

Scottish Correspondence Chess Association

Magazine No.161

Spring 2023

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Alistair analyses the Q1 statistics

SCCA Best Game Prize 2022

Austin Lockwood ranks the entries

The Hawkes Files

John features more Ukrainian games

Is there a future for Correspondence Chess?

Peter provides part 3 of his thesis

Proposed changes to WS/O Events

Tom's suggestions are welcomed by the ICCF WTO

Chess Art

Featuring Still Life compositions

Games Column

Alastair features LGM Helen Sherwood



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Two knights back to back, from Skye, mid-13th century
National Museum of Scotland <https://www.nms.ac.uk>



Welcome to the first edition of our 2023 magazine set. It's the Easter weekend here and we're seeing some sunny spells, an uplift in temperatures and lots of spring colours.

The second ICCF rating list of 2023 is analysed by our grader Alistair Maxwell. This quarter saw Robert Montgomery receive the CCM title and Graham Morrison collected his CCE award. Well done both!

Austin Lockwood of Wales generously agreed to judge our 2002 Best Game prize. Entries were down somewhat on previous years (those engines...), but Austin's perceptive analysis makes for entertaining reading.

Peter Bennett provides the third part of his new series on 'Is there a future for CC?' He's also provided a new puzzle for us to crack...

John Hawkes makes a welcome return to our pages with an article on Ukrainians VasilySkotorenko and Lev Omelchenko, Some fine games in there!

Tom Anderson provides an article arguing for changes in player selection for ICCF WS/O tournaments. I forwarded Tom's request to ICCF's WTO and they responded very quickly, committing to a trial period.

Our Chess Art pages feature Still Life compositions this time, and I hope you enjoy the selection.

The final placings in our 2022-23 Championship came to hand just before we went to press, and I've squeezed in a short article showing the table. Congratulations to joint winners Robert Montgomery and Iain Sneddon!

Alastair Dawson's Games Column looks at some recent games from Welsh LGM Helen Sherwood during the ICCF Lockdown tournament.

Following Ben Major's decision to stand down from Facebook updates, Mickey Blake is now running all our Social Media communications.

Ian Whittaker is settling into the Treasurer role and is busy gathering year-end figures prior to our Accounts audit.

Our AGM is scheduled for Sunday, May 21st at 4pm using Zoom, so please.get in touch if you'd like to attend.

SCCA Membership

Annual: £10/year buys you entry to all SCCA domestic events and friendly international matches, plus 4 quarterly e-magazines.

Life: £100 gets you annual membership for the rest of your days (plus a year's worth of printed magazines to try out).

Patron: £125 (+ any further donation you care to make) gets you life membership and your name on something commemorative.

SCCA 100 Club

The 100 Club has been and continues to be an important revenue-earner for our Association, with many long-standing subscribers.

However, in recent years we have lost a number of subscribers through death and replacing them has been a challenge that, as yet, we have been unable to fully meet.

Could you help us address our challenge by agreeing to take one, two, three or more units each month?

Responsibility for the 100 Club rests with our Treasurer, Ian Whittaker. Units cost £1 with some members taking one unit while others take as many as 10 units per month. From the Association's perspective paying by Bankers Order is most convenient.

If you don't already subscribe to the 100 club please consider if you can help the SCCA by making contact with Ian to sign up for some units (contact details below).

Recent 100 Club Winners

2023	1st	2nd
March	G M Anderson	A P Borwell
February	I Mackintosh	P M Giuliani
January	A P Borwell	I Sneddon

SCCA Officials

Role	Name	Address	Contact	Email
President	Iain Mackintosh	11 West Grange Farm, St Andrews KY16 8LJ	+44 (0)1334 470287	president@scottishcca.co.uk
International	Gordon Anderson	63 Wellin Lane, Edwalton, Nottingham NG12 4AH	+44 (0)115 923 1021	international@scottishcca.co.uk
Treasurer	Ian Whittaker	Inchkeith House, Lauder, Berwickshire TD2 6TE	+44 (0)1578 722 670	treasurer@scottishcca.co.uk
Membership	Mickey Blake	Turnpike Cottage, Kennerleigh, Crediton, EX17 4RR	+44 (0) 7485 204208	membership@scottishcca.co.uk
Committee	Kevin Paine	47 Park Hill Drive, Frome BA11 2LQ	+44 (0)1373 467585	kevin.paine@scottishcca.co.uk
Committee	Alan Borwell	8 Wheatfield Avenue, Inchture PH14 9RX	+44 (0)1828 686556	alan.borwell@scottishcca.co.uk
Grader	Alistair Maxwell	34 Loganswell Gardens, Glasgow G46 8HU	+44(0)141 620 2115	grader@scottishcca.co.uk
Games Editor	Alastair Dawson	10 Berry Place, St Andrews KY16 8RG	+44(0)1334 477236	games@scottishcca.co.uk

NB Secretarial duties will be undertaken by Iain Mackintosh pro tem.



CCE Title for Morrison



Lytham St. Annes based Graham Morrison has obtained his second Correspondence Chess Expert (CCE) norm and consequently the CCE title playing in the VI AEAC Master 18 event, where he has met the norm requirement of 4.5 points, Graham having now scored 5/9 with 3 games remaining. Graham's first norm was in the WS/MN/B/55 event. Congratulations to

Graham!

CCM Title for Montgomery



Robert Montgomery from Livingston has achieved his third Correspondence Chess Master (CCM) norm whilst playing on Board 7 in the European Team Championship Semi-Final having reached the norm requirement of 4.5/9. His first norm was on Board 2 in the Carlos Flores Gutierrez Team tournament with a score of 5/8, while his second norm was obtained by

scoring 7/14 in the Veterans World Cup 11 Semi-final. This third norm earns Robert the CCM title. Congratulations to Robert!

14th ICCF Veterans World Cup (VWC14) Announced



Working in collaboration with ICCF, the Netherlands Federation for Correspondence Chess (NBC) will organise the 14th Veterans' World Cup tournament.

The first stage of the 14th ICCF Veterans World Cup will start on 1st September 2023.

As with the previous VWCs, the tournament will be organised in three stages which will allow several players from each group stage to advance to the semi-finals and final.

The number of promotions will depend on total entries received.

It is envisaged that groups at the preliminary stage will comprise of 11 players (10 games) or 13 players (12 games) played by webserver with a rate of play 550 days Triple Block without "guaranteed time" (PR and SF). And only in the final with "guaranteed time.

The 14th ICCF Veterans World Cup is open to all players who are 60 years old or more at the start date of the tournament. Therefore, players have to be at least 60 years old on 1st September 2023.

A prize fund of €6,000 will be available for this tournament as agreed at the 2013 ICCF Congress. The exact distribution of this prize fund will be determined once the number of entries and groups are known.

Medals will also be awarded to those finishing in first, second and third place in the final.

Players may enter:

- through their federation (contact Gordon Anderson via international@scottishcca.co.uk)
- where eligible, via the ICCF Direct Entry system. The entry fee by Direct Entry will be €9.00 for each preliminary group entered.

Although the number of preliminary groups which each player may enter is unlimited, no player will qualify for more than two semi-final groups or for more than one place in the final.

Closing date for entries is 25st July 2023.

All veteran chess players are heartily invited to enter this tournament, both for the enjoyment of games and for friendly contact/communication with senior players around the world.

ICCF Entry Fees 2023



A reminder that Gordon Anderson's proposals for ICCF tournament entry fees were adopted by Congress delegates in Glasgow during August last year.

The new rates are now in effect from 1st January 2023 and will be welcome news for players - almost every event will cost less than before.

You can browse the changes on the SCCA website at: <https://www.scottishcca.co.uk/fees.html>

Fernschach 2023 CC Database



Herbert Bellmann writes to advise that Fernschach 2022 offers a CC games database in addition to ICCF and commercial products. In summary:

- Database available annually since 2000
- Nearly 1,835,000 games (from 1991)
- Over 115,000 new games since 2022
- Over 10,000 annotated (280 new)
- German letters ä, ö, ü and ß are not counted in names
- Games from all main chess servers + post + email All tournaments marked correspondence so that CC games can be recognised in a larger database

The price is €14.00 (shipping within Germany) and €16 (shipping elsewhere). Email version €12.

For further details, contact Herbert at:
Herbert Bellmann
Auf dem Brink 11
46399 Bocholt
Germany

Bank details: Transfer the purchase amount to:
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<https://www.bdf-fernschachbund.de/news/fernschach-cd-2023-erschienen.html>

ICCF Games Archive Updates



March updates to the Games Archive have now been added, and may be downloaded by logging into: <https://www.iccf.com/> then selecting Games Archive from the menu.

SCCA on Twitter



Mickey Blake sends a reminder that we are now on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/scotcorrchess>

The account is linked to membership@scottishcca.co.uk

If you are a Twitter user, feel free to follow us and retweet our news items. We'll retweet news from ICCF to broaden the reach of their tournament announcements etc., and our posts will carry the tag #CorrespondenceChess

Our page looks like this:



If you're a Twitter user, feel free to get in touch!

SCCA on Facebook



Ben Major is standing down from maintaining the SCCA Facebook page, and Mickey Blake is now our FB editor.

If you prefer to get your updates from Social Media, then the page to visit is:

<https://www.facebook.com/scottishcca>

You can help Mickey by posting your own comments on the page, and 'Liking' anything which catches your eye!

For reference, ICCF are on Facebook at:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/168419426514337>



2023/2 Grading List

By Alistair Maxwell

The second ICCF grading list of 2023 is published and new grades are based on 3 months' results reported between 1 Dec 2022 and 28 Feb 2022. The grades will apply to internationally graded games starting between 1 Apr and 30 Jun 2023.

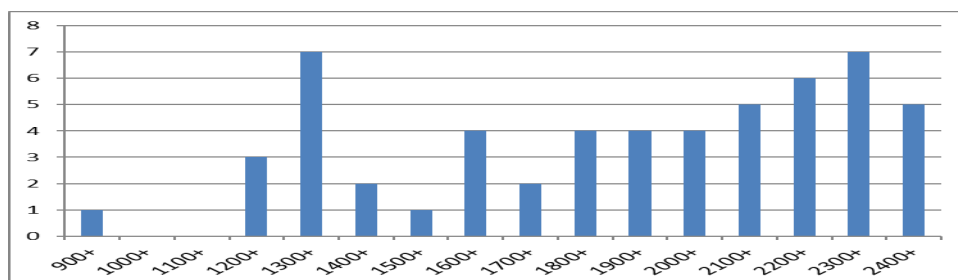
In the norms and titles stakes, Alan Bell got this third IM norm and hence the title playing in the 11th European Team Championship Final. Kevin Paine and Robert Montgomery both achieved their final norms to obtain their CCM titles while Graham Morrison and Wilf Taylor have both got final CCE norms for the title as well. Wilf also got his first CCM norm as so congratulations to all our new title and norm holders!

There were no additions or deletions on the list. 7 players have unfixd and hence unpublished ratings at present. The most significant rating moves were Martin Hardwick (+141), Steve Pettigrew (+37) and Wilf Taylor (+27).

