Nxe7 Kxe7 22. Qf5)) 19. Nxg5 O-O-O
 20. Nf3 (20. Nxb7 Rh8 21. Nf6) 20... f6 {Covers g5}
 (20... Bh3 {is worth looking at} 21. Nd4 Bxg2) 21. exf6
 Rxf6 22. Rhe1 Qb4 {Black crumbles in face of a dire
 situation}



(22... Re6) 23. Qxd7+ {the opponent will choke on this}
 (23. Qxd7+ Kb8 24. Qxd8+ Ka7 25. Qxf6 Qxc4+
 26. Kb1) 1-0

[Event "Goteborg izt"]
 [Date "1955"]
 [White "Keres, Paul"]
 [Black "Spassky, Boris V"]
 [Result "1-0"]
 [ECO "E14"]

1. d4 Nf6 {Opening = E14 - Queen's Indian-Central System} 2. c4 e6 3. Nf3 b6 4. e3 Bb7 5. Bd3 Be7 6. O-O O-O 7. b3 d5 8. Bb2 Nbd7 9. Nc3 c5 10. Qe2 dxc4 {last book move} 11. bxc4 Qc7 12. Rad1 Rad8 13. d5 a6 14. dxe6 fxe6 15. Ng5 Qc6 {The mate threat is Qxg2}



16. f4 h6 17. Nf3 Qc7 18. Nh4 Bd6 19. Bb1 Rfe8 20. Qf2 Nf8 21. Qg3 Nh5 22. Qh3 Nf6 23. Ng6 e5 (23... Nxc6 24. Bxc6 Re7 25. Rd2) 24. Nd5 (24. fxe5 Bxe5 25. Nxe5 Qxe5 (25... Rxe5 26. Nb5 axb5 27. Bxe5 Qxe5 28. Rxd8)) 24... Bxd5 (24... Nxd5 25. fxe5 (25. cxd5 exf4 26. Nxf8 Rxf8 (26... Bxf8 27. Qf5 g5 28. exf4)) 25... Nxc6 26. Bxc6 Bxe5 27. Bxe8 Rxe8 28. Bxe5 Qxe5 29. cxd5 Qxe3+ 30. Qxe3 Rxe3 31. d6) 25. fxe5 (25. cxd5 N6d7 26. Qg3) 25... Bxe5 (25... Bxc4 26. exf6 Nxc6 27. Bxc6 Rf8) 26. Nxe5 Be6 27. Qg3 Rxd1 28. Rxd1 b5 29. Rf1 N6d7 (29... Nh5 30. Qh4 Nf6) 30. Qxg7+ (30. Qxg7+ Kxg7 31. Nxd7+ Kg8 32. Nf6+ Kf7 33. Nd5+ Kg8 34. Nxc7) 1-0

KERES PUZZLES ANSWERS

- a) Qh6 b) Ng5
- c) Be4 if Qg4 w/Bxb7
- d) Rxd8 Rxd8 Qxf7 Re8+
- e) Qxd6 f) Rxg8
- g) Qxd7 h) Ba3
- i) Rxe5 w/Qd5 j) Qh6
- k) Bd5 if Ra7 Qf7
- l) h7+ Kh8 Qb2+ if Nc3 Qxb3 Qxe7 Qg8

What the blurbs on opening books and videos really mean

- Tired of the tried and tested openings? = Want to lose in a hurry?
- A good practical choice = A terrible theoretical one.
- A good fighting choice = Not only do you go down in flames, but you have to fight like mad all the way too.
- You'll really enjoy this, it's fun to play = For masochists only.
- Relatively unexplored = It's so obviously crap that no one worth mentioning has bothered to look at it.
- Easy to learn = Easy to beat.
- The latest idea, complete with secret analysis = Someone touched the wrong piece in the opening and decided to write a book about it.
- Surprise your opponents = Go on, give them a laugh.
- As played by Anand = As played by Anne Hand.
- All analysis checked by computer = Once I'd turned the spell-checker off, my PC couldn't find anything wrong with it.
- Revised, improved, or 2nd edition = I've taken out all the lines in the first edition where John Nunn found a forced mate in 3.

I know plenty of chess venues with pool or snooker tables, in fact Leicester Chess Club played in Willie Thorne's Snooker club at one time, in an area only used for snooker when the club was very busy, which wasn't normally on the night the chess club met. However, the snooker World Championships usually bring out quite a few extra players, which led to some chess being played alongside active snooker tables. But no one quite managed this combination ...

