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PRESS RELEASE

Pro-Biz Cup

John Saunders reports: The 5th Pro-Biz Cup took place on Thursday 30 November 2017 at the London offices of Google on Pancras Square, London. This novelty event serves a number of functions; it's a curtain-raiser for the main event, the London Chess Classic, which is the last leg of the 2017 Grand Chess Tour; it is a fund-raiser for the Chess in Schools and Communities charity, with the amateur players involved making generous donations to this worthy cause; and it enables everyone involved, players, organisers, technicians, press and guests, to meet and greet each other and generally acclimatise to the atmosphere at one of the world's most prestigious and exciting chess competitions.

The tournament has been adapted so that everyone gets the same number of games. The eight pairs played a three-round Swiss, each consisting of one rapid game (20 minutes plus 5-second increments), with a number of novel tie-breaks lined up in the likely event of a tie at the end. As it turned out, these weren't necessary so we'll skip an explication of them.

With eight grandmasters required to partner the amateur contestants, it meant that not all ten of the London Chess Classic contestants would take part. In fact, just six of the elite group were called upon, with two other grandmasters not involved in the Classic being drafted in to make up the numbers. One was David Norwood, who, unusually, could qualify for both sides of the Pro-Biz equation; he's both a 'pro' (having been a chess grandmaster since his teens) and a 'biz' (a highly successful businessman since his retirement from professional chess). The other was Garry Kasparov, who needs no introduction whatsoever. Thus, despite the light-hearted nature of the event, this provided the chess world with the tantalising prospect of the player generally reckoned to be the greatest of all time crossing swords sitting across the board from the player who has dominated the game during the past ten years of the century. Would it come to pass?

Some further rules: there was to be no conferring, with pro players moving first, but with players being allowed two one-minute time-outs to discuss the state of play during the course of a game. Having said that, the arbiting of this fun event was a million miles away from the zero tolerance regime favoured by the world federation. Though players



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adhered to the no-conferring rule, I'm pretty sure the number of time-outs exceeded the stipulated two per game by some margin. Also, the strict move sequence of pro players making the odd-numbered moves and 'biz' players the even ones also became blurred at various points during the games, though this was more by accident than design. I never thought to hear a strong player asking "whose move is it?" but I heard this familiar beginner's refrain several times today from the lips of legends of the game. This is quite revealing; despite their elephantine memories for openings and patterns on a chess board, a small adjustment to the move sequence such that four players are involved rather than two brings super-GMs down to a level of forgetfulness which is the norm for us ordinary mortals.

We were barely five minutes into play in round one when suddenly there was a rash of time-outs. This drew guffaws from the audience but I suppose an early time-out makes a lot of chess sense since the path through the initial moves of the opening is so critical. The other noticeable thing was the difference in atmosphere between one of the partnerships and the other seven. Dave Norwood and Ali Mortazavi have known each other most of their lives, and they have spent much of that time as business partners as well as blitz chess opponents. Consequently their games were accompanied by a certain degree of banter and trash talk, not, I hasten to add, directed at their opponents but at each other. One particular exclamation from the GM to his IM partner – "here's another fine mess you've got me into" – tempts me to dub them the Laurel and Hardy of chess. But, far from putting their opponents off, this had the positive effect of lightening the mood of what was anyway intended as a fun event. That's not to say that the players didn't take it seriously. For example, an examination of the photos and videos taken of the tournament show the full range of Kasparovian facial expressions that we older chess fans still remember and cherish, but Garry has since added a few indulgent smiles and grins to his repertoire, even whilst play is still in progress.

The final crosstable shows that tie-breaks were not required, despite there only being three rounds, with Ian Nepomniachtchi and Rajko Vujatovic scoring 2½/3, with a draw against Ali Mortazavi and David Norwood, followed by wins against the French team of Maxime Vachier-Lagrave and Gilles Betthaeuser, and Levon Aronian and Justin Baptie. Rajko has been a winner of the event before and is a formidable, ebullient amateur player with a FIDE rating of 2222. He also has experienced of standing in a chess-boxing ring, albeit as a referee rather than a fighter, so he is used to being in a public arena,



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which probably helps. Word has it that he played more of a part in the opening planning of his twosome than the other partnerships.

	1	2	3	Points	
1	Nepomniachtchi / Vujatovic	♦ ½/2	♦ 1/7	♦ 1/5	2½
2	Mortazavi / Norwood	♦ ½/1	♦ ½/3	♦ 1/7	2
3	Nakamura / Green	♦ 1/8	♦ ½/2	♦ ½/4	2
4	Kasparov / Chapman	♦ ½/5	♦ 1/6	♦ ½/3	2
5	Aronian / Baptie	♦ ½/4	♦ 1/8	♦ 0/1	1½
6	Carlsen / Flowers	♦ ½/7	♦ 0/4	♦ ½/8	1
7	Vachier-Lagrave / Betthaeuser	♦ ½/6	♦ 0/1	♦ 0/2	½
8	Adams / Hassabis	♦ 0/3	♦ 0/5	♦ ½/6	½

Despite the bantering of their team, Norwood and Mortazavi scored a creditable 2/3 and finished in a three-way tie with Hikaru Nakamura and Lee Green, and Garry Kasparov and Terry Chapman. The latter pair had some experience of being adversaries when they met in a high-profile handicap match at Simpson's in the Strand in 2001. That was from a time when Kasparov was still a full-time professional and, despite its exhibition status, he still took the match very much in earnest. I recall being in the press room on that occasion and seeing the result flash up on a screen saying that Kasparov had conceded a draw in the second game. Quickly grabbing my camera to return to the playing hall to get pictures of the players still at the board, I found I was too late: just as I arrived at the swing doors to the playing room, they were suddenly flung open and followed by a chess legend intent on beating the world's land speed record for vacating a tournament hall. But the Kasparov of 2017 is a much mellower figure, amiably mingling with the watching audience and happily kibitzing the games of younger super-GMs as they relax with a game or two of blitz.

