TOURNAMENT RULES OF THE 8th WORLD COMPUTER-CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP

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1.   Each entry is a computing system and one or more human operators. A listing of all chess-related programs running on the system must be available on demand to the Tournament Director, Mike Valvo. Each entry requires at least one full-time operator.

2.   Participants are required to attend an organizational meeting at 15:00 in the tournament hall on May 25th for the purpose of officially registering for the tournament. Rules will be finalized at that meeting.

3.   The tournament will be a 5-round Swiss-system event. The schedule will be as follows:

Thursday 25 May
Opening Ceremony (time and venue to be announced)
15:00-16:00 Rules meeting
16:00-22:00 Round 1

Friday 26 May
16:00-22:00 Round 2

Saturday 27 May
15:00-16:00 ICCA Meeting and Elections
16:00-22:00 Round 3

Sunday 28 May
10:00-14:00 Match between computer programs and Hong Kong National Team (to be confirmed)
16:00-22:00 Round 4

Monday 29 May
16:00-22:00 Round 5

Tuesday 30 May
12:00 Awards Ceremony (venue to be announced)
15:00-onwards: departures.

In addition there may be an excursion organized for participants and their friends/families and there may be a match between one of the programs and a Grandmaster, but both of these events are subject to confirmation. In addition, a workshop on Computer Strategy-Game Programming has been proposed for Friday 26 May [for the announcement of which see pp. 55-56 of this issue].

4.   Trophies will be awarded to the first three finishers. The winner of the tournament will be awarded the Shannon Trophy and the title of World Computer Chess Champion, both until 1998. The order of finish will be determined by the total number of points earned. If two or more teams have an equal number of points, a tie-break system will be employed. The first tie-break will be by the sum of the opponents' scores. If there is still a tie, it will be broken on the basis of the sum of the respective programs' cumulative scores after each round (i.e., score after round 1 + score after round 2 + ... + score after round 5).

5.   Unless otherwise specified, rules of play are identical to those of human tournament play. If a point is in question, the Tournament Director has the right to make the final decision.

6.   Games are to be played at a rate of 40 moves per player in the first two hours and 40 moves per player per hour thereafter.

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7. The Tournament Director has the right to adjudicate a game after six hours of total clock time. The adjudication will be made on the premise that perfect chess will be played by both sides from the position reached.

8. An operator may ask the Tournament Director to stop clocks at most twice during a game because of technical problems. The operator can ask the Tournament Director for permission to restart the program. When restarting after a failure of any kind, the operator must reset all parameters to their values at the time the game was interrupted. Play must resume after at most a fifteen-minute delay. If operators using a remote computer can clearly establish that the problems are not in their own computing system, but in the communication network, the Tournament Director can permit additional delay.

9. An operator error made when starting a game or in the middle of a game can be corrected only with the approval of the Tournament Director. If an operator enters an incorrect move, the Tournament Director must be notified immediately. Both clocks will be stopped. The game must then be backed up to where the error occurred. Clocks will be corrected to their settings when the error occurred, using whatever information is available. Both sides may then adjust program parameters with the approval of the Tournament Director. The Tournament Director may not allow certain parameters to be changed, e.g., the contempt factors.

10. Terminals at the tournament site must communicate directly with remote computers, i.e., there cannot be any human intermediary at the remote location.

11. If a terminal is used, it must be positioned so that the operator's activities are clearly visible to the opponent. An operator can only (1) type in moves and (2) respond to requests from the computer for clock information. If an operator must type in other information, it must be approved ahead of time by the Tournament Director. (This might happen if there is noise on the communication line and, for example, a 'CR' symbol must be typed to clear the line.) The operator cannot query the system to see if it is alive without permission of the Tournament Director.

12. A team must receive the approval of the Tournament Director to change from one computing system to another.

13. Each game is played on a chess-board and with a chess clock provided by the Tournament Committee.

14. At the end of each game, both teams are required to hand in a game listing to the Tournament Director.

THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE 8th WORLD COMPUTER-CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP

D. Levy, T. Marsland and M. Newborn

The 8th World Computer-Chess Championship is being supported by IBM, our primary sponsor, as well as by Compunetics Inc., the Association for Computing Machinery, and the Chinese University of Hong Kong. We would like to acknowledge their support and to thank them very much for it.

The ICCA received 36 applications by the closing date of February 25th. Two more applications were received after the closing date but were not considered.

It was always our intention to restrict the number of participants to 24 in order that the 5-round tournament should not be too unwieldy and so we have had to make some difficult decisions to identify what we consider to be the 24 strongest programs.

Our deliberations were based on a number of factors: the results obtained by the programs in human tournaments and in computer tournaments, other test results submitted by the programmers, and other data relating to the programs. In some cases we found it extremely difficult to decide on the relative ordering of the programs but we feel this is inevitable in almost any competitive environment.