

Kobese Reigns in Cape of Good Open

Western Province Chess got off to powerful start with a fully packed Cape of Good Open held at Bellville Technical High School over the weekend. An impressive 228 chess players gathered and competed over 4 sections. Amid the water crisis, it was a weekend of battles of a different kind.



The A section included 6 FIDE titled players, including the likes of FM Daniel Barrish, FM Shabier Bhawoodien, FM Keegan Agulhas, FM Paul Gluckman and CM Seth-Riley Adams.

But it was IM Watu Kobese who brought a new dimension to January 28th by a memorable clinching of one of the oldest Cape Town chess events. The Cape Of Good Open is traditionally the first tournament of the year in Cape Town, and a fixture with rich legacy that stretches multiple decades. With 5 out of 6, Kobese kept his resolve with 4 wins and 2 draws. The vital decider was in Round 3 where he had to face the tenacious FM Bhawoodien. Both players have a nation-wide reputation for exciting chess, and the encounters between the “Lion of Soweto” and “Houdini” over the many years make for gripping spectator chess. Both players ended on 5 points with Bhawoodien executing a merciless cull of 5 wins and a single loss. Though tied on points, the coveted title was decided by the ‘direct encounter’ tie break system. A good start to the New Year for both players.



In hot pursuit of the two stalwarts were some of SA's exciting young chess talents. With 3.5 out of 5 were Paul Gluckman, Luan De Jager, Bernard Klein and FM Daniel Barrish.

This is a strong start to the season for chess in the province. With the calendar for the year almost full to the brim, Chess Western Province has the highest number of active players in South Africa, and, holds the largest annual chess league on the African continent.

Let the games begin!

Tauriq Jenkins
Secretary, CWP
Observatory Chess Club