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*The Newsletter of the Chess Arbiters' Association*

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EDITORIAL

After the Lord Mayor's Show of a bumper sixteen-page issue last time we are back to a slim line edition because of a dearth of material submitted. My thanks to the faithful few contributors, but where are the rest of you?

Almost every event I attend has some amusing or significant incident. I don't believe such happenings are confined to tournaments of mine. You, yes you, must have something of interest to offer.

On Saturday 23rd April there was a meeting of the CM at Peterborough. Its purpose was to study the submissions with regard to the revision of the FIDE Laws of Chess and related Appendices.

John Robinson had performed the mammoth task of collating all the often conflicting views members had put for­ward. About a dozen members were present for the 11.30 a. m. start.

About two hours later most had to leave to attend the BCF Finance Council Meeting in another room. This finished about 5.30 p.m. and I returned to the CM meeting to find four very weary colleagues still working through reams

paper. Eventually they called it a day at about 7 p.m. The "Fab Four" were Eric Croker (Chairman), David Welch (Chief Arbiter), John Robinson (Colla­tor) and Richard Haddrell. I am full of admiration for the dedication they showed that day.

The final submission from the CM (BCF?) contains contributions from fifteen CM members. I doubt if so many British arbiters have previously had such an opportunity to have their say on the FIDE Laws. I hope our input is not wasted.

With this issue you should receive details of the 1996 AGM of the Chess Arbiters' Association. After the British Championship's travels to Plymouth (1992), Dundee (1993), Norwich (1994) and then Swansea last year, I hope the central venue of Nottingham will enable more members to attend. Please make an effort to be there.

I hope you have responded to the Treasurer's recent request to renew your subscription. Last time we had almost a 100% renewal rate. This request does not apply to recent new members who are still in credit.

**John Robinson** writes :.

Many thanks to all readers of ARBITING MATTERS who took the trouble to write to me on the draft FIDE Rules. Several obvious small slips were pointed out, often by a single contributor. Some more detailed suggestions may well form the basis of proposals in the next revision. Those who were present at Peterborough on April 20th will be aware of the range of comment, mean­while we await the final wording with interest.

Last year saw the revision of the BCF Quickplay Finish and Rapidplay rules, and now I wonder if we should look at the general rules for BCF events?

In the Midland Qualifier at Birmingham in June, Sum-of-Progressive Scores failed to split two contenders for the second place. One had a half-point bye in Round 2, the other had played all six games. What is "bye's" score for the Sum-of-Opponents Scores calculation? Bye traditionally scores zero, but this seems mean, and what if the bye had been a full-point one?

An alternative suggestion was that for the purposes of the calculation, bye should score the average of the other five opponents, which may be too gen­erous. A few phone calls failed to help, mainly because Arbiters control Chess Congresses on Sundays. As it hap­pened, both models gave the same qualifier. What do members think?

Anyone who wrote to me requesting a copy of PROTOS, the Swiss pairing program now no longer protected by copyright, may like to know that a further updated version is now available. I would be happy to update anyone's disk on receipt of a SAE, although if readers have registered their interest as suggested in PRO­TOS README, they may well be advised.

**Editor :­**

To save you the trouble of reaching for your Chess Yearbook (page 118 in the 1995 issue) here is what it has to say on the subject of tie-breaks.

Sometimes it is necessary for the Tourna­ment Organisers to break ties other than by matches. This is always undesirable and should not be necessary for cash prizes. The tie-break system to be employed must be announced at the earliest opportunity, preferably prior to the event. The order of preference is as follows :

a) The result(s) between the player(s) involved in the tie provided they have all met.

b) In a Swiss: Sum of Progressive Scores.

c) Sum of Opponents' Scores. Where an

opponent has lost game(s) by default his score must be increased proportionately. Thus a player in a nine round tournament withdraws with 316. His score for resolving tie-breaks of his opponents is 4Y:.. The player with the highest SOS is the winner. Sometimes this system is used by deleting the lowest scoring opponent(s) and possibly the highest-scoring as well.

d) Sonneborn-Berger Score. The sum of the scores of the opponents the player has defeated plus the sum of half the scores of the opponents with whom he drew is calculated. The highest SB wins. Again the scores of defaulting players must be increased proportionately.

e) Resolved in favour of the player who

had the greatest number of blacks.

