



SKITTLES ROOM



Chess Today

Alex Baburin, Editor

Almost seven years ago, grandmaster Alexander Baburin, then recently relocated to Ireland, started a monthly column at ChessCafe.com, *Checkpoint*. His sole mission: to review opening books. A very popular columnist, Alex moved on to found the daily internet e-zine *Chess Today*. The consistently high quality of its content has made it a unique success.

Recently Alex offered to re-visit [ChessCafe](http://ChessCafe.com) with *Chess Today*. We thought readers might find it particularly interesting to see Yasser Seirawan's recent article in the e-zine about the current state of FIDE. You may recall that when Yasser had completed his work on what would become known as the "Prague Agreement," his report appeared in a three-part article at ChessCafe.com.

We thank *Chess Today* and Alex for permission to reprint Yasser's letter to him that appeared Friday February 3 in *Chess Today*, as well as that issue's terrific annotated game.

Yasser Seirawan on FIDE

Dear Alex,

Greetings and salutations to you and the readers of Chess Today! I'm writing you regarding your editorial about the upcoming FIDE elections. I wanted to point out a historical inaccuracy and to offer the readers of Chess Today my own perspective.

In 1994 at the Moscow Olympiad, Florencio Campomanes was reelected in the most dubious FIDE election ever held. You will recall the famous speech of Andrei Makarov, the Russian delegate, threatening Anatoly Karpov with having his legs broken in an open session of the FIDE Congress. The same delegate spoke passionately about his love for democracy and why all delegates must vote for Campomanes. Or else!

By the time of the 1995 FIDE Congress in Paris, attending delegates had become ashamed about the 1994 election and were seeking amends. The revolt was in full swing and Campomanes was asked to step down. Karpov had brought his friend

Kirsan Ilyumzhinov to the 1995 FIDE Congress. With the pressure building, Campomanes decided upon a graceful exit and resigned in favour of Ilyumzhinov rather than endure the old heave ho. Campomanes became FIDE's "Honorary Chairman", while Ilyumzhinov replaced him as FIDE President in 1995.

The FIDE Congress in Yerevan 1996 was an Olympiad year where many delegates met. During the non- Olympiad years, fewer delegates come to the FIDE Congress. It was decided to hold a new election or rather to confirm the results of the 1995 Congress. Ilyumzhinov was reelected, unopposed. There was the famous story of Ignatius Leong (Singapore) hiding in the American delegates hotel room fearing for his life. In Elista 1998, FIDE was back to its normal schedule of elections every four years. A member of the opposition, Bachar Kouatly (France), withdrew and fled Elista, out of fear of physical reprisals. Again, Ilyumzhinov was re-elected, unopposed. In Bled 2002, Ilyumzhinov was re-elected unopposed when Leong withdrew his ticket at the last moment. Amazingly enough, Ilyumzhinov and his ticket of professional chess politicians have never faced a contested FIDE election. Turin 2006 will be a first.

2006 will mark the eleventh year that Ilyumzhinov has held the FIDE Presidency post. The "reign of error" as I call it, has been securely in place for these very long years. During this time we have witnessed the decline of FIDE as a respectable chess organization. Each year seems to have brought a new scandal. We have careened from one piece of bad news to another. The rank and file doubt the integrity of FIDE and its reputation is at an all time low. Newspaper articles about FIDE tend to focus mostly on the negative, highlighting the eccentric behaviour of its leader. Our friend Robert Huntington, the Associated Press chess reporter, resigned his post in disgust in 2002. In his goodbye letter, posted on the TWIC website, Robert wrote that the acronym FIDE had changed. The new meaning had become, "Federation International for the Destruction of Echecs". FIDE was plumbing new lows and destroying the very institutions that made chess a revered sport.

Certainly, the prestigious title of FIDE World Champion has been degraded if not destroyed. While San Luis did much to restore some of the lost cache of our highest title, the chaos caused by the split over the last thirteen years continues unabated. Following the Prague Agreement of 2002, FIDE broke every promise it had made to the players, to our host Bessel Kok and to the chess world. Knockout events that were to become World Championship matches were switched to double round robin tournament finals. Can anyone guarantee that the rules for the new cycle won't change in midstream? FIDE's leaders do not abide by the statutes of the organization, rules of play nor contractual agreements signed and executed. Recently, Ilyumzhinov demanded that anyone seeking FIDE Presidential offices post one million dollars to FIDE's accounts. Try to find that one in the FIDE statutes! Ridiculous whimsy or standard operating procedure? The ruse was clear enough: "This is my fiefdom, no one else is welcome!"

I suppose we should be grateful, FIDE no longer threatens physical reprisals, sanctions and fines will do nicely. (Hmm, my blunder, I forgot Calvia.) Today's chess professionals can be barred if they test positive for steroids. Bans include two year and lifetime sanctions as well as extravagant monetary penalties. FIDE's

chairperson of the Medical Committee assures that she only seeks fair play so that no player has a physically drug induced advantage over another. For the life of me I cannot understand how using steroids will revive my cherished Caro-Kann. Common sense has flown out of the window!

FIDE has stopped to become a prospective partner for major sponsors. In truth, it is an organization they no longer even think about. I know this from personal experience that corporate sponsors won't touch our sport for the simple reason they do not want the name of their company and its products tainted by association with the FIDE organization. That is pretty damning. Outside of the one-time-only sponsorship of municipalities and other government agents I can't think of a single major corporate sponsor that has supported FIDE in ages. Can you? It is Kirsan's money that has supported the FIDE organization, his rules, his formats and his administration. Again, I can't think of another single sports body where the President has to personally financially guarantee his vision for the "growth" of the sport. FIDE is addicted to the money of one person. It is not the product, chess, which is lacking it is the lack of capable, competent, professional administrators selling that product. Our cherished, noble sport that once held such high cultural importance has morphed. We have become a band of beggars.

Can anyone think of a single FIDE initiative introduced in the last eleven years that hasn't been tainted by scandal or mishap? To much fanfare, FIDE announced that the new Knockout World Championships would be five million dollar events held every year. This changed to three million dollar events held every other year, to one and a half million dollar events. How about the FIDE Rapid Chess events that were summarily cancelled? The aborted matches in Baghdad, Buenos Aires and Yalta? The FIDE time control and its announcement that a "majority" of top players polled favoured ninety minutes plus thirty seconds for the whole game? Other personal favourites include FIDE Commerce President Artyom Tarasov explaining that FIDE