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I. Purpose

To change the time control for the lowest section in each month's tournament to a faster time control than the club's currently defined regular time control.

II. Existing Policy statements under consideration

From Monthly Tournament P&P dated 2003-02-07

- Normal time controls are 40 moves in 90 minutes, followed by sudden death in 30 minutes, unless otherwise announced.

III. Previous motivations for changes

Not Applicable

IV. Motivations for changes put forward by this document

John Chamberlain who teaches the Monthly Group Class proposes that the time control for the lowest section in each month's tournament be made a faster time control such as G/60 to allow lower rated adults and younger players to complete their games earlier. John suggests that the lower rated adults will prefer this as they will not have to remain at the club for long hours. He also believes that this will attract more younger players to the club because as it will not be too late for them to play on school nights.

V. Outline of Possible Solutions

Not Applicable

VI. Discussion Summary or Text

Jim Krycka, 2005-08-08

I'd like to get your feedback on a proposal put forth by John Chamberlain and modified slightly by me.

Based on conversations with players from the Weekly Study Group, many favor a shorter time control for the lowest section. John proposes that we change the time limit for the lowest section to G/60.

The modified proposal is that:

1. We consider changing the time control for the lowest section in four section events to G/60. In practice, this is only for U1350 sections and lower. (Five round events currently have three sections with the lowest being U1400 or higher, so there would be no changes for these events.)
2. Before making this change we would have to poll the members. Even if the reaction is mainly favorable, we would have to carefully consider any adverse consequences before making such a change.

Below are the relevant e-mails to date on the subject in chronological order from John, me, and Kappy. Disregard the references to having two G/45 games per night - this is not part of the proposal.

I'd like to hear the pros and cons of the idea, and any thoughts you may have on how to gather data from the membership who would be affected.

When I tossed out a similar idea awhile back, some of the cons were:

1. It might attract many scholastic players and where already near or at capacity in the playing room. Overcrowding in turn might cause some regulars not to play.
2. Games with a shorter time control are more likely to enter into a time scramble. This would occur at a time when probably all of the TDs on duty are still playing their games.
3. The lower rated adults who want the long time controls would be forced to play-up. Some of these might simply elect not to play at MCC.

I'm sure that many younger players and their parents would welcome a short time control for the reasons stated in John's mail.

If the feedback John is getting from the Weekly Study Group is representative of the general membership who play in the lower sections, then I think we should try to accomodate them. However, I don't want to alienate those whose ratings are low but want to play at our normal 40/90+SD/30 pace.

Jim (and on behalf of John)

John Chamberlain's original proposal:

Hi Jim, I talked with Mark last night and he suggested I send this to you and it be forwarded to the monthly tournament list for discussion.

Because I lead the lesson group every week I have a lot of contact with players in the lower section. The feedback I get from the great majority is that the time limit is too long. There are a few players who like it, but most of them do not. Especially among the young kids and seniors keeping them up to 11:30 p.m. (plus the drive home) is a turnoff. Parents also are not psyched by the 4-hour wait.

I propose that the time limit be changed in the lower section be changed to:

G/60

For those players who want to stay late there is always a lot of action in the skittles room. I think this change would greatly improve the overall happiness level in the lower section.

Hope you agree, John C.

Jim Krycka's response to John:

I like the idea. In fact, I suggested something similar a couple of years ago when we migrated to 4 sections for 4 round events -- specifically that we offer shorter time controls for the lowest section in months where we have 4 sections (usually an U1300 or U1350 section). Another option would be to play two G/45 games against the same opponent in the lowest section.

At that time, nobody in the monthly advisory group supported the idea. But, things have changed somewhat since then. The 4 section event has worked out quite well and we now have more beginner and/or very low rated players (ie, U1000) at the club. More importantly we have feedback from some of these players through you!

I'll float this idea in the monthly discussion list. If it seems like a good idea, then I suggest we introduce the concept to the membership through the newsletter and conduct some sort of informal poll to see what what players think who actually play in the lowest section -- those U1000-U1300 players who play there but don't like the short time controls will have to play up, so we need to be careful.