With Euro 96 still fresh in our minds we are only too aware that chess is not the only activity to have problems with tie-breaks! Where titles are concerned, I far prefer to see them shared, especially if they are for junior events. Try explaining to a tearful child and his/her resentful parents that the rival has the title and trophy because of something called Sum-of-Progressive Scores!

Unfortunately there are times, and John cites one such instance, where a tie­break is necessary.

Although I have now come to accept SOPS, because it is easily understood and calculated, I feel its weakness is that it over-values the win in Round 1 which is, for a top-half player, probably against the lowest-rated of the oppo­nents. In a five-round event it counts five times. The "pressure" win against a leading rival in the last round counts only once.

Now that most players are graded, I feel that Sum-of-Opponents scores would 4 be better replaced by Sum-of-Oppo­nents grades.

I have never seriously considered Son­neborn-Berger as a worthwhile method. Why not take off the sum of the scores of the opponents against whom the players lost? Why leave them out?

With so many events having an odd number of rounds, giving preference to the player having the most Blacks seems to merit a higher priority than fifth place in the tie-break hierarchy.

At the last two Llandudno Congresses we have awarded trophies for the best-placed North Wales player in each section and also to the best ­placed Senior in each section. With so many players taking a Friday evening HPB I devised the following set of tie-breaks:

1. Individual game(s)
2. Sum-of-Progressive Scores.
3. Preference given to the player( s ) who had no half-point;bye and therefore had to work fpr all their score (I hope they didn't get a full-point Bye !).
4. For the Seniors title, preference to the older player. For the North Wales title, preference to the player having the better Sum-of-Opponents Grade.

I think getting rid of HPB scores should come fairly high in the order. It also has the merit of simplifying some of the other calculations mentioned in John's account.

**What do you think about chess tie-breaks ?**

**Will this question have the usual dramatic nil response?**

NAME BADGES FOR ARBITERS?

Probably most of you have a variety of badges collected on your arbiting travels e.g. ARBITER. CONGRESS DIRECTOR. CONTROLLER etc. Do you think the CAA should have standardized metal badges produced? These could include the arbiter's name (Christian and forename) and title e.g. BCF SENIOR ARBITER. BCF ARBITER. INTERNATIONAL ARBITER (obviously this is going down the scale) with different colours for the different titles.

In the last issue David Sedgwick described three situations which had arisen in the SCCU International Tournament and invited members to comment on the decisions reached. Unfortunately no one responded.

*From the Daily Telegraph* :­

"... he has contrived on one hand to be ... an absolutely impartial and dedicated arbiter, as near flawless in his decision-making as it is possible for a human to be."

Who is he ? See a later page.

**REAL CHEATING AT CHESS**

**written by Steve Boniface**

We all enjoyed Bill Hartston's amusing books on the more blatant forms of gaining an unfair advantage in the game. Nowadays the more obvious methods of cheating are very rare and a high standard of sportsmanship and etiquette seems almost universal.

Despite some well-publicised contrary examples from the very highest lev­els, I had thought that wrong-doing during more mundane events was almost elimi­nated until I came across two exam­ples of the same kind of chicanery in almost the same circumstances in the last couple of years.

I ignored the first episode as a freak occurrence that was best dealt with by a severe warning and no further action, but the second incident left me worried that this might be more common than I imagined, and should be publicised, at least within the controlling fraternity so it may be recognised for what it is ­cheating.

I was paying my customary visit to the analysis room, ensuring that no top copies of duplicate scoresheets were around, and that sufficient sets and boards were available for use. Most players were in pairs, but one person was studying a position intently in one corner, and making various trial moves on the board. I made a mental note of the piece and pawn configuration and moved closer. As I approached, the player glanced round, swept the pieces across the board and re­turned to the playing hall.

