

Chess on the Offensive-- Two Big Bay Area Tourneys

By Charles Downie

CHESS HAS GONE the way of tennis, basketball and bowling — and all other sports. It's a money game these days but there is a difference. You don't have to be an expert or devote your life to chess to pick up a few cash prizes.

In fact there are two tournaments offering \$10 to \$500 to losers and winners this month in the Bay Area, including the Paul Masson American Class Chess Championships of 1974, which boasts the largest prize fund of any weekend tournament in the U.S. — \$8000.

Already under way is the Chess Festival at Serramonte shopping center in Daly City at Junipero Serra Freeway and Serramonte boulevard.

While you are welcome to watch and attend the performances of U.S. National Champion John Grefe and International Chess Master George Koltanowski you're out of luck if you want to play. The tournament was sold out over a month ago with more than 500 players from Unrated to Master-Expert competing for prizes ranging from \$10 (fourth place Unrated) to \$500 (winner, Master-Expert class).

Grefe and Koltanowski will give chess demonstrations and play 15 to 20 players simultaneously Saturday between 9 a.m. and noon. Anyone can attend this show free.

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THE PAUL Masson affair is on an even larger scale and has the distinct advantage of one of the greatest settings in the Bay Area. The tournament takes place at the old Mountain Vineyard where the now famous summer concerts are staged.

There is the old stone winery building, the spreading

trees on the terrace above, the vines of the original vineyard stretching off down the mountainside so steep it seems as though it must be plowed using mountain goats.

There is the stone house with its vast stone terrace where thousands of music lovers and chess buffs have sat and sipped wine in years past and the chess lovers will



CONCENTRATION

again this Memorial Day weekend.

And there will, as usual, be wine. It would be absurd if there weren't. The tasting this year will be Chenin Blanc and Crackling Rose — done between rounds.

The tournament is open to anyone who pays the entry fee: \$20 for B, A, Master and Expert class players; \$15 for those in Unrated, C and D/E classes.

This is a six-round Swiss and players with the same number of points will be paired as play progresses. Those who want to play must register Saturday 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. There is a players' meeting at 11:30 a.m. Saturday and play will start in Round I at noon.

Round II starts at 4:30 p.m.; Round III begins at 9 a.m. on Sunday; Round IV at 4:30 Sunday; Round V starts 9 a.m. Monday and the last round begins, hopefully, at 4:30 p.m.

Prizes go all the way down to fifth place (\$25) in each of the seven classes with the top prize in each \$500, except for Unrated where the winner gets \$250.

The important thing to remember about this event is that anyone can enter and anyone can kibitz. However, only those with special parking permits can park in the Mountain Vineyard lot on the hill. All others must park at the Masson Champagne Cellars on the other side of Saratoga. The firm has arranged to have a shuttle bus take visitors or participants without parking permits from the Champagne Cellars to the tournament.

Anyone who wants to play must bring his or her own board and men, pencils and, if you have one, a chess clock.

Beside the chess, the wine and the view there will be a performance by Koltanowski, best known as world blindfold chess champion. He will lecture on Bobby Fischer, answer questions about chess, play simultaneous chess with 20 or more persons and put on some of his noted memory stunts such as the Knight's Tour.

This may well be one of the last opportunities to watch Koltanowski, one of the great performers on the chess circuit. He will direct the Canadian Open, receive a gold medal and co-captain the U.S. Chess Olympic team in Niece come June, direct the U.S. Open—and then retire, for the last time, he says.