

Reflections 11: 2018 Western Cape Club Championship by Dr Lyndon Bouah

For the past two days I was awakened by the waves of the Indian Ocean in Stilbaai. Eden Chess Union is hosting the 2017 edition of the Western Cape Club Championship. The event is an annual one and has been held since 2012. Steinitz chess club has won the event since inception. The event tends to rotate around the Western Cape.

This year the event was held at the Preekstoel resort in Stilbaai. The resort is named after the rocks that jut out of the sea in Stilbaai.



Stilbaai is situated 26 kilometres off the N2 on the way to Mossel Bay. Stilbaai, according to many travel brochures, is rapidly becoming one of the most popular holiday destinations on the Garden Route, yet it has still managed to maintain its peaceful character and scenic beauty. The Indian Ocean washes onto

miles of unspoilt white beaches. The village of Jongensfontein lies 10km away and offers breathtaking views of the Indian Ocean. Age old indigenous Khoisan fish traps can be seen at low tide. We went to have supper at the famous restaurant On the Rocks which offered a mind boggling 1kg Steak!! None of us dared!

Stilbaai has a unique relationship to chess in that Tannie Wynie Robbertse who opened the event as the invited guest, won the First SA Ladies Open in 1976. She was the champion for eleven years. She has been living here for 26 years and freely dispensed her pearls of wisdom. At the age of 83 she moves around with ease and speaks her mind. She remembers the events in Pretoria and of course speaks fondly of her husband and four children of which three are daughters. She took us on a short tour of the area and I am so glad that the Western Cape Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport bestowed upon her the title Legend of Sport ten years ago. Tannie Wynie certainly had an effect on all of us. Amongst her adages and aphorisms included that chessplayers must castle as soon as possible as it is the second best move after checkmate! She also noted that the younger players are struggling to develop their rooks!



Tannie Wynie Robbertse with WIM Denise Bouah

The event this year has nine teams of which the majority is from Eden. The clubs are Steinitz , Riversdale, Albertinia, Mossel Bay and George. The Eden chess league last year had 25 teams and has been won for the last three years by Mossel Bay chess club. Mr Terry Quirk who retired to this neck of the woods is arranging a Chess Event to coincide with the Knysna Oyster Festival and Mossel Bay is organising an event to coincide with the Mossel Bay Sport and Recreation Festival which is normally held at the Casino. The dates are the first week of July and the second one is the end of September. Oudtshoorn who is not here this year hosts their festival at the end of June.

Riversdale entered four teams and the hard work of Mr. Pietie Steyn is paying off. He is one of the most tireless chess administrators and organisers in the province. He ensures that there is growth and that chess is flourishing. Riversdale is described as a floral paradise of the Garden Route and is situated on the N2. It is home to a number of historic churches: St Matthews Anglican Church was built from stone in

1859, the Lutheran church in 1907 and the Dutch Reformed church in 1907.

On Saturday night Pietie Steyn arranged a lovely potjiekos after the fourth round. I then met three interesting ladies who told me about the development they do for Eden and Western Cape chess. They are part of the MiniChess organisation and the MiniChess is paying dividends as their players frequently make the Eden teams. Well done ladies. It is through your hard work that the girls in this district are becoming stronger. The ladies are Dorothy Adams from Riversdale, Cornelia Joseph from Albertinia and Marinda Darries from Melkhoutfontein. Eden sent a team to Johannesburg last year and Mrs Adams had 17 players, Mrs Joseph had 9 players and Ms Darries had three players. Congratulations! Since the MiniChess was started at Melkfontein Primary by Ms Darries the school has produced district players which were a first!



Albertinia is a peaceful country village and is charmingly situated between the Indian Ocean in the South and the Langeberg mountain range in the north. An eco-paradise with breathtaking views, it has retained much of the character of a typical late 18th and early 19th century outpost. It is the country's foremost source of aloe juice used in the health and skincare industry. The areas of George and Mossel Bay are well known to most readers and I am glad to see that chess is flourishing along the Garden Route.

The ratings of the players are not very high but that belies the fact that they have a strong chess culture going and that they have a good understanding. Because of their practical understanding, once they survive the opening then the players become extra dangerous and of course then tactics abound. A number of the top players found this out to their cost.

The event was played over two days and was won by Steinitz who has defended their title but it was not so smooth sailing as the final scores suggest. The over fifty champion Mr Mark Lewis suffered two unexpected losses and recovered to score 4/6. Micheal James played the ultimate swindle in the

following position: white king on h1, rooks on h7 and f1 and pawns on a3, b4, e5, f6, g3 and h2. James as black had a king on e3, rooks on d8 and e2 and a sole black pawn on h3. He now played Rf2 to which Terry Quirk replied Kg1 and instantly saw Rxf1 check followed by mate. Micheal James scored 6/6! There were two teams that only had female players. Well done to Albertinia and Riversdale who each fielded one all girl teams! The 2018 edition will be held during 2018.



Steinitz Chess Club

George Laverlot played for Riversdale and played a good game against me. He of course has played the last two SA Closed B sections and also is part of the MRL team that won the WP league in 2017. There are many players here that are grossly underrated and I know that given the right conditions and tournaments that they will become stronger. WIM Denise Bouah lost in the first round to the unrated Welesley Davids who then went on to win the board prize with 6/6. He is definitely not unrated material and we should watch his progress. CM Lyndon Bouah played well to score 6/6 to lead the Steinitz team to victory.

The final scores are:

1. Steinitz Chess Club - 12 match points 6 match victories.
2. Riversdale won four matches, lost one against Steinitz and drew to secure 9 match points
3. Mossel Bay
4. George
5. Riversdale C
6. Riversdale B
7. Albertinia A
8. Riversdale D
9. Albertinia B

B section

1. Riversdale B 5 points (the all-girls team)
2. Riversdale C
3. Riversdale d

The board prizes were won

1. CM Lyndon Bouah 6/6 Steinitz
2. Micheal James 6/6 Steinitz
3. Wayne Jordaan. 5/6 Mossel Bay
4. Welesley Davids 6/6 Riversdale A

Regards signing off from Stilbaai.

Dr Lyndon Bouah