

Scarborough Community of Toronto Chess News & Views

Newsletter of / Le Journal de
Scarborough Chess Club

“ FRIENDLY Chess Since 1960 ”

ITEMS OF INTEREST TO BOTH MEMBERS & NON-MEMBERS

Issue # 1 – September 1, 2001

Do You Know ? / Savez-Vous ?

Happy Second Birthday !!

History

This year starts the third year of publication ! We started back in the Fall of 1999 with one page, and now have an average of 3-6 pages per newsletter. We initially covered only SCC information. We then added some international and Canadian tournament reports. We then began reporting on GTCL, OCA and CFC affairs, usually with some political analysis content. Last year we also added a “ significant games “ section, which appeared from time to time, examining games involving a Queen sacrifice. Also, we published some guest articles by the CFC, OCA, the new GTCL President, etc..

Some New Clothes

We're celebrating our birthday ! We've thrown out some of the old, and brought in something new. We've changed our name ! “ SCT Chess Talk “ has become “ SCT Chess News & Views “. Note our modified masthead – and the monitor copy of the newsletter now has a spanking new 3-colour look (though we're not yet printing the hardcopy in colour).

We want to thank Chess 'N Math, the ChessTalk website and Larry Bevand, for their kind permission to use the Chess Talk name when we first started. It gave us some immediate “ market identification “, since people associated the name with chess comment. Now that we're established, it's time to “ identify ourselves “ clearly (and make sure there is no possible confusion on the fact that we never have been in any way associated with ChessTalk or Chess 'N Math).

We feel that our name now captures the fact that we are not only presenting the news, but analyzing it. We are asking you, our readers, to make your own judgments

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about what is happening at all levels of the chess world. The more informed we all are, the stronger chess will be in Canada.

Our Readers Write

We especially want to thank our readers for their very positive feedback on our efforts to bring to you “ the breaking news in the GTA and beyond “ ! Here are some of the comments :

- “ I love your newsletter...(it) provides a vital link for us news-hungry types out here in the hinterlands [Kitchener – Waterloo CC]. Other than “ En Passant “, there are few sources of news (and gossip) in Ontario. “ – Doug Hoch, President, K-W CC.
- “ Congratulations for editing a really excellent Chess Newsletter. “ – Nicholas Varmazis, President, Willowdale CC.
- “ Enjoy (it), I did. Keep up the great work. Excellent reporting ...thanks for keeping us current “ – John Friendly, SCC member & past SCC Exec. Cttee. member.
- “ I really appreciate getting the bulletins from you, and I am quite aware of all the work involved in keeping the members informed...It's very refreshing to know that someone out there still cares about chess. Please keep up the good work. “ Cec Canham, past SCC member, & past SCC Exec. Cttee. member.
- “ Thanks ! You're doing a great job with the newsletter...I give you particular credit for paying intelligent interest to OCA affairs. “ – Roger Langen, past OCA President.
- “ ...a quick thank you to you for putting the GTCL Club Competition updates in your newsletter. Maybe we can whip up some more interest from people who might not have otherwise known of the competition. “ – David Gebhardt, GTCL Exec. Cttee., Club and Team Coordinator.
- “ I always enjoy reading your stuff ...” – Larry Bevand, Chess ‘N Math Executive Director.
- “ Your articles are well thought out and well written. It can only be of service to the chess public. “ – Rick Garel, past SCC member.

The Future

We intend to continue our coverage of events outside of SCC, which we have been told time and again, makes our newsletter of interest to our many non-member subscribers, as well as to SCC members. We will evaluate what is being done and said in the chess world, and hopefully pose some of the important questions to be answered. Sometimes we may even propose some solutions for your consideration !

And, of course, we will be keeping SCC members up to date on what is happening in the club : tournament winners, upcoming club tournaments, recent decisions by the Exec. Cttee., etc..

