

BCCF E-MAIL BULLETIN #413

Your editor welcomes any and all submissions – news of upcoming events, tournament reports, and anything else that might be of interest to BC players. Thanks to all who contributed to this issue. To subscribe, send me an e-mail (swright2@telus.net); if you no longer wish to receive this Bulletin, just let me know.

Stephen Wright

HERE AND THERE

International Chess Day/Chess'N'Run (July 20)



FIDE (the Fédération Internationale des Échecs) was founded in 1924 on July 20, and since 1966 this day has been recognized as International Chess Day. In previous years Konstantin Pyryaev has celebrated the occasion by holding friendly chess meetings on an outdoor giant chess board; this year the meeting was again outdoors, held at Westminster Pier Park in New Westminster on July 18 (Sunday), although the sets were for the most part of standard size. The variants included bughouse, anti-chess, and king of the hill along with regular blitz. (It also gave the city the opportunity to correct the alignment of the inlaid boards at the site.) [More photos](#)

Thursday Night Marathon Online (June 24 – July 15)

As previously noted, the San Francisco Mechanics' Institute Tuesday Night Marathon (two tournament games an evening at 35 + 5 for several consecutive Tuesdays) has now shifted back to in-person chess, but the new [Thursday Night Marathon](#) remains online, hosted by the chess.com platform. Perennial online TNM winner Gadir Guseinov (Azerbaijan) added yet another first prize to his haul, beating fellow GM Alex Lenderman en route to a final score of 7.5/8. FM Max Gedajlovic and Ivan Zong from this province scored 5.0 and 3.0 points respectively in the forty-six player Swiss. [Standings](#)

**Gedajlovic, Max – Lenderman, Alexander [B07] Thursday Night Marathon (online)
chess.com (8), 15.07.2021**

1.d4 d6 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.Nbd2 g6 4.e4 Bg7 5.Bd3 0–0 6.0–0 Nc6 7.c3 e5 8.h3 Nh5 9.Nb3 a5 10.Be3
Nf4 11.Bxf4 exf4 12.Re1 Re8 13.Qd2 g5 14.a4 Qf6 15.Bb5 Rd8 16.Rad1 g4 17.hxg4 Bxg4 18.Be2
Re8 19.Qd3 Rab8 20.Nbd2 h5 21.Qb5 Kh8 22.Nh2 Bxe2 23.Rxe2 Qg6 24.Ndf3 Bf6 25.Kh1 Re7
26.e5 dxe5 27.dxe5 Rbe8 28.Qxb7 Nxe5 29.Nxe5 Bxe5 30.Rde1 f6 31.Qe4 Kg7 32.Qxg6+ Kxg6
33.Nf3 Re6 34.Nd2 Rc6 35.Re4 Rb8 36.Nc4



36...Rxc4 37.Rxc4 Rxb2 38.Kg1 Ra2 39.Rd1 Kg5
40.Kf1 h4 41.Rd8 h3 42.gxh3 f3 43.Rd1 Rc2 44.Rc5
Kh4 45.Rxa5 Kxh3 46.Ra8 Bxc3 47.a5 c5 48.a6 Bd4
49.Kg1?? [49.a7 Rxf2+ 50.Ke1 Re2+ =] 49...Bxf2+
50.Kh1 Bh4 51.Kg1 Rg2+ 52.Kf1 Rf2+ 53.Kg1 Ra2
54.a7 c4 55.Rc1 Bf2+ 56.Kh1 Bxa7 57.Rg1 Rh2# 0–1

BCCF Annual General Meeting (July 11)

The Annual General Meeting of the BCCF was held online via Zoom on the afternoon of July 11. In the minutes of the meeting will be available in due course on the BCCF website, but for the time being these are the members of the incoming board:

President – Stephen Wright
VP, Vancouver Island – Roger Patterson
Secretary – Berry de Groot
Treasurer – Paul Leblanc
Bulletin Editor – Stephen Wright

Tournament Coordinator – Michael Lo
Publicity Coordinator – Alina Calota
Clubs Coordinator – Robert Swartz
Members At Large – Lyle Craver, Don Hack,
Victoria Jung-Doknjias

Voting Members of the Chess Federation of Canada – Lyle Craver, Berry de Groot, Don Hack, Victoria Jung-Doknjias, Paul Leblanc, Michael Lo, Stephen Wright

