

International chess tournaments part of **WORLD EXPOSITION**

Reprint of the great original from [Jan van Reek](#) (1945-2015), www.endgame.nl (site inactive)

World exhibitions (synonym: World Fairs, sometimes called *expo* or *Expo* for short) became a new phenomenon in the West in the 19th century. International travel strongly developed after the discovery of the steam engine. Comfortable journeys became possible for the upper-middle-class. International transport improved rapidly. Steam boats crossed the Channel at the beginning of the 19th century. A railway net existed half-a-century later. International gatherings were stimulated.

Industrialisation, scientific and technical progress were shown, and cultural exchange developed.

About a dozen [World Fairs](#) were organised during the second half of the nineteenth century.

Seven times an international chess tournament *of note* was part of the world exposition:

[London 1851](#), [London 1862](#), [Paris 1867](#), [Vienna 1873](#), [Philadelphia 1876](#), [Paris 1878](#), [Paris 1900](#)

Survey:

The winners of international invitation chess tournaments part of **World Exposition**

London 1851 [Adolf Anderssen](#) (Germany), tournament in knock-out format

London 1862 [Adolf Anderssen](#) (Germany)

Paris 1867 [Ignatz von Kolisch](#) (Austro-Hungarian Empire, Slovakia)

Vienna 1873 [Wilhelm Steinitz](#) (Bohemia) after play-off (2–0) versus shared first
[Joseph Henry Blackburne](#) (England)

Philadelphia 1876 [James Mason](#) (Ireland/USA), it was also the 4th American Chess Congress

Paris 1878 The event was won by [Johannes Zukertort](#) (German Empire / Poland) and [Szymon Winawer](#) (Russian Empire / Poland) who decided to share the first prize after they each won one play-off game. They drew twice, so another play-off was necessary. Zukertort won both games and gained the first place

Paris 1900 [Emanuel Lasker](#) (German Empire)

No chess events of significance accompanied, for instance, the [Exposition Universelle \(1889\)](#) in Paris or the [World's Columbian Exposition](#) in Chicago in 1893 (Corresponding links from Wikipedia)

Pro memoria – All World Fairs in the 19th century:

London 1851, Paris 1855, London 1862, Paris 1867, Vienna 1873, Philadelphia 1876, Paris 1878, Melbourne 1880, Barcelona 1888, Paris 1889, Chicago 1893, Brussels 1897, Paris 1900

The tradition of world fairs and prominent international chess tournaments continued occasionally in the 20th century – but far less frequently!

Examples are **Barcelona 1929** (Cuban Capablanca won undefeated at incredible 13.5/14, two full points ahead of Tartakower, while Colle finished sole third, 15 players, including Vera Menchik), or **Liège (Belgium) 1930** (Tartakower won undefeated at 8.5/11, two full points ahead of second place Sultan Khan, followed by Nimzowitsch, Ahues, and Colle as shared third, twelve players).

London 1851

The first international fair took place in London 1851, named THE GREAT EXHIBITION. All participating countries exhibited their finest creations in the large Crystal Palace at South Kensington. The millions of visitors expected to see a British superiority after the century of economic growth, but France appeared to be a strong competitor (indeed, Paris 1855 would become then the next fair).

The first international chess tournament took place during this London World Fair in 1851. Money and interest were available at that time. Great Howard Staunton personally organized the tournament. Anderssen won the event, played in knock-out format!



Entrance to the Crystal Palace



Adolf Anderssen

London 1862

The Crystal Palace was recycled for the second British world exhibition. A great invention was the sewing machine for families.

Fourteen players participated in the main chess event from 16 vi - 28 vi 1862. They played at the St. George's Club, St. James's Club and Divan.

All-play-all and time controls were novelties for a big tournament! Twenty-four moves had to be played in two hours. Time was measured with hourglasses. **Draws did not count and had to be replayed.**



Crystal Palace



Adolf Anderssen again

The prizes were won by Anderssen (£100), Paulsen (£50), Rev. Owen (£30), MacDonnell (£15), Dubois (£10) and Steinitz (£5). Blackburne made a promising debut.

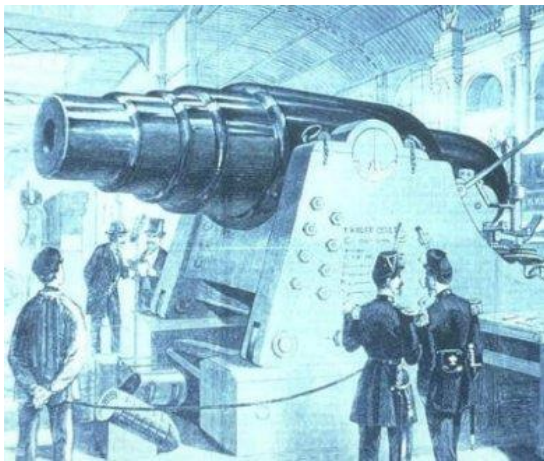
Paris 1867

New developments were shown in an enormous building. The gallery of machines had a length of 1.2 km. A Krupp canon was most impressive. Its superior firing power at war would be demonstrated in France three years later.

