

Fredkin Chess Tournament at AAAI-82

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A significant computer chess event was sponsored in Pittsburgh on August 15 through 17 by the Fredkin Prize Fund in conjunction with the national meeting of the American Association for Artificial Intelligence. The four best computer programs in the world played a team-style round robin against four Pittsburgh experts. The programs were rated from 1900 for Duchess to 2258 (provisional) for Cray Blitz. The human experts were rated from 1994 for Resnick to 2097 for Martinak. The format of the tourney was that each program played each expert once in a four-round format. The four actual games were played in a closed conference room at Carnegie-Mellon University, while a number of experts and masters did commentary to an audience at a University of Pittsburgh auditorium. A closed computer "talk" line was used to transmit moves as they were made. The result was a convincing victory for the humans. Only one computer (Nuchess) got an even score and managed to get into the prize money. The overall score was Humans: 10 - Programs: 6.

There is a lot to be learned from all this. Goodside was definitely "booked up" on how to play against computers and his games should be of great interest to all those that fear playing computers. His strategy worked fine until the last round when he fell to Nuchess. After the first three rounds, the score was Humans 9, Computers 3, and there were two human perfect scores competing for the \$500 first prize. This may account partly for the last round result where the computers won 3-1, thus equalling their output for the first three rounds, and making a lot of us happy.

There were some unfortunate tragedies from the computer point of view. In the first round a power failure in Minnesota caused Cray Blitz to lose about 1 1/2 hours on its clock, and this was too much for it to overcome even though it was a piece ahead in what should have been a winning position. In that round Nuchess lost with the black pieces. The pairings in such a tourney require that some competitors have the same color twice in a row. This happened to Nuchess, who had two Blacks on Sunday the 15th. After the first game there was a rush to go eat in order to get back for the second game, and Dave Slate, little suspecting that Nuchess would have Black again in the evening, did nothing to modify his book. In the second round, Martinak with the White pieces repeated the same moves that were played against Nuchess in the previous round and was rewarded with a point, even though at one point Nuchess almost made a different move due to differences in the time consumed. Finally, I would recommend the game Goodside-Cray Blitz from round 3 to those who would like to see the "ideal" style against computers. Overall, the tournament was a great success as evidenced by the enthusiasm of the audience and the fact that hand-outs of the games disappeared almost instantaneously at the conference.