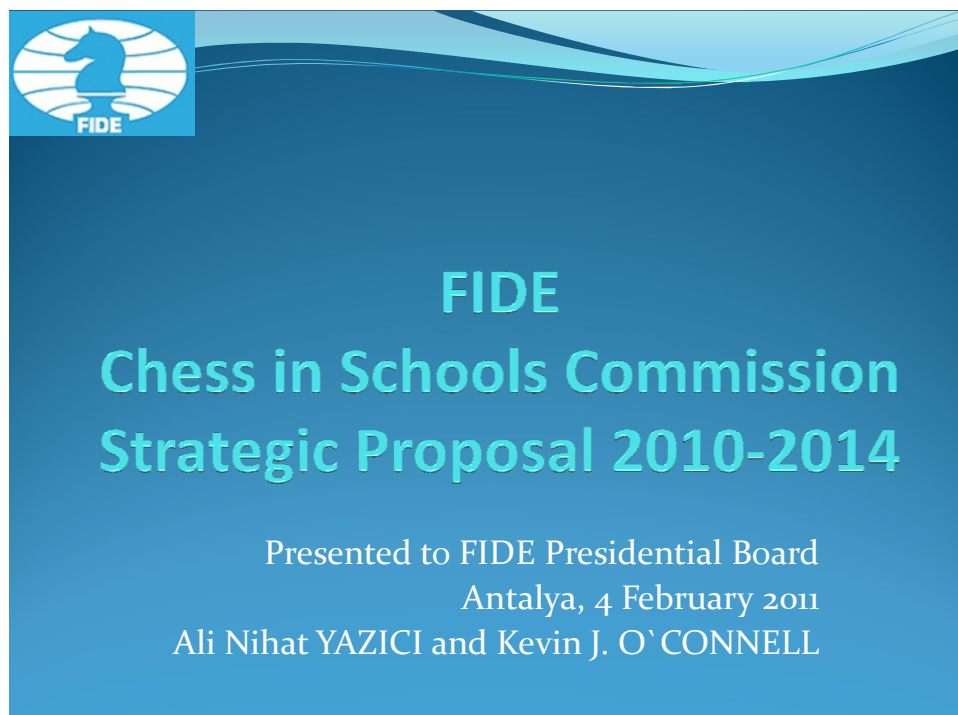


CHESS IN SCHOOLS COMMISSION – CIS100 IS BORN – IT’S TWINS!!

CIS100 was conceived at meetings during the Women’s World Championship in Antakya in December 2010. The baby was expected to come into the world in September this year. However, there were some complications, triplets having been expected, but healthy twins have come into the world this month in Slovakia and Slovenia.

The conception was blessed following the presentation to the FIDE Presidential Board meeting in Antalya in February. Simultaneously the CIS website went live and first news of the anticipated happy event was announced on March 1. What has been done since that announcement?



Slovakia was established as the first project country and their team, led by Martin Huba, worked closely with the Commission Chairman and Secretary to develop the project. The very first hurdle was to get the full backing and whole-hearted support of the national federation, which had previously been lukewarm in its support of chess in schools, choosing to favour the elite.

As a result of the CIS presentation to the FIDE Presidential Board in Al Ain at the beginning of June, it was decided, with the financial backing of the FIDE President, to increase the number of project countries for 2011 from one to three, Slovenia and Sweden being the additional countries. The development of the project was considered sufficiently important that it made the lead paragraph of FIDE’s press release about the PB meeting:

The FIDE President, Kirsan Ilyumzhinov, reported on his activities since the previous meeting. He had visited 20 countries, meeting with heads of countries, Sports and Education Ministers and informing them of the work of FIDE. In particular he had highlighted the Chess in Schools programme. The Chairman of the Chess in Schools Commission made a major presentation to Board members and it was agreed to accept his proposals for pilot projects in 2011, moving to further implementation if the pilot schemes were successful.

June and July were hectic months. A huge amount of work was done by the groups in all three countries, Martin being joined by team leaders Primoz Kokalj in Slovenia and Jesper Hall in Sweden. Slovakia and Sweden wanted to prepare their own syllabus textbooks, while Slovenia chose to translate the books used in Turkey. Sweden was the first to be ready with a completed book, they even had an impressive poster ready to be sent out to the schools, but then that project hit an unforeseen snag.

