

[CHESS, 27 November 1954, p119-121]

This is the second grading list prepared by the B.C.F. National Grading Sub-Committee. The list grades performances in the three years to end August 1954, including Nottingham and Skegness, but not Paignton or Amsterdam.

The results used in the grading were provided by Union and County Secretaries, etc., in response to the Committee's request. Very full results have been obtained from some places; others are under-represented in the list. Many players, strong enough to be included, have had to be omitted for lack of sufficient data.

The method was described in the B.C.F. Year Book for 1953-54 [*appended below - JS*]. The same grades have been used as in the first list; a man at the top of one grade would be expected to win by about 7 to 5 in a long series of games against a man at the top of the grade below. The best Russians are about three grades above our 1a.

All serious over-the-board play reported to the Committee has been regarded as eligible. The qualification for inclusion is 20 assessable games in the three year period, with at least 10 in the last twelve months. In a few cases, the Committee have waived the latter condition, but never where the player has not engaged in serious play during the year. Those who were eligible to play in the B.C.F. Junior and Boys' Championships have been graded on two years' and one year's play respectively (or on the last 20 games if they had played less in these periods). Names are arranged alphabetically in each grade. We have inserted in brackets the ranking in last year's list of each player who was included.

The Committee hope to collect enough records for 1954-55 to permit the 1955 list to be made generally on two years' performance instead of three. The Committee are indebted to those who have given such great help in 1954. A circular will be issued shortly asking for records for 1954-55; it is hoped that all clubs will meanwhile keep records of all play of the strength indicated by the list. This year's list is nearly five times as long as the first list; with the co-operation of the chess world, the Committee hope to continue to improve the list in 1955, both in quality and in quantity.

COMMENT . . . [presumably by CHESS editor B.H. Wood]

Disappointment will again be felt that the players are graded into mammoth groups, instead of being arranged into order of strength, from first to last. It is also curious that Paignton (which finished on September 18th) could not be incorporated in a ranking list issued just two months later. (No prize offered for an explanation!) This and the [1954] Amsterdam [Olympiad] tournament, being succeeded by a several weeks' lull free of big-tournament chess, formed a natural close to a period covered.

The disappearance of such names as W. A. Fairhurst, D. M. Horne and T. H. Tylor is regrettable.

The inclusion of many new names greatly enhances interest, however.

[n.b. modern grade equivalents given in square brackets after 1a, 1b, 2a, etc]

