



SUNCOAST CHESS CLUB NEWSLETTER

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Continuing our theme from July, let's now consider class prizes in tournaments. Note that they have not been referenced as rating divisions. This picks up Norm Braybrooke's theme that we are rewarding classes of players, not rating groups.

At the Noosa and Gold Coast Opens this year, classes were created by basically dividing the field into equal size groups. All things being equal this is an eminently fair system. The problem is **all things are not ever equal** in a field of chess players. Every tournament has variations in the ranges of rankings of the players and so these variations must be reflected in the manner in which the classes are created. This is why there are usually considerable problems with tournaments that set ratings divisions beforehand eg.

- the Whale Open where very few 1800-2000 players competed as they knew they were in the open class and they knew Ian Rogers and Stephen Solomon were competing; and
- the Gold Coast Classic, where generous class prizes were on offer (\$250 first and \$50 second) for odd classes (1600-2000, with 4 classes with about a 150 spread below).

The editor believes that the goal should be to afford every player a **reasonable opportunity to obtain a prize**. This is a big ask, but it is achievable. Consider that in the first couple of years of the Noosa Open between 35-40% of players received a prize. Evidence of opportunity.

How is it achieved? **Firstly**, at the top of the field these players should clearly be playing in the open section, so find a natural break of about 100 points at the top of the range. Usually because of the small number of players at the top, 2000+ is chosen (but this would be pointless if the natural break was at say 1994). It is a bit unreasonable to expect 18-1900 players to compete in this class and have a *reasonable opportunity to obtain a prize*.

Secondly and turning to the lower end of the field, again find a natural break of around 100 points. It is more difficult at this end because of the sheer number of players, but at this end we have a much wider range of players as well:-

- Unrated players;
- Juniors and cadets;

- Some veterans.

As is the normal case, there are special prizes in these categories for these players. So it needs to be recognised that before a move is played, most players in these areas have a *reasonable opportunity to obtain a prize*.

Now we normally have 4 rating divisions (5 really does ease the pain though) for the range of players between 1200 and 2000. Now the following exercises should be run:-

- **Thirdly**, divide the players into equal groups of four and then examine the divisions to determine if by moving the breaks up or down a few players we find a natural break of say 30-50 ratings points, and thus break at that point.
- **Fourthly**, look for natural large breaks between players of around 100+ points, place breaks at these points and then divide into equal groups for each section or for the balance section.

Fifthly, after conducting these two exercises, look at the results and it is usually possible to merge them, but often they will end up with very similar groups anyway. The editor believes that by following this approach all will have a *reasonable opportunity to obtain a prize*. The test for statistical arguments of this nature, (and the editor has qualifications in this field!!) is to go to extremes. So if you remain unconvinced, consider the following:-

- By using the above method, an extreme result might be one division with 20 players between say 1300 and 1400 battling it out for a prize in one division and 4 players between 1700 and 2000 in another division. This is a common result of this outcome and one which players have not complained about, because it is recognised that players in each section there is a *reasonable opportunity to obtain a prize*.
- By using the equal numbers method and recognising that in most tournaments the largest group of players will be rated around 11-1300, we will end up with a typical rating division of 1200-1300 and at the other end of the scale 1400-1800, simply because there are fewer players in the latter range. As a consequence, in this example the 1200 players have a greatly enhanced *opportunity to obtain a prize* as compared to say the

1400-1800 players. Yet this is a typical outcome. This year at the Noosa Open we had 1800 players competing in the open section with GMs, IMs and FMs plus many 2100+ players. Hence the grumbles.

Next time you play in a tournament, don't be selfish, have a look at the spread of players. You will find that there will be at least one section of 100-150 points where there may be no players or only 1 or 2. A return to the system described above is advocated for future years. If you don't agree with this, the lack of complaint in previous years must surely be sufficient evidence.

Rules Section. A combination of the changes introduced with the 1997 *FIDE Laws of Chess* now clearly indicates that you must write your move down after you press the clock and not before. Players who write down their move, cover it with their pen, think for a bit and then either make the move or write down a new one, are using an external memory device ie. pen and paper to remember the move, while they check other things. Be gentle with such players though, the habit will be hard for them to break.