New games centurions were Raymond Burrige, Martin Hardwick (both 1900+), Ian Marshall (900+), John Dunn (500+) and Alan Miles (100). Highest recorded games this quarter were Martin Hardwick (48), Carlos Almarza Mato and Geoffrey Lloyd (36), Iain Sneddon (33), Alan Buchan (32), Raymond Burrige (31), David Cumming (30) and Colin Beveridge (25).

You need to complete 12 ICCF-eligible games to obtain a rating. Fixed ratings are based on at least 30 games and only these are shown below. Rating changes are denoted by arrows. Email grader@scottishcca.co.uk if you have any queries.

No.	Name	Results	Grade	No.	Name	Results	Grade
317	Almarza Mato, C (CCE)	2382	2066 ↓	532	Mackintosh, I (SIM)	835	2405 ↓
518	Anderson, G M (CCM, SM)	384	2378 ↔	216	MacMillen, A N	1485	1629 ↓
	Anderson, T R	41	1776 ↓		Major, B	90	1214 ↔
313	Armstrong, J McK	521	1367 ↔	566	Marshall, I H	905	2020 ↓
511	Beecham, C R (SIM)	531	2472 ↓	434	Matheis, T (IM)	296	2458 ↔
599	Bell, A D (IM)	283	2429 ↔		Maxwell, A	60	2128 ↓
501	Bennett, P G (CCM, SM)	512	2378 ↔		Miles, A	100	1353 ↓
481	Beveridge, C (CCM)	773	2240 ↓	598	Montgomery, R S (CCM)	373	2289 ↑
472	Blake, M J (CCM)	930	2384 ↔		Morrison, G J (CCE)	61	2319 ↑
509	Borwell, A P (IM)	1105	2197 ↔		Moss, R	47	1778 ↔
486	Buchan, A W (CCM)	387	2375 ↑	474	Murden, C (IM)	672	2458 ↑
602	Burrige, R J	1912	1945 ↓	564	Murray, J S	102	2038 ↔
	Carswell, D	38	1556 ↓	603	O'Neill-McAleenan, C	241	1638 ↑
247	Cormack, W H	125	1904 ↓	604	Paine, Prof K A (CCM, SM)	248	2360 ↑
166	Cumming, D R (CCM, SM)	2160	2255 ↑		Pettigrew, S	187	1377 ↑
422	Dawson, Prof A G (CCE)	177	2191 ↓	432	Price, D	511	1933 ↑
478	Dunn, J	506	1462 ↔		Rafferty, F	42	1343 ↔
371	Edney, D	337	1870 ↑		Rafferty, K	68	1396 ↔
462	Gilbert, R	309	1691 ↓		Ross, Derek I	57	1808 ↔
399	Grant, J	79	1629 ↔	477	Sedstrem, A	119	1348 ↔
596	Hardwick, M E	1919	968 ↑	439	Smith, M J	124	2195 ↔
475	Kearns, A	115	1380 ↔	057	Sneddon, I (CCM, SM)	633	2374 ↑
548	Kilgour, D A (GM)	364	2247 ↓		Taylor, A	37	1907 ↓
260	Knox, A	425	1262 ↓		Taylor, R	78	1438 ↓
	Lima, Joao	30	2039 ↔	605	Taylor, W (CCE)	192	2153 ↑
264	Lloyd, G (CCM, SM)	1151	2272 ↓	480	Whittaker, I P (CCE)	281	2273 ↑
	MacDonald, M	96	1246 ↓		Wicht, D	82	1890 ↓
584	MacGregor, C A	495	1822 ↓				



Statistical Analysis

Total listed	55
New entrants	0
Deletions (inactive, lapsed or non-members)	0
Grading increases (↑)	14
Grading decreases (↓)	22
Grading static (↔)	19

Top 30 Grades

Beecham, C R (SIM)	2472	Cumming, D R (CCM, SM)	2255
Matheis, T (IM)	2458	Kilgour, D A (GM)	2247
Murden, C (IM)	2458	Beveridge, C (CCM)	2240
Bell, A D (IM)	2429	Borwell, A P (IM)	2197
Mackintosh, I (SIM)	2405	Smith, M J	2195
Blake, M J (CCM)	2384	Dawson, Prof A G (CCE)	2191
Anderson, G M (CCM, SM)	2378	Taylor, W (CCE)	2153
Bennett, P G (CCM, SM)	2378	Maxwell, A	2128
Buchan, A W (CCM)	2375	Almarza Mato, C (CCE)	2066
Sneddon, I (CCM, SM)	2374	Lima, J	2039
Paine, Prof K A (CCM, SM)	2360	Murray, J S	2038
Morrison, G J (CCE)	2319	Marshall, I H	2020
Montgomery, R S (CCM)	2289	Burridge, R J	1945
Whittaker, I P (CCE)	2273	Price, D	1933
Lloyd, G (CCM, SM)	2272	Taylor, A	1907

Top 10 Rated Games

Almarza-Mato, C (CCE)	2382	Lloyd, G (CCM, SM)	1151
Cumming, D R (CCM, SM)	2160	Borwell, A P (IM)	1105
Hardwick, M E	1919	Blake, M J (CCM)	930
Burridge, R J	1912	Marshall, I H	905
MacMillen, A N	1485	Mackintosh, I (SIM)	835

Selected Personal Best Grades 2022/2

	New	Previous		Gain
Buchan, A W (CCM)	2375	2372	2023/1	3
Paine, Prof K A (CCE, SM)	2360	2359	2023/1	1
Morrison, G J (CCE)	2319	2310	2023/1	9
Whittaker, I P (CCE)	2273	2268	2023/1	5
Smith, M J	2195	2179	2023/1	16
Taylor, W (CCE)	2153	2126	2023/1	27

Other Notes

Senior International Master (SIM) title norms are held by:
Matheis, T (1), Murden, C (1)

International Master (IM) title norms are held by:
Anderson, G M (1), Bennett, P G (1), Cumming, D R (1),
Sneddon, I (2)

Scottish Master (SM) title norms are held by:
Montgomery, R S (2), Buchan, A (1)

Correspondence Chess Master (CCM) title norms:
Whittaker, I P (1), Taylor, W (1)

Correspondence Chess Expert (CCE) title norms:
Burridge, R J (2), Smith, M J (1).

This list includes a number of our members who are registered with other countries. Members who have played <30 games are not shown.

To check your rating online at any time, go to the ICCF webserver site (www.iccf.com), click on the ICCF Ratings link then complete the search boxes.

A number of useful online rating enquiry facilities are available, including a personal forecasted rating as your results come in.



10th Annual SCCA Best Game Prize

By IM Austin Lockwood

[Ed –this year we invited old friend IM Austin Lockwood of Wales to be our judge for the competition. Austin is ICCF Services Director and has done a power of work over the last few years maintaining and improving the ICCF webserver. He’s also well known for running the online Scheming Mind CC Club since 2002.

Only 4 games were submitted this year, no doubt reflecting the increase in engine-based analysis. All games were stripped of header information and annotations before being passed to Austin for analysis. Many thanks for your excellent work, Austin!]

Austin Lockwood: Reflections from a Best Game judge.

I am grateful to my good friend Iain Mackintosh for having the confidence to invite me to the review these games!

As usual Iain has stripped headers, timestamps, and annotations from the games, so I have judged them purely by the moves on the board.

I did not necessarily look for perfect play because "perfect play" is easy in modern CC - anyone can copy and paste the output from Stockfish, and the perfect nature of those games goes way beyond my limited ability to evaluate it;

I was much more interested in flair and risk taking... strategies which might not necessarily win CC tournaments these days, but which will definitely win best games prizes.

Fourth Place

Austin Lockwood

Only four games submitted, so a consolation award goes the unplaced game between Ian Whittaker (SCO) v Robert Montgomery (SCO) from the 2021-22 SCCA Championship.

Congratulations to White for playing the Orangutan! Ambitious, daring

(exactly what I am looking for here), but probably ill-advised for anyone looking for success in modern CC!... Black’s 2... Nf6 is the rarest reply to a rare opening, but superficially there is nothing wrong with it, and there’s certainly nothing wrong with eschewing theory if you value interesting games over boring “perfect” games. The first novelty (according to my database anyway) is as early as 2... g6.

The game progresses dynamically and aggressively (from both players) and looks to be in the balance until White blunders with 43 Kd1?, handing Black their rook on f7 for nothing, and immediately and correctly resigning.

I enjoyed this game, but no best game prize for Black unfortunately because firstly I was impressed with White’s ambition, which he very nearly carried off, and secondly it doesn’t seem right to award the prize for an opponent’s blunder – but well played both players, and thanks for an entertaining game.

1 b4 Nf6 2.Bb2 g6 3.c4 Bg7 4.Nf3 O-O 5.e3 d6 6.d3 e5 7. Be2 e4 8.dxe4 Nxe4 9.Bxg7 Kxg7 10.Qd4+ Qf6 11.Qxf6+ Nxf6 12.Nc3 a5 13.b5 Nbd7 14.Nd4 Re8 15.g4 Nb6 16.g5 Nfd7 17.h4 Nc5 18.h5 Be6 19.Rc1 Rad8 20.Rc2 Bxc4 21.Bxc4 Nxc4 22.Nd5 Re5 23.h6+ Kf8 24.Nf6 Nb6 25.Nxh7+ Ke7 26.Nf3 Rf5 27.Nh4 Re5 28.f4 Rxe3+ 29.Kd2 Re4 30.Re1 Rxe1 31.Kxe1 Nd5 32.f5 Nd3+ 33.Ke2 Ne5 34.Rd2 c6 35.bxc6 bxc6 36.Rb2 gxf5 37.Nxf5+ Ke6 38.Nd4+ Kd7 39.Rb7+ Kc8 40.Ra7 Kb8 41.Nxc6+ Nxc6 42.Rxf7 Ne5 43.Kd1 Nxf7 0-1

Third Place

Austin Lockwood

Unfortunately, another very interesting game lost through a blunder, this time by Black, who played 55... g4? (instead of moving his king from f8) and thus eventually allowing 57. Ne6+. Black rightly

resigned here, rather than experience the subsequent carnage.

Another rare opening, with Black responding to White’s standard 1. d4 with the rather unusual (but still in theory) g6; once we get out of my database, around the tenth move, White always feels better and continues to press home this advantage through the middle game against some fierce and accurate resistance from Black (at one point White narrowly avoids handing Black a draw through repetition by playing 48. Rf8 instead of 48. Rd7 for the third time), but despite this heroic resistance from Black, the game is ultimately lost through his blunder on move 55. Again, I hesitate to award the prize for a game won in this manner, Black might well have held out for a draw otherwise.

All very rare for correspondence chess, but beautiful to watch!

White: Buchan, Allan (2327)

Black: Claridge, John B. (2450)

Modern Defence [B06]

BCCC 21/23 {WLS} 2021

[Notes by Allan Buchan]

1.d4 **g6**
2.e4 **Bg7**
3.Nc3 **d6**
4.f4

More common and possibly better is 4.Be3

4... **a6**

Not an uncommon response but looks to be the first time played at 2400+ level.

5.Nf3 **b5**
6.Bd3 **Nd7**
7.a4

7.e5 also looks good here.

7... **b4**
8.Ne2 **c5**
9.c3 **cxd4**

10.cxd4 **a5**
11.Qb3 **Bb7**
12.0-0 **Rc8**
13.f5 **Ngf6**
14.Ng3N

14.Ng5 has been played twice previously, both resulting in draws.

