

Reaction to Fischer's end 4/4/75 S.F. Ex.

Bobby Fischer's abdication as world chess champion drew a mixed reaction here today in circles where the game is taken seriously.

Some thought it would have a detrimental effect, reducing public interest in chess, while others declared they were determined not to let that happen if possible.

"It would have been much better if the match took place, and it's a shame it won't," Walter Browne commented.

Browne is the American, Pan American and International German chess champion. He will be defending his Lone Pine championship in Southern California April 12 through 24 against 22 grand masters.

"Everybody would like to have seen the match take place," he said of the Fischer-Anatoly Karpov game that was cancelled.

"It would have produced a lot of publicity, and would have been really good for chess. It's a fantastic opportunity that didn't take place."

Browne thought, however, that chess is "still on the rise," and predicted that Fischer eventually will play again.

Bob Hamilton, co-owner



WALTER BROWNE
"Chess still on the rise"

with Bill McNally of Gambit, a shop at 625 Kearny St. that may sell more chess sets than any other in The City, had an unreservedly gloomy view.

"I think," he said, "it will have a most detrimental effect. He (Fischer) was the guy who inspired the chess revival.

"Already, in terms of our sales, his not playing has had the effect of slackening interest."

Hamilton estimated that his sales of chess sets has fallen off 10 to 20 per cent compared with a year ago.

"Backgammon is all the rage now," he added.

Nicholas C. Maffeo, chess master and teacher, called it "unfortunate" that Fischer did not play or promote chess during his reign as world champion.

"We were all hoping that Fischer fever would once again show the world that the U.S. does have a latent interest in chess," he commented.

"It's unfortunate that he has declined to play in a world championship match. However, I don't think it will kill chess, because there are a number of professionals who are determined to make chess known."

Jim Buff, another master, said Fischer's abdication revealed "the problems of the business of chess."

"In my view, all his demands (for tournament terms) were precedented. In the past there have been many world championship matches handled exactly the way he wanted to handle this one," Buff said.

"I feel this is just a ploy on the part of the Russians to get the title back under any circumstances. Chess is their national sport."

Buff felt that the situation had been handled "very poorly" by the International Chess Federation.

He conceded that he is a good friend of Fischer, and has played many games with him.

(Browne played Fischer once, five years ago.

"He got a draw," Browne grumbled. "I made a mistake.")

Buff and Maffeo, in their efforts to help toward a chess revival, have established the San Francisco Chess Club, free to the public.

It's located at Enrico's sidewalk cafe, 504 Broadway St., from 11 a.m. to 3 a.m. daily, and appeals particularly to the novice and inexperienced player.

Seven days a week, the club will offer chess classes, and the opportunity to play. Buff and Maffeo will be on hand most of the time.

They are also starting a weekly speed tournament at Enrico's, beginning at 7 p.m. April 8. Players will work against the clock, having five minutes to complete a game.

Another upcoming chess attraction are free exhibitions at the University of San Francisco, 11 a.m. next Tuesday and at San Francisco State University, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., next Thursday.