



NEW ZEALAND CHESS FEDERATION INC. PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT 2020

GRANDMASTER MURRAY CHANDLER

Last year we congratulated ourselves on the record-breaking number of NZCF rated games played – some 11,619 in 12 months. This year the situation unexpectedly and dramatically changed, due to the dreadful impact of the Covid-19 virus. The playing of chess was now – paradoxically – a fairly high-risk activity, due to players being in close proximity for lengthy periods of time. NZCF Council had to make some fast and critically important decisions. At an emergency zoom meeting of Council representatives from around New Zealand we debated the issue. The verdict was clear - at Government Covid Alert Level 2 or higher we could not sanction official events.

Chess had to do its part in trying to keep the coronavirus from taking hold in New Zealand.

I would like to thank the entire Council for their input and wise counsel during this difficult year: Paul Spiller, Winsome Stretch, Nigel Metge, Mike Steadman, Ying Wang, Bob Gibbons, Stan Yee, Hilton Bennet, Ross Jackson, Russell Dive, Craig Hall and Quentin Johnson.

MULTIPLE OVER-THE-BOARD EVENTS CANCELLED

As a sad but necessary consequence of the potential pandemic events had to be cancelled. Chess club organisers throughout the country were put in a difficult position of deciding whether or not it was safe to open.

Tournament casualties included the North Island Championship, scheduled for a high-profile venue in the Auckland CBD. The annual Waitakere tournament, the Wellington Easter, the Latvian Rapid. And so on...

Our Olympiad squad – already preparing for the Moscow Olympiad - was stood down. The Grand Prix (generously sponsored by organisations belonging to Michael Freeman and Martin Dreyer) was ended a year early.

It had looked as though North Shore's Peter Stuart Memorial (29-30 August) might escape the carnage – until organiser Helen Milligan had to contend with changing alert levels. So much hard work and preparation to waste, very sad.

Fortunately, despite this, there is still considerable activity to report.

127TH NEW ZEALAND CONGRESS, TAURANGA 14-22 JANUARY 2020

Another fascinating Championship, with the presence of some overseas grandmasters adding additional colour and excitement. GM Daniel Fernandez (England) won the "Open" section, while the New Zealand title was shared by four players: Kirill Polishchuk, Ben Hague, Paul Garbett, & Russell Dive. It was Paul Garbett's seventh title – his first being 46 years previously in 1973/74!

The Major Open was won by Hao Tang (Howick-Pakuranga Club) and the NZ Rapid by Anthony Ker. A notable result was 10-year-old Isabelle Ning winning the New Zealand Junior Open on 5/6.

The Congress venue was excellent (The Trinity Wharf Hotel) and the Congress impeccably organised by Bob and Vivian Smith of The Mount Chess Club.

An interesting photographic record of Congress and other NZ events was posted by Russian GM Vasily Papin on his website: <http://papinchess.ru/news/1423/>

The Congress – our centrepiece event - was underwritten by NZCF, with continued generous support from the Kasparov Chess Foundation Asia Pacific.

INTERNET COMPETITIONS & ONLINE COMMITTEE

With the halting of over-the-board chess pretty much worldwide, official international online competitions began springing up. Overseeing these can require geek-like technical skills. NZCF Council appreciates the work of our NZCF Committee for Online Chess, for taking on this role: Craig Hall (Chairman), Bill Forster, Timothy Ha, Matthew McNabb, Michael Sole

I won't go into details of the many events played, but these can all be seen on the NZCF website at www.newzealandchess.co.nz

NZCF INTERSCHOOLS FINALS 26-27 SEPTEMBER

Despite changing Covid alert levels the determination of organisers Bob and Vivian Smith paid off and the 2020 NZ Interschool Finals were able to proceed. Over 200 children and accompanying adults from across the country descended on Mt Maunganui for the Finals. Whether the competition would be held at all was only known five days earlier, when the Bay of Plenty moved down to Covid alert level one and Auckland moved to level two.

