EUROPEAN YOUTH CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP 2005

by International Master **Jovan Petronic**

Chairman, FIDE Computer & Internet Chess Committee
FIDE Senior Trainer

Have you read the recent spectacular photo article of the President of the Turkish Chess Federation, Mr. Ali Nihat Yazici, on the ongoing European Youth Championships 2005 in Herceg Novi, Serbia and Montenegro?

From the online text, recently posted at http://www.chessbase.com/newsdetail.asp?newsid=2631, I quote:
"Our reporter Ali Nihat Yazici was so enchanted by the venue that he is appealing to all our readers: call and come!"

Well, I did not call, but decided to accept the invitation and come!! Virtually!! These days, one does not necessarily need a plane, a train or a car to reach any part of the World. There is another traveling tool, called – Internet!

So, here I am, at: http://www.scgchess.org/euro2005! It's Sunday, September 18, 2005, close to midnight already.

Chess makes kids smarter, make no doubt about it! The brightest chess minds of Europe have gathered to challenge each others IQ's, to challenge the preparations of many coaches and trainers. As of the moment I write this, The European Youth Championships U10-U18 in both competitions have moved into the 2nd half, with round five finished.

Serbia and Montenegro is one of the European countries with the highest level of chess culture. There, almost everyone knows, and more importantly, values highly our beloved game of chess! Trust me, I was born there.

The website of the Chess Federation of Serbia and Montenegro Euro page has been specially designed to host the European Youth Championships 2005 and I would like to comment on some details I have noticed, that impressed me. I have been, of course, following happenings on all similar Championships held in the past years, and do not intend to make comparisons with these.

What impresses first is the light, yet professional design of all the pages. With just one click of the mouse, you are able to quickly view the results, download PGN, watch the selected games with an online viewer or see the current standings in all 10 competitions! There are no page and link labyrinths, in which one could get lost forever.

I was further impressed by the speed the results are updated! Only a while after the last game has finished, you are able to see all the results, standings and pairings for the next round! This is not common for many online tournaments and should be congratulated separately. Obviously, the arbiters team has decided to have their dinner only after all the job is done!

I downloaded all selected games available and have to give another positive review. There are currently twenty selected games published in each category, a total of two hundred per day - which is a higher number of games usually covered at similar events! To the joy of the world of chess! Another plus is that the quality of the PGN games is very high, with the highest percentage of entered moves, I have seen for a while. The modern systems of electronically recording chess games has shown significant disadvantages lately, and many games of youth tournaments, where this equipment was used, failed to produce complete moves of each game, thus corrupting the final database. This is not the case in Herceg-Novi. The older method of saving the games produces mostly exact data. Additionally, all important data is included in the PGN games: name abbreviations and surnames, FIDE elo, year and tournament title. Again, I must stress, this, normal approach to preserving our invaluable games of chess, is not yet an axiom for all. Ideally, all the games recorded would be the superb choice, but for this task, a lot of manpower, which is often enough lacking, is needed.

The organizer's choice of the pairing program - Swiss Perfect, generates high-quality cross-tables and challenges well the more recent other swiss pairing software being developed.

In the times of scarce chess bulletins, usually not provided in an adequate number, or even not at all, the Euro 2005 Youth Chess website offers a free download of each round's online bulletin, in high enough quality PDF format!

The game viewer is fine, one can easily, even with a dialup connection, such as I currently have, view the games online, without downloading the files.

There are no live games available, though. Well, on the other hand, this might just save a lot of nerves of the hundreds of coaches and parents who stayed behind! Anyway, until technology reaches a new level, when we can watch not selected, but all the games at a mass tournament of the highest importance, such as are the European Youth Championships, I personally don't mind! The closest to this ingenious chess project of the century (millennium?) is the MonRoi company!
The photo section of each round is done very well, bringing all closer to the live ambient of the Euro Youth games.
Quality of the photos is high, and they are chosen well, which is not a surprise to me, as the author is a well known young journalist from Beograd, FIDE master Josip Asik, with years of experience in this area (and a great camcorder!).

Serbia and Montenegro's Chess Federation's website is cleverly tracked by a free tracker (this information is made with free access to all, by the SCG Chess Federation's webmaster Goran Tomic), which gives precise data on various topics, some of which I will present below.

I personally love and respect statistics, here are some that may raise eyebrows!

http://extremetracking.com/open;geo?login=scgchess

Chess Federation of Serbia & Montenegro

URL:	http://www.scgchess.org
Counting since:	17 May 2004 / 16:56
Current report:	18 Sep 2005 / 20:28

Domains / Countries

		Unique Visitors	
.yu	Yugoslavia	26549	28.86%
.de	Germany	4406	4.78%
.fr	France	4251	4.62%
.cz	Czech Republic	3784	4.11%
.ru	Russian Federation	3322	3.61%
.ba	Bosnia and Herzegovina	3307	3.59%
.pl	Poland	3130	3.40%
.si	Slovenia	3026	3.28%
.nl	Netherlands	2372	2.57%
.com	United States	2299	2.49%
.es	Spain	2145	2.33%
.ro	Romania	1945	2.11%
.il	Israel	1935	2.10%
.it	Italy	1926	2.09%
.hu	Hungary	1899	2.06%
.hr	Croatia	1751	1.90%
.bg	Bulgaria	1555	1.69%
.uk	United Kingdom	1354	1.47%
.dk	Denmark	1312	1.42%
.ch	Switzerland	1244	1.35%
.se	Sweden	1205	1.30%
.tr	Turkey	1125	1.22%
.az	Azerbaijan	1108	1.20%
.gr	Greece	1089	1.18%
.be	Belgium	1069	1.16%
-	Unknown	1058	1.15%
.sk	Slovakia	951	1.03%

Continents			Unique Visitors
Europe	77508	84.25%	
Asia	9556	10.38%	
North America	3006	3.26%	
Unknown	1058	1.15%	
Oceania	423	0.45%	
South America	318	0.34%	
Africa	76	0.08%	
Central America	47	0.05%	

http://extremetracking.com/open;unique?login=scgchess

Last 8 Days		Unique Visitors
11 Sep, Sun	664	
12 Sep, Mon	1353	
13 Sep, Tue	2164	
14 Sep, Wed	6852	
15 Sep, Thu	9367	
16 Sep, Fri	9300	
17 Sep, Sat	7336	
18 Sep, Sun	5143	

Last 7 Weeks		Unique Visitors
Week 31	1745	
Week 32	1092	
Week 33	1248	
Week 34	997	
Week 35	1173	
Week 36	1786	
Week 37	41515	

Last 7 Months		Unique Visitors
Mar	4481	
Apr	6823	
May	4896	
Jun	3016	
Jul	3593	
Aug	5611	
Sep	43945	

41.515 unique visitors in one week! The growing popularity of chess and Internet chess in Serbia & Montenegro, Europe and the World needs no further comments!

Hope you enjoyed this brief review! **Now, it is my turn to send another, online invitation!**

Join Europe and the FIDE World of Chess at: http://www.scgchess.org/euro2005**!**