

Cork Congress 2007 review

Venue: Metropole Hotel, Cork city

Over 160 players made the journey to Cork over the weekend of the 30th March to 1st April in the Metropole Hotel. For the masters section, we had the pleasure of welcoming three GM players, namely Stuart Conquest of England who lives in Spain, Alex Baburin of Russia living in Ireland and Harmen Jonkman, who does so much traveling we could suggest the airport is where he resides!! In addition, we had some players making the journey from Germany, France and England. Local hopes were on young FM Alex Lopez who plays for Douglas.

The format of the traditional three sections was altered slightly to accommodate the more ambitious players close to the threshold. Players over 1500 could play up to the masters (1600+) and those over 1150 could play up to the majors (1200-1600). This was well received by all who took advantage of it and may become a regular feature for the congress. The Masters section had over 60 players as a result.

In the **masters** almost all results went with seed in round one. Cork player Paul O Donovan had nice win over Michael Hansch, over 300 rating points above him. Round two produced two great results for Cork players David Path and Stephen short. Both players drew with GM's Conquest and Jonkman, in slight time trouble David did have opportunity to convert for a full point but would not complain about a draw with a GM (I suspect) if offered at the start of the game. Stephen played very well and deservedly got a draw.

Short v Jonkman GM, rd 2.

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 Nf6 4. O-O Nxe4 5.

d4 Nd6 6. Bxc6 dxc6 7. dxe5 Nf5 8. Qxd8+ Kxd8 9. Nbd2 h6 10. b3 a5 11. Bb2 a4 12. c4 Be6 13. Rfd1 Kc8 14. Nd4 Nxd4 15.

Bxd4 b6 16. h3 Bb4 17. Ne4 Bf5 18. Bc3Bxe4 19. Bxb4 Bc2 20. Rdc1 axb3 21. axb3 Rxa1 22. Rxa1 Kb7 23. Rc1 Bxb3 24. f4

g6 25. g4 Ra8 26. f5 gxf5 27. gxf5 Rg8+ 28. Kh2 Rg5 29. e6 fxe6 30. fxe6 c5 31. e7 Re5 32. Re1 Rxe1 33. Bxe1 Ba4 34. Bd2 h5 35.

Kg3 Kc8 36. Kf2 Kd7 37. Bf4 c6 38. Bc7 b5 39. Bd6 b4 40. Bxc5 b3 41. Ba3 c5 42. Ke2 Ke6 43. Ke3 Kf6 44. Kf4 Be8 45. Bxc5 b2

46. Bd4+ Kxe7 47. Bxb2 Kd6 48. Bd4

Draw agreed 1/2-1/2

Path v Conquest GM

1. Nf3 g6 2. c4 Bg7 3. e4 d6 4. d4 Nf6 5. Nc3 O-O 6. Be2 Nbd7 7. O-O e5 8. Be3 Ng4 9. Bg5 f6 10. Bc1 Kh8 11. h3 Nh6 12. Be3

Nf7 13. Qc2 c6 14. Rfd1 Qe7 15. b4 exd4 16. Nxd4 Re8 17. b5 Nd8 18. Bf4 Ne5 19. a4 Be6 20. Na2Bg8 21. Rac1 Rc8 22. Qd2

Ndf7 23. a5 a6 24. Nb4 Ng5 25. Bxg5 fxe5 26. bxc6 bxc6 27. Nf3 Nxf3+ 28. Bxf3 Red8 29. Bg4 Be6 30. Bxe6 Qxe6 31. Qxg5 Rd7

32. Qg4 Qxg4 33. hxg4 Rb7 34. Nd3 c5 35. Rb1 Rcb8 36. Rxb7 Rxb7 37. e5 Bxe5 38. Nxe5 dxe5 39. Rd5 e4 40. Rxc5 Kg7 41. Rc6

Rb4 42. Kh2 Ra4 43. Rxa6 Rxc4

Draw agreed 1/2-1/2

GM Alex Baburin and FM Alex Lopez made very solid starts and indeed drew their meeting.

Here is the game annotated by Alex Lopez of his win over Harmen Jonkman GM.