14... Qb6
 15.Kh1 0-0
 16.h3 Rce8
 17.Bb5 Bc6
 18.Bxc6 Qxc6
 19.Bg5 Nb6
 20.Rfc1 Qa8
 21.Re1

I prefer White's position but there's not a lot in it.

21... d5
 22.fxg6 hxg6
 23.e5 Ne4
 24.Bf4 Rc8
 25.Nxe4 dxe4
 26.Ng5 e3

This pawn's a goner, but White's d-pawn is going to prove vulnerable.

27.Rab1?!

Bit of an ugly move. 27.Rad1 would have been stronger.

27... Nd5
 28.Bxe3 Nxe3
 29.Qxe3 Bh6
 30.Qg3 Qd5
 31.Ne4 Kg7
 32.Qh4 Qxd4

33.Qxe7
 White maintains a material advantage.

33... Qd8
 34.Qf6+ Qxf6
 35.exf6+ Kh7
 36.Rbd1 Rfd8
 37.Rxd8 Rxd8
 38.g4 Bf4
 39.g5 Rd3

Things are starting to look brighter for Black. The h-pawn is going to fall, and the g-pawn will be hard to defend.

40.h4 Rh3+
 41.Kg2 Rxh4
 42.b3 Rh5
 43.Rd1

The g pawn is in fact impossible to defend.

43... Bxg5
 44.Rd7

Time to attack Black's weak f-pawn.

44... Kg8
 45.Rd8+ Kh7
 46.Rd7 Kg8
 47.Rd8+ Kh7
 48.Rf8 Bh6
 49.Rxf7+

Looking very much like a draw now.

49... Kg8
 50.Ra7 Rd5
 51.Kf2 Kf8
 52.Ke2 Bf4
 53.Rb7 Rf5
 54.Kd3 g5
 55.Kc4



55... g4??

A fatal mistake in a dead equal position. The knight is free to go to c5 and then to e6.

56.Nc5 Be5

57.Ne6+

The Black king has no good moves. There are only two options: 57...Ke8 would allow a knight fork of king and rook on g7, and 57...Kg8 leads to a forcing line where the f and g pawns fall, after which White can pick off Black's a-pawn in various ways, for example, planting the knight on d7 and forcing an exchange of rooks. The Black king is on the wrong side of the board to offer any help and White's pawns are on light squares, so impregnable to attack by the dark-squared Black bishop.

1-0



Second Place

Austin Lockwood

Starting with a well-known Slav/QGD pattern until 6... Bb4, pinning White's knight on d2, which appears to be an unusual and rather unnecessarily aggressive continuation for correspondence chess (the usual move here is Bd6), and the pin is nothing much for White to be concerned about. Black continues with a similarly aggressive exchange of knights and eventually withdraws his bishop following a threat from White's a pawn. This early flurry of hubristic activity

seems to have cost Black dearly in terms of tempo and position, and the advantage is now clearly with White going into the middle game. As the game progresses, White gradually hammers home the advantage and even by move 20 White's position appears to be unassailable. Nevertheless, the game progresses for another 20 moves until Black's position becomes completely untenable.

A nice win for White, solid play with no obvious errors, and the clinical punishment of what might have been a misjudgement by Black in the opening (but a lapse if made against other opponents might well have been recoverable); I award this game second place, congratulations.

White: Buchan, Allan (2327)

Black: Vrana, Lubomír (2221)

QGD Declined [D30]

5th IZIT Pr F 2021

[Notes by Allan Buchan]

1.d4 d5
 2.c4 c6
 3.Nf3 e6
 4.e3 Nf6
 5.Nbd2 Nbd7
 6.b3 Bb4

An uncommon move.

7.Qc2

7.Bb2 is the normal reply here, but 7.Qc2 helps get us closer to being out of book.

7... Ne4



8.a3N

And now we're out of book in terms of ICCF correspondence games.

8...Nxd2

9.Nxd2 Be7
 10.Bb2 b6
 11.Bd3 Bb7
 12.0-0 g6
 13.e4 Rc8

White has a much better position out of the opening. Black should probably have just castled here.

14.c5 0-0
 15.b4 dxe4
 16.Bxe4 Ba6
 17.Rfe1 Nf6
 18.Bf3

White's position continues to slowly improve.

18... Re8
 19.g3 Qd7

Maybe 19...Bf8 with a view to occupying the diagonal from g7 might be better.

20.Rad1 Nd5
 21.h4

When in doubt, push the h-pawn!

21... Bf8
 22.Ne4 Rcd8

This is possibly an inaccuracy.

23.Bc1 f5

Black is starting to look over-extended.

24.Nd6

Getting rid of the dark-squared bishop is worth the pawn sacrifice, as Black's kingside will be extremely weak on the dark squares.

24... Bxd6
 25.cxd6 Qxd6

26.Bg5

Taking advantage of 22...Rcd8

26... Rc8

27.h5

Black's king is looking vulnerable, so applying more pressure.

27... Qd7
 28.Re5 Bb7

29.h6

With the pawn firmly lodged on h6 the Black king is going to be a little uncomfortable from now on.

29... Nc7

Black's pieces are looking constricted.

30.a4 Nd5

31.Qd2 Qd6

32.Rde1 Rc7

33.b5



There's a tactic here that prevents 33...cxd5. The line would continue: 34.Rxd5 Bxd5, 35.Bf4 White is up a bishop since Black can't take the bishop as the rook is hanging, and 37...Rxe1+ doesn't work either because after 38.Qxe1, Black is facing Qe8#]

33... Qd7

34.g4

Attempting to prise open the position further.

34... f4

35.Bxd5 cxd5

36.Qxf4

Picking up the pawn and bearing down further on Black's increasingly exposed king.

36... Bc8

37.Bf6 Rc3

38.R5e2 Qf7

39.Kg2 a6

40.Qe5 axb5

41.axb5



Material is equal but White's positional superiority is too much.. One simple plan for White would be to double his rooks on the a-file and cause havoc on the 7th/8th ranks.

1-0



First Place
The R.J. Burrige Trophy
2022

Austin Lockwood

A determined ground-out win here for Black (although the win could

have been claimed by tablebase a little earlier than the final move).

This time we start with the well-trodden path of the English Four Knights, which can lead to positions with interesting opportunities for both White and Black; in correspondence chess these are ambitious opening moves, and clear statements of intent from both players.

In this game Black slowly gains the initiative from the early middle game. It's difficult to pinpoint exactly when this advantage becomes a winning one; there are no obvious blunders or bad moves by White that I can find, Black simply grinds away mercilessly, playing accurate moves through rather a positional and complex middle game.

By the time we reach move 50, the writing is on the wall for White, but White bravely soldiers on with their defence until the harsh inevitability of the seven-piece tablebase kicks in and makes further moves futile.

Games like this show that sheer hard work and determination can still be winning factors in modern correspondence chess, particularly for the player with the black pieces – well played!

I am looking forward to seeing the identities (and the relative ratings) of both players in this game; grinding out a win as Black in modern CC is very difficult these days, especially against similarly rated players who don't blunder. For this reason, I award the SCCA Best Game Prize to the following game.

White: Price, Derek (1878)
Black: Mackintosh, Iain (2423)
 SCCA Championship 2021-22
 English, Four Knights, 4.g3 [A29]
[Notes by Iain Mackintosh]

1.c4 e5
 2.Nc3 Nf6
 3.Nf3 Nc6
 4.g3 d5
 5.cxd5 Nxd5
 6.Bg2 Bc5
 7.0-0 0-0
 8.d3 h6
 9.Nxd5 Qxd5
 10.Be3N

Here Derek leaves the book. Most common is 10.Bd2.

- | | |
|---------|------|
| 10... | Bxe3 |
| 11.fxe3 | e4 |
| 12.Nd2 | Qg5 |
| 13.Rf4 | exd3 |
| 14.exd3 | Qe7 |
| 15.Qe2 | Ne5 |
| 16.d4 | Ng6 |
| 17.Rf2 | c6 |
| 18.Ne4 | Be6 |
| 19.Nc5 | Rad8 |
| 20.Nxe6 | Qxe6 |
| 21.b3 | Rfe8 |
| 22.Re1 | Re7 |
| 23.Bf3 | Nf8 |
| 24.Qd2 | Nh7 |
| 25.Qb4 | Qd7 |
- 25 moves in and Black has a microscopic advantage.
- | | |
|---------|------|
| 26.Qa3 | a6 |
| 27.Bg2 | Nf6 |
| 28.Rfe2 | h5 |
| 29.Qc5 | g6 |
| 30.Bh3 | Qe8 |
| 31.Bg2 | Ne4 |
| 32.Qc4 | Rd6 |
| 33.Rf1 | Rde6 |
| 34.Qd3 | Nd6 |
| 35.Rfe1 | Qd8 |
| 36.b4 | Kg7 |
| 37.a3 | Ne4 |
| 38.Rf1 | f5 |
| 39.Bxe4 | Rxe4 |
| 40.Rf4 | Rxf4 |



Black has inched forward and all the White pawns are now isolated.

- | | |
|----------|-----|
| 51.Qh7+ | Kf6 |
| 52.Qh8+ | Ke7 |
| 53.Qg7+ | Kd8 |
| 54.Qxg6? | |

Tempting, but this hands the initiative to Black. 54.Rf2 seems better.

- | | |
|-------|-------|
| 54... | Qxd4+ |
|-------|-------|
- Threatening Rg3+
- | | |
|---------|------|
| 55.Kh2 | Qd2+ |
| 56.Kg1 | Rxh3 |
| 57.Qf6+ | Kc7 |
| 58.Qe7+ | Qd7 |
| 59.Qe5+ | Kb7 |
| 60.Rb1+ | Ka6 |
| 61.Qb2 | Qc7 |
| 62.Kg2 | Rh7 |
| 63.Qe2+ | Ka7 |
| 64.Qe5 | |



This changes the White pawn structure and gives Black a slight, but important, advantage.

- | | |
|---------|------|
| 41.gxf4 | Qd5 |
| 42.Rf2 | h4 |
| 43.h3 | b6 |
| 44.Qc3 | Kf7 |
| 45.Rf1 | a5 |
| 46.bxa5 | bxa5 |
| 47.a4 | Rb7 |
| 48.Qc2 | Rb3 |
| 49.Qf2 | Ra3 |
| 50.Qxh4 | Rxe3 |



Allowing Black to simplify.

- | | |
|----------|-------|
| 64... | Qg7+ |
| 65.Qxg7+ | Rxg7+ |
| 66.Kf2 | Rb7 |
| 67.Re1 | Rb4 |
| 68.Re7+ | Kb6 |
| 69.Rf7 | Rxf4+ |
| 70.Ke3 | Rxa4 |
| 71.Rxf5 | Rc4 |
| 72.Kd3 | Rc1 |
| 73.Kd2 | Rc5 |
| 74.Rf1 | a4 |

Austin's foreword mentions 'similarly rated players'. There's a big grading gap between Derek and myself, but this was a very close contest for around 50 moves, and was only decided on slightly better endgame technique. Well played to the man from Stafford!

