

THE MIDDLE GAME

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Congratulations

To Mark Hebden on winning the British Rapidplay Championship; Lateefa Messam-Sparks on winning the U16 title at the same event; Tom Pym on winning the Ampleforth Masters & Phil Bull on topping the U125 BCF Grand Prix Board. More details of these and other good performances by midland based players in the Events Supplement.

JUGGLING ACT

This issue sees a move of sections. The "Forthcoming Events" section has been moved to the Events Supplement. I think it sits more properly in that area.

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MCCU HALF-YEAR MEETING

20TH NOVEMBER AT SYSTON

This was a disappointing meeting, with only 6 delegates present from 4 counties. As a result the meeting was not quorate and could only make recommendations, rather than being able to make any firm and binding decisions.

The meeting felt that a letter should go out to all counties who did not attend, urging better support in future.

I include most of my report as CEO below:-

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS REPORT

The period between the AGM and the half year meeting is essentially one where little actual play relating to MCCU competitions is going on. However, the lull provides some time for reflection, and comments from a couple of people, and the transition from BCF to EFC led me to feel it is time to examine the MCCU as an organization, rather than having it largely just tick over.

As most of you are probably aware Cyril has been elected as the new ECF Junior Director and is looking to obtain greater input from the Unions on junior issues. If the opportunity to have input is not taken up, we only have ourselves to blame.

Speaking of people not taking up the chance to have input, I have to say I am disappointed that requests for input, made on several issues, on several occasions, have met with little or no response. The latest example on this has been the Child Protection Policy.

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SO YOU THINK YOU KNOW THE OPENINGS?

Harking back to a previous issue here is another slice of quiz which gives the moves related to particular openings along with a cryptic? clue which, depending on your general knowledge, might help you to identify the name.

a)1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 d6 3.g4

An elderly member of the ape family would enjoy this

b)1.e4 e5 2.Bc4 f5

Didn't your mother tell you to eat all your greens up?

c)1.e4 e5 2.d4 exd4 3.f4 Bc5 4.Nf3 Nc6 5.c3

Think of Paul Hogan or false tears.

d)1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.Qg4

Is this extinct? Does it fly?

e)1.d4 d6 2.c4 e5

Roland the rodent was one.

f)1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.Bd2

Don't confuse this with touch move problems.

g)1.d4 c5 2.d5 Nf6 3.Nf3 e4

A dove wouldn't like this.

h)1.c4 b5

There's something fishy at the bottom of the sea.

i)1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.g3

Surely you know chess players are bound to go mad?

j)1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 dxe4 4.Bd7 5.Nf3 Bc6

Hard to break into in the United States.

k)1.a3 e5 2.h3 d5

Think of the largest group of living things on earth and what kids call them.

l)1.d4 Nf6 2.e4 Nxe4 3.Bd3 Nf6 4.Bg5

A deceased Arab in Middle East politics might assist here.

m)1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.d5 b5 4.cxb5 a6 5.bxa6 c6

Think blue, H2O & Strauss

n)1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 Nc6 3.d5 Ne5 4.f4

An equine annoyance.

o)1.e4 e5 2.Qh5 Nf6

This is childish.

p)1.e4 c6 2.Bc4

A feud between southern US families might result in this..

Solutions on page 14

Continued from page 1 col 1

There have been requests for a Midland Club Event from some quarters. However, the MCCU entry to the National Club events has once again been pretty poor, which leads me to question whether an MCCU club event of any sort would really get the support required to make it viable. Last years attempt to run a Rapidplay event had a woeful amount of support.

Whilst one of the main aims of the MCCU is to promote and expand chess activity, if attempts to do so are met with little or no response, those involved can only begin to wonder whether they are banging their heads against the proverbial brick wall; and whether there is really any point in them spending time and energy trying to take things forward.

This leads me to ask a fundamental question of delegates, which I would like them to take away and actually provide some feedback. What do the Midland Counties really want of the MCCU? Do they merely want us to simply run the various qualifying events for the ECF Counties competitions, plus the individual OTB events and Correspondence events as we do now? If that is the case MCCU officers can stop wasting their time trying to do other things. Or do they actually want us to do more, and if so what?

The agenda for this meeting includes a proposal to review the MCCU Constitution between now and the AGM. I feel that feedback on what the counties want from the MCCU is vital in shaping any revisions. I also feel that job descriptions go hand in hand with this issue, they should reflect what the Counties want those officers to do, or strive realistically to do. This is why a review of these is also on the agenda.

I would personally like to see the MCCU moving forward, rather than stagnating, but a voluntary association like this operates on the will of the members, not the will of the CEO. I hope the will of the constituent members is not so apathetic that little or no feedback is forthcoming.

In light of the poor attendance at the meeting it was recommended that a consultation process be started using the MCCU Newsgroup, and mailings with the Newsletter to those clubs who do not appear to have email access. Depending on the level of feedback, the AGM could then consider whether a sub-committee was needed to review the feedback and come up with proposals.

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POSITIONAL PUZZLES



a) White to play and win in 2 moves



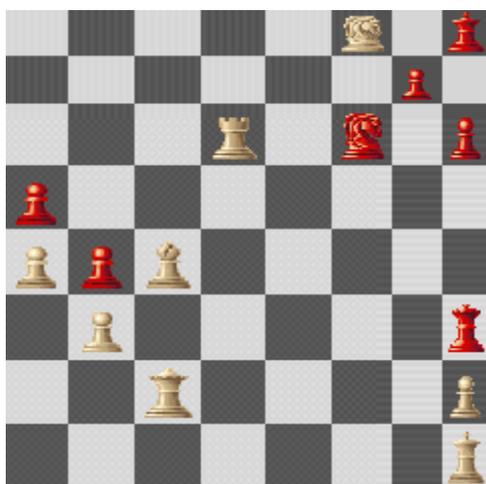
d) White to play and win in 4 moves



b) Black to play and win in 2 moves



e) White to play and win in 4 moves.



c) White to play and win in 2 moves.



f) White to play and win in 3 moves.