The wished-for Carlsen-Kasparov clash did come about in round two but ended with an anti-climactic blunder losing a piece. The most notable feature of the game was the players losing track of the move sequence and having to call in the arbiter to help resolve the confusion. But it was all very amicable. Incidentally, it should be possible to identify the moves played by the pro players as the odd-numbered ones from the game scores but I'm not entirely sure this is true of all the games, so there may have been a number of moves played out of sequence throughout the tournament.

The games themselves are not readily publishable since they are inevitably variable in quality but here's a king and pawn endgame – not too difficult to see what's coming but the pro and partner had to be on precisely the same wavelength to pull it off.

□ Levon Aronian & Justin Baptie

■ Mickey Adams & Demis Hassabis



43.Rg6! Rxc6 43...Rxh4 44.Rxd6 and the other black pawns will drop off. **44.fxg6+** It's handy when the amateur's turn coincides with a routine recapture. **44...Kxc6 45.a5!** The pro player is on hand to analyse and initiate the winning sequence. **45...bxa5 46.c5!** Well played, Justin Baptie. White's two well-separated and well-advanced passed pawns will triumph.

46...dxc5 47.h5+ Kf7 48.h6 e4+ 49.Kxe4 a4 50.h7 Kg7 51.h8Q+ Kxh8 52.d6 Only one pawn left but it queens with check. **52...a3 53.d7 1-0**

While their six rivals were taking part in this doubles chess event, the other four super-GMs present for the Classic, Vishy Anand, Wesley So, Fabiano Caruana and Sergey Karjakin, were engaged in simuls and talks with some of the children learning chess via the services of the Chess in Schools and Communities charity. This was a wonderful opportunity for the children to see the stars of chess up close and personal. It was great to see the children interact with the players, and will give them something to aspire to.

Thanks are due to Demis Hassabis and his company DeepMind for hosting the event at London's Google HQ with its stunning broadcasting facilities. DeepMind's hospitality doesn't end with the Pro-Biz Cup as round one of the London Chess Classic is also being held at the same venue, with live webcasting starting at 1400 GMT on Friday 1 December 2017.

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NOTES TO THE EDITORS

Press contact

John Saunders

email press@londonchessclassic.com

Twitter @London_Chess

Tel +44 (0)7777 664111

For media enquiries related to Chess in Schools and Communities, please contact:

James Gwinnett

Brazil

Tel: +44 (0) 20 7785 7383

E: chess@agencybrazil.com

About the Pro-Biz amateur players

Rajko Vujatovic: born 1970, FIDE rating 2222. Works in finance/banking. Chess boxing referee. Previously won the Pro-Biz Cup in 2014, accompanied by Anish Giri.

Lee Green, aged 69, international financial adviser, member of RAC Club, and active in their chess circle.

Demis Hassabis - see [previous press release](#), also Wikipedia.

Terry Chapman, born 1956 - won the 2016 ProBiz Cup in tandem with Vishy Anand, beating Kramnik & Baptie in the final. British Under 14 chess champion in 1970. He became a FIDE master in 2013. Founded Terence Chapman Group plc, now retired.

Justin Baptie, born 1969, rating 2099 (ENG). Accountant specialising in construction, manufacturing & care homes, owner of contract caterers for care homes & schools. Played alongside Kramnik in 2016 - they beat Nakamura & Vujatovic.



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Gilles Betthaeuser: president, Colliers International (France). Published an article in the newspaper *Les Echos* entitled *Chess and Real Estate*. Since 2009 has sponsored the top French player, Maxime Vachier-Lagrave.

Chris Flowers - an American private equity investor and investment manager. He is a Managing Director and CEO of J.C. Flowers & Co. Joined the Kasparov Chess Foundation Board in February 2015.

Ali Mortazavi - Holds the IM title for chess, rated 2353. CEO of Silence Therapeutics plc since 2013.

[Notes on the professional players here.](#)

About Chess in Schools and Communities

Chess in Schools and Communities (CSC) is a UK charity whose mission is to improve children's educational outcomes and social development by introducing them to the game of chess. Founded in 2009, CSC now teaches in over 300 schools and supports 500 more nationwide.

CSC also organises a world-class tournament, the London Chess Classic, and Yes2Chess, an international tournament for schools.

For more information visit: Chessinschools.co.uk.

About the London Chess Classic

The London Chess Classic is the flagship annual event of Chess in Schools and Communities. As the UK's largest chess tournament and the concluding leg of the Grand Chess Tour, an international circuit of high-profile chess events inspired by the legendary Garry Kasparov, the event brings with it enormous prestige in the chess community. Alongside this competition amongst the world's best players, Chess in Schools and Communities runs a range of amateur and age-grade competitions for 1,000s of children from the charity initiative nationwide.

For more information visit: Londonchessclassic.com.

About DeepMind



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DeepMind is a neuroscience-inspired AI company which develops general-purpose learning algorithms and uses them to help tackle some of the world's most pressing challenges. Since its founding in London in 2010, DeepMind has published over 100 peer-reviewed papers, three of them in the scientific journal Nature – an unprecedented achievement for a computer science lab.

DeepMind's groundbreaking work includes the development of deep reinforcement learning, combining the domains of deep learning and reinforcement learning. This technique underpinned AlphaGo, a computer program that defeated Go world champion Lee Sedol in 2016 – a breakthrough experts proclaimed to have arrived a decade ahead of its time.

In 2014, DeepMind was acquired by Google, in their largest ever European acquisition, and is now part of the Alphabet group.