

SUMMARY OF METROWEST CHESS CLUB DISCUSSION REGARDING NUMBER OF TOURNAMENT SECTIONS AND PRIZES

A recent proposal to increase to three the number of sections in the regular MCC events has been discussed by email among numerous club members over the last two weeks. The discussion broadened to consider prizes and the MCC championship. This document summarizes the email messages distributed to the MCC consult list between April 8 and April 21 (as of 5:00 pm). Listed below are the key questions under discussion, with a summary of members' opinions on each. On the following pages are Mark's proposal and other commentary, followed by the comments of other members, edited for brevity.

1. *Should regular MMC events have three sections?*

Mark's proposal is that regular MCC events have three sections with the first break at 1800 or 1700 and the second break at 1300. By advertising the sections as Open, Advanced and Reserved, as opposed to publishing specific rating-point breaks, Mark retains the flexibility to adjust the break points as appropriate to the distribution of ratings among tournament entries. Participation by 50% of the club's members will put 16 players (more or less) in each section; and 16 is the preferred number of players for a four-round Swiss event.

There appears to be very wide acceptance by commenting members of the proposal that most MCC events have three sections. There seems to be general agreement that reducing the rating spread within a section by increasing the number of sections will increase competitiveness within each section, hopefully increase participation in the highest and lowest sections, and give more players a better chance of winning some prize money (see discussion below about prize money).

Beginning with the tournament in July 1998 future MCC regular events will have three sections.

2. *Should some MCC events continue to have only one section?*

Several members expressed the opinion that one or two MCC events should be one-section events. The events nominated for this structure were the MCC championship and the Stan Crowe (November) tournament.

General Comments:

Sentiment in favor of a one-section tournament was based on the following points:

- A single section enhances the social aspect of the club, reinforcing the idea that we are all members of the same club.
- A single section affords players the opportunity to play opponents whom they would never face in normal section play (recognizing that many lower-rated players usually do not exercise their option of playing up).

Comments With Respect to the Championship

Opinion was pretty evenly split regarding whether the championship should be one section or some other structure. On the one hand, a single section gives every club member a shot at being club champion (theoretically at least), with the champion being determined from a single pool of all club members. This is the traditional format for the club championship.

On the other hand, some objections raised against a single-section tournament included these:

- Many players have no realistic chance to be champion, given the strength of the club and especially the regular Master-level participation that we enjoy from Masters Foygel and Curdo, so the idea of giving every member a shot doesn't amount to much.
- Players (especially lower-rated players) might choose not to participate in the tournament rather than play games involving enormous rating differences. A single-section tournament offers such players an unattractive choice between getting "beaten up" in some number of very uneven games or not playing at the club for a six-week period. A smaller number of entrants also means a smaller prize fund.
- For the championship to be most meaningful, it should be determined by the toughest competition that can be arranged. Providing Master-level players with several easy games against much lower-rated players does not contribute to this.
- The larger the one-section tournament is, the greater the chances that there will be two- or even three-way ties for first place, and that these "co-champions" will not have played each other during the tournament.

As alternatives to a one-section tournament, a number of ideas were offered for a closed championship, including these:

- A three-section tournament, like the regular club events; anyone from lower sections wanting to compete for the championship can play up
- A round-robin or double round-robin tournament for a small number of qualifying players (different numbers of players were suggested)
- A four-round Swiss for 16 qualifying players
- The resurrection of the Challenge Cup idea (invitational tournament), whose winner would be recognized as club champion

With respect to the last three options, typically it was suggested that the championship tournament (for those wishing to play for large, money prizes and recognition as the club champion) would run concurrently with another tournament in which the remainder of the club membership could play, perhaps for "class" championships (no money prizes, possibly trophies, recognition as Class A, etc. champion); although the opinion was also expressed that the championship should be an event with no money prizes.

There was no general support for any of these particular options, and each involves other issues to be resolved (especially how participants qualify). The question of how the championship should be determined is still open.

Comments With Respect to the Stan Crowe Tournament

Opinion was generally in favor of keeping the Stan Crowe Tournament a one-section event. Because one-section tournaments cater to the top players by offering large, money prizes, the

Stan Crowe should continue to be one section as a means of rewarding our top players. Having large prizes also enables the event to qualify as a Grand Prix event.

3. *Should additional prizes be offered?*

There was widespread opinion that more prizes should be offered, to give more players a chance to win some prize. Mark's proposal for regular events introduces three new prizes: a third-place Open-section prize and first- and second-place prizes in the new section.

Regarding prizes generally, the following points were made:

- Large prizes reward our top players and encourage them to continue to participate in club events.
- Prizes can attract top players (large prizes) or more players (more prizes of smaller size) to our events.
- The prize structure can be different for different tournaments.
- The chance of winning a cash prize is an incentive for all players, but are least important to players in the lowest section.
- Cash prizes should be meaningful in amount, at least comparable to the tournament entry fee.

Much discussion centered around whether class prizes should be offered. Strong support was expressed in favor of class prizes, the underlying idea being that there are some groups of players who have little or no chance of winning section prizes, given the strength of, and their ranking within, their section. Some of the pertinent questions raised were these:

- At what level of player should class prizes be aimed?
- What ratings will determine "class" (as determined by the club, or conforming to USCF class structure)?
- Should class prizes be offered in addition to section prizes?
- Should section prizes be reduced in number or size to fund class prizes?
- Should class prizes be offered in all/most tournaments, or only in the one-section events?

A proposal for a prize for the biggest upset was also offered.

For now the prize structure will be as indicated in Mark's proposal.

<u>Section</u>	<i>Regular Events</i>			<u>Section</u>	<i>Biggie Events</i>		
	<u>1st</u>	<u>2nd</u>	<u>3rd</u>		<u>1st</u>	<u>2nd</u>	<u>3rd</u>
Open	200	100	50	Open	600	300	150
U1800	25	13	---	U1800	75	38	----
U1300	6	3	---	U1300	19	9	----

The following MCC members offered comments in this discussion:

Mike Barry
 Ron Birnbaum (ronaldb)
 Larry Eldridge (theeldridges)
 Homer Franck (hfranck)
 Alan Hodge

Steve Iverson (siverson)
Joel Johnson (bigbear)
Mark Kaprelian (Kappy)
John Krycka (jkrycka)
Tom Powers
Harvey Reed (hreed)
Derek Slater (dslater)
Glen Soucy (soucy)
Severine Wamala (wamalas)