

## Reflections by Dr Lyndon Bouah - The 6th Annual Claremont Chess Festival

I moved my first pawn in anger yesterday. It was the start of my 2017 chess season. The 6th Annual Claremont Chess Festival organised by African Chess Lounge and the Claremont Central Improvement District was joined by the Knight Frank Property group.



The event consisted of a seven round blitz championship. I noticed two simultaneous displays being conducted by Keegan Agulhas and Dantelle Joubert two of South Africa's up and coming future stars.

The blitz event had its fair share of drama. The event had seeded first IM Donovan Van Den Heever, 2013 SA Closed Champion, followed by Six time SA Champion FM Charles De Villiers, myself as third seed and fourth seed was FM Shabier Bhawoodien the 2017 Lesotho Open Championship. Seventh seed was Daud Amini from Zimbabwe who now lives in Khayalitsha.



In my first round I was paired against Raymond Magagula who resigned after a minute since he was clear rook down. In Cape Town on the Cape Flats we would say he was Roekeloos when he resigned.

Raymond however came back strongly after this defeat to finish on 5/7. Well done to him.

In round two I played Adil Mohamed whom I haven't seen for some time. An affable chap we played a Slav in which I had him under pressure. He resigned when an unstoppable mate arrived. In round three I played Luka Elliot. Luka is one of the guys who has played for WP juniors a long time and now plays for UCT. We played the 7.d5 kings Indian and he played exceptionally well. This game went down to the wire and I had to pull out all stops to win this game. I explained some principles to him afterwards. With a bit of coaching I am sure he could be far stronger than his blitz rating (1375) suggests.

In round four I faced Charles De Villiers. Charles and I have played against each other every year since 1991 when unity arrived in South African chess. The games go either way. In the WP team Blitz championship he beat me in a see saw game and today's game was no different. I sacrificed in the game to open the king and then had a knight and pawn against his rook. We still had many pieces on the board and I was able to win sufficient pawns to allow one to queen. A see saw battle which was enjoyed by the spectators who couldn't determine who was winning!

On the board next to us IM Donovan Van Den Heever and FM Shabier Bhawoodien had a dispute which disturbed Charles and me. They were gesticulating, shouting and generally causing a racket through which Charles and I had to play. So two SA Players quarrelling with the arbiter whilst the other games were in session. Passion as the Claremont Improvement District said. Perhaps next time they must move the board and players away to allow other games to continue in peace. I decided to have no part of this quarrel as it didn't concern me because in India I learnt not to invoke negative energy by becoming involved in disputes that you have nothing to do with. This is a handy tip for our younger players. Concentrate on your own games. Don't become involved in off the board incidents.

In my next game I played FM Shabier Bhawoodien. This was going to be another game for the ages. Shabier and I have been playing against each other also for a very long time. The first time I saw him play was in 1987! I remember sitting with Jannie Saffier and preparing the Dutch Defence to face Bhawoodien. In 2016 FM Bhawoodien faced each other a number of times. In April 2016 he beat me in a blitz event and in June 2016 I beat him in a rapid. We played the same opening, the Samisch variation of the Kings Indian. And yes you guessed it. In our meeting he again essayed the Samisch and a battle a royal commenced. He played an early g4 and h4 and tried to open lines. I allowed him to capture on h6 with his g pawn thus creating cover using his own pawn. He then had a draw in hand by perpetual but decided to eschew this to try to go for mate. That respite allowed me to consolidate as I had won a piece in his attack! I was able to finish the game brilliantly! I am sure we shall meet again at the Steinitz blitz on 13 April 2017. Remember when you play Dr Bhawoodien, the game is never really over because as a medical practitioner we always know he has a bag of tricks under the table in his medical bag!

In round six I played Amini. He and I go way back to 2005 when I beat him at The African Championships in Zambia in a Grunfeld. He subsequently moved to Cape Town and we have played twice after that with a draw in one and a win for me. This time it was not to be. Amini defended everything I threw at him to clinch the event with 6/6. He had defeated IM Donovan Van Den Heever and me to secure his 6/6. He made no mistakes in his games and one can see that he has matured as a player. Well done to him.

In round seven I beat Dr Sipiwe Baloyi who played the g3 system if the Kings Indian. Amini however showed he was not sharing first with anyone when he proceeded to beat Craig Willenberg and scored an emphatic 7/7/!



So the day ended after seven rounds, with 51 participants and a junior section. The African chess lounge has the full results and pics. The top finishers were

1. Amini Daud -7/7
2. Lyndon Bouah 6/7
3. Charles De Villiers 6/7
4. Donovan Van Den Heever 5/7
5. Raymond Magagula 5/7

The Arbiter was Jean Baka from France who wore the funkiest pants on the day. See pic attached!

I enjoyed this event. WP should consider hosting monthly blitz and rapid events as the one day events are great fun. I was glad that I kicked off my year with a second place finish. the top five each won cash and book voucher. I bought two books by South African author Professor Zakes Mda whom I met at breakfast last week!

Regards

Dr Lyndon Bouah