

Steinitz Reflection Article 3 by Dr Lyndon Bouah



The Steinitz Chess Club has done itself proud by organising the 40th anniversary in fine style. Grandmaster Sahaj Grover from India won the event with 6.5 out of seven after defeating FM Calvin Klaasen in round seven. GM Grover was very approachable and always had a friendly word for all the opponents and players.



I played GM Grover in round four and had him in some difficulty. At the critical juncture of the game I decided to go all out for glory (instead of objectively taking a draw) and ended up losing the game. Immediately after the game ended and even the next day he came over to me to commiserate with me and told he thought I played a good game. The game taught me something very valuable. I should be objective and not go for glory if the win is no longer there. That's exactly what happened. FM Calvin Klaasen told me afterwards that I should be more objective and that's the lesson I have taken.



The tournament had its fair share of upsets. Kenny Willenberg beat IM Watu Kobese. Kenny sacrificed his rook for the Nf6 to open Watu's king. I thought Watu had it covered

but Kenny showed otherwise and brought the point home.

A find of the event must be the showing of Cherwin Kleinsmidt. He beat Freddy Odendaal and Kevin Jacobs both strong players. He nearly had a draw against me but he showed that he still needs some endgame refinement when he underestimated the outside pawn. A good showing from the young man who has won the B section of every event he played in this year so far.

The top three women from the SA Olympiad team played extremely well in this event and all picked up solid rating points. WIM Denise Frick had a good run when she drew with FM Calvin Klaasen and then she beat Amini Daud and the new SA Under 16 champion Jordan Verster. WIM Jesse February had a topsy turvey event but luck favoured her when Micheal James lost a piece up when his time ran out. WIM Anzel Laubscher tried some new openings and beat Reuben Salimu beautifully but luck was against her.

The following federations participated in the event: South Africa, Namibia, Malawi, India and Zimbabwe. There was one grandmaster, one International master, three women international masters, three FIDE masters, and three candidate masters.



The event was thus won by GM Grover with IM Watu Kobese and CM Lyndon Bouah joint second with 5/7. A string of players ended fourth to 8 on 4.5 out 7. Kenny Willenberg, Craig Willenberg, Calvin Klaasen, Reuben Salimu and Amini Daud all

ended on 4.5. WIM Jesse February won the best Lady player prize with her score of 4.5 also.





The Prestige section was won by Christopher Londt who scored 5.5 7. A good showing by the young Unisa student. The section had 28 players with the Van Niekerk sisters and Dantelle Joubert all participating. Veterans such as Stephen Gallied and Edwin November all participated in this section.



The full results of all sections can be found on www.chess-results.com

In round five I played against FM Calvin Klaasen. A difficult game for me because Calvin has beaten me in our last two outings. I essayed the Kings Indian Defence and allowed his knight to enter e6 via g5. He had immense pressure which I had to absorb. I genuinely thought it's a matter of time before my demise and then FM Klaasen did a Big Think. He thought in one position in the middle game for 47 minutes! Gosh after the tenth minute of being seated I decided to buy a coffee for myself. So I merrily went to purchase my coffee and came back and he was still thinking. Of course I did what most players do and walked to the other boards to see what they were doing. I noticed on the back boards that Caleb Samuels was playing his own unique brand of chess against Dr Andrew Southey. (Let's just say that Samuels eskews convention and plays some pretty unique moves.) IM Kobese who was walking past the board at the same time, raised his eyes and looked at me and just smiled. Caleb you go boy!

I stopped to pause at the game Goredema vs Fredericks. White was a queen down and was confidently sitting there capturing pawns. I then noticed a tactic which Goredema then promptly misses and he immediately resigned when Fredericks played Bd3 check. I looked up and Klaasen was still thinking.

I then looked at Salimu versus Roland Willenberg. These two wily veterans were playing out an equal endgame. At the end of the game Salimu won with Roland saying that Salimu had outsat him! (hope that's a word!). On the board next to them Kevin Jacobs won a piece against FM Paul Gluckman who then continued to play on for another twenty odd moves. So the ethical question which Jacobs posed to me afterwards was should Gluckman not have resigned with a clean conscience. Of course this question was posed with the wine god Bacchus in attendance. I pointed out to Jacobs that there is no rule which says when someone should resign and it is his duty to finish the game

promptly if he is a piece up.

