

2024-07-13

## The 1st Chess Olympiad and creation of the FI(D)E - The Chess Tournament (3/4)



by Jean Oliver Leconte

Third part of the articles dedicated to the 1<sup>st</sup> Chess Olympiad and the creation of the FI(D)E.

Part one: [The 1st Chess Olympiad and creation of the FI\(D\)E - The first steps \(1/4\)](#)

Part two: [The 1st Chess Olympiad and creation of the FI\(D\)E - Getting organized \(2/4\)](#)

I would particularly like to thank Mr Guy Gignac, who sent me an exceptional document. It is the programme for the "International Amateur Chess Tournament", photos of which you have on the left and below.

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In addition to the list of participants from the various nations, you can see that the chairman of the referees' committee is none other than Alexander Alekhine (who was not yet World Champion, nor French at the time).

The chess competition consisted of 3 parts: a preliminary round, a tournament between the winners, and a tournament between the losers, known as the "subsidiary". There would be an individual ranking and a Nations ranking.

This is well explained by Gaston Legrain in his chess column for the newspaper L'Action Française of 7 July 1924.

## TOURNOI OLYMPIQUE D'ECHECS

Dans sa séance du 21 juin, la *Fédération Française des Echecs* a décidé de diviser le tournoi en trois phases :

1° *Epreuves préliminaires*. — Il sera formé des groupes égaux. Aucune nation ne sera représentée par plus d'un joueur par groupe. Chaque groupe jouera un tournoi à un tour.

2° *Tournoi des vainqueurs*. — Les concurrents classés premiers dans les épreuves préliminaires joueront un tournoi à un tour. Le vainqueur de ce tournoi sera nommé *champion des amateurs d'échecs de la VIII<sup>e</sup> Olympiade*.

3° *Classement subsidiaire des nations*. — Les concurrents exclus du tournoi des vainqueurs joueront un nombre de parties égal à celui joué par les concurrents du tournoi des vainqueurs en évitant la rencontre de deux joueurs d'une même nation. Le classement des nations sera fait en additionnant les points de tous les joueurs de chaque nation dans les trois épreuves.

Durée du tournoi : du samedi 12 juillet, 14 heures, au dimanche 20 juillet, 18 heures. Séances de 14 à 18 heures et de 20 à 24 heures. Soit 17 séances.

Temps de réflexion : 40 coups pour les deux premières heures et ensuite 20 coups à l'heure.

Cette lutte de 19 nations, représentées par 60 amateurs réputés, est un événement qui marquera dans les *Annales des Echecs*. C'est un triomphe de l'esprit sportif que la mêlée de tant de combattants accourus vers nous de loin, de bien loin, pour conquérir, non pas quelques gros chèques, mais les seuls lauriers de la gloire.

Si la Grande Presse consent à secouer son indifférence et commente ce tournoi avec un peu de l'enthousiasme qu'elle prodigue aux menus exploits des boxeurs, la cause des Echecs en France est gagnée. Là-haut, contemplant la nouvelle ère de prospérité du jeu qui l'immortalisa, Philidor nous sourira.

GASTON LEGRAIN.

[RetroNews](#)

L'Action Française of 7 July 1924

## OLYMPIC CHESS TOURNAMENT

In its meeting of 21 June, the French Chess Federation decided to divide the tournament into three phases:

1 - Preliminary rounds. - Equal groups will be formed. No nation will be represented by more than one player per group. Each group will play a one-round tournament.

2 - Winners' tournament. - The competitors ranked first in the preliminary rounds will play a one-round tournament. The winner of this tournament will be named Amateur Chess Champion of the VIII Olympiad.

3 - Subsidiary classification of nations. - Competitors excluded from the winners' tournament will play a number of games equal to that played by the competitors in the winners' tournament, avoiding the meeting of two players from the same nation. The ranking of the nations will be made by adding the points of all the players of each nation in the three events.

Duration of the tournament: Saturday 12 July, 2pm, to Sunday 20 July, 6pm. Sessions from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. and from 8 p.m. to midnight. A total of 17 sessions.

Reflection time: 90 moves for the first two hours and then 20 moves per hour.

This battle of 19 nations, represented by 60 renowned amateurs, is an event that will go down in the annals of chess. It is a triumph of the sporting spirit that the melee of so many combatants who have come to us from far, far away, to conquer, not a few large cheques, but the laurels of glory alone.

