**REPORT OF THE RULES COMMISSIONER**

Dennis Doren, submitted on 5 August 2018

 From June 2017 - June 2018

**The Commission Membership**

The following are the people who were selected and served this year as members of the Rules Commission:

IA SIM Thomas Biedermann, TD Committee Chair & Deputy Rules Commissioner; SIM Gerhard Binder, Rating Commissioner; IA CCM Jean-Christophe Chazalette; IA IM Juan Alberto Martello; SIM Josef Mrkvicka, Auditor; IA Andrey Nikolaevich Pavlikov, Director Zone 1; IA SIM Nikolay Poleshchuk; IA SIM Uwe Staroske, Qualifications Commissioner; IA SIM Olli **Ylönen. All of these people also served on the Rules Commission the previous year except IA SIM** Olli **Ylönen who was added to the Commission membership during Fall 2017.**

**Status of Regular Rules Commissioner Duties**

During this past year, the Rules Commission collectively or I alone addressed the following regular duties:

A. Kept Tournament Directors (TDs), Tournament Organizers (TOs), and Adjudicators informed of rule and procedural developments. This was typically accomplished through mass mailings.

B. Responded to inquiries about rules and procedures from TDs, TOs, adjudicators, ICCF officials, and players.

C. Participated in offering input/answers to inquiries concerning server updates.

D. Reviewed all new proposals for Congress 2018, both to ensure that any existing rule that would be affected by a proposal is mentioned in the proposal and to indicate if there appeared to be an error in how an existing rule was cited or interpreted.

E. Made requests to the Executive Board (EB) for rule clarifications. The following were the nature of those requests during this past year:

 (1) 13 September 2017: Concerning whether or not the Triple Block time control system was in violation of Article 3 of the ICCF statutes. Clarification was that it was not, with the recommendation by the EB being made for a Congress proposal to solidify that clarification.

 (2) In developing the single document "ICCF Rules", there needed to be a series of rule clarifications ("a" through "d" below) where there were existing conflicts in the rules:

 (a) 21 September 2017 (from the Playing Rules - Server) "The Tournament Director must be notified immediately of any disagreement between players about the game" versus It is reasonable to try to sort out minor disputes without getting the Tournament Director involved**.** [Clarification: the TD need not be informed of minor disputes]

(b) 21 September 2017 (From the Playing Rules - Post)"Should there be no reply to any move within 16 days plus the average time in the post both ways,.... It is necessary to wait 16 days plus the average length of time it takes in the mail to get a move to your opponent and back." versus (from the Playing Rules Guidelines)  "If you know you are going to take more than 14 days over a move, please let your opponent know so that unnecessary repeats can be eliminated. Days when the opponent is on vacation shall not be counted to calculate the time to send a reminder. A too early repeat should be avoided. Exception: It is necessary to wait 14 days plus the average length of time it takes in the mail..." [Clarification: 16 days is the proper number]

 (c)  24 September 2017 (from the Tournament Rules): "For both Postal and Server, unless specified otherwise: ....(d) A month after the start, the Team Captain will ensure that all players have begun play. If a player of a team has not begun play against all opponents within two months after the starting date despite written reminders by his opponents, and his/her Team Captain has not informed the Tournament Director within this time that a substitute player was placed on the board, then the team will lose the game on that board." versus the fact that in a server game, the person would have already lost the game by ETL prior to 2 months, suggesting this rule only applies to postal play. [Clarification: the rule only applies to postal play]

 (d) 24 September 2017: (from the Playing Rules - Post) a player who does not respond to either a TD or TC inquiry within 14 days (plus time in mail) may be deemed withdrawn from the event, but (from the Playing Rules - Server), the player is only required to respond to the TD, with nothing said about needing to respond to the TC. [Clarification: players in server events need to respond to TCs as well as to TDs, or risk being withdrawn from the event]

 (3) 28 October 2017: Clarification of 2017-017, as required by that proposal (concerning the viewing rules of certain events)

 (4) 11 March 2018: Concerning whether or not the 3-person panel review process represents the appeal stage for adjudications for (accepted) withdrawn players adjudicated with a loss. Clarification was that it does.

Notably, there were only 7 occasions requiring rule clarifications this year, with 4 of those being needed to address conflicts across the existing rules. This compares to 14 occasions for rule clarifications during each of the previous two years. I believe the difference stems from the successive reworking of the ICCF rules' documents that allowed both the expansion in descriptive text and an increased consistency across the rules. Now that the rules have been integrated into one document, the number of conflicts found across existing rules should be fewer still in the future.

**New Projects**

A. Gathered ideas suggested by others during the year for consideration by the Rules Commission for potential Congress proposals; presented those idea to the Commission; wrote and submitted Congress proposals for the ideas garnering at least majority support (while rejecting the others). This work resulted in 9 Congress proposals this year, besides the one described in "D" below.

B. In service to the World Tournament Director (WTD), completed working with Martin Bennedik and Austin Lockwood concerning the server specifications for the newly automated withdrawal system. Then helped monitor the workings of the system for 4 months before handing the daily workings of the system back to the WTD. I then agreed to continue serving as the contact person for any further work in developing the automated system.

C. In service to the World Tournament Director, monitored and serviced the 2-year old automated adjudication system. This included manually organizing all of the appeals (including 3-person panel reviews) within the adjudication system. During April, I decided to discontinue doing this activity. IA SIM Uwe Staroske agreed to take over these duties for the WTD.

 **Note**: The appeal adjudication process had been left fully non-automated during the development of the automated adjudication system for two combined reasons: (a) the number of appeals had been very small for some years, and (b) the expense was considered too great for the potential benefit due to that rareness. However, while the number of standard appeals of adjudication decisions has only increased slightly during the past year compared to other years (still being in the single digits per year), the number of 3-person panel reviews has grown to be substantial (at least 25 during the past year). Since each 3-person panel review involves many steps, with numerous emails in each step, this has become more work than originally anticipated. Even though this work is no longer may responsibility, I recommend that increased automation of the 3-person panel review process be considered a new priority for the Services Committee (SC). I will be willing to work with the SC on that project, if and when it goes forth.

D. A project that had been required since a Congress 2014 decision was the development of the ICCF Laws of Correspondence Chess (LCC) based on the FIDE Laws of Chess. The purpose was to ensure that ICCF rules were not affected by any FIDE change in rules (made, by definition, without ICCF input). That project was finally completed this year, and has been presented to Congress as proposal 2018-044. Since the completion of the TD Manuals, the TD Review tests, the TO Manual, the Triple Block system rules (currently tentatively determined), and then the combined ICCF Rules, the ICCF Laws of Correspondence Chess represents the last of the planned major rule document updates on my agenda.

E. Although nothing completely new was done by me concerning the Triple Block system trials, I did promote the use of the system in friendly matches through a mass mailing to tournament organizers (in my role as the Chair of the work group that developed the system and is overseeing its trials). To date, the system has been employed in about 16 (mostly national) events with no significant problems. Two ICCF-approved events [the 8th Chess960 World Cup**,** and the Under 2300 Team Tournament, preliminary round (currently named the Esko Nuutilainen Team Tournament)] are now scheduled to be run as Triple Block events. The World Tournament Director has also agreed that the "next Veterans World Cup (13th VWC) and Champions League (9) editions will use the Triple Block."

**Final Comment**

Just as in my report the past two years, I wish to thank Congress for giving me the honor and privilege of serving the ICCF in this role. I am grateful to be in a position where my efforts serve the international correspondence chess community and this great organization. Thank you.

 Dennis Doren, Rules Commissioner