

Isle of Man (IoM) Open

The event of 2016 definitely got the Isle of Man back on the international chess map!

Isle of Man (IoM) Open has been played under three different labels:

Monarch Assurance International Open Chess Tournament at the Cherry Orchard Hotel (1st-10th), later Ocean Castle Hotel (11th-16th), always in **Port Erin** (1993 – 2007, in total 16 annual editions)

PokerStars Isle of Man International (2014 & 15) in the Royal Hall at the Villa Marina in **Douglas**

Chess.com Isle of Man International (since 2016) in the Royal Hall at the Villa Marina in **Douglas**

The Isle of Man is a self-governing Crown dependency in the Irish Sea between England and Northern Ireland. The island has been inhabited since before 6500 BC. In the 9th century, Norsemen established the Kingdom of the Isles. **Magnus III, King of Norway**, was also **known as King of Mann and the Isles between 1099 and 1103**. In 1266, the island became part of Scotland and came under the feudal lordship of the English Crown in 1399. It never became part of the Kingdom of Great Britain or its successor the United Kingdom, retaining its status as an internally self-governing Crown dependency.



<http://iominternationalchess.com/>

For a small country, **sport in the Isle of Man** plays an important part in making the island known to the wider world. The principal international sporting event held on the island is the annual [Isle of Man TT motorcycling](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sport_in_the_Isle_of_Man#Other_sports) event: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sport_in_the_Isle_of_Man#Other_sports

→ Isle of Man also organized the 1st World Senior Team Chess Championship, In Port Erin, Isle Of Man, 5-12 October 2004
<http://www.saund.co.uk/britbase/worldseniorteam2004/>

Korchnoi who had to hurry up to the forthcoming 2004 Chess Olympiad at **Calvià**, agreed to play the first four days for the team of Switzerland which took finally the bronze medal, performing at 3.5/4, drawing vs. Uhlmann. Germany and Israel won gold (shared), Russia did not yet take part.

==> Note: There wasn't any further World Senior TCC until in the year 2014 at Vilnius, Lithuania: <https://schach.chess.com/news/lithuania-wins-revived-world-senior-team-championship-6453>. The Senior Team Chess Championships continued then at Dresden / Radebeul, Germany.

Isle of Man IoM Open (not to mix with the regional Isle of Man Congress)
(originally and longtime labelled as «Monarch Assurance», later «PokerStars», now «Chess.com»)

Launched on initiative of Dennis Hemsley (1933 – 2015) founder, originator and organiser of the IoM, **backed by the late Patrick Taylor**, he was the man who persuaded Monarch Assurance to support chess on the Island, and it has been very successful, bringing many British GMs to the IoM. <http://www.englishchess.org.uk/rip-dennis-hemsley/>, and <http://www.ecforum.org.uk/viewtopic.php?t=7974>

From 1993 to 2003 inclusive, **Richard Furness** (1937 – 2004) was **chief arbiter of the Monarch Assurance Isle of Man tournament and one of the driving forces** which made it Britain's leading annual chess tournament.

As well as being a top arbiter at such events as the Owens Corning tournaments of the 1990s, the Oakham Young Master tournaments and the 4NCL (British Team League) for many years, he was also a leading chess organiser, having founded and run such prestigious events as the Benedictine Manchester tournaments (1978-1983). The 2004 and 2005 Monarch Assurance IoM tournaments have both been dedicated to his memory.

Monarch Assurance series in Port Erin (1993 – 2007, numbered by the organizers)

1st edition 1992, Port Erin: 1. IM **Colin McNab** (7/9), 2. GM Motwani (6.5/9), 3.-7. IM K. Arkell, WGM S. Arkell (IM norm), GM Flear, Gary Quillan (IM norm), GM Timoshchenko (6/9), n/a plrs. Bio of Susan Arkell Lalic: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Susan_Lalic

2nd edition 1993, Port Erin: 1. IM **Dharshan Kumaran** (7.5/9), 2.-4. WGM Arakhamia, IM Emms, now GM McNab (6.5/9), 5.-6. IM Arkell, IM James Howell (6/9), 37 players

3rd edition 1994, Port Erin: 1. GM **Bogdan Lalic** (7/9), Croatia, living in England, 2.-6. GM Stohl, GM Sadler, GM Nunn, GM V. Milov (Isr), IM Bjarke Kristensen (6.5/9), 57 players

4th edition 1995, Port Erin: 1.-5. (1.) GM **Julian Hodgson** (5.5/9), (2.) GM Miles, (3.) GM Sadler, (4.) GM V. Milov (Isr), (5.) IM Baburin (RUS), 54 players.

