

544 Market Street, Room 805
San Francisco 4, Calif.
July 7, 1952

Mr. Neil T. Austin
1608 - 42nd Street
Sacramento 19, Calif.

Dear Neil:

I got a note from Phil Smith agreeing to whatever you decide regarding the State Championship. I think that you ought to hold a tournament, mainly because that's the way the other parts of the State are operating. Also, each player in the finals is carrying about \$25 in prize money from the preliminaries, and the north is especially anxious for the money.

After returning from a long week-end, I read your two letters concerning the rating system. I was puzzled that you first noted that you weren't as mad as you sounded, then in the second letter, tendered your resignation. But after talking to Bip maybe I see why.

Without going into deep waters, let me say that two things seem to produce obvious absurdities. First, the original table, where a master needs 50% to retain his rank. In a tournament of our 12 masters, six would probably be demoted summarily. That of course is ridiculous. We wouldn't have any left after a bit. Second, we now have A.B. Stamer and Ralston in the same category as Francis Crofut and Stan Mac Carty. That is impossible too. A glance at the record will show that they belong in quite different groups.

Something is wrong; let's see if we can patch it up. One suggestion is not to demote anybody unless he proves it up by a second poor year. Another is never demote anybody. A third is to count previous experience with more weight -- for example, Fink has had a master rating since 1924 or so: Give him 100 points a year for 38 years, or 3800. Then if he scores 50 points this year, his score would be 98.7. (Fink would not drop a category for many years this way, but why should he.) Or take McClain -- a master since about 1946. If he plays one year of Expert chess, he should lose about 1/6 of a category.

In haste,

Guthrie McClain
Guthrie McClain (PK)