

Dear Friends,

Attached is a database that IM Jay Whitehead, who died earlier today, was working on for the past twenty years or so. Jay had his laptop stolen in Buenos Aires a few years ago and shortly after he lost the flash drive that had the backup data. Fortunately he had given the Mechanics' Institute CC a copy of the games which got had merged into a historical database we maintain. Later when he needed the games it was pretty much possible to separate them as Jay used an internal numbering system that corresponded with a excel spread sheet he maintained that contained additional information.

My understanding is this excel file was primarily a record of where Jay found each game but am not certain having never had a copy of the information. Recently Elliott Winslow passed on a pair of old disks that he was safeguarding for Jay that might contain this information. Elliott was a very good friend to Jay in many ways the past few weeks and helped to make his last days peaceful.

If the attempt to retrieve the data is successful you will receive it. Hopefully this will be the case as it would be wonderful to know where he found individual games. Jay was very meticulous in recording this information and it would be a pity if it were lost.

Two days ago Jay explained to me that while persevering the games was very important to him it was not his primary motivation which was to record as many results from 19th century chess players as possible to provide data to create a more accurate way to rate chess players from the 1800s. He was convinced that the historical ratings for players like Staunton were much too high. It's quite possible that no titled player since Fischer spent so much time studying the old masters.

This desire for data explains why there are some games with no moves here. Jay wanted to at least have the result if nothing else.

There are probably around 14,000 complete games here. Jay did not keep up with Mega so there is undoubtedly some overlap with what already exists in MegaDatabase 2011. Still I am pretty sure that there is much that is new. For example Dr. Divinsky found many games by Lasa that were completely new to him.

During the past two decades Jay traveled to libraries in Europe, South America and the US. He spent several months at the John G. White collection in Cleveland. Many if not most of the games come from old newspaper columns.

Jay wished to have his research disseminated as widely as possible and put to use. Please feel free to pass it on or post it on your website if you wish. If you could mention that this is Jay's work it would be nice.

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Thanks,
John