

Jay E. Whitehead

(* 12/10/1961 New York † 04/10/2011 San Francisco)

Our member John Donaldson has informed us that his friend, the International Master **Jay Whitehead** passed away last week. Only a few days before his 50th birthday he died from cancer.

Jay Whitehead was not only a great chess talent who was awarded the IM title in 1986 (at the age of 25), he was also an excellent backgammon player. But already before his 30th birthday he gave up tournament play, in 1997 David Lazarus reported in his online article on the psychological background of this step: [Pawns of the Game - Love, obsession, madness, and other matters of chess](#) (see the 2nd half of the text) which also contains further details on Jay and his older brother Paul (a comparable chess talent). Already before (in 1984) Jay Whitehead had joined the Hare Krishna sect.

In his two last decades Jay Whitehead devoted to chess historical research and collected games from the 19th century - i.e. prior to 1867 - which he recorded in a database, and some time ago he presented his project on the page [Definitive Work on Chess History in Progress!](#) You will find current information about it in [John Donaldson's mail](#) (04/10/2011) who simultaneously sent us Jay's database in [CBV format \(1.5 MB\)](#) and [PGN format \(8.7 MB\)](#).

Mark Ginsburg has sent us a mail with two historical photographs (reproduced below). Among other things he tells us how the visit of the Lugano Open 1984 had come about: [Mail by Mark Ginsburg](#) (05/10/2011), as well as Mark Ginsburg's **A Personal Chess History: [The Fabulous 80s: Lugano, Switzerland](#)**.

- _ Photo from the US Junior 1978 From left: NM Tom Costigan, Jay Whitehead, Yasser Seirawan, Michael Rohde, Paul Whitehead, Steve Odendahl, Mark Ginsburg and John Fedorowicz
- _ Photo from the Lugano Open 1984: Jay Whitehead (with his back to the camera) analyzes with Viktor Korchnoi. Left from Kortschnoi Boris Spassky and Florin Gheorghiu, between Spassky and Korchnoi Sergej Kudrin. (Photo by Catherine Jaeg)

Additional obituaries of Jay Whitehead were published by the *United States Chess Federation* ([main.uschess.org/...](#), with a newer photo of Jay) and by Dennis Monokroussos at his *Chess Mind Blog* ([www.thechessmind.net/blog/...](#)).