

Oh to be in England

SEVERAL Commonwealth masters took advantage of generous sponsorship to compete in this year's British Championship, scoring reasonably successfully. Top Australians Ian Rogers and Darryl Johansen were among the prize-winners in third-equal position, behind only English Grandmaster Jon Mestel, the winner, and myself in second. Still in the money list was 16-year-old Dibyendu Barua, topping the four-man Indian contingent to finish level with Grandmaster Jon Speelman in 14th place. Hebert from Canada and Murshed from Bangladesh found the going tougher, but still kept to the upper half of the 58-player field.

The British Championship has, of course, long been open to Commonwealth contenders, with two notable past victors being Sultan Khan from India and New Zealand's own Bob Wade. This congress, stockbroker sponsors Grieveson Grant provided additional incentives by deeming foreign masters eligible for appearance fees normally paid only to British players. It is encouraging to see England, now undisputedly the leading West European chess power, willing to spread her success around. The end result is not without advantages either. Having a multitude of nationalities increases the chance of British players gaining international title results.

England's inspired rise over the past decade has been eye-witnessed by many Kiwis, at various stages trying their luck on the UK circuit. New Zealand chess leaders could do well to study the formula of grassroots training and top player support that has worked so well over there. Perhaps, too, New Zealand banks and stockbrokers will realise (as they have in England) the considerable interest there is in chess — particularly within their own communities. 530 players gathered for this latest British Championship, making it effectively one of the largest chess conferences in Europe.

The latest local departure for the UK circuit is Auckland's Mark Levene. He scored an immediate victory in the major open section of the British, thus qualifying for the championship section next year. Mark has also had a fair share of success in New Zealand events this year. This following win, against promising Wellington junior Leonard McLaren, comes from the Civic Club Easter tournament where Levene made a six-game clean sweep.

White's most solid move now in this standard French Tarrasch position is 10.c3 followed by Nbd4. However, the development chosen by Levene is also well known.

- 10. Bg5 0-0
- 11. Re1 Qc7
- 12. c3 a6
- 13. Bd3 f6?!

This weakens the e6 square; 13...Bg4 was less committal.

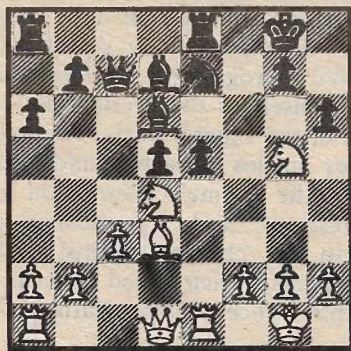
- 14. Bh4 Ne5
- 15. Nbd4 Bd7
- 16. Bg3 Rfe8
- 17. Bxe5?!

A bold idea, but one that shouldn't succeed against correct defence. 17.Qc2 keeps a safe advantage.

- 17... fxe5
- 18. Ng5 h6?

18...exd4 19.Bxh7 ch Kh8 (19...Kf8 20.Qf3 ch) 20.Qh5 gives White a winning attack, but 18...g6! would have repelled the assault.

McLAREN



LEVENE

- 19. Qh5! hxg5

If 19...exd4 then 20.Qf7 ch Kh8 21.Re6! (threatening 22.Rxh6 ch and 23.Qh7 mate) Bxe6 22. Nxe6 wins Black's queen or mates on g7, while 19...e4 20.Qf7 ch Kh8 21.Nde6 is similar.

- 20. Bh7 ch Kh8

On 20...Kf8 21.Qf3 ch regains the piece, and leaves Black with a shattered Kingside.

- 21. Ne6!

A neat touch — both 21...Bxe6 22.Bf5 ch Kg8 23.Bxe6 ch Kf8 24.Qf7 and 21...Qc8 22.Bg6 ch Kg8 23.Qh7 are mate.

- 21... Ng8

- 22. Bf5 ch

22.Bd3 ch! Nh6 23.Qg6 forced mate, but with Levene about to go a queen ahead it scarcely matters.

- 22... Nh6
- 23. Nxc7 Bxc7
- 24. Bxd7 Rf8
- 25. Rad1 Bb6
- 26. Re2 Rad8
- 27. Rxd5 e4
- 28. Rd6 Bc5
- 29. Rxh6 ch gxh6
- 30. Qxh6 ch Kg8
- 31. Be6 ch Rf7

Presumably one or both sides were in time-trouble by now, or else Black could certainly resign.

- 32. Qxg5 ch Kh7
- 33. Qh5 ch Kg7
- 34. Qxf7 ch Kh6
- 35. Qf6 ch Kh7
- 36. Qxd8 Resigns

MURRAY CHANDLER

FRENCH DEFENCE

M. LEVENE	L. McLAREN
1. e4	e6
2. d4	d5
3. Nd2	c5
4. exd5	exd5
5. Ngf3	Nc6
6. Bb5	Bd6
7. dxc5	Bxc5
8. 0-0	Nge7
9. Nb3	Bd6