Continued from page 2 col 2

It was clear that various elements of the constitution were out of date and irrelevant. It was agreed that a revised constitution should reflect what the MCCU actually does, thus we need to know what that is for the future, before a revision is attempted.

It was also agreed that the matter of producing up to date job descriptions is also linked to what activities the Union is to undertake. Thus all 3 areas are interlinked and need to be addressed in logical sequence.

Graham Humphries welcomed the election of Cyril Johnson to the ECF Junior post and was pleased to nominate Traci Whitfield to join a new ECF Junior Committee as an MCCU representative. He drew attention to the various junior events reported in the newsletters and the encouraging performances of Midlands youngsters in National and International events.

The Events Directors reported that he was in discussion with a venue regarding the Midland Individual Congress. This prompted some discussion on the future of an MCCU Congress. Is such a venture now too much of a gamble for the MCCU? The chess calendar is becoming more and more congested, with a number of events competing with each other for entries. 1 day events have become more popular, possibly because of a combination of increasing venue and accommodation costs, and the busy lives people lead.

Everyone was sorry to hear that John Robinson was unwell. Following on from the AGM, he, the CEO and Finance Director had taken soundings regarding a printed MCCU Grading booklet. The upshot had been a small print run of 100 being produced, most of which had been pre-ordered. There are some spares available should anyone have changed their mind about wanting a copy.

Chris Lee the County Team Correspondence Controller sent a report, in which he tendered his resignation due to pressure of other commitments, though he will continue to run this year's event until a replacement is found. The results of the 2004/5 event are detailed separately in the newsletter. The 2005/6 event has been complicated by correspondence from one team captain going astray.

The proposed consultation exercise over email rules

had not taken place. It was suggested that it was likely that most of the team captains were involved with the equivalent BCF/ECF competition, and would be familiar with operating under the email rules proposed for the MCCU. The meeting felt that, unless there were significant objections from captains, the proposed email rules should be adopted.

The County Team Controller had asked for clarification regarding how many teams were to be promoted in the new Open sections. The minutes of the AGM confirmed this as being 1. In addition he had sought clarification over the issue of neutral venues where teams from the East & West play each other. It was felt that the existing rule 9b was quite clear that a neutral venue applies, unless otherwise agreed. The meeting also agreed that this rule was rather a nonsense where 2 counties have a common border, and should not apply in those circumstances. However, as this would be designed to apply to the 2006/7 competition, the AGM can decide on this.

As the meeting was not quorate the proposed Child Protection Policy could not be formally adopted or rejected. There were concerns about MCCU Directors accepting responsibilities where they have limited control over competitions involving counties e.g. 2 counties playing each other with little input from MCCU officials.

The AGM will be at Syston in June, possibly June 18th if the venue is available and there is no major clash of dates.

Obituary: Phillip Church

Born 6th June 1954 and died suddenly at home 18th October 2005

Phil Church, happy family man, dedicated teacher and chess enthusiast was one of those rare individuals who really make a difference. Phil took great pleasure in providing opportunities for others to shine. He worked diligently in educating his pupils at Cape Hill Primary School, Smethwick, to the best of his ability and in assisting his colleagues.

In the Worcestershire chess scene he started up an U100 team and was a great support for the U125 team.

At Redditch Chess Club he became Secretary at the beginning of 2003 and was very much the

club's driving force. He was also an influential member of Headless Cross Chess Club.

In the world of internet chess he built up a friendship with players from Nieuwerkerk near Rotterdam in Holland and set up Redditch v Nieuwerkerk internet tournaments. He followed this up with organising a visit of half a dozen Worcestershire players to Holland to take part in a Nieuwerkerk Quickplay Tournament.

Phil took up chess at the age of 40 and soon discovered a love for gambit play. His favourites were the Danish, Budapest and Blackmar Diemer Gambits but he had quite a few others in his repertoire. His attacking forthright play could be devastating for the unwary and he notched up an impressive list of victims with his gambits, many of them mated in less than 10 moves. One well known Birmingham League player, who shall remain nameless, sat with his head in his hands in disbelief for at least five minutes after one of Phil's early mates.

In the last round of a Spectrum tournament in Birmingham Phil's opponent was concerned about how long the game would go on for as he had a train to catch. Phil assured him that the game was not likely to take too long, launched into a Latvian Gambit and mated the poor man in 9 moves. Needless to say the train was caught.

His sudden death leaves a big gap in the Redditch and Worcestershire chess world. He will be sadly missed.

Phil is survived by his wife Therese and three daughters, Megan, Pippa and Anna.

The Swiss Draw

If you play in weekend congresses you will be familiar with the concept of the Swiss Draw, but how much do you actually know about it? Others may have heard the term and wondered how the system works. The article below explains both the basics and some of the tie-break systems that have been developed to deal with players on equal scores at the end of the event.

In the 1800's, the format of chess tournaments was often a "Round Robin", where each opponent played all of the other opponents. This is the best way of determining playing strength; however, the number of rounds needed are prohibitive for a large number of entrants. For example, for 32 players, there would be 31 rounds using the Round Robin format. And for

many scholastic sections, it's not uncommon to have 100-300 players, which would require from 99 to 299 rounds!

Today, in order to host a large number of players in a single weekend, the "Swiss System" is used. Invented by J. Muller and first used in a chess tournament at Zurich, Switzerland, in 1895 (hence "Swiss" system), this pairing system was introduced in the United States by the legendary George Koltanowski.

In the Swiss system, after the first round, players are placed in groups according to their score (winners in the 1 group, those who drew go in the 1/2 group, and losers go in the 0 group). So each round, you play someone with the same score as you. Since the number of perfect scores is cut in half each round, it doesn't take long until there is only one player remaining with a perfect score. (The actual number of rounds needed to handle the number of players in the section is $2n$, where n = the number rounds. So for 32 players, 5 rounds are needed to determine a clear winner, since $25 = 2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 = 32$. After 1 round, there would be 16 with 1-0; after 2 rounds, only 8 would have 2-0 scores; after 3 rounds, 4 players would have 3-0 scores; after 4 rounds, 2 players would score 4-0; and after the 5th round, only 1 player would have a score of 5-0). In actual practice, there are usually many draws, so more players can be handled (a 5 round event can usually determine a clear winner for a section of at least 40 players, possibly more).