We are quite excited to be crossing the threshold into our third year, and we are pleased that the newsletter is well-received, both within and outside of the club. We are looking forward to a successful 2001/2 year !

2001 Canadian Closed Championship (and FIDE World Chess Championship Zonal)

The Main Tournament

This 9 round Swiss is considered to be our most important national tournament – we determine both our Canadian Champion for the year, as well as our Canadian representative going to the 1st round of the FIDE World Chess Championship. Besides the top-rated players being invited to play (anyone over 2250 qualifies), provincial/territorial champions or the highest rated player in the province/territory, qualify. Some others qualify through specific additions. This year, two “ qualifier tournaments ” were also authorized. The tournament took place from Aug. 21 to 29 in Montreal. 31 players participated, including both of our active Grandmasters, Kevin Spraggett (2633) and Alexandre Lesiege (2617). The group also included 1 IM, and 6 FM's.

Playoff Dissatisfaction

The tournament ended in a tie, with both Kevin and Alexandre at 8/9 pts., a full 2 pts. ahead of the 3rd / 4th place finishers, Mark Bluvstein and Marat Khassanov. It had been advertised in advance that the Closed would use the Active game playoff format used in the FIDE WCC. Wednesday, Aug. 29, had been scheduled in to take care of this eventuality.

But shortly after the conclusion of the main tournament on Tuesday evening, at 9:01 p.m., Kevin posted on ChessTalk that both he and Alexandre would prefer to play a 6 game slow match as a tie-break format. But he advised that there would have to be a prize fund for such a match, and since he didn't expect that would happen, the two of them would likely just have to follow the original playoff format.

Unexpectedly, 10 minutes later, Brian Hartman, a Canadian IM, and the one who had been commenting on some games for the Closed website, posted that he would see if he could do something to allow such a match to take place, though he advised his prize fund would not be in the amount Kevin had suggested (which had been \$ 10,000). There followed a number of ChessTalk postings expressing dissatisfaction with the FIDE tie-break format, and supporting the advantages of a longer slow game match.

To his everlasting credit, on Wed., Aug. 29, Brian posted that he had indeed put together the start of a package. He advised the Montreal organizers that if they wanted to pursue it with him, they should contact him and discuss it further. (And if they were going to just continue on, best of luck). At this point, things were not all that clear. This proposal was coming in at the 11th hour. All details were not ironed out, and the playoff

was set to start at 4:30 p.m.. The organizers then posted that they were pleased Brian was putting something together, but that his proposed match would have to take place outside of the Closed. They felt compelled to continue with the playoff as originally planned.

Playoff – Day 1

Under the circumstances, both Kevin and Alexandre agreed to start the playoff. The first two games were played at Game/30 min., with 30 sec. increments. The first was a 108 move marathon, with Lesiege eventually having R+B vs R, but being unable to mate – draw. In the second game, a repetition of moves saw the game drawn at move 32.

The second 2 games of the playoff were to be played at Game/20 min., with 10 sec. increments. If required, the final game was a blitz one (sudden death; no increments; black gets 6 min.; white gets 5 min. and draw odds).

But according to everyone, both players were exhausted by the first 2 games. The games had taken almost 4 hours of intense play, with an hour break. After some discussion, all parties agreed that the continuation of the playoff should be rescheduled to the next day, Thurs., Aug 30, at 4:30 p.m., at the same location.

A Slow Game Playoff Match Proposal

But Kevin, and it appears Alexandre as well, had not given up hope on their desire to have the championship decided in a longer slow game match. In the wee hours of Thursday morning, at 1: 27 a.m., Kevin again went onto ChessTalk and urged Brian to continue his efforts, and advised that he had to make a concrete proposal to the organizers and the CFC before the playoff started at 4:30 p.m. that afternoon, if something was to be done !

