

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 # 2 – September 15, 2001

Do You Know ? / Savez-Vous ?

CFC Governors To Debate Abolishing 2002 Can. Women’s Closed Championship !

The Motion

- A) that the CFC abolish the intended 2002 Canadian Women’s Closed Chess Championship;
- B) that the 2002 Canadian Women’s Champion will be the highest finishing woman in the 2002 Canadian Open in Montreal next year; and
- C) that the 2003 Can. Women’s Champion (under same new format) will be Canada’s Qualifier to the 2003 FIDE Women’s WCC, and that the 2 top finishing women will be Canada’s reps. to the 2003 Americas Women’s Continental Championship.

The Confession !!

Well...not quite....We have to come clean ! The above is NOT really happening. There is no motion as set out above coming before the CFC Governors. The motion, we admit, is a FICTITIOUS one. We just wanted to get your attention !!

However, though it’s not going before the Governors, it is being brought before the house of public opinion ! And that’s YOU, our readers. What do you think of the motion – yes or no ??

Before we see how our “ Governors ” are voting on this fictitious “ motion ”, let’s look at a bit of history first.

Background on Canadian / FIDE Women’s Chess

Historically, Canada and FIDE have a tradition of having a separate women’s tournament system to determine women champions, alongside the “ mixed ” gender tournaments. In the most recent Canadian tournament, on the first long weekend of last
e – mail : scarboro@idirect.ca Website : <http://webhome.idirect.com/~blamb/>

Wexford Seniors’ Apartments (Comm. Ctre.), 1860 Lawrence Ave E. (just east of Pharmacy Ave.)
(easy access – Victoria Park Stn./Pharmacy Bus; Lawrence E. Stn./Lawrence W. Bus

month, 18 of Canada's top female players came together in the separate, women-only, 2001 10th Canadian Women's Closed Championship. It had not been held for 5 years. The winner, WIM Nava Starr, became the 2001 Canadian Women's Champion.

She also MAY have become the Canadian Zone's " Qualifier " directly to the first round of the FIDE Women's World Chess Championship.

In addition to the World Chess Championship (open to men and women), FIDE organizes a separate women-only Women's WCC.

As well, Nava, and the second place finisher, Amanda Benggawan, became the Canadian Zone representatives to the 2001 Americas Women's Continental Championship. FIDE also runs women-only Continentals. FIDE runs similar women-only Women's Continental Championships in the other three FIDE " continents " (Africa, Asia and Europe).

Prior to the separate women's tournament, Canada did determine its Women's Champion in the Canadian Open. The 1st Can. Women's Closed Championship was held by Canada in 1975; the winner was Smilja Vujosevic. It is interesting to note that under the prior system, she also won the Canadian Women's Championship in both 1970 and 1973 !

In Canada last month, no woman played in the 2001 Canadian Closed Championship (open to both men and women) in Montreal.

Other Points of View

But in some countries, separate women-only tournaments have been abolished.

The 2001 British Women's Championship was just recently decided in the mixed 2001 British Championship – she was the highest finishing female. However, there were only 2 women among the 70 participants, one rated only 2118 and the other 2117. This led the editor of British Chess Magazine, in the Sept. Issue, to comment : "...there must be a case for ensuring that there is a representative women's entry, or perhaps re-establishing a separate women's championship." It is interesting to note that the British Women's Champion has been decided this way since 1989 ! One would have to conclude, with only 2 2001 women entries, that this system has not been successful in marketing women's chess in Britain.

Up to and including 2000, USA determined its USA Women's Champion in a separate women-only tournament. But the USA has recently abolished the separate women-only tournament. There will be no USA Women's Champion for 2001. But in 2002, the USA Women's Champion will be the highest finishing woman in the 2002 US Championships (a mixed tournament). This will be an invitational tournament including, for the women : the 2 2000 USA Women's Co-champions; 6 seeded from the rating list; " qualifiers " from 3 other mixed tournaments (2001 US Open – 2; 2001 National Chess Congress –1; 2001 American Open - 1). It will be held Jan. 5-13, 2002.

Now...On to the Voting

Although the motion is fictitious, it is a topic that is current and controversial. And so we decided to bring the debate to you, our readers.

To help us in debating this motion, we approached a well-known member of the Canadian chess community, whom we felt had some special connection with this topic under “ motion “. We indicated that we wished him/her to act “ like a Governor “, and make a “ written submission on the motion “, for a “ fictitious CFC Governors’ Letter “. Below is his/her vote on the motion, and the vote of SCTCN&V.

The Vote

Vote # 1 : Against the Motion !