(1) Astaneh,Alex (2287) - Jonkman,Harmen (2426) [C54]

Cork Chess Congress 07' (4), 01.04.2007

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.0-0 Nf6 5.d3 This whole line is pretty unambitious, but as I am not playing much these days, I didn't want to go into some of the sharper options available to white. **5...d6 6.c3 Bb6 7.Bg5?!** Too early, Jonkman's next few moves capitalise on this mistake, and White can only strive from equality out of the opening from hereon in. **7...h6 8.Bh4 g5!?** Seizing the initiative... **9.Bg3 Bg4 10.Nbd2 Nh5 11.Re1** [11.Kh1!? was the better option probably 11...Qd7 12.h3 Be6 (12...Bxh3? 13.gxh3 Qxh3+ 14.Nh2+- white has nothing to worry about here...)] 13.Nh2 Nxe3+ 14.fxe3 an interesting position, I would debate whether or not white has any edge here, but I don't think he stands worse, which is better than the way the game continued... 14...0-0-0 15.Bxe6 fxe6] **11...Nxe3 12.hxe3 h5 13.Nf1 h4 14.Ne3 hxe3?!** after this i think white's play is relatively straightforward [14...Bxe3! 15.Rxe3 hxe3 16.fxe3 Qf6 17.Qb3 0-0-0 18.Rf1 Be6 19.Bxe6+ fxe6 20.Nh2 Qg6 21.Ng4 d5³ White will have a tough time in this position...] **15.Nxe3 gxf2+ 16.Nxf2 g4 17.Kf1 Bxf2 18.Kxf2 Qf6=** up to here it's all pretty much forced, and 18...Qf6 is certainly the best move. Now white has a few options, and I think with accurate play on both sides, it's roughly equal. **19.Re3 Rh7 20.Qe2 Nd4?** getting a little too creative, missing white's strong (and forced) 22nd move. **21.cxd4**

exd4 22.e5 dxe3+ 23.Qxe3 Qe7 24.Nd2? My opponent was already in some time trouble, and I guess I wanted to make sure time was a factor asap! Had I stopped to think a bit more though, Qe4 would have pretty much ended it! [24.Qe4! Rh8 25.Qxg4! the solid option, killing black's counterplay completely. (25.Qxb7 Rd8 26.exd6 Qxd6 27.Qe4+ Kf8 28.Ne5 Rh5 29.Re1 Qb6+ 30.Re3 Rd4 31.Nd7+ Rxd7 32.Qe8+ Kg7 33.Qxd7 g3+ 34.Kf3 Qf6+!= this is obviously not all forced, but as a line it's a good illustration of the dangers of taking the b7 pawn.) 25...d5 26.Bb3 c6 27.Re1+-] **24...dxe5** here i thought i had a winning position, but fritz thinks its tougher than what it looks, and he probably has a point! still, i think white's two minor pieces give him a definite edge. **25.Re1 f6 26.Ne4 b6 27.Bb5+ Kf8** [27...Kf7 28.Bc4+ Kg7 29.Ng3 Qb4 30.Re2 Rf8 31.Nf5+ Kh8 32.Kg3 and White has a definite advantage...] **28.Nc3 Rd8 29.Kg1 g3?!** unnecessary sacrifice **30.Qxg3 Rd4 31.Bc4 Qg7 32.Qf3 Qh6** [32...Qh8 33.Rxe5! Rh1+ 34.Kf2 Qh4+ 35.Ke3 Rd8 36.Re6 Kg7 37.Kd2+-] **33.Ne4** at this stage Jonkman had only about 3 minutes left on the clock, so all I needed to make sure of was to not blunder in the next few moves. [33.Qa8+] **33...Ke7 34.Qg4?!** another weak move, with a far better alternative [34.Ng3! Rf4 35.Nf5+ Rxf5 36.Qxf5+- may have been quicker.... 36...Kd8 37.Qe4] **34...Qh1+ 35.Kf2 Qh4+ 36.Qxh4 Rxh4 37.Nd2 Rd8** [37...b5! 38.Bxb5 Rb4 39.Bc4 Rxb2 40.Kg3 Rh8 41.Ne4 a5 42.Rf1 Rh6 43.Rf2 and white will struggle to win this....] **38.Nf3 Rh5? 39.d4** Once the central pawns fall, it's only a matter of technique. With about a minute on my opponent's clock at this point, my task was far simpler. **39...c6 40.dxe5 fxe5 41.g4 Rhh8 42.Rxe5+ Kd6 43.Re6+ Kc5 44.Be2** [44.Ne5+-] **44...Rhe8 45.Rf6 Re4 46.g5** [46.Ng5 Ree8 47.Ne6+] **46...a5 47.g6 Rg4 48.Rxc6+ Kxc6 49.Ne5+ Kd6 50.Nxg4 Ke7** and my opponents flag fell. still, its a simple enough win from here anyway. **1-0**

Ennis player Rory Quinn was best of the untitled players with a very impressive 5/6 in the final shakeup. His loss came in round 3 to GM Conquest but went onto finish third overall.

