



## COLUMNISTS

*Dutch Treat*

Hans Ree



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**Beware, Chess Players Crossing!**

At the opening ceremony of the Corus tournament in Wijk aan Zee, I met the 98-year old Johan van Hulst, who would take part in the group of former and present members of parliament, as he does every year.

He is an admirable man, honored by the Israeli organization Yad Vashem for his resistance work during World War II, when he was able to save many Jewish children.

Later he used to be a senator for the Christian Historical Union, a group that was to merge later into a much bigger Christian political party. His CHU was always considered to be "conservative," but not as the word is often used nowadays, as a code for radicals of the Right, but in the classical sense, where moderation is one of the hallmarks of conservatism.

As in other years, I had meant to greet him saying something like "So, professor, still above ground?" for I know that he enjoys a playful reference to his venerable age. But my frivolities were stopped by the fact that for the first time I saw him in a wheelchair.

This can happen to someone who would turn ninety-nine during the Corus tournament, but I found it difficult to accept the fact. And so did he, for he explained that I shouldn't think that he was always using that wheelchair; it was only occasionally, and at home he was still able to do everything himself and in no need of help.

Next year he would celebrate his hundredth anniversary, like Lilienthal, he said. Both will be great birthday parties, I said. Circumstances permitting of course, he added laughingly.

A few days later he had won his politician's group together with Jan Nagel, father-in-law of Yasser Seirawan. Though Van Hulst regretted that in a few games he had let his opponents off the hook, he realized that he shouldn't be so ambitious anymore as to be set on winning the group alone. Yes, they mellow with age, but not to the point of self-effacement.

Monique van de Griendt, who wrote down his words for the tournament website, also interviewed another former Dutch politician, Henk Vonhoff (seventy-eight), a member of the liberal party, which in Europe means right of center.

Vonhoff was sad because only former members of parliament took part, not present members. He had some ideas about the reason for their absence, which he didn't want to divulge, but nevertheless did: "If I would develop my ideas they would come to plain insults. Something about the intellectual level of our present members of parliament." A harsh judgment on our political life. Because I knew that the French Senate organizes chess events regularly, I was jealous of the French.

For another article Monique van de Griendt interviewed people who live in the village Wijk aan Zee about their opinions of the tournament. They all liked it, one reason being that bars and restaurants flourish during these weeks, though one man said that they had to be careful with the chess players running loose, as they would cross the street absentmindedly right in front of one's car. He said that car drivers in Wijk aan Zee would warn each other when the chess players were bound to arrive.

I am writing this article after the seventh round of last Saturday. Alas, no

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glorious deeds of the Dutch contingent can be mentioned yet. When Alexei Shirov had consecutively beaten Tiviakov, Smeets, and Van Wely, my colleague Gert Ligterink wrote in the newspaper *de Volkskrant* that the Dutch trio had served as a three course dinner. As a chess player, remembering my own struggles with the world's elite, I found it beastly cruel, and as a journalist I was jealous that I hadn't thought of this simile myself. What came to my mind was a line from Mozart's *The Abduction from the Seraglio*, "first beheaded, then hanged, then spitted with hot skewers..."



*Anish Giri*

But we relish the success of our fifteen year-old Dutch champion Anish Giri in Group B. We cannot call him a product of the Dutch school of chess, as he was born in St. Petersburg and has lived only a few years in the Netherlands, but at least we can say that he has flourished on Dutch soil.

Giri is leading in his Group and up till now he has beaten, seemingly without effort, fine players such as Harikrishna, Nisipeanu, and Sutovsky.

See how he beat Pentala Harikrishna in the first round.

Last year *New In Chess* published the English version of the book about the three world championship matches between Botvinnik and Smyslov, played from 1954 till 1958. Apart from Botvinnik's analyses of the match games, it also contains his notebooks, the record of his opening preparations, written before the matches of 1957 and 1958.

One of the positions studied by Botvinnik when he prepared for the match of 1958, is the one that occurred after Black's tenth move in the game Harikrishna-Giri. As we can see in his notebook, Botvinnik's intention had been to play 11.e3 followed by 12.e4. These are good moves, but what Giri did against Harikrishna, the immediate 11.e4, was much stronger.

