

Høw Much Før Yøur Chess Club?

By Tim Wall

"The point is, ladies and gentlemen, that Play Magnus – for lack of a better alternative – is good. Play Magnus is right. Play Magnus works. Play Magnus clarifies, cuts through, and captures the essence of the evolutionary spirit.

Play Magnus in all of its forms – Chessable, the Champions Chess Tour, Chess24, New in Chess, CoChess, iChess.net, Everyman Chess & Ginger GM – has marked the upward surge of humankind.

And Play Magnus – you mark my words – will not only save the Fulchester Chess Congress, but that other malfunctioning corporation called FIDE."

- Gordon Gekko, *Wall Street* (2021 social-distancing edition)

Yes, folks. During the pandemic the chess world is changing, and such venerable institutions as GingerGM – as English as a swift lunchtime pint in a Godalming pub garden – will never be quite the same again.

For the Play Magnus Group has [bought control](#) of cheeky chappie Simon Williams' publishing company GingerGM – the latest in a series of ambitious acquisitions by the World Champion's public company, which [floated on the Oslo Stock Exchange](#) in October 2020.

The original Gordon ['Greed is Good'](#) Gekko speech from the 1987 film *Wall Street* may have been all about cut-throat corporate mergers and acquisitions in 1980s America, but we're now seeing a similar buying spree in the chess world – this time not from New York City, but Norway.

And our new Øslø øverlørds are taking advantage of a similar economic opportunity – during a pandemic, assets are cheap, and the synergies are manifold.

Want to watch the best chess tournaments in the world? Play Magnus Group owns the tournaments – the Champions Chess Tour – and the website you’ll watch them on, [Chess24.com](https://chess24.com).

There you’ll be invited to spruce up your game with the online training site [Chessable](https://chessable.com), and even get some individual coaching through another Play Magnus affiliate, [CoChess](https://cchess.com).

Or if you’re old-school and prefer to read about chess in a printed magazine or book, Play Magnus has you covered too – thanks to its acquisition of the renowned Dutch chess magazine publisher, [New in Chess](https://newinchess.com), and of [Everyman Chess](https://everymanchess.com), one of the world’s most prominent chess book publishers (with an extensive and valuable back catalogue).

The list goes on, and the buying spree is probably not over yet by a long chalk.

So you think you’re immune from catching the Play Magnus bug? Think again. Let me illustrate.

Full disclosure: I am the team captain for [Chessable White Rose](https://chessable.com/white-rose) in the 4NCL Online, so who knows? Maybe I’ll get a call from Oslo I can’t refuse, and Magnus Carlsen will pitch up and play for us one Tuesday evening, under one of his lichess.org aliases, [DrNykterstein](https://lichess.org/@/DrNykterstein)?

And once over-the-board chess resumes, which major chess tournament would sensibly turn down the offer of Magnus’s sponsorship money?

If so, I guess it pays to jump to the front of the queue. Here goes (shameless plug alert!):

In this context, I can humbly recommend Magnus to check out the excellent OTB open tournament the [Northumbria Masters](#), recently given the all-clear to go ahead on 26-30 August, 2021 at Novotel Newcastle Airport, just three miles from Newcastle Airport (once travel restrictions are lifted, Norwegian Air and KLM have very reasonable flights from Oslo). As we re-emerge from lockdown, surely the Northumbria Masters would be an ideal tournament for the Play Magnus Group to sponsor, expanding its growing presence from online to OTB events.

After all, in the North East, we have a long tradition of being invaded by the Vikings, so why stop now? Covid vaccinations permitting, by late August we could even offer the World Champion a slap-up Saturday Night 'Oot on the Toon' with a socially-distanced Premiership football game at St. James' Park, Newcastle Brown Ale and a late-night curry as a signing bonus.

And in the spirit of [Offerspill Sjaakklub](#), hasn't the 'Magnus Carlsen Forest Hall Chess Club' also got a nice ring to it? Surely a branding opportunity too good to miss...

Of course, this is all wishful thinking. But the World Champion's new commercial clout is clearly here to stay, and could shake up the chess world, FIDE and even the World Championship in ways we haven't yet begun to think of.

Let's hope Magnus does use his millions of kroner to transform the fortunes of our game in a good way. We don't want chess to be dominated by a kind of Gordon Gekko-style, short-term asset-stripper.

Hopefully, the Play Magnus Group sees itself more as a long-term angel investor, helping to make chess mainstream as an educational mind sport that everyone can enjoy.

Who knows? Maybe they'll even make a Netflix mini-series out of it.

Tim Wall is a FIDE Trainer and freelance journalist. The views expressed in this article are the author's own and not necessarily those of the ECF.