0-1



The R.J. Burrige Trophy

Winners

- | | |
|------|---------------------------|
| 2013 | Richard Beecham |
| 2014 | Charles O'Neill-McAleenan |
| 2015 | Peter Bennett |
| 2016 | Kevin Paine |
| 2017 | Tom Matheis |
| 2018 | Peter Bennett |
| 2019 | Iain Mackintosh |
| 2020 | Iain Mackintosh |
| 2021 | Allan Buchan |
| 2022 | Iain Mackintosh |





Ukrainian Greats

A selection of CC Champions



Vasily Skotorenko

Born March 20, 1927 in the Ukrainian city of Kremenchuk. Died June 22, 2011 (84 years old).

A coal mining engineer, he became an ICCF IM in 1971, and was European correspondence champion 1978-83.

He won the Olympics twice, playing for the USSR team.

White: Tiemeyer, Horst

Black: Skotorenko, Vasily

Dutch Defence, Leningrad [A87]

German Federal Republic Corres. , 1988

[Notes by John E Hawkes]

- 1.d4 f5
- 2.g3 Nf6
- 3.Bg2 g6

Kuznetsov - Skotorenko, USSR

Team Correspondence

Championship 1991 went: 3...c6

4.Nf3 d6 5.b3 Qc7 6.Bb2 g6 7.Nbd2

Bg7 8.0-0 0-0 9.c4 a5 10.Rc1 a4

11.b4 Re8 12.d5 e5 13.dxe6 Bxe6

14.Ng5 Nbd7 15.Nxe6 Rxe6 16.Nf3

a3 17.Ba1 Ne4 18.Bxg7 Kxg7

19.Nd4 Ree8 20.Qb3 Ndf6 21.Rfd1

Qe7 22.e3 h5! and finished 0-1 in 40 moves.

- 4.Nf3 Bg7
- 5.0-0 0-0
- 6.c4 c6
- 7.Nc3 Na6



Mostowik - Skotorenko in the 6-7th ICCF World Cup SF went; 7...d6 8.d5 e5 9.dxe6 Bxe6 10.Qd3 Na6 11.Ng5 Qd7 12.Bf4 Ne8 13.b3 h6 1/2 14.Nxe6 Qxe6 15.Be3 Nf6 16.Rad1 Rfd8 17.h3 Rd7 18.Rfe1 g5 19.Bd4 Nc5 20.Qc2 Re8 21.Bxf6 Qxf6 22.Rc1 a5 23.Bf3 g4 1/2-1/2

- 8.Bg5 d6
- 9.Qd2 Nc7
- 10.Bh6 Be6

No surprise if you have played through my above game references.

- 11.Bxg7 Kxg7
- 12.b3 Qd7
- 13.Rfe1

White never gets to justify this rook placement.

- 13... b5!
- 14.cxb5 cxb5
- 15.Ng5 b4
- 16.Nxe6+ Qxe6
- 17.Na4 Ncd5
- 18.Rac1 Rac8
- 19.Rc4



- 19... f4

20.gxf4

If 20.Rec1 then 20...Qf5 was probably Black's intention.

- 20... Ne4

21.Qc2

21.Bxe4 Qxe4 22.e3 was evidently not to White's taste.

- 21... Nxf4

If 21...Nxf2 22.Rxc8 (22.e4)

22...Qe3! 23.Bxd5 (23.h3 Ng4+

24.Kh1 Qg3 25.hxg4 Ne3-+)

23...Ng4+ 24.Kh1 Qf2 it's game over for White.

22.f3?

Relatively best for White was the queen sacrifice; 22.Qxe4! Nh3+ 23.Bxh3 Qxe4 24.Rxc8 but Black had the shock move 24...Rxf2! when 25.Kxf2 Qh4+ 26.Kg2 Qxe1 results in White's pieces all are ominously on the board's edges.

- 22... Ng5

23.Nb2?

An e-pawn move and Black plays Nxb2.

23.Rxc8

- 23... Qe3+

24.Kh1



24.Kf1 Ngh3 25.Bxh3 Nxh3

26.Kg2 Qf2+! 27.Kxh3 Rf4!

28.d5 Rxc4 and White must give up his queen to prevent mate.

- 24... Qf2!

24...Qf2! 25.Rg1TM Ngh3 26.Bxh3

(26.Qd1 Qxf3!! 27.Nd3 Qxd3!!)

26...Nxh3 27.Qd1 Rxc4 28.bxc4

Nxg1 29.Qxg1 Qxe2+

0-1



White: Skotorenko, Vasily
Black: Sivets, Valentin
 Petrov Defence, Cochrane Gambit
 [C42]
 A.Petrov Memorial USSR Corr ,
 1987
[Notes by John E Hawkes]



Scottish master John Cochrane, after whom the gambit is named. It was first played in Calcutta during 1848.

- | | |
|--------|------|
| 1.e4 | e5 |
| 2.Nf3 | Nf6 |
| 3.Nxe5 | d6 |
| 4.Nxf7 | Kxf7 |
| 5.d4 | g6 |
| 6.Nc3 | |

Skotorenko - Somod, CC 1985 went;
 6.Bd3 Bg7 7.0-0 Re8 8.Nc3 Kg8
 9.h3 Be6 10.f4 Nbd7 11.Qf3 c6
 12.Be3 Qa5 13.g4 Nb6 14.f5 Bc4
 15.g5 Nfd7 16.f6 Rf8 17.Qg4 Bxd3
 18.cxd3 Nxf6 19.Qe6+! Rf7 20.gxf6
 Bf8 21.e5 Nd7 22.Ne4 1-0

- | | |
|--------|-----|
| 6... | Bg7 |
| 7.Bc4+ | d5 |
| 8.Nxd5 | Be6 |
| 9.Bg5 | Re8 |
| 10.0-0 | |



- | | |
|-----------|--------------------|
| 10... | h6?! |
| 10...c6!? | CC Informator No.1 |
| 11.Bxf6 | Bxf6 |
| 12.Nxf6 | Qxf6 |
| 13.e5 | Qf4 |
| 14.g3 | Qf5 |
| 15.Bxe6+ | Rxe6 |
| 16.f4 | h5 |
| 17.d5 | Re8 |
| 18.Qd4 | Na6 |
| 19.Rf2 | |



- 19...Kg7?
 19...Rad8 might continue 20.Qxa7
 Rxd5 21.Qxb7 Qe6 22.f5 gxf5
 23.Rxf5+ Qxf5 24.Rf1 Qxf1+
 25.Kxf1 Rd1+ 26.Ke2 Rd6! and a
 much longer struggle would result.
 20.Re1 Kh6
 21.e6! Rad8
 22.Re5 c5
 23.Qe3 Qf6
 24.f5+ g5
 25.h4
 25.h4 Nc7 26.hxg5+ Qxg5 27.Qxg5+
 Kxg5 28.f6+ Kg6 29.f7+]
- 1-0



White: Nezhmetdinov, Rashid
Black: Skotorenko, Vasily
 Sicilian Taimanov [B45]
 14th Russian Championship 1954

- | | |
|---------|------|
| 1. e4 | e6 |
| 2. d4 | c5 |
| 3. Nf3 | cxd4 |
| 4. Nxd4 | Nf6 |
| 5. Nc3 | Nc6 |
| 6. Ndb5 | d6 |
| 7. Bf4 | e5 |
| 8. Bg5 | a6 |
| 9. Bxf6 | gxf6 |

- | | |
|-----------|-------|
| 10. Na3 | f5 |
| 11. Qh5 | Bg7 |
| 12. Bc4 | O-O |
| 13. exf5 | b5 |
| 14. Bd5 | b4 |
| 15. Bxc6 | bxc3 |
| 16. O-O | cxb2 |
| 17. Rad1 | Rb8 |
| 18. Be4 | Bb7 |
| 19. Qf3 | Bxe4 |
| 20. Qxe4 | Qa5 |
| 21. Nb1 | Rfd8 |
| 22. Rd3 | d5 |
| 23. Qh4 | f6 |
| 24. Rh3 | h6 |
| 25. Rg3 | Kf8 |
| 26. Rg6 | Rd6 |
| 27. g4 | d4 |
| 28. Rxh6 | Bxh6 |
| 29. Qxh6+ | Ke7 |
| 30. Qg7+ | Kd8 |
| 31. g5 | Qc7 |
| 32. Qg8+ | Kd7 |
| 33. Qf7+ | Kc6 |
| 34. Qc4+ | Kb7 |
| 35. Qe2 | Re8 |
| 36. Qf3+ | Ka7 |
| 37. g6 | Qxc2 |
| 38. h4 | Qxb1 |
| 39. Rxb1 | Rc1+ |
| 40. Kh2 | Rxb1 |
| 41. g7 | Rg1 |
| 42. Kxg1 | b1=Q+ |
| 43. Kh2 | Qxa2 |
| 44. h5 | d3 |
| 45. h6 | Qg8 |
| 46. Qe3+ | Rd4 |
| 47. Qc1 | Kb6 |
| 48. Qb2+ | Kc6 |
| 49. Qc3+ | Kd7 |
| 50. Qc5 | d2 |
| 51. Qa7+ | Kc6 |
| 52. Qxa6+ | Kc5 |
| 53. Qa5+ | Kc4 |
| 54. Qa2+ | Kd3 |
| 55. Qxg8 | d1=Q |
| 56. f4 | Ke3 |
- 0-1



A very entertaining game; and as an exception, an OTB game in my exclusively CC Hawkes Files column!





Lev Evgenyevich Omelchenko

Born 6 June 1922 in the Ukrainian city of Zhashkiv, Kursavka. Died on 12 August 2015 (93 years old).

White: Golikov, G. -
Black: Omelchenko, Lev
Closed Ruy Lopez [C91]
 USSR Corres, 1970
[Notes by John E Hawkes]

1.e4	e5
2.Nf3	Nc6
3.Bb5	a6
4.Ba4	Nf6
5.0-0	Be7
6.Re1	b5
7.Bb3	d6
8.c3	0-0
9.d4	Bg4
10.Be3	d5
11.exd5	exd4
12.Bg5	dx3
13.Nxc3	Na5
14.Bc2	Bh5



Omelchenko v Korelov, USSR CC 1971 went; 14...c5 15.Qd3 c4 16.Qd4 Bxf3 17.gxf3 h6 18.Bxh6 gxh6 19.Qe3 Kg7 20.Kh1 Rh8 21.Qxe7+-
15.Qe2 Re8
16.Rad1 Nc4
17.Bd3 Nb6
18.Qc2
 18.Bf5 b4 19.Bxf6 Bxf3 20.Bxe7 Bxe2 21.Bxd8 bxc3+
18... Bxf3
19.gxf3 h6

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20.Bc1	Bd6
21.Rxe8+	Qxe8
22.Be4	Qe5
23.f4	Qh5
24.f3	Re8
25.a3	Bc5+
26.Kg2	Nc4
27.Re1	Kf8



28.Nd1?	Nxd5
29.b3	Nd6
30.Nf2	Bb6
31.Re2	Re6
32.Bd3	
32.Bxd5 Rg6+	33.Ng4 Rxc4+
34.fxc4 Qxc4+	35.Kf1 Qg1#
32...	Be3!
33.f5	Nf4+
34.Kf1	Qxf3
35.Rxc3	
35.Bxe3 Rxe3	36.Rxe3 Qg2+
37.Ke1	Qg1+
38.Kd2 Qxf2+	38.Kc3 Rxe3
39.Qxf2	Ne4+
40.Kd4 Nxf2	41.Bxe3 N4xd3
knight and two pawns up.	
37...	Ng2+
38.Ke2	



