



ICCF Congress – Dresden, Germany

By George Pyrich

The 2006 ICCF Congress, in conjunction with meetings of the ICCF Executive Board and Management Committee, took place in the Ramada Hotel, Dresden from 15th to 20th October 2006. Unlike last year's Congress in Argentina, the Scottish CCA delegation of George Pyrich and Alan Borwell arrived safely following an uneventful journey.

The Congress was arranged and hosted by the Deutscher Fernschachbund (BdF) as part of its 60th Anniversary celebrations and held in the ancient historic city of Dresden which is presently celebrating its 800th Anniversary.



Opening the Congress, BdF President and former World CC Champion Fritz Baumbach welcomed a total of 111 delegates, officials and accompanying persons to Congress before handing over to Herr Lehmann, Mayor of Dresden who extended a warm welcome to Dresden – next Alfred Schlya, President of the German Chess Federation spoke of chess in Dresden, mentioning the 2007 European Championship and the 2008 FIDE Olympiad, both events scheduled to be held in Dresden. Thereafter ICCF President Med Samraoui formally declared the Congress open, wishing for a successful and constructive Congress.

Prior to proceeding with the normal business of the Congress, delegates observed 2 minutes silence in the memory of those who had sadly passed away during the last year. Delegates were especially saddened to remember the passing of 96 year old Hermann Heemsoth, a very distinguished chess player and author and the grand old man of German correspondence chess.

The Congress also noted the passing of Alfonsino Lannaioli (ITA), GM (both FIDE and ICCF) Enrico Paoli (ITA), Gaspar Darwin Soria (ARG), Mrs. Raimondi (FRA), Gary Abram (USA), Shigeo Hayakawa (JPN), Paul Darmogray (UKR) and GM Czsaba Meleghegy (HUN).

In his opening remarks, the ICCF President also noted the significant progress made during the year in the development of the ICCF server, acknowledging the substantial efforts of Alan Borwell and his colleagues in the Web Server Development Steering Group, and the ICCF Direct Entry system.

The ICCF President also noted the excellent tutorial and web server guidelines prepared by Franklin Campbell (USA) and the Help Desk Administration which is now fully
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operational, thanks to tremendous work this year by Gino Figlio (PER)

The Minutes of the 2005 Congress were formally approved following a few small modifications and Algeria and Ghana were welcomed as 65th and 66th members of the ICCF family. ICCF Honorary Memberships were granted to President Med Samraoui and long serving Hungarian delegate and ICCF historian Ivan Bottlik. Bertl von Massow Gold awards were presented to Gianni Mastrojeni (ITA), Per Soderberg (SWE), Georg Walker (SUI) and Fritz Baumbach (GER).

Silver awards were presented to Pedro Hegoburu (ARG), Zdenek Nyvlt (CZE) and Karel Glaser (CZE). The Congress was delighted to welcome World Champion Ivar Bern (NOR) who received his gold medal and certificate. Prizes were awarded to the successful teams in the Rochade 5171 team event by TD Joachim Walther (GER) – 1st Czech Republic, 2nd Germany II and 3rd Germany I.

Delegates were greatly impressed when they were able to hear the new "ICCF Anthem" prepared by CC Grandmaster and professional musician Dmitry Lybin (BLR).

Next on the Agenda was ICCF financial affairs – North American Zonal Director Ruth Ann Fay (USA) had bravely taken on the unenviable task of preparing ICCF accounts for 2004 and 2005 following the resignations of 2 finance directors in 2 years.

Unfortunately the 2004 accounts have still not received the unqualified approval of the ICCF Auditor and the 2005 accounts were not submitted to the Auditor in time for scrutiny for congress. However, ICCF finances remain healthy with ICCF assets increasing by some 15,000 SF in the 12 months to 31.12.2005 in the accounts presented by Ruth Ann.



Thereafter several vacant positions were filled – Deputy President and Development Director Max Zavanelli (USA) and Finance Director Michael Millstone (USA) had both announced their retirements and were replaced by George Pyrich (SCO) and Hans-Jurgen Isigkeit (GER) respectively with both newcomers scheduled to serve until the 2007 Congress when the 4 yearly elections for the ICCF Executive Board are scheduled to be held.

Dmitry Lybin (BLR) was appointed to the post of Chairman of the Arbiter's Commission, replacing Ragnar Wikman who had also retired and Per Soderberg (SWE) became the new Chairman of the Appeals Commission (Other Rules) whilst Gino Figlio (PER) was appointed as Webserver Commissioner. Finally, Marco Caressa (ITA) was appointed Title Tournaments Commissioner, replacing Daniel Finkelstein (ARG) who had also recently retired.

