

**“ SCARBOROUGH COMMUNITY OF TORONTO
CHESS TALK ”**

Newsletter of / Le Journal de
Scarborough Chess Club

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“ FRIENDLY Chess Since 1960 ”

ITEMS OF INTEREST TO BOTH MEMBERS & NON-MEMBERS
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DO YOU KNOW ? / SAVEZ-VOUS ?

Tournament Chess in Toronto – The New Reality

Dutton Chess' New Site

Since Dutton Chess lost its lower-than-market contract for holding weekend tournaments at the Toronto Primrose Hotel, it has retreated to the Dutton Chess Club on Bayview, South of Eglinton Ave. East, as its new site. It has now held three tournaments at the club since then. In earlier years, DC had previously held its Canada Day Open and Simcoe Day Open at the club.

The club, unfortunately, is modest in size for tournaments, though amply satisfactory for internal club events and DC monthly Saturday Active tournaments. Initially Mark Dutton advertised that there would be a maximum limit of 80 players, due to the size of the space. The main playing room handles about 60 players, and the two small side rooms can accommodate about 20 players.

This has not been tested yet, since the Primrose loss. At the Toronto Victoria Day Open '01, held the same weekend as the very successful Kitchener Ontario Open '01, there were 53 players. At the Toronto Father's Day Open '01 on June 15-17, there were 60 players. The Canada Day Open '01 drew 67 players.

Maximizing Adequate Playing Conditions

But what became clear was that the quality of tournament conditions would drop dramatically if DC actually had a tournament at the club with 80 players. The reason is that the two smaller rooms are desperately needed for other purposes than tournament playing.

In an interview with Mark, he noted that the parents of juniors who come and attend, and visitors to the tournament who want to talk to friends there, were using the smallest room to hang out. Even at the Canada Day tournament where he had to make use of this room for tournament games, he tried whenever possible to move the players out into the main playing hall when there were byes in other sections that left boards unused, to try to keep the room available. This not only gives parents/visitors a place to go, but reduces the noise level that would otherwise exist if all this talking took place in the entrance to the playing room or the hall just outside. Similarly, the larger room, which holds about 8 boards, was being used as the analysis/skittles room. Unfortunately, when chess players carry out these two activities, they are not quiet. So it is good that this room has a door that can be closed, and is some distance from the main hall. Tournament chess players have to be provided with such facilities. Otherwise finished games are analyzed at the board, despite TD efforts to prohibit it, and other games still in progress are disturbed. And where were players to go when they are finished their games early – the hallway ? Downstairs ? Outside ?

A New Maximum Player Limit

Given this experience, before the Canada Day Open '01, Mark felt that his tournaments at DCC realistically would be only able to accommodate a maximum of 60 players, using only the main hall for tournament playing. He felt he might invoke the “ first come, first served “ rule at the 60 player level, rather than the 80 player level.

The Canada Day tournament number came in slightly over 60 players, staying at the levels of the first two tournaments. So Mark decided to stretch it and use the small room for the last 3 boards. He said that although he'd like to make the small room available to parents/visitors/skittles players, it was a matter of giving tournament players priority, if he had to choose. So he is effectively using now a maximum of 66 players (leaving the larger room for skittles/analysis/etc.).

But there is a special problem for the Simcoe Day Open '01 on Aug. 4-6. David Cohen, organizer of the 2001 Canadian Women's Closed Championship (and Zonal), has contracted with Dutton Chess to assist him. Part of the deal is that it will be held in the large DCC room, at the same time as the Simcoe Day is going on in the main playing hall. This means the normal skittles room disappears, and DC is only left with the small room for this purpose, etc.. In the light of this, Mark told SCTCT that he will have no choice but to impose a 60 player maximum on Simcoe Day, and it will be “ first come-first served “. So he is already urging players to advance register earlier than normal for this one. So this means some Toronto players who may want to play, may be out of luck. So the importance of “ advance entry “ may now become not only a money-saving tactic, but essential to guaranteeing yourself a place !

For the Thanksgiving Open '01 in October, Mark said that he is exploring a possible rearrangement of some of the main playing hall/ reception space, which might allow him to shoe-horn in another table or two, so he could raise the 66 player maximum. But even he concedes that trying to give priority to the tournament players, and accommodate as many as possible, is putting severe pressure on the overall playing conditions for the tournaments.

The Million Dollar Question !

There is definitely a cloud over the Toronto tournament scene. One is forced to ask:

Why is Toronto, which we've referred to previously as the "chess capital of Canada", able only to serve up restricted entry weekend tournaments currently, except for the Macedonian Labour Day Open '01, coming up this September ?