I then went to check on Klaasen. I stayed at the board now but my coffee was now at its end. I then looked to see what he was looking at but couldn't see what the fuss was all about as the position was fairly simple. I then went to buy a second cup of coffee. I decided to play the Southey gambit and also bought my opponent a cup as well. This of course gained me an extra few minutes as he must now take time to drink the coffee and he must of course wonder if I had put sugar in or not! Nowadays with Banting and the like one doesn't know. As a rule where I don't know I put in one sugar.

I then began to think of these Big Thinks. I once read that GM Bronstein thought one hour on his first move because he was going through variations in his head. GM Tal once said he thought for an hour because he was trying to work out how to get a hippo out of a swamp. He didn't really solve the puzzle but an hour had passed. So I decided to go walk a bit again.

WIM February was playing against Hendriksz. Both of them are students and the game turned out quite interesting with February having a knight and two pawns against her opponents' four pawns. One pawn was the outside passed pawn which of course limits the knight. February then played her knight to a8 and when it was captured secured the draw by playing her king to oppose the cornered king.

Luan De Jager was playing WIM Denise Frick and they agreed to a draw when De Jager had two knights against the two Bishops of Frick. The position was closed however and the players decided to call it a day. On the neighbouring board Craig Willenberg was playing against WIM Laubscher who missed a tactic when Willenberg slyly won the exchange early on!

I went back to my board and found Klaasen still in deep thought. Now I was getting worried. So I decided let me use some of my training over the last three decades of tournament play and use GM Kotov's tree of analysis. First check for candidate moves and then works out the tree of possible alternatives and their sub variations. I then decided to do this.

Nowadays I play with a cap on. The reason for this is that I don't want to play against an opponent but rather against the pieces. GM Gligoric released a famous book called I Play against the pieces. This allows me to be objective and not worry about my opponent or his or her rating. Remember chess is a great equaliser and nowadays no one thinks badly when you lose to a junior player, a women player or a visually impaired player. So I don't have to look at my opponent. I then knuckled down. I was satisfied that I had everything covered but there were some nuances and subtleties that I checked for. Remember in a Kings Indian set up there are always possibilities. So I noticed some options. But let's not get ahead of ourselves as my opponent was still thinking.

Time to walk a bit. Cherwin Kleinsmidt was having a battle royal against Freddy Odendaal. Freddy at 2067 was rated over 250 rated points above his opposition. However

he was attacking furiously but his UWC opponent was also attacking. So sacrifices abound in the game but alas the sacrifices didn't work out and Freddy lost on time a piece down and also about to lose his queen.

On table four Micheal James was playing against IM Kobese. This was a revenge encounter as James had beaten Kobese in the WP Open in March 2017. So both players were geared for the encounter. Now Kobese, as the whole South Africa knows, has his own antics at the board, shooing away players who stand too close to him and even chasing away a young kid who had change in his pocket. So the game gave him a slight advantage with his rook on the seventh but opposite colour Bishops. Micheal then saw an opportunity to exchange rooks and played Rxf5. Alas it was not check and Kobese then banged out his move Rh2 getting out of the potential skewer and securing the rook. He also hit the clock with a flourish. So quite a showman is IM Kobese.

On board three Amini Daud was slowly gaining the ascendancy in his game against Dr Bhawoodien. Amini has come on leaps and bounds over the last few years. I first encountered him in the African Championships in 2005 in Zambia where I beat him quite easily but nowadays he is a tough customer.

On board one Kenny Willenberg was having a torrid time against GM Grover. He played what looked like a Pirc and was made to suffer as only grandmasters do when he had no space in which to move. So back to my game.

My opponent had made a move I expected. I then responded within a minute as it was an only move. I tend to play only moves quickly because I believe that if there is objectively no other move then just get in and play it. So my opponents deep think has caused him to enter my position but his advantage had not increased. I knew that I must activate my pieces which is now what I tried to do. We went to and fro and at the end in deep time trouble my opponent offered a draw. After checking that everything was covered I then accepted.

I also ended up thinking some weird stuff. What is the best position for my knights. Should they look forward or sideways? Mmmh this is a question of epic proportions. I also noticed that some pawns on the board were heavier than others. I was playing on the wooden boards which had lovely crafted pieces. So I decided that I must make a passed pawn of the pawns that are lighter in weight to allow them to run faster of course! I was mindful of the Marshall Chess club slogan that black pawns run faster than white pawns.

The event was also remarkable in that it was the first tournament where the entire hall sang Happy Birthday for me and ate some chess pieces..... literally! here are the final results of each section. Photos can be found on the website with the article.



Regards

Dr Lyndon Bouah

Joint runner up in the Steinitz Blitz and

Joint runner up in the Steinitz 40th Anniversary International Open