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WINNING STRATEGIES

This issue of the Journal is guided by the concept of *Winning Strategies*. It is a generic concept which applies not only to games, but actually is valid for the whole society, from the ancient world to the ultra-modern one. Winning in itself may evoke a feeling of happiness. This may have extreme forms. For instance, a well-known Chess Grand Master stated once that winning a lost game gives him more satisfaction than winning a game straightforwardly. However, finding a winning strategy in the study room might have given that Grand Master even more satisfaction, if he had been the very first to reveal such a strategy.

A winning strategy is as a secret. You know something that another person (a colleague or an opponent) does not know. It may provide you with a feeling of having an advantage. Like chess players, scientific researchers are competitive too. They have a definitive preference for winning; only they play another game. They would like to communicate what they have found, to coin the finding with their name, or at least to make a marked connection. For games, we are now in the domain of the solvers. As long as the full game is too complex the researchers restrict themselves to smaller versions, i.e., smaller boards, slightly different rules, or a particular variant.

All three approaches of these winning strategies are exhibited in this issue. Kohei Noshita shows a winning strategy for the 8 x 8 Hex game (Black wins), Barteld Kooi proposes different generalizations in order to state that his new most-parts strategy is the best one, and Jonathan Schaeffer, together with his team, makes a big step forward towards solving the game of Checkers, by solving the White Doctor opening.

The mission of this Journal in the World of Games is publishing final results. So, we are happy with this issue and we thank the authors for their contribution.

Jaap van den Herik

A Letter to the ICGA

Dear Mr. Levy,

During the 2003 World Computer Chess Championship in Graz, the arbiter requested that I allow him or another computer-chess expert to examine my program code, in order to confirm that my program was original (which it definitely was). At that time I was not in Austria but at home preparing for an examination, and I refused all such requests for different reasons – one reason was that I am not experienced in participating in such events and did not understand the full importance of all the rules. As a result I was banned from the tournament.

I now realise that it is an important duty of all participants to follow the rules of such events. I have therefore agreed to allow inspection of my code by an expert approved by the ICGA. He stated as his opinion that my code was definitely not a clone of any other program, and that it contains some new ideas in chess programming. I therefore request to the ICGA that the ban on my participation in ICGA events should be lifted, and I apologise to everyone in Graz for not agreeing to the requested inspection when it was first made. I am grateful for clearing the misunderstandings and agree with publication of the text in the next ICGA Journal. I am looking forward to cooperating with you and thank you for your efforts.

Grundau, Germany
Fritz Reul

Cancellation of Suspension

During the 2003 World Computer Chess Championship in Graz, it was unfortunately necessary for the ICGA to disqualify one of the participants, Fritz Reul, and to impose a suspension on him from taking part in ICGA events. This was because Mr. Reul did not respond positively to a request by the tournament committee to submit his program code for inspection, as required by the ICGA tournament rules.

We are now pleased to announce that Mr Reul has since submitted his program code to the scrutiny of an expert approved by the ICGA tournament committee and that this expert has declared Mr. Reul's code to be completely above board, with no sign of any copying of code from other known programs. Furthermore Mr. Reul has submitted to the ICGA an apology for what happened in 2003 (see above).

The ICGA tournament committee has therefore decided unanimously to lift the suspension on Mr. Reul with immediate effect and to welcome him back for participation in future ICGA events.

London, England
David Levy

Change of residential address

Please note that as of January 1, 2005 our residential address reads Minderbroedersberg 6a, 6211 LK Maastricht, The Netherlands. All our other coordinates remain unchanged.

ICGA Journal readers who are interested in information on our publications are referred to our website. A complete list of all articles, notes, and literature reviews published in the *ICCA Journal* and the *ICGA Journal* is accessible on the Internet at <http://www.icga.org>