Getting Started with Vega

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Version history: First complete document V2.1 12 April 2018
V2.2 Changes, revamp Appendix 4 to correct problems with Game Downloads, plus some other refinements suggested by IA Keong Ang, thanks Keong.
V2.3 Same as V2.2 except for this important detail not previously noted: It is quite common for new New Zealand Players to appear in the FIDE database before they appear in the New Zealand database. **So for FIDE rated tournaments, arbiters please get in the habit of checking the FIDE database for new New Zealand players as well as foreign players**.
V2.4 Miscellaneous updates to cover changes to Vega up to V9.

Introduction

Vega is established as the standard and FIDE approved tournament management software in New Zealand. When Vega is correctly setup it works extremely well. Player entry is so easy it's almost fun, generating pairings is one button, result entry is smooth and intuitive and the program automatically generates very decent tournament websites without any extra effort. Unfortunately there are barriers to get over before these benefits are available. The program suffers from "feature-itis", it is noble of the developer to try to make a program that has every conceivable feature but unfortunately the resulting complexity is not hidden in any way with intimidating results. The official documentation is very useful once you have successfully used the program – but it concentrates exclusively on all the (many) individual trees and neglects the forest entirely. In other words it is good on details, but hopeless on quickly getting up to speed from a standing start.

This document is an attempt to solve this problem by providing an easy to follow step by step guide to getting up and running with Vega on a Windows computer. Nothing beyond basic computer skills is assumed. Similar procedures will work on Linux, perhaps Linux users are more technically adept and won't mind some details being different. The document was written in conjunction with running a real tournament, the 2018 Wellington Open. Going in the author had some previous tentative experience with Vega, but knew there would be difficulties to overcome and hoped that carefully documenting the experience would help others facing similar challenges.

This document has aged reasonably well as of 2024, but of course some things are different and so I've added some clarifications highlighted like this to try and keep the document as useful as possible. I've also used ~~strikethrough~~ rather than purple text in a few places. The good news is that more recent versions of Vega 8 and Vega are significantly improved over the early version of Vega 8 considered in 2018, it's now less confusing and more polished than it used to be!

Step 1: Collect Everything We Need

The first thing we need to do is create a convenient working area and download some files we'll need. We can get all the files we need directly or indirectly from the following pages.

https://newzealandchess.co.nz/resources/arbiters-organiser-resources/   (NZCF page)

https://ratings.fide.com/download_lists.phtml   (FIDE page)

I've updated the links abover for 2024. Websites get reorganised and things get shuffled around, that's a fact of life. Fortunately the basic things we require are essentially unchanged and easy enough to find. The NZCF page now includes a direct link to the players_list.zip file on the FIDE site, although you will need to convince your browser that it's not insecure so you can download it (start with right click and "Save link as"). The NZCF page also now includes a link to download Vega but it's a broken link to Vega 8. The current version of Vega at the time of writing is 10, but unfortunately that version has a misguided feature that means it cannot be used to publish to the web with Filezilla (as recommended in this document) or any other external FTP upload tool, or indeed any website that requires SFTP rather than FTP. If you ask around club or NZCF officials should be able to point you to a place where you can download Vega 9, or a recent Vega 8. These versions are by and large fine.

On the New Zealand Chess resources page the files we need are in the "Vega" and "Ratings" sections.

From the "Vega" section on the resources page go to the Vega download link and download the Windows 64 bit Vega ~~and Vega Team~~ version of the Vega program. Vega Teams is not recommended for any purpose it has been replaced by Orion and in any case is not in scope for our purposes.

Also from the "Vega" section download the NZ registration code text file. You might need to right click the link and "Save link as" because we want to download it, not view it.

From the bottom of the "Ratings" section download the NZ standard and rapid ratings in Vega format.

On the FIDE download page the files we need are at the top. We always need file players_list.zip (label "Download full list of players (not rated included) STD, RPD, BLZ combined TXT format"). We'll also assume we are going to need FIDE rapid and blitz files for rapid and blitz tournaments, so download file rapid_rating_list.zip (label "Download RAPID ratings list TXT format") and download file blitz_rating_list.zip (label "Download BLITZ ratings list TXT format").

These details have not changed in the past 12 months and hopefully the FIDE filenames and formats have settled down after a period of prior instability (this remains true).

Collect all the downloaded files in our new working directory. Sort by Type to group the files logically. It should look something like this;
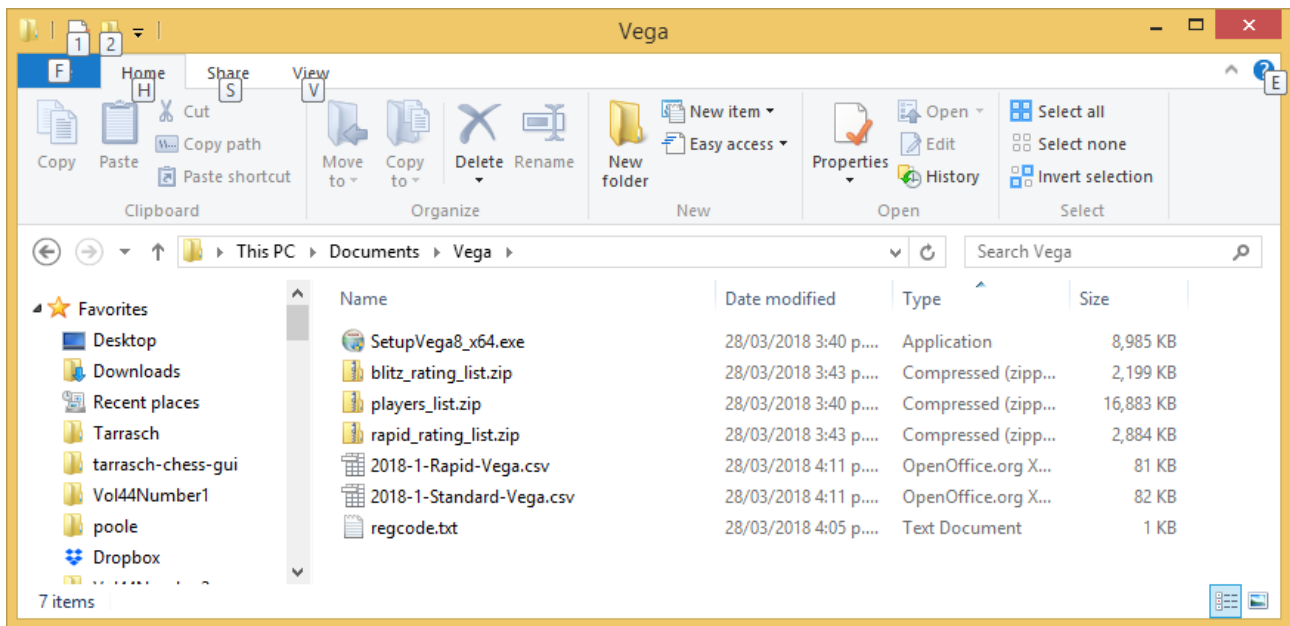
Here we have the Vega Windows 64 bit setup program (the first thing we downloaded) first, then the various FIDE ratings files, then the various NZ ratings files, then the NZ registration code.

Now we need to unzip the zip files to get the actual FIDE ratings files. One way to do this is to double click the zip file and copy and paste from the explorer window that opens up. When we've unzipped all three files we should have something like this;
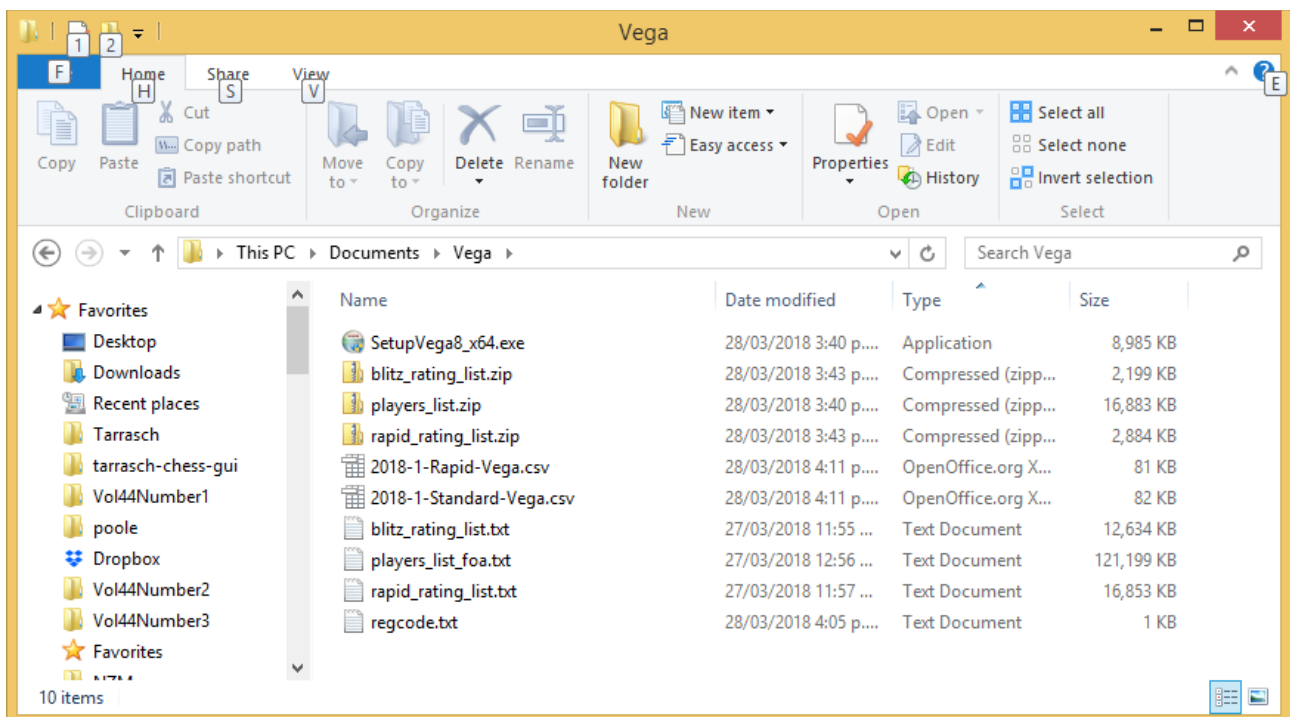
Note that the main FIDE rating file is rather confusingly called players_list_foa.txt.

