



# The International Correspondence Chess Federation

**Ratings Commissioner  
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## Report for the Congress at Järvenpää 2011

Dear friends,

since last year's Congress three new ratinglists were published, all on time and including the usual pdf-file and Eloquery. No technical problems, no critical cases, only the publishing on iccf.com was slightly delayed sometimes due to communication problems with the webmaster. Hopefully the new website concept will allow the Rating Commissioner to upload these things himself.

At previous Congresses I always had to report strange cases abusing the concept of starratings. Already in 2010 I checked some variants to avoid such problems and to improve the system. But I was not able to present a proper solution to the Congress in Kemer. Some more statistical research was necessary to find out what is the best suited formula for the difference of ratings which is the base for the evaluation of a game.

Since 2000 we are using the difference in the starratings of both players, independent from their rating development during the game. This was a logical method to ensure that all games of a tournament were treated equally whenever they were finished. But with ongoing time the concept was more and more critized, not only due to the mentioned strange cases. For new players, especially in open tournaments, the starratings were sometimes too low and damaged the rating of higher rated opponents who often refused therefore to participate in Cups or Jubilee tournaments.

After some simulations and discussing five possible solutions especially with my deputy Mariusz Wojnar I favoured the idea to use the recent published rating for the player and the higher value of starrating and recent rating for the opponent.

Using newest ratings for the calculation is of course the most accurate method following the theory of Prof. Elo and near to the thinking of the players. It works fine, if a tournament is finished within a short time and is evaluated before the next tournament starts (OTB). In CC we have a totally other situation. The results of a tournament come in over different periods and other tournaments are played simultaneously. This may lead to strange distortion for the players in one tournament, especially if an opponent drops down dramatically due to withdrawals in other events. The current situation is also unjust if the opponent's starrating does not correspond to his real strength and he goes up during the tournament due to good performance. To use the better value (starrating, recent rating) is a good compromise to reduce such injustice. Of course, such a choice for a higher value has hidden dangers for the balance of the system (inflation).

To estimate this danger and to further convince Mariusz and myself (and with a tremendous amount of time !) I made step by step a complete recalculation of all ratinglists from 2000/1 (when the starrating concept was introduced) to 2011/3 using this proposal. This comprised 28 ratinglists with all players who finished at least one game during that period (18.443 players). After removing those players who do not have a published rating in 2011/3 remained 13.492 players. Analysing their rating performances convinced me that this way of calculating the rating

difference does not produce inflation but, on the contrary, rather compensates the existing deflation. I intend to give at Congress a presentation of this simulation.

Maybe we can have a discussion round of experts about the proposal in Järvenpää. Furthermore we should clarify the amount of work and time as well as the budget for changing the calculation programs on the webserver. If both leads to a positive judgement I will propose a change of the rules so, that the new strategy will be used from 2012 onwards.

I am looking forward to seeing you in Finland !

Amici sumus

Gerhard Binder

ICCF Ratings Commissioner

Concerned paragraphs in the Tournament and Rating Rules:

- T 7.4 The rating calculation procedure would use players' ratings as at the start of a tournament for those players with a published rating in the applicable ratings list. For newer players, FIDE ratings may be used if available, failing which a player would be regarded as having a rating equal to the tournament level. In case of a wrong or obviously inappropriate value the Ratings Commissioner may adjust such a start rating to a more realistic value, even if the tournament is already ongoing.
- R 8 The expected game result  $W_e$  is the percentage expectancy, obtained from item 4, based on the difference between the player's rating and the opponent's rating at the beginning of the game. If this difference is  $> 350$ , it is snipped to this value for the evaluation.
- A player without a published ICCF rating at that time will be regarded as having a rating equal to the tournament level (see item 11).

The following rule is not up-to-date because it does not consider running or unrated games:

- T 7.7 Players who appeared on previous lists but who do not qualify for a new rating because they have not finished a game during the evaluated period are nevertheless considered currently at their most recently published rating. Players will be considered inactive if they do not finish a rateable game for two calendar years. Those players are no longer shown in the published lists.

I hope to find the assistance by a native English speaker for a correct wording of the necessary changes.