When I saw that game I thought that Giri's opening preparation had been better than Botvinnik's, of course not because he was the better player, but because he could use the engines.

But I was wrong. Later Giri said that he had never prepared for this sideline of the Slav and that he had seen at the board that 11.e4 was winning. So it had not been Fritz or Rybka that had been superior to Botvinnik's preparation, but just some minutes of thinking at the board by Giri.

Had the position occurred in Botvinnik's match, I would like to think that he would also have improved on his preparation. A Dutch writer once said that five minutes typing would provide more ideas than hours of thinking, and so it is with chess. At the board we are in a pressure cooker, much more alert than during our preparations.

**Giri, Anish (2588) - Harikrishna, Pentala (2672)**

Corus B Wijk aan Zee NED (1), 16.01.2010

Slav Defense [D17]

1.d2-d4 d7-d5 2.c2-c4 c7-c6 3.Ng1-f3 Ng8-f6 4.Nb1-c3 d5xc4 5.a2-a4 Bc8-f5 6.Nf3-e5 e7-e6 7.f2-f3 Bf8-b4 8.Ne5xc4 Nf6-d5 9.Bc1-d2 Qd8-h4+ 10.g2-g3 Qh4xd4



**11.e2-e4**

The way Botvinnik intended to play, first 11.e3 and only then 12.e4, as already played in 1939 by Mikenas, is also good, but Giri's move is much more incisive.

**11...Nd5xc3**

After 11...Bxc3, White has 12.Nd6+ Kf8 13.bxc3 Nxc3 14.Qc1 with advantage.

**12.b2xc3 Bb4xc3 13.Ra1-a2 Bf5xe4**

Black could play 13...Bh3, but after 14.Qb3 Bxf1 15.Rxf1, White would be fine.

**14.Qd1-c1 Be4-d3**



After 14...Bxf3 15.Bxc3 Qe4 16.Kf2, White wins material; e.g., 16...0-0 17.Nd2 Qd5 18.Bc4 Bxh1 19.Bxd5 Bxd5 and Black's rook and four pawns are not enough for the piece.

**15.Qc1xc3 Qd4xc3 16.Bd2xc3 Bd3xf1 17.Rh1xf1 O-O 18.Ke1-e2**

Black has three pawns for the piece, but they are not dangerous. White's pieces are active. He must be winning.

18...b7-b6 19.Rf1-d1 Nb8-a6 20.Rd1-d6 Rf8-c8 21.Nc4-e5 c6-c5 22.a4-a5 Na6-c7 23.a5xb6 Nc7-b5 24.Rd6-d3 a7xb6 25.Ra2-b2 Nb5-c7 26.Ne5-c4 Rc8-e8 27.Nc4xb6 Ra8-a6 28.Ke2-d2 e6-e5 29.Nb6-d5 Nc7-e6 30.Bc3xe5 c5-c4 31.Nd5-b4 Ra6-a1 32.Rd3-e3 Re8-d8+ 33.Kd2-c2 Ra1-h1 34.Re3-e2 Rd8-d1 35.Kc2-c3 Rd1-f1 36.f3-f4 h7-h5 37.Kc3xc4 h5-h4 38.Nb4-d5 Rf1-c1+ 39.Rb2-c2 h4xg3 40.h2xg3 Rc1xc2+ 41.Re2xc2 f7-f6 42.f4-f5 Ne6-f8 43.Be5-f4 g7-g6 44.f5xg6 Kg8-g7 45.Rc2-a2 Kg7xg6 46.Ra2-a6 Nf8-h7 47.Kc4-d3 Rh1-e1 48.Nd5-e3 Nh7-f8 49.Kd3-e4 Nf8-d7 50.Ra6-d6 Nd7-f8 51.Ke4-f3 Re1-b1 52.Kf3-g4 Rb1-e1 53.Ne3-d5 Nf8-h7 54.Bf4-g5 Re1-e5 55.Nd5-f4+ 1-0

Black prolonged the game for a while, but now he resigned.

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