For the first round, you can pair the players randomly. Another way, more complicated but leading to better results, "seeds" players according to their rating. Players are listed from highest rating to lowest, and unrated players are listed at random at the bottom, and then assigned a pairing number for the tournament. The top half of the list then plays the bottom half of the list (if there are 32 players in the section, #1 plays #17, #2 plays #18, etc.), alternating colours (if #1 plays white, then #2 plays black and #3 plays white, etc.) The starting colour for #1 is picked at random. A "seeded" draw is not really a viable option where a significant proportion of the players are unrated. In subsequent rounds, colours are alternated if possible. A player might be paired the same colour twice in a row if necessary, but is usually not paired the same colour three times in a row, unless absolutely necessary (for example, both players have played the same colour twice in a row, and there is no other logical pairing). *Continued on next page*

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After each round, players are placed in scoring groups, or "packs", according to their score. Then the above process is repeated within each score pack. If a scoring pack has an odd number of players, the lowest pairing number within the pack plays the highest pairing number in the next pack down (for example, if there were an odd number of 1's after the first round, the lowest rated 1 would play the highest rated 0.5, if there were any players who drew the first round, or the highest rated 0 if there were no draws the first round). So ideally, you're either playing someone with the same score as you, or usually no more than 1/2 or 1 point lower or higher than your score.

Pairing adjustments are made if both players are due the same colour, unless it cannot be avoided. Also, in tournaments where team scores are kept, players from the same school are usually not paired against each other. Directors have the discretion of overriding this, however, if all or most of the players within a section are from the same school. In any event, players are never eliminated in Swiss System or Round Robin tournaments. Also, you may not play the same player twice within the same tournament. If there are 5 rounds, you will play 5 different players. If there are an odd number of players in a section, the lowest rated player with zero points will receive a 1 pt. "bye". (Unrated players should not be given a bye unless there are no rated players with zero points. This helps unrated players play more opponents to give them a more accurate rating). If there are no players with zero points, then the lowest rated player in the lowest score group gets the bye, etc. A player cannot receive more than one bye during a tournament.

The drawback of the Swiss system is that it's only designed to determine a clear winner in just a few rounds. However, there could still be ties if the last two players with perfect scores draw against each other. Also, the strength of the players between the top and bottom players is hard to determine. There could be many players with 3-2 scores, and it's hard to say which player is better than the others, or whether a player with 3.5 points is better than a player with 3 points. To help determine the order of finish, a tiebreak method can be implemented.

Accelerated Pairings

If there are more players in a section than the number of rounds can handle (to determine a clear

winner), and then "accelerated" pairings are an option for the director.

Players are seeded as above, but in the first round, the players from the top 1/4 of the wallchart play the players in the 2nd 1/4 of the wallchart. The 3rd 1/4 plays the bottom 1/4. Then in the second round, the winners in the top 1/2 of the wallchart play each other, the losers in the top 1/2 play the winners from the bottom half of the wallchart, and the losers from the bottom 1/2 of the wallchart play each other. (The reasoning is the higher rated losers from the top half should beat the lower rated winners from the bottom half, which would cut down the number of perfect scores faster). After the 2nd round, all the players are lumped together within their score packs, as in the traditional Swiss method, and the tournament continues as a regular Swiss. The only difference is, there should be 1/2 as many players with 2-0 than there would have been with a straight Swiss System tournament. So up to 64 players could be handled in a 5 round tournament.

Solkoff

This system is based on the strength of each player's opposition *on that day*. To figure your Solkoff tiebreak, simply add the final scores of your opponents. The player whose opponents scored higher is presumed to have had tougher competition that day. (Here's a reason to wish your opponent "Good luck" for the rest of the day - if their final score is high, your tiebreaks will be high!)

Median (also known as the Harkness System after Kenneth Harkness)

This method is the same as the Solkoff method, but you discard the highest and lowest scores of your opponents and add the rest.

Modified Median

Same as Median, but modified as follows: for tied players with plus scores, only the lowest-scoring opponent is discarded; for tied players with minus scores, only the highest-scoring opponent is discarded. (There are further modifications for tournaments of 9 or more rounds and for unplayed games).

Cumulative

Another easy method to determine: you simply add the cumulative (running) scores for each round. So if you won your first 2 games, lost the third and fourth games, and won the fifth, your cumulative score on the wall chart was: 1 2 2 2 3. $1+2+2+2+3 = 10$, which would be your Cumulative tiebreak. *Continued next page*

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A player who lost their first 2 games, then won the last three would have a Cumulative tiebreak as follows: $0+0+1+2+3 = 6$ tiebreak points. The reasoning behind this method is based on the Swiss System of playing an opponent with the same score as you. The assumption is that if you win early, you're playing tougher opponents (opponents who also won early and probably finished higher). If you lost in the early rounds, you played weaker opponents (who also lost early and probably didn't finish as high). This method obviously doesn't work for players who finished undefeated.

The problem is that the order of the Progress tie-breaks is known before the last round (last round scores will change the actual value but not the order within a point group). This may encourage some undesirable tournament "tactics" in the last round.

Interestingly the USCF Official Rules of Chess considers the above feature of the system an advantage on the grounds that it "*avoids the problem, common in Median and Solkoff, of having to wait for a lengthy last-round game between two non-contenders to end for top prizes to be decided*".

Berger or Sonneborn-Berger

This is calculated by adding scores of the opponents who were beaten by a given player and half the scores of the opponents who she drew with. This has been adopted from round-robin tournaments and is usually used as a secondary method.