<b>Grade 1a</b> [241-248 - 1 name]	E. G. Sergeant (West London) (2b)	P Keffler (Bath)
C. H. O'D. Alexander (1a)	A. H. Trott (Metropolitan) (3a)	S. J. Krubski (Insurance)
<b>Grade 1b</b> [233-240 - 3 names]	T. H. Wise (Middlesbrough) (3a)	D. Leslie (Finchley) (3b)
H. Golombek (1b)	<b>Grade 3b</b> [201-208 - 34 names]	D. E. Lloyd (Cambridge U.)
J. Penrose (1b)	D. M. Andrew (Sheffield)	B. J. Moore (Birmingham)
R. J. A. Persitz	F. W. Allen (Athenaeum)	J. J. Moore (Metropolitan)
<b>Grade 2a</b> [225-232 - 11 names]	J. Ansell (Cheltenham)	A. J. Morrell (Ilford)
G. Abrahams (2b)	R. W. Bonham (Worcester) (4a)	H. F. Moxon (Clapham Common)
L. W. Barden (2b)	R. F. Boxall (Lewisham) (3b)	P. W. Parkes (Wimbledon)
R. Blow (2b)	C G. Butcher (Wimbledon)	A. Philpott (Finchley)
R. J. Broadbent (1a)	P. B. Cook (Ilford) (3b)	J. H. Pollitt (Manchester) (4b)
S. Fazekas (2a)	S. C. Davey (Ipswich)	J. E. Povey (Leeds)
M. J. Franklin	M. Davis (Hastings)	D. B. Scott (Battersea) (3b)
P. S. Milner-Barry (2a)	H. G. Felce (Sutton & Cheam)	S. A. Seale (Ealing)
A. Phillips (2b)	P. C. Gibbs (Bradford & Birmingham U.)	R. W. Stevenson (Clapham Common)
M. Radoicic	I. Goldberg (Leeds)	A. F. Stobo (Cheshire)
W. Veitch	D. F. Griffiths (Birmingham)	C. Sullivan (Glos.)
R. G. Wade (2a)	P. Harris (Oldbury) (3b)	<b>Grade 4b</b> [185-192 - 56 names]
<b>Grade 2b</b> [217-224 - 11 names]	M. J. Haygarth (Leeds)	D. L. Barrett (Insurance)
J. M. Aitken (Cheltenham) (2a)	J. B. Howson (Kent)	A. J. Bernfield (Metropolitan)
P. H. Clarke (Ilford) (2a)	E. C. Hughes (Civil Service)	J. Birnberg (Athenaeum)
J. A. Fuller (Harrow) (2b)	F. E. A. Kitto (Exeter)	C. Bridle (Wimbledon)
A. Y. Green (Athenaeum) (3a)	G. J. Martin (Ilford & Leicester U.)	J. G. Brogden (Wakefield)
D. V. Hooper (Battersea) (2b)	D. Miller (Metropolitan)	H. Brown (Streatham)
N. McKelvie (Battersea)	J. Neale (Cheltenham)	T. I. Casswell (Hampstead)
F. Parr (Stock Exchange)	N. A. Perkins (Hendon)	P. E. Collier (Leicester)
W. Tabakiernik (Leicester)	W. E. B. Pryer (Herts)	M. G. Collins (Crewe)
A. R. B. Thomas (Exeter) (2b)	W. E. C. Richards (Civil Service)	E. Faierman (Glos.)
P. N. Wallis (Leicester) (2a)	V. J. A. Russ (Leicester) (3a)	J. T. Farrand (Willesden)
B. H. Wood (Warwicks.) (2b)	P. D. Sanderson (Cambridge U.)	J. C. Frost (Cheshire)
<b>Grade 3a</b> [209-216 - 28 names]	P. Scull (Derby)	W. J. Fry (Southampton)
L. Alexander (Surrey)	Sergt. K. R. Smith (U.S.A.A.F.)	L. A. J. Glyde (Ilford)
P. B. Anderson (Glasgow)	J. D. Solomon (Battersea)	D. J. P. Gray (Exeter)
J. F. Barrett (Cambridge U.)	J. Stone (Hampstead)	D. B. Grayson (Manchester)
T. J. Beach (Liverpool)	R. F. Streater (Wimbledon)	Rev. W. R. Greenhalgh (Lewisham)
M. Blaine (Hampstead) (3a)	B. Sturgeon (Ilford)	C. R. Gurnhill (Sheffield)
E. Brown (Hampstead)	H. V Trevenen (Penzance)	J. B. Hawson (Ilford)
P. F. Copping (Swindon)	H. I. Woolverton (Ilford)	B. Hayden (Sussex)
J. W. Cornforth (Hampstead)	<b>Grade 4a</b> [193-200 - 33 names]	K. A. Hirsch (Hampstead)
A. Distler (Athenaeum)	G. A. C. Ashcroft (Battersea)	H. S. Hope (Croydon)
F. Fischer (West London)	J. H. Beaty (Doncaster)	S. R. Hossell (Coventry & Taunton)
O. Friedman (Finchley)	K. Beaumont (Huddersfield)	J. T. Keable (Croydon)
I. J. Good (Cheltenham)	J. M. Bee (Metropolitan)	E. Knopfler (Glasgow)
G. F. Harris (Stourbridge)	E. G. Berg (Bradford)	W. H. S. Lavers (Herts)
P. C. Hoad (Liverpool)	R. M. Bruce (Plymouth) (3b)	A. Lerchs (Aberdeen U.)
D. G. Horseman (Oxford U.)	B. Cafferty (Birmingham U.)	J. Levin (Metropolitan)
H. Israel (Middlesex) (2b)	J. G. Cockcroft (Bradford)	K. W. Lloyd (Birmingham)
A. Lenton (Leicester)	S. H. Crockett (Insurance)	E. G. Long (Bristol U.)
D. G. Mackay (Battersea)	C. A. S. Damant (Hampstead)	W. D. Lowe (Metropolitan)
D. V. Mardle (Cheltenham) (2b)	F. Davy (Southgate)	C. W. Marshall (Glasgow)
S. Milan (Stockport)	K. L. Gardner (Oxford U.)	T. G. Midgley (Huddersfield)
W. R. Morry (Birmingham) (3a)	J. B. Goodman (Plymouth)	A. E. Nield (St. Leonards)
R. H. Newman (West London) (3a)	J. J. A. Handley (Cambridge U. and Newcastle)	G. C. Nurse (Insurance)
R. C. Noel-Johnson (Kent)	C. G. Hilton (Manchester)	L. S. Penrose (Hampstead)
D. Paffley (Wakefield) (2b)	C. Jahn (Harrow)	M. Podoba (Southgate)
J. S. Parker (Wimbledon)		M. E. Poolake (Bristol)
		A. P. Primett (Herts)
		A. Rivlin (Leeds)
		J. D. Rosse (Southgate)
		H. A. Samuels (Croydon)

