

April 10, 1979

Gentlemen,

At the PCA meeting in Lone Pine on March 31, 1979, the PCA decided to hire a professional fund-raiser. Arnold Denker proposed that we make plans for a big tournament, ask for as much money as we want, and leave it up to the fund-raiser to sell it to a sponsor. I'm writing to you for your suggestions on his idea of a knockout U.S. Match Championship.

Here's the basic format. Arnold wants each of the USCF regions to send a representative to the finals. Everyone should be eligible for their regional championship. In the finals, a series of short matches would decide the winner, as in the first tournament in London, 1851. The winner should receive \$20,000 of the \$50,000 prize fund for the finals.

This could be an exciting way to promote chess. Within each region, there would be a contest for the one qualifying spot, and the publicity generated should make it easy for the region to finance their champion's trip to the finals. The players in the finals would be well-paid, the PCA would get publicity and support, and there's a chance that we could attract more sponsors for more events. Matches catch the public imagination more than tournaments, and, in the absence of a 1979 U.S. Championship, a Match Championship will have even more prestige.

Now we must work out the details.

- 1) How many finalists? There are 12 USCF regions, but 8 or 16 are better for a knockout. Should we have 12 players and give four (which four?) of them a bye in the first finals round, or should we seed four

more players (chosen how?) to raise the field to 16, or should we group some of the regions together in order to have only 8 finalists?

- 2) How many games in the finals matches? It's clear that we can't wait for a player to reach a certain number of wins, because draws could prolong a match and disrupt the tournament. There must be a limit to the number of games, and a procedure for breaking tied matches.
- 3) How should the \$50,000 be distributed in the finals? Also, should there be a consolation match for third place?
- 4) Regional qualification. It's possible that we can cooperate with the USCF on this. They are considering a proposal for the 1980 U.S. Championship from Louis Statham and Isaac Kashdan that includes regional qualification of two players from each region. If the PCA does it alone, we will obviously have to rely on the help of the most active local organizers. If we have a cut-off date for entries, an organizer could determine how many preliminary rounds are necessary in his region, and schedule dates for them. Players could meet privately or at a central location. In the larger regions, the first few rounds of the preliminaries could be conducted at several sites. If a fast time limit (50/2 or quicker) is used, two best-of-three-games matches could be played in one weekend. Suggestions, please.
- 5) Entry fee. Something should be set aside for the regional champion's expenses, as well as for normal

expenses for TD's, renting a hall, etc. If the turnout is good, these tournaments should show a profit.

6) Prizes (if any) in the preliminaries.

Please send me your ideas on these and other details within two weeks. I've promised Arnold that the PCA would present him with a formal plan soon, so that the fundraiser could get to work on it. Much preparation is required if we intend to pull this off in 1980. Thanks for your help.

Sincerely,

*John Peters*

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