Strongest Open in Great Britain after the traditional Lloyds Bank Open at London stopped in 1994 (Hastings Chess Congress has still been played as a traditional round robin invitation tournament)

5th edition 1996, Port Erin: 1. GM **Vladislav Tkachiev** (Kaz) (7/9), 2.-3. GM Baburin (playing now for Ireland), IM Ledger (Eng); third WGM norm for WIM Harriet Hunt (Eng), again 54 players

1997: **Alexander Baburin**, outright scoring 8/9, a clear two points ahead of his nearest rivals!

1998: **Emil Sutovsky** (winner on tie-break) and Nigel Short both scored 7/9

1999: **Emil Sutovsky** first and only player to retain his title, above joint Sergey Shipov on 6.5/9

2000: **Mark Hebden**, outright, 2001: **Mikhail Ulibin**, outright, 2002: **Vladimir Epishin**, outright

A Short incident in (12th) 2003: (quote) «**The dispute has been resolved by payment to Nigel of his appearance fee and expenses**» (unquote), after his withdrawal in the first round due to a re-pairing: <http://theweekinchess.com/html/twic465.html#3> (well, business is business as Nigel tends to say). OTB winner is **Simen Agdestein**, on tie-break above Smbat Lputian (both at 7/9), 98 players

Viktor Korchnoi arriving at IoM in (13th) 2004, scoring 6/9, leading solely after five rounds: <https://de.chessbase.com/post/kortschnoj-fhrt-auf-isle-of-man/1>, but losing to Chandler in round 8, beating Rowson in style: <http://www.365chess.com/game.php?gid=3025257> and Williams, too: <http://www.chessgames.com/perl/chessgame?gid=1730608> (Viktor and Simon in a gruelling duel).

Ehsan Ghaem Maghami wins on tie-break above Petr Kiriakov, both at 7/9 in a field including Smirin, Volkov, Moiseenko, Milov, Zhang Zhong, Rogers, Kotronias, Agrest, Ramesh, a bunch of the best Brits as Speelman, Chandler, Conquest, Gallagher, Wells, Howell, Rowson, Williams, McNab, Arakhamia-Grant, Li Ruofan, Houska, Bosboom-Lanchava, Skripchenko, as well as **legendary veteran Korchnoi, 73 or novice Nakamura, 17**, already a grandmaster above Elo 2600; Viktor Korchnoi finished 7th, young Nakamura finished 16th, in total 96 players (26 GM, 4 WGM)

WGM Tea Bosboom-(then)Lanchava made her third IM norm, and beat GM Ian Rogers and GM Viorel Iordachescu: <http://www.chessgames.com/perl/chessplayer?pid=49853&kpage=1#reply1>

→ To some extent, the IoM was the perfect role model for the Gibraltar Masters (Open), starting moderately in the year 2003. Inviting a bunch of the best Brits, plus some of the junior and most promising chess players, strongest senior players as well as the best women players of the world.

Note (see first page for more):

The first World Senior TCC was being run back to back with that event from 5-12 October 2004.

14th edition 2005: **Alexander Shabalov** on tie-break from Alexander Areshchenko – both at 7/9

15th edition 2006: **Alexander Areshchenko** on tie-break from Sergey Volkov – both scored 7/9

16th and «last» edition 2007, Port Erin: **Mateusz Bartel** (on tie-break), shared with Vitali Golod, Zahar Efimenko, Yuri Yakovich, Michael Roiz and Mikhail Kobalia on 6.5/9 points, 86 players <http://www.saund.co.uk/britbase/monarch2007/index.html> (a huge tie, but no real big names) <http://theweekinchess.com/html/twic673.html#4> (TWIC)

Planned edition for 2008 with a new sponsor, and renamed **Richard Furness Memorial Masters**, = 17th Isle of Man International Chess Congress, but finally it did not take part. 2008-2013 paused: <http://www.saund.co.uk/britbase/monarch2007/rd5.html> (scroll down to read the Addendum text!)

