

CWP League Reflections (1) by Dr Lyndon Bouah

The WP Chess League commenced on Thursday 25 July 2017 at Wittebome Civic Centre. Three divisions were represented and what an occasion it was. 2017 is the 25th anniversary of the unified Western Province League. Leonard Rietstein in his wonderful book a History of Chess in South Africa (2003: 91) notes that the first Western Province league started in 1907 when Cape Town chess club, Tokai, Woodstock and the YMCA met and formed the Western Province Union. Mr A.J.A Cameron was elected President and each club agreed to enter one team in the League at a fee of £1-1-0 per team. Teams of five competed in the inaugural competition. Cape Town was expected to win, and they did so, but only by one point. In the double round tournament they scored 10 match points, Woodstock 9, YMCA 6 and Tokai 0.

The league continued in various forms and then around 1976 South Africa started burning when apartheid was intensified. There were many racial incidents at chess events and other sport codes. Mr Andre Van Reenen formed a new Chess organisation and many black clubs started to be established after 1976. My own chess Steinitz was formed in 1977 in Bonteheuwel. Separate leagues were now contested in Cape Town. You had the establishment (government supported) WP League as well as the black chess league being contested in Cape Town. This continued until 1992.

Unity discussions started in Cape Town in 1991 and continued throughout that year as South Africa was still banned by South Africa. In February 1992 FIDE sent various representatives down to South Africa who agreed that South Africa could rejoin the FIDE family. Cape Town then decided to form one chess league and one chess organisation was forged. The unified league kicked off in July 1992. Various clubs have been champions of Western Province through the last twenty five years. The clubs are :

1992 - University of Cape Town

1993 - Steinitz

1994 - Cape Town

1995 - Manyanani

1996 - Mitchell's Plain

1997 - Claremont

1998 - Steinitz

1999 - Claremont

2000- Cape Town

2001-Steinitz

2002 - Steinitz

2003- Claremont

2004- Mitchell's Plain

2005- Mitchell's Plain

2006 - Steinitz

2007- Stellenbosch

2008- Stellenbosch
2009- Steinitz
2010- UCT
2011- Steinitz
2012- Chesscube
2013- Steinitz
2014- Steinitz
2015 - African Chess Lounge
2016- African Chess Lounge

So the statistics for most wins to become Champions of Western Province (Cape Town Metro is):

Steinitz.	9
Mitchell's Plain	3
Claremont	3
UCT	2
African Chess Lounge	2
Stellenbosch	2
Cape Town	2
Chesscube	1
Manyanani	1

So who will go for glory in this year? The league is dedicated to the late WP and Chessa President Eldo Smart. Steinitz is on the brink of the special La Decima - number ten, whilst African Chess Lounge wishes to do a triple win which has never been done before!

Let the games begin!!!

Regards

Dr Advocate Lyndon Bouah