Article 6.7(a) states *During the game each player, having made his move on the chessboard, shall stop his own clock and start his opponent's clock. A player must always be allowed to stop his clock. His move is not considered to have been completed until he has done so, unless the move made ends the game.* Therefore the move is complete by playing it on the board and pressing the clock.

Article 8.1 states *In the course of play each player is required to record his own moves and those of his opponent, move after move, as clearly as possible, in the algebraic notation, on the scoresheet prescribed for the competition.* Therefore a move can only be recorded after it is played and the clock is pressed.

Article 12.2 states *The scoresheet shall be used only for recording the moves, the times of the clocks, the offer of a draw, and matters relating to a claim.* So by recording **notes** before the move is complete (ie. after playing it on the board and pressing the clock), a player is breaching Article 12.2.

Games Section. Bored with the editor's notes. You can fix this by either putting notes to your own games and submitting them to the editor. Alternatively, you can use computer programmes to prepare your notes for you. This is what Derrick Jeffries has done for this month's game. The notes have been abridged

as the computer has made lucid comments like *moves it out of take and checks Black's K.*

White: Michael Crocker
Black: Derrick Jeffries
Opening: Ruy Lopez, Steinitz Defence
Event: Hervey Bay Open, 5/4/98

1 e4 The King's pawn move controls the centre, opens lines for both the Q and the B and usually leads to an open game in which tactics, rather than slow manoeuvring predominates **1...e5 2 Nf3** With the possible exception of f4 (*Even computers recognise it!! - Ed.*), this is the most logical second move against Black's symmetrical reply. The N attacks e5, clears the way for castling and rests on the best defensive square **2...Nc6 3 Bb5** The Ruy Lopez, designed to maintain long term pressure on Black's centre. If driven away the B will take up an eventual position at b3 or c2 to focus on a K'side attack or on the central squares **3...d6** The Steinitz Defence breaks the potential pin on the N by aiming at ...Bd7. The King's B can be fianchettoed in some lines **4 OO Bd7 5 c3 Nf6 6 Re1 g6 7 d4 Bg7 8 d5 Ne7 9 Bf1 OO 10 c4 b6 11 Nc3 c6 12 dxc** Forks Black's B at d7 and Pat d6, as well as creating a passed P on c6 (*Forks?? - Ed*) **12...Bxc6 13 b3 Rc8 14 Nd5** Slightly better is 14 Ba3 **14...Bb7** Slightly better is 14..Nexd5 **15 Nxf6+ Bxf6 16 Ba3 Rc6 17 Qd2 Qc7 18 Rad1 Rfd8 19 Bb2 Nc8 20 Qh6** Pins Black's g6 pawn and blocks the h7 P (*Pins?? - Ed*) **20...Qe7** Disengaging the pin **21 Qc1 Ba6 22 Qa1 Bb7 23 Nd2 Bg5 24 Nf3** Slightly better is 24 g3 **24...Bf6 25 g3 Bg7 26 Bh3 Rc7 27 Nd2 Bh6 28 Nb1 Qf6 29 f4** Pinning the e5 pawn **29...Qe7 30 fxe dxe 31 Rxd8+ Qxd8 32 Bxe5** Winning a pawn **32...Rc5 33 Bf6 Qe8 34 Nc3 Nd6 35 e5** Better is 35 Rd1 Rb8 36 Nd5 Bg7 37 Rd4 **35...Qc6 36 Nd5 Rxd5 37 Bg2 37 e5xd6 c6-c5+ 38 Kh1 d5xd6+ 39 Bg2 Bxg2+ 40 Kxg2** winning a pawn **37...Qc5+ 38 Kh1 Rd2** Moves it out of take, threatens mate and partially pins the Bg2 **39 Bxb7** Much better is 39 e1-g1 c5-f2 40 a1-f1 f2xf1 42 g2xb7 f1-f2 winning the B for a Q **39...Qf2** Threatening mate, however 39...d6xb7 40 a1-d4 c5xd4 41 e5-e6 d4xf6 42 e6xf7+ g8xf7 (*And while the notes do not indicate it, the editor presumes Black won at this or some later point. An interesting trial of computer notes, you don't get much on strategy, eh! Not intending to offend the computer, but we'd prefer your notes next time Derrick!! - Ed*)