

In the Vineyards With Wine, Cheese and Chess

By Charles Downie

THE DEVOTEES of sun, wine and chess will make their annual pilgrimage to the old stone, ivy-covered winery in the Saratoga hills where Paul Masson first won fame and fortune, Saturday and next Sunday, July 24.

What began as a modest local chess tournament with wine-tasting laid on in the incomparable surroundings of the old vineyard has flourished almost to the point of no return. It is now the world's largest rated outdoor tournament with the largest prize fund, \$15,000.

Because of the limited parking space available, the proprietors have had to put a lid on the number of entries. It is 700 players in the Master, Expert, A, B, C, D, E, and Unrated sections. Jan Wells, the vice president of Browne Vintners in charge of such things, reports that approximately 500 players have already signed up, that means you must turn up BEFORE 10 a.m. Saturday, when the first round starts, in order to have a chance to enter.

The prizes this year range from \$25 for 5th in the Unrated group to \$2000 for 1st in the Master's.

While kibitzers are welcome, as usual, it is well to remember that there are only 350 parking places on top of the hill near the winery and

those go on a first-come, first-served basis. However, free buses will run from the Paul Masson Champagne and Wine Cellars at 13150 Saratoga avenue in Saratoga to the tournament. (You might even want to make the champagne tour before going up the hill.)

Even non-players can enjoy the sun and wine sampling (at least those over 21), the view and George Koitanowski's showmanship.

The World's Blindfold Chess Champion will run a Vegas Fun Chess game between rounds of the tournament, lecture, answer chess questions—and if the crush isn't too great, perform his famous Knight's Tour, an extraordinary feat of memory that has to be seen to be believed.

The Vegas Fun Chess game is Kolty's own invention, something he cooked up overnight in 1964 when the gaming moguls of Las Vegas wanted something Vegas and special to liven up their chess tournaments.

Vegas Fun Chess is designed to move quickly and give the player who scarcely knows his Pawn from a Rook some chance against strong players.

The rules are simple. Players roll two dice which have chess symbols instead of numbers on them—one die has a

King, Bishop, Knight, Rook, Pawn and Pawn on it. The other die has a Queen, Bishop, Knight Rook, Pawn and 0 (the 0 gives a player the right to make any legal move on the board or to make no move at all, to "pass").

White rolls the dice first and must move if either die turns up a symbol of a chess piece that he or she can move. (A queen and bishop on the first roll, for example, would mean White couldn't move at all.)

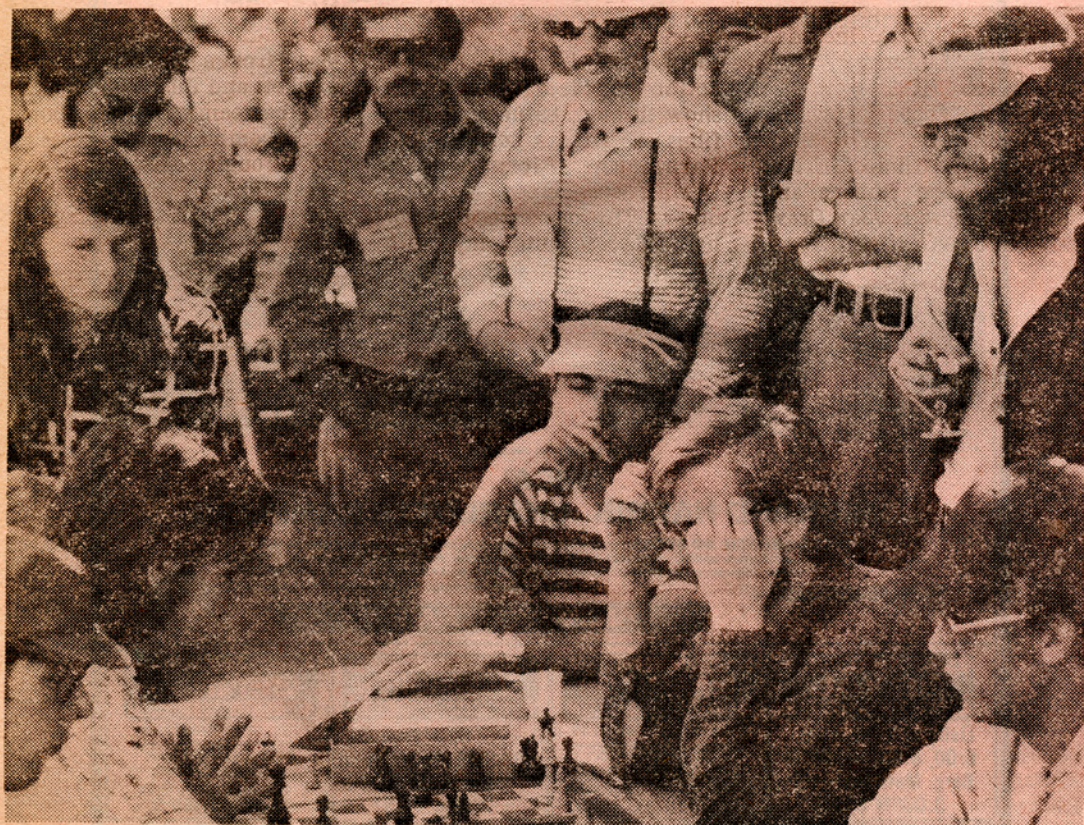
Black then takes a turn under the same rules.

When a player is in check, he or she must get out of check without throwing the dice. Then the opposing player can make any move he or she wants without throwing the dice. This gives a strong player a chance to maneuver.

When neither is in check, the dice-tossing resumes.

The game goes faster than the telling, fortunately, and is a straight knock-out affair. The four survivors get prizes, 1st gets \$40, 2nd \$30, 3rd \$20 and 4th \$10.

Whether you play in the tournament, do the Vegas thing or just sip wine, nibble cheese and kibitz, the idea is to have fun, and wine and fresh air, a heady combination.



PAUL MASSON CHESS TOURNAMENT