Trustees of the BC Chess Foundation: Paul Leblanc (Chair), Roger Patterson, Howard Wu

Philadelphia Events

With the lifting of pandemic restrictions over-the-board events are now returning in the US; last issue we reported on the National Open in Las Vegas, this time around we have two annual events held at the Sheraton Philadelphia Downtown. The [14th Philadelphia International](#) (June 26-30) was a nine-round Swiss in two sections with a total of ninety-five players. Three tied for first in the

Premier, GMs Vladimir Belous (Russia) and Hans Niemann (USA) and IM Andrew Hong (USA) on 7.0/9, with Belous getting the nod on tiebreak. Restrictions may be lifting but crossing the border is still problematic so Canadian participation in both these Philadelphia events was limited. For the International FM Anthony Atanasov (ON) and Ethan Su (BC) scored 4.5 and 3.5 respectively.

Both also entered the [49th World Open](#) (July 1-5), traditionally the largest annual tournament in the states, live and in-person after being held online on ICC last year. Atanasov tied for the 2nd/3rd U2200 prize with 5.0/9 but the top Canadian was FM Victor Plotkin on 5.5. The overall winners were GMs Hans Niemann and John Burke (both USA) who tied with 7.5 points, Niemann took the bonus and World Open title after an Armageddon game. Ethan Su scored 50% in the U2200 Section.

Stephen Lester-Smith (1949-2021)

With sadness we note the passing of Stephen Lester-Smith after a short illness. Born in Manchester, England, Stephen attended Chorlton Grammar School before completing an Associate-in-Music (Theory) from Trinity College in London. After coming to Canada he worked as a music teacher, both privately and in schools, specializing in all levels of RCM theoretical subjects. Stephen was a long time chess player, playing at several clubs throughout the lower mainland. He participated in the Keres, BC Open, GPO, and more recently the BC Senior, and won the U1600 trophy at the 2016 Canadian Senior in Surrey. Stephen was on the coaching staff of the Vancouver Chess School and was also a member of Mensa Canada. A thoughtful, witty gentleman, he will be missed – rest in peace. [photo by Victoria Jung-Doknjas]



Checkmate Foundation

“The Checkmate Foundation is a non-profit organization that is equalizing opportunities in chess for underprivileged and underserved youth! The Checkmate Foundation facilitates the accessibility of chess through tournaments, lessons, and contributions to local communities. The foundation is looking for passionate individuals to join their discord server and join their Instagram at @checkmatefoundation. What are you waiting for?”

We are looking for people who want to be a volunteer coach, discord staff, and junior executive team members! Whether your a chess enthusiast or new to chess, we want your help! You are also welcome to participate in tournaments to encourage others to try and experience chess. We will be hosting a tournament soon, so be sure to join our discord for more updates.

Don't miss this opportunity to join a community of positive and encouraging individuals, don't be afraid to try a new hobby and help grow our community. <https://discord.gg/D5j2zsNW33> Have any questions or concerns, feel free to reach out to us at checkmatefoundation@gmail.com! If you would like to donate to help a youth experience the opportunity of chess let us know as we are very thankful for your donations.”

CYCC Online (July 3)

'Tis the season for World Cups; two World Cups are currently taking place over-the-board in Sochi, Russia, one open and the other for women. FIDE and the Georgian Chess Federation have also organized an [Online Rapid World Cup for Cadets and Youths](#) which will be held instead of the 2021 WYCC. The two-stage competition will take place in August; this year's CYCC was scheduled for Hamilton, Ontario but was cancelled due to continuing pandemic issues. Instead the CYCC was held online as a qualifying event for the Online Rapid World Cup.

Arranged in the usual two-year age brackets (but without U8 sections) as seven-round Swisses at a time control of 15 + 10, the tournament was played over the lichess.org platform but with administrative functions handled by a website called [chess.stream](#). The latter, previously unknown to this writer, was extremely impressive, providing pairings, standings, live games and PGNs along with a registration module and all using real names rather than online handles. Of the three hundred and sixty players participating almost a quarter were from this province; we will not attempt to list them all here, but these are the BC players who have qualified for the World Cup – congratulations!