And it appears Brian had also not given up hope, despite the rejection of his offer by the organizers on Wed.. He apparently continued to improve his package. On Thursday, before the start of the continued playoff, he e-mailed the organizers, setting out his commitments, making a concrete proposal, and advising that CFC President, Dale Kirton, was making himself available by phone at the time, to discuss this change of format proposal. The organizers spoke with Dale, and when the 2 players arrived for the recommencement of the playoff, they also spoke to him.

Congratulations Canada !!

The result ? All agreed to accept Hartman's proposal in principle, and to have his proposed format replace the existing one !! A great result for the players, and a great result for Canada. No one denies that our 2 GM's deserve an opportunity to play their best chess for the 2001 Canadian Championship, and that is in a longer match, at a slow time control. This will surely be one of the greatest matches in Canadian chess history. Further, it has the potential to be a great opportunity to market our game to the chess-playing, and non-playing, Canadian public !

So what are the details so far ? The CFC website advises : a 6 game match at slow time control; at the end of September; guaranteed prize fund of \$ 5,000 (\$3,000 to the

winner; \$ 2,000 to the runner-up); organizers to cover travel and accommodation expenses; location to be determined, likely Hamilton.

However, on Thursday, the Montreal Chess League posted on ChessTalk, that they wanted to propose the match be in two parts, and that the second half be held in Montreal; they advised they were developing a proposal. Also on Thursday, Brian posted on ChessTalk that he had obtained a match sponsor, the World Chess Network ! They will be “ displaying all games of the match live, with considerable added features for analysis, etc..”

All of us can only express our profound thanks to Brian Hartman for his efforts on behalf of Canadian chess. Positive recognition should also be extended to the Canadian chess infrastructure (Montreal Chess League, Closed organizers, CFC, etc.) for being able to make a creative decision under severe time constraints, that went beyond normal by-the-book decision-making. Finally, we have to thank the two players. Kevin and Alexandre had the desire to make this a worthy Championship. Kevin had the faith that by taking his case, and that of Alexandre, direct to the Canadian chess-playing public, something could perhaps happen ! And it did ! It's never over 'til its over !

Canada has won “ big “ here. We all look forward to some top calibre, fighting, Canadian chess later this month.

The FIDE International Master Playoff

Somewhat lost in all the excitement is the fact that a second playoff was also required, due to the fact that Mark Bluvstein and Marat Khassanov both achieved the IM norm of 6/9 pts.. FIDE only awards automatically one IM title in our Zonal (CFC can seek specific approval for the second applicant, but it is discretionary on FIDE's part). At 4:30 p.m. on Wed., August 29, Mark made a move as white in their first playoff game, and pressed Marat's clock – but Marat had not yet shown up ! And when Marat's flag fell, he still had not appeared!

So Mark claimed a default win in Game 1. To our knowledge, Mark also claimed a default win on the playoff match, since Marat had not appeared, and the TD did not start game 2 of the playoff. Here it gets murky. Is it the rule that a player who defaults the first game in the playoff match, automatically defaults the match as well ? Can the defaulting player contend that the second game should have been started at the time given for it, and then he might have shown up, won, and tied the playoff ? We're still trying to research this one, and get advice from the experts.

But much later that night, during the 2nd Spraggett-Lesiege playoff game, Marat showed up, but as a “ spectator ” ! When told of what had happened, he protested that he was not aware that he had had to play a playoff match on Wed. with Mark !! Our sources tell us there were witnesses to the fact that Marat had indeed been told at least twice about the playoff match. Mark has confirmed that he was told twice about the playoff.

But even if Marat is to be believed, that though being told, he “ didn't hear ”, he has paid the price. The TD has awarded the playoff, by default, to Mark. So his name will be given to FIDE for the automatic IM title ! Congratulations Mark !