Relaunch in Douglas (since 2014, not numbered by the organizers)

The Scheinberg family brings big money to the Islands:

→ 2014: **prize fund of £21,000**, 2015: **prize fund of £32,000**, 2016: **prize fund of £50,000**

1st PokerStars edition 2014, relocated in Douglas: **Nigel Short** («I am ecstatic» on Twitter), clear first at 7.5/9, a full point ahead of the rest of the field (including Adams, MVL, globetrotters Alina L'Ami, Tiviakov, Granda Zuniga, Hebden, Hillarp Persson, or legendary James Tarjan), 77 players
The inaugural edition of the PokerStars Isle of Man International Chess Tournament.

2nd PokerStars edition 2015 Douglas: 1. **Pentala Harikrishna** (on tie-break), Laurent Fressinet and Gabriel Sargissian shared 1st place with 7/9, followed by Short and Howell on 6.5/9 (including Adams, Naiditsch, globetrotters Alina & Erwin L'Ami couple, Tiviakov, Granda Zuniga, Hebden, Hillarp Persson, or legendary James Tarjan and Jan Timman), 105 players. Possibly the strongest open tournament ever to be held in the British Isles, but also one of the strongest worldwide.

1st Chess.com edition 2016 Douglas: 1. **Pavel Eljanov** (on tie-break), Fabiano Caruana, 3. Naiditsch (including Adams, Howell, Trent, Bok, Shirov, Leko, Rodshtein, Wang Hao, Hou Yifan, Jovanka Houska, youngest IM ever Praggnanandhaa (born 2005), veteran Oleg Romanishin, as well as again Alina & Erwin l'Ami, Granda Zuniga, Hillarp Persson, and Tarjan, amongst others), 133 players entered from 39 countries, including 47 GMs. About forty players with so-called “conditions”.

There are 25 GMs who've cleared 2600 Elo rating, prompting IoM Open tournament organizer Alan Ormsby (Chairman, Isle of Man International Chess Committee) to say that the IoM is catching up with Gibraltar, Aeroflot Open in Moscow, and the Qatar Masters (Open) in Doha.

The Chess.com Isle of Man International Open 2016 had 3 top-10 players (Caruana, Nakamura, So).

GMs Pavel Eljanov and Fabiano Caruana tied for first place in the 2016 Chess.com Isle of Man International. Due to progressive tiebreaks, Eljanov won the first place trophy and the title above Caruana. In some ways, his loss on tiebreaks is the chess universe leveling things. Less than one month ago, [nail-biting tiebreaks](#) narrowly gave Caruana's U.S.A. squad gold over Eljanov's Ukrainian team (Mike Klein). The winning men each take home £9,000.

Driving force today is **Alan Ormsby**, Chairman of the Isle of Man International Chess Committee. Renowned **Simon Williams** and **Fiona Steil-Antoni** act as commentator.

The event is sponsored by Chess.com: www.Chess.com and notably by the Scheinberg family: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mark_Scheinberg, <http://www.forbes.com/profile/mark-scheinberg/> with assistance from Isle of Man Department of Economic Development, ServiceTech and BlueWave Communications. In addition to the IoM Masters event, there are **two subsidiary sections (Major and Minor)**, FIDE rated tournaments **aimed at club players**.

Note: Unlike other major Open Festivals as eg. the Gibraltar Masters or the Qatar Masters at Doha, there is no playoff here in Isle of Man.

A tie-breaker decides the IoM tournament champion and winner of the **Manx trophy**, the prize money is split.

If the engine calculator does not deceive us, then the next edition of IoM Open must be a jubilee 20th edition of the series – or another very first inaugural event ☺.

Anyway, it's fine to have another **<open supertournament>** on the chess planet. Let's hope, that **<Hastings Congress>** grows again, too.

Most prominent players not winning at IoM (all editions): *Miles, Nunn, Speelman, Adams, Shirov, Leko, MVL, Caruana, Nakamura, So, plus Korchnoi and Timman (both entering as veteran players)*

Sources: DIE SCHACHWOCHE (1978-2003), THE WEEK IN CHESS, Chess.com, ChessBase, and [Isle of Man International Chess Committee](#)

Winner of the first Isle of Man Open



Colin McNab, pictured at Turin Chess Olympiad 2006: http://www.chessscotland.com/photos/colin_turin.jpg



Short (left, not politically) with Alan Ormsby

Short wins PokerStars Isle of Man International 2014



Harikrishna wins IoM 2015 (two photos from the organizer website)



Eljanov wins Chess.com Isle of Man International 2016 (photo from his own Twitter)

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