

CORRESPONDENCE

SAMUEL, SEIDEL AND OLDBURY

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The Editors have recently received a communication from Derek Oldbury, who was Checkers World Champion 1976-1982. In it, he takes issue with the Editorial Statement as published in *Three Generations Meeting* (Vol. 9, No. 1, p. 2) that "checkers could be said to have been solved for ever after". He comments that "The Samuel program was, and is, a marvel of Artificial Intelligence ... however, as a checker player it does not evoke special mention". Mr. Oldbury substantiated this by the results of his 1965 match against the Samuel program in which he won every game. The match has been fully documented in the literature.

Mr. Oldbury makes another critical remark on Seidel's Diagram 2 in *What Constitutes Optimal Play* (Vol 9, No. 1, p. 39). He states, tersely: "From Diagram 2: 1. Ra8+ Nc8 2R(h7)a7 ..., Black can resign. A clean kill. No variations. My way. Optimal".

He founds this on an apophthegm: "In attack, whichever solution if written out in full (including branch defences) covers least acreage of paper, that is the optimal solution."

The Editors concur and note it for the record.

FIDE'S OBJECTION REFUTED

I.J. Good

Virginia Polytechnic Institute
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Finally, we quote a letter from University Distinguished Professor of Statistics, Dr. I.J. Good.

"The objection by the FIDE to the entry of computers in international human chess tournaments is based on the following argument quoted in the *ICCA Journal 11*, Nos. 2/3 (June/September 1988), page 126:

... a game "played by a computer is a game played by a human with the assistance of a machine programmed to do so."

If this argument were taken seriously it would also prevent *humans* from entering tournaments! For every human, like every computer, is taught the game by other humans (and often is taught by a computer!). Therefore the central argument of the FIDE (as expressed by Prof. Lim Kok-Ann) is fallacious."