Step 2: Install Vega

Now let's install Vega 8. It's probably a good idea to uninstall any previous version of Vega. (One way of doing that; Windows-X, Control Panel, Programs, Uninstall a program. Then look for Vega

in the list of installed programs, right click and uninstall. In this Windows-X means hold down the Windows key between the Ctrl and Alt keys and the X key at the same time). In Windows 11 the Windows-X menu can be used to access the Installed Programs directly rather than through Control Panel.

To install the program, double click the SetupVega8_x64.exe file, then ignore the warning about an unknown publisher and accept the Licence Agreement.

It's best not to accept the default install location. Vega8 saves configuration files in the folder in which it is installed, and the default install location is read-only under normal conditions, so Vega leaves a confusing error message at the end of each run (and doesn't remember its configuration). So instead of the default install location C:\Program Files\Vega8, browse your way to a directory like C:\Vega8.

Once Vega is installed, run it using the standard Windows facilities for running programs. I use the third party extension "Classic Shell" (fortunately Windows 10 and 11 have largely eliminated the need for Classic Shell I find. It should be easy to find and run Vega without it) which means I can just press the Start/Windows button at the bottom left of my screen and effortlessly locate any program.

You should get a message like this;

Artistes like us cannot work under conditions like that, so we need to solve this problem. All we need to do is exit Vega then copy the regcode.txt file from our work directory into the C:\Vega8 directory.

Run Vega again and this time we should see something like this instead;
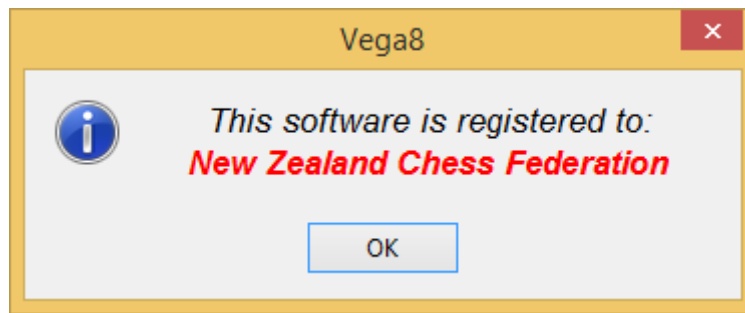
There is one other possible problem that I haven't encountered myself but is no doubt very disconcerting. Vega is written in a programming language called Java and it needs a layer of software called the Java 8 runtime to be installed in order to run. Most computers already have the Java 8 runtime installed, but if yours doesn't you'll need to install it to run Vega successfully.

I *STRONGLY* recommend the wonderful website **ninite.com** (still great!) as a trusted and reliable source for the Java8 runtime and many other free and important Windows tools. It is very easy to select, download and install tools from ninite.com and very importantly you will not pick up any malware, or annoying browser toolbars and junk. This solves what has become a major problem in downloading and using free Windows tools (assuming the tool you want is high profile enough to be on **ninite.com**). In particular, and most shamefully, Oracle the giant corporation that now owns Java sold its soul and meddled with your browser toolbars if you downloaded Java runtimes directly from them for many years.

If you do visit **ninite.com**, consider picking up ~~Classic Shell (also known as Classic Start – in the Utilities section) and~~ Filezilla (in the Developer Tools section). ~~Classic Shell makes Windows sane again and~~ Filezilla will be very useful for uploading your Vega tournament www directories to a website like **newzealandchess.co.nz** so that people around the world can view your tournaments. More about that in Appendix 2.

Step 3: Create a New Tournament

We are now ready to use Vega to setup a tournament. I am going to use the 2018 Wellington Open as an example tournament.

From the Vega File menu create a New Tournament and fill in the basic features of the tournament like this;

It is important to use the "set schedule" button to tell Vega the date and time of each round of the tournament. Right click in the window that pops up to add the rounds (6 rounds in this example). A control widget is provided for date entry, but for time entry just type the time. I am not sure if any freeform text is accepted, You can use either "14:00" or "2:00pm or even simple 2pm" without problem for a 2 O'Clock in the afternoon round. Neglecting this step entirely *did* cause me problems (see Step 6), but I was able to come back and enter the schedule at the end of the tournament. Also see Step 6 for an explanation for the FIDE ID in parenthesis after the arbiter's name. (Whoops that section says I should have used uppercase SELLEN – too late, it didn't cause problems and it would be poor form to retrospectively change the screenshot after the fact!).

The Done button would normally be labelled Okay and the Close button would normally be labelled Cancel. Vega can be a little quirky about niceties like that (this is the single greatest remaining problem with Vega I think. Basically you need to translate to Okay and Cancel yourself and the positioning of the buttons isn't a reliable guide. I think Done if present is always Okay and Close if present is always Cancel, but otherwise all bets are off, it might say Done and Cancel instead of Done and Close for example) . I used a "Create Directory" button in the top right of the browse window opened from "set folder" to create the WellingtonOpen2018 folder within the Vega work directory that we created at the start of this whole exercise. **It is very important to create and use a unique directory for every tournament, else you will overwrite your work from previous**

tournaments. Emphasis requested by Keong. You can also create directories outside of Vega with Windows Explorer of course. I have found creating all my tournament directories as subdirectories (folders as subfolders if you like) to one Tournaments folder makes life easier.

If you get some detail wrong at this stage you can come back later and fix it with from the menu with File > ~~Dangerous Stuff~~ Tournament Manager > Modify Tournament.

Step 4: Enrol Players

Now we want to add our players to the tournament. Once you know how to do this properly this is actually very efficient and almost fun. It's one of the best features of the program. Vega has the flexibility and capability to get player information from many different types of files, but fortunately it has been adapted to support NZCF directly and we can ignore the more complicated aspects of this process (in particular the "Filters" feature) and find and enter players with a minimum of keystrokes and mouseclicks. First we need to tell Vega where to look up players. We use the ratings files we downloaded earlier.

We are going to use two of the three Database tabs in the Player Archive window of the tournament. Multiple Database tabs are used to find players from multiple sources, and to gather information on single players from multiple sources. So a typical NZ player will be located in the NZCF ratings file. That file will provide their NZCF ID and rating, and also their FIDE ID. Then the FIDE ratings file will be used to gather their FIDE rating. In the Wellington Open we are going to have an overseas player with no NZCF ID or rating. That is not going to be a problem, we are going to be able to find him in the FIDE ratings file.

This will all become clearer as we develop the example. First let's setup the NZCF standard ratings file as our Database 1 and then the FIDE ratings file as our Database 2.

