

Reflections by Dr Lyndon Bouah - World Cup in Georgia

This weekend is the start of the World Cup in Georgia. Africa has a number of representatives. They are

GM Bassem Amin (Egypt) who is playing GM Viktor Erdos



*GM Bassem Amin*

GM El Gindy (Egypt) who is playing GM Alexander Grischuk



*GM Essam El Gindy*

GM Kenny Solomon (South Africa) is playing GM Fabiano Caruana



*GM Kenny Solomon*

IM Daniel Cawdery (South Africa) is playing GM Levon Aronian



*IM Daniel Cawdery*

IM Balogun Oluwafemi (Nigeria) is playing World champion Magnus Carlsen.



*IM Balogun Oluwafemi*

The matches start this weekend in Georgia. The players play two matches with tiebreaks where necessary. The event is a knockout with 128 players.

GM Bassem is approaching 2700 in rating and has recently won the Abu Dhabi Open ahead of GM Nigel Short and other grandmasters. The Egyptian stands an excellent chance of going through to round two.

GM Grischuk is playing experienced Egyptian grandmaster El Gindy. Grischuk knocked out GM Kenny Solomon in Libya in 2004 and will be looking forward to the match against El Gindy.

GM Kenny Solomon is playing GM Caruana. The South African and the American both have an Italian connection as GM Kenny lives in Italy whilst GM Caruana played for Italy. The two players played against one another in Norway at the Tromso Olympiad in 2014 when the American won.

South African IM Daniel Cawdery is playing GM Levon Aronian. A dream pairing for Cawdery who will I am sure be well prepared.



GM Mohammed Haddouche from Algeria is playing top Chinese grandmaster Ding Liren.



*GM Mohammed Haddouche*

And on board one Magnus Carlsen will be playing IM Balogun Oluwafeni. In a Chessbase article Magnus says the rules allow him to play so he decided to take advantage of the rules to play!!

From a South African perspective this is the first time that two South African players are competing at a World Cup at the same time. I dream about upsets and Africa making a stand on all the boards.

I remember with fondness that the lion of Africa IM Watu Kobese beat GM Peter Leko in Moscow at the turn of the century. Let us hope that similar good fortune comes our way.

In 2011 IM Henry Steel played against GM Ivanchuk at the World Cup before playing for SA in Mozambique at the All African Games that year.

Whether you are from Cape Town, Cairo, Lagos, Algiers, Johannesburg you represent the hope and dreams of all Africa. May the blessings of the nations be with you as we wish you well in your preparation and your journey!

The six African players are representing the continent of 1 billion people and the 54 nations within it. You will represent us with pride and dignity. May you take your spears, assegais and shields with you as you march to Georgia.



Regards

Dr Advocate Lyndon Bouah