

News release

Tuesday 14th September 2010

LONDON CHESS CLASSIC 2010

Expectation is building for the strongest chess tournament ever to be held in Britain, when eight of the world's best players meet for the second London Chess Classic, running from 8-15 December 2010 at the Olympia Conference Centre. Tickets are now on sale (<http://www.ukgamesshop.com>) both to watch the super-grandmasters and to play in the wide range of subsidiary events.

Heading the line-up is the world chess champion, Viswanathan Anand from India; the teenage sensation who currently outranks him on the world chess rating list, Magnus Carlsen from Norway; and Anand's immediate predecessor as champion, Vladimir Kramnik from Russia.

Vishy Anand is the one addition to the field that contested the first London Chess Classic in December 2009. Though undisputed world champion, Anand is currently not the highest rated player in the world, but he recently wrested back third place from Kramnik, so is considered the man most likely to stop Carlsen making it two London triumphs in a row. Anand has recently stated that his ambition is to regain his number one status, so it sounds like he already has plans for his clash with the prodigiously talented Norwegian in London.

More good news for spectators is that most of the super-GMs have shown an upswing in form in the past few months. Carlsen now stands at an astonishing 2826, making him the second highest rated chessplayer in history behind his mentor Garry Kasparov. Kasparov's all-time high-water mark is 2851 and most pundits are expecting Carlsen to pass that mark very soon - perhaps even during the London Classic. It is hard to believe that Carlsen doesn't turn 20 until December. He comes to London as the winner of the inaugural London Chess Classic in 2009 and he has gone on piling up tournament successes in 2010.

Anand, 41, has also recently enjoyed an upsurge in form, with Kramnik moving slightly in the opposite direction. US star Hikaru Nakamura turns 23 during the 2010 event and he has recently advanced to 15th in the world. The big rating gain has been by England's Mickey Adams who has had a superb year so far. He started 2010 with victory at the prestigious Gibraltar Masters tournament in February and has recently won his third British Championship title in Canterbury with almost absurd ease. Adams spent some years at fourth place in the world rankings a number of years ago and it seems that he has had a second wind recently, advancing back into the world's top twenty and looking back to his best.

Adams' major British rival Nigel Short will always be remembered as one of the most famous chess prodigies, as well as the first non-Russian since Bobby Fischer to break the Russian monopoly contesting world championship matches back in the 1990s, so it comes as something of a shock to find that he is now, at only 45, the oldest player amongst the world's top 100 rated players. This is testament to Short's appetite

for the game and his attacking flair which shows no sign of diminishing despite the growing numbers of gifted, computer-fuelled youngsters scaling the chess summit.

Completing the field are Britain's two most promising grandmasters, Luke McShane, 26, and David Howell, who will be 20 by the time of the tournament. McShane has now had a year of intense professional chess following his return from his city banking career, and has re-entered the world's top 100. David Howell, the 2009 British Champion, is also a very gifted and determined player who is widely tipped to advance into the world's elite very soon. The London Classic provides them with an excellent opportunity to cross swords with some legends of the game.

The average rating of the 2010 London Chess Classic is 2729 – an unprecedented figure for a tournament held in Britain and also making it one of the strongest tournaments held anywhere in the world this year.

WATCHING CHESS IS A FUN EXPERIENCE!

The 400-seater auditorium at the Olympia Conference Centre provides a comfortable way to watch play live, but many chess followers prefer to have the moves explained to them by experts as the game progresses. Both preferences are fully catered for at the London Classic, with leading grandmasters commentating on the moves and fielding spectator questions in an adjoining hall. As games end, spectators have the chance to hear the players' immediate post-game comments as they are interviewed live in the commentary room. One of the joys of the 2009 tournament was the chance to hear, for example, Nigel Short's sparkling, provocative post-game banter with his British grandmaster colleagues, and sometimes with fellow competitors. That's just one example – the other players are all great speakers too! Last year, after completion of games, lucky spectators got the chance to sample the dry humour of Kramnik and the uncanny self-assurance of Magnus Carlsen, and this year everyone will be looking forward to the effortless charm of world champion Vishy Anand as he joins spectators in the commentary room after games. These close encounters with the world chess elite are worth the price of admission in their own right.

PLAY CHESS!

If all this talk of chess rivalries is only making you thirst for some chess action yourself... you can play chess at the London Chess Classic, under the same roof as the super-stars! There are all sorts of events and prizes for all chess standards and tastes, from the humblest beginner, and tournaments which last days at a time, or over the weekend – or for just part of a day (e.g. evening blitz events lasting no longer than 2½ hours). Entry forms are available for download NOW from the tournament website at **www.londonchessclassic.com**. Apart from the eight-player elite tournament, there is a nine-round world-rated open which attracts professional grandmasters from around the world, chasing the £2,500 first prize. As in 2009, one of the legendary figures of the game, Viktor Korchnoi, will be playing simultaneous displays, where amateur players can experience what it is like to face the player who contested world championship matches with Anatoly Karpov in the 1970s and 1980s.

Tournament Line-Up

Name	Title	Country	Rating (1/9/2010)	World Ranking (1/5/2010)	D.O.B. (dd/mm/yy)
Carlsen, Magnus	grandmaster	NOR	2826	1	30.11.1990
Anand, Viswanathan	world champion	IND	2800	3	11.12.1969
Kramnik, Vladimir	ex-world champion	RUS	2780	5	25.06.1975
Nakamura, Hikaru	grandmaster	USA	2733	15	09.12.1987
Adams, Michael	grandmaster	ENG	2728	18	17.11.1971
Short, Nigel	grandmaster	ENG	2690	48	01.06.1965
McShane, Luke	grandmaster	ENG	2657	85	07.01.1984
Howell, David	grandmaster	ENG	2616	167	14.11.1990

Last Year's Tournament (*n.b. win = 3pts, draw = 1pt*)

Final Placings: 1 Magnus Carlsen (NOR) 13/21, 2 Vladimir Kramnik (RUS) 12, 3 David Howell (ENG) 9, 4 Michael Adams (ENG) 9, 5 Luke McShane (ENG) 7, 6 Ni Hua (CHN) 6, 7 Hikaru Nakamura (USA) 6, 8 Nigel Short (ENG) 5.

For more information and to buy tickets to The London Chess Classic, please go to www.londonchessclassic.com Tickets are on sale NOW from the website or from the London Chess Centre, 44 Baker Street, W1U 7RT (tel. 020 7486 8222).

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