FIDE Master Titles

Besides playing for an IM title, the participants were also able to play for the FIDE Master title. The required result was 4.5/9 pts.. Discounting Mark, who will be getting the IM title, 6 players are eligible to apply, who are not already FM's ! But here, FIDE only automatically grants 2 FM titles in our Zonal. The CFC can apply on behalf of the rest, but again it is discretionary on FIDE's part. The fact that so many qualify is partly the consequence of Canada being its own single country zone, and partly the result of the overall strength of the tournament. It is interesting to note that the average rating of this tournament was only 2283 ! This has led to a whole discussion of whether Canadian Zonal titles are " cheap ", in comparison to the difficulty of obtaining them in the normal way, or in Multi-country Zones (but that's a topic for another day).

One of these automatic FM titles will go to Ray Phillips, who scored 5.5/9.

Unfortunately, there was an odd number of players in this year's Closed, and anyone with a bye is disqualified from the title. So Marc Ghannoum will get the 2nd automatic FM title with 5/9 (Yoos disqualified for his round 4 " bye ").

The others eligible to apply, who scored 4.5/9, are : Arthur Odachowski, Dragoljub Milicevic, Artem Gurevich, and Tyler Reddy (Ed Urquhart and Eric Lawson had a " bye ").

Americas Continental Championship '01

This inaugural tournament was held in Cali, Columbia from Aug. 9-19. It drew 146 players, including 21 GM 's ! Seven first round places in the FIDE World Chess Championship knockout tournament were at stake, along with the prize money. The players winning the spots were : Alex Yermolinsky (GM – USA); Alexandre Goldin (GM – USA); Boris Gulko (GM – USA); Daniel Campora (GM – Argentina); Alejandro Hoffman (GM – Argentina); Alexis Cabrera (IM – Cuba); Alexander Ivanov (GM – USA).

GTCL Board Meeting # 3 (2001/02)

On August 23, 5 members of the new Board of Directors, in person, and 2 by proxy, met to deal with developing the infrastructure to facilitate chess in Toronto. The meeting ran head-first into a number of tough long-outstanding issues that currently plague Toronto chess, as well as some new ones. But the meeting was a good one, and some possible answers were canvassed.

Some of the items dealt with were :

1. Toronto-Montreal Match – this is currently set for Sunday, Sept. 16, in Kingston. GTCL proposed there be 8 member teams, including 2 women, and 2 juniors. They allocated some funds towards travel and meals. Bryan Lamb, President, and Mark Dutton, Communications Director, form the Toronto committee dealing with selection and other details.
2. GTCL-Sanctioned Weekend Tournaments – This has been a thorny issue in the GTA for some time now, since Dutton Chess withdrew from bidding on any more GTCL-

sanctioned tournaments. And the position of DC has now changed financially, for the worse, through an increase in rent for the coming year at Dutton Chess Club. GTCL finds itself on the horns of a dilemma : it wants to run at least a few GTCL-sanctioned tournaments per year (this generates income for the GTCL scholarship fund; GTCL also wants to address the problem of “ restricted maximum entry “ tournaments, which DC currently offers); but it also recognizes the weak financial position of DC, and that running its own tournaments in competition with DC will cause a drop in DC revenue, and could affect the viability of DC’s Toronto organizing. This is a consequence it does not particularly want. So, in order, partly, to give DC some breathing space during the next 6 month financial transition period, it decided to no longer seek bidders for its Thanksgiving Day Open (Oct.), Remembrance Day Open (Nov.), or Christmas Open (Dec.).

However, it is actively seeking bids for the 2002 Toronto Closed and 2002 Toronto Blitz Championship (Jan. or Feb.), the 2002 Toronto Class Tournament (March), and the 2002 Toronto Open (April). But DC put forward a general proposal that perhaps the GTCL and DC could somehow jointly organize these last two tournaments, since they are generally larger than the available space at DCC. GTCL was willing to explore such an idea, as another possible option, along with whatever bids might be submitted. The bids for these four tournaments must be in prior to the next GTCL meeting, Monday, Oct. 15.