In a time scramble, Alex Lopez secure his final point of the tournament to finish joint first with GM Baburin with 5.5/6

<http://www.corkchess.com/Congress/2007/ResultsMasters.aspx>



David Path during his game with Stuart Conquest GM, with Harmen Jonkman, Stuart and Paul O Donovan during one of the rounds.



Alex Lopez, joint winner, during the congress and also Alex Baburin GM during the congress.



Alex Baburin receives the trophy from Cork chess life president Joe Browne

In the **majors** section, numbers were down on last year owing a number of players deciding to play up. With that said 38 players got ready to do battle. Recent winner of the Bunratty tournament Gabriel Murza was top seed with 1580 rating, the bulk of players were inside the 1300-1500 rating band.

However, seeding and ratings are not a ticket to a win and it was young John Courtney (1325) who was making the early running with Yoel Ferrer(1400). A number of close followers were involved who eventually were part of the final shake up. Having taken a traveling bye, even this scribe was involved at one point with an opportunity for joint 2nd after round 5.

In round 5 John won the crucial encounter with Yoel Ferrer and drew his remaining game to take the title.

Alas, during the tournament, the dreaded mobile phone cost a player a game. This despite our best announcements, notice and reminders....!! It is relatively new for all concerned but its still unfortunate to have to let someone know that its game over.

There were a large gathering on joint 2nd, including Cork players Donal O' Hallahan, Alex Martinovic and Joe Moroney. I missed out with a spectacular horror show gaff in round 6, but top ten was not so bad for my first Cork majors....?!!

All results listed here.

<http://www.corkchess.com/Congress/2007/ResultsMajors.aspx>



Eventual winner John Courtney in action.

In the **minors section**, there were 60 players of all ages and indeed a few internationals to add to the mix. Didier Mukekwa, Thabani Balang (ex-Cork, now Limerick...and playing while his expectant partner was **36** weeks gone..such committment !!!!) and Amin Shamsudin played impressively and were the front runners. Local performers Daniel Cashin and Mark O'Hallahan did very well also.

A lot of the young players appreciated the refreshments we laid on, we accept no responsibility for any hyper kids Saturday or Sunday evenings ! In keeping with the easy going atmosphere created, we gave out some small prizes to a lot of the younger players as a momento of the occasion, supplied from Hungarian IM Erdélyi Tamás and tournament controller, John Alfred.

Alex Baburin also generously sponsored some vouchers for his book stall for some of the prizes.

There was no stopping Didier who ran out an excellent 6/6 finish with Thabani and Amin sharing joint second. Six players shared 4-9th place.

<http://www.corkchess.com/Congress/2007/ResultsMinors.aspx>



Some players from the minor section during the congress.

Action from the Masters section



As a final treat for all young players. GM Alex Baburin held a Q&A session. I know from looking at the faces of some of the parents that they had probably primed their kids to ask questions they actually want to know. It was well received and definitely something to consider for a repeat performance next year. (Fresh questions please !!)

Alex Baburin GM gives some words of advice to a keen audience...



On behalf of Tom Hickey & myself, we hope those who played enjoyed the weekend and look forward to making it happen all again for 2008.

All the best,

Michael Bradley
Co-Tournament Director
April 2007



Left :Tom Hickey (Co-Tournament director) & John Alfred (Controller) hard at work.
Right: My good self during the evening “discussions” in the Metropole.
(Classic chess sacrifice of sleep for good craic...)



Anne Coughlan & Aonghus Gannon. Chilling.



Harmen Jonkman GM with the Jack & Janet Healy



John Donoghue, Pat Twomey & DJ all thinking...



Paul O Donovan, Stuart Conquest and Harmen Jonkman on table 3-5 during the congress



Brian Nolan concentrating mad...



Simon Lawrence showing Hugh Doyle a thing or two...not for long we suspect !!