

17. National Master Robert Jacobs Reminisces about the 1966 Piatigorsky Cup

National Master Robert “Bob” Jacobs is one of the strongest players to ever live in Missouri and equally skilled at play over the board or by mail. He was the winner of the first U.S.C.F. Absolute Correspondence Championship in 1976. Before settling in St. Louis in 1970, Bob made his home in Los Angeles for twenty years. During this time he served as one of the commentators for the 1963 Piatigorsky Cup. Here he reminisces about the commentary for the 1966 Piatigorsky Cup.

John Donaldson: With the impression I had, they had excellent attendance which you can see from this photo and this would just be part of it. They would probably watch for a little while and then they would come and watch your show and go back and forth in the commentary room.

National Master Robert Jacobs: There are things about that commentary room, a few things that I do remember.

JD: Uh huh, yes.

RB: Well let’s see, in the ‘66 one I was there a little bit, not a prominent thing, but I dropped in and tried to help her a couple of times. I made the mistake, in the ‘66 one, because we were always able to get players to come in after their games. If they won the game they would be willing to answer questions and go over it. And after [Bobby] Fischer won a game I made the mistake of asking Fischer if he would come in and comment, and he wouldn’t even answer me. He walked by just cold as a fish. On the other hand, the best one we ever had to come in and comment was [Boris] Spassky whose English was unbelievably good. He damn near sounded American. He would give excellent commentary. He was just the highlight whenever we could get him in, and he was usually willing to come in.

JD: And he won a lot of fames in that tournament.

RJ: He just seemed like a super nice guy.