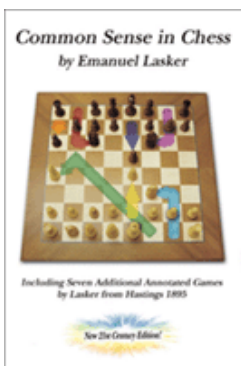




SKITTLES ROOM

From the Archives

Hosted by
Mark Donlan



From the Archives...

Since it came online many years ago, ChessCafe.com has presented literally thousands of articles, reviews, columns and the like for the enjoyment of its worldwide readership. The good news is that almost all of this high quality material remains available in the [Archives](#). The bad news is that this great collection of chess literature is now so large and extensive – and growing each week – that it is becoming increasingly difficult to navigate it effectively. We decided that the occasional selection from the archives posted publicly online might be a welcomed addition to the regular fare.

Watch for an item to be posted online periodically throughout each month. We will update the ChessCafe.com home page whenever there has been a “new” item posted here. We hope you enjoy *From the Archives*...

In an article published in the first number of the *American Chess Journal*, the legendary tournament held at New York in 1927, was examined in depth. One of the issues discussed was the failure of the only ex-World Champion of the time, Emanuel Lasker, to play. A month or so after the conclusion of the 1927 tournament, Lasker released his version of events. It was a ten-page single-spaced explanation of both the clock incident and the financial questions that lingered from the 1924 tournament. ChessCafe.com is pleased to present this article in four parts. Herewith, we bring you part three of...



Emanuel Lasker
December, 1927

The Emanuel Lasker Affair

Lasker's Version, Part Three

From: Emanuel Lasker
To: Various Newspapers and Organizations
Date: April or May [?], 1927

[Continued from Part 2]

As to the division of an expected surplus each of the masters was informed of it in writing by a scrap of paper. Press articles of that time exist which mention the promise and no doubt give further particulars. That the division should be in equal parts, as Mr. Lederer has the front to assert, is unreasonable. If a master of a prize fund of \$4,500 gets \$1,500 he would naturally, if the prize fund is increased to \$6,000, get \$2,000 of it. The Committee, after making that promise, paid out a considerable sum to Mr. Yates and a lesser amount to Mr. Janowski and possibly also to other masters from motives of generosity, as I learnt privately. But the Committee has been very parsimonious with the news on this matter. It has published no specified account, nor made known to me, as Mr. Lederer falsely asserts nor mentioned its promise in the book of the Tourney. Let the Committee speak definitely and give a detailed account of its generous gifts with dates attached. It is wrong to be generous with pledged money, of course. As to the clock incident, Mr. Lederer contradicts the statement of the Committee of January 26th. There it was stated, “Lasker forgot to stop his clock after one of his moves.” Now he says, “Mr. Lasker did not properly push the lever of his clock with the result that for about eight minutes both his and his opponent’s clock were running simultaneously.” Since my opponent’s clock ran, I did push the lever properly; a chess clock, the two sides of which can run simultaneously, is defective. A chess clock must be so constructed that only one of its sides runs, else it is no good. What happened was that I noticed after my 30th move, when according to our timing piece the total time consumed was nearly four hours that the expected signal for adjournment was not given; I looked round saw all the masters in deep thought and discovered that we had played only about three hours and three quarters. Hence I concluded that one of the two sides of the timing piece was too quick and after having made my 31st move, at adjournment time, asked Mr. Lederer to test the two sides. We tested and found that each side of the clock ran right; and then he informed that he thought that the two sides had run simultaneously. With all of this, apart from losing approximately a quarter of an hour of the time allotted me for reflection, I lost about twenty minutes of the time allotted me for dinner, repose, etc. This was a heavy handicap which showed on the 37th move. I had then about twenty minutes for nine moves,

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moved hastily and excitedly and blundered. But even if I had not blundered, it was careless to a fault to hand out a defective clock, for the most important encounter of the Tournament. Onlookers thought so too, who informed me that they had noticed the defect of the clock, but had been unable to interfere because they looked for Mr. Lederer in vain.

Mr. Lederer's account cannot be reconciled with mine. Mine has the color of truth and also evidence of witnesses and press articles. His accounts contradict each other. The public may judge.

Mr. Lederer as well as Capablanca assume that I made the above statement in order to discredit Capablanca's win. They are mistaken. My motive is entirely the future of Tournaments. Since they insist on organizing Tournaments in the wrong way I describe the perils of that way.

I state my opinion that the Committee of the late tourney was by no means representative of the American chess public, and I have no doubt of that being a fact. The subscription lists for raising the funds for Tournaments will show an increase as soon as the Committee is a better expression of American will.

The proposition of Mr. Joseph Nemerov, of which Mr. Lederer tells us, is sportsmanlike. But Mr. Lederer seems glad that the offer has not been met. Maybe the offer has not been made sufficiently known. A *conditio sine qua non* would naturally be a public statement by Mr. Nemerov himself. There is plenty of time for that. When the Champion has accepted a challenge and is about to enter a match, which, as I learn, will take place in Buenos Aires in September, it is the wrong moment for talking of another match.

Of the quality of my chess Mr. Lederer is no fit judge, and his talk on this subject discloses the spirit that is his.

My remarks on the doings of Mr. Maróczy were very much to the point. It is evident that he has been one of the agents to bring about the state of mind that culminated in the defamatory attack upon me of January 26th.

[End Part 3]

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