

June 27, 1962

Mr. Morris Kasper  
1372 Broadway  
New York 18, N. Y.

Dear Morris:

As you know, I am not in a position at this time to do much for the promotion of Chess and Chess activities.

However, where I think I can do some good I am willing to find some time to express my thoughts regarding those things which I think will do some good in better promoting the interests of Chess.

On June 18th I wrote to Lessing Rosenwald expressing my dissatisfaction, and what I considered to be the dissatisfaction of most Chess players in the United States, with the situation resulting from holding the annual Lessing J. Rosenwald Tournament for the championship of the United States without the participation of Fischer and Reshevsky.

I felt that this annual tournament without the participation of the best players would be "just another tournament", without any particular significance or interest nationally or internationally.

I felt that the situation could be remedied and Reshevsky and Fischer would participate if they were given a retainer. While I think that you and others disagree with me, nevertheless I feel that a retainer for those two particular persons is justified. Besides, I felt it was necessary to give such a retainer in order to accomplish this desired objective.

In my letter to Mr. Rosenwald, I suggested two alternative mechanisms, namely:

1. That there must be donated an additional \$2,000. so that the \$3,000. contributed by you there will be \$5,000. "in the pot" for this tournament. Reshevsky and Fischer could then each receive a \$1,000. retainer and there would be \$3,000. for prizes and expenses. Perhaps, some of these other "expenses" could consist of a modest amount of travel money or maintenance money for a few desirable out of town contestants such as the Byrne brothers.
2. That if the tournament is to be financed entirely by your contribution of \$3,000. there must first be deducted enough of a retainer, probably about \$750. each to Reshevsky and Fischer to insure their participation. The balance, which would be small enough, could be prize money, probably only in two or three categories, first, second and third prize with maybe a modest amount reserved for some expense money that could be given for travel to a small number of contestants.

Rosenwald's secretary replied to me under date of June 25th, a photostatic copy of which letter I am attaching herewith.

It is evident that by "Plan A" Rosenwald was referring to "Y1" in my letter.



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I, also, think that this first plan is the best one--to raise altogether \$5,000., an additional \$2,000. to Rosenwald's \$3,000. so that if Reshevsky and Fischer are given a \$1,000. retainer each the full \$3,000. can be used for prizes, minus perhaps for some minor expense money.

All of which means that the American Chess Foundation, including individual donors such as yourself and perhaps Mrs. Piatigorsky of Los Angeles, might raise the additional \$2,000.

A possible alternative proposition would be to hold this tournament every other year in which case maybe Rosenwald could be induced to furnish \$4,000. and the Foundation and others the other \$2,000. so that the financial burden would be a little less.

In my opinion, no participating funds could be expected from the United States Chess Federation for the reason that while they have many fine Chess players as members, for some reason they seem unwilling to contribute any funds, however small, for important National and International Chess events.

I do not agree with Rosenwald that the name of the Tournament should be changed to "United States Championship". I would try to talk Rosenwald out of changing the name although he would have a right to insist on it if he wanted to.

I feel confident that both Fischer and Reshevsky would agree to participate every year in this tournament for the United States championship if they were given this retainer of \$1,000. each and, perhaps, they might be induced to take \$750. each. Nor would I worry too much about the non-professionals who might complain or might not want to participate on account of these retainers.

It is much more important that we have Reshevsky and Fischer as participants than that we satisfy the few who may have some objections to their getting retainers. However, I am not in favor of keeping anything "undisclosed". The fact that they are getting retainers should be disclosed to all who are interested and, in my opinion, there is nothing to apologize for.

Naturally, the United States Chess Federation will have to be agreeable to any changes that are made and you will note that I am sending a copy of this communication to Fred Cramer and Jerry Spann.

I am wondering if you would be good enough to get in touch with Walter Fried, Fred Cramer and Jerry Spann so that you will be able to write me and perhaps phone me to give me the consensus so that I can write Mr. Rosenwald and let him know your reactions.

With kind personal regards to you and all who receive this communication, I remain,

Sincerely yours,

Alexander Biano

AB:bk  
cc: Walter Fried  
Fred Cramer  
Jerry Spann