

In contrast, we believe that computer chess is not only a frontrunner in the world of games, but also serves as a guideline for the introduction of agent technology in the world of human beings. Soon software agents will make many decisions, for instance in the domains of commerce, economics and law. The world of chess forebodes such a development. The prevailing question therefore is do we wish to go along or do we object. FIDE clearly objects, but the winner of the Dutch Championship, Loek van Wely, obviously is in favour of combining honour and money as he states: "(...) the computer must be allowed to play next year again, if it generates more money."

A glance over the statements of chess columnists shows that most of them are rather fanatic against the participation. However, a deeper investigation of the background of these columnists brings to light that they are usually not well acquainted with the world of computer science or computer games. Of course, this observation does not affect the validity of their opinion (e.g., we all have opinions on the atom bomb, but only a few have knowledge of it), but it makes a discussion difficult. As a case in point, reading the magazine *New in Chess* is recommended and in contrast to the magazine's title, we can observe that the new development in chess is not well appreciated. *New in Chess* apparently hints only at new opening moves, or - albeit reluctantly - new endgame database results. New developments such as shuffle chess and advanced chess have a rather low priority. With the pace of the current development it is not difficult to predict that the contents of the magazine soon will change.

The new obstacles encountered after a change of policy are clear: a novel domain of expertise should be developed. This statement also applies to the ICGA Journal, since widening our scope meant widening the expertise and implied the co-operation with many more researchers. In this issue we are happy to publish articles on Go, Chess and Planning, as well as reports on Shogi, Bridge and Chess (now seen as the game that makes headway in the world at large). Some scientists predict a new economy, others have hesitations whether it will happen the way it is predicted. But obviously in this century the relation between science, commerce, and sportive competition will change fundamentally. The interrelationship will be mixed and integrated: human and computers will play at a par. The Royal Dutch Chess Association understands this development and is one of the first organizations that recognizes its importance. Therefore we offer them our sincere congratulations with the headway made.

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