Tournaments in other cities in both Canada and the U.S.A. have always had no player maximum, and have found adequate space. What's the problem ?

Toronto Tournament Space

Dutton Chess, being a for-profit company, maintains that Toronto space is extremely high priced for weekend tournaments. It cannot incur such rental expense, and still turn enough profit to cover the time spent by Mark and Christine in organizing and being TD, as well as other tournament expenses.

Perhaps some support for this contention is found in the non-profit organizing sector. Even without the profit factor being required, no non-profit organizer has come forward to bid on the GTCL-sponsored tournaments coming up in October, November and December. And these tournaments have been open for bids since March (Dutton Chess still refuses to bid on any GTCL-sponsored tournaments). One of the factors cited by potential non-profit organizers has been the same as that cited by DC – the availability of suitable space, and its cost. Fortunately, Randy Moysoski, organizer for the Macedonian Labour Day tournament has worked this out, with the use of the Macedonian Church/Community Centre (though we have heard rumours that he has in the past made up tournament expense shortfall out of his own pocket).

Is there no one in Toronto that has a lead on solving this problem ? Has GTCL made any progress in their search for space, under the option they're exploring of tying bidding for GTCL tournaments to use of space which it has found ? Or is the only answer to raise the tournament registration fee so that Toronto space can be paid for by organizers without taking a loss – a Draconian solution that Mark, based on his experience, has said would engender a player revolt !

Quite a dilemma.

An Unwanted Solution

One can explain away the 53 player turnout for the Toronto Victoria Day Open '01, since it conflicted with the Ontario Open '01. The Canada Day tournament over the last few years always drew less, being a summer weekend tournament, and so 67 players was reasonable. For the same reason, plus competition from large international tournaments, Simcoe Day has only drawn moderate turnout (though this year might be different, given the cancellation of this year's Toronto International in August).

But the drop in turnout for the Father's Day Open '01 is significant (from 93 in 2000, to 60 in 2001). And since the start of the year, the turnout number at the monthly tournaments has been dropping, compared to 2000.

So the question is what can be expected for the Thanksgiving Day Open '01 ? In 2000, this tournament drew 82 players. If this drops yet again this year, then maybe the DCC space with Mark's intended space modifications may turn out to be sufficient.

But this would be an unhappy solution. It is difficult to see the participation rate at " over-the-board " Toronto tournaments decline, though this does seem to be the experience across the country.

Your Views ??

Who would have believed that a possible 75 player maximum would one day pose no problem for a Toronto weekend tournament, because of falling turnout ? Or is the current tournament set-up contributing to the decline we are seeing, since people had gotten used to the playing conditions in a place like the Primrose, and are having trouble accepting less ? Let us know what you think is happening – e-mail us and we'll try to publish some reader opinions on this !

2001 July FIDE Rating List

The FIDE list keeps inactive players, like Fischer, on the list. So for comparison purposes, kasparovchess and chesscafe issue a top 100 list, taking out the very inactive players. We will use the kasparovchess list.

Only 2 players currently break the 2800 barrier. FIDE World Champion # 13, Gary Kasparov (Russia), continues to be # 1, with a rating of 2838. 2001 BrainGamesNetwork World Champion, Vladimir Kramnik (Russia) is # 2 at 2802.

Then come 12 players in the 2700's. 2000 FIDE World Champion, Viswanathan Anand (India), is only 6 points shy of 2800, coming in 3rd at 2794. Alexander Morozevich (Russia) is 4th at 2749, and Michael Adams (England) is 5th at 2744. 2000 FIDE World Championship Runner-up, Alexei Shirov (Spain) is # 10 at 2706. 1999 FIDE World Champion, Alexander Khalifman (Russia) is # 14, at 2700. FIDE World Champion # 12, Anatoly Karpov (Russia) is # 18 at 2692. The world's strongest woman player, Judit Polgar (Hungary) has slipped to # 20 at 2686.

Two young grandmasters to watch, both born in only 1983, whom we expect to shortly break into the top 20, are : Ruslan Ponomariov (Ukraine), # 21 at 2684 (he barely missed winning the silver (2nd place) medal for individual performances at the 2000 Chess Olympiad on 2nd board [won by our Can. GM Kevin Spraggett]); Alexander Grischuk (Russia), # 25 at 2669 (he was one of the semi-finalists in the 2000 FIDE World Championship).

The 100th ranking on the list is now 2599. Canada's highest ranked FIDE rated player is GM Alexandre Lesiege at 2564.