A grand chess tournament was played in the Grand Cercle, 10 boulevard Montmartre from 4 vi to 11 vii. Thirteen participants played double rounds. **Draws counted as zero!** The time limit per move was six minutes. The time control was ten moves an hour.

The prizes were won by Kolisch (5000 Francs), Winawer (2500 F), Steinitz (2000 F), Neumann (1500 F), De Vère (1500 F), De Rivière (1000 F).

The first four also got a Sèvres vase. The winner, Ignatz von Kolisch invested his porcelain in real estate immediately.



Krupp canon



Leisure in the Café de la Régence

Vienna 1873

The world exhibition in 1873 had the intention to show the new Wien. An enormous building was erected at the Prater and opened on May 1. Unfortunately, the stock exchange crashed a week later and cholera plagued the city from July to September. Finally many guests visited the fair in October and November.

During the epidemic, a chess tournament was played in the rooms of the *Wiener Schachgesellschaft* from 19 vii until 29 viii. Kaiser Franz Josef, Baron Albert Rotschild and Ignác Kolisch contributed large sums to the prize fund.

Twelve participants carried out eleven rounds of three games. A player gained 1, $\frac{1}{2}$ or 0 points per round. One game was played per day. The time limit was twenty moves per hour.

The prizes winners were: Steinitz 10 points & winner of playoff (1000 & 200 golden ducats), Blackburne 10 points (600), Anderssen $8\frac{1}{2}$ points (300), Rosenthal $7\frac{1}{2}$ points (200). Scores of the other players were: Paulsen and Bird $6\frac{1}{2}$, Fleissig and Meitner $3\frac{1}{2}$, Heral, Schwarz and Gelbfuhs 3, Pitschel 1.

The **Vienna 1873 chess tournament** was a side event of the [world exhibition of 1873](#) (the fifth since the first [Great Exhibition](#) in London in 1851).



Wien 1873

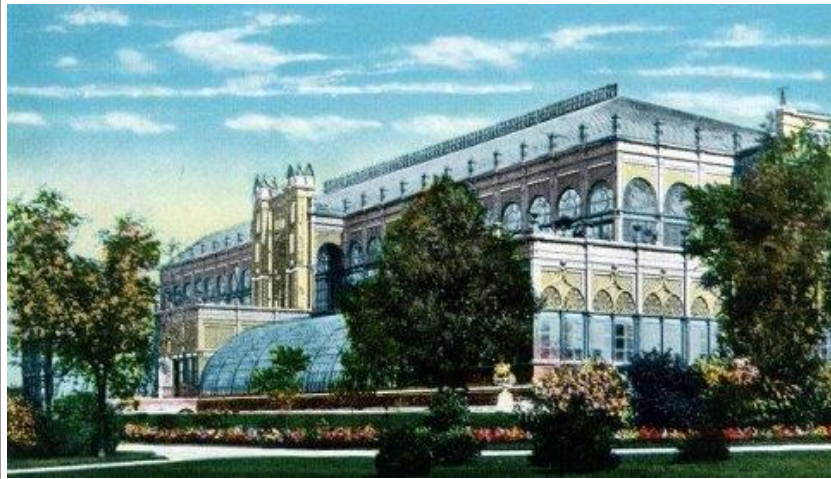


Wilhelm Steinitz

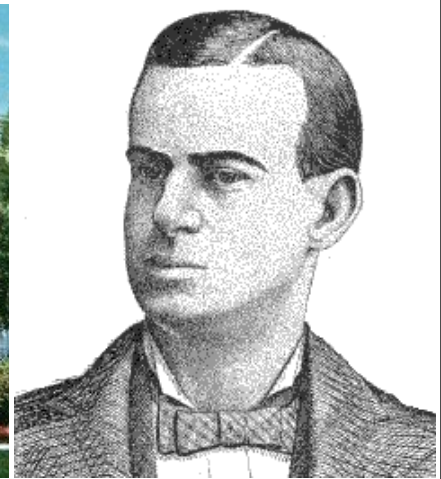
Philadelphia 1876

The first American world exhibition celebrated a century of independence. New technical developments were shown in the Machinery Hall. New discoveries were the typewriter, telephone and telegraph. Foreign visitors were surprised by the American progress.

The fourth U.S. Chess Congress was organised at the occasion of the fair. Only Mason, Judd and Bird were well-known participants.