The Congress listened with interest to a very interesting presentation on the ICCF Webserver by WDSC Chairman Alan Borwell (SCO), Ratings Commissioner Gerhard Binder (GER) and technical systems designer Martin Bennedik (GER). Martin offered numerous up to date statistics – thus far around 1.8 million moves have been played on the server in 92,327 games by 4,145 registered users! Congress approved budget of 15,000 SF for new web server developments during 2007. Gerhard reported that the ICCF Rating System will be fully operational on the server during 2007.



Thereafter interesting discussions were held on proposals put forward by the President's Council. Ideas discussed involved the concepts of "Money" Tournaments whereby entrants paid higher entry fees in order to compete for substantial cash prizes, possibly under faster time controls and also the possibility of remuneration to persons for performing specialist technical tasks.

In both instances Congress approved the formation of a working group to further examine these proposals. Another working group was established to explore the possible development of a private forum for ICCF officials. Also further consideration will be given to the possibility of producing an ICCF 60th Jubilee book (or DVD) in 2011.

Finally in this section, the Congress authorised the formation of a group led by the new Title Tournaments Commissioner Marco Caressa (ITA) to examine qualifications requirements in World Championship events as Congress was concerned by the recent instance whereby new World Champions were produced in quick succession.

Qualifications Commissioner Eric Ruch (FRA) presented his customary excellent report which was warmly acclaimed by the Congress. Eric confirmed awards to 20 new Grandmasters, 49 Senior International Masters, 36 International Masters, 3 Lady Grandmasters, 3 Lady International Masters and 5 International Arbiters – unfortunately there were no new Scots titleholders this year.

Eric's presentation included some interesting statistics - total new titles awarded have now levelled out at just over 100 each year since 2004 following the implementation of the *SCCA Magazine* 96

revised rules approved at Seixal Congress in 2002 whereby two norms over a minimum of 24 games are now required for all title awards. Significantly we have approximately 40 new International Masters each year whereas not so long ago we had over 180 in one year – consequently we no longer hear any talk of titles being devalued.

The Congress then expressed its great appreciation of the really excellent work undertaken by the Ratings Commissioner Gerhard Binder (GER). Congress noted that the ratings Commission will undertake a review of nominal ratings allocated to unrated players during the coming year.

The Congress was also pleased to note the low numbers of appeals submitted during the year to the various Appeals Commissions.

Thereafter, Congress approved proposals submitted by Rules Commissioner Gerhard Radosztics (AUT) to clarify web server Playing Rules with regard to the "40 day rule" and the player's obligation to respond to email reminders generated after 35 by the system. The Congress also approved amendments to the Tournament Rules in order that "Scheveningen" events may be held and, subject to conditions, be eligible for title norms.

ICCF webmaster Evelin Radosztics (AUT) provided an interesting presentation on developments on the ICCF website during the past year and development plans and improvements for the future, most notably the reintroduction of a "Game of the Month" feature and the introduction of online polls on matters of interest to correspondence chess players.



Perhaps the most enjoyable event of any ICCF Congress is the Awards Ceremony when the presentation of awards and titles are made and this year was no exception. One nice feature this year was that a considerable number of players had travelled some very considerable distances in order to receive their awards in person.

Another was the attendance of all the members of the Gold Medal winning German team in the 14th Olympiad Final who proudly wore specially produced chess motif team t-shirts – needless to say, the team photograph may now be viewed at several web sites including www.iccf.com

Thereafter we turned our attention to ICCF marketing matters, specifically the disappointing progress in this area during the last year. After some discussion, the Congress resolved that the Marketing Commissioner, Dr. Claudio Goncalves (ARG), should be replaced and that ICCF must promote itself more effectively.

Next we returned to the matter of ICCF Statutes and proposals submitted by the President's Council. Following lengthy discussion the Congress agreed to a restructuring of the Executive Board which, effective from 01.01.2008 will comprise: President, General Secretary, Finance Director, World Tournament Director, Marketing Director, Services Director and 4 Zonal Directors. This restructuring has resulted in a net increase of 1 to the new Executive Board whose members will be elected or confirmed at 2007 Congress when the normal 4 yearly elections are scheduled.

The new Executive Board set up sees the deletion of the Deputy President & Development Director post and the new post of Marketing Director established. Marketing is now viewed as crucial to the future development of ICCF and the Marketing Commissioner is now effectively promoted to the Executive Board. Additionally the current post of Membership & Services Director is effectively split into 2 posts. General Secretary (who will deputise for the President if required) and Services Director as it is considered that the workload of the M&SD is excessive.



