

A Noted Chess Master for SF

By WILL STEVENS

"The toughest thing about chess," said the new chess director of the Mechanics' Institute Chess Room, oldest of its kind in the United States, "is the tension."

Pipe - smoking, bespectacled, 30 year William G. "Bill" Addison should know.

Around the world, among tournament chess players, Addison already is one of the big names. He isn't a legend like Lasker, Capablanca, Alekhine or Euwe, who are to chess what Brahms, Beethoven, Mozart or Wagner are to music — or Babe Ruth, Ty Cobb, Christy Mathewson or Cy Young are to baseball.

CHESS OLYMPICS

But the current greats of chess — Fischer, Bisquier, Reshevsky and Evans know and respect America's sixth ranking chess master, former California chess champion and a member of the United States Chess Team at the 1964 World's Chess Olympics in Israel.

Addison, one of the new breed in world chess, doesn't talk about these things. His friends take care of that. Addison prefers to talk about chess itself, and about this he can become rapturous.

"There's no release from the tremendous tension of tournament chess," he recalled yesterday. "It's a pugnacious game. It's very competitive. It's also not a good way to get rich. The U. S. Open Chess championship pays only \$1,500. If you don't win, you might as well have stayed home."

CALIF. TITLE

He won the Eastern United States Open Chess Tournament in 1964, tied for third in the U. S. chess championship in 1963, and won the California chess championship that same year.

During 1959 - 60, he set an all - time record at the Manhattan Chess Club in New York by winning 12 of their tournaments in a row. He has won dozens of region 1, national and international awards.

But this doesn't make him a great intellectual, logician — or gambler, Addison explained. Chess players really aren't shaggy double-domes.

"People think you have to be an intellectual," he said. "But that's a myth. They



—Examiner Photo by Gordon Stone

WILLIAM ADDISON—ALWAYS EN GARDE
He reflects—as does chessboard in glasses

think you must have mathematical aptitude. That's another myth. I've taught chess to first graders with brain damage.

"Actually, there are two main tensions — the strong pull of logic, and the strong pull of unbridled imagination. And if you don't blend these, you go off the deep end."

Some players are cold logicians. Some are wild gamblers—"the people who lead quiet, everyday lives have a tendency to play the wildest, while extroverts are the most cautious — it's a strange thing, isn't it?"

Addison, who has been playing tournament chess since he was 12 years old, somewhere along the way developed an astonishing technique for teaching chess on a short-time basis.

Director of Youth Activities for the Piatagorsky Foundation in Los Angeles for two years, he also conducted chess classes for minority groups, and the handicapped, including deaf and blind young people. It was his success at this, rather than his tournament triumphs, that seems to please him most.

Addison, as drawn from his broad experience and championship play in America and overseas."

The room, on the second floor of the Institute building at 57 Post St., was established in 1858, and has been in continuous operation since then. Here members include people from all walks of life.

As Addison chatted, a cabbie — "a legician position player," as Addison would call him, confronted a surgeon — "one of the imagination tacticians" — over one of many chess boards in the room.

"There is no status, no race, no color when a check-mating attack starts," Addison said. "Chess players are the most tolerant people in the world. . . ."

Addison thinks Paul Morphy of New Orleans, back in the 1850s, was the greatest chess master of all times. There are those, Reshevsky and Bisquier among them, confronting young "Bill" Addison over kings, queens, and bishops, who have wondered at times if the name wasn't really Morphy.

Anyway, he belongs to San Francisco now.

"There were hundreds of them," he said, "and chess gave them something they never had before. It even brought beauty into some of their lives. And there is a beauty to chess, too, among other things."

OLD CHESS ROOM

Theodore R. Meyer, president of the Institute, is delighted with having Addison as the new Chess Director of America's oldest chess room.

"We are sure," said Meyer, "that the many Bay area chess devotees who are Institute members will find greater enjoyment from this historic game in tournaments and match - play planned by