For Database 1, select Database 1 then click the Set DB button, then choose "Archive Vega" (with a red V graphic in lieu of a flag, this is the file format) and browse to the 2018-1-Standard-Vega.csv file and press "Open". Keong wants me to emphasise that a common error is to note that NZCF rating files have extension .csv and conclude that we should open them as generic CSV archive. Don't make that mistake, our Vega friendly rating files have extension .csv but are in the much easier to use "Archive Vega" format.
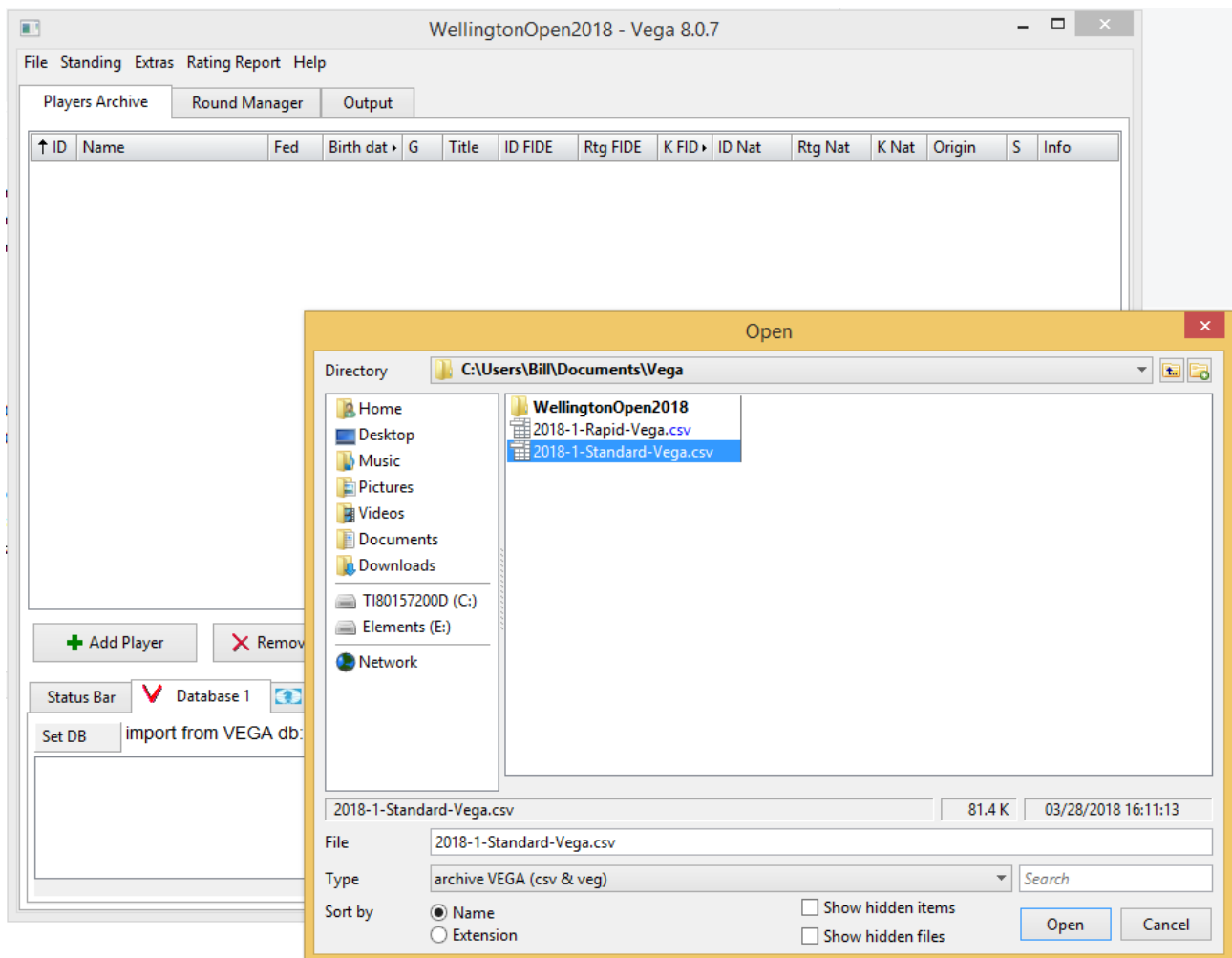
For Database 2, select Database 2 then click the Set DB button, then choose "Archive FIDE" and this time there are additional sub options to identify the file format. Choose Standard – full list with unrated – TXT file.
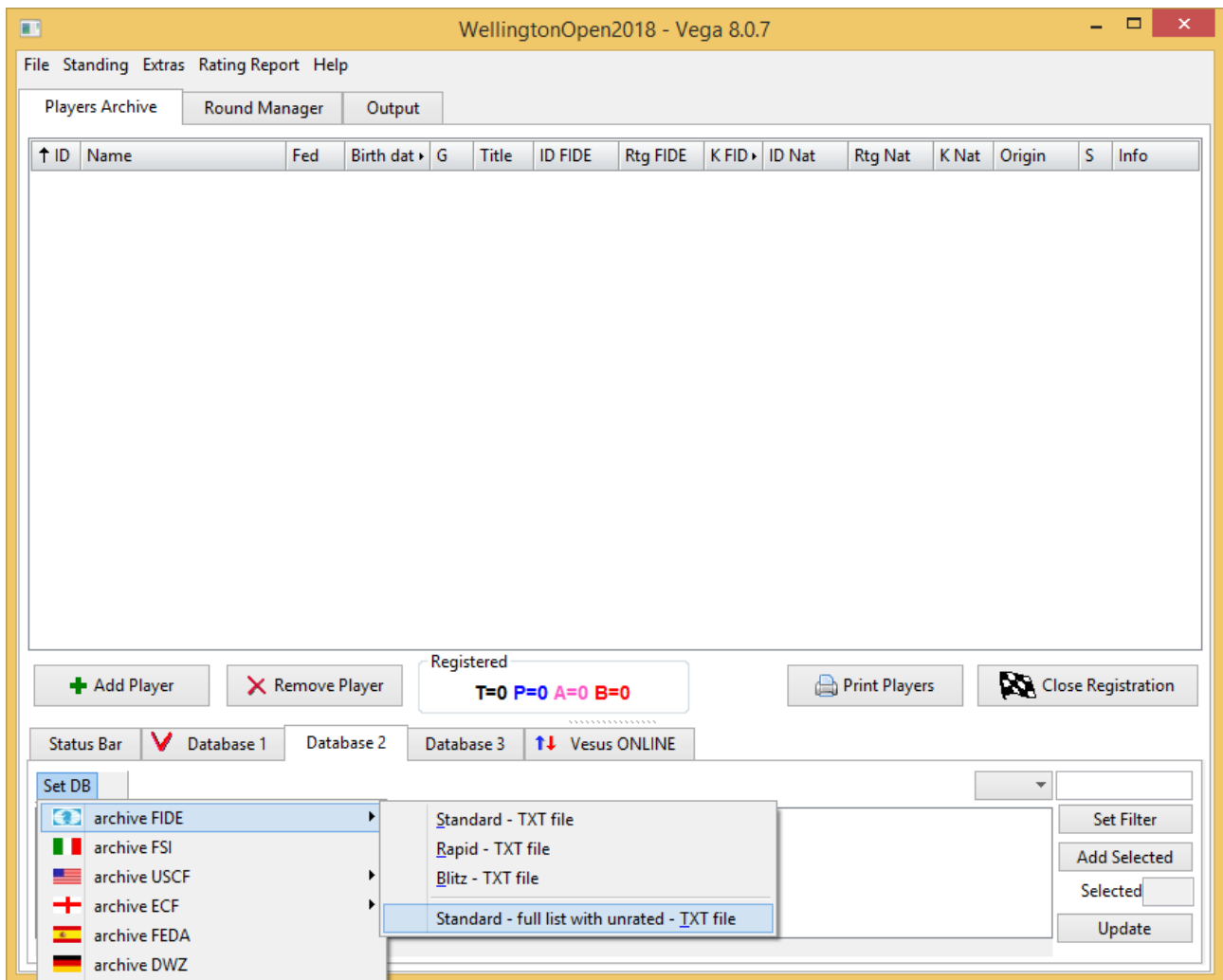
This is the file format that corresponds to the players_list_foa.txt file we downloaded earlier. Go ahead and select (with "Open") that file for Database 2.

We are now ready to add players. This is where the magic happens. Surprisingly, we **don't** press the "Add Player" button.

Instead we select Database 1 and start typing the player's surname into the text box above the "Set Filter" button. Ross Jackson is invariably the first entrant to a Wellington tournament, so start typing Jackson into the box;
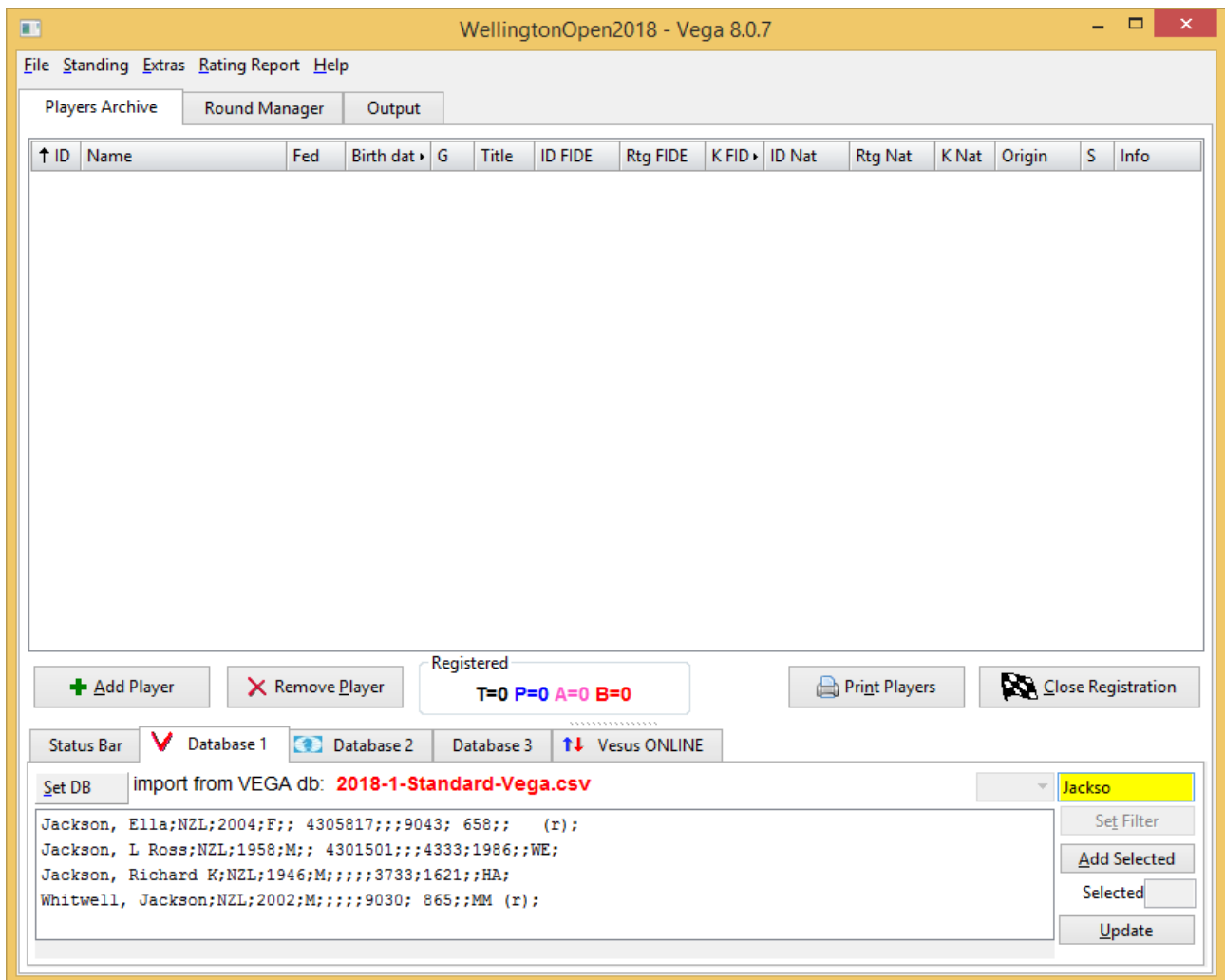
Once we have typed six characters, Vega lists possible matches from the Database. After six characters, there are four matches. Note one of them has forename Jackson – indicating the search is reasonably flexible – it matches anywhere in the name, not just at the start. You could carry on typing more characters, but note that Jackson, Ross won't work because Ross's entry in the database uses his formal name L Ross Jackson.