“ I think that we should have an annual Canadian Women's Championship. Any group of chess players has the right to hold their own championship. The success of the 10th Canadian Women's Championship 2001, with 18 players, proves that there is strong interest by the players for this event.

The benefits are tremendous: players with something in common competing against each other; a wonderful opportunity for good publicity for chess; and opportunities for juniors to compete against experienced opponents.

In sending our Champion to the World Championship, we are fulfilling our international obligations as a member of FIDE. By holding a Canadian Championship, we raise money to support our Champion. In 2001, the players in the Women's Closed raised \$900 for this purpose [this was out of entry fees; CFC is also kicking in from general CFC revenue, an additional \$ 850 towards Nava's costs re the Continental; CFC also pays the women's champion's airfare to the Women's WCC.].

I have nothing good to say about the method of choosing our champion from the top female finisher at the Canadian Open. This method was rightly abandoned in 1975 with the introduction of the first Canadian Women's Championship. Besides losing all of the benefits mentioned above, it's extremely unfair to the women, as the women don't even compete against each other to determine their own champion.

[Can you guess who our “ guest contributor “ is ? Send us your guesses – we'll let you know in the next Issue # 3 !]

Vote # 2 : Against the Motion !

SCTCN&V believes there are many benefits flowing from the holding of a separate women-only championship.

Firstly, it allows a clear determination of the “ women's champion “. For example, if the determination were within the Can. Open, and not in a separate women's tournament, one woman could finish a $\frac{1}{2}$ pt. ahead of 4 other women, and never have played any of the other women in the tournament. And this could even be the case for the 4 women in 2nd place. It is certainly arguable that the woman who placed the $\frac{1}{2}$ pt. ahead is the “ strongest “. But we think that the chess public wants a women's champion to show that she's dominated the “ other women competition “, and will not accept the result if the “ champion “ has never played any of the next 4 strongest women. A women-only tournament gives the clearest result on this test.

Secondly, it makes women's chess more easily marketable and highly visible. Women are a substantial minority in chess, despite being more than 50 % of the population. There are many reasons for this (perhaps a topic for a future newsletter). But the fact is that making a substantial breakthrough with women, would be a great advance

for chess in Canada. So how do we get the attention of women/girls in Canada. We believe that a picture of 18 women playing chess in a national championship, all in one room, as recently happened, is especially striking to women. They note such a picture – it challenges the stereotype of chess as a male-only sport. It catches their attention.

It is much harder to market chess to women, if we only have a picture of a woman in a large chess hall among a number of men, with an explanation that no matter how far down she finishes in the group, if she's the highest woman, she'll become women's champion. We just see it as a much harder sell.

Lastly, we believe women derive more satisfaction from the “social aspect” of chess, than do their male counterparts (we'll likely hear about this one ! and we're not saying they're any less competitive !). We believe we have observed this over the years watching women playing in regular weekend tournaments. And those directly involved in the recent 2001 Can. Women's Closed actually commented on how much the women/girls “enjoyed” playing against each other. There was a special “social” atmosphere to that tournament, in the eyes of female players, and both female and male observers. It was palpable. The separate women-only tournament acts as a “magnet” for women players – they want to play in it ! And we want to encourage our top women players to play (both in the separate and mixed tournaments). We believe the opportunity for our junior girls to play in the Women's Closed one day is a major incentive to their chess development, and adds a specific “goal” for them to shoot for.

Your Vote ??

As you can see, our 2 “Governors” were both against the motion. But we know there are positive arguments that can be made in favour of the motion, and that some of you would support such an actual motion. If you'd like YOUR side to be heard, write us your “submission on the motion” and we'll see if we can put it in the next Issue. Or if you are against the motion, and have an additional reason not mentioned above, send it to us.

Our conclusion - there is obviously merit in both positions, since different countries have gone different ways. The issue is whether we want to change direction here in Canada.

2001 Canadian Closed Playoff Match (Lesiege – Spraggett)

The playoff is a 4-game match, 40 moves/2 hrs., and Sudden Death, 1 hr. (no increments). It is being played in Brantford, Ontario, from Sept. 13-16, and will be live on WorldChessNetwork. As of Thursday night, Alexandre Lesiege is leading after winning the first game (he had white)!! [Due to circumstances beyond our control, we had to distribute this Sept.15 Issue early on Friday morning, Sept. 14, and so couldn't cover the 7 p.m. Friday game for you].