I. T. Sifton (Exeter)	P. Henley (Finchley)	E. B. Chapman (Leicester)
J. T. Smith (Manchester U.)	A. Hills (Herts)	D. J. Collins (Harrow)
J. M. Soesan (Ilford)	A. J. Hooke (Insurance)	S. W. Dickens (Herts)
Miss A. Sunnucks (Lud-Eagle)	H. Mann (Cheltenham)	W. Evans (Battersea & Bucks)
C. G. Tayar (Birmingham)	H. G. T. Matchett (Birmingham)	H. W. Gamble (Battersea)
M. Thompson (Southampton)	I. R. Napier (Cornwall)	O. C. Gardiner (Dover)
Aird Thomson (Surrey & Glasgow)	B. H. Neumann (Manchester)	W. J. Gillies (Harrow)
Miss E. Tranmer (Hampstead 4a)	J. E. Pattle (Guildford)	J. P. Goodfellow (Metropolitan)
D. G. Tranter (Sheffield)	A. R. Pitt (Cheltenham)	P. Gough (Ludlow)
C. Welch (Bristol)	J. Poole (Harrow)	D. Gould (Leicester)
R. G. White (Stock Exchange)	R. O. Powis (Nailsworth)	E. W. Harrison (Ilford)
K. Whyld (Nottingham)	J. S. Price (Battersea)	G. E. James (Leicester)
B. L. Wilkinson (Chorley)	G. A. Rain (Croydon)	R. E. James (Insurance)
S. Wilkinson (Essex)	D. Saunderson (Chesterfield)	H. F. Joynson (Wolverhampton)
	H. W. Scarlett (Cambridge)	F. R. Leicester (Clapham Common)
	D. Smith (Hull)	A. Lindhurst (West London)
	J. E. Smith (Cheshire)	B. Lyons (Wimbledon)
<b>Grade 5a</b> [177-184 - 37 names]	D. H. Spencer (Wimbledon)	M. Rose (Glasgow)
W. G. Barb (West London)	R. Starasolsky (Leicester)	O. Schalscha (Wellington)
Mrs. R. Bruce (Plymouth)	P. Starling (Middlesbrough)	G. H. Simmons (Scunthorpe)
J. Bzowsky (Athenaeum)	G. H. F. Tredinnick (Coulsdon)	V. Tarnofsky (Cambridge U.)
H. W. Calvert (Ilford)	L. Vine (Eastleigh)	W. S. Wallis (West London)
F. J. Camm (West London)	J. Vining (Stock Exchange)	L. C. Walters (Ilford)
L. J. Cannon (Newcastle)	F. S. Woolford (Gloucester)	H. H. Watts (Southport)
C. Cordel (Leicester)	R. D. Wormald (Worcester)	A. Weber (Clapham Common)
A. Flood (Hampstead)		O. Weiss (Leicester)
B. E. Glaze (Metropolitan)	<b>Grade 5b</b> [169-176 - 29 names]	R. Weisz (Wimbledon)
P. T. T. Godwin (West London)	E. G. Ansell (Manchester)	
I. F. Grix (Cornwall)	S. D. Callard (Nailsworth)	
E. Hamilton (Middlesbrough)		

#### A GRADING SYSTEM FOR BRITISH PLAYERS [1953/54 BCF Yearbook, pages 39-42]

Some months ago, the B.C.F. Development Committee decided to examine the possibilities of adopting a grading system for British chess players. This examination has been made, and proposals have been submitted to (and approved by) the Executive Committee. The proposed system is summarised in this article.