Number of Wins

Calculated by adding a point for a win and nothing for a loss or a draw. Intended to discourage making quick draws. Popular in 70's and early 80's (particularly in round-robins). In modern Swiss tournaments hardly justified.

Opposition's Rating Sum

Sum of the opponents' ratings. Uses the ratings i.e. presumed pre-tournament strength of the opponents rather than their performance in a given tournament. Also has the same problem with the last round as 'Progress'.

Some regard this as an ill-conceived method, with ratings invented for other purposes.

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*To me the passed pawn, as well as many other actors, has a soul, and like Man he is the bearer of wishes and fears of which he is unaware. - Nimzovitch*

## **Stephen R Boniface (1951 - 2005)**

Many congress goers will have been shocked to hear of the untimely death of one of the countries best known arbiters. What some will be unaware of is that Steve was in fact a Midlander by birth.

Born and raised in Northampton, while still at school he started playing at the White Melville Club in the town. He went to the West country in 1970 when he took up a three year teacher training course at Rolle College, Exmouth. The fact that the local chess club met in the College made it easy for him to get quickly and fully immersed in Devon chess. Although completing the course, he didn't take up teaching but became interested in the then new world of computers, which later became his career.

He remained in the Exmouth area throughout the '70s, a time when the weekend congress became an established feature of the British chess scene. He played in them and quickly became interested in their organisation. His first organised event was the Exmouth Primary Schools Chess Congress in 1976, which he organised with fellow club member, Bob Jones. It was immediately clear that this was his metier, and he soon moved on to larger, adult events.

In 1980, he left the county to become a computer maintenance operator with a large insurance company in Brighton. But he regularly returned to the west as he became controller of long-established and prestigious events at Paignton, Torquay, Exeter and the peripatetic West of England Championship.

His day job took him to Bristol in the early 1990s and with its active chess league he was in his element. His services as a tournament arbiter grew in demand as his talents became increasingly recognised nationwide. Eventually he retired early in 1999 and was free to devote himself fully to chess. Without losing touch with his existing West country events, he became involved in, to mention but a few more, the British Championships, the Guernsey Congress and the 4NCL

In 2000, he devised the formula for a new event, the Royal Beacon Seniors Congress, held next to Rolle College, Exmouth, which he ran for its first five years. At the time, it was Leonard Barden's opinion that this was the first and only event of its kind in the UK.

Eventually, he was awarded the title of International Arbiter by the world's governing body, one of only a handful in the UK. He was also very active in the Chess Arbiters' Association, helping to train many up-and-coming controllers.

Many tributes have been paid to his unstinting work for the chess cause, all of which refer to his warm and convivial personality at chess tournaments, one which could generally defuse potentially difficult situations with a light touch without compromising his position as the man in charge, able to take tough decisions if necessary. Off-duty, he could amuse his colleagues for hours with a fund of stories about the follies and foibles of chess players. He was a well-respected and greatly popular servant to the game, whose loss will be deeply felt by players and fellow organisers for years to come.

He was unmarried and is survived by his brother and two nieces, Kate and Samantha. Our condolences go to his family.  
R H Jones

## **REPORT ON BCF/ECF AGM'S**

WITH THANKS TO CYRIL JOHNSON

The 2 AGM's were held in London at the Central Council for Physical Recreation, which meant a higher than normal degree of security. Prior to these meetings there were also Board meetings of both the ECF & BCF. It was therefore quite surprising that everything was done and dusted by 4.30pm, leaving those who had pre-booked their train tickets based on the usual finish time kicking their heels for a while.

The BCF meeting in April had prepared the way for the AGM, when the decision to become a company limited by guarantee was accepted. This does protect the directors and officers from being bankrupted by the actions of any or all of them, and affords a degree of protection normally found in limited companies or co-operatives.

The directors' report rounding off the final period of activity, were all accepted. The Congress Director had performed a minor miracle keeping the losses down at the event in the Isle of Man. The Junior Director had resigned, and the acting Junior Director reported on his activities. The finances aided by the growing membership scheme being piloted in the NCCU

looked better than for some time. The meeting closed at about 2.45pm marking the end of the BCF as a trading company.

The ECF AGM started at about 3.15, after most present had fortified themselves with wine and orange juice. The new organisation has a smaller board, with the following elected unopposed, the President, Gerry Walsh, CEO Roy Heppinstall, Company Secretary Geoff Steel, Finance Director Robert Richmond, Home Chess Chris Majer, International Chess Rupert Jones, Junior Chess and Education Cyril Johnson and Marketing Roy Lawrence. There was an election for the 2 non-exec posts. Mike Turan and John Wickham taking their places on the board; Andrew Leadbetter and Brian Smith not being successful. Matthew Turner was appointed by the ECF Board as manager of Coaching, Dave Welsh as Congress Manager, Claire Summerscale as manager of Women's Chess and Dave Thomas as Gradings Manager.

I did find the subsequent board meeting on November 12th much easier with a smaller board. The Junior Policy paper was approved, including the need to create levels of coaches, on the same lines as soccer. Counties are likely to be offered the chance to adopt a membership scheme along the same lines as the NMS, i.e. a county would not have to go down a membership route unless it chose to do so.

The board now seems more professional and less inclined to go off on tangents. My hope is that we discuss expansion of chess now more than administrative niceties.

## **HISTORY OF THE BRITISH RAPIDPLAY CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP**

The city of Leeds, one of the largest in the UK had rather a poor record of staging chess events. Up until the 1980s, that is! Many local players had long wanted to develop an annual weekend congress in the city, and one did take place in 1981 and 1982. But for a number of reasons these did not continue.

In 1986 however, following initiatives from local chess "activists" Nick Nixon and Neil Bramson, in association with well-known BCF national chess organiser Stuart Reuben, a generous sponsorship deal was secured with Tetley's brewery to stage a national chess event in Leeds. And so the British Rapidplay Chess Championships were born.

The early runnings of the championships were staged in the palatial splendour of the Queens Hotel in the centre of Leeds. The first one in 1986 being won by Nigel Short with 11/11!

