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NEW TITLES FOR U.S. PLAYERS

The burgeoning list of U.S. International Masters has been increased by a quintet of rising stars. They include:

YASSER SEIRAWAN. Though Yasser is only 19 years old and had already achieved other IM norms, they became relatively unimportant when this summer he won the prestigious World Junior Championship in Skien, Norway, which automatically bestows upon the victor the International Master title. With this signal triumph, his name is added to the illustrious roster of previous winners whose names include Karpov, Spassky, Miles, Gheorghiu, Ivkov, Panno, Belyavsky, Chekhov, and three Americans—Lombardy, Kaplan and Diesen. We feel certain with Yasser that the IM title will be but a short stepping stone to the Grandmaster title.

JOHN PETERS. John is one of the rare players who previously refused to accept the IM title. No, he is not crazy. The truth is that two of his previous results were so good that he did not want to "waste" them on an IM title but preferred to save them for his GM title. In July he achieved his third IM norm in the Philadelphia International and this, combined with his Lone Pine results in 1977 and 1979, completed his IM requirements. Now he still has two GM results from Lone Pine 1978 and London 1978 as he homes in on the Grandmaster title. When John is in form, he is capable of defeating anybody—as is evidenced by his many fine results. It seems inevitable that soon he will score another triumph which will deplete the list of IM's but add yet another Grandmaster for the United States.

JOHN WATSON. This John achieved three qualifying results in 1978 including the GHI International (New York), Lloyds Bank Masters (London), and the Aaronson Masters (Harrow, England). This consistency augurs well for his future success since, in the past, erratic play and inconsistency have hampered Watson from achieving the results of which he is obviously capable. John is a cartoonist as well as the author of The 2nd Marshall International and a forthcoming series on the English opening soon to be published by Batsford.

BRUCE RIND. Like Watson, Bruce achieved his norms in the GHI International, Lloyds Bank Masters, and the Aaronson Masters. Bruce is a teacher by profession but an excellent student of opening theory. He is particularly successful in those variations of which he specializes which usually utilize his tactical skill and aggressive style.

NICHOLAS DE FIRMIAN. Nick, originally from Southern California, brought his talents north when he enrolled as a student at UC Berkeley. For a long time he has been considered one of our most promising young players, and he undoubtedly would have achieved the IM title at an earlier date had he been able to spend more time on his avocation. He parlays a good positional sense with a tactical flare and a coolness under fire (even under extreme time pressure) into frequent successes. Apart from his current IM norms, in 1976 he shared first place in the Canadian Open. His IM title was gained for his results at the 1978 GHI International, at Gausdal, Norway in 1978, and at Lone Pine in 1979.

Normally, the International Master title is awarded to a player who achieves IM results in events covering at least 24 games and who has a rating of at least 2350 in the current FIDE Rating List. It can also be granted immediately to one who achieves first place in special events such as the World Junior Championship as occurred in Seirawan's case.

Recently, the new title of FIDE Master has been created for players who score two or more FIDE Master results in events covering at least 24 games and have a rating of at least 2250 in the current FIDE Rating List. Three U.S. players have met this criteria and have just been awarded the title. They are Robert Gruchacz of Newark, NJ, Walter Morris of Ames, IA, and John Meyer from Washington, DC. Bob and Walter recently achieved their last norm in Gausdal, Norway, while John had accumulated no less than four norms. Apparently, he was just waiting for this title to be created. We expect more successes and even more prestigious titles from all of them in the future.

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