It was necessary for the schedule that the national federations should fully agree the project and sign a contract with FIDE that they would meet their side of the obligations laid down for both FIDE and the national federation. Although Jesper Hall had been given the go-ahead by his national federation, the Swedish federation Executive were unable to agree to sign the contract in time and, regrettably, we had to allow the Swedish project to drop by the wayside.



In tandem with the work of the federations, preparing the text for the books, their outline schedules for training teachers and preparing promotional material such as the posters shown here, we had been working hard on fleshing out the concept of FIDE Student Membership, especially the package for Premium members which would include granting each member a Student Rating appropriate to their age.

It is probably true to say that all the federations involved were initially suspicious of the concept of FIDE Student Membership. Was this a ploy to go behind the backs of the federations? Would the award of a Student Rating debase the rating system? However, they were soon convinced by the details and are now happy fully to support it. Work by CIS, the QC and the Expert Rating Group has ensured that the Student Rating system is totally independent of, and will not affect the rating system in any way, while to an outside observer it will appear that the Student Ratings are part of the same ladder to the top that currently peaks with the World Champion, GM Anand, and GM Carlsen. The project federations also came to realize that Student Membership, especially Premium membership, was not only no threat to them, but represents a new way in which FIDE can work in collaboration with the national federations for their direct benefit.

The safety of the FIDE Rating List from interference by these Student Ratings cannot be stressed too much. For that reason, and to avoid any possible misunderstanding, we think it worthwhile to draw your attention to the main details of the functioning of the system:

Key Features of the Student Rating System:

(1) Initial Rating between 600 and 900 based on age

Any player entering the CIS rating pool will immediately receive an initial rating based on their exact current age. A player aged 6 years or younger will receive a rating of 600, a player aged 12 years or older will receive a rating of 900, and players with an age between 6.00 years and 12.00 years will receive a proportional rating between 600 and 900, depending on age. Each completed month beyond a player's 6th birthday will count for 4.167 (i.e., 50 divided by 12) extra rating points in the calculation of this initial rating, so that the possible initial ratings are 600, 604, 608, ..., 892, 896, 900.

(2) Education Bonus of 5 points per monthly lesson (maximum nine lessons per year)

Any player acknowledging completion of a month's lesson will receive an immediate Education Bonus of 5 rating points from that lesson. Players can only receive this bonus once during each calendar month, and cannot receive more than 45 Education Bonus points in a single school year.

(3) Renewal Bonus of 30 points for annual renewal

Any player renewing their membership for an additional year will receive an immediate Renewal Bonus of 30 rating points. Players can only receive this bonus once during each school year. If the player's rating, after receiving the Renewal Bonus, is still below the age-based initial rating that a new player at their current age would receive, then upon renewal their rating will be elevated to that level instead.

(4) Linear Elo adjustment for CIS-rated games

For each game played by a CIS-rated player against a CIS-rated opponent, the player's CIS rating will be adjusted in an Elo-like way, but with a simple Linear Elo relationship (and $K=40$) that does not depend on an expectancy table lookup. A player with a 400-point rating advantage will have an expected score of 100%, and a difference in rating of more than 400 points shall be counted for rating purposes as though it were a difference of 400 points.

(5) Rating Adjustment extremely easy to calculate

Since the maximum effective rating difference is 400, and the K-factor for Linear Elo is 40, players can easily calculate their rating adjustment from a game without needing a calculator or an expectancy table. The rating change from a draw will simply be the quantity: [rating difference divided by 10], and the rating adjustment from a win or loss will be that same quantity plus/minus 20. For instance, if your rating is 720 and my rating is 750, then the rating difference is -30 and so I will lose 3 rating points (that's -30 divided by 10) if we draw the game. Taking that value (-3) and adding/subtracting 20 tells me that I will gain 17 rating points if I win the game, and I will lose 23 rating points if I lose the game.

(6) Activity Bonus of 1 point per game played

For each game played during a calendar month (up to a maximum of 20 during that month) against FIDE-member opponents, a player will receive an Activity Bonus of 1

rating point. This bonus will apply, whether the opponent is FIDE-rated, or CIS-rated, or neither, or both, as long as the opponent is registered with FIDE. After 20 such games in a single month, games played against CIS-rated opponents will still affect a player's rating, but only from the Linear Elo adjustment; the Activity Bonus will no longer apply during that calendar month. Note that you will still be motivated to play a game even if matched against an opponent rated 400+ points lower, despite your expected score being 1.00, since you can still receive the Activity Bonus of 1 point for playing the game.

