



19th August 2017

ICCF MARKETING DIRECTOR'S REPORT FOR CONGRESS, Albena (BLG), 2017

In March this year, our previous MD (Andrew Dearnley of England) had announced his resignation for the position. Having previously had several discussions with Andrew on quite a few topics concerning both his ongoing work in this regard and ideas for future, I've decided to put forward my candidacy for the position, and was consequently appointed MD in May.

It is not my intention to evaluate Andrew's work here, but my personal view is that the job he did was simply outstanding! In these few months since I've been working as MD I've tried my best to pick up where he left, and still haven't been able to do this first step fully – speaks enough of the sheer volume of the work he did and activities he has put in motion. I would therefore like to wholeheartedly thank Andrew for the said work, and humbly hope to be able to continue it myself the same way.

ICCF Partners and Sponsors

ChessBase, *Convecta*, *HIARCS* and *New in Chess* remain our most attractive partners/sponsors. *ChessBase* and *Convecta* had already replied to my introductory letter and have expressed their satisfaction working with us – we had agreed to try and expand on our cooperation with fresh ideas in near future. Our other partners/sponsors (*Your Move*, *ChessDom* and *Opening Master*) have been of significantly less interest to our members, and those partnerships need to be either reworked and enhanced or let go.

As for the new ones, we have just agreed a partnership with *Chess University Inc.* – they offer video courses for all rating ranges of players, videos by known and titled OTB players. These products are offered to our members with 15% discount for the period of 1 year (15.08.2017 – 14.08.2018) but only if the clicks have come through their logo, which shall be visible on all Aspirers crosstables started in that period. Another inquiry we had was from *Chessable*, a site providing a bit unorthodox method of learning chess, mostly openings. As of this moment it is, however, unclear if we shall be able to make a satisfying agreement with them.

As for other possibilities, several chess sites/portals deserve our attention – or better, ICCF has caught their eye – I shall investigate various options of cooperation with them in near future.

ICCF player photographs

We continue to have almost 1 photo per day submitted, and this new option/feature has turned out to be very welcome, as players are now able, for the most part, to visualise their opponents and this adds a nice bit of touch of personalisation in our hobby.

ICCF Hall of Fame

This great new initiative has received very warm welcome throughout the ICCF community. I shall certainly make sure it continues every year. This time we induct another famous name, as reported in more detail elsewhere.

New member federations

This year congress will decide on the membership of Indonesia, where stellar work has been done and is continuing by Yosua Sitorus. I am also informed there is a strong intention to form a federation in Mexico, while I keep slow but steady work with several isolated members of Balkan countries, of which Serbia is now closest to a goal of forming an association, but still long way to go.

Things to consider

As the inevitable influence of the engine usage increases, the level of the chess played (for any given rating level) increases with time. This in turn has several notable effects on our community:

- membership variety: we have more computer-chess skilled members coming in, and some OTB-chess skilled members leaving. This is also one of the reasons why DMD keeps persistent amongst our ranks, despite congress' efforts to reduce this negative phenomenon each year with regulations; less OTB experience/strength usually means less chess etiquette.
- achievement recognition: on personal level, our results are less representative of our own analytical skills, and therefore perceived of lesser value; at the same time, objective level of the games played keeps bringing more and more focus for those interested in chess research – in openings phase in particular. Our game database is very valuable commodity among top OTB players these days.

Some food for thought I would like the delegates to consider: should we consider making our most valued product, namely our game database, more difficult to obtain? Also, should we consider an automated (computer performed) procedure of judging the “DMD level” of the finished games, and together with it a penalty system that would result in loss of rating points and/or norms (DMD level seems to be in direct proportion to eagerness of winning both), or even suspensions?

I hope to be able to work on some of these questions in the remainder of my mandate, and would warmly welcome any suggestions, ideas, and thoughts from anyone willing to contribute. Needless to say, opinions expressed in this last section are entirely subjective and are a product of my own observation and thinking, which may not be always correct.

Amici sumus,

Leonardo Ljubičić

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