38...	Rxe3+!
39.Bxe3	Qxf1+!
40.Kd2	Qe1+
41.Kd3	Qxe3#

0-1



White: Wikström, Birger
Black: Omelchenko, Lev
 Nimzo-Indian Hübner Variation [E41]
 VIII Olympiad Finals Bd 6/6
[Notes by John E Hawkes]

1.d4	Nf6
2.c4	e6
3.Nc3	Bb4
4.e3	c5
5.Bd3	Nc6
6.Nf3	Bxc3+
7.bxc3	d6
8.0-0	e5
9.Qc2	0-0
10.Rd1	cx4
11.exd4	Bg4
12.Ba3	Re8



13.dxe5
 Better was the exchange sacrifice
 13.Ng5 Bxd1 14.Bxh7+ Kf8
 15.Rxd1 exd4 16.cxd4 Nxd4 17.Qd3 Qb6 18.Kf1 Re5=
13... Nxe5
14.Be2 Bxf3
15.gxf3 Nh5
16.Rd4 Qg5+
17.Kh1 Nf4
18.Rg1





18... Qxg1+!!
 19.Kxg1 Nxf3+
 20.Kh1
 20.Bxf3 Re1#
 20... Rxe2
 21.Qc1 Nxd4
 22.cxd4
 22.Qxf4 Re1+ 23.Kg2 Rg1+!!
 24.Kh3 Ne6! 25.Qe3 (25.Qxd6 Rd8)
 25...Re8! 26.Kh4 g5+ 27.Kh3 Nf4+
 22... g5
 Or 22...Nd3 23.Qc3 Nxf2+ 24.Kg1
 Nd1 25.Qb3 Re1+ 26.Kg2 Rae8+
 23.Bb4

23.Bxd6 Rae8 24.Bxf4 Re1+ 25.Kg2
 Rxc1 26.Bxc1 Re4 and an easy
 endgame win e.g. 27.Be3 f5
 23... Rae8
 24.Qg1 Nh3
 0-1



Miniature Correspondence Masterpieces No. 28

White: Monck, William H.S
Black: Shenele, Peter S
 King's Gambit Accepted [C33]
 Correspondence 1880
[Notes by John E Hawkes]

1.e4 e5
 2.f4 exf4
 3.Bc4 g5
 4.d4 Bg7
 5.Qh5 Qf6
 5...Qe7 is better.
 6.e5 Qg6
 7.Qe2
 7.Qxg6 hxg6 8.Nf3=
 7... Ne7
 8.Nf3 d5
 9.exd6 cxd6
 10.c3 Nbc6
 11.h4 h6
 12.hxg5 hxg5
 13.Rxh8+ Bxh8
 14.Na3 a6
 15.Bd2 Bf5
 16.0-0-0

16... b5
 17.Bd5 Bd3?
 17...Rc8+
 18.Qe1?
 18.Bxc6+ Kd8 19.Qxd3! Qxd3
 20.Bxa8±
 18... Kd7
 19.Bb3 Rc8
 The errors have cancelled each other
 out: White is in serious trouble and
 now plays another weak move.
 20.Qh1



A rare "two-way" smothered-mate.
 23.Nxc2 Nd3# or 23.Bxc2 Nxa2#
 0-1



20.Nc2 Na5
 20... Nb4
 21.Ne1 Bb1
 21...Be2 is winning of course - but
 there is something very special in the
 air.
 22.Nxb1 Qc2+!!

Peter Shenele was Devon-born, and
 at the time of this postal match, was a
 police inspector living in Ilford.

His opponent was an Irish
 astronomer and philosopher William
 Henry Stanley Monck, a member of
 Kingston upon Thames Chess Club.

The game was published in the
 Illustrated London News on New
 Year's Day 1881.



Is there a future for Correspondence Chess? Part C: so is it still possible to ban engines?

By Peter Bennett

In this third article of a four-part series of articles on the future of CC, I shall attempt to address the knotty question of whether, in principle, the future of CC could be secured by revisiting, and reimposing, a ban on engines; and how this might be achieved in practice.

It is a big subject, and this is only a short article; so inevitably my treatment of the issues here will be rudimentary. Even so, I believe there are some useful conclusions we can still draw from just a few key pointers in modern CC administration and practice.

The reader might also ask: why bother to address these complex issues at all?

To which my answer is, unless we find a new way forward, the CC game will die. For me personally, mainstream CC is already dead, sorry to have to admit. In the last tournament group in which I played – a 10-player single round-robin event – all 45 games were drawn. What this tells me is that, in the main, the game of chess, as played under current ICCF rules, is a draw. So why waste time proving the point again next year, when it has already been proved this year?

Sorry friends, but I am out.

Even so, you are still my friends; and, on this basis, I shall return to the subject of my article: could we still ban engines, even now?

The Victorian* Correspondence Chess Club revisited

* = pseudonym

In my previous article I referred to the way in which the VCCC had shown itself guilty of gross hypocrisy, a view held not only by myself, but also by one member of its own Rules Committee and its erstwhile (and now deceased) club champion.

This had been demonstrated by simple arithmetic. In my view and that of one of its own members – back in about 2006 – four of the VCCC Rules Committee's then (7) members were certainly already using chess engines as a tool in their own correspondence play. Yet they voted by a majority of 5 to 2, in favour of maintaining a complete ban on the use of chess engines in all competitions.

Now, in 2023, 17 years later, they are still sticking stubbornly to this same illusion.

But there, for the moment, my criticisms of the VCCC rest; and, for now, I want to heap a little praise on this venerable and much-loved (by its members) CC club. In spite of the unwillingness of its Committee to address reality, they also got – and still get – a lot of things right.

And what, for example, have they got right?

Well, several things. Every CC club has the right to set its own rules, but it cannot elude the responsibility to seek the sanction of its own members or stakeholders, in carrying out that task.

So, to create rules, you need a Rules Committee, which is voted into office by the wider membership, and which is re-elected on an annual basis. Furthermore, this process of re-election, typically at an AGM, allows for committee members, whose views no longer reflect those of the wider membership, to be replaced by those who do.

In other words, democracy – the kind of tried and tested democracy which has, for donkeys' years, supported the governance of every chess club, tennis club, golf club and parish council up and down the land. This is dead basic stuff....but it doesn't always happen.

Still, in the VCCC, it certainly does happen, to their very great credit. In fact, the VCCC's Rules Committee and their General Management Committee are one and the same body. That doesn't matter a jot: at least the internal jurisdiction exists, with the full support of club members.

It remains the case of course, that most constituent national federations, within the ICCF, and their own affiliated local clubs, accept the 196-page ICCF rulebook in its entirety; and where there are local variations, they tend to take the form that "we adopt ICCF rules, with the following exceptions..." My understanding is that the ICCF is both sympathetic to, and supportive of, such procedural variations.

And that is precisely what the VCCC later (that is, subsequent to my own lapsed membership) actually did: they said, in effect, we adopt ICCF rules, except that we ban engines.

So far, so good. Full marks to the VCCC. But HOW did they ban engines? With two big wellies!

Unfortunately, the VCCC continued to adopt the view that engines were the source of all evil; and all that was required was a general statement that engines were banned. If evidence (collected in a haphazard and amateurish way) of engine use was found, the dastardly perpetrators should simply be named and shamed, hence the vilification of their own former club champion, the late Chris Smith (the pseudonym I had adopted in my earlier article) as a "cheat".

The plain fact is that if Chris Smith had been litigious, and had taken the VCCC to court in a libel action, he would have won his case and the club would have been bankrupted. Sadly, in this particular respect, he died still, I suspect, feeling angry with, and maligned by, the VCCC.

So what could the VCCC, indeed what should the VCCC, have done differently?

The necessary mechanism for banning chess engines

Let's take this step by step.

First, you have to have a democratically elected Rules Committee which has the delegated authority to implement a ban. Fine, we've crossed that bridge. The VCCC, for example, has done that.

Next, we have to define and specify "that-which-is-to-be-banned".

How about just a "general ban on the use of chess engines"?

No, sorry. That doesn't work. It is an idea, the equivalent of which has already been tried, tested and found to be hopelessly wanting, in many other sports.

Thus here in CC, sorry to have to say, there are, as in other sports, no short cuts. To ban engines, we have to provide a detailed enumeration of every single commercial engine that is to be banned.

Actually, the task in CC is slightly easier than in professional cycling or athletics, where the list of performance-enhancing substances gets longer all the time.

All we would have to do is to construct a list of all the Stockfish, Fritz, Komodo programmes, etc, developed and marketed in the last 12 years, say, earlier versions being considered trivially irrelevant. That, in itself is a manageable, but necessary task.

The definition of engine "usage"

Then we get to another knotty problem. What constitutes "engine usage"?

For this we need a very tight and detailed definition of the threshold, below which represents a trivial and incidental infringement, which might reasonably be held to be unintentional (an athlete drinking ginseng tea, containing faint traces of a banned substance, was an infamous historical example), and above which constitutes clear evidence of engine usage.

In an attempt to answer this question, I have carried out a small-scale research study of my own games. In the last two years, the main engine that I have been using is Komodo 13. So any CC investigator, looking at my recent games, would find clear evidence that I had been using Komodo 13 in some (but actually only a minority) of my games.

In my own, small-scale research I retrospectively examined all the moves in 25 of my recent games in which I had NOT been using Komodo or, indeed, any other engine. In other words, I was playing the games "clean" with the equivalent of FIDE Rules, just as Tom Anderson advocated in Issue 159.

The result was interesting. I found a 55% correspondence between the moves I had played and those that Komodo 13 would have recommended, had I been using it.

Was this surprising? Not really. There are many, many situations in a chess game in which almost any strong player – and all engines – would agree that there is only one sensible move to be played. So an incidental correspondence of 55% between player choice and engine choice is entirely to be expected.

Put another way, the advantage of using an engine is to be found in the 45% of moves (9 in every 20) where my fallible human brain failed to find the best move – if, indeed, such exists.

We can further infer that even a 65% correspondence would fail to prove engine use because, statistically, that kind of variation could easily happen by chance.

Yet, if an investigation showed that there were a 98% correspondence between the moves in my games and those that would be recommended by, say, Stockfish 15, this would prove, not only engine use, but the use that particular engine. Needless to say, such a correspondence could never be found in my games because the plain fact is that I have never used a Stockfish programme in my entire playing career. Anyone who doubts that, by all means, check my games: they are out there on the ether for all to see!

Thus the evidence to convict a player of the use of a banned engine would involve setting a threshold of correspondence, between the player's moves and the engine's recommendation, somewhere in the range from, say, 65% to 98%, to which I have just referred – realistically much closer to the higher figure, for a "safe" conviction.

Has this ever been done, successfully? Not as far as I am aware. But if any reader knows any examples of this, by all means write your own article for this magazine, describing them.

Engine usage: the mechanisms of scrutiny

The legitimate mechanisms of scrutiny of player/participant behaviour in any sport are the subject of very clear codes of practice. These are not even controversial any more. It is absolutely essential that the mechanisms of scrutiny are open, clear, transparent and fair – as between different players or categories of players – and well-advertised. These principles have all been well-tested in such sports as football, rugby, cycling, athletics, boxing and so on.

