

‘Silly Openings are for the Birds’, says Chess Scotland.

Glenrothes Chess Club has always been in the vanguard of innovative rule changes. First it was three points for a win, the so-called ‘Pearson Formula’, shamelessly appropriated by football leagues the world over. And who could forget the infamous ‘one ring and your out’ policy? Sinners and recalcitrants whose mobile phone dared ring during a match were sentenced to a week’s pillorying in local stocks – a policy since adopted by the majority of the world’s more progressive states – Pinochet’s Chile, present-day Burma, the state of Texas, Franco’s Spain, Israel, etc.

Oh cruel irony, then, that Chess Scotland’s latest ruling is likely to meet fierce resistance in Fife’s very own new town. Chess’s governing body has just outlawed what it calls ‘daft openings’. Speaking from the newly-created ‘Ministry of Silly Openings’, a Chess Scotland spokesman said, ‘We are thinking here of stuff like the Colle, the Centre Counter and the French Exchange.’

Several Glenrothes players have already hung up their rooks in protest.

Treasurer Bruce Geddes was not amused, ‘I don’t play the Scandinavian to avoid theory; it’s simply that Abba was my favourite pop group and this was the closest I could get.’

Fellow Glenrothes stalwart, Neil Taylor, was no less amused. ‘I can’t believe they’re going to stop me from playing my beloved Birds Opening. There’s nothing wrong with it. I took it up about three months ago and I recommend it to anyone – prior to this, my grading had dropped by more than 100 points but since taking up the Birds, it’s only dropped another 50 – in my book that’s progress.’

Long-standing member, Peter Selbie, has also been ordered to change his openings. However, the club intends to lodge a formal appeal. President, George Pyrich, explained, ‘It’s no Pete’s fault; he doesn’t mean to play silly openings – he honestly does think he’s following theory – and nobody’s had the heart to tell him – plus, if we upset him, he might not play in the *Nancy* *Elder.*