

Major battle expected in Saint John

By Andrew McKenna, Editor
UNB Saint John student paper,
The Baron

The World Chess Festival takes centre stage in Saint John, NB, from January 23 to February 20 as players from around the world battle for one of seven titles. Over 1000 chess players will be competing.

The competition will transform the Saint John Trade and Convention Centre from a banquet hall into a battleground of the mind. A media centre and TV Production Room will act as a miniature newspaper/TV station.

The festival comprises seven separate tournaments. Candidate Matches will feature 14 of the world's elite Grand Masters competing for the position of challenging the World Champion.

Two International tournaments will be featured, each 10 days long with a prize of \$50,000. Both tournaments will attract up to 100 top ranked competitors.

Two Open Tournaments will

feature players who watch the Grand Masters and compete in their own tournaments. Each has a prize of \$50,000.

The World Blitz Chess Championship, with a maximum of 5 minutes per game, offers a \$100,000 purse. Thirty two players will be seen by 100 million viewers world-wide.

Four winners of the "Blitz" qualifying matches automatically advance to the Blitz Championships, with a purse of \$5,000 per qualifier.

Players with no international rating will compete in the World Amateur Chess Championships, which has a purse of \$20,000 over a 12 day time period.

The Canadian National Match places the best Canadian players from 4 regions against each-other for a \$5,000 prize.

Leading countries that will be present at the festival include the United States, the Soviet Union, England, Germany, and 21 more. Canada's top rated international player, Montreal native Kevin Spraggett, will play Andrei Sokolov of the Soviet Union, currently

rated third in the world, in the Candidates Match. Spraggett is the first player in Canadian history to make it to this level of play, having first reached this level in 1985.

Spraggett's coach, Andras Adorjan, may be the edge that he needs to upset Sokolov. Adorjan is a former trainer of Garry Kasparov, the Soviet rated in the top 2 positions in world chess. If Spraggett is successful in reaching the quarter finals, he will be the second North American to do so, the previous being Bobby Fisher.

Among the talented field for the festival; Soviets Artur Yusopov, Jaan Ehilverst, and Rafael Vaganian, and Yasser Seirawan from the United States will be competing.

In order to promote the festival, a direct mail campaign of 31,000 kits have been mailed to internationally rated chess players in Canada and the United States. In the words of U.S. champion Yasser Seirawan, "... the World Chess Festival is going to be the greatest chess event in North America - one not to be

missed."

In order to put on the festival, a large amount of volunteers are required and the response was so strong that "we have surpassed our goal. We simply can't find positions for anyone else," stated Katrina Kirkegaard, Festival Human Resources Manager.

The world's top six players will be attending the festival, including Anatoly Karpov. As well, 27 of the top 40 players will be in attendance.

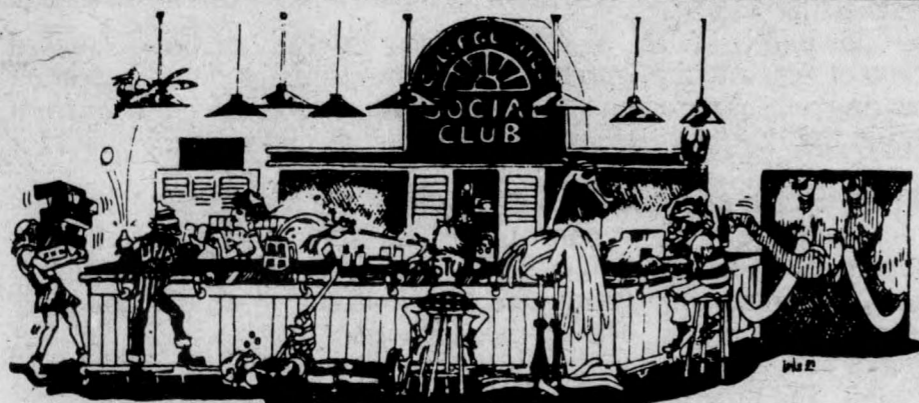
A total of 17,000 tickets are available to the public, ranging in price from one to 25 dollars. Ticket reservations are available to those outside the Saint John area by calling the Festival Hotline, 1-800-561-9229. Major credit cards are accepted.

Along side the festival will be an arts festival featuring Acadian singer Edith Butler, Irish tenor Frank Patterson, and Saint John's Phillip Thompson. In the same time period, Zappa Costa will be in town and Theatre New Brunswick and UNB Saint John drama productions will be on stage.

In order to finance the enormous cost of the festival, Canadian Airlines, NB Tel, The Bank of Nova Scotia, McMillan Press, and CN Rail have paid fees for sponsorship recognition.

The festival organizers face two major problems with the North American market. Due to the lack of awareness of chess in comparison to European nations, fewer North Americans, especially Americans, are likely to watch television coverage on the American Sports Cable Network. Secondly, the festival will have to work hard to achieve the level of excellence required by the major television networks to carry chess coverage. The print media's support will be strong due to the chess columns in major newspapers, such as the New York Times, and large magazines, such as *Life*.

Economically, the festival will bring between 10 and 12 million dollars into the City of Saint John and media coverage will surpass that of the Canada Summer Games in 1985.



Time: from 12 noon to 1:30pm

Monday

Baked Lasagna
Tossed Salad
Home made bread \$2.25

Wednesday

Hot stacked roast beef
on a Kaiser bun
with dip and chips \$2.25

Friday

Garlic spareribs
Beef chow mein
Fried rice \$3.00

Ham and Swiss cheese
with lettuce and tomato
on a Croissant \$2.25

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