

Montana Open Chess Tournament, Winners and Runner-up.

Notes on the attached tabulation.

The Montana Open Chess Tournament, sponsored by the Montana Chess Association, had its beginning in Livingston, Montana, in 1935. In the following years considerable experimentation was carried on in an endeavor to fit an increasing number of entrants into the time limitations of a week end tournament, and at the same time not leave half the players completely eliminated after the first round.

Straight knock-out tournaments, with first round losers forming a Class "B" group have been tried. The dividing of players into small round-robin elimination groups with the group winners playing for the championship was experimented with. The use of three classes to reduce the number of players in any one class was another effort. Finally in the tournament of 1951 held in Butte, the Swiss System Tournament was introduced for the first time, and five round Swiss tournaments have been used at all succeeding tournaments.

During 1953, 1954, 1955, and 1956, a single class Swiss system was used. However, as the number of entrants increased, it became difficult to determine a winner with only five rounds of play, and the two class tournament was again resorted to.

While these changes were taking place, there was also a considerable change in the nomenclature used for the various classes. The top class has been variously designated as "Masters", "Championship", "Class AA" and "Class ". In the following tabulation the top ranking class has been marked "A", the next "B", and the third class, "C", without regard to the designation which may have been used in the particular tournament involved.

In 1953 the Great Falls Chess Club presented the state Association with a plaque on which the names of the champions for each year could be engraved. However the terms of the presentation were that the name to be engraved on the plaque would be that of the highest ranking Montana chess player. It has developed that Montanans have not always been able to keep their Chess Championship within their own state, and hence in a few cases it will be found that the name engraved on the plaque does not agree with the champion shown in the attached tabulation.

It will be noted that some information is missing--an address or two, the names of some runners-up, the class B winner for 1959, etc. If anyone can fill in any of these gaps, please do.