

Mozambique Reflections 8 by Dr Lyndon Bouah

Megan Van Niekerk triumphs to become the new 2018 Zone 4.3 Champion!

Megan Van Niekerk caused a sensation when she won the 2018 zone 4.3 Women section. Last week 7 April Megan Van Niekerk started in the tenth position with a rating of 1674. She went into the zonal untitled and not known to many of the players. Megan is well known as the youngest sister of the three Van Niekerk sisters, WFM Lauren Van Niekerk and Robyn Van Niekerk. All three sisters have achieved their Senior Protea colours. Let's look at her journey in the event.

In round one she won relatively quickly when she disposed of Siteo from Mozambique. I recall scanning the results and noting that her result was up first. In round two she lost to WIM Francis Onkemetse (1794) from Botswana. Megan now had to consolidate and she then proceeded to win, win, draw with WIM Jesse February and then rattled off four victories in a row. She also beat WIM Esperance Caxito from Angola. She scored an emphatic 6.5/7 in the last 7 rounds. She now becomes a WIM elect and has to obtain a rating of 2000 to fully comply with the requirements of the title. She scored 66.2 FIDE rating points and had a tournament performance of 1967!

Over the last two years WIM - elect Megan Van Niekerk has made fantastic progress and scored victories against a number of Olympiad players. She doesn't hold back and what I enjoy about her chess is that she is not scared of anyone. In a recent conversation over one of her victories against a senior club player in Cape Town she told me that her opponent didn't know his opening so she decided to punish him! That's what I like about her! Megan all of us in South Africa are proud of you. You have given yourself the best 21st birthday present ever. Megan turned 21 on 26 March this year.

In the Open Section we had some intriguing results!

1. On board one FM Calvin Klaasen beat Domingos who had already won the event. Klaasen on tiebreak now ends in the bronze position with 6/9. Domingos takes gold.



2. On board two Roland Bezuidenhout scored an upset win against IM Aderito Pedro. This was a great result for Roland and South Africa. Roland picks up 46 rating points in this event and ends in fifth position. Roland will now be over 2150! I look forward to seeing him at the SA Closed one day! Roland was undefeated with 2 victories and seven draws!

3. On board three IM Silva drew with Munenga to end on 5.5.

4. FM Charles De Villiers lost to FM Khetho from Botswana and picked up 29 rating points. Charles was unbeaten in the first five rounds but only scored 1.5 / 4 in the last four rounds. Any more points and he would have been a contender. Khetho takes the silver.

5. CM Paiva beat CM Simutowe

6. Kaulule drew with IM Oatlotse

7. Mulenga beat Calicoca

8. Bhawoodien drew with Abrantes

9. Do Santos lost to Chunguane

10. Mwale beat Gafar

11. Masongo beat Vasco

12. Beukes beat Botao.

I am sure that Klaasen would've been disappointed that he didn't win this one. But I am sure he will be back. Charles was an inspiration to all the guys and showed that he can mix it up with the best of the zone. Roland played well and was consistent. Last year he also scored a bucketful of points! Congrats to Catarino Domingos from Angola who won the event and FM Khetho from Botswana who came second.

Women section:

1. Megan van Niekerk beat WCM Hamoongo to clinch the title a point ahead of the field.



2. WIM Onkemetse lost to Lubuuto. Onkemetse will be very disappointed as she played well.
3. WFM Mwangi drew with Selkirk. Both players wanted the win and of course Mwangi was leading for a great deal of the event.
4. Cheila lost to Jesse February who ends on 6.5
5. WIM Mudongo beat WIM Caxita from Angola.
6. Constance beat WCM Castro.
7. Marape beat Idalmish
8. Efentakis lost to Robyn Van Niekerk
9. Siteo lost to Makwena
10. Jefe drew with Simenda.

Analysis of final standings for Women:

South Africa wins gold and Silver in this competition!

1. Megan Van Niekerk 7.5/9 who now has to obtain a rating of 2000 to become a WIM. Gold.
2. WIM Jesse February on 6.5/9 ends second and wins the silver medal



3. WFM Lorita Mwangi takes the bronze with 6 just beating out Onkemetse who ended fourth.

Selkirk ended seventh on 5.5 and Robyn Van Niekerk ended in 9th position with 5.

South Africa thus obtains three medals from this event! Well done to all the competitors and we wish them well!

Regards

Dr. Lyndon Bouah