Zachary Hankun Liu (U10), Azher Hossain (U12), Rachel Ruoxuan Chen (U14G), Yu Han (Veronica) Guo (U14G), Neil Doknjas (U16), and Andrew Hemstapat (U18)

CANADIAN CHESS CHALLENGE (June 26-27)

Now in its thirty-second year, this annual national scholastic team event took place online over the lichess.org platform. The BC team, consisting of Kai Zhang, Leon Gong, Nathan Yi-Hsin Yang, Ryan Bole Yu, Ryan Jingyun Yang, Nathan Wu, Yu Han (Veronica) Guo, Tao Xie, Patrick Huang, Bill Wang, and Victor Zheng, took its usual third place behind the two traditional powerhouses, Ontario and Quebec:

1 Ontario	9 (92.5/108)	6 Saskatchewan	3.5 (50)
2 Quebec	8 (82)	7 Manitoba	3.5 (44.5)
3 British Columbia	6.5 (63)	8 Nova Scotia	3 (54)
4 Alberta	6 (67)	9 Prince Edward Island	1 (26.5)
5 New Brunswick	4.5 (48)	10 Newfoundland and Labrador	0 (12.5)

Primary scoring was by match points (1, 0.5, or 0 for the whole team), meaning that it didn't matter if a team won by one or ten games, the points allotted were the same. Game points were only used for tiebreak purposes – had they been used for overall results the order of finished would have changed, BC dropping to fourth place and Nova Scotia jumping to fifth. In the penultimate round BC only managed to draw Saskatchewan, leaving the team a half-point behind their last round opponents Alberta and needing a win to finish third. This BC accomplished but only by the bare absolute minimum, 6.5-5.5. Notably the team from Newfoundland and Labrador was only able to field four players (other teams had one player per grade) but still managed to score 12.5 points.

In the individual board prizes BC garnered a total of five trophies Congratulations to all and to the team as a whole! Further details can be found at the [event website](#).

1 Kai Zhang 8/9 – second	2 Leon Gong 8 – first	7 Nathan Wu 7 – third
8 Veronica Guo 7 – second	10 Patrick Huang 7.5 – tied for first, second after playoffs	

CALGARY MASTER DALE HAESSEL WINS 2021 BC SENIOR (June 25-27) by Paul Leblanc Harleen Singh Takes BC Adult Trophy



Dale Haessel



Harleen Singh

This year's Senior was held on chess.com over the weekend of 25-27 June, a full year after the 2020 BC Senior became the first CFC rated tournament ever held online in the province. Twenty-five players participated in a five-round Swiss format with a traditional time control of game in 90 minutes with 30 second increments. It is unusual to find online events with slow time controls but a survey of players when the event was being planned indicated that the majority wanted to slow the game down. Myself, I enjoyed not being in "time trouble" from move one onwards!

Dale Haessel (4.5 out of 5) led all the way and held off Vancouver's Joe Soliven (4-1), the only player with a chance of catching him by settling for a draw in the last round. A new section was introduced this year, the BC Adult Championship open to players between 20 and 49 years of age. It attracted sixteen entries. Harleen Singh Jaspal of Vancouver exactly mirrored Haessel's 4.5 out of 5 score, holding Prabhsimran Singh, also of Vancouver to a draw in the last round to clinch the first-place trophy. Other trophy winners in the BC Senior were Paul Leblanc of Victoria (U1700) and Don Hack of Surrey (U1200), while Prabhsimran Singh (U1700), Isabelle Zhu of Toronto (U1200) and Oliver Cook of Penticton (top unrated) won trophies in the Adult.

Brendan Woodroff of Chilliwack was the Tournament Director and Paul Leblanc of Victoria Chess organized the event with website assistance from Roger Patterson, also of Victoria Chess.

[Senior standings](#) [Adult standings](#)

Haessel, Dale – Leblanc, Paul [D20] BC sen (online) chess.com (4.1), 27.06.2021

[Dale Haessel]

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e4 Nf6 More common is to keep the pawn but endure a prolonged attack by White due to development disadvantage. White has full compensation here. 3...e5 4.Nf3 exd4 5.Bxc4 Nc6 6.0-0 with attack. **4.e5 Nd5 5.Bxc4 Nb6 6.Bd3** 6.Bb3 Nc6 7.Ne2 (7.Nf3 Bg4 8.Ng5 draws by force 8...Bxd1) 7...Bf5 8.Nbc3 e6 9.Be3 +/- **6...Nc6 7.Ne2** Avoiding Bg4 pin – the knight has good squares to go to from e2 (g3 / f4)] [7.Nf3 Bg4] **7...Bg4** The bishop gets out from behind