There he sat down at a game still in progress and I noticed an uncanny resemblance between his actual game and the position I had seen a few minutes earlier.

Just to be sure I returned to the analysis room and confirmed that in spite of the player's intent to destroy the set-up, several key pieces still occupied the same squares.

At this point I was convinced I had seen a serious crime, so called the other controllers together and explained what I intended to do.

As quietly as possible I returned to the player's board, halted both clocks and asked both competitors to ac­company me to the analysis room. I led them to the board in question then offered the of­fending player the opportunity to re­sign the game there and then and to leave the tour­nament immedi­ately. This he did. I then explained briefly to the opponent what I had wit­nessed. At no time did I accuse the other player of any offence.

The whole episode left a nasty taste in my mouth, and left me pondering on several questions.

Is this a rare event?

Was I right to take such an undemonstra­tive approach?

Should I make further enquir­ies about this player? Should we as arbiters be more positively vigilant to such wrong-doing ? What further action should I take? I have already proposed we do not accept this person's entry at *this* event next year.

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*Chief Controller to inexperienced assistant* :­

"I'm just popping out for ten minutes. If a dispute breaks out, try to keep it

going until I get back."

So that is how you train them in the West Country, Steve !

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**NO JAM TODAY by Steve Boniface**

There are many pitfalls in Swiss Tourna­ments; the confusion of two players with similar names, the inadvertent pairing of a married couple, the pairing of a couple recently divorced! But there are also some technical traps which need to be avoided, one of which is that of jam­ming. For those unfamiliar with the term, it describes the situation where it is impossible to pair all the players in a particular round.

At first thought this seems an impossi­ble situation itself. I became aware of it at one of the British Championships in the early 1980s. The Ladies' event was an 11-rounder encompassing *(embracing*?) 14 players. An experi­enced controller politely pointed out that we needed to be careful not to jam. When a few eyebrows were raised, he drew a diagram which dem­onstrated the negative possibilities.

The simplest case to imagine is a tournament of six players. In Round 1 the Swiss system produces 1v4, 5v2 and 3v6. Round 2, following rules and results, 5v1, 4v3 and 6v2. The third round again is no problem :- 1v6, 2v4 and 3v5.

Even now the difficulty is not immedi­ately obvious until we look for candi­dates in the fourth round. I do not know the *precise* mathematical parameters by which this situation might occur, but in this case each member of the sub-group 1 , 2 and 3 has played every other individual in the sub-group 4, 5 and 6. Hence 1, 2 and 3 cannot *all* be paired, nor can the others.

Now for the. practical remedy. The problem arises when the number of players is only slightly larger than the number of rounds, e.g. 10 rounds for 12 players. This does not mean that the tournament *will* jam, but the arbiter needs to be aware of the possibilities. The closer the two figures, the greater the danger of the worst happening.

One way is to turn the situation to our advantage. In the previous case, one can start with a 12-person All-Play-All table and simply eliminate one round. Not only does this make the event delightfully straightforward to pair, but can also be used to avoid nasty accidents such as brother and sister playing each other, or to sidestep the possibil­ity of the highest-graded playing the lowest, especially if it might occur in the last round. One word of caution ­choose the round to be deleted care­fully to avoid bad colour splits. These should normally be plus or minus one black or white only.

Where the probability is less, as in our first example of 14 players competing in 11 rounds, nothing quite so drastic is needed, but be aware of the closed sub-group scenario shown earlier. If there is only one round short of an APA, and the timetable is flexible, you could try to persuade the players to have the extra round. This will not only be seen to be fair but will enable them to plan a campaign by observing opponents to be. Just remember that with an **odd** number of competitors the number of rounds needed is the **same** as the number of players and **not** one less.

Once you have tried these techniques you will soon see the advantages. But watch out for that player who with­draws and creates such a situation. Ouch!

*Another word of warning from the ever-vigilant Steve* :­

**"Have you noticed there are two players called Bye in the grading list."**

Sure enough there are, so be careful when placing their cards in the pairing boards. Players may not realise that David K Bye (Portsmouth) and Nigel Bye (Ealing) really do exist and would probably like to have the occasional game.