The competition has continued from then until the present day (only not taking place in 1993). Here are some key facts about the history of the tournament:

- The first congress was won by Nigel Short with a 100% score. He carried off a £5000 first prize and a curious trophy that resembled a beer pump handle!
- Almost all of the top British grandmasters have taken part.
- Past sponsors have included the BCF, Lloyds Bank, Tetley Breweries, Silvine (stationers), Leeds City Council and NatWest, who gave a massive £10,000 in 1989 & 1990.
- Attendances are regularly over 350 players; in 1989, 551 took part!
- Leeds has hosted the event every year except 1992 (London), 1993 (no contest) & 2001 (Bradford).
- Venues have included Leeds Civic Hall, the Queen's Hotel & Leeds Metropolitan University & Bradford City Football club
- The tournament usually consists of eleven gruelling rounds in two days but was held as a one-day event in 1992 & 1994.
- 6,000 entry forms are printed for each congress.
- The youngest champion was Ameet Ghasi, who was only thirteen years old when he finished joint first with grandmaster Aaron
- Summerscale in 2000.
- Garry Kasparov once declared that "the future of chess lies with rapidplay chess"

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Some part of a mistake is always correct. --
TARTAKOVER

CHANGING A LIGHTBULB

You've probably heard the one about how many it takes to change a light bulb, here is one involving a chess tournament.

Q: How many people at a chess tournament does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Here is the current state of research... You need one to complain about the lighting. A second will say he thinks the light is fine. A third suggests the tournament controller be called, and number four fetches him. An aged player (5) reminisces about the lighting levels at Nottingham 1936. The controller (6) can't be found, but his deputy (7) arrives. Player eight says that if they increase the lighting levels it will reflect into his eyes. Number nine says they should have fluorescent lighting. Player ten says it's just a question of replacing the dead light bulb, but player 11 thinks the bulb hasn't been working properly since the tournament began. The deputy arbiter asks an assistant arbiter (12) to make up a sign: 'Bulb defective.' A democrat (13) suggests taking a vote on whether to change the bulb and a businessman (14) forms the light bulb changing association (LCA) as a pressure group to argue for better lighting. The world champion (15) is elected chairman. The FIDE president (16) sets up a working party (17-20) to establish agreed lighting levels with the LCA. The LCA chairman then has a row with its other members about direct/indirect lighting, and storms off with his lawyer (21) to found the Association for Changing Light bulbs (ACL). The challenger for the world title (22) suddenly says he will not play under FIDE lighting. Three sponsors (23-25) emerge to hold the FIDE (direct light), LCA (fluorescent) and ACL (reflected light) championships, but none can match the interest attracted by Fischer (26) playing Spassky (27) with the new Fischer light bulb, whose incandescence increases the longer you think. The last sane player on earth (28) sneaks into the playing room to change the defective bulb, but his replacement has the wrong fitting. His scream of anguish reveals him, and he is expelled from world chess for creating a disturbance.

Note: Refers to the way chess tournaments work and also very topical to a lot of recent chess politics. Credit William Hartston in YOU magazine.

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*The hardest game to win is a won game.* -- Em. LASKER

## WORLD CHESS CHAMPIONS

The next in our series brings us to the first champion who is still living



### **BORIS SPASSKY**

**1937 -**

**World champion: 1969 - 1972**

When Spassky joined some 1,500 spectators in applauding Bobby Fischer's victory over him in game six of their 1972 world championship match in Reykjavik, Iceland, the only person surprised by this unaffected gesture was the man whom he was applauding, Fischer himself, who exclaimed wonderingly, "Did you see that? That was class."

Boris Spassky was born in Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) in 1937, the second of three children. He and his family were among the lucky evacuees before the Nazis encircled St. Petersburg, spending World War II in the Kirov region of the Urals where he learned the moves of chess at age five. Showing talent straight off, he entered the chess section of the Leningrad Palace of Young Pioneers in the autumn of 1946, where he worked five hours a day on the game with the trainer, Vladimir Zak.

On more than one occasion, Spassky has said that youth programs were the single redeeming feature of the Soviet state. In the Young Pioneers he found a warm home away from a cold hovel where his divorced mother

struggled to support her family amid conditions of general starvation.

In 1948 Spassky finished fifth in the Leningrad junior championship, and in 1951 he finished second in the Russian junior championship, which made him a candidate master. Then, in 1952 at the age of 15, he came second in the Leningrad Championship, catching the eye of an impressed Mikhail Botvinnik. Botvinnik probably played a role in Spassky, a mere 16-year-old who had yet to compete in even a semi-finals of a Soviet championship, being sent to play in the 1953 Bucharest international, where he tallied 12 - 7. He finished tied for 4th - 6th behind Alexander Tolush with 14 points, Tigran Petrosian at 13 and Vasily Smyslov with 12 ½. This won him his international master title.

Spassky's first trainer, Vladimir Zak, yielded in 1952 to Alexander Tolush. He showed Spassky that chess was not merely an exercise in strategy but was also filled with, in Spassky's words, "attack, sacrifice, creative ideas."

Spassky's chess story followed an interesting, if typical script. Having been noticed by Botvinnik and having then done well at Bucharest 1953, the 16-year-old comer appeared poised to sweep all before him. He tied for 3rd - 6th in the 1955 Soviet Championship, in the process, qualifying for the Gothenburg interzonal. He then won the 1955 World Junior Championship. At Gothenburg 1955, he tied for 7th- 9th which was just good enough to scrape into the Amsterdam candidates tournament of 1956. Only 18 years old, Spassky was a grandmaster and a candidate for the world chess championship.

At Amsterdam, Spassky did very well, tying for 3rd - 7th. Surely, here was a 19-year-old with a good chance to become the youngest-ever world champion in the next title cycle - a possibility that seemed far from farfetched after he tied for 1st - 3rd in the 1956 Soviet Championship. But then came ....