2001 Dortmund, Germany Tournament (FIDE Category XXI – 2755 Av. Rtg.)

This is the strongest tournament held this year so far. It is a double round robin, that started Thurs., July 12. It has 4 of the top 5 rated players in the world : Kramnik, Anand, Morozevich, Adams. Joining them are Peter Leko (Hungary - # 7 at 2730) and Veselin Topalov (Bulgaria - # 9 at 2711). At the time of going to press, after 4 rounds, the leader is Vladimir Kramnik, the highest rated player, with 3/4 pts.

2001 Canadian Youth Chess Championships, Sackville, N.B.

SCC had the amazing number of 10 junior members playing in 4 of the age/sex categories this year in this 7 round swiss. The top 3 medalists in each group qualify to represent Canada, though partial expenses are paid only for the first place finisher . Here is how they did :

Up to 10 years boys : David HIER – 5 ½ / 7 pts. (2nd (!) of 24 players); Shiyam THAVANDIRAN – 5/7 pts. (3rd (!)).

Up to 12 years boys : Jonathan YU – 6/7 pts. (1st (!!!) of 26 players); Vincent CUEVAS – 4 ½ / 7 pts. (4th / 7th); Raja PANJWANI – 4/7 pts..

Up to 14 years boys : Nimalan THAVANDIRAN – 4/7 pts. (31 players).

Up to 16 years boys : Allan CAI – 5/7 pts. (4th of 20 players); Matthew COOKE – 3/7 pts.; Gaja SRINIVASAN – 3/7 pts.; Liam HENRY – 2/7 pts..

2001/2 CFC AGM

This meeting, held at the same time as the Canadian Open, saw new blood being brought onto the Executive. It is as follows :

President – Dale Kirton (Manitoba) *

Vice-President – Ken Craft (New Brunswick) *

Treasurer – Lyle Craver (British Columbia)

Secretary – Fred McKim (Prince Edward Island)

Junior Coordinator – Bryan Lamb (Ontario) * [SCC President]

FIDE Representative – Sid Belzberg (Ontario) *

Past CFC President – Maurice Smith (Ontario) [SCC Member]

[* - indicates new member]

Officers not on the Executive :

Women's Coordinator – David Cohen (Ontario)

Rating Auditor – Alvah Mayo (Nova Scotia)

Special Officer – Joshua Keshet (British Columbia)

Some important issues dealt with at the AGM will be looked at in the next Issue.

2001 Canadian Open, Sackville, N.B.

GM Larry Christiansen and GM Tony Miles tied for first with 9/10 pts. The scores of the 5 SCC members were : Jaime SOLIS – 5.5 pts.; Raja PANJWANI – 5.5 pts.; Phil HALEY – 4.5 pts.; Matthew COOKE – 4.5 pts.; Maurice SMITH – 4 pts.;

SCC Summer (Tues.) Swiss '01

This experiment of SCC running a regular-rated swiss on Tuesdays proved successful. The tournament ended on June 26 (5 rounds). 10 players took part. The co-winners were Bryan Lamb and Liam Henry (4/5 pts.).

It looks like SCC should again do this in the Fall on Tuesdays, at least as part of a rotational different tournament–type schedule. Might one of the swisses be held at the new FIDE time controls of 40 moves in 1 ½ hrs, and sudden death of ½ hour (close to what SCC does now on Tues. and Thurs., but slightly faster) ? It'd be nice to try the new time control ourselves at SCC and see how it goes !

SCC Summer (Tues.) Active # 1 '01

In line with SCC trying to broaden the tournament types it offers its members, we followed the last regular-rated swiss with a new 2 consecutive Tuesdays' Active (30 min.). It is a 6 round swiss, three rounds are being held each evening, starting at 7:00 p.m.. It is open to members only. There is no registration fee. Non-members can buy a \$ 10 tournament membership. It started July 10, and ends on July 17. Contact Bryan to get in this Tuesday, and take byes for the first 3 rounds. 14 players are participating, with the class breakdown as follows : Expert – 2; A – 1; B – 6; C – 2; D & U – 3.

SCC Summer (Tues.) Active # 2 '01

Since this format appealed to members, SCC is going to have another 2 consecutive Tuesdays Active. This one will start Tuesday, July 24. It will conclude on Tuesday, July 31. It is being run on the same basis as Active # 1 (above).

SCC Mid-Summer (Thurs.) Swiss '01

This tournament has been added to the initial schedule and will go for 5 rounds, starting July 19 and finishing Thursday, August 16 (this is the last day for the club to be open in August; it will re-open with the 2001/2 Annual Meeting on the first Tuesday in September, Sept. 4 . Make a note also that SCC will be closed all Sundays in August, and Sunday, Sept. 2, for the Macedonian Labour Day Open '01 that weekend). Come out and play in this last Thursday tournament of the 2000/1 club year.

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.