By contrast, the covert scrutiny of player behaviour by organisers, to identify malpractice, is itself organisational malpractice: it won't wash, in any sport, ever again. The Court for Arbitration in Sport would throw it out in a heartbeat.

A perceptive reader might point out that a fairly recent television documentary showed, with great clarity, that covert surveillance by journalists had exposed clear evidence of financial malpractice by a once famous football manager. Doesn't that prove my point wrong?

No, it doesn't. These were journalists. Journalists can do and say what the hell they like. They proved (to my private

satisfaction as it happens), that the football manager was acting improperly; but did it end his career? No, it didn't. The case against him was never brought, not within the sport, because the techniques of scrutiny were not only illegitimate, their very usage compromised the entire case against the manager in question.

The documentary drew in a wide audience; but did nothing to solve the problems within football.

In an earlier article, I referred to the case of a chess IM who was evicted from a competition, following the misapplication of covert surveillance techniques. If the IM in question had taken her complaint to the CAS, I am quite sure she would have won her case.

Some additional problems

The devil, as always, is in the detail. When, for example, in years gone by, I was using Houdini 4 to analyse my games on the ICCF site, the programme itself, as I understand it, had been developed by a team of three grandmasters. They had pooled their ideas and then built them into the algorithm from which the commercial programme was derived.

Thus, one way of looking at the mechanism of assistance to me – as an ordinary player – is that I was, in effect and indirectly, picking the brains of those three grandmasters. The commercial programme and its algorithm was the mechanism through which this assistance was being routed; and, one might further argue, it raised my play to something close to grandmaster strength.

Some would claim this to be unfair: I was, in effect, getting “help” from three grandmasters.

But supposing I wasn't using a commercial programme at all? Supposing I was a computer specialist with computer programming skills? And that I was using these skills to develop and use my own, independent programme, picking no-one's brains but my own?

I believe that roll-your-own programmes are quite common and, accordingly, impossible to trace, detect and incorporate into a list of “banned” engines.

It also follows that computer specialists who, professionally or semi-professionally, develop chess engines as one of their main activities in life, may also be playing chess on the ICCF site using a variety of “development” engines that are much stronger than anything currently available on the retail market. How do you identify this kind of practice, or legislate against it?

Peter's Spring Chess Puzzle appears on page 24 of this magazine. Here's the solution:

26....Rxc2! 27.Qxc2 Nxf3+ 28.Kh1 Bg2+ 29.Kxg2 Ne1+ 30.Kf1 Nxc2 31.Rxc2 Qd3+ 32.Re2 Qxd4,
and the powerfully placed queen soon mops up.

And, finally, there is the huge question of the way modern databases have developed. It was long since established, in a tradition going back 200 years that CC players, unlike OTB players, could use the “opening book” during a game. That is a well-established, critical difference between CC and OTB play. Back in the 1960s and 1970s, for example, every postal player, even those graded under 1000, owned a copy of at least one edition of MCO or NCO, and used it all the time.

Even in the VCCC, engines were banned, but books were allowed: there was a clear difference.

But is there?

From the 1990s onwards, the waters between engine and database have become progressively murkier, hence the demise of MCO/NCO. Even in 1999, 24 years ago, NCO declared that all its “opening book” lines had now been “computer-checked”.

Today, any innovation, played in any form of chess, anywhere in the world, falls immediately under the scrutiny of specialists in that particular opening; and the databases are mushrooming monstrously. In some openings, they are already bridging across to the endgame tablebases.

Conclusion

So my assertion is that a re-introduction of a ban on engines is completely impracticable; and that the ICCF was right to acknowledge this, all those years ago. Furthermore, the scorn which has been heaped on the CC community by their OTB counterparts – and certainly within my own OTB club – has been cruelly misplaced.

Indeed, OTB chess hasn't much further to travel either, in my view. Modern technology is facilitating so-called “cheating” in OTB chess with increasing ease, as several recent scandals have demonstrated.

So is there still a future for CC?

Actually, and perhaps surprisingly, my answer is: yes. Indeed, I have already found a way forward, myself. I shall pick up on this theme in my final article in the next Issue. In the meantime, I invite readers to go back and re-read Tom Anderson's article in Issue 159. He has some very interesting things to say on the subject



ICCF WS/O tournaments: A Proposal

By Tom Anderson

I wish here to put forward a proposal for a new regulation to be applied regarding player selection for ICCF WS/O tournaments. I ask that the SCCA Executive Committee look at it and, if they deem it worthwhile, to put it forward for consideration at the next ICCF Congress in Amsterdam.

The proposal is quite simple: that no more than three unrated (without fixed rating) players may be entered into the pool of seven players that

constitute a WS/O tournament, ensuring an optimal mix of rated and unrated players.

Having stated my proposal, let me explain my thinking. I have now been playing correspondence chess on the ICCF server for about a year and currently have a fixed rating of 1777. Along the way, I played a couple of WS/O tournaments and would like to play more.

However, I am put off for one simple reason: these tournaments usually include a number of unrated players who are newcomers to ICCF and are assigned a provisional rating of 1800 (“1800P”), but whose actual playing strength is, based on my experience, often much stronger.

In order to tackle the issue of playing strength, let’s take a look at the current spread of players with fixed ratings throughout ICCF (Figure 1).

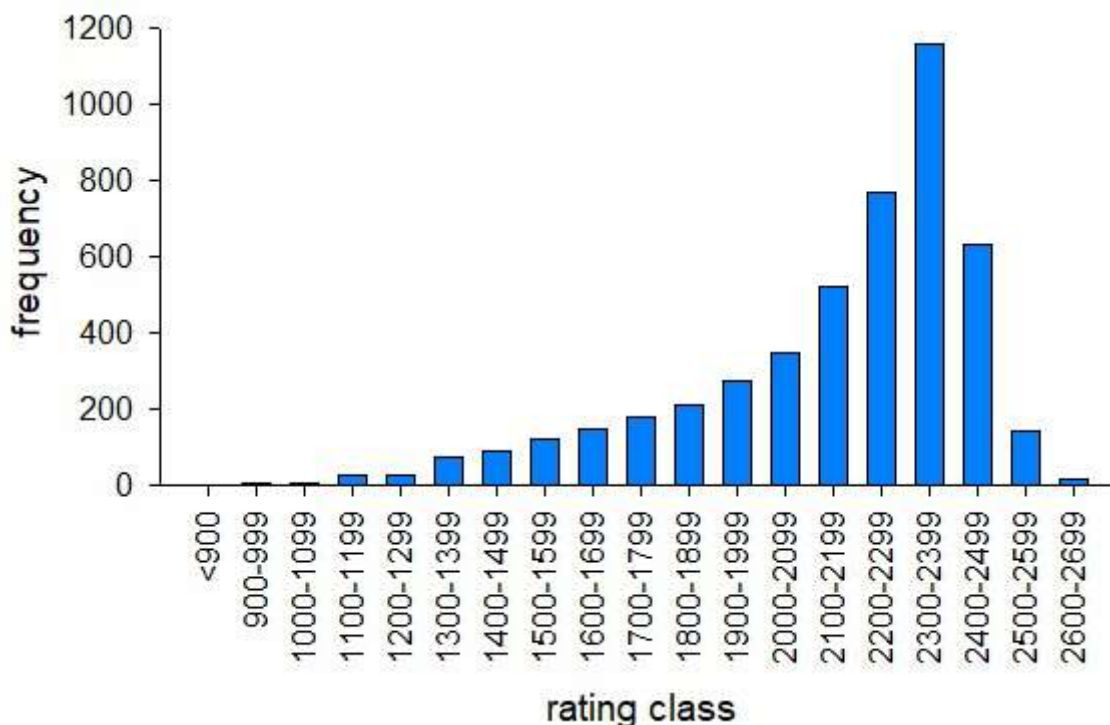


Figure 1. Frequency distribution of ICCF ratings (total number 4751).

This graph shows that only 14% of players are rated <1800, with 19% <1900 which is the entry-level requirement for WS/O. The median rating (4751 players) is 2252.

Most players on ICCF use engines for analysis (Dawson, 2021). It follows the progress of unrated players many rapidly achieve ratings >2000 for this reason.

These computer-aided players are being introduced to a rating category that is well below their playing

strength, and will likely score heavily against rated players <1900.

This latter group includes chess players who, like myself, choose not to use engines to assist in analysis (Anderson, 2022), but who are nevertheless experienced and well-versed in the game.

I appreciate that newcomers to correspondence chess have to start somewhere and have no objection to the current WS/O rating limits and the use of a provisional rating of 1800 for unrated players.

What is needed, in my opinion, is to avoid having too many 1800P players in any one event for two reasons.

First, it can be demoralising for rated players such as myself to face too many engine-assisted opponents. It is essential that all players on ICCF have good opportunity to play hard-fought games against opposition of similar strength otherwise they may become discouraged and, even worse, may be put off correspondence chess altogether.

Second, 1800P players will likely achieve a meaningful rating in a timely manner if they face opponents with fixed ratings, rather than

“inbreeding” amongst themselves. So, let’s take a look at the frequency distribution of the number of 1800P players in WS/O events during the

last 12 months (mid-March to mid-March; Figure 2):

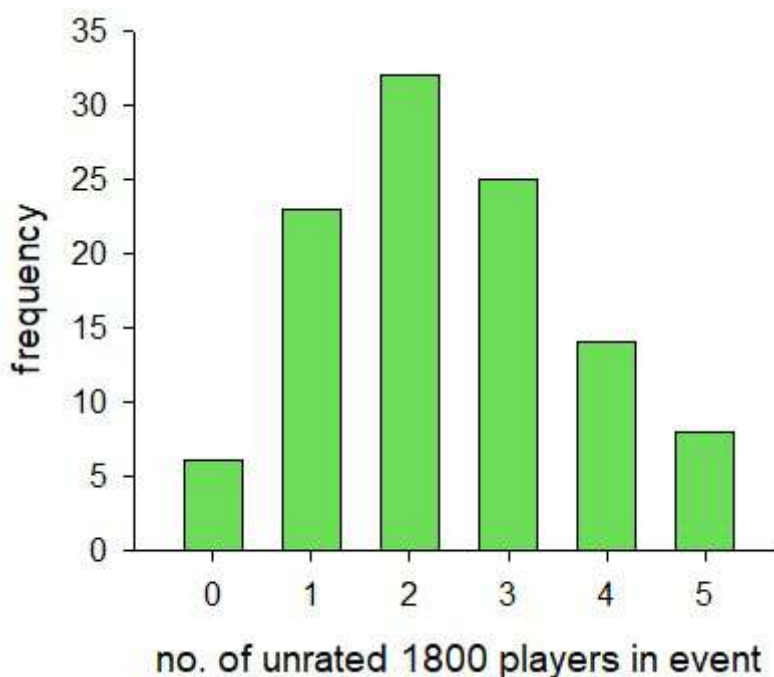


Figure 2. Frequency distribution of the number of unrated players in WS/O events during the last year (WS/O 1426 to 1533).