Building for plants



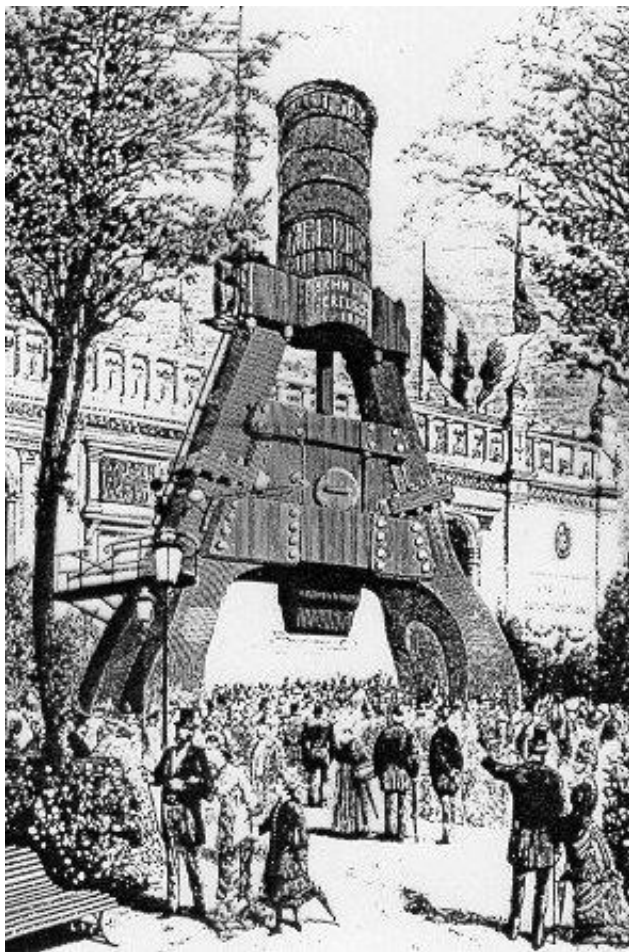
James Mason

Prize winners in the double rounded tournament of eight players were Mason (\$300), Judd (\$200), Bird (\$150), Elson (\$100) and Davidson (\$8).

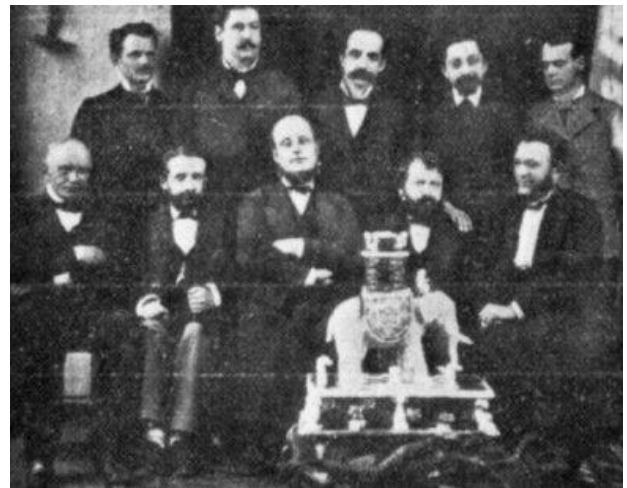
Paris 1878

The revival of France after the Franco-Prussian war was demonstrated by a world exhibition. Paris was a city of light for the first time. Visitors enjoyed cold drinks as a pleasant innovation. A colossal steam hammer stood by an entrance of the enormous exhibition hall.

A super chess tournament took place in the hall from 17 vi - 31 vii 1878. The participation of Mackenzie and Mason made it the first intercontinental tournament in Europe. The ill Anderssen would die the next year.



Steam hammer



Mackenzie, Englisch, Gifford, Winawer, Mason
Anderssen, Zukertort, Bird, Steinitz, Clerc

When the eleven double rounds were completed, play-offs were needed. Mackenzie defeated Bird twice in the struggle for the fourth place. Zukertort and Winawer drew twice. Another play-off was necessary. Zukertort won both games and gained the first prize.

Winners of the prizes were: Zukertort 16½ & winner of playoff (1000 Frans + two Sèvres vases), Winawer 16½ (500 F + one vase), Blackburne 14½ 1500 F, Mackenzie 13 & winner of playoff (1000 F), Bird 13 (500 F), Anderssen 12½ (200 F). The other players scored: Englisch and Rosenthal 11½, Clerc and Mason 8½, Gifford 3½, Pitschel 2½. Steinitz was present as reporter for *The Field*.

Trivia: Zukertort's vases were priced at 5800 Francs. He needed cash. It took three days until he could sell them much below the estimated value.

Paris 1900

A large section of the city was utilised in Paris 1900. The first metro line was connected with the central part of the exhibition area.

*No important chess tournaments has taken place during the exhibitions of Paris 1889 (well-known from the **Eiffel Tower**) and Chicago 1893. The chess masters had to wait until 1900.*

The tournament in 1900 was played in the Grand Cercle from 17 v - 20 vi. Time restriction was 30 moves in two hours followed by 15 in one hour. Draws had to be replayed once!



Exhibition area



Emanuel Lasker

The division of the prizes was: Lasker 14½ (5000 F), Pillsbury 12½ (2500 F), Maróczy and Marshall 12 (1750 F), Burn 11 (1500 F), Chigorin 10½ (1000 F), Marco and Mieses 10 (300 F). Schlechter also scored 10 points, but he won less games and got no money.

The top four also won Sèvres vases. Samuel Rosenthal wrote the tournament book. The quality of the analyses is remarkably high.

Between the World Wars, chess tournaments in Europe seemed to be located at central European spa towns (if possible with a casino), or at English or Dutch coastal towns. Off-season, of course.

Apart from sea and health resorts, important international invitation chess tournaments happened during World Expositions, on Jubilee and Memorial occasion, and in big cities, too.

Source:

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