

# WEST VIRGINIA CHESS BULLETIN

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## THE BLINDFOLD RECORD <sup>By</sup> GEORGE KOLTANOWSKI

(Written Especially for the West Virginia Chess Bulletin)

When I was interviewed by the New York Times reporter, he really surprised me when he told me that a wire from Rosario, Argentina, had announced that Neidorf had played 40 games blindfold winning 36, losing 3 and conceding 1 draw.

Yes, he surprised me. First of all, because to play such a number of games blindfold, one HAS to train specially and must get there slowly but surely; secondly, had he said Alekhine had done this extraordinary feat, I would not have been surprised.

Then the fact that they announced he had played 80 players, two on each board, astonished me still more, and this for two reasons:

First, where did they get 80 players to sit through 17 hours of play in Rosario? I do not agree with Chess Review in its statement that two players to a board made the score more impressive. This would be true only if both were good players which is highly doubtful as I know from experience. Edinburgh has many players--but how many strong ones? I played 34 there and at least 20 were not top-flight players. We could have placed six more men on each board: would that have made the record any more valuable? You must forgive me if I felt doubtful when I first received the news. It was not easy for me to receive such news when all that I had heard of Neidorf as a blindfold player was that he, like many others, played here and there an exhibition of 10, to 12 boards. I had trained six months before I dared attempt break the world's record and word of Neidorf's exhibition came like a thunderbolt--and was hardly announced before it had been played.

My second reason for astonishment, or perhaps for doubt, at that moment when I first received the news was that I remembered the story of what happened to Richard Reti. He had just beaten the world's record with 28 games when the newspapers printed the sensational news that a certain Juncosa had played 32 games blindfold in Vallodolid, Spain, winning 29, losing 2 and drawing 1. It nearly killed Reti and certainly astounded the chess world. Reti went specially to Spain to find out at close quarters if the story was true. Here is what he learned: The exhibition did take place, true, and 32 players had been invited from all over Spain...but only three turned up, so Juncosa won 29 by default, lost 2 and drew 1.

Though I am not quite over my doubts I am entirely willing, in the absence of any adverse evidence, to concede the title to Master Neidorf and to hope he will be as luck with it, or more still, than I was.

I feel I should answer one question, one that has been asked so often: Will I attempt to beat the record?

At the moment, NO. It is not only a matter of playing more boards that counts; the percentage in the score must be high, too.

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When this war is won and I can tour again, then maybe one or another club or city will be able to arrange this mammoth record-beating exhibition--and I may have another fling at it.

Until then, let's give unto Caesar what belongs to Caesar!

Good luck and good hunting, Neidorf!

LETTER FROM T. SELDON W. TERRANT, JR., BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA:

"I've just finished reading the November issue of the Bulletin and decided to drop you a line before it skips my mind. Each issue brings back memories of the enjoyable associations I had with pawn-pushers back in Charleston. I was never any good, but certainly enjoyed the evenings that were spent at the Kanawha Hotel in the company of such hospitable and gracious hosts. Have missed being able to play when I felt the urge, and have had to be content with a few evenings a month which I have been fortunate enough to share with a lawyer here in town. He is a CCIA'er, and has an exceptionally fine library of chess books, in several languages, as well as an interesting collection of chess men. One of the sets is Chinese, and I'm sure every follower of the Game du Royale would enjoy seeing their unique design.

"Am certainly interested in the great showing that Dick Grimm has displayed in both the State and Charleston tournaments, inasmuch as we used to play during lunchtime in the lab at Carbide. As Eddie Foy said in his letter, 'Just wait until we hold our big VICTORY TOURNAMENT.'

"Have been expediting orders to overseas duty for months now and just in case, I've got my pocket chess set already packed! A friend of mine was shipped in August, and according to his letters, he'd have gone crazy with boredom on the ship going over if it hadn't been that he had his pocket set with him and a worthy opponent. . . .

"Well, that's about all, except for saying, 'Keep up the good work so that we'll have a live wire chess world to come back to when this mess has been cleaned up.'"

IT'S A SAD STORY, MATES!--BUT HAS A HAPPY ENDING!

After numerous delays (that's the sad story), we have finally obtained a house in Pittsburgh and will be installed there on or before Feb. 1, complete with family, typewriter, mimeograph and all the other ingredients necessary for proper functioning on the Bulletin and the Yearbook (which we hope will be taken as the happy ending).

The last few weeks have been busy but we are hoping now to enter a new era of leisure and convenience (aren't we all?).

What do our other members plan for '44? Let's hear from as many as possible of you in the next few days and I'll give you a real bulletin early in February. Considering the way you've been neglected, you are entitled to one. Right? Right!

Our new address, as of Feb. 1, will be given next time, along with the features missing from this issue. Meanwhile write to old address.

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