Thereafter the 4 Zonal Directors reported an events and activities in their respective zones during the past year. Congress was pleased to note news of new developments and progress in all Zones.

The Congress returned briefly to financial matters when it approved the earlier formation of a Finance Committee to be chaired by the ICCF President. This Committee is to assist the acting Finance Director Ruth-Ann Fay (USA) with the completion of the ICCF accounts for 2004, 2005 and 2006 in accordance with a clearly defined timetable.

Congress then accepted Ruth-Ann's proposals with regard to fees for server events, specifically that member federations shall in future be required to pay a fee of 1 CHF per game for national events played on the ICCF server.

Considerable time was allocated to the consideration of ICCF tournaments and the arrangements for future events. World Tournaments Director Frank Geider (FRA) led Congress through an interesting examination of all ICCF events – postal, email and server – as in previous year there was a lively discussion on the "dead man defence" phenomenon and, as previously, there was no satisfactory resolution. New Title Tournaments Commissioner Marco

Caressa (ITA) led a very interesting presentation on arrangements for World Championship Finals. The Congress was advised that presently there are 43 players holding 48 qualification places for World Championship Finals, the Congress also noted that ICCF have had 4 new World Champions since 2004 (T. Hamarat (AUT), J.J. Van Oosterom (NLD), I. Bern (NOR) and C. Leotard (FRA)).

Whilst mindful that the change adopted at the 2005 Congress whereby the number of qualifiers from the Candidates tournament cycle was reduced, the Congress agreed that measures must be taken in order to break the current "logjam" and avoid the possibility of there being two or even more new World Championship Finals started in one year.

Following considerable discussion, the Congress agreed an arrangement whereby all those eligible to participate in a World Championship Final will be invited to play in a new World Championship Final played on ICCF server and starting at the end of 2007. In view of the large numbers of players who may choose to take part, pairing (16 games) will be randomised but also modified to provide all participants with opposition of equal overall strength (rating).

Additionally, special arrangements (likely email "nodes") will be provided in order to accommodate players who wish to play only by post. Those players who choose not to participate in this event will still retain their qualification rights to take part in a future final but they will be allocated a place only if a final is not filled by those players now competing in the current qualifying tournaments. It is hereby envisaged that the current "logjam" will be cleared and we will return to the situation in place some years ago whereby a new World Championship Final started only every second or third year.



The Congress reluctantly agreed to the dissolution of the longstanding co-operation agreement with "Fernschach" magazine following breaches of the agreement by the magazine's owner. On a happier note, the Congress noted progress with the development of the ICCF historical archive and approved plans for an international school-children's team tournament to be played on the ICCF webserver.

External matters considered included the holding of a brief "post mortem" on the debacle of the FIDE Olympiad and the non-participation of an ICCF team and a progress report on the ongoing sponsorship agreement with "New in Chess" magazine.

After 4 busy days of meetings, the Congress wound down with a brief representation by the Spanish Delegate Josep Mercadal Benejam on arrangements for the 2007 Congress, scheduled to be held in Benalmadena (near Malaga), Spain.



As usual, there were a number of social events and the Congress delegates enjoyed a day's excursion following the end of the Congress which included a boat trip on the river Elbe and visits to Sachsische Schweiz (the historic summer palace of the kings of Saxony) and Die Festung Konigstein (a hilltop military fortress which dates back to medieval times).

Congress delegates made a special visit to the grave of former ICCF President Hans-Werner von Massow and also attended a civic reception hosted by the Mayor of Dresden.

The traditional blitz tournament was convincingly won by FIDE FM and ICCF SIM Petr Bucniecek (CZE) ahead of a strong field (the Scottish CCA's representative recovered from a bad start to score just over 50%) and a 20 board match was held against members of the local Dynamo Dresden club (resulting in a narrow win for the hosts). We end with a small selection of games from the event.