the pawn chain. **8.Be3 e6 9.Nbc3 Be7 9...Qd7** Castling queenside is a little dangerous but was played at top level 10.0–0 0–0–0 **11.a4** with attack, Moissenko - Ganguly 2013 **10.0–0 0–0?** By committing the king to the kingside, White can gain a tempo with Qb1 or Qc2 to break the pin and obtain a significant advantage. **11.a3N** The top computer move coincidentally - Qb1 has been seen in GM games by White. White had a significant advantage in both cases. **11.Qb1 g6 a) 11...h6 12.f3 Bh5 13.g4; b) 11...Kh8 12.a3 (12.Ng3 f5 13.exf6 Bxf6 14.Bxh7) ; 12.Rd1 Nb4 13.h3 Bxe2 (13...Nxd3 14.hxg4 Nb4 15.Bh6 Re8 16.Qc1+/-) 14.Bxe2 11...Bh5 12.Ne4** Better is **12.Qc2 Bg6 13.Rad1 Qd7 14.Nf4 12...Nd5 13.Rc1 Bg6 14.b4?! 14.Qd2; 14.N2c3 14...a6=**



White's previous moves have allowed black to equalize **15.Qb3???** I can't give this move enough question marks – the engine proves it loses by force.

15...Qd7??? Returning the favour. The last move was a6 so it is a little hard for a human to play a5 one move later. Silicon monsters have cold blood and have no recollection of previous moves. **15...a5** just wins on the spot - neither of us realized that Qb3 was such a bad move. It appears normal and good but in reality beneath the surface it just outright loses. **15...a5** exploiting the unfortunate queen position – that is the problem with Qb3, a3 becomes weak because the pawns become separated. Black would have an edge in this line. **16.b5 (16.bxa5 Rxa5 17.Ra1 Qa8 18.Bc1 Qa7) 16...a4 (16...Na7 17.Qc2 (17.Qd1 Bxa3)**

17...Bxa3) 17.Qb2 Nxe5 16.Rfd1 Out of danger because the bishop is now protected. **16...Rac8?!** Confusing move - no purpose; **16...Rfd8** or **16...a5 17.N2c3 f6? +/- 18.exf6 gxf6 19.Bc4 Rcd8 20.Bh6 Rfe8 21.f3** Wrong move order - I saw the win but had the move order wrong. **21.Nc5** (threat Nxe6) **21...Bxc5 22.dxc5 Nce7 23.f3 Ne4** is a huge threat now – the computer finds better moves than Ne4 but Ne4 is crushing. I played f3 with the same idea but didn't realize the importance of first playing Nc5: **23...Kf7 (23...Kh8 24.Ne4) 24.Ne4 21...Bf7 22.Nc5 Bxc5 23.dxc5**



23...Nce7??? **23...Qe7+/- 24.Nxd5 exd5 25.Bf1;** still much better for White but not as decisive as previously. **24.Ne4 Qc6 25.b5 Qd7 25...axb5 26.Bxb5** and the queen has no escape; **25...Qd7 26.Bxd5 Nxd5 27.Rxd5 Qxd5 28.Nxf6+ 1–0**

Singh, Prabhsimran – Jaspal, Harleen Singh [D02] BC adult (online) chess.com (5.1), 27.06.2021

Harleen Singh Jaspal: this was my last game, and I just needed a draw for first place so I was being little defensive from the beginning. I had a little passive position in the middle and end of the game, but I was able to make a draw.

1.d4 d5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.Bf4 e6 4.e3 Bd6 5.Bxd6 cxd6 6.c4 Qb6 7.Qc2 Nc6 8.Nc3 Nb4 9.Qb3 Bd7 10.Nd2 Qa5 11.a3 Nc6 12.cxd5 exd5 13.Bd3 0–0 14.0–0 Rfe8