(7) CIS ratings kept separate from FIDE ratings

When a CIS-rated player faces an opponent, it does not matter whether that opponent has a FIDE rating. The game will still count toward an Activity Bonus (assuming the player has not reached the monthly maximum of 20), but the Linear Elo system only applies if both players are CIS-rated. Thus the pool of CIS ratings and the pool of FIDE ratings do not affect each other. Nevertheless, it will be very important in upcoming years to understand the relationships (and possible conversions) between CIS ratings and regular FIDE ratings. In order to support this future understanding, we will track a detailed history of all events (lessons, renewals, all games played against FIDE-member opponents with/without FIDE ratings, and with/without CIS ratings). This history will eventually enable us to improve the quality of the CIS ratings and bring them more in line with the FIDE rating pool.

(8) Encouraging weaker players to enter FIDE rating pool

We cannot draw concrete conclusions about the true strength of scholastic players, because we don't have games between scholastic players and FIDE-rated opponents. In order to bring these two groups closer together, so that we can eventually calibrate the CIS ratings against the FIDE rating pool, we recommend lowering the minimum FIDE rating to 1000 or even lower, and providing financial incentives to member federations for weaker players to obtain FIDE ratings.

Many logistical problems had to be overcome (we hope!), not least the technology for producing the plastic ID card that members will receive as part of their Premium package, which also includes a welcome letter, a regular newsletter containing tips for improving their play and for getting more fun from chess, the student book of the syllabus being followed in the CIS100 schools (in Slovakia and Slovenia; in other countries in the future, premium pack contents will likely vary) and last, but by no means least, access to the premium content on the student website, all in their own language. The Student Membership website is soon to go live.

There was also the little matter of sourcing appropriate chess material – 100 demonstration boards, 2500 chess boards and sets for each country – with all the complications of transport and customs duties that such international projects inevitably involve.

The Slovak and Slovene language books, both finalized during September (later than expected – if only projects could run without delays – we had not made sufficient allowance for the impact of holidays), had to be submitted to printing houses in different countries, in order to ensure the most competitive price and there were some big differences that fully justified this approach.

Slightly later than anticipated, all this material – the demonstration boards (which got an upgrade to the beautiful version shown here, with a full complement of white pawns of course!), the 2500

boards and sets and 5000 Slovene books and 3000 Slovak books have all been delivered to Ljubljana and Bratislava respectively and the majority of those materials are now placed in the participating schools.



The progress of the project in Slovakia made the prime time TV news there. But take a look at our current favourite map – it shows the locations of the 104 schools in Slovenia that are participating in the first phase of the project. 104, instead of 100, because four were so vociferous in their pleadings (having failed to sign up in time – all 100 places were taken up by schools inside three days of the announcement of the project) that we agreed with the Slovenian federation proposal to send only 24 boards and sets to the participating schools in order that the other four could be included.

The original plan was for a project launch in September in good time to report on progress to this Congress. However, aside from the inevitable logistical problems, it transpired that schools in the project countries are more attuned to introducing something new like this into their schools during October and November, after the initial hectic six weeks or so of settling in to the new school year. Also, although we have had full agreement and support all along the way, we need the formal approval of the Executive Board for the introduction of FIDE Student Membership and the FIDE Student Rating System.



Both federations are working hard to develop the project further and make it a big success. With the help of our Commission, they have both set up their own web sites, are working on DVDs and TV advertisements, posters and promotional materials. They have held training sessions for many school teachers, more than 100 in Slovenia, 31 in Slovakia – fewer because they were waiting for the delivery of the materials in order to minimize the logistical problems of distribution of material by having the teachers take materials back to their schools following the training sessions. Important ministerial support has been obtained and this was much easier to achieve because the ministries were not being asked for funding (provided by FIDE), but only their blessing. Our web site (cis.fide.com) will have detailed reports on both countries from time to time as they progress.

In the next couple of months we should start to see the first fruits of all this labour. Where do we go from here? We expect to be inviting more countries, perhaps many more to tender for inclusion in the next wave. What does “tender” mean here? Most importantly, we want to be certain, before we start work, that any federation asking to be included can demonstrate that it has the leadership and management to succeed, and that they will pitch their tender with the full agreement of their Executive Board (accepting the stipulations, for both sides, of the FIDE-FED contract).

Ali Nihat Yazici
Chairman

Kevin O’Connell
Secretary