**RUSSIAN ROULETTE?**

A new pairing system from Russia

The BCF rules for seeded Swiss pair­ings have been with us for a good many years and have been modified, hopefully for the better, from time-to-time.

Most Arbiters, together with a good many players, acknowledge that players just below the cut are disadvantaged and spend most of the event playing against higher-ranked opponents. Oth­ers, just above the midway split, enjoy much lower-ranked opposition.

A look at a sprinkling of pairing cards after any event will illustrate the point. On the same final score you will usually find a card or two where all the oppo­nents have PINs in the teens or all in the twenties whilst on another card all the opponents have PINs in single figures.

Many would argue this is unfair and that players should have a true mix of oppo­nents, some stronger, some weaker, some about the same strength. From Russia comes another pairing system developed by International Arbiter E.L.Dubov. So we have the Dubov System. The basic instructions run to five A4 pages, so this explanation can only give a very rough idea of its aims and how they are achieved. The Dubov System aims to balance the strength of opposition met by players on the same score level.

The Round 1 pairings are done accord­ing to the BCF seeded rules. In the remaining rounds, for each score level, players are sorted into White-Seekers (WS) and Black-Seekers (BS). The WS are then arranged in order of IN­CREASING AVERAGE RATING OF OPPONENTS. The BS are arranged in order of DECREASING RATING

Only one check in done. Have the players already played each other? If they have, then continue down the BS until a player is found who has not yet played the WS. Intervening BS then drop one place. If the problem occurs with the last pairing, the most recently completed pairing is unscrambled.

Obviously there are rules to cover colour transfers and floats. If an upfloater is required, he is the highest ­rated of the appropriate colour. It is not clear whether the upfloater is placed as the last player in the *WS/BS* pile or in the appropriate position, that is by ARO if a WS and rating if a BS.

The expression "float” is never used. Instead a player is promoted to the higher group. There is no reference to players down-floating or being moved down. There are restrictions on the number of times a player can "go up" consecutively and in total.

So far as colour transfers are con­cerned, there is reference to "retro­analysis" which I presume to be what we normally term colour history.

If anyone is interested in having a copy of these rules, they should send me one 20p and one 26p stamp to cover photocopying and postage. I would be interested to hear of anyone trying out the Dubov System.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Quite a lot it seems, if the name is the name of the village where I live. During the last couple of years I have listed the wrong spell­ings encountered on my incoming mail. Here is that list.

CILCETH CLCHETH COLCHETH CUKETH CULCET CULCETH CULCETN CULCHETCH CULCUTH CULGHETH CULLCHETH CULPETH CULPHETH

If you want the correct version, try looking on page 1 of this issue. Whatever you do, don't take it from the monthly CHESS magazine. I have never known them get it right. To balance things, BCM makes the same mistake when sending my son's magazine.

An increasingly frequent error is in the name of the road. Cranwell Avenue often turns out as Cromwell Avenue. This can cause problems since there is a (locally) well-known road of that name not too many miles away.

This morning I had a congress entry with the wrong house number, the wrong road name and one of the above mis-spellings !

"THAT FLAWLESS ARBITER - see earlier ­

Who can it be ?

He isn't a FIDE arbiter

He doesn't even hold the BCF Arbiter title

*The full quotation was* :­

"With a magical balance he has con­trived on one hand to be a character, a comic an entertainer, and on the other an absolutely impartial and dedicated arbiter, as near flawless in his decision-making as it is possible for a human to be. "

He is a Yorkshireman

He is normally seen wearing a white coat

He isn't selling ice cream. He is cricket Umpire Harold "Dickie" Bird

*TAIPIECE*

I have almost completed three years as Editor of this newslet­ter. I set myself a target of three issues per year (Novem­ber, March and July). These targets have been met, but only by me supplying most of the copy. Feedback on issues has been abysmal. If I carry on, ARBITING MATTERS will only appear when I have suffi­cient material from you.