Nothing. Nine years — 1956 to 1965 - would separate Spassky's first and second appearances in candidates competitions. Chess is arguably the ultimate sport or art of the double-edged sword. Spassky's strengths were his weaknesses. He played brilliantly against the best but could lose to the less than best. His results were littered with fine play against the top half of tournament tables and too many defeats against the bottom half.

Although Spassky respected Tolush's fighting profundity, he needed more than a trainer. Given his inconsistent results in the late 1950s and early 1960s, he needed a new lease on chess life. And so, Spassky turned

to Igor Bondarevsky, who became his trainer in 1961. Bondarevsky, broadened Spassky's style, disciplined his play and provided emotional support. He was the catalyst that ignited Spassky's spectacular drive toward the world championship.

On the eve of the 1965 candidates matches, Spassky was feared for his fearlessness and respected for a new-found solidity. At the chess board he replaced Keres as Caissa's consummate poker-face, typically sitting sideways at the table with legs crossed, cigarette in right hand, head held back and eyebrows arched. He gave an impression of slightly bored detachment.

The luck of the draw went against Spassky for the 1965 candidates matches. He would have no easy opponents, instead having to overcome the cream of the Soviet grandmasteriat. In three candidates matches, Spassky lost only once with Black, while losing twice as White because of overly frisky play. Overall, his scores with Black and White were identical on the plus side. His play seemed to be in perfect balance, and he became a hot favorite to defeat Petrosian in their upcoming title match in 1966. Against Keres, Geller and Tal, he appeared to play like a champion. The single cavil was that twice or thrice over three matches, this irresistible force played a bit - well - playfully and fell behind at the beginning of his matches with Keres and Tal, though he proved able to recoup against his less patient opponents. Spassky's bad luck or, more accurately, ill fate was having to face Petrosian. For in the entire chess universe there is nothing more patient than an immovable object. It was Spassky's own impatience that proved his undoing.

Between 1966 and 1969, Spassky grew stronger. In 1969, on his second try for the world title, Boris Spassky beat Tigran Petrosian through *force majeure*, backing him up against the chess wall until the champion's systems against 1. e4 collapsed. Spassky was a happy man scaling the Everest of Chess. "My best time was when I was moving to become champion," he said. Even the defeat against Petrosian in 1966 had the effect of prolonging an exciting challenge rather than crushing a questing ambition. But, having perched himself upon the peak, he discovered that opponents played more strongly against him because as world champion he was, by definition, the choicest of all chess scalps. He became dismayed when fans continued to expect supreme results befitting his exalted station. Later he averred feelingly, "I don't want ever to be champion again."

Spassky has described his championship years from 1969 to 1972 as the unhappiest of his adult life. "In my country, at that time," he once said, "being a champion

of chess was like being a King. At that time I was a King ... and when you are King you feel a lot of responsibility ... but there is nobody there to help you." And, too, there were the unpleasant politics. Spassky despised the Communist Party, which a post-Soviet court would rule to have been a criminal conspiracy. As he said to one American audience, "Politics, I dislike them. They would come to me and say, 'Comrade Spassky: sign a petition for the defense of Angela Davis!' and I would reply, 'No, no, no.' I had to get rid of the Soviet Chess Federation because I could not change my nature."

The year leading up to Fischer - Spassky 1972 was filled with extraordinary chess drama. In three candidates matches played in 1971, Fischer scored 18 ½ - 2 ½ or nearly 90 percent against super-GMs Bent Larsen and Tigran Petrosian and world title candidate GM Mark Taimanov. Suddenly, Bobby was punishing all players - including the giants of the international arena.

After many hilarious misadventures, Fischer arrived in Reykjavik almost as if by accident. Spassky, the man whom he would play, resembled the victim of an accident. Having put on weight over the past two years, Spassky could be glimpsed chain-smoking and chain-circling match headquarters at the Hotel Loftleidir. The agony of his anxiety - would Fischer end up in Reykjavik or go to Kalamazoo? - was culminating in a tobacco-frenzy of despair. Like the refugees in Casablanca, he was waiting. And waiting. And waiting.

Fischer arrived. The match started. Two knights - one sans reproche, the other errant - charged each other, lances raised. The result of the collision between these two gallants - a collision that symbolized for many the clash between American individualism and Soviet collectivism - was that Spassky lay unhorsed in the dust.

The first line of Soviet defense was to charge that electronic emissions or exotic exudations were attacking Spassky. Other equally outlandish claims were made, but the final line of defense was to blame Spassky, who was accused by a specially convened investigating commission of neglecting Soviet training methods. Political fallout fell on him, and he was forbidden from playing abroad.

Spassky himself eschewed the gobbledygook. "When I played Bobby Fischer, my opponent fought against organizations - the television producers and the match organizers. But he never fought against me personally. I lost to Bobby before the match because he was already stronger than I. He won normally." That's all.

*Continued on next page*

Spassky may have lost the chess war and quite a few pieces to Fischer, but he won the peace. Freed from the burden of defending a title that ultimately meant little to him, Spassky became a congenial performer on the chess after-dinner circuit, while Fischer descended into his own personal mayhem.

In the 28 years since he lost the world title, Boris Spassky has probably given more lectures than he has played tournament and match games. A gifted mimic who will answer virtually any question tossed at him and who has gained lasting fame as Fischer's quondam opponent, he demands and gets good money for visiting chess clubs, conducting simulms and, most of all, for just being himself. There are more pictures of Spassky standing before audiences of chess enthusiasts, who are rocking backwards in their chairs with delighted laughter, than there are of him sitting at a chessboard. He can act the clown while maintaining a dignified reserve - a gift unique among the humorless lot in the chess world.

Over the board, Spassky slipped from being a special player to being a great player. Spassky himself said, "In general, I've lost my motivation. I am now rather peaceful." True enough. Yet when this great, hibernating Russian bear is awakened or, for whatever reason, feels that he ought to win, then his chess claws can rip out flesh.

