12-1986 [A-6156] SciSys - **Kasparov Turbostar 740 (production samples)**
De Turbostar 640 werd in de USA verkocht. Daardoor zou het goed mogelijk zijn dat zijn opvolger, de Turbostar 740 later ook door SciSys aangeboden en verkocht werd. Helaas ontbreken de harde feiten. Zeker is dat deze ultra snelle versie (als voorversie) bij gerenommeerde personen in de USA getest werd! Of deze razendsnelle turboversie ook stabiel genoeg was voor de commerciële verkoop is dus helaas niet bekend. Deze 'turbo' blijft tot de verbeelding spreken…

Computer Chess Reports (1986)
The SciSys history about the
Turbostar 440, 540, 540+, 640 and 740 versions

The only new development since last year's **Turbostar** is the **Kasparov module KSO**, which gives the Turbostar a large and powerful opening book of over 36,000 positions - the most extensive opening library on the market. Its opening play is quite varied, which increases its effective power against a regular opponent, but would be of little benefit in a tournament or rating test. The module also enables the Turbostar to recognize opening transpositions - a valuable feature. Finally, the module triggers a randomizer that operates in post-book opening positions in cases where two moves are judged to be of nearly equal value. This may actually hurt it minutely against unfamiliar opponents, but is of course desirable to the regular user.

The Turbostar + Kasparov module (440) is now being sold at 5.53 MHz as the **Turbostar 540+**. The extra speed is probably worth more than with Novag machines, because the Turbo is rather poor at speed chess. As long as you give it at least half a minute per move on average, it win play a pretty good game. As the **Turbostar 440** has a published rating of 2038, the 540+ may be rated at 2085 against humans by the standard speed adjustment formula, although its rating against other computers is somewhat lower.

In my own simul games, the Turbo scored just 2,5 out of 7, but it notched two simul wins from Grandmaster Sosonko of Holland! Although it is rather poor in the endgame, all in all it is clear that it is the main rival for Fidelity's **Par Excellence** in the under $200 category. The two units, are of about equal strength, but the Turbostar has an infinitely greater opening variety which should make it a infinitely greater opening variety which should make it a tougher opponent for the regular user.

One peculiarity of the **Turbostar** is its choice of 'A' and B levels. The 'B' levels consider elapsed time on previous moves in deciding how long to think, while the 'A' levels treat each move as an isolated event. I found that at 30 second speed chess, the 'B' levels played better, but at 40/2 it is claimed by some that the 'A' levels are stronger. Programmer IM Julio Kaplan knows of no reason why either 'A' or 'B' should be superior. I think the 'A' levels are weaker because the time saved by thinking on the opponent's time goes to waste.

By the way, when using the **540+**, be sure to set the 'B' time limits for 25% to 38% longer than you really want, as the time limits have not been re-programmed for the faster speed. According to Kaplan, the Turbostar differs from most others in that it spends more time evaluating each node, looking at less total lines. It has been called a "wise selective" search implying that it is intermediate in nature between the full width used by Fidelity and Novag, and the selective search which is a Mephisto specialty.

One flaw I have noticed with most programs but especially the Turbostar, is a tendency to trade bishops for knights without just cause. I feel that judging bishop/knight trades is one of the most crucial positional decisions in chess and much more attention should be directed to it.

SciSys has announced their intention of developing an even faster version of the Turbostar, perhaps at 6 and/or 7 MHz. It would be named the **Turbostar 640** and **740**. They would be considerably faster than the 5.53 MHz now sold. The increase in strength should be between 11 and 34 points respectively by my table. In view of the Turbostar's weakness at speed chess, these figures may even be conservative.

Also expected soon is the all wood unit called the '**Leonardo**'. It is modular, and it is especially suitable for use in conjuction with a personal computer. Although the basic unit will contain only a cheap program in the low class 'A' range, the Turbostar program will be offered as a module. Other modules are planned, but details are not yet available…

Chess Computer ratings (September 1986)
Turbostar 432, European results: 1991
Turbostar 440 (Turbostar Kasparov), European results: 2015
Turbostar 540, European results: 2054
Turbostar 540+, European results: 2069
Turbostar 640, European results: 2083
Turbostar 740 (!), European results: 2103

Source: Computer Chess Reports – Fall/Winter 1986 Edition

Literaturhinweise / References / Literatuuroverzicht

- 09?-1986, Computer Chess Reports – Fall/Winter 1986 Edition.

Programmierer / **Programmer**
- Julio Kaplan (internationalem Schachmeister)

Baujahr / Release
- Erste Einführung: Dezember (?) 1986 (?)

Technische Daten/ Technical specifications
- Mikroprozessor: 65C02 8 bit
- Taktfrequenz: 7 MHz
- Programmspeicher: 40 KB ROM
- Arbeitsspeicher: 4 KB RAM

Spielstärke/ Playing strength
- Spielstärke (Elo / DWZ): ca. 1920

Last Updated on June 1, 2010