There is a wide spread in the frequency across the range 0 to 5. If I or anyone else chooses to enter a WS/O tournament, there is therefore a large element of luck as to how many 1800P players I will be paired against and I find that disconcerting. I groaned when I first saw the entry list for my last WS/O tournament (no. 1444) which had five such players, albeit including myself. My proposal aims to remove this random element by ensuring that there will always be a maximum of three 1800P players in any one event, and therefore a minimum of at least four rated players. The mean number of players in the above frequency distribution is 2.4. It should therefore be entirely possible for tournament controllers to ensure that a maximum of three 1800P players is allocated to each new WS/O event.

References

Anderson, T. (2022). Living dangerously with correspondence chess. *SCCA Magazine* 159, 12-14.

Dawson, Professor A. (2021). Games Column. *SCCA Magazine* 155, 22-24.

Editorial Comment

When Tom submitted his paper, I wasn’t sure if it qualified as Congress Proposal. Membership Secretary Mickey Blake suggested trying the ICCF World Tournament Office first, so I forwarded Tom’s request to Frank Geider, who is the World Tournament Director.

Within a couple of hours, Frank had circulated his team of Tournament Organisers (Jörg Kracht, Uwe Staroske and Michael Schirmer) asking for their comments.

Within another day, I received this reply from Michael Schirmer:

“We are in complete agreement that this rule of assigning only three players with a provisional rating per group in the O-class can be implemented with immediate effect.

In my personal opinion, no decision of the Congress is necessary for this (please correct me if I am wrong).

When assigning tournaments, I primarily take into account that only one player per country participates and that, if possible, a player does not always meet the same opponents.

In the O-class, the frequency of registrations is the highest of all classes. Therefore, it should be possible to take another criterion into account without causing unreasonable waiting times for players.

If there are no objections, I could consider this factor on a trial basis from now on.

In a few weeks or months I will certainly be able to make a statement on whether this trial has been successful.”

So, success for Tom and a customer service award to the ICCF WTO team!



Still Life Selection



Lubin Baugin (1612-63, France) "Still life with Chessboard or The Five Senses"
<https://chessandmusic.wordpress.com/2019/11/20/baugins-story-about-chess-and-music/>



Manuel Domínguez (1954, Spain)



Oswald Eichinger (1915-?, Germany), Chess still-life



Steven-Paul Robert (1896–1985, Switzerland), Stillleben mit Schachbrett, Muscheln und Vase, 1948



Sinisa Labus (1971, Serbia), Mrtva priroda (Still life)



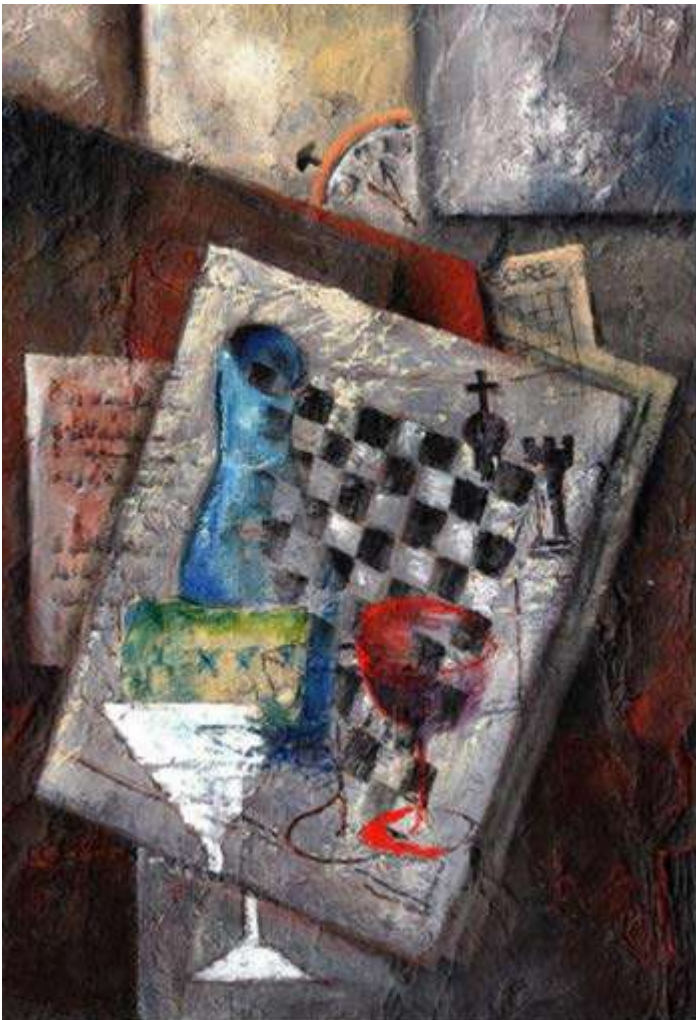
Eva Zur, Martwa natura z szachami i szkłem (Still life with chess and glass)



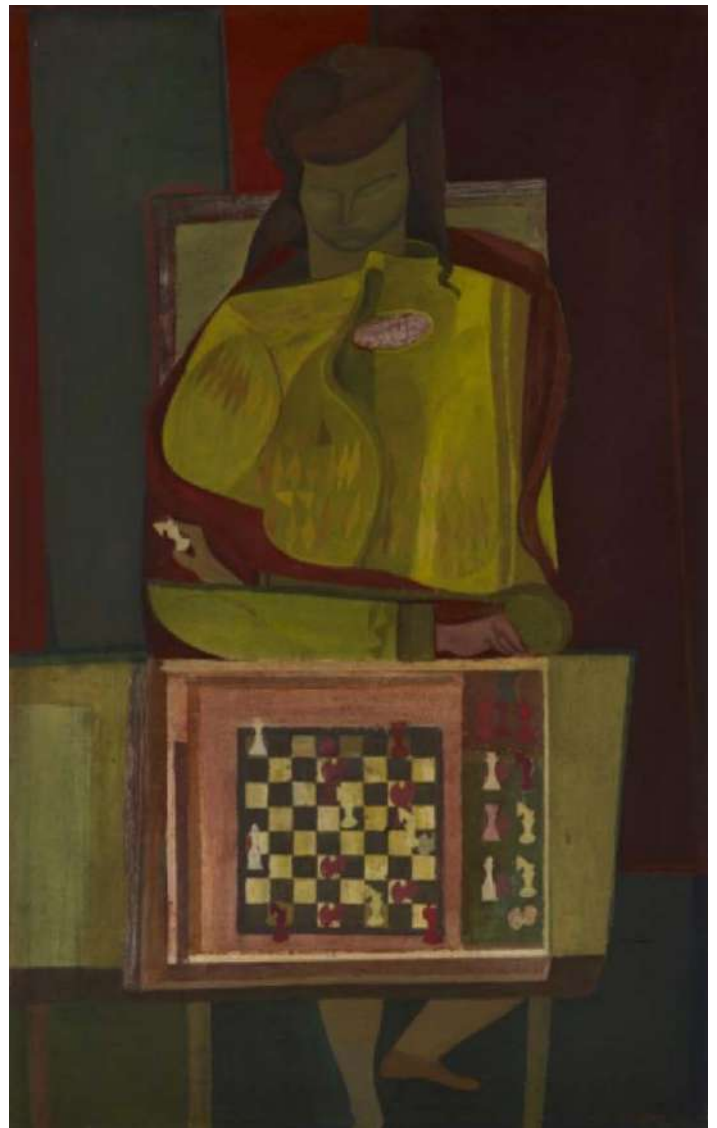
Bela Kontuly (1904–1983, Hungary), Still life with chess board and statuette 1930-40



Yulia Babulina (2000- Russia) Still life with a skull and chess



Val Byrne (1936, Ireland), Check Mate



Robert MacBryde (1944, Scotland) The Chess Player



A number of these images are taken from part of the Roaring Pawn Blog, available as part of Chess.com <https://www.chess.com/blog/RoaringPawn/still-life-modern-chess-under-predation-press>



SCCA Championship 2022-23

By Iain Mackintosh

Championship 2022-23 Final Table

SCO/C2022, Scottish Championship 2022/23

				TD Murden, Clive (IA)																		
Rated				1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	Score	Wins	SB	RG	Place
1	✉	620409	CCM Sneddon, Iain	2358			½	½	½	½	½	½	½	1	½	½	1	7	2	40.25	0	1
2	✉	620529	CCE Montgomery, Robert S.	2287	½	½			½	½	½	½	½	1	½	½	1	7	2	40.25	0	1
3	✉	620775	CCM Buchan, Allan	2370	½	½	½	½			½	½	½	½	½	½	½	6	0	36	0	3
4	✉	620345	SIM Mackintosh, Iain	2410	½	½	½	½	½			½	½	½	½	½	½	6	0	36	0	3
5	✉	211024	Whittaker, Ian P.	2202	½	½	0	½	½	½	½	½		½	½	½	½	5.5	0	33	0	5
6	✉	620426	CCM Cumming, David R.	2283	½	0	½	½	½	½	½	½	½		½	½	½	5.5	0	33	0	5
7	✉	620704	CCM Beveridge, Colin	2237	0	½	½	0	½	½	½	½	½	½	½			5	0	30	0	7

After a long and close struggle, the 2022-23 Championship was shared between CCE Robert Montgomery and CCM Iain Sneddon, both scoring 7/12 points, and with identical SB scores.

Robert was a previous winner in 2014-15, but this was a first for Iain - many congratulations to both players!

Previous winners Allan Buchan and Iain Mackintosh tied for 3rd/4th place with 6/12.

White: Sneddon, Iain (2358)
Black: Cumming, David R. (2283)
 Sicilian Najdorf [B96]
 SCO/C2022 (SCO)

1.e4 c5
 2.Nf3 d6
 3.d4 cxd4
 4.Nxd4 Nf6
 5.Nc3 a6
 6.Bg5 e6
 7.f4 Nbd7
 8.Qe2 Qc7
 9.0-0-0 b5
 10.a3 Bb7
 11.g4 Be7
 12.Bh4 h6
 13.Bg2 Rb8
 14.Rhe1 0-0
 15.Kb1 Nb6
 16.g5 Nh7
 17.Rd3 hxg5
 18.Bxg5 Nxg5
 19.fxg5 Bxg5
 20.Qh5 Qe7
 21.Nd5 Nxd5
 22.exd5 g6
 23.Qg4 e5
 24.Nc6 Qf6
 25.h4 Bf4
 26.Nxb8 Rxb8
 27.Rc3 Bc8
 28.Rxc8+
 1-0



White: Whittaker, Ian P. (2202) –
Black: Montgomery, Robert S. (2287)
 English Opening [A15]
 SCO/C2022 (SCO)

1.b4 Nf6
 2.Bb2 g6
 3.c4 Bg7
 4.Nf3 0-0
 5.e3 d6
 6.d3 e5
 7.Be2 e4
 8.dxe4 Nxe4
 9.Bxg7 Kxg7
 10.Qd4+ Qf6
 11.Qxf6+ Nxf6
 12.Nc3 a5
 13.b5 Nbd7
 14.Nd4 Re8
 15.g4 Nb6
 16.g5 Nfd7
 17.h4 Nc5
 18.h5 Be6
 19.Rc1 Rad8
 20.Rc2 Bxc4

21.Bxc4 Nxc4
 22.Nd5 Re5
 23.h6+ Kf8
 24.Nf6 Nb6
 25.Nxh7+ Ke7
 26.Nf3 Rf5
 27.Nh4 Re5
 28.f4 Rxe3+
 29.Kd2 Re4
 30.Re1 Rxe1
 31.Kxe1 Nd5
 32.f5 Nd3+
 33.Ke2 Ne5
 34.Rd2 c6
 35.bxc6 bxc6
 36.Rb2 gxf5
 37.Nxf5+ Ke6
 38.Nd4+ Kd7
 39.Rb7+ Kc8
 40.Ra7 Kb8
 41.Nxc6+ Nxc6
 42.Rxf7 Ne5
 43.Kd1 Nxf7

0-1





Games Column

games@scottishcca.co.uk

By Alastair Dawson

In this issue we celebrate the Correspondence Chess career of LGM Helen Sherwood of Wales. Helen was British Ladies Correspondence Chess Champion in 2016-17 alongside LIM Dawn Williamson (ENG).