On September 2, 1992 - on the Yugoslav resort island of Sveti Stefan just off the coast of Montenegro - Boris Spassky returned to chess center stage for the first time in 20 years. He played and lost a 49-move Ruy Lopez, which was game one of Fischer - Spassky II - a curious affair that was billed by the Serbian sponsors as a rematch for the real world championship. In that first game, Fischer looked great. In several subsequent losses, however, he would play less like his old self and more like an old man. Spassky, on the other hand, belied his 2560 pre-match rating and No. 101 ranking among the world's masters. For the first time in nearly a decade, he played fighting, uncompromising chess. Fischer - Spassky II was a match that resonated with historical and political echoes, though widely accepted as a match for one version of the world chess title, it was a letdown. Spassky got away from Yugoslavia grazed rather than scathed by the media bullets. Fisher was less fortunate.

His life or, more precisely, how Spassky has lived it, is why he lived down the embarrassment of playing chess in a pariah state. He had accumulated moral capital. Naturally friendly, always polite, Spassky was popular. Even the way he left the Soviet Union during the dark days of the Brezhnev regime and attached himself to France during the mid-1970s bespoke a pacific

disposition. He resided in France but continued to play in Olympiads for the Soviet Union. His was a slow-moving disengagement that he described as political castling or exchanging one life for another en passant.

The art in Spassky's elegant chess conceptions seemed to be complemented by the artfulness of his elegant life. Chess people admired Spassky for having integrated personality with lifestyle. This cool, classical European intellectual led a cool, classical life. Married since 1975 to a French diplomat, he said on one occasion, "I live in a beautiful French home with my wife, a beautiful French lady." This image — the chess grandmaster as gentleman, parfaitement gentil — reflects faithfully what Boris Spassky happens to be.

### The Cary Grant of the 64 Squares.

Whilst the Spassky/Fischer World Championship event is what most remember, the 2 did meet somewhat earlier, here is one the games in which Spassky gained the upper hand

Event "Mar del Plata" 1960  
 White "Spassky, B."  
 Black "Fischer, R."  
 Result "1-0"

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1. e4 e5 2. f4 exf4 3. Nf3 g5 (3... d6 $1)
4. h4 (4. Bc4 g4 5. O-O (5. Ne5 Qh4+
6. Kf1 Nc6) 5... gxf3 6. Qxf3 Qf6 $10)
4... g4 5. Ne5 Nf6 (5... h5 6. Bc4 Rh7
7. d4 d6 8. Nd3 f3 9. gxf3 Be7 10. Be3
Bxh4+ 11. Kd2 Bg5 12. f4 Bh6 13. Nc3
$146) 6. d4 (6. Bc4 d5 7. exd5 Bg7 (7...
Bd6)) (6. Nxc3 Nxe4 7. d3 Ng3 8. Bxf4
Nxl 9. Qe2+ (9. Bg5 Be7 10. Qe2 h5 11.
Qe5 f6 $1 12. Nxf6+ Kf7 $19 {Steinitz,W
}) 9... Qe7 10. Nf6+ Kd8 11. Bxc7+ Kxc7
12. Nd5+ Kd8 13. Nxe7 Bxe7 $19 {Morphy,P-
Anderssen,A Paris 1858}) 6... d6 7. Nd3
Nxe4 8. Bxf4 Bg7 9. Nc3 $17 (9. c3 $1 Qe7
$1 {Fischer,R} (9... O-O $5 {Keres,P} 10.
Nd2 Re8 11. Nxe4 Rxe4+ 12. Kf2 Qf6 13. g3
Bh6 14. Bg2 $2 {Keres:"with advantage for
White."} (14. Qd2 $1 $44 {15.Bg2}) 14...
Rxf4+ 15. gxf4 Bxf4 $17) 10. Qe2 Bf5 $15)
9... Nxc3 10. bxc3 c5 $1 (10... O-O
{Keres,P}) 11. Be2 (11. Qe2+ Be6 $1 (11...
Qe7 $6 12. Bxd6 Qxe2+ 13. Bxe2 cxd4 14. O-
O $1 {->}) 12. d5 $2 Bxc3+ $19 13. Bd2
Bxa1 14. c3 Qf6) 11... cxd4 12. O-O Nc6
(12... h5 13. Bg5 f6 14. Bc1 {/\ Nf4; ><
g6, e6, h5}) (12... Qxh4 $6 13. g3 $13)
13. Bxg4 O-O 14. Bxc8 Rxc8 15. Qg4 f5
(15... Kh8{>=}) 16. Qg3 dxc3 17. Rael (17.
Bxd6 Rf6 18. Bf4 Rg6 $36) 17... Kh8 (17...
Qd7 18. Bxd6 Rfe8 19. Nc5 Qf7 $17 {Knoch,H
and Antoshin}) 18. Kh1 $2 (18. Bxd6 {>=}
Rf6 (18... Rg8 19. Ne5) 19. Be5 Nxe5 20.
Nxe5) 18... Rg8 (18... d5 19. Nc5) 19.

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Bxd6 Bf8 \$1 (19... Bd4 20. Qh2 Rg4 21. Be5+ \$1 Kg8 (21... Bxe5 22. Nxe5 Rxh4 23. Nf7+) 22. Bg3 \$15) 20. Be5+ Nxe5 21. Qxe5+ Rg7 \$1 22. Rxf5 (22. Qxf5 Qxh4+ 23. Kg1 Qg4 24. Qxg4 (24. Qf2 Bd6 \$40) 24... Rxg4 \$17) (22. Rf4 \$2 Bd6 \$19) (22. Qf4 \$2 Rg4 \$19) 22... Qxh4+ 23. Kg1 Qg4 \$2 (23... Qg3 \$1 {>=; Spassky,B} 24. Qxg3 (24. Qe2 Bd6) 24... Rxg3 \$17 {/\ Rxc3}) 24. Rf2 Be7 {/\ Bh4} 25. Re4 Qg5 (25... Qd1+ 26. Re1 Qg4 27. Re4 Qd1+ \$10 (27... Qd1+ 28. Kh2 Rc6 29. Qb8+ Rg8 30. Qe5+ Rg7 \$10)) 26. Qd4 \$1 Rf8 \$2 { Fischer:'Overlooking White's real threat.'



