THE ACM CHESS CHALLENGE
WORLD CHAMPION KASPAROV TO PLAY IBM'S DEEP BLUE

With minor changes we reproduce below a press release issued at the prize-giving ceremony of the eighth World Computer-Chess Championship in Hong Kong, 30 May 1995.

"The Association for Computing Machinery (ACM), the first society in computing, announces a six-game match between World Chess Champion Garry Kasparov and the top-rated chess program DEEP BLUE. A $ 500,000 prize fund has been established for the match, to be held in Philadelphia, Penn., USA, February 10-17, 1996, as part of the ACM's year-long 50th Anniversary Celebration which begins with the ACM Computing Week '96 conference. The winner will receive $ 400,000 with the remaining $ 100,000 going to the loser.

So far, the world's leading chess-players have had an edge on the best computer-chess systems, although there have been some computer wins against grandmasters. Even Kasparov, who has never lost a match to a computer opponent, has lost individual rapid-chess games. However, experts agree that the previous games were not an appropriate test of the relative abilities of either Kasparov or the computer. The Philadelphia match will accurately portray their skills, since it will be structured in standard tournament style with a maximum of eight hours per game. This competition will be under the auspices of the International Computer Chess Association (ICCA).

"Computer chess experts have predicted that, within five years, the world chess champion will lose a match to a computer", said Tony Marsland, ICCA President. "This match will be the first such attempt."

Debate about the computer's ability to play at world-champion level has raged since the late 60s. Many scientists took the position that it was impossible.

"This was a challenge that ACM members couldn't resist", said Joseph DeBlasi, executive director, ACM. "It is exciting to see that computer-chess systems have progressed to a point where they can compete at this level."

At the age of 22, Kasparov won the title of World Champion in 1985 from Anatoly Karpov. Born in Baku and currently living in Moscow, Kasparov is the youngest person ever to attain this title. His early teacher and mentor was Mikhail Botvinnik, World Champion for over a decade beginning in 1948 and the engineer who pioneered Russian computer chess.

DEEP BLUE is being developed at the IBM T.J. Watson Research Center in Yorktown Heights, New York, by Feng-Hsiung Hsu, Murray Campbell and Joe Hoane, under the supervision of Chung-Jen Tan. An earlier version of the system won the 1994 ACM International Computer Chess Championship at Cape May, New Jersey.

"For the last five years, the DEEP BLUE prototype has dominated the chess-playing computers", said Monty Newborn, Chairman of the ACM Computer Chess Committee. "The new system should be significantly stronger and prove to be a worthy opponent for Kasparov."

Founded in 1947, ACM is the first and foremost international scientific and educational organization with 85,000 members dedicated to advancing the art, science, engineering and application of information technology. For more than 23 years ACM has also brought the leading computer-chess systems and their developers together to compete and exchange ideas. ACM serves both professional and public interests by fostering the open interchange of information and by promoting the highest professional and ethical standards. This is accomplished through its many publications, conferences, special interest groups, chapters and network communications."