3. Junior Scholarship Fund – no progress has been made in arriving at a possible consensus change to the existing policy of “ no strings attached “ scholarships of \$ 35. But a number of creative ideas on fund-raising for the scholarship fund were brought forward, and will be investigated further.
4. GTCL Club Team League – This will be run again in 2001/2, likely starting in October. GTCL League Coordinator, David Gebhardt, who ran the competition last year, will oversee it again. He is currently getting input on possible changes for this year – Active time control, rather than Game/90 min.; having 4 clubs meet on the same evening at the same location, and have 2 matches played the same evening (can be done if shorter time control adopted); combining the GTCL league play and the GTCL Cup competition, which were separate in 2000/1; etc..

Attending this meeting were : Bryan Lamb, President (formerly SCC rep.); Cesary Posylek, Vice-Pres. (formerly Polonia (Mississauga) CC rep.); Ismail Ibrahim, Secretary (formerly SCC rep.); Wilf Ferner, Treasurer (formerly SCC rep.); Mark Dutton, Communications Officer (formerly DC rep.); Martin Jaeger, Willowdale CC rep. (by proxy); Chris Field, Toronto Secondary School Chess League (by proxy).

2001/2 SCC Annual General Meeting – Tuesday, Sept. 4

Our most IMPORTANT club meeting – to kick off the 2001/2 club year ! It’s our club, and this is where we get our say, and our VOTE. One of the agenda items is the election of a new Executive Cttee. for the new year. In addition, the old Executive reports on the past year’s successes (and failures – of course there are few of those !). It is also our chance, not only to provide feedback on how things went this past year, but, more importantly, where we’d like them to focus this year.

A number of important issues are on the agenda – club space; tournament format for Tuesdays (now that we've opened it up for club tournaments); what to emphasize in our club newsletter this year, and whether distribution should be expanded; a new membership drive; our junior program; our Scarborough Active Series 2001/2; etc..

So, come out and contribute your input to the running of OUR club, and let's have another successful year (free pizza, pop & coffee to celebrate) ! It starts at the regular time : 7:00 p.m. Please try to be on time, so that we can start right away.

And a big thanks to all the members who supported the club this past year, playing in regular tournaments, coming out for the Scarborough Active Series, and volunteering time to help in the administration of the club – we're a voluntary, non-profit, community club, and we don't function without volunteer labour ! Special thanks to our past Executive – Bryan Lamb, President; Ted Termeer, Vice-President; Wilf Ferner, Secretary; Ben Harrigan, Treasurer, Lukas Beaudry, and then Gaja Srinivasan, Junior Rep., and Bob Armstrong, Officer-at-Large.

SCC Mid-Summer (Thurs.) Swiss '01

This 15 player event, the last tournament of the 2000/1 club year, finished on Aug. 16. The winners were : Andre ROLAVS / Nimal THAVANDIRAN (4/6 PTS.).

New SCC Tuesday Fall Tournament Schedule

During the second half of last year, SCC experimented with a rotating tournament format on Tuesday evenings – regular swiss, 1-hour, and Active. It was liked by the members, and so we will offer this mix of tournaments on Tuesdays this year.

The Tuesday tournament schedule begins Tuesday, Sept. 11, at 7:00 p.m., with round 1 of the 5 round Fall (Tues.) Swiss '01. It will be 30 moves/ 90 min./ S.D./30 min..

[note : Tuesday, Sept. 4 is our club Annual General Meeting].

SCC Autumn (Thurs.) Swiss '01

Round 1 of this 7 round start-of-the-year tournament will be on Thursday, Sept. 6. This is traditionally one of our largest swisses (other than the club championship). Come out and sign up for enjoyable, friendly over-the-board chess. Please show up a bit before 7:00 p.m. for registration. (same time control as Tues. above)

SCC Fall (Sun.) Swiss '01

Round 1 of this 7 round swiss will be on Sun., Sept. 9. Time control is 40 moves/2hrs./ S.D./ 1 hr.. Come out a bit before 1:30 p.m. to register.

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.