

Scarborough Community of Toronto

Chess News & Views

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Scarborough Chess Club

“ FRIENDLY Chess Since 1960 ”

ITEMS OF INTEREST TO BOTH MEMBERS & NON-MEMBERS

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Do You Know ? / Savez-Vous ?

Man vs Machine : How Good Are the Computers Now ?

This question will be answered in October of this year. Two cutting edge matches are now scheduled for then between the # 1 and # 2 rated humans, and the top two computer programs.

The Kramnik Match

One match has been in the works for a while. Vladimir Kramnik, # 2-rated, and generally recognized classical world champion, after his defeat of then-champion Garry Kasparov, the currently # 1-rated player, for the title in 2000, was to have played his computer match in October 2001. But it got postponed due to the terrorist attack in the USA on September 11, 2001. So it was been rescheduled to start October 4, 2002, in Bahrain (publicized as “ Brains in Bahrain ”). He will be playing the Deep Fritz program, created by programmers in Germany, associated with ChessBase. It won the right to play Kramnik in a computer play-down. Since then the program has been iced, waiting for the match with Kramnik, though variants of it did play in the 2002 Computer Championship in the Netherlands. “ Deep ” refers to the fact that the program runs on multi-processors. \$ 1 million is backing this match – its publicity value is high ! One of the backers of the match is Einstein TV, which took over the rights to Kramnik’s title defense from BainGamesNetwork, which had originally set up this computer match. One of the conditions for this match is that Kramnik get a copy of the program before the match for preparation purposes.

FIDE

The Kramnik match is entirely outside of the auspices of FIDE, the world chess

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Stan Wadlow Park Clubhouse, 373 Cedarvale Ave.

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easy TTC access – 5 min. bus ride from either Woodbine Subway Stn. or Main St. Subway Stn.

governing body. But FIDE has seen the importance of these “ Man-Machine “ matches, in terms of chess publicity. So, at the 2001 FIDE Congress, a motion was passed to set up a “ Man vs Machine “ challenge. It is to become an annual event, and part of the official FIDE Chess Calendar. The International Computer Chess Association (ICCA) has agreed that it also will sanction the match. FIDE Commerce, a company independent of FIDE (but which in the past was working closely with FIDE on the commercialization of chess), will underwrite a \$ 1 million prize fund for this match.

The Kasparov Match

On August 7, 2002, FIDE announced it had reached an agreement for this 6-game match, at classical time control, with former world champion, Kasparov. Kasparov gets half a million up front, and the other half is split 60/40 winner/loser. It will be played Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays, between October 1 and 13. Thus this match and the Kramnik match will be overlapping. It will take place in Jerusalem, Israel, despite the social upheaval there at the moment. This is because the computer program being played in this match is “ Deep Junior “, the creation of two Israeli programmers, Amir Ban, and Shay Bushinsky. Again, “ Deep “ here refers to the fact that the program will be running on a massive multi-processor machine that will allow it to reach millions of positions per second in its analysis. Deep Junior has won three of the last four computer championships, and is thought to be the strongest available program currently (but in the 2002 Computer Chess Championship, Deep Fritz, the program Kramnik is playing, didn’t play in that championship; also, Deep Fritz has defeated an earlier version of Deep Junior). Unlike Kramnik, Garry will not be given a copy of the program prior to the match, but the programmers will not be able to modify the program after the match begins.

Garry has not played a formal match against a computer since his stunning loss to IBM’s program, “ Deep Blue “ in 1997 (which was a rematch, after Kasparov had defeated Deep Blue in 1996). After that match, Deep Blue was disassembled, and so some controversy has continued as to how strong it was, compared to today’s programs.

FIDE has set up a 5-person committee to supervise the match. Kasparov has said that besides winning, one of his main goals is to establish a model to be adopted for similar “ man vs machine “ matches in the future, while ensuring the sportive value of such events.

Politics Heats Up at FIDE

For some time now, FIDE President Kirsan Ilyumzhinov has had firm control of the reigns at FIDE. He has promoted the FIDE World Championship Knock-out format, reduced time controls for WCC matches from the former classical time controls, arranged for the hoped-for commercialization of chess, etc. And since he had been providing FIDE prize funds from his own personal extensive wealth, he has been given a lot of leeway by many, who appreciate his largess, and do not see at the moment alternate sources of chess prize income, unless sponsorship becomes more prominent.

But recently, the French Chess Federation sent out a warning missile, criticizing Kirsan, and the overall direction he has been taking FIDE.

Now there has been a further follow up to this unrest. Ignatius Leong of Singapore, who has been active in FIDE over the last 10 years, and is currently President of the Asia Zone, has decided to challenge Kirsan for the presidency at the upcoming 73rd FIDE Congress in Bled, Slovenia on November 1 – 11, 2002. And on the ticket as General Secretary is the French federation President, Jean-Claude Loubatiere. Others on this slate are : Deputy President – Morten Sand, a lawyer from Norway; Vice-President – Lin Feng, of China; Treasurer – Uvencio Blanco, of Venezuela.