SNAPSHOT OF SOME OTHER EVENTS SUCCESSFULLY STAGED

George Trundle Masters (Auckland Centre) 1st GM Daniel Howard Fernandez (ENG), 7.5/10, 2nd= GM Vasily Papin (RUS), GM Darryl Johansen (AUS) 7/10; George Trundle Qualifiers (Auckland Centre) Paul Garbett 8/9; George Trundle Reserves (Auckland Centre) Richard Meng 8/9; George Trundle Talents (Auckland Centre) Akshay Sharma 8/9; Auckland Anniversary Weekender (Auckland Centre) FM Scott Wastney 5.5/6; Waitangi Weekender (Auckland Centre) Alphaeus Ang 21.5/27; Hawkes Bay Rapid (Hawkes Bay Chess) Bob Smith 6/6; Bay of Plenty (Mt Maunganui Club) Ben Hague, Paul Garbett, Alphaeus Ang 4.5/6; South Island Championship (Otago Club) Matt McNabb 5.5/7; Merv Morrison tournament (Auckland Centre) Alphaeus Ang 6/6; Auckland Girls' Championship (organised by Bob & Viv Smith) 147 participants. Well done also to Ying Wang's Summit Club for staging several junior tournament during this difficult year.

Finally: the annual Poppies Bookstore chess challenge in Howick was timed to celebrate international chess day. A blitz match between Ewen Green and Martin Dreyer with loads of youthful spectators crowding round. Our overseas chess friends

watched enviously on Facebook – New Zealand was one of the few places in the world where normal face-to-face play could resume.

ORGANISERS OF THE YEAR – BOB AND VIVIAN SMITH

An unofficial award – but totally deserved. Bob and Vic organised Congress in January, the Interschools Finals in September and the Auckland Girls in November. Plus multiple Regional Interschools qualifiers in Auckland in the most trying of circumstances.

NZCF WEBSITE INCLUDING HISTORY PROJECT

Webmaster Bill Forster made further major progress during 2020 (with assistance of Philip Hair on scanner). There is now a substantial amount of New Zealand chess historical documentation online, to browse for free, with more being added on a weekly basis. Take a look at: <https://www.newzealandchess.co.nz/history.html>

BRIAN FOSTER

During the year New Zealand chess was saddened to lose Brian Foster, on his 83rd birthday, after a lengthy illness. Initially a keen player, Brian turned to organisation in the 1970s. As President of Pencarrow Chess Club he inspired a group of juniors (myself included), and later he oversaw the Wellington Chess League. Together with his wife Colleen, Brian founded a superb chess supplies business, still fondly remembered by players who attended tournaments at that time.

FIDE (WORLD CHESS FEDERATION) TITLES OBTAINED

Our NZCF Fide delegate Michael Freeman reports that the following FIDE titles were obtained during 2020:

Three National Arbiter titles: Hong Yuan, Alexander Postma, Stanley Yee

Candidate Master title: David Guthrie

In addition a FIDE Trainers online seminar in September was attended by Helen Milligan, Ceferino (Jun) Isaac and Eva Lorenzo. Helen already holds the Trainer title, but Eva qualified as a NI (National Instructor) and Jun as Development Instructor.

NZCF ACCOUNTS AND FINANCES

Many thanks for Martin Dreyer of D & D Financial Consultants for preparing the latest accounts for y/e 30/6/2020, working in conjunction with NZCF Treasurer Winsome Stretch. Despite the trying times the NZCF balance sheet is reasonable, in part due to the large donation from Pub Charity in late 2019 arranged by Nigel Metge.

BOOKS & MAGAZINES

NZCF received two generous donations of chess literature during 2020 for two former NZ Internationals. From Andrew Day and the estate of the late Edith Otene (thanks to her daughter Linda). There are currently being stored by NZCF Vice-President Paul Spiller, who is considering options for a possible permanent storage resource or training centre.

FINAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT

As I am standing down from NZCF Council at the upcoming AGM (9 January 2021), this will be my final report. It has been a pleasure being involved with New Zealand chess on a volunteer basis these past ten or so years – a small payback for the incredible support I received from NZ chess players in my younger days.

I wish my successor Nigel Metge the very best; he takes over in challenging times, but I'm sure he is up to the task.

MURRAY CHANDLER GM

13 November 2020