The easiest thing to do is to stop typing as soon as the list is managably small as it is here. Just click on a listed player to select them and press "Add Selected".

As soon as you do that, Ross moves up and becomes the first player in the tournament.

The next players to enter are Mike Steadman (no worries), Quentin Johnson (no worries) then Felix Xie (hmmm).

Okay I am showing off a little here. Neither Felix's forename or surname are six characters long, but we can find him because we know the database format is Xie, Felix. We don't even have to start with Xie if we guess (correctly as it turns out) that there won't be many Felixes in the database – I am showing off by starting with the comma.

The next player to enter is Philip Weiskopf, a visitor from Germany. Database 1 is not going to be much use in this case. We'll put him aside for now and return to entering Kiwi players. I timed myself at just over three minutes to add a further 22 entrants. It really is easy, just as Keong has always claimed.

Let's return to Herr Weiskopf. We need to select Database 2 and search for him in the FIDE database in exactly the same way.

The first screenshot shows the Vega 8.0.7 Players Archive window with a table of registered players:

↑ID	Name	Fed	Birth dat▸	G	Title	ID FIDE	Rtg FIDE	K FID▸	ID Nat	Rtg Nat	K Nat	Origin	S	Info
9	Lyall, Simon	NZL	1971	m		4303148	0	0	3945	1826	0	AC		
10	Wells, Clinton A	NZL	1970	m		4301188	0	0	5482	1888	0	NS		
11	Weng, Xintong (Winston▸	NZL	2006	m		4306414	0	0	8853	1470	0	AC		
12	Rossiter, Philip E	NZL	1966	m		4301455	0	0	4367	2010	0	WE		
13	Benitez, Edgar	NZL	1955	m		4301315	0	0	6784	1908	0	WE		
14	Dive, Russell J	NZL	1966	m	IM	4300106	0	0	3459	2453	0	WE		
15	Ker, Anthony F	NZL	1967	m	IM	4300084	0	0	3383	2472	0	WE		
16	Forster, William	NZL	1960	m	CM	4301358	0	0	3927	2051	0	WE		
17	Stracy, Don M	NZL	1943	m		4302362	0	0	3064	1631	0	WE		
18	Lee, Edward	NZL	1967	m		4303229	0	0	6598	2053	0	WE		
19	Lee, Dylan	NZL	2003	m		0	0	0	8223	676	0	AC		
20	Winter, Ryan	NZL	2003	m		4306295	0	0	9065	1999	0	WE		
21	Chen, Wei Kai	NZL	1994	m		4304152	0	0	7803	1885	0	WE		
22	Wevers, Alexis	NZL	1992	m		4307399	0	0	9248	1821	0	WE		
23	Sole, Michael D	NZL	2000	m		4309030	0	0	8855	1782	0	WE		
24	He, Caleb	NZL	2006	m		4307615	0	0	9354	1717	0	WE		
25	Timergazi, Layla	NZL	2001	f	WIM	4303733	0	0	8095	2119	0	WE		

Woo hoo. Click on the name and press "Add Selected" as before and we are almost ready to go with a 26 player tournament. Almost, but not quite. Look at the Rtg FIDE column above. That information is missing at the moment, we need to get it from Database 2. With Database 2 still selected we press "Update" in the bottom right corner. After a short delay (in general using the FIDE database creates longer pauses as the program struggles with the huge number of players in the FIDE file) we get this panel;

The settings shown are pretty smart, we don't need to mess with them at all. The ticked boxes mean that only a small number of fields (FIDE title, FIDE rating, FIDE K factor) are changed by updating with the FIDE database. The "Backup .veg file before to upgrade" is some typically quirky and

ungrammatical Vega language. I think it should really say "Backup .vegx file first". The .vegx file (it used to be .veg before Vega version 8 – the programmer has forgotten to update this bit of text [and from Vega 9 it's .vegz:]) is the Vega format tournament file that we created with File > New earlier. If we ended the Vega session now and restarted it we would need to File > Open our WellingtonOpen2018.vegx file. Actually I find my tournament directory clogged up with old backup files due to this Backup feature – possibly it was more relevant earlier in Vega's history. Still, I choose not to mess with the checkboxes on this screen and the old backup files don't hurt in any tangible way.

Once again the "Done" label is misleading, it's really "OK" again and we won't be "Done" until we press that button and wait quite a while (the big FIDE database effect). Now our players have FIDE ratings and K factors. They already had titles because that information is also in the NZCF database, but as we noted earlier the FIDE database file does update the FIDE title field (indicating that the system thinks that the FIDE database is more authoritative on this point at least).

Here is an important detail I am adding late, to V2.3 of this document. It is quite common for new New Zealand Players to appear in the FIDE database before they appear in the New Zealand database. **So for FIDE rated tournaments, arbiters please get in the habit of checking the FIDE database for new New Zealand players as well as foreign players**.

Now we really are ready to run the tournament. We press the chequered flag "Close Registration" button beneath the player list on the right and Vega tells us it's time to generate the pairings for

Round 1. Just before we do that, let's go back to the Players Archive tab at the top (Vega has automatically moved us on to the "Round Manager" tab) and check our list of players again;


Something subtle but very significant has happened; Vega has taken the opportunity to reorder the players. They are now in seeding order, more significant and useful than the previous order which was just the arbitrary order in which they were entered.

Often a Vega tournament will be set up months in advance of the actual tournament so that a Vega web page can display entries as they pour (or trickle) in to an internet wide audience. Under those circumstances it's actually a good trick to "Close Registration" in this way whenever we update the website (see Appendix 3 for information about that). That way the players will appear on the website in correct order. Good news, we don't have to do this any more, Vega 9 (and newer versions of Vega 8) automatically order the players sensibly in the generated website without requiring you to manually close and reopen Registration. Of course this means we have to "Reopen Registration" before adding the next batch of players. The command for that is in the File menu, under the "~~Dangerous Stuff~~!" Tournament Manager submenu. Vega gets a little dramatic at this point, with the following warning,
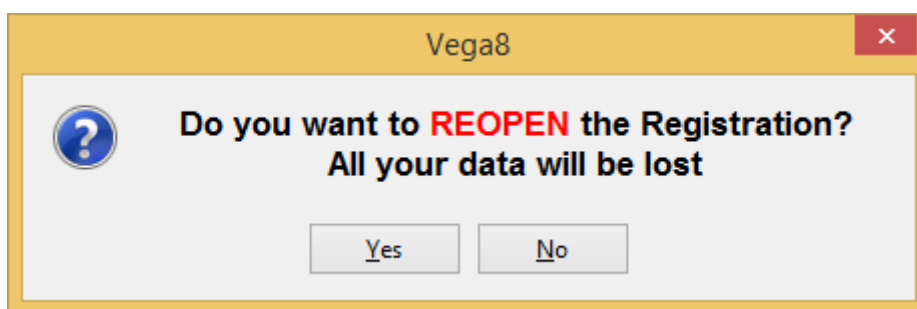
This is a bit misleading. It means all your pairing and results data will be lost. But of course in the months before the tournment we don't have any pairing and results data, the only data we have is the tournament description and the player list, and that data is not in any danger. So press "Yes" and smile inwardly as Vega doubles down with a second misleading warning;
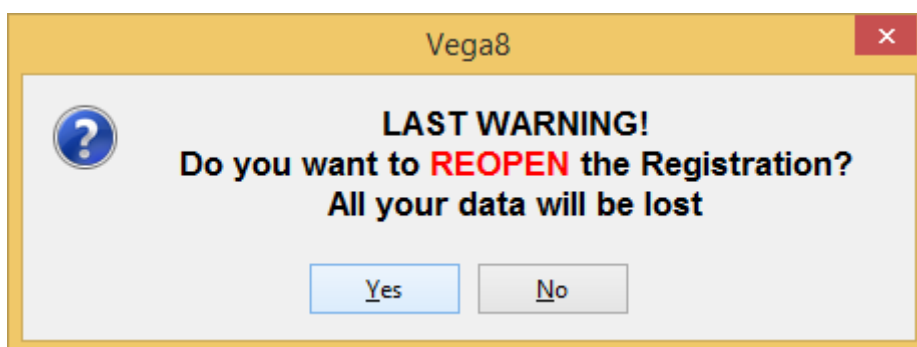

Press "Yes" again and we can enter more players.