Mark Kaprielian's reply to both e-mails:

We should really quantify the interest if we are going to consider taking action. I think this could be very easy to do. For round 3 of next months event I can easily generate a list of players in the section for a polling sheet. We put perhaps 3 or 4 questions with a column for each and people just find their name and check it off. We could also solicit via the newsletter from people not present if we wanted more data.

Also, I can just generate a list of all people under a certain rating and we could probably do an email directly to that list only. Thus we would have a direct send to and response from.

The idea about the two G/45 against the same opponent is interesting. Ideally they can just turn the board and start the second game. Thus, minor, distributed disruption and no real need for TD intervention. Only problem I foresee is based on when I see games end somewhat quickly I go over and try to get them to flip colors for a shorter game. Both Adults and Kids often turn it down I suspect mostly because it was a blow out and the game was too lopsided. Also, because of the desire to call it a night and get home.

If we are going to keep discussing then you should probably respond to this email thread by forwarding it to the monthly list.

Neil Cousin – 2005-08-08

The lack of TDs available around 9:30 is definitely a drawback as I see it. The odds of a TD being available are pretty remote and would require them to be interrupted during their game. I do not like the idea of even more interruptions than there are now. We should try to quantify the interest and then continue the discussion on the other merits.

Harvey Reed – 2005-08-09

All,

The biggest negative for me is that our Club is “defined” by our consistent application of our time control. That’s who we are. We are not for everyone. I think if we start to introduce additional time controls, it’ll bring chaos. Once we do it for one section, why not another? Why not run parallel sections?

We can't please everyone. The scholastics know if they play at the Club, they play our time control.

This will also wreak havoc with TDs, with people wanting to play additional side games (why not get a few games in, right?)...

I am very against this. Very.

Matt Phelps – 2005-08-10

Add me to the list of very, very against this proposal. As a TD, events with different time controls in different sections are highly undesirable. For example, GAME/60 is dual-ratable for both regular and quick chess ratings. Though certainly do-able, we'll have to keep remembering to dual-rate certain sections on certain months, which we may forget one month, causing more headaches. I'm not sure, but we may have to pay more to have the event dual rated too.

One of our assets is that we play "real" chess in a weeknight-only club every week. Let's keep it that way.

The logistical reasons already mentioned concerning TD availability at the two hour mark, and also the fact that sudden-death time scrambles will happen in the middle of the upper sections games causing general disturbances, are enough in by book to squash this idea.

Harvey Reed – 2005-08-10

Our focus is our strength.

That's why there is room for other chess clubs with different focus, like Waltham CC.

If we have people that want short time controls, refer them to Waltham. We can even ask that they tell Waltham CC that they were referred to them by us

Mark Kaprielian – 2005-08-13

I agree with Harvey. We have a clear and consistent program offered by the club. It will attract some players while others may not be inclined to play. By offering a consistent program we have what I think it is fair to say, a consistent result. With the existing policy of having our regular events all be 40/90, SD/30, which has been in place since 1995, we have achieved a steady growth and what I think could be called a steady base of players. The club is near capacity now. We have an average attendance for the last three years of about 80 players.

By changing what we have been doing consistently for almost ten years, we are changing the expected outcome we may achieve. Some times change is good, other times change is bad. Compare our numbers with other area clubs. Other clubs have a consistent time control such as we do yet they do not get the numbers we get. The Waltham Chess Club varies their time control and they do not achieve the numbers that we have. By sheer volume of players we manage to get more young players on our school night than Waltham manages on a Friday night.

The question I would propose back to anyone still in favor of changing the time control is, what is the perceived better outcome than what we have now? My summary of what we have now is:

- Highest attendance of any club in the region – average 80 people each month
- A high proportion of young players at the club – many with above 1200 ratings
- Near capacity for the facilities – more players would take away comfort and skittles area
- Conditioning young players and new to rated play adults to “slow” chess. They can get fast chess on the internet, on their PC or at other clubs. How much slow chess at appropriate ratings is available on the Net? I have heard repeatedly, very little.

- A strong retention rate of lower rated adults and young players. As of today we have 50 players with a rating under 1100 who have been participating at the club in the last 12 months.

I just don't see how any of the risks identified can result in a better overall result than what we are achieving.

VII. Wrap up

Not Applicable