It is not clear how much support the challengers have at the moment. A few years ago, there was wide-spread dissatisfaction with Ilyumzhinov's autocratic method of dealing. But in May this year, he was a major player in the signing of the Prague Unity Agreement, by which the classical world championship title will be unified over the next year and a half. This has given Kirsan some new credibility, and enhanced the chess image internationally. Whether it is enough to hang onto the reigns of power remains to be seen.

The SCTCN&V “ Know Your Chess Player “ Quiz

Do you recognize this well-known international chess player ?



(Answer on last page of newsletter)

2002 Montreal International

Out of the 12 players in this invitational round –robin, 6 were foreign grandmasters. The tournament was played July 25 – August 5. The results were somewhat disappointing generally for the Canadian contingent of 6 players. The tournament was won by Jean-Marc Degraeve of France, with 8.5/11 pts. The second to fifth places were all won by foreign grandmasters : Vasilios Kotronias – Cyprus (7.5); Lubomir Ftacnik – Slovakia (7.0); Alexei Barsov – Uzbekistan (6.5); Jesus Noguieras – Cuba (6.0).

The top Canadian player was 2002 Canadian Champion, IM Pascal Charbonneau, with 5.5 pts. He showed that his recent winning of the title was no fluke, defeating both Le Siege and Hebert. The rest of the Canadians filled in the bottom of the standings from 8th – 12th. The only Canadian GM playing, Alexandre Le Siege, was quite off form, and scored only 4 pts. One bright spot was that Canadian Sylvain Barbeau scored 5 pts., sufficient to garner him a second IM norm ! The other Canadians' scores were : IM Igor

Zugic – 4.5 pts.; IM Mark Bluvshstein – 4 pts.; IM Jean Hebert, who also had a very bad tournament, not scoring a win – 2.5 pts..

2002 Guelph Pro-Am International

This 9-round tournament ran from August 7 – 11, and attracted a number of GM's, IM's and FM's to the Open section, which had 49 players. The total attendance exceeded 100 players. Initial reports are that Hal Bond, the organizer, provided a first-class tournament, and many are pleased to see that he has committed himself to running a 2003 Guelph Pro-Am as well.

The tournament was won by foreign GM Nikolai Legky of Russia, with 7.5 . But it was the 2nd/3rd place finish that surprised the tournament. Foreign GM Walter Arencibia of Cuba got 6.5 pts.; but tied with him was Hamilton's FM Frank Pushkedra (2303), who played what some call the “ tournament of his life ”. Along the way, he drew two GM's, John Fedorowicz (USA) and Dmitry Tyomkin (Israel), defeated a top-rated IM, Igor Ivanov (USA), a former 3-time Canadian Champion, drew IM David Cummins and defeated Toronto's Goran Milicevic (2414). Congratulations Frank !! Frank also gets an IM norm for his effort (to be confirmed on application to FIDE).

Another Canadian deserving honourable mention is junior IM Stephen Glinert, who tied for 4th through 8th , with 6 pts.. He had to play all 5 foreign grandmasters, defeating Jean-Marc Degreave of France, and drawing Arencibia and Fedorowicz. He also defeated IM Cummins (who finished 10th). Had Steven won his last round encounter with Tyomkin, he would have finished clear second, and obtained his first GM norm. Congratulations Stephen !

2002 Canadian Youth Chess Championship/ Girls' CYCC

This national championship was played last month in Montreal, prior to the 2002 Canadian Open. Ontario juniors won a number of championships :

Open Section :

U 18 – Warrick Rolfe

U 16 – Igor Divljan

U 14 – Mark Bluvshstein

U 12 – Raja Panjwani

U 10 – Shiyam Thavandiran (SCC member)

Girl's Section :

U 10 – Alina Sviridovitch

Congratulations to them all, and the other 4 Girls' Section champions.

Scarborough Chess Club

SCC completed its last tournament of the 2001-2 year on Thursday, August 8. It is now closed for the rest of the summer.

The first activity of the new 2002-3 year will be that year's Annual Meeting, which will be held on the first Thursday evening after Labour Day, on Sept. 5, at 7:00 pm.

“ Know Your Chess Play “ Quiz Answer

Garry Kasparov, currently # 1 – rated player in the World, and 13th World Chess Champion.

A – Members/ non-members may contact Bob Armstrong, ed. , directly, at bobarm@sympatico.ca or through SCC e-mail, to :

5. Be added to the free e-mail list; 2. Submit content (fact, opinion, criticism, recommendations!).
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.