During Lockdown, Helen has been busy with her chess - most notably playing in the ICCF Lockdown Preliminary Tournament in Section 8. There were 82 competitors in this event and Helen sat top of the pile in 1st place with 9½/12.

Here we show three of her wins from this tournament against some strong opposition. In particular, her win with the Black pieces in a King's Indian is especially impressive.

White: Sherwood, Helen (2330)
Black: Colebrook, Mike (1664)
QGD Tartakower Defence [D58]
 LD/PRELIM S 8 ICCF, 2020
[Notes by Alastair Dawson]

- | | |
|--------|-----|
| 1.d4 | d5 |
| 2.c4 | e6 |
| 3.Nc3 | Nf6 |
| 4.Nf3 | Be7 |
| 5.Bg5 | 0-0 |
| 6.Qc2 | h6 |
| 7.Bh4 | b6 |
| 8.e3 | Bb7 |
| 9.Bxf6 | |

The moves Bd3 and/or Rc1 are more popular here. The capture by the bishop on f6 can often prove successful since it draws the Black bishop onto a poor square (f6). Black will now have to spend one or two moves repositioning this bishop onto a square where it can be more effective - and while this is going on White can steadily improve.

- | | |
|---------|------|
| 9... | Bxf6 |
| 10.cxd5 | exd5 |



So now, with the exchange of pawns on d5, White has started to develop annoying pressure down the c-file.

11.g4
 This is an intriguing move. White is about to launch a violent attack on the kingside linked to castling queenside.

- | | |
|----------|------|
| 11... | c5 |
| 12.0-0-0 | Nc6 |
| 13.h4 | cxd4 |
| 14.exd4 | Qb8 |
| 15.Qd2 | |

So now we can reassess the position. White now has a bishop to aim at with the advancing pawns - can either the g-file or the h-file be opened quickly enough?

- | | |
|--------|-----|
| 15... | Be7 |
| 16.Kb1 | Bd6 |
| 17.Ne1 | Re8 |
| 18.Nc2 | Bf4 |
| 19.Qd3 | Qd6 |
| 20.Qf3 | Re6 |
| 21.Bd3 | Ne7 |
| 22.Ne2 | Rf6 |
| 23.Qg2 | Re6 |
| 24.g5 | |

Some reorganisation of minor pieces has gone on but White is still on the offensive.

- | | |
|---------|------|
| 24... | Bc8 |
| 25.Qg4 | Rf6 |
| 26.Qg2 | Re6 |
| 27.Qf3 | hxg5 |
| 28.Rdg1 | Rxe2 |
| 29.Qxe2 | g4 |
| 30.Ne3 | Bxe3 |
| 31.Qxe3 | Bd7 |
| 32.Qg5 | f6 |
| 33.Qh5 | Qf4 |

- | | |
|----------|------|
| 34.Re1 | Kf8 |
| 35.Qh8+ | Ng8 |
| 36.h5 | Qh6 |
| 37.Qxh6 | gxh6 |
| 38.Rhg1 | Re8 |
| 39.Rxe8+ | Bxe8 |
| 40.Rxg4 | |



With the queens now off, White's bishop has a lot more squares to work with than the Black knight.

- | | |
|--------|------|
| 40... | Bxh5 |
| 41.Rh4 | Bf3 |
| 42.Kc1 | h5 |
| 43.Bg6 | |

A convincing display from White.
1-0



White: Sherwood, Helen (2330)
Black: Lukášová, Alena (2193)
Nimzo-Indian Rubinstein [E49]
 LD/PRELIM S 8 ICCF, 2020
[Notes by Alastair Dawson]

- | | |
|--------|-------|
| 1.d4 | Nf6 |
| 2.c4 | e6 |
| 3.Nc3 | Bb4 |
| 4.f3 | 0-0 |
| 5.a3 | Bxc3+ |
| 6.bxc3 | d5 |
| 7.cxd5 | exd5 |
| 8.e3 | c5 |
| 9.Bd3 | b6 |

A conventional Nimzo-Indian with both players battling for space.

10.Ne2 Ba6
 11.0-0 Bxd3
 12.Qxd3 Nbd7
 13.Ng3 Re8
 14.Bb2 Rc8
 15.Rae1 Qc7
 16.Rf2 Qc6
 17.e4

White is trying to find a way into the game for the bishop that is hemmed in on b2 - but Black is comfortable.

17...b5
 18.e5 Nb6
 19.Ref1 Nfd7

Now White has grabbed a foothold in the centre.

20.f4 cxd4
 21.cxd4 Nc4
 22.Bc1 f6
 23.h4 Rc7



So the White bishop has still not solved its problem of a lack of space - meanwhile Black has posted a fearsome-looking knight on c4.

24.h5 Qb6
 25.h6 g6
 26.Ne2

White is probing for weaknesses on the kingside and is making progress.

26... f5
 27.g4 Rf8
 28.Nc3 Qe6
 29.gxf5 Rxf5
 30.Ne2 Nf8
 31.Ng3 Rcf7
 32.Rg2 Kh8
 33.Nxf5 gxf5
 34.Qg3

White has won the exchange and the g-file has been opened, ceding control to the White queen and rook.

34... Ng6
 35.Qg5 a5
 36.Qd8+ Rf8
 37.Qc7 Ne7
 38.Qb7 Rc8
 39.Rf3



The White queen is now causing mayhem behind enemy lines but it has to be careful that it is not trapped at any point.

39... Nxe5
 40.dxe5 Rxc1+
 41.Rf1 Rc8
 42.Rd1 a4
 43.Rg5 Rg8
 44.Rxg8+ Kxg8
 45.Qb8+

The pawn structure favours White with the advanced pawn on e5 supported by the pawn on d4. On the other hand the Black d-, f- and h-pawns are isolated and liable to come under pressure. With Qb8+ the Black edifice collapses quickly since ..Kf7 is met by Qd6 and there is no satisfactory reply. A fine game by White.

1-0



White: Hospers, Bert (1993)
Black: Sherwood, Helen (2330)
King's Indian Classical [E92]
 LD/PRELIM S 8 ICCF, 2020
[Notes by Alastair Dawson]

1.c4 Nf6
 2.Nc3 g6
 3.d4 Bg7
 4.Nf3 0-0
 5.e4 d6
 6.Be2 e5
 7.d5 a5
 8.Bg5 h6
 9.Be3 Ng4

Maybe here White ought to be thinking about moving the bishop to c1 rather than d2 - now the ..e4 pawn

advance becomes much more powerful.

10.Bd2 f5
 Black follows the standard plan of counterattacking along the f-file.

11.exf5 Bxf5
 This is the first divergence of the ways. Usually Black will recapture with the g-pawn because we are always told that Black does not want to cede control of the e4 square to White's minor pieces.

(11... gxf5)
 12.0-0 e4

13.Ng5
 All of a sudden White is gasping for air - so a little tactic is tried with Ng5.

13... hxg5
 14.Bxg4 Nd7
 15.h3 Nc5
 16.Bxf5 gxf5
 17.Qh5

The game is still materially equal but look how much space Black has.

17...f4
 18.Rae1 Qe7
 19.Qg6 Rae8
 20.Nb5 Rf6
 21.Qxg5 Qf7
 22.Nc3



Black has converted the two powerful bishops into a huge space advantage.

22... f3
 Now comes the thematic push.
 23.g3 Re5
 24.Qh4 Rh5
 Black is manoeuvring her rooks in order to exert maximum pressure on the White position.
 25.Qg4 Rg6
 26.Qc8+ Kh7
 And now Black is in charge!
 27.Nxe4 Bd4
 28.h4

There are too many threats now that White cannot hold the position

together anymore - every Black piece is co-ordinated.

28... Nxe4
29.Rxe4 Rxc3+



And Black crashes through.

30.Kh2 Rg8
31.Qh3 Be5+
32.Kh1 Qg6

Black regroups after ...Rg8 and now the main threat is on g2.

33.Rfe1 Bf6

And now h3!

34.Bxa5 Bxh4
35.Rxh4 Qg2+
36.Qxg2 fxg2+
37.Kg1 Rxh4



This issue's problem position is again taken from a real and recent game. Like previous problem positions in this series, it is not too difficult; and has been chosen so that the solution can be found by simply studying the diagram, as in a newspaper chess problem. The use of a chess engine should not be necessary.

The game was a fast game of online skittles, completed in just a few days. The game score is given solely to show how the position arose in practical play. The game itself is not worthy of study.

One point of note: the combined ages of the players in this encounter was 152!

This must have been such a fun game for Black - and effortless.

38.Re7+ Kg6
39.Bc3 Kf5
40.Rf7+ Ke4
41.Re7+ Kd3
42.Re3+ Kxc4
43.Rg3

White flails around with the rook but to little avail.

43... Rxc3
44.fxg3 Rg4
45.Kxg2 Kxd5
46.Kf3 Ra4



Black is happy to transfer into a winning ending.

47.a3 Ke6

48.g4 c5
49.Bg7 d5
50.Bf8 b6
51.Bg7 Ra8
52.Bh6 d4
53.Bd2 Rh8
54.Bf4 Rh7
55.Ke4 Rh4

And finally Black can penetrate into the White position with the king. A lovely game from Black.

0-1



Publish Your Games

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Spring 2023 Chess Puzzle

By Peter Bennett

White: Iceman 21

Black: Peter Bennett

Website: Frozen Rooks

Game completed, March 2023

1.e4 c5 2.Nc3 a6 3.a4 d6 4.f4 e6
5.Nf3 Nc6 6.Be2 Nd4 7.0-0 Ne7
8.b3 Nec6 9.Bb2 g6 10.Bd3 Bg7
11.Rb1 0-0 12.Ne2 Nxf3+ 13.Rxf3
Bxb2 14.Rxb2 f5 15.c3 fxe4
16.Bxe4 d5 17.Bb1 e5 18.fxe5 Rxf3
19.gxf3 Nxe5 20.Ng3 Qf8 21.Kg2
Qh6 22.d4 Bh3+ 23.Kg1 Qe3+
24.Rf2 cxd4 25.cxd4 Rc8 26.Bc2

Material is still level, although Black plainly has positional superiority. With what sacrifice and sequence of about 6 moves can Black now secure White's resignation?



The sacrifice is fairly easy to spot; but the ensuing sequence requires a little more thought.

Answer on page 16.