The adoption by the B.C.F. of a grading system which could be extended to cover all U.K. chessplayers who wished to be included is expected to yield definite advantages for British chess. It will stimulate interest and organisation; it will be useful for tournament directors and others who have to arrange and classify players according to strength; it could be a fruitful source of income for the B.C.F.

A grading system provides a means of measuring and comparing the performance of players over a definite period. This is not quite the same thing as comparing their intrinsic strength. It can take into account only the actual facts of the results which a player achieves over the period. It cannot take into account the circumstances behind the results—bad health or business worries that make a man play below form, good luck with opponent's blunders, and so on. If Mr. A's performance is better than Mr. B's over a period, it does not necessarily mean that he is the stronger player. But for all practical purposes, performance is a pretty good guide.

It is proposed that a grading list should be issued annually by the B.C.F., based upon performance over a three-year period. Thus, the list for the B.C.F. year 1953-54, based upon performance in the three years ending 30th June, 1954, would be published in the B.C.F. Year Book in the late autumn of 1954. Using a shorter period than three years would put too much weight on short-term fluctuations in form, and would involve rating some players on inadequate data—or leaving them out and making the list unrepresentative. If a longer period was taken, the list would be too static, and would not reflect quickly enough the changes which are constantly taking place.

The danger must be avoided of trying to grade players on insufficient data. There are great variations in the form of every class of player from one tournament to another. Some players are notoriously inconsistent, but everyone's performance varies widely. The grading can be very misleading unless it is based on a reasonable run of play. It must also cover all kinds of play—tournaments, international matches, county matches, county championships, etc. It is therefore proposed that the grading system should cover all serious over-the-board play under match conditions; different conditions apply to correspondence chess, and this must be excluded. It is also proposed that no grading should be issued for anyone who has played less than 25 rateable games in the three-year period.

It is intended that the number of grades should be chosen in a way which reflects meaningful differences in performance. If there are too few grades, the system can tell us nothing new. If there are too many, artificial distinctions will be created, and purely fortuitous considerations will get too much weight. It will never be possible to say with certainty that a man in one grade has had a better performance over the three years than a man in the grade immediately below, for there is bound to be very little difference between the performance of a man at the bottom of one grade and that of a man at the top of the next. But we do need to be certain that the performance of every player in one grade is better than that of every player in the next grade but one. It will probably be found best to have 15—20 grades to cover the whole range from the strongest players in the country to those who play around Board 20 in the weakest County teams. It is not proposed to designate specific grades as carrying particular titles, such as "Master", "Championship Class", and the like.

#### Principles of the System

The system would take into account both the strength of each player's opponents over the period and his results against them. For working purposes, a rating would be calculated for each player. This would be based upon the rating of his opponent's ratings, plus (or minus) 10 points for every 1% by which his aggregate percentage result exceeds (or falls short of) 50 per cent. Thus, if a player's opponents have an average rating of 2100, and he has scored 58.3 per cent, against them, his rating would be 2183—i.e., 2100 plus 83. If his score had been 31.9 per cent, (i.e., 50 minus 18.1), his rating would be 2100 minus 181, i.e., 1919. With this notation, a difference of 100 points between two players would imply that the higher would be expected to beat the lower in a long match by 6 to 4.

This is the essential characteristic of the United States Chess Federation's rating system, and we have had valuable help from Mr. Harkness, their Rating Statistician, in working out a plan suitable for British conditions. In the proposed B.C.F. system, the actual ratings would be used only for working purposes; for publication and for all practical purposes, the ratings would be grouped into a much smaller number of grades as described above.