[The pawn structure is reminiscent of Miles – Larsen, Tilburg 1978, a classic example of exploiting play on both sides of the board: 1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 e6 3.c4 b6 4.Bf4 Bb7 5.e3 Be7 6.h3 0–0 7.Nc3 d5 8.cxd5 exd5 9.Bd3 Nbd7 10.0–0 a6 11.Ne5 Re8 12.Qf3 Bd6 13.Ng4 Ne4 14.Bxd6 cxd6 15.Rfc1 Qg5 16.Ne2 Rac8 17.Qf4 Qxf4 18.Nxf4 g6 19.f3 Nef6 20.Nxf6+ Nxf6 21.Kf2 Kf8 22.g4 Ke7 23.h4 b5 24.h5 Nd7 25.Rxc8 Rxc8 26.Rh1 Nf8 27.hxg6 hxg6 28.Ke2 Kf6 29.Kd2 Kg7 30.Rc1 Rxc1 31.Kxc1 Kf6 32.Kd2 b4 33.Kc2 a5 34.Bb5 Ne6 35.Nxe6 fxe6 36.Kb3 Kg5 37.Ka4 e5 38.Kxa5 exd4 39.exd4 Kf4 40.Bd7 Ke3 41.Kb6 Ba8 42.Ka7 Kxd4 43.f4 1–0] 15.Rfc1 Rab8 16.h3 a6 17.Qd1 Qd8 18.Rc2 Be6 19.Rac1 Qd7 20.Nf1 Ne7 21.Ng3 g6 22.b4 Rec8 23.a4 Kg7 24.a5 b5 25.Nce2 Rxc2 26.Rxc2 Rc8 27.Rxc8 Qxc8 28.Qd2 Nf5 29.Bxf5

Bxf5 30.Qc3 Be6 31.Qxc8 Bxc8 32.Nf4 Kf8 33.f3 Bb7 34.h4 Ke7 35.Nge2 h6 36.g4 g5 37.hxg5 hxg5 38.Nh3 Nh7 39.Kg2 Kf6 40.f4 Kg6 41.Kg3 f6 42.Neg1 Bc8 43.Nf3 Bd7 44.Nf2 Bc6 45.Nh3 Bd7 46.Nd2 Bc6 47.f5+ Kf7 48.Ng1 Nf8 49.Ne2 Nd7 50.Kf3 Nb8 51.Nc3 Ke7 52.Ke2 Bb7 53.Kd3 Ba8 54.Nf1 Bb7 55.Ng3 Ba8 56.Nh5 Kf7 57.e4 dxe4+ 58.Nxe4 Bxe4+ 59.Kxe4 Nc6 60.Ng3 Nxb4 61.d5 Nc2 62.Nf1 Na3 63.Ne3 Nc4 64.Nxc4 bxc4 65.Kd4 Kg8 66.Kxc4



[So why has your editor included a diagram of such a singularly uninteresting position? As an example that online platforms do not always follow the Laws of Chess as laid down by FIDE. The diagram is a 'dead position' in which neither player can checkmate the opponent's king by any possible sequence of legal moves. The game should be declared an immediate draw, but chess.com required an additional fifty-moves before that happened.] 66...Kh8 67.Kb4 Kg8 68.Kc3 Kh8 69.Kd4 Kg8 70.Ke3 Kh8 71.Kf3 Kg8 72.Kg3 Kh8 73.Kh3 Kg8 74.Kh2 Kh8 75.Kg2 Kg8 76.Kf2 Kh8 77.Ke2 Kg8 78.Kd2 Kh8 79.Kc2 Kg8 80.Kb2 Kh8 81.Ka2 Kg8 82.Ka1 Kh8 83.Kb1 Kg8 84.Kc1 Kh8 85.Kd1 Kg8 86.Ke1 Kh8 87.Kf1 Kg8 88.Kg1 Kh8 89.Kh1 Kg8 90.Kh2 Kh8 91.Kh3 Kg8 92.Kg3 Kh8 93.Kf3 Kg8 94.Ke3 Kh8 95.Kd3 Kg8 96.Kc3 Kh8

97.Kb3 Kg8 98.Ka3 Kh8 99.Ka4 Kg8 100.Kb4 Kh8 101.Kc4 Kg8 102.Kd4 Kh8 103.Ke4 Kg8
104.Kf3 Kh8 105.Ke3 Kg8 106.Kd3 Kh8 107.Kc3 Kg8 108.Kb3 Kh8 109.Ka3 Kg8 110.Ka2 Kh8
111.Kb2 Kg8 112.Kc2 Kh8 113.Kd2 Kg8 114.Ke2 Kh8 115.Kf2 Kg8 116.Kg2 ½–½

MAGNUS IN VANCOUVER: THE EDUCATION OF A CHESS PLAYER

(dedicated to the memory of David Cohen, chess historian and friend)

No, not Carlsen – our subject here is instead Magnus Magnusson Smith, Canadian champion in 1899, 1904, and 1906. Originally from Iceland, Smith has usually been thought of as a Winnipeg or Manitoba player because that's where he lived at the time of his greatest Canadian successes, but he was also a resident of Vancouver for several years. In terms of sources Myron Samsin wrote an excellent article on Magnus Smith a dozen years ago which was published on the [Chess Cafe](#) website, currently only available for donation; the first three paragraphs can be found at [chessgames.com](#). We also have a contemporary Icelandic source: *I Uppnami* (en prise) was published in North America by Daniel Willard Fiske, librarian and professor of North European Languages.