2001 Americas Women's Continental Championship

This 9 round swiss, in Merida, Venezuela, starts with round 1 on Sat., Sept. 22, and concludes Sept. 29. Among the prizes are first round places in the FIDE Women's

WCC in Moscow from Nov. 24 to Dec. 11, 2001 (however, the CFC and USCF appear to have different views on this – CFC says all 8 Americas first round places are at stake; USCF seems to say only 1 of the 8 places is at stake in the Continental; we'll let you know as soon as this is resolved). The 7 Zonal Qualifiers from the 5 Zones of the Americas are entitled to play. Then there are 7 Zonal President's Nominees and 3 other designated participants. Finally, anyone else can play who is willing to pay their own expenses, and has the "endorsement" of their Zonal President. The organizers are apparently hoping for about 32 players from 12 countries here in the Americas.

WIM Nava Starr, as we said above, as winner of the 2001 Can. Women's Closed, is Canada's "Qualifier" to the Continental. As we said above, there is uncertainty whether she has obtained entry directly to the first round of the FIDE Women's WCC. The CFC's current position is that Nava has to go to play in the Continental if she wants to win a place in the Women's WCC. And after much e-mailing back and forth between different officials, CFC is still trying to confirm with FIDE whether its position is correct. So, to be safe, the CFC is advising Nava to attend, in case they are right, and she still has to win a place in the Women's WCC at the Continental. Nava has made arrangements to attend, and she looks forward to representing Canada. To our knowledge, the 3 USA Qualifiers are skipping the Venezuela tournament, on the belief that they already have a first round place in the Women's WCC ! We hope CFC, USCF and FIDE sort this all out BEFORE the Continental begins !!

Junior Amanda Benggawan, as mentioned above, is Canada's Zonal President's Nominee to the Continental, since she placed second in the 2001 Can. Women's Closed. Our last information was that she was going.

Good luck to both !

SCC Annual General Meeting

On Tuesday, Sept. 4, SCC held its start-of-the-year AGM. There was a good turnout of 16 members (over 25 % !), as well as 2 non-member observers.

The first item dealt with was a review of the past year, with each past Exec. Cttee. member giving a short report of their activities on behalf of the club. We will be staying at the Wexford Seniors Building again this year. But the search will continue for a larger space. We noted our 8 consecutive monthly Active tournaments in 2000/1, and the monthly Scarborough Youth Tournaments, successful club contributions to the GTA chess community. Also, we have now obtained free space at the Scarborough Civic Centre for the first 2 Scarborough Active Series 2001/2 tournaments in Nov. and Dec.. We anticipate booking the Jan. to June 2002 dates next month. It was reported that our club newsletter was well received this past year by both members and non-members (it is now distributed not only to about 30 SCC members, but also to almost 100 non-member players in the GTA/Surrounding GTA, and 12 chess clubs). It was therefore decided that this year we would start a general mail-out of the newsletter to all players on our GTA/Surrounding GTA contacts list. Should anyone not wish to receive it, they need only reply and we will remove them from our new subscribers' list.

There followed the election of officers for this year. The new Executive is :

President – Bryan Lamb *

Vice-President – Ted Termeer *

Secretary – Gaja Srinivasan * (previously Jr. rep.)
Treasurer – Ismail Ibrahim
Officer-at-Large – Bob Armstrong *
Junior Rep. – Liam Henry
[* = member of 2000/1 Exec. Cttee.]

SCC Autumn (Thurs.) Swiss '01

This is the first tournament of the new 2001/2 club year. It started Sept. 6. There was a high turnout of 28 players ! The class breakdown is : Master – 1; Expert – 3; A – 8; B – 12; C – 1; D & Under/Unr. – 3. Time control is : 30 moves/90 min./S.D./30 min.. It is 7 rounds, and ends Oct. 18. Some of our strongest players are playing : Lamb, Cai, Moysoski, Picana, etc.. Round 3 is this Thurs., Sept. 20. If you would still like to play, contact Bryan and he can give you “ byes “ for the first 2 rounds you missed (or just show up before the round).

SCC Fall (Sun.) Swiss '01

This 7 round tournament started Sunday, Sept. 9, and ends Oct. 28. Time control is 40 moves/2 hrs./S.D./1 hr.. 12 players registered, and the class breakdown is : Master – 1; A – 2; B – 7; D & Under/Unr. – 2.

SCC Fall (Tues.) Swiss '01

This is a 5-round tournament, played on consecutive Tuesdays. It started last Tuesday, Sept. 11. It ends Tuesday, Oct. 9. Because of the tragic events in the USA, we expect some didn't come on Sept. 11 who had intended to play. If you still want to play on Tuesdays, but missed last Tuesday, contact Bryan to get a “bye “ for round 1 (or just show up before the start of the round on Tuesday, Sept. 18). Time control is the same as for Thursdays.

6 players are registered for this event, and the class breakdown is : Master – 1; B – 4; D & Under/Unr. – 1.

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.