

Minutes of the Online Commission meeting of September 7th, 2016 (87th FIDE Congress, Baku, Azerbaijan)

Chairman: M. Kaloumenos (GRE)

Secretary: A. Dimitrijevic (BIH)

Present: A. Keles (TUR), W. Brown (USA), W. Kastner (AUT), E. Benitez (PAR), Y. Gnyp (UKR), K.K.Chan (HKG), G. Mastrokoukos (GRE), G. Urosevic (SRB), J. Lehtivaara (FIN), N. Faulks (BER), A. Holowzak (ENG), P. Jacobsen (DEN), S. Logothetis (GRE), P. Spiller (NZL), K. Bonham (AUS), M. Pahlevanzadeh (IRI), F. Jablonicky (SVK), C. Abundo (TLE), A-N.Yazici (TUR), Y. Dobriguer (TUR), D. Cross (POR), N. Kalesis (GRE), T. Hongwei (CHN).

1. FIDE Online Arena (FOA) in numbers

After 3 years of operation, 3959 chess players have completed at least one online rated game in FOA. The current number (as of September 1st, 2016) of active FOA members with a paid subscription is 2.279, representing 122 different National Federations! The 'FIDE flag' players with a paid active FOA membership are 480.

The top Federations among FOA members are ITA (253 players) and IND (243 players) followed by USA, ESP, GER, FRA, BRA, RUS (64 to 95 players). ENG and GRE complete the top 10 list.

Among these members, 33% are under 30 years old (21% are U20), 44% are between 30 and 50 years old, and 23% are older than 50.

1.175 Arena titles have been acquired by FOA members. There are 210 AGMs, 437 AIMs, 605 AFMs (indicating the average performance level of players in the range 1400 - 1700 ELO points) and 133 ACMs. Arena titles are an important element for the existence of the FOA project as 80% of the title fees end up to FIDE. Our belief that Arena titles provide a motivation to chess players is proven by the fact that 4 Arena title holders are present in the 42nd Chess Olympiad: AGM Maung Kyaw Zaw Hein (MYA), AIM Tito Kahn (JCI), AFM Jeffrey Balbalosa (PLW) and in the Women section AIM Zavala Galindo (ESA).

FIDE Online Arena provided FIDE with an income of 21.299 euros in 2015, and after the first 6 months of 2016, 52,7% of the expected income for 2016 (25.000 euros) has already been paid to FIDE.

2. FIDE Online Arena activities

The first FIDE Online World Championships were organized in 2015 and were fully sponsored by the developers of the platform. After Amateur and Junior championships were completed, a glamorous final of the Women championship was held in Rome, and the winner, GM Harika Dronavalli from India, was declared the 1st woman FIDE World Online Blitz Champion.

Until legal and accounting issues of organizing online tournaments with prize funds are resolved, a total of 500 months of free membership is offered to the winners of our regular competitions, the 14 hour long FIDE Online Grand Prix series. 7 such events have already been completed in 2016, with 5 more to be scheduled until the end of the upcoming winter

holidays. The FOGP consists of 8 tournaments (4 blitz 3m and 4 bullet 1m+1s). The winner is the player with the most points in his/her 5 best tournaments. In this way, global participation is possible, as members from Asia withdraw from the last tournaments, while members from the Americas join the competition later. Special articles before and after a FIDE Online Grand Prix include a presentation of the honored person or historical event, tactical puzzles from the games played and a number of analyzed games.

Our daily schedule includes rapid, blitz and bullet tournaments every day. Top participation is reached during the European evening zone.

3. FIDE Online Arena and standard time control

Following the approval of annex 23 in the 86th FIDE Congress, the Federations of Portugal and Denmark were added to the interested Federations from the Caribbean and the Pacific who have difficulties in implementing their annual schedule of team events because of high transportation costs. We are expecting that test events will be organised soon.

4. Motivation for the FIDE Academies to be involved in FIDE Online Arena projects

With the cooperation of TRG, the Online Commission invited the FIDE Academies to be involved actively in FIDE Online Arena. Their logos are included in the rotating banner inside the application which changes frames every 60 seconds. Depending on the participation of their students, it is possible to organize in the future closed tournaments for Academy students or inter-Academy competitions.

5. Anti-cheating system

A supervisor of the Anti-cheating system will be assigned by the Online Commission in order a) to monitor the system of penalties applied to the offenders of our regulations, b) decide escalating punishments to the repeatedly offenders and c) consult the platform developers on the improvement of the system.

6. Future development

Our future plans include:

- Develop applications for iOS and Android
- Improve presentation and reports of FIDE Online tournaments
- Provide online searchable chess databases
- Develop additional services for members
- Open the platform to turn-based and corr chess
- Chess puzzles, basic endgames, chess openings, chess strategy
- Invite GMs to interact (play chess) with FOA members

7. Over-the-board license fee for 'FIDE flag' players

The over-the-board license fee for 'FIDE flag' players is finally implemented. This license is required for 'FIDE flag' players who wish to participate in over-the-board FIDE rated events

worldwide. Their player card on the FIDE website displays with green font the word “licensed until _____” for all ‘FIDE flag’ players with a valid license.

Player cards on the FIDE website include a banner in red colored background for all unlicensed ‘FIDE flag’ players which redirects them to the regulations for Registration and License of players in the FIDE handbook and an online payment system where credit cards can be used for direct payment to FIDE of the license fee.

The Online Commission considers a burden for the National Federations to collect the fee from the ‘FIDE flag’ players and then be invoiced by FIDE, therefore the Commission proposes that this option is removed from the regulations for Registration and Licensing of players. As a result we propose an amendment to the current article 2.13 which states that: “The ‘FIDE license fee’ must be paid directly to FIDE or through the tournament Organiser. In any case, FIDE Secretariat must be informed immediately in order to collect the fee. Upon confirmation of payment the ‘FIDE flag player’ is considered to be licensed.”

Amended 2.13: The ‘FIDE license fee’ must be paid directly to FIDE using the FIDE Online payment system. Upon confirmation of payment the ‘FIDE flag player’ is considered to be licensed.

Private Organizers are recommended to register unregistered players via their National Rating Officer. If the newly registered player obtains a new FIDE ID number (FIN) under the FIDE flag, the Organiser should prompt him/her to pay for the over-the-board license fee through the link available on his/her player card on the FIDE website.

8. Private data and email addresses.

Upon request of the Federations of Portugal and Finland, the platform administrator will request permission from ‘FIDE flag’ players who registered via the online registration system and declared the respective citizenship/residence, to provide their email address to the Federation, so that these players join their National Federation.

The names and FINs of these players are available to the National rating officer and can be accepted the National Federation by a single click of the mouse. However, the email addresses are considered to be private and remain hidden.

9. In memoriam

The Online Commission meeting ended with a minute of silence in memoriam of our beloved friend and colleague Sevan Muradian who has been an active member of the Commission. We will never forget his smile and open heart, we will never forget his contribution to the development of the regulations of FIDE Online Arena.