If the Great Press is willing to shake off its indifference and comment on this tournament with a little of the enthusiasm it lavishes on the minor exploits of boxers, the cause of chess in France is won. Up there, contemplating the new era of prosperity of the game that immortalised him, Philidor will smile at us.

GASTON LEGRAIN.

In the report of the tournament published in the Bulletin n°12 of the FFE - July August September 1924, Pierre Vincent wrote:

And this is why our champion, G. Renaud, was able to write in a special edition of his remarkable chess chronicle in the *Éclaireur de Nice*:

"On the early morning of 12 July last, in the Salle des Fêtes of the IX<sup>th</sup> arrondissement town hall in Paris, fifty-five players from eighteen different nations answered the call of the competitors. Some, like the Argentinians, had crossed the ocean to come and compete for their chance to represent Latin America.

Others, like the Latvians or the Finns, had crossed the breadth of Europe and travelled for five consecutive nights and four consecutive days... And now they were all there, driven by the same desire to win, with the hope of supporting their country's flag loud and clear.

And that radiant morning of 12 July 1924 was at the same time like the dawn of a new era in the history of chess. It is true that an international tournament had already been held in Paris in 1900 for the last time, and that major competitions have since been held in countries all over the world. But never before had the elite of chess enthusiasts from the two worlds, from eighteen nations, come together without profit motive, solely to try to win an enviable and glorious title: that of champion of the VIII Olympiad."

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— The town hall of the 9th arrondissement of Paris

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— The town council room, formerly the salle des fêtes, the venue for the tournament and the signing of the FIDE foundation.

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— [RetroNews](#)

Photo published in the Excelsior newspaper - 13 July 1924

Extract from the newspaper Le Gaulois of 13 July 1924, quoted in bulletin number 12 of the FFE.

"At 10 o'clock precisely - chess players are punctual people - Mr Lucien Sauphar, mayor of the IXth arrondissement, whose benevolent generosity cannot be praised enough, pronounced the words of welcome in his large Salle des Fêtes where he gives a wide hospitality to the competitors of this tournament. Mr Mesureur, former Minister of Trade, presided over the event. In a charming opening speech, he spoke of the benefits of the famous game for training the mind, and showed that, while this tournament was completely in harmony with the stadium games, which showcase discipline, grace and strength of body, it also highlights the pure beauty of intellectual speculation, which attests to the balance of the mind.

Fifty-five players answered the call of their names, then Mr Georges Renaud, French champion, read out the oath in the Golden Book of the French Chess Federation:

We swear that we will take part in the International Chess Tournament, organised on the occasion of the celebration of the VIII Olympiad, as loyal competitors, respectful of the rules of the tournament, for the honour of our countries and the glory of the game of Chess.

Fifty-five raised arms confirmed the words of the French champion and the fifty-five competitors signed the Golden Book of the French Chess Federation."

The referees' committee was chaired by Alexander Alekhine, with each country having a representative. The first round took place at 2pm on Saturday 12 July. Each player had to play five games in the preliminary rounds, and eight games in the subsequent tournament (winners' tournament or subsidiary tournament for players who did not qualify).

\_ Revue L'échiquier 1925 - Photo of the decisive game to decide the winner of the individual tournament.

The winners' tournament keeps some suspense until the last game.  
Bulletin number 12 of the FFE states:

"Colle, Tchepernoff and Mattison can therefore win the tournament. For Tchepernoff to win, he has to beat his opponent and Colle has to beat Mattison. He will then have 5 and so will Colle, but as he beat Colle he will come first.

For Colle to win, he has to beat Mattison. Whatever the result between Tchepernoff and Apschenek, he will have the best result of the three players finishing with 5. For Mattison to win, all he has to do is draw.

However, Colle quickly obtains a superior game. Mattison has to sacrifice a quality to have counter-chances and Colle has the win in hand... Especially as Tchepernoff has just lost. The journalists are already preparing their telegrams to celebrate Colle's victory...

But the young master, in a hurry to get the game over with, made a few careless moves and almost lost. At 1pm, the game was adjourned. When it resumed at 3pm, he managed to cancel it. Mattison is the Amateur Chess Champion of the VIII Olympiad."

Curiously, I haven't found the complete [Colle vs Mattison](#) game in the magazines of the time, or on the internet (it seems to be missing moves after the game resumed), even though it was a decisive game.

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La Stratégie 1924

[Hermann \(Hermanis\) Mattison](#), winner of the individual tournament.

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The article was first published on [Le Café de la Régence](#)

