

Crossroads Chess Club - Thoughts by Thando Hlakula

“Today marks just three weeks after the Western Cape Chess league has concluded, however for the Crossroads chess club the jubilant vibrations still linger on. Having participated in the D division for the first time officially, and subsequently winning it, it’s something that we will always reflect on with fervent memories. It was a well-deserved victory even if I have to say it myself,

As we eat, sleep and live chess on a daily basis, there is lack of positivity in townships like Crossroads and chess has become one of the few things which keep us breathing.

The club was formed in 2015 November with merely 10 kids, who had never seen nor play chess before, but now it has about 35 active players mainly kids between 7 and 15 years old, so it was not easy at all considering that we had strong teams to compete against in the D division group with highly rated players like Blackjacks, Maties, UWC, Table View and the list goes on. We struggled our way through the top with a couple of losses and fortunately Crossroads C ended up on top with Crossroads A losing against Maties A and settling at position 5.

You know people who do not play chess often think it is just a couple of checks and mate but not knowing that you sit for hours laboring to stop your opponent’s ideas and trying to exalt your own and ending up maybe winning a pawn, position or tempo which might give you a slight advantage over your opponent and you still need to convert that advantage into a win.

So winning the League was a mammoth task with all the challenges that the club faces. Also it would be remiss of me not to pay gratitude and acknowledge the immense support we’ve received from the development officer Eugene Steenkamp, he has been behind the club since day one, at times offering his own personal transport so to ferry our players to chess tournaments. I would also like to thank Deon Solomon and the rest of the CWP EXCO for welcoming us and all the teams we’ve played amongst or against, not forgetting Watu Kobese for his huge contribution in training the club, with a short period of time his aptitude for chess is really showing off.

I am humbled and grateful with the Chess Western province league experience and any other competitions we took part in.”