There is also a newspaper article in the 11 March 1899 edition of the *Vancouver Daily World* which is where we will begin. The following was written after Smith had left Vancouver for Winnipeg:

Many frequenters of the City Library [this would have been the Free Reading Room and Library in the YMCA building on Hastings Street, Vancouver's Carnegie Library was not built until 1902/03] will remember a young chess enthusiast who used to be ready to play all comers a game and who almost invariably won notwithstanding the odds he was always ready to offer. Since last August, however, he has been missed and many wondered what had become of him. We refer to Magnus Smith, a young intelligent shoemaker, who came here a number of years ago. Being of a studious nature the library attracted him and becoming interested in chess, by watching the game played, he learned the moves about three years ago and in a remarkably short time he had mastered the game and was able to give odds to almost every comer. He was one of the prime movers in the formation of the chess club and as long as it existed was acknowledged to be its strongest player.... Last August Mr. Smith went to Winnipeg and became a member of the Winnipeg chess club ... The result of Mr. Smith's playing in Winnipeg has encouraged the chess enthusiasts in determining to send him to Montreal to compete for the Canadian championship at the annual match there on March 31, and his many Vancouver friends will watch with interest the result. While complete success there is very doubtful, as he will be pitted against the strongest players in the Dominion, it is confidently expected that he will give a good account of himself. That he has the makings of a champion chess player all here who have had the privilege of playing with him admit and it is only his youth and want of opportunities for developing the talent he has for the great silent game that leads his friends to fear for him at the coming national event. The Winnipeg papers have so far claimed Mr. Smith as a Manitoban, but as it was in Vancouver he learned chess and acquired his present prowess,

Vancouver asserts its right to share with him in the success which undoubtedly will eventually be his.

With hindsight the Vancouver players had no reason to “fear for him” – Smith won that championship and the next two before moving to New York to work for Emanuel Lasker. But did Smith develop into a champion chess player in just three years? Our other sources tell a somewhat different story.

In 1869 when Magnus Magnusson was born Iceland was undergoing a period of economic and environmental upheaval, conditions which led between 1870 and 1915 to almost a quarter of the country's population leaving the island. One favoured destination was the area known as [New Iceland](#) in Manitoba, land specifically assigned to Icelandic immigrants. (Gimli was the first town founded in the area, meaning paradise in Icelandic.) Magnus's mother died when he was five and his father passed away six years later, so it was as an orphan he joined the great exodus and moved to New Iceland in 1885. According to Samsin he knew something of chess even at that stage, although not much.

“I moved to America in 1885, staying in Manitoba until the fall of 1889 when I moved to Vancouver, British Columbia, and with the exception of travelling extensively in the United States along the Pacific Coast, I stayed in Vancouver until August 20, 1898, when I moved back to Winnipeg and have lived there ever since.” [*I uppnami*, July 1901]

In the Vancouver city directories for the period there are two listings for Smith, in 1891 and 1897, which seems to confirm a transient life-style. *I uppnami* also states Smith worked for a time as an electrician but without credentials; unable to afford the training, he reverted back to his original trade, shoemaking.

“In Vancouver he met two brothers named MacLeod, previously known to chess players in Quebec and other eastern towns; one of them soon left British Columbia and is now a well-known chess player in Minnesota. The other brother, who now lives in Minneapolis, was Magnus' first important opponent.” [*ibid.*]

From other sources we can put names to these siblings: William Donald Ross MacLeod (1869-1941) and Nicholas Menelaus MacLeod (1870-1965). Their father Donald Ross MacLeod was also a competitive player, which presents possible confusion as to who played in which event. Nicholas was Canadian champion in 1886 and 1888 (when he won the former he had only just passed his sixteenth birthday) and tied for first but lost the playoff in 1887. He participated in the 6th American Chess Congress at New York in 1889, a massive double round robin with twenty players in which initial draws in the second cycle were replayed. MacLeod finished last (the event was a de facto candidates tournament to determine a challenger for Steinitz) but did beat fourth-place finisher Blackburne. We know less about William's early chess activity but he did finish second in the 1890 Canadian Championship, a mere half point behind winner Robert Short. By 1892 William and Nicholas were both living in Vancouver, as listed in *Williams' Illustrated Official British*



Nicholas, Champion in 1888 ...

