The Chess Ban In Minneapolis Sparks Protest

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By all accounts it was a normal day at the Minneapolis Public Library. Nothing out of the ordinary seemed in the air. Then suddenly there was shouting, a shower of obscenities, and a general ruckus over in one crowded section of the main reading room. No, Governor Ventura had not arrived.

The chess fans were at it again.

After last week's ban on chess, fans had gathered over near the copy machine and were berating library security. How dare the public library interfere with this great sporting event?

Indeed a ban has been placed on chess at the Minneapolis Public Library and fandom was in a tizzy. And well they might be. Who ever heard of such a thing? A ban on Chess! What will it be next? Etiquette training for Little League parents!

It may be hard to believe but people do get bent out of shape by chess. Some people even think it's a sport. In Russia the sports segment of the evening news, weather and sports regularly reported the Chess News. Chess players in Russia are national heroes and major celebrities. Chess is followed closely and intensely. Major chess matches are the lead story on the sports reports.

But not in Minneapolis. I can truly say in the twenty plus years I lived in the City of Lakes there was never once a public disturbance over chess. Not in the Public Library, nor anywhere else. Not once did a chess story ever appear on a sports program on either radio or television, nor did one ever make it to the sports pages of the newspaper. I can only report on Minneapolis, of course, and can not say what might have happened in St. Paul, a city that is liable to produce anything during a full moon.

So how did this state of affairs come to be? It seems that workers in the Copy Center at the Library brought chess sets to work. They started lending the sets to patrons and chess quickly caught on. It is clearly a case of spontaneous chess, always a delicate and dicey situation. Spectators began to gather and according to a library
spokesperson, "boisterous language" was being used. "But this is a library, so boisterous language is not appropriate."

Indeed it is not.

It is however a great place for chess, according to one pawn wielding library employee. "Chess is the kind of thing that should happen in a library."

Perhaps not. Perhaps it should happen on ESPN2, FoxNet Sports, or TBS and TNT. Perhaps it should happen on NBC where, fortuitously, Saturday Night Prime Time is wide open. With the XFL having bombed out, maybe, just maybe, chess is the answer. Are you listening, Mr. Ebersol?

The XCS, the Xtreme Chess Smackdown, brought to you live from Public Library venues across the nation. Vince McMahon, still the King, presents "in your face" Chess, full of "boisterous language" and scantily dressed Chess Girls from Silicon Valley. Prime time television like you have never seen before, or at least in the last two weeks.

Kings, Queens, Knights and Pawns, not to mention Bishops and Rooks, all, in your face during prime time. It will shock, surprise and entertain. Smash-mouth Chess.

After you've seen the XCS you'll never care about Gary Kasparov again. From around the Globe, and even around the world, Chess like you've never seen it before! No moves will be banned. Trash talking will be allowed, indeed encouraged. Checkmate could bring death, or worse.

To give it credibility none other than the Governor of Minnesota, the state that invented "boisterous" chess, will serve as the color commentator for this series of duels to the death on the big board from Vegas.

We will, we will, Rock You!

Perhaps it's just the full moon. After all there was a no-hitter in baseball this week that featured nine walks. And there was a serious threat this week to end high school football in the Mobile, Alabama, area. So why not the XCS? Dick Ebersol and NBC, the Network of the Taped Olympics, will apparently buy anything.
On Sport and Society this is Dick Crepeau reminding you
that you don't have to be a good sport to be a bad loser.

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