

## **Grandad Banter Blitz**

By Tim Wall

We've all heard the phrase: 'Dance like no one's watching'. Well, in the [North East Online League](#), my Dad engages in 'Grandad Banter Blitz' like no one's listening.

How do I know this? Because my Dad, John Wall (Snr), plays in the same room with me when we play for Forest Hall in the local online League. In the most recent game, I blundered my rook after what felt like an hour and a half of incessant Grandad Banter Blitz.

Some typical and all too real examples:

'Tim, how do I challenge again?'

'Where is my opponent? Where has he gone?'

'What colour do I have again?'

'Oh no, that's nonsense!' (After blundering a pawn with check.)

'Why did I do that?'

'I should resign.'

'Why am I Black now? I can't move my pieces.' (He has switched away from the game window and become a spectator in his own game.)

'Oh, I have a passed pawn! Hahahaha! I'm winning!'

'Nooooo! Why did I do that?'

'This is hopeless! I should resign...'

'I keep trying to resign, but it won't let me!'

'What's this machine doing? Why won't it let me resign?'

'Where do I press? Tim, can you help me?'

Now my dear old dad is a very decent chess player, and his playing strength (currently just over 1600) has hardly changed since he started playing in the early 1950s. His fondest chess memory is of playing friendly games against the great Sir George Thomas at the British in Chester, 1952. This actually makes dad a member of the very exclusive Morphy No. 3 Club – people who played someone (Sir George) who played someone (American diplomat James Mortimer) who played Paul Morphy.

But – at the grand old age of 88 – it's fair to say dad also struggles a tad with technology. I usually have to help him log on to Lichess for a League game and also to click the right places for him to challenge an opponent, resign or offer a draw.

As we usually chat about each other's League games afterwards, it is perhaps natural that he would want to talk about his game.

But perhaps because he has been watching too many Agadmator or Simon Williams YouTube videos in lockdown, he now thinks it is socially acceptable to provide a running commentary on all his online games – in real time.

Dad, it is not!

Especially when I am trying to play my own game (and captain our teams, and run the League...)

Now I am all in favour of a friendly bit of banter – but there's a time and place. Not when I have 5 minutes on the clock in a League game that I take seriously.

So, I'm not quite sure what I can do for the next match. Perhaps if I can cunningly arrange a clash with *Antiques Roadshow*, *Touch of Frost*, a royal funeral or a snooker final, he may, ahem, sadly become unavailable to play.

And then, of course, I can blunder my rooks in peace (without any convenient excuses).

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