Columbia Directory:

MacLeod, N M, fmr, rms 634 Cordova
MacLeod, W D R, fmr, rms 634 Cordova

By 1894 only William is listed in the directory, so presumably Nicholas was the brother who “soon left British Columbia.” By the turn of the century both siblings had moved to St. Paul, but it was Nicholas who won a match for the Minnesota championship in 1899 and came first in the 1901 Western Open (subsequently renamed as the 2nd US Open), making him the “well-known chess player in Minnesota.” (William was also Minnesota champion but not until 1907.) So it was against William that *I Uppnami* indicates Smith first cut his teeth in chess: “initially he had to accept a queen as a handicap, but it was not long before the handicap became a queen knight.” We have seen this training via progressively lessened odds before, notably of Max Enke and Lawton Partington by [Thomas Piper](#) in the 1920s. William was married in Melbourne, Quebec (half way between Sherbrooke and Drummondville) in 1896 and then moved to Minnesota; we do not have an exact date for these games between MacLeod and Smith, but it must have been in the period 1893-1896.



... and in 1901

For the following few years there are mentions of Magnus Smith in the Vancouver press but only one extant game. That occurred in 1895 as part of the great [cable matches](#) between Victoria, Vancouver and San Francisco. Smith, along with Keith, Proctor, and Grant, was part of the Vancouver team who played White against San Francisco. Vancouver essayed a Scotch Gambit but without a sufficiently aggressive follow-up and were quickly down material with no compensation. With such a game by committee it's hard to judge the strength of individual participants; suffice it to say that Smith's subsequent skill was markedly superior to that demonstrated by the White players here.

Vancouver (Keith, Smith, Proctor, Grant) – San Francisco (Lovegrove, Howe, Quiroga, Samuels) [C44] Telegraph match, 14.06.1895

[Samuels annotations from *San Francisco Call*, Piper's from *Province*]