Bucniecek,Petr - Eichner,P
(ICCF v Dynamo Dresden ICCF Congress 2006)

1.d4 e6 2.e4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.Qg4 Nc6 5.Nf3 cxd4 6.Bd3 Bd7 7.0-0 Qb6 8.c3 h5 9.Qg3 Nh6 10.Nxd4 Nxd4 11.cxd4 Qxd4 12.Nc3 a6 13.Bf4 h4 14.Qf3 h3 15.Rfd1 Qb4 16.a3 Qxb2 17.Ne2 Qb6 18.Rab1 Qc7 19.Rdc1 Bc6 20.Nd4 g6 21.g4 Bg7 22.Bc2 Bxe5 23.Nxe6 fxe6 24.Bxe5 Qxe5 25.Re1 Qg7 26.Rxe6+ Kd7 27.Rxg6 Qf7 28.Rf6 Qe7 29.Bf5+ Nxf5 30.Qxf5+ Kd8 31.Rc1 Re8 32.Kf1 Qe4 33.Rd6+ Kc7 0-1

Mohring,Peter - Dearnley,Andrew
(ICCF v Dynamo Dresden ICCF Congress 2006)

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 a6 6.Bc4 Nc6 7.Nxc6 bxc6 8.e5 d5 9.exf6 dxc4 10.Qxd8+ Kxd8 11.Bf4 gxf6 12.0-0-0+ Bd7 13.Rd2 e5 14.Rhd1 Ra7 15.Be3 Rb7 16.Ne4 c3 17.Rd3 cxb2+ 18.Kb1 Be7 19.Bc5 Re8 20.Bxe7+ Rxe7 21.Nxf6 Kc8 22.Ne4 Kd8 23.Nc5 Ra7 24.Kxb2 f5 25.Kc3 Ke8 26.g3 Be6 27.Rd8+ Kf7 28.Nxe6 Rxe6 29.R1d7+ Rxd7 30.Rxd7+ Re7 31.Rxe7+ Kxe7 32.Kb4 Kd6

33.Ka5 Kd5 34.Kxa6 Ke4 35.Kb7 Kf3 36.a4 e4 37.a5 Kxf2 38.a6 e3 39.a7 e2 40.a8Q e1Q ½-½



Loxine,Jakov - Lybin,Dmitry
(ICCF v Dynamo Dresden ICCF Congress 2006)

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.d4 0-0 6.h3 e5 7.d5 Na6 8.Bg5 Qe8 9.g4 Bd7 10.Nd2 h6 11.Be3 Nh7 12.Rg1 Kh8 13.Nf3 Qe7 14.Qd2 f5 15.gxf5 gxf5 16.exf5 Bxf5 17.Be2 Qf6 18.Nh2 Nb4 19.Ng4 Nc2+ 20.Qxc2 Bxc2 21.Nxf6 Nxf6 22.Kd2 Bh7 23.Rg2 Ne4+ 24.Nxe4 Bxe4 25.Rg3 Rf7 26.Rag1 c6 27.f3 Bh7 28.Bd3 cxd5 29.cxd5 Bxd3 30.Kxd3 e4+ 31.fxe4 Bxb2 32.Rg6 Rf6 33.Rxf6 Bxf6 34.Rg6 Be5 35.Bd4 Kh7 36.Re6 Bxd4 37.Kxd4 Rd8 38.Re7+ Kg6 39.e5 dxe5+ 40.Kxe5 Rc8 41.d6 Rc5+ 42.Ke6 Ra5 43.Rxb7 Rxa2 44.d7 Re2+ 45.Kd6 Rd2+ 46.Kc7 Rc2+ 47.Kb8 Rd2 48.Kc8 1-0

Richter, Claudius - Peschardt, Soren
(ICCF v Dynamo Dresden ICCF Congress 2006)

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Qb6 5.Nb3 Nf6 6.Nc3 e6 7.Be3 Qc7 8.Bd3 Bb4 9.0-0 Bxc3 10.bxc3 d6 11.Nd4 0-0 12.f4 b6 13.Nf3 Bb7 14.Qe1 e5 15.Qg3 Rad8 16.fxe5 dxe5 17.Nh4 Ne8 18.Nf5 Kh8 19.Rf3 Ne7 20.Raf1 Nxf5 21.Rxf5 Bc8 22.Rh5 f5 23.exf5 Nf6 24.Rh4 Qxc3 25.Rc4 Qb2 26.Bc1 Qxa2 27.Qxe5 Ba6 28.Rd4 Bxd3 29.cxd3 Rxd4 30.Qxd4 Qd5 31.Qb4 Rd8 32.Bb2 Qc5+ 33.Qxc5 bxc5 34.Ra1 Rxd3 35.Kf1 Rd5 36.g4 Nxe4 37.Rxa7 Nf6 38.Ra8+ Ng8 39.f6 Rf5+ 40.Ke2 gxf6 41.Rc8 Kg7 42.Ba3 Rh5 43.Bxc5 Rxh2+ 44.Kf3 Nh6 45.Bf8+ Kg6 46.Bxh6 Rxh6 ½-½



[Editor's note – many thanks to GM Raymond Boger of Norway who provided the photographs!]

