

“SCARBOROUGH COMMUNITY OF TORONTO CHESS TALK”

Newsletter of / Le Journal de
Scarborough Chess Club

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“FRIENDLY Chess Since 1960”

ITEMS OF INTEREST TO BOTH MEMBERS & NON-MEMBERS
ISSUE # 18 – May 15, 2001

DO YOU KNOW ? / SAVEZ-VOUS ?

Chess is a Sport in Canada !

For some time now, FIDE has been working on getting Chess recognized as a “ sport “, and accepted into the International Olympic Association. Some countries managed to get national recognition for chess as a sport, while others have been unsuccessful. Such recognition significantly raises the profile and media-acceptability of Chess, and of most practical importance, it opens up the possibility of Chess obtaining government “ sport funding “ !

Finally, here in Canada, the first step has been taken with the recent acceptance of Chess into the Canadian Olympic Association, after successful lobbying by the CFC. Congratulations are certainly in order to the CFC for a job well done/started.

Below is the May 14, 2001 release on this by the CFC President, Maurice Smith :

“Subject: One Small Step

Gentlemen:

I have just today received official word from Michael Chambers, Canadian Olympic Association President that my application for CFC membership in the COA has been approved by its Board Of Directors. Consistent with the COA General By-Law, such recognition shall take effect automatically at the time of commencement of the next meeting of the Board Of Directors, November 24, 2001. Mr. Chambers included in his package an Organizational Overview of the COA and its Annual Report 2000.

This historic moment may be recognized as one small step for the benefit

of chess and its participants. In future years it may become known as a larger step that significantly improved the image of chess and led to a degree of funding that benefited all aspects of the sport.

While we often seem to indulge ourselves negatively in the problems we have in the chess world, let us on this occasion rejoice in this positive act that could truly alter the Canadian chess scene in the future. ”

FIDE World Chess Championship – New Route for Canadian Qualification !

A Geography Lesson

For the purposes of world chess, FIDE divides the world into four “continents” : Africa, Americas, Asia and Europe. Each continent has a Continental President, and a continental organization. The Americas consists of North, Central and South America. The Continental President is Dr. Pedro Barrera of El Salvador. The continental organization is the Confederation of Chess for the Americas (CAA). It’s General Secretary is Mr. Jorge Vega, at this point still an unpaid volunteer.

Each of the continents is divided into “Zones”. There are 29 world “Zones”. Usually these zones contain a number of countries. European zone 1.3, for example, includes Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Iceland and the Faroe Islands. But there are, for various historical and demographic reasons, 5 single-country zones. They are Russia, USA, China, Ukraine and Canada (!). The Americas consists of 5 zones, Canada and the USA being 2 of them.

Each of the Zones is allocated a certain number of places in Round 1 of the FIDE WCC Knockout tournament. So European zone 1.3, cited above, sent 3 qualifiers to the 2000 WCC. Canada, as a single zone, has been able to send 1 qualifier. USA has sent 5 qualifiers. The 5 Americas Zones together sent a total of 12 qualifiers in 2000. And at least 10 of them were Grandmasters.

Expansion of FIDE WCC 2001 Knockout Tournament

The knockout tournament format for the FIDE WCC was first introduced in 1997. It was fully used for the 1999 Championship, won by the Russian, Alexander Khalifman (FIDE’s 14th World Champion). In the year 2000 there were 100 participants in all, most having qualified through the zonal tournaments. A few participants were seeded and didn’t have to start in Round 1. It was won by Viswanathan Anand of India (FIDE’s 15th World Champion). [We note that the 3 K’s, Karpov (12th World Champion), Kasparov (13th World Champion) and Kramnik, do not recognize Khalifman or Anand, and all refer to Kramnik as the 14th World Champion; FIDE does not recognize Kramnik].

For 2001, all players start in Round 1, and FIDE has expanded the number of Round 1 participants to 128 : World Champion; Runner-up; other 2 semi-finalists of the prior year; the World Junior Champion of the prior year; 20 best rated players; 90 continental qualifiers (and this can include zonal qualifiers where the continent has adopted such a system); 8 through a World-wide Internet Championship; 5 “ wild-card ” Nominees of the FIDE President.