For this example we'll assume we are almost ready to go, but then a 27th player, the often late entering Nathan Goodhue throws his hat into the ring. We go back to Database 1 and enter him in the normal way.

Let's just imagine for the moment that both the ratings files have been updated. Checking for and then downloading updated ratings files is a routine thing to do just before the tournament really starts. That's because if you're just publishing entries it's not too bad to use stale ratings – but it's very important to get accurate ratings before you pair the first round. Instead of just selecting Database 2 and then pressing "Update" to get Nathan's FIDE rating, we instead do a full database update which means we select and update each database in turn. The order is critical, always select Database 1 and press "Update" first, then select Database2 and press "Update". Some tournaments might use all three database tabs, in that case we would continue and select Database 3 and press "Update" as well.

In general it's a good idea to get in the habit of always updating all databases in order at the same time. The fields updated by each database are carefully organised to make sure the most reliable, authoritative and accurate information is extracted from the databases if you order the databases properly and follow this "update all databases at the same time, in the right order" procedure. Proper database ordering for different types of tournaments is covered in Appendix 1. If you do it right and don't mess with the carefully crafted field checkboxes (for each database just press "Update" and "Done" without changing checkboxes) you get subtle benefits, for example a FIDE rated rapid tournament will use a player's standard FIDE rating if they don't have a rapid FIDE rating.

This will be the first time we've actually done a Database 1 update and we should get a warning we haven't seen before.
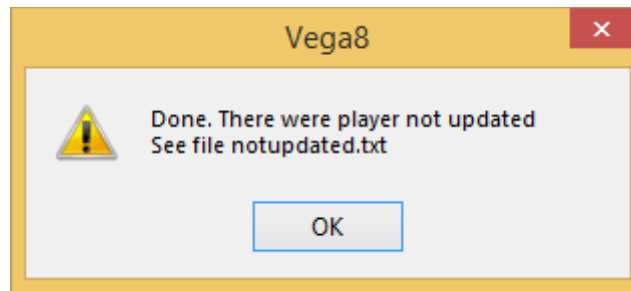
Looking at the notupdated.txt file in the tournament directory we find that this means that Philip Weiskopf, the foreign player, wasn't found in the NZCF database. This is of course not surprising.

After updating both databases and closing registrations again Vega again prompts us to generate the pairings for round 1.

I should mention that we do need to use the "Add Player" button if the player can't be found in any database. Sadly, if the tournament is FIDE rated, overseas players who don't have FIDE IDs simply can't play, there's no way to accommodate them. Any possible workarounds incur ~~ruinously punitive~~ (I now wonder if this is really true – some Arbiters in NZ just register friendly foreigners as locals but this is a big debate) FIDE fines. For new NZL players, fill out as many Vega fields as possible (leave IDs blank). Pay attention to the details as it is much easier to get these things right the first time than to fix a player once he's formally inducted into the chess world. For example, I am stuck with Forster, William although I would much prefer to be Forster, Bill!

Important: When manually entering Date of Birth, enter the full date in format YYYY-MM-DD. Vega allows this even though it accepts YYYY only. In fact please edit even known NZL players who don't yet have FIDE IDs to add the full YYYY-MM-DD date of birth instead of the YYYY only information that comes from the NZCF Vega ratings file. This is a special request from Michael Freeman. In the 2018 Wellington Open Dylan Lee was the only player without a FIDE ID, he did have a NZCF ID so this step was required for him. A trap for the unwary (this has caught me out in the years since I wrote this document) in FIDE rated tournaments is that players who ARE in the NZCF database BUT NOT in the FIDE database also need special attention, are they citizens or permanent residents entitled to be automatically registered by FIDE as NZL players? This is the same issue I reference in the purple section of the previous paragraph.

Step 5: Run the Tournament

This time we go ahead using the "Automatic" button in the Round Manager tab.

Now we sit back and watch the players do battle in the first round. Let's assume there are no upsets of any kind. It's easy and intuitive to enter the results, giving us a screen like this.

WellingtonOpen2018 - Vega 8.0.7

File Standing Extras Rating Report Help

Players Archive | Round Manager | Output

Bo.	White Player	Points	IDW	Result	IDB	Points	Black Player
1	IM Dive, Russell J	0.0	1	1 - 0	14	0.0	Lyall, Simon
2	Weiskopf, Philip	0.0	15	0 - 1	2	0.0	IM Ker, Anthony F
3	FM Steadman, Michael V R	0.0	3	1 - 0	16	0.0	Chen, Wei Kai
4	Sole, Michael D	0.0	17	0 - 1	4	0.0	Johnson, Quentin J F
5	Macdonald, Paul	0.0	5	1 - 0	18	0.0	Ha, Huy Minh (Timothy)
6	Winter, Ryan	0.0	19	0 - 1	6	0.0	WIM Timergazi, Layla
7	Wells, Clinton A	0.0	7	1 - 0	20	0.0	Wevers, Alexis
8	He, Caleb	0.0	21	0 - 1	8	0.0	Goodhue, Nathan
9	Jackson, L Ross	0.0	9	1 - 0	22	0.0	Stracy, Don M
10	Weng, Xintong (Winston)	0.0	23	0 - 1	10	0.0	CM Forster, William
11	Lee, Edward	0.0	11	1 - 0	24	0.0	Xu, Hannah
12	Benitez, Edgar	0.0	25	0 - 1	12	0.0	Rossiter, Philip E
13	Brockway, Andrew	0.0	13	1 - 0	26	0.0	Legner, James
14	Lee, Dylan	0.0	27	1	0	0.0	(bye)

Insert result

1 − 0   0 − 1   ½ − ½   1F − 0   0 − 1F   0F − 0F   ? − ?   (clock)   0 ½ 1   (grid)

Show results
Round 1   all   ...

New Pairing
☐ Accept WWW/BBB
☐ Danubian Variant (Dubov)
Avoid pairs
Pairing checklist

Automatic   Verbose   Modify Pairing   Publish
Manual   Print Pairing   Improve Colors   View local site

If you have outstanding attention to detail you might notice that Felix Xie has been lost somewhere. Sorry about that, I wrote this section in advance of the actual tournament and I forgot Felix. The real tournament did feature him and 33 other players (a few more entries, yes including late entrant Nathan Goodhue, arrived). You can now find the completed Vega Wellington Open 2018 tournament website on the NZCF official website.

If there are no difficulties or complications of any kind, life is very simple. We just continue pressing "Automatic" and filling in results. But let's at least handle one common problem. Imagine a player announces that he can't make it to Round 2. We sigh and agree to give him a half point bye. To do it we go back to the Player Archive tab, right click the player and change his status for Round 2 by clicking repeatedly on round 2 status until it changes to half point bye.
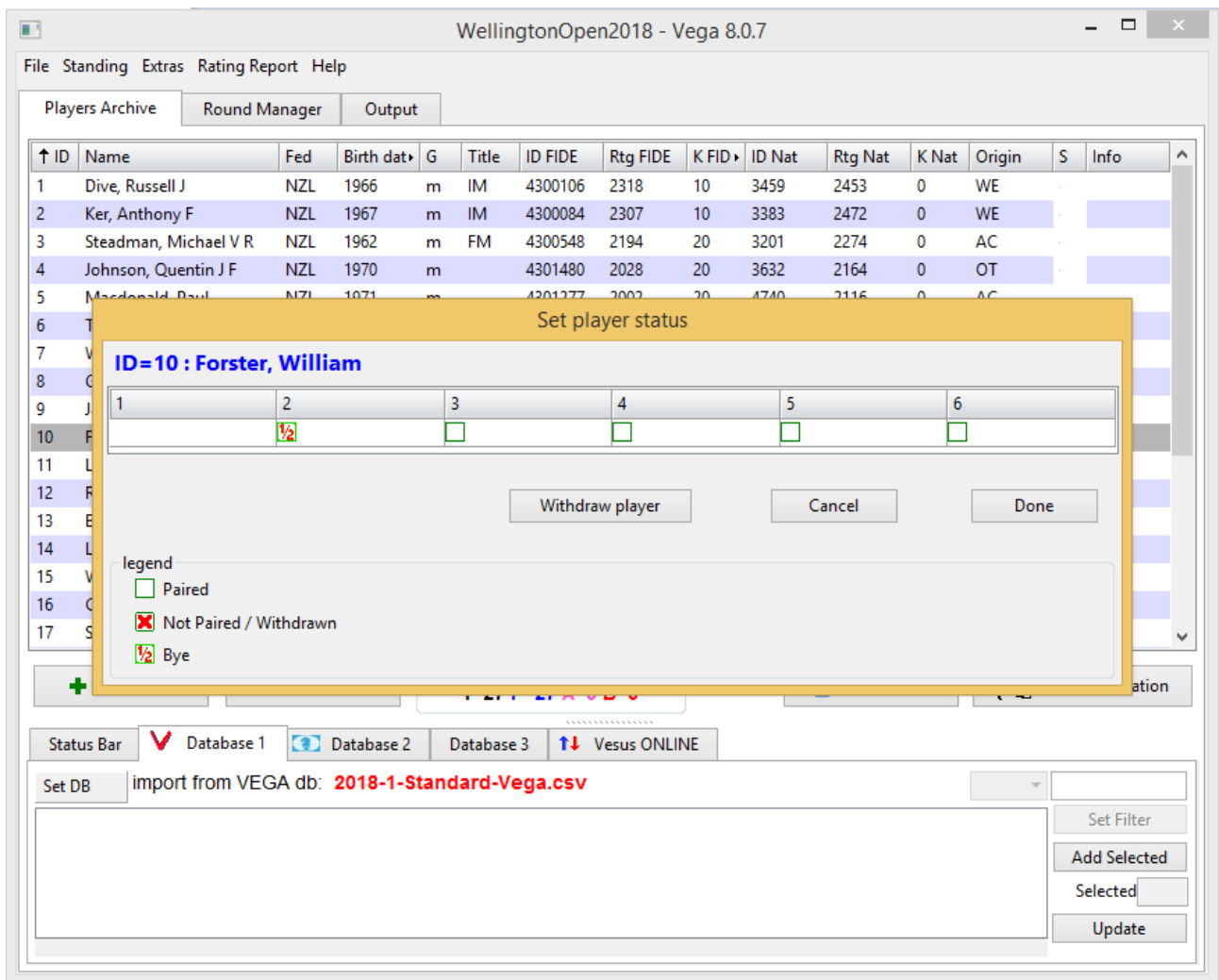
We then hit "Done" (remember Done in Vega means Okay in other programs), return to the Round Manager and use "Automatic" to pair Round 2.

