Guest Editorial

The future of chess

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Correspondence Chess and Computer Chess are close friends. Although they started from different angles they found each other this year in the Double Tree by Hilton in Amsterdam. The organizational umbrella was the ICCF Congress 2023 in Amsterdam, the Netherlands which took place from August 20 to 25.[1]

There were two primary focal points. First, honoring the new Correspondence Chess World Champion, Jon Edwards. Second, discussions about the future of chess. To delve into the latter topic, a symposium titled "Chess – Science – Communication" was organized, featuring four speakers (see below).

Van den Herik addressed the development of computers: From Beginners to Over Champions and was succeeded by Richard Pijl (Chief Arbiter of the WCCC 2023 in Valencia, Spain) who provided relevant insights into The Playing Strength at the WCCC 2023.

Thereafter it was time to enlighten the audience about the connection between Computer Chess and Correspondence Chess. The *trait d' union* between these two worlds is, of course, Hans Berliner. Given the known friendship between Hans Berliner and Dap Hartmann, it was clear that Dap should acquaint us with Hans Berliner's life, hobbies, and profession. For this contribution, Dap expanded the lecture to pay a fitting tribute to all the contributions that Hans has made to the ICGA throughout his life. He undoubtedly deserves to be remembered as a cornerstone in the world of chess.

Next, the new World Champion, Jon Edwards, outlined the initial steps toward the future of chess. In the evening, he delivered The Marshall talk. For his contribution in the current context, he chose the title: "Artificial Intelligence and Correspondence Chess: A Harbinger for Other Endeavors."

All four keynote speakers have been invited to adjust their presentations slightly to allow for discussions related to the future of the game of chess.. One crucial point remains unaddressed. It has been demonstrated that it is possible to develop a computer program that outperforms the human world champion. The remaining question is whether, in game-theoretical terms, we can solve the game of chess. By this, we mean achieving a state where, with perfect play on both sides, chess can be characterized as:

1. Won for White; 2. Drawn; 3. Won for Black? [you may think of Zugzwang.]