



News Release

Date: January 31, 2006

Contact: John B. Henderson, 206-229-9233
US Championship Coordinator & Media Relations
America's Foundation for Chess
info@uschesschampionship.com

DLUGY AND LENDERMAN GET AF4C WILDCARDS



SEATTLE, January 30, 2006 – The stated mission of the AF4C is to use their wild card spots in the US Championship to help promote the development of exceptionally promising junior players.

Last year, we selected Salvijus Bercys, who is the #1 US rated player aged 16. Running Bercys a close second is New York's Alex Lenderman (USCF rating 2427), who throughout 2005 continually dominated the junior scene in the US with a number of impressive performances.

He gained IM norms at the Hungary 'First Saturday' tournament, scoring 10/13, and at Foxwoods 2005, scoring 6/9. At the 2005 World Open, Alex, scoring 6/9, gained his third and final IM norm, though narrowly missed out on tiebreak for a direct qualifying spot for the US Championship.

Alex then went from the World Open to the world stage with an unbeaten score of 9/11 to take the U16 title at the 2005 World Youth Chess Championship in Belfort, France, becoming in the process the first American to bring home gold since Tal Shaked captured the World Junior title in 1997.

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AF4C ANNOUNCE WILDCARDS FOR US CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP

On the January 2006 FIDE rating list, Alex Lenderman has an ELO rating of 2431 that ranks him as 62nd in the United States and he thus becomes our first wild card selection for the 2006 US Chess Championship.

Last year, the AF4C also offered a wild card spot to one of the top names in the game in Gata Kamsky, who used his berth in the US Championship to stage a dramatic comeback on the world stage. Our second wild card selection this year again goes to a famous player making a comeback, GM Max Dlugy -- a player who made headline news throughout 2005, though perhaps not for what he'd have liked it for!

Max is a former World Junior Champion. He went on to become one of the US' leading players winning the World Open twice and National Open three times. Not content with just playing, he also offered his services directly to US Chess in a leading administrative role by becoming, at 24, the youngest president in the history of the USCF, serving from 1990-1993.

He retired from full-time chess in the mid-nineties, going on to use his strategic skills for a successful career on Wall Street as a securities trader for Bankers Trust – a job he applied for after the company advertised directly for chess players.

Along with some fellow investors, Dlugy then sought a bigger challenge in his former homeland by buying shares in Russian factories and bringing to them much-needed American management techniques. He became chairman of the Solikamsk Magnesium Works in the Perm region of Russia, which innocently led to him becoming embroiled in an alleged \$9 million fraud brought by disgruntled business partners.

To the shock of many chess fans and his fellow players, Max languished in a Russian prison for 9 months protesting his innocence. On a point of principle, he even turned down the chance of an early release by refusing to plead guilty to a minor charge. Common sense prevailed though, and when the case came to trial he was completely exonerated by the judge.

Thankfully, Max was released from prison just before Christmas and was reunited with his wife, Marina, and two children, Michelle, 16, and Matthew, 13, back home in Fort Lee, New Jersey. Whilst in prison, Max sought solace – amongst other activities and pursuits - through playing chess, where he once again rediscovered his joy for the game and now seeks to return to top-level play.

The chairman of the selection committee was AF4C co-founder and board member, Dr. Jim Roberts, and committee members were AF4C president Erik Anderson and chess journalist John Henderson. The committee would like to thank numerous US championship players and others in the chess community for their input into these decisions.

This will be the fifth year that AF4C has hosted the annual tournament and its second year doing so in conjunction with the NTC Foundation in San Diego.

For further championship details, go to www.uschesschampionship.com

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