WellingtonOpen2018 - Vega 8.0.7

File Standing Extras Rating Report Help

Players Archive | Round Manager | Output

Bo.	White Player	Points	IDW	Result	IDB	Points	Black Player
1	Goodhue, Nathan	1.0	8	...	1	1.0	IM Dive, Russell J
2	IM Ker, Anthony F	1.0	2	...	7	1.0	Wells, Clinton A
3	Rossiter, Philip E	1.0	12	...	3	1.0	FM Steadman, Michael V R
4	Johnson, Quentin J F	1.0	4	...	9	1.0	Jackson, L Ross
5	Lee, Dylan	1.0	27	...	5	1.0	Macdonald, Paul
6	WIM Timergazi, Layla	1.0	6	...	11	1.0	Lee, Edward
7	Lyall, Simon	0.0	14	...	13	1.0	Brockway, Andrew
8	Stracy, Don M	0.0	22	...	15	0.0	Weiskopf, Philip
9	Chen, Wei Kai	0.0	16	...	21	0.0	He, Caleb
10	Xu, Hannah	0.0	24	...	17	0.0	Sole, Michael D
11	Ha, Huy Minh (Timothy)	0.0	18	...	23	0.0	Weng, Xintong (Winston)
12	Legner, James	0.0	26	...	19	0.0	Winter, Ryan
13	Wevers, Alexis	0.0	20	...	25	0.0	Benitez, Edgar
14	CM Forster, William	1.0	10	½	0	0.0	(half point bye)

Insert result

1—0 0—1 ½—½ 1F—0 0—1F 0F—0F ? - ? 🕑 0½1 ▦⚡

Show results

Round 2 ▲▼ all ...

New Pairing

☐ Accept WWW/BBB
☐ Danubian Variant (Dubov)

Avoid pairs
Pairing checklist

🖥 Automatic   📖 Verbose   ▤ Modify Pairing   🌐 Publish
✋ Manual   🖨 Print Pairing   ◧ Improve Colors   🔍 View local site

Excellent, in round two there are again 27 players and 13 games, but this time the player who wants a half point bye gets the bye.

Note that the Set player status screen above doesn't let us change the player's status in round 1, only in those rounds that haven't been paired yet. Once you understand why this is the case I think you really understand how Vega works (as I write these words I think I have understood how Vega works for about 5 minutes – so this may be presumptive on my part). Vega treats rounds like a stack of cards. Pressing "Automatic" (or generating pairings another way) lays down a new card. The older cards in the stack are still viewable (you can step backwards and forwards through them at the bottom right of the Round Manager screen) but no longer modifiable. You work on the current round by filling in the results. Once all the results are entered, Vega will let you press "Automatic" again and lay down a new card (start a new round). The only way to modify an old round is to take cards off the stack until you expose the old round. To do that you have to delete rounds! This is entirely reasonable, since newer rounds would have been paired differently if older rounds were different. Deleting rounds is destructive, so it is in the File > ~~Dangerous stuff~~ Tournament Manager menu. Remember the "Reopen Registration" menu command? We found that in the "~~Dangerous stuff~~" Tournament Manager menu because it is equivalent to deleting all rounds! It's a pity that Vega doesn't recognise that there is no need for the terrible warnings that accompany that command if there are zero rounds to delete, which was the situation when we used it earlier.

It's worth adding something about Manual and Modified pairings, not covered in the original document. I've found that in the everyday hurly burly of managing tournaments sometimes you find you need more than Automatic Pairing. The good news is that Vega is very good at this, it's

nothing to worry about. But a couple of tricks / subtleties might be worth pointing out. Vega offers Manual and Modified pairing, but they're two sides of the same coin, basically they use the same screen, for modified pairing you have the automatic pairing as a starting point, if you delete all those pairings you are at the same point as Manual pairing. The need for Modified pairing (say) might arise on a club night, when you find some players haven't showed up and you want to pair the disappointed players with each other. Just delete the games that aren't going to happen, the affected players show up as a pool of unpaired players. Make pairings from that pool as you like. It's very easy, a good intuitive user interface. After you've made all your pairings the players who haven't shown up need to be dealt with or Vega won't let you proceed. It's easy, just "Withdraw" them. Perhaps sadly, this doesn't mean they get withdrawn from the tournament, just the current round. Use the player status feature in the Players Archive if you want to withdraw them from future rounds. Players that are in the tournament, but not in any round, can get 0, 0.5 or 1 points at the discretion of the arbiter. You can even go back and change this for previous rounds with 0 0.5 and 1 buttons for that precise purpose. This is a rare example of being able to change an older round. If you've messed up a previous round in a more elaborate way, the only solution is to delete rounds (take cards off the stack) all the way back to that round. Then recreate with manual pairings the rounds that have already happened. It's pretty easy, nowhere near as horrendous as it sounds. As long as you've got good records to work off of course!

Another club night situation is a new or returning player showing up and begging to be allowed to play (or being a help to you because you can pair them with someone who'd otherwise get a bye). Late entering a person in the Players Archive is pretty simple (although I think you have to use the Add player button – auto database entry seems to work except for the final step). Then they are in the unpaired player pool we talked about before and you can manually pair them. An annoyance, something that can lead you to having to delete and rebuild the whole round manually (maybe do it at your leisure once the players have started playing) is having someone you've given a half point bye being suddenly available. Sadly they aren't in the unpaired pool and you can't change their status for this round without deleting the round.

For the 2018 Wellington Open this is about all of Vega that Ian Sellen (the actual arbiter) and I understood or needed to understand. We have discussed in reasonable depth the Players Archive and Round Manager screens. There is a third main screen, the "Output" screen, but that seems pretty intuitive, Ian had no problem selecting reports that needed to be printed (mainly pairings for each round) for the players to see.

As I write these words the tournament is winding up. When the last few games finish Ian and I will record the last results then use the "Rating Report" menu to generate FIDE and NZCF rating reports for emailing to Michael Freeman and Rowan Wood respectively. If there is any unexpected drama I will no doubt be back later to edit this document appropriately! (There was only the tiniest amount of drama – but just enough for me to come back and add the new Step 6 chapter directly below).

Step 6: Submit Tournament Results

Once the tournament is over, Vega can generate various reports for submission to authorities. The most important are the FIDE and NZCF rating reports. As hinted in the previous paragraph, this is almost simple enough to need no comment. I did run into a few small issues. When you run the commands, Vega reports that it has created a file (NZCF), but remains silent (FIDE). Even in the NZCF case, it doesn't tell you the name of the file it created. For the record, the file names were;

- WellingtonOpen2018.txt   (NZCF ratings report)
- FIDE-WellingtonOpen2018.trf   (FIDE ratings report)

I established this using a simple trick I am sure all experienced computer users know; Sort the directory files by time and date in Exporer to identify files you've just created. Both of these files are plain text and can be viewed with any text editor (e.g. Notepad) if you like before emailing to Rowan Wood and Michael Freeman respectively.

As noted in the tournament setup step, Vega wouldn't let me generate rating reports until I had filled in the tournament schedule in the New Tournament / Modify Tournament tournament screen. Fortunately it's easy to do, Menu File > ~~Dangerous Stuff~~Tournament Manager > Modify Tournament. Press "set schedule" button. Right click to add a round. As always pay attention to the details, in this case simply make sure you correctly fill out the time and date of each round.

I neglected to add the full YYYY-MM-DD birth date of the one player in the field without a FIDE ID. From the NZCF tournament website I knew I needed to supply this information in the email to Michael Freeman, but it would have saved trouble for everyone if I had entered the information into Vega directly (right click on player – edit – fill out Birth date field will full YYYY-MM-DD). If you do this just before you generate the rating report you also need to go menu File > Save Tournament or your change won't be reflected in the rating report. This is one reason why it might pay to do a sanity check on the generated file before you email it to Michael Freeman. This is one of the very few (only?) cases where I needed to go File > Save Tournament. Most of the time Vega seems to save automatically.