#### Method of Calculation

When ratings are known for a large number of players for one year, the next year's results can be rapidly worked out. For each tournament, we take the average rating of the players—this can be reasonably accurately estimated if ratings are known for half the players. For each player who has taken part in a rateable tournament, we then know the number of rateable tournament games played, the aggregate ratings of his opponents, and his total percentage result. For all his other play against rated players, we likewise know the number of games, the aggregate ratings of his opponents, and his percentage result. Combining the tournament and non-tournament play, we get aggregates accordingly.

Thus, to rate performance in 1953-54, we should apply the ratings for 1952-53 to the play in 1953-54; to these aggregates for 1953-54 play would be added the aggregates for play in 1951-52 and 1952-53 which had been used for calculating the 1952-53 rating. These three-year aggregates would provide the final ratings for 1953-54, based upon three years' performance, from which the grading list for 1953-54 would be prepared. And so on for 1954-55, etc.

Certain special points have to be taken into account. For example, it is impossible to make an average rating for a Swiss system tournament; the average of each player's opponents has to be calculated; if no rating is known for some of the players, either a rating must be estimated or the games against these opponents ignored. Again, some modification is needed to cover very rapidly improving players, to credit play against them at more like their current strength than their previous year's rating. Allowance must be made, too, to get over the fact that a win against a much weaker player may actually reduce a player's rating—and a loss against a much stronger player improve it.

All play against foreigners, both here and in foreign tournaments, can be and should be included. The results of about 200 post-war tournaments, for over 400 foreign players, are being analysed and ratings calculated, and this will of course be kept up-to-date so that all U.K. players' play against foreigners can be taken into account.

#### A Grading List for 1952-53

To get to the starting point, an analysis is being made of the records since the end of the war of the 77 players who have played in the British Championship and of 11 others who have represented the B.C.F. in international matches or in representative international tournaments or have had notable tournament performances. This does not necessarily represent the strongest players at the moment; two of the strongest, Crown and Combe, are, alas, dead; others are inactive or past their best; others again, as strong as many in this list, do not play in tournaments. But this is a suitable list to start with.

All these players' tournament play, play in international matches, and non-tournament play against each other, up to the middle of 1953, recorded in the B.C.M., Chess, and the B.C.F. Year Book, is being analysed in the way

described above. At the outset, it is necessary to do some estimation of ratings, but this rapidly adjusts itself as the working of the system proceeds.

The grading list for 1952-53 will cover the three years ending 30th June, 1953, and the analysis covers a long enough time before the start of this period to get over all the teething troubles.

This grading list, covering as many of these 88 players as have played enough rated games in the last three years, will be published before the end of 1953 as a tentative first step in the working-out of the new system.

#### Further Development

The system is capable of extension to cover any number of players, of all strengths. The limiting factor is the availability of records. It is not necessary to know the result of every game that every player has played in the last three years in order to assign meaningful grades. But it is necessary to have a representative set of results for each player to be rated, and it is necessary to have a certain minimum amount of information about a player's performance in order to assign him a grade. And the accuracy grows rapidly with the amount of information.

It is intended to seek to collect as complete records as possible of the following play:—

- (a) All congresses; all tournaments in each congress.
- (b) Qualifying tournaments for the British Championship.
- (c) All county matches.
- (d) County Championship tournaments; London Championship; Championships of the chief cities.
- (e) Matches between cities, e.g., London v. Birmingham, Liverpool v. Manchester, etc.
- (f) Quarter-finals and subsequent rounds of the National Club Championship; Civil Service matches, etc.
- (g) National Chess Centre Championship and chief tournaments.
- (h) All matches played by University clubs, including Universities' Week, Oxford v. Cambridge Past, etc.
- (i) Scottish tournaments and matches.

A request will be made to the various authorities concerned to make available to the B.C.F. such records as they may have of results in 1951-52 and 1952-53, and to keep records in 1953-54 so that it will be possible to produce a somewhat more comprehensive grading list next year and to begin to build up the system of records required for extension of the system to cover a really large number of players.

Further consideration is being given to the problems involved in grading all the players who will want to be graded. The present proposals represent a first step, which, with the co-operation of all the constituent units of the B.C.F., can be developed into a comprehensive system which can provide considerable benefit for British chess.