(27.Re5)} (26... Bf8 \$1 27. Qxa7 (27. Ne5 Bc5 28. Nf7+ Kg8 29. Nxg5 Bxd4 30. Rxd4 Rxg5 \$10) 27... Bd6 \$10) 27. Re5 \$1 (27. Ne5 \$2 Rxf2 28. Qxf2 Bc5 \$1 29. Qxc5 Qxg2#) 27... Rd8 (27... Qg6 28. Rxe7 \$18) (27... Qh4 28. Rxf8+ \$18) (27... Bf6 28. Qd6 \$1 \$18) 28. Qe4 Qh4 29. Rf4 (29. Rf4 Qg3 30. Rxe7 \$18) 1-0

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Interview with a Vampire?

No, it's an interview with the new ECF Junior Director Cyril Johnson (CFWJ) by your editor Julie Johnson (JDJ) As many will be aware Cyril was acting Director during the final months of the BCF, but now he has been elected to the equivalent ECF post -

JDJ: After 7 years in Home Chess, you have moved over to Junior Chess & Education. Why?

CFWJ: The spell in Home Chess included 9 months running the office as well! In June Alan Ruffle resigned as Junior Director and I was asked to take over. When the elections came round, I realised that

there was a job to be done in Junior Chess so I stood down from Home Chess.

JDJ: Most of us know you as a chess organiser. What is your background in education?

CFWJ: I was doing a Teaching Qualification at Cambridge when I was first diagnosed with heart problems in 1990. I started teaching chess in schools in 1992, and have been involved in schools chess since then.

JDJ: What are your plans?

CFWJ:

Where do I start. I have already circulated all the Local Education Authorities in England, and other organisations as well, offering the services of the English Chess Federation. I have had a lot of excellent feedback from that. I would like to reorganise coaches along the same lines of football coaches, with Gold, Silver and Bronze Coaches reflecting the level of players they can coach. The selection committee is being altered. Each Union is being invited to send a delegate to the committee, through whom local organisers can recommend their promising juniors. Traci Whitfield will act for the MCCU, and I am pleased to welcome her onto the committee.

Criteria are being laid down, so that players will know what rating should have been achieved at a certain age to be eligible for selection for participation in the World and European Junior Individual events.

I would very much like to organise friendly matches against other countries for those less experienced. I would like to see greater participation in FIDE rated events, especially those in England which are properly organised.

JDJ: One of the problems is that school teachers want to set up chess clubs, but have little support at present. What are you going to do about that?

CFWJ:

The level of arbiter called a "referee" will be shortly available to those wishing to sit the examination. This will require a thorough knowledge of the Laws of Chess, and those who become members of the

Continued on next page

Arbiters Association will receive updates on the Laws. They will be encouraged to assist at tournaments and county matches, ensuring that the Laws are observed. This will give teachers the kudos of having a certificate to state that they know the Laws, and will reinforce their decisions, and give them the confidence they need to teach youngsters. We will also offer a simple system to teach the moves, to run school tournaments, and generally be there to offer any specific advice we can.

We also hope to source cheaper chess equipment for schools.

CALLING ALL JUNIORS

A CIRCULAR FROM THE ECF JUNIOR DIRECTOR

At a meeting of the ECF Board it was agreed that anyone playing for England in an event under the auspices of the ECF must fulfil three criteria. They must be members of the ECF, they must not owe money to the ECF, and they must have a minimum rating which will be specified when the Selection Committee meet. If you, or anyone you know, would like to be considered by the selection committee for any individual or team event under the ECF, please send the player's details to ecfjuniorchess@yahoo.co.uk. Details required are, name, postal address, date of birth, telephone number, email address, and current rating ECF and/or FIDE. Details of all tournaments entered in the last year would be appreciated. These will be placed on a secure database which will remain in the control of the Director of Junior Chess. A copy will be kept in the office under secure conditions in case of disasters at the Director's home. The information will not be made available to a third party. If you have any questions, please contact me by email or by phone on 0116 260 9012. It would be appreciated if calls were between 9.00 a.m. and 9.30 p.m. Wednesday is not a good night as I try to play chess then.

A good chess player

A man went to visit a friend and was amazed to find him playing chess with his dog. He watched the game in astonishment for a while. "I can hardly believe my eyes!" he exclaimed. "That's the smartest dog I've ever seen."

"Nah, he's not so smart," the friend replied. "I've beaten him three games out of five"

OPENING QUIZ ANSWERS

- a) Aged Gibbon Gambit
- b) Calabrese Counter-Gambit
- c) Crocodile Variation
- d) Dodo Gambit, KGA
- e) English Rat
- f) Fingerslip Variation, French
- g) Hawk Variation, Benoni
- h) Halibut Gambit, English
- i) Gaga Gambit, KGA
- j) Fort Knox Variation, French
- k) Creepy Crawly Formation
- l) Arafat Gambit
- m) Danube; Donau Gambit
- n) Horsefly Gambit
- o) Kiddie Countergambit
- p) Hillbilly Attack, Caro-Kann

POSITIONAL PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

- a) 1. Qxf5 Kxf5 2. Bb1++
- b) 1. Qxc1+ Bxc1 (if Qe1 then 2. Qxe1++) 2. Rf1++
- c) 1. Qh7+ Nxh7 2. Ng6++
- d) 1. Nf5 exf5 (if the knight isn't taken then either 2. Qg7++ or Qh8++) 2. Rxh7 Re1+ (the only way to delay mate next move) 3. Rxe1 Bh1/any other move 4. Rh8++
- e) 1. Ne7 Kh8 2. Qh7+ Kxh7 3. Rh1+ Qh5 4. Rxh5++
- f) 1. Qxg7+ Kxg7 2. Bf6+ Kg8 3. Nh6++