Incidentally it is possible that a player apparently without a FIDE ID (according to the NZ rating list), has actually been issued with one. It's worth asking, and you can then filling it in manually. Of course it's best to do this before the tournament starts but I was intent on keeping things as simple as possible then, so sadly I am reduced to mentioning it at this late stage.

The last niceties I missed initially was to append the FIDE ID in parenthesis and prepend the FIDE arbiter title (if they have one) to the arbiter name and uppercase the surname. So IA Keong ANG (4303660) rather than just Keong Ang.

An optional extra is to ZIP the Vega tournament directory and attach that to your emails. I recommend 7-Zip for this task, available from **ninite.com** (of course). Sadly, it is necessary to work around a problem with many (most) email systems to successfully email a zipped Vega tournament directory. There are a handful of javascript files in the www subdirectory, and since javascript is executable these email systems refuse to send them (a very conservative approach to a potential security problem). The simplest workaround I can think of it to simply rename the javascript files from .js to .j (or similar) before zipping.

Finally, Vega can help generate IT3 and IA1 (or FA1) pdf documents as part of the process whereby FIDE grants arbiter titles. The commands are in the File > Ratings Report > FIDE submenu, and are clearly labelled as Tournament Certificate IT3, Arbiter Certificate IA3 and Arbiter Certificate FA3. In each case Vega provides a simple word processor interface to a form document that is pre-filled with all the information Vega already knows. Use the word processor to freeform edit in the rest of the form (for example filling in comments). The word processor can export to pdf. You can use a tool like Foxit Reader (available from, you guessed it, **ninite.com)** to add scanned signatures as necessary to these FIDE mandated forms, once they are in pdf form. Email the completed forms to Michael Freeman. More information about these forms can be found on the FIDE website at;

http://www.fide.com/fide/handbook.html?id=41&view=category

Appendix 1: Database Tab Order

Always use the NZCF ratings files for Database 1. Use the standard file (eg 2018-1-Standard-Vega.csv) for classical chess and the rapid file (eg 2018-1-Rapid-Vega.csv) for rapid or blitz. For FIDE rated tournaments always add players_list_foa.txt for Database 2 . For FIDE rated Rapid or Blitz only add a third file as Database 3. Use file rapid_rating_list.txt for Rapid and file blitz_rating_list.txt for Blitz.

Examples;

(Thanks to IA Keong Ang who provided these examples when Wellington were preparing for the 2017 Congress – these examples were key to understanding how to use Vega effectively).

NZCF Rated Classical
Database 1, 2018-1-Standard-Vega.csv (using "archive VEGA")

NZCF Rated Rapid
Database 1, 2018-1-Rapid-Vega.csv (using "archive VEGA")

FIDE Rated Classical
Database 1, 2018-1-Standard-Vega.csv (using "archive VEGA")
Database 2, players_list_foa.txt (using "archive FIDE > Standard - full list with unrated - TXT file")

FIDE Rated Rapid
Database 1, 2018-1-Rapid-Vega.csv (using "archive VEGA")
Database 2, players_list_foa.txt (using "archive FIDE > Standard - full list with unrated - TXT file")
Database 3, rapid_rating_list.txt (using "archive FIDE > Rapid TXT file")

FIDE Rated Blitz
Database 1, 2018-1-Rapid-Vega.csv (using "archive VEGA")
Database 2, players_list_foa.txt (using "archive FIDE > Standard - full list with unrated - TXT file")
Database 3, blitz_rating_list.txt (using "archive FIDE > Rapid TXT file")

Appendix 2: Adding a Links Menu to Vega Web Pages

Vega automatically generates a very usable tournament website without doing anything special, but there are some extra niceties that are worth knowing about. From the ~~Extras~~ Publish online menu we select WWW Settings. The screenshot below shows the form that comes up. For the moment I haven't added anything extra except External links (the panel at the bottom).

If external links are entered like this, a drop down menu is added to each tournament website page. The menu is usually used to just make it easier for users to navigate away from the tournament website to other relevant websites. In this case the dropdown menu is labelled "Links" and it looks like this when opened.
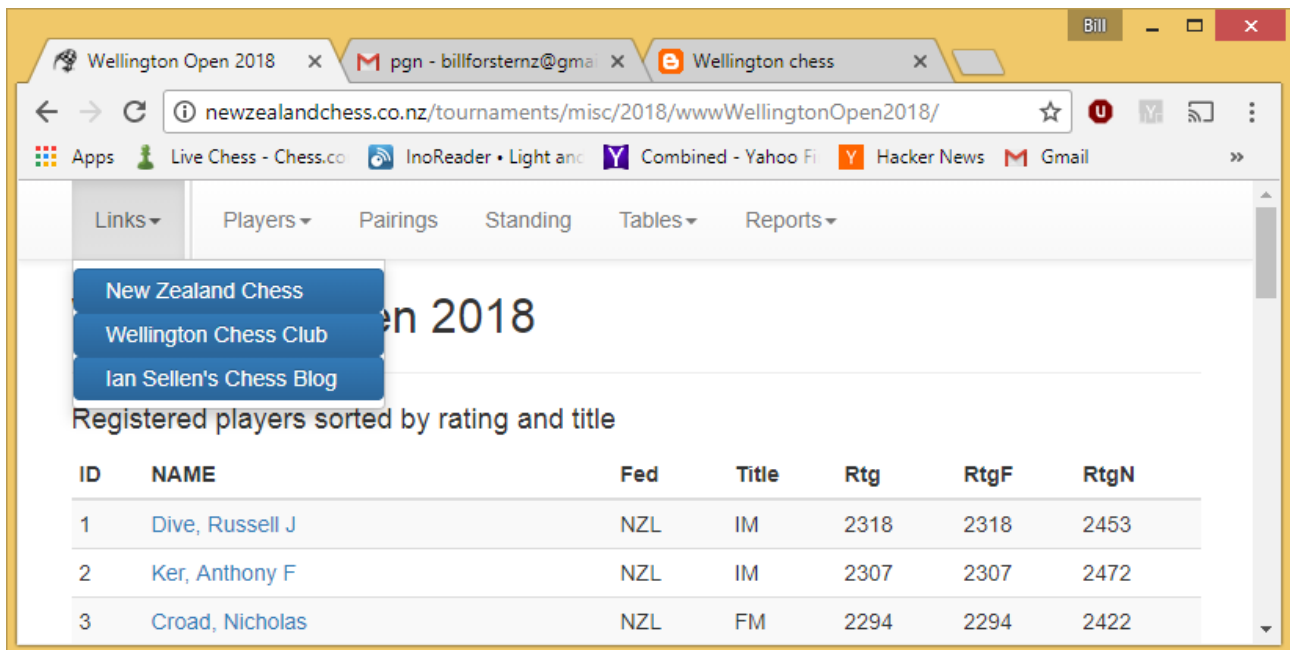
Each row of text in the "External links" panel is specifying a link. Each row has the format label;site. The labels for our linked websites are "New Zealand Chess", "Wellington Chess Club" and "Ian Sellen's Chess Blog" and the site text is of course just the URL (ie web address) of each of these sites. The first row of text features a special trick to label the drop down menu itself. It's a label;site row like the others but the special label "HOME" tells Vega that the site text is actually the label for the drop down menu itself – in this case "Links".

# Appendix 3: Using Filezilla to Upload Tournaments to the Web

Vega automatically generates a useful tournament website in a special subdirectory of our tournament directory. This subdirectory is automatically given a "www" prefix. So we find the website subdirectory wwwWellingtonOpen2018 within our WellingtonOpen2018 working directory. I find it is a good idea to use the menu Publish online > Generate local site immediately before uploading the website subdirectory.

This Appendix still seems fine, although as noted right at the start you can't do it this way with Vega 10 – so avoid Vega 10. Actually it's worse than that, you could blissfully proceed only to have a website that looks like it should work but just shows garbage. Vega 10 will happily let you proceed as described here, but you'll be set up to fail because the files in the www directory it creates are deliberately garbled (encrypted) and are only ungarbled (decrypted) by the built-in Vega 10 FTP feature. That feature might be fine, I don't know. I do know it fails one basic acceptability test – it doesn't support SFTP (many websites now require this rather than FTP – changing to SFTP is painless in Filezilla).

Vega now has its own website publication ecosystem. Some arbiters in New Zealand like to use that. It is not in scope for this document.

In theory it is possible to upload that directory to a web server within Vega itself, but more common practice in New Zealand is to use excellent the free program Filezilla instead. We learned how to download Filezilla when we were setting up Vega earlier in this document.

