

Presidents Report for the 2015 Annual Meeting

Author: Mark Kaprielian

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Table of Contents

I.	Purpose.....	1
II.	The past year in review	1
III.	The future.....	2
	A. Changes to our rental agreement with the Community Center.....	2
	B. Near term issues that need to be addressed.....	2
	C. Some perspective about time controls	2
	D. Considerations about how to move forward from here	3
	E. Side Effects	3
IV.	Summary	4
	A. What kind of success have we had with what we've been doing	4
	B. Presidents thoughts	4

I. Purpose

This report provides a brief summary of the topics the current President of the club, Mark Kaprielian, will present and discuss to the membership at the Annual meeting of the club to be held on Tuesday, January 20th, 2015

The last section of this report includes topics raised during the meeting.

Due to very recent and extremely critical events which will be discussed below, a very short summary of the past year will be provided followed by our prospects for the future.

II. The past year in review

This year the club had an average of 82 players per month despite having two months that lost a night of play due to weather. Our Open section appears to have evolved into a section where strong players come to play each other. As we approach our 32nd Anniversary in May, the past year saw three months that made the clubs strongest events list where the average rating of one of our sections must be 2200 or higher. Only 15 sections in our 33 year history have made the list. This past years 2014 Club Championships reached the top of the list with the strongest section in club history with an average rating of 2361.

For the past 12 years the club has only missed averaging 80 players twice, and those two years the average was 79.x. Our 12 year monthly average is 83 players. I believe this is a remarkable feat for a chess club that meets on a weeknight.

The last few months of 2014 saw an unusually small U1400 section. This appears to be due mostly to players moving up and out or just playing up. Normally I would expend more energy examining this phenomena but as you will see in the next section of this report, there are more pressing matters to be addressed.

In other matters the club continued to operate smoothly. We started a revitalization of group classes and we expect to continue to this trend.

III. The future

A. Changes to our rental agreement with the Community Center

This past week I met with the new director of the community center and the rental manager by their request. They reviewed all programs and renters at the center with an eye to making sure that all activities fall within the parameters of the town and the center in particular.

The essential information communicated to me at the meeting was:

- Our rent was supposed to go up some time ago but we were never informed. We are paying less than any other renters at the facility
- No facility in the town of Natick rents anything past 10:00
- No building monitors are available to work till midnight. They are hired and managed as town employees.
- We must maintain a list on site of names and contact numbers for the adults responsible for players under the age of 18 playing in the current event.

Bottom line

- Rent is going up to be correct rate (possibly a doubling of our current hourly rate)
- We must be out of the building by 10:00 PM
- Everything is takes effect February 1st.
- They understand if we have to look elsewhere, which I told them we would have to consider. We're on good terms. They need all their renters to conform to all their rules/requirements.

B. Near term issues that need to be addressed

A lot of important decisions need to be made in a hurry.

- Our entire calendar of events will not work because of the closing time of 10:00 pm
 - February's event cannot be held as advertised
- Our five round events need to be unregistered as FIDE events.
- All schedules and promotions must be changed to reflect whatever it is we will be doing.
- Club Championships were scheduled for March. Do we delay them till later in the year, cancel them, award based on points placement, play at the new time control?

C. Some perspective about time controls

For last twenty-years the club has been essentially a "slow time-control" chess club with less than probably 10 events at a time control faster than our usual 40/90, SD/30; d5. Our time control which consumes four hours is the slowest time control that can be reasonably done on a week-night. Weekend tournaments are rarely longer than six hours per game and a recent trend has been the shortening of weekend tournaments to be five hours per game.

Other clubs in the area offer a wide range of time controls. Active Chess club's "in the area" where we know some of our players also play are:

- Boylston Chess Foundation – Every day/evening
- Waltham Chess Club – Friday nights
- Greater Worcester Chess Club – Thursday nights
- Billerica Chess Club – Friday nights
- Newburyport Chess Club – Thursday nights

D. **Considerations about how to move forward from here**

I learned of the rental agreement changes the night of January 13, round 2 of the monthly event.

I informed the approximately 80 players present that evening about what I had learned a few hours earlier and explained that believed we had two primary courses of action available to us while we search for a new location. I proposed that we want to continue to play with our traditional time control for 40/90, SD/30; d5 rather than never being able to play that time control again. The two options I presented were:

- The club stops meeting until we find a new location that supports our slow time control
- We switch to G/60; d5 until we find a new location and this may go on for at least six months.

The show of hands overwhelmingly supported continuing to play at the G/60 time control which will allow us to exit the building by 10:00 pm.

During the course of the evening I had many conversations and only two players had a strong dislike of the idea of having to play G/60 but understood that this was best for the club.

I firmly believe this is the correct course of action for us as we don't want players to get out of the habit of playing on Tuesday nights.

There may be some room for negotiation regarding the rental rate. My position is that even if we were able to pay the same rent as we have been doing, we still need to relocate.

This brings us to some fundamental questions about who we are as a club:

- Do we want to be a G/60 club and be out by 10:00 on Tuesdays
- Do we want to start the round 6:30 pm and be a G/90 club
 - This fundamentally changes people's schedules of leaving work, going home or not, having time to eat, hitting earlier traffic.
- Do we want to start at 5:30 pm and have our regular time controls
 - I don't believe this will be feasible as people will not be able to get out of work on time and make it to the club and have a chance to eat. TDs will need to arrive by 4:30 pm. Players will have to register by 5:20 pm
- Do we want to change to a weekend club instead of being a weeknight club?
 - This would allow us to run our slow time control

E. **Side Effects**

It is always difficult to predict the side effects of changes. Below are my thoughts about what some of the side effects may be as time marches on in our seeking out a new location:

- Attendance of club regulars may drop off due to players not liking the time control
- We attract some new to the club players who like faster time controls
 - I suspect the number we might gain will not compensate for the potential loss of club regulars as we have an active pool of 120 players
- Some players may start to prefer the shorter time control for play
- Many players will likely enjoy being able to be home earlier
 - This may have an impact later once we return to our normal time control as people may decide they don't like being out that late anymore.
- We may attract scholastic players whose parents will feel the 10 pm out the door time will be ok for their children to participate.

- The shorter time control could “open the flood gates” and cause us to need to rent an additional room or establish entry limits.
- Having a very large number of young players may also have a negative impact on our existing base of players

IV. Summary

A. What kind of success have we had with what we’ve been doing

It is my strong opinion that the club has been “very successful” for a number of Years:

- Consistently “large” attendance
- Wide range of ratings with the opportunity to play against similarly rated players
 - This is something that is hard for smaller clubs to provide unless they happen to get players all rated near each other but over time, this may change.
- A friendly and social atmosphere where people want to improve and people help each other improve
- Smooth and consistent operation, our members know what to expect when they play at the club
- Low drama, high stability

B. Presidents thoughts

I believe that the club can best survive and maintain its robust attendance by keeping true to the format of our monthly event, namely 40/90, SD/30; d5. It is difficult to find other places to play in the region that consistently offer this type of “slow chess”. We draw players from the surrounding towns and the Rt. 128 belt who attend on a regular basis.

Many of our core members played their first rated games with us and are still playing with us.

We have 26 people who started playing with us in the first ten years of the club who are still playing at the club in our 32nd year. That number more than doubles to 54 people when we look at how many people started playing with us in the first twenty years of the club.

Many players travel to our club for the playing conditions and the competition. I have had many players complement the club on its operation and many have stated that we are the best club they have ever played at.

For the reasons I have put forth in this report, I will diligently and with passion direct our efforts to find a new location as quickly as possible to return the club operations and format to that which we have become accustomed.