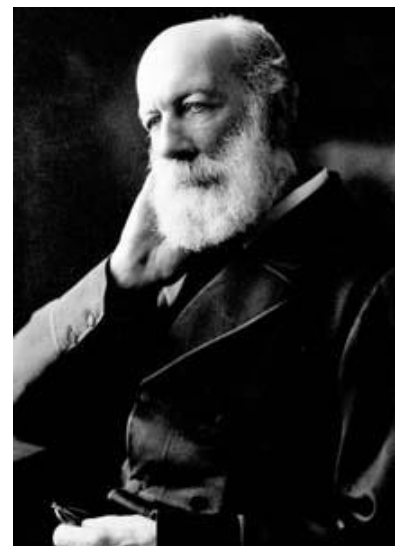


J.C. Keith

F.J. Proctor

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4 4.Bc4 Samuels: White resigns a pawn which would naturally demand a spirited attack on his part. **4...Bc5 5.0-0 d6 6.c3 Bg4 7.Be2** Samuels: Very weak, giving up all show of attack. Piper: *Cook's Synopsis* gives 7.Qb3 Bxf3 8.Bxf7+ Kf8 9.Bxg8 Rxb8 10.gxf3 g5 11.Qd5 Qd7 12.b4 Bb6 13.Bb2 d3 and Black is considered to have the better game. **7...dxc3 8.Nxc3 Nge7** Samuels: A very strong move, as it prevents White's queen checking when the f-pawn is advanced. **9.Ng5 Bxe2 10.Nxe2 h6 11.Nf3 0-0 12.b3** Samuels: This move was made with the intention of placing bishop at b2 and thus constantly threatening Black's king, but Black prevented this by a counter-attack. **12...f5 13.Ng3** Samuels: Desiring Black to advance pawn upon knight, but Black readily perceived its weakness and exchanged pawns. Piper: Why not Bb2 and Qd3, and develop the queen rook, whose fate reminds us of "dejected Marianne's at the moated grange." [Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, also referenced in Tennyson's *Mariana* - which source Piper had in mind is unclear.] **13...fxe4 14.Nxe4 Bb6 15.Ng3** Samuels: This and succeeding moves show what a great respect White has for his opponent's strength. **15...Qd7 16.h3 Rf7 17.a3 Raf8 18.Kh2** Samuels: The only move that would avail in this position. **18...Ng6 19.Ra2** Samuels: A forced move, showing that White perceived Black's plan of sacrificing the exchange. **19...Nf4 20.Bxf4 Rxf4 21.Re2 Nd4 22.Nxd4 Bxd4 23.f3 Qf7 24.Rfe1 Be5 25.Re4 c6 26.Rxe5** Samuels: White is compelled to surrender the exchange or eventually lose his knight, which is pinned by the bishop. From now on White had absolutely no chance, but continued playing with the vain hope that Black would commit a blunder. **26...dxe5 27.Rxe5 Re8 28.Re4 Rfxe4 29.Nxe4 Qc7+ 30.Kh1 Rd8 31.Qc2 Qd7 32.Qc4+ Qd5 33.Qb4 b6 34.Qe7 Qd7 35.Qh4 Qd1+ 36.Kh2 Rf8 37.Qe7 Qxb3 38.Qxa7 c5 39.Qa6 Rd8 40.Qa7 Qe6 41.Qa4 Qe5+ 42.Kh1 b5 43.Qc2 c4 44.Qc1 Kh8 45.Kg1 Rd3 0-1**

The Vancouver Chess Club also engaged in competition with clubs closer to home. In 1896/97 a series of [three matches](#) was played with the New Westminster Chess Club. Smith did not participate in the first but held down top board in the two later events (5 March 1896 and 6 February 1897), his opponent on both occasions being Dr. George Fowler Bodington, medical superintendent to the Provincial Asylum for the Insane. Smith outscored Bodington 3.0-1.0. Also in the spring of 1896 Charles Punchard of the Toronto Chess Club was in town and played a ten-game match with Magnus Smith, losing by the score of five wins to one with four draws. "Mr. Punchard is one of the crack players of Toronto, and he defeated all comers in all the towns he visited on the way out here so that Mr. Smith's is no empty victory." [*Vancouver Daily World*, 4 April 1896; Smith subsequently won from Punchard again at the 1899 Canadian Championship]



Dr. George Bodington

This is the extent of the information we have about Magnus Smith's chess playing before he moved to Winnipeg in 1898. Soon thereafter he won a tournament at the Winnipeg Chess Club with a perfect score, then the Northwest Championship, and finally the Dominion Championship, so his powers were approaching their peak by the time he left Vancouver. *I uppnami* states the most important chess books Magnus had access to were Howard Staunton's *Handbook*, the *Chess Manual* by Gossip and Lipschütz, and James Mason's *Art of Chess*, implying that he gained theoretical knowledge from them before he became a champion. We don't know but likely this was before he left for Winnipeg; what we can see is that Smith, intelligent and determined, managed to raise his level of play from rudimentary beginner to championship calibre during his time in British Columbia, and this without the advantage of prolonged practice against superior opponents for much of the period.



Winnipeg, 21 April 1906. From left to right: Magnus Smith, Géza Maróczy, Charles Blake, J. Wildman, H.H. Currie, R.J. Spencer

Addenda

Outside the scope of this article, but after Magnus Smith won the 1899 Dominion Championship he was challenged to a match by Thomas Piper of Victoria – Piper could not understand how the BC player he knew from the 1895 cable match and other events here was capable of winning a national championship. Details in [Bulletin #158](#).

Nicholas MacLeod subsequently settled in Spokane, Washington. He largely gave up chess in latter life but did participate in a team match between Spokane and Nelson in 1910 (see [Bulletin #157](#)).

Chess archivist Jeremy Gaige produced a potted biography of Nicholas MacLeod in 1983 which was subsequently published as part of Edward Winter's Chess Notes and on his [website](#) (scroll to the bottom of the page).

UPCOMING EVENTS

See also the listings at the [CFC](#) and [Northwest chess](#) websites

Dan Scoones Memorial

August 14-15
[Details](#)

BC Closed

October 8-11
[Details](#)

Jack Taylor Memorial

November 13-14
[Details](#)

Banff Open

November 12-14
[Details](#)