The following screenshot shows Filezilla in action, ready to upload the entire wwwWellingtonOpen2018 subdirectory to the NZCF website newzealandchess.co.nz.
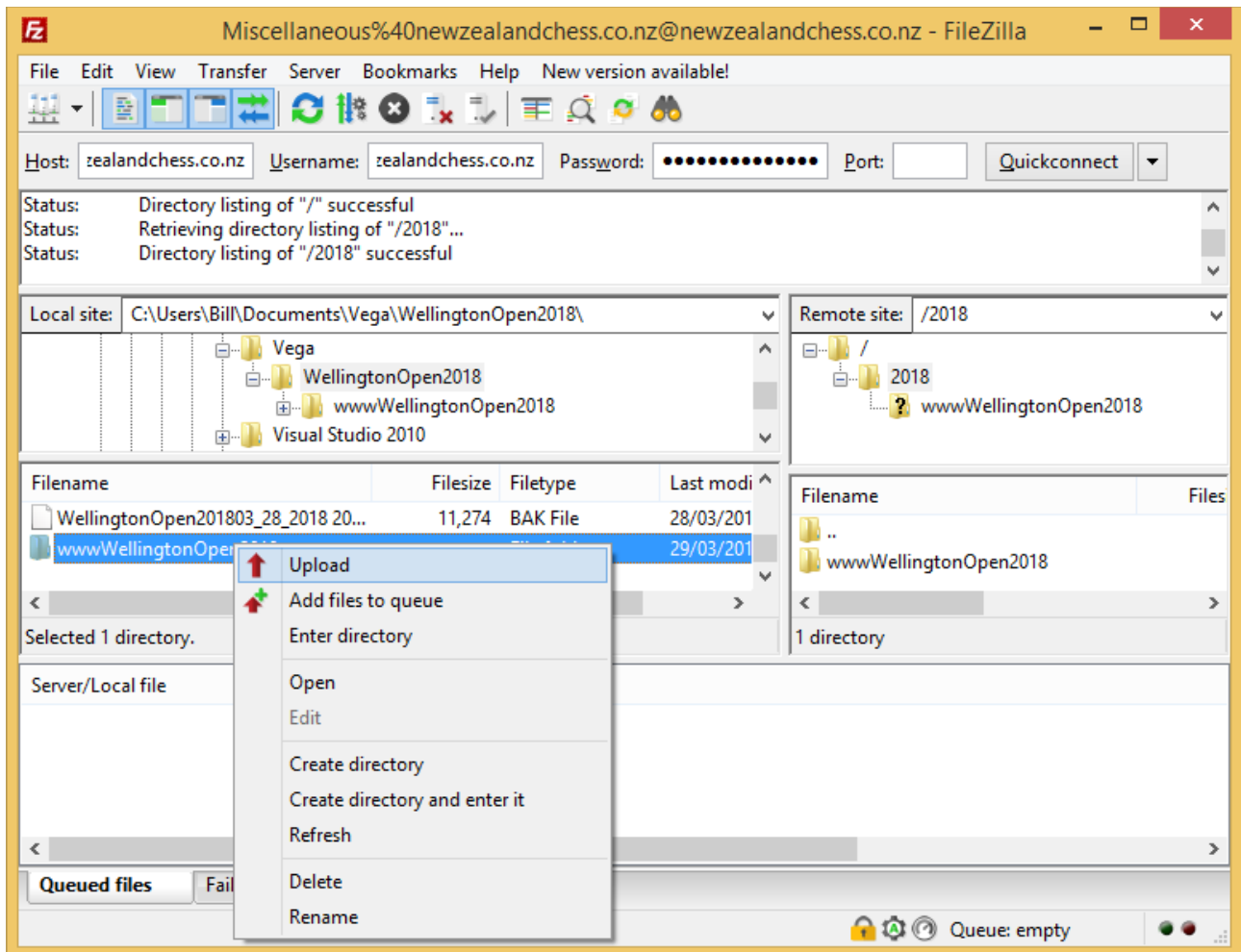
Once you've successfully connected to a remote server, Filezilla offers a very intuitive interface. The local computer is on the left and has a directory pane at the top and a files pane at the bottom. Similarly the remote computer is on the right and also has a directory pane at the top and a files pane at the bottom. Simply navigate to the correct directory on each machine then right click on the file or directory in the files pane that we want to copy from one machine to the other. Our application is to upload a directory from the local machine to the remote machine this is an "upload". In the other direction (something we don't usually do) it's a "download".

You can see I have right clicked the entire wwwWellingtonOpen2018 directory and when I proceed to "Upload" it will overwrite the existing wwwWellingtonOpen2018 directory on the remote server. Filezilla will warn you when you are overwriting rather than when creating for the first time. This creates an extra step, but it is helpful because it reassures us we are copying to the right place on the server. I always click the "Apply to current queue only" checkbox in the warning dialog box so I don't lose this useful little safeguard the next time I upload. Expert users might notice that in a situation like this where we are updating the folder rather than copying it for the first time there will be some "Failed transfers" because it will try to (re)create the directory containers themselves on the remote machine – that won't work but it doesn't matter the directories already exist and happily accept the updated files.

Anyone can ask for an account on the NZCF site to upload Vega tournaments (sorry I'm not sure if that's still true). Filezilla needs the account information, in the example it is Host: newzealandchess.co.nz Username: Miscellaneous@newzealandchess.co.nz plus a password which I won't reveal here. Filezilla can save these details in its "Site manager", and using the "Advanced"

tab of the site manager you can specify local and remote directories to start in. Those features mean that connecting to the website and navigating to the right place become basically one click features, and as we have seen uploading is then more or less just another couple of clicks.

Appendix 4: Upload Game Play-Throughs to the Web

I must admit I have had mixed/terrible experiences with this and would recommend finding some other way to do it. Eg Lichess broadcast (talk to Tim Ha!) hopefully supplemented by a straightforward PGN download on your website entirely independent of Vega. I'm not even going to re-read this Appendix, leaving the rest unaltered, as I edit in 2024 for fear it might give me post traumatic stress syndrome. We already have a decent automatically generated website. Now let's add some nice-to-haves.

The following screen shot shows some enhancements to the web generation form, accessed with menu Extras> WWW Settings.

I've clicked three checkboxes that were previously left blank. I've asked for ratings reports to be added to the website (why not) and for a Link to a PGN game file (ie provide for pgn download as well as web play-through).

To provide web play-through, I've told Vega that the third party tool pgn4web, complete with Vega plugins, is installed on the NZCF website at http://newzealandchess.co.nz/pgn4web.

The "relative path games:" (where the cursor is at present – so currently yellow) parameter is a tricky one. In Version 2.1 of this document I actually got this wrong – my apologies for that. The following paragraphs are the result of discussions with Keong and also some more experience. They constitute an improved, simpler, better approach that actually works!

Sadly the parameter we need doesn't actually fit in the narrow window. I've edited the screenshot to show both the beginning and end (you won't actually see a "..." representing the middle). For our example the whole parameter entered into the yellow field is;

/tournaments/misc/2018/wwwWellingtonOpen2018/pgn

This is the full path of a previously unmentioned pgn subdirectory, within the tournament www directory on the server. We have already been uploading this entire tournament www directory successfully onto the server (see Appendix 3). The approach we are using means that we will still only have one directory upload to deal with, it will just include games from now on. We are going

to make use of the previously unused pgn subdirectory to hold the games. Vega creates this subdirectory for us but leaves it empty. Vega also generates skeleton pgn files with all the metadata (White, Black, Site, Event, Date etc.) in the www directory (not the pgn subdirectory). We need to add the moves manually, poor old Vega knows the event and players but has no way of knowing what moves were played. Electronic boards (and real time display of games) is out of scope of this document.

So use your favourite chess program to flesh out the skeleton pgn files with the moves of the games. For the Wellington Open Ian used my own Tarrasch GUI (shameless plug). **It is very important that you save the filled out pgn files in the previously empty pgn subdirectory – do not save them in their original location because Vega will overwrite your work.** I've bolded that last sentence because it is very important.

This all might sound a bit complex, but in practice you'll find it very easy and logical once you get started. The logic is compelling:. If you want game playthroughs you're obviously going to need pgn files. Vega gives you a good starting point, a series of skeleton pgn files, one for each round; WellingtonOpen20181.pgn, WellingtonOpen20182.pgn …. WellingtonOpen20186.pgn. Save the filled out pgn files in the pgn subdirectory (a very logical place it seems to me). Don't save them in their original location because they'll just be overwritten by fresh skeleton files every time Vega regenerates the site.

As a webmaster I also choose to offer a combined pgn file separately from the round by round Vega facilities. In other words, on the Wellington Chess Club website, I offer users a link to download a complete Wellington Open 2018 tournament pgn, something Vega won't do automatically for us.

One annoying problem I have only been able to work around is that the critical fields pgn viewer: and relative path games: in the WWW settings screen above don't seem to be persistent, for me at least. The same problem showed up at the 2018 Trusts Open in June and this appears to be a bug in Windows Vega, at least with version 8.0.7. My work around? Generate the site one time at the end of the tournament once all the games are available. Then you only have to re-enter these fields for the next tournament.

I trust and hope that you can adapt these instructions appropriately if you are not using the Miscellaneous FTP account, and indeed if you are not using the NZCF website at all. Adding this facility to the tournament website is rather tricky as you can see. There's no rocket science here though, it's just a matter of carefully paying attention to the details.

One tip I can offer as the result of hard earned experience: At one point I was following the instructions exactly as presented here but the file download button on the Games page of the website wasn't working. I was desperately trying various adjustments in Vega, pressing the Generate Local Site button and re-uploading the www directory with Filezilla. Then I'd refresh the page on the website, but nothing was changing. After a while it clicked: Literally nothing was changing! I had to do more than just reload the page, I had to clear the browser cache (google it if you don't know how) for my changes to take effect.

You can see the results on the Web complete with play-throughs at;

http://newzealandchess.co.nz/tournaments/misc/2018/wwwWellingtonOpen2018