As a result of this expansion, each continent received an increased number of positions, and had to decide on the new system they would adopt to determine the qualifiers. The Americas received 7 extra places. They had had 12 qualifiers previously. It was decided here in the Americas that the Zonal system would be left in place, with each zone qualifying the same number as in 2000. The extra 7 places are to be determined in a brand new tournament, the Americas Continental Championship.

The Canadian Zonal Time Crunch

So Canada will still send its Canadian Champion directly to the WCC. Last year this was Grandmaster Alexandre Lesiege, who made it into Round 2, but was then knocked out. For 2001, there was only one bidder for the Canadian Closed & FIDE WCC Canadian Zonal Qualifier. They were organizers from Montreal, and their bid was accepted, and the dates of Aug. 21-29 set, some time ago.

But, as we know, FIDE has been moving at a blistering pace to make major changes to the WCC cycle for this year, starting back in Nov. 2000. But information and decisions from FIDE were still coming too slow and too late. So on Feb. 9, 2001 our CFC FIDE rep. and Zonal President, Phil Haley, wrote to FIDE and asked : "By what date do the Zonal Tournaments have to be completed ?" On Feb. 27, Emmanuel Omuku, Executive Director of FIDE responded : "The meeting of Continental Presidents with (the) Deputy President on March 23, 2001, should settle this question." Subsequent to that meeting, FIDE generally asserted that it would like all zonals finished by July, 2001, but some statements seemed to imply some flexibility for the 2001 transition year, since things were being so rushed.

Then on April 7, Phil got the new Regulations for the Americas Continental Championship. In line with the FIDE request, the Continental is to be held in July. But the Continental President expressed the hope that the Canadian Champion would play in it !! So, on April 9, Phil wrote to Pedro Barrera and drew to his attention that that would be impossible, since the Canadian Zonal was set for AFTER the Continental (there is also a serious regulatory problem in his wish, which we will investigate at some other time). Moreover, because of the order of the 2 tournaments, Canada would be unable to use the Zonal as a means of determining who might be the "official" Canadian participants in the Continental (the Regulations named 19 "official" participants, Canada getting 2 of them). So Canada was now faced with having to develop immediately some criteria and system for choosing the 2 "official" participants in the Continental.

On April 11, Pedro wrote to Phil : "As you know, FIDE has requested all the continent that all the championships must be finished by the end of July; so I would advise you that for next year or including this year, Canada will take this into account." What did this mean ?

Concern rose even more re the Canadian Zonal dates, when the head of the FIDE World Championship Cycle Committee, Mr. Willy Iclicki, on April 26, wrote to Pedro Barrera for confirmation of the Canadian Zonal, and added : "Kindly note that the event is supposed to be finished by (the) end of July. " When he received a copy of this communication, Phil immediately sent off a letter of concern to Dr. Barrera. He stated : "As I have noted a number of times, ... the Canadian Zonal (is)... August 21-29.

Considering how late FIDE is in doing its own work, FIDE must be flexible in relation to problems with the 2001 World Championship Cycle..... Is Canada the only zone that will not be holding its zonal before July ? “ Sure enough, on May 2, Mr Omuku of the FIDE office, wrote to Phil : “ Isn’t there the possibility that you could adjust the dates of your zonal in agreement with Pedro ? “ So, for the second time the CFC spoke to the Closed organizer, Pierre Denommee, and confirmed the dates couldn’t be changed.

Pedro then came to the rescue, and wrote back that he did “ not have any difficulty approving the Canadian Zonal in August. “ Now Phil is pretty long-in-the-tooth when it comes to how things work, and do not work, in FIDE. So he decided that he would like, if possible, 2 approvals, namely, the FIDE office approval as well (since its last e-mail had been seeking a date change, and Mr Iclicki had noted the July deadline). So on May 4, he wrote to Emmanuel, copying Pedro, confirming Pedro’s position, and asking : “ Would you please **officially** confirm that the winner of the Canadian Zonal in August will advance directly to the first round of the World Championship ? “.

That certainly did the trick! On May 6, Pedro wrote to Phil : “ As Continental President, I **officially** declare that the winner of the Canadian Zonal will go directly to play the first round of the World Chess Championship. “ Good work Phil !!

We do not like to think of the mess that would have ensued if FIDE ultimately had demanded that all zonals, including ours, had to be completed by the end of July !!

The Inaugural Americas Continental Championship ’01

FIDE has expressed the hope that the Continental Championships will become four of the most prestigious tournaments in the continents, drawing the strongest players on the continent, and hopefully offering the biggest prize fund of the various tournaments on the continent. The Americas Continental puts up for grabs 7 first round places in the FIDE WCC !

Besides the 16 “ official “ participants from the 5 zones, the Panamerican Junior Champion is invited, along with 2 wild-card entries, one chosen by the Americas President, and one by the tournament organizer (called the “ Administrator “ in the Regulations). The “ official “ entrants (such as the 2 Canadian ones) do not have to pay the tournament registration fee.

But the tournament is a 10 Round Swiss, currently open to anyone in the Americas who wishes to play, and pays the Registration Fee! And to date, the Regulations do not place any official rating cut-off on entrants !! Moreover, FIDE Commerce, the company that now owns the commercial rights to world-wide chess from FIDE, has put up \$ 80,000 (US) towards the prize fund, and this is to be enhanced by private sponsorship fund-raising by the organizer, in addition to the receipt of the registration fees. This is beginning to look like an attractive tournament.

But the Continental is still only in the bidding stage, and some restrictions will likely develop as a successful organizer finalizes his bid. We hope that this finalization will happen soon, since the Continental is supposed to finish by the end of July.

So, in addition to the Canadian Champion going to the FIDE WCC, we will have 2 “ official “ Canadian participants (the CFC Exec. is now finalizing the selection) in the Continental. And we may have who knows how many “ pay-their-own-way “ other Canadian participants, chasing the 7 Continental qualifier spots.

Wouldn't it be great if a Canadian won one of the Round 1 positions (or more than one ?!) ? So get your suitcases packed to head south in July in the quest for the Holy Grail !! We'll try and scrounge details for you as they are officially announced.

Scarborough April Showers Active '01

25 players turned out on Saturday, April 28 at the McGregor Park Recreation Centre for what turned out to be a hotly contested tournament for the \$ 625 prize fund. A number of strong Toronto players showed up – Ochkoos, Rositsan, Bluvshstein, Rakhinshteyn, Brajkovic; two of our strongest Canadian women players attended as well – Chu, Bryskine. The first place was shared by Jura Ochkoos and Mark Bluvshstein.

SCC members also did well – Andrew PICANA tied for the U 2200 prize; Gaja SRINIVASAN, a junior who has recently been pushing his rating up quickly, won the U 1800 prize; Liam HENRY, another junior, won the U 1600 prize; and the Junior Prize was won by member David HIER.

The tournament organizer was Scarborough Chess Club, and the TD was SCC President, Bryan Lamb (who found this tournament hard slogging !). This tournament was the 6 th in the Scarborough Active 00/01 series. The 7 th will be the Scarborough May Flowers Active '01, in 1 ½ weeks, on Sat., May 26 (registration starts at 1:15 pm).

SCC Summer (Sun.) Swiss '01

On May 6, this new multi-week tournament saw 17 players come out to contest this last Sunday tournament for the 2000/2001 year (SCC will likely close for Sundays in August to mid-September). It will be 7 rounds and conclude on July 8. The class breakdown is : Master – 1; Expert – 1; A – 4; B – 3; C – 5; D & Under/Unr. – 3.

New SCC Tournament ! – The Summer (Tues.) Swiss '01

The SCC Executive has decided to experiment with a regular rated swiss on a Tuesday. It is 30 moves / 90 min. // S.D./30 min., the same as on Thursday evening. It will be 5 rounds. So on Tues. May 29, at 7:00 p.m., adventurous SCC members will give the new idea a try. Get in touch with Bryan in advance if you can, if you want to play, so we'll get some early indication of interest. But, if you just decide at the last minute, that's OK too – just show up Tues. and you'll get in ! We'll look forward to the feedback on this experiment.

NOTE :

- A – Members/ non-members may contact Bob Armstrong, ed. , directly, or through SCC e-mail, to :
 - 1.be added to the e-mail list; 2. submit content (fact, opinion, criticism - recommendations help!).
- B – An item in any language may be submitted for publication, if accompanied by an English translation.
- C – The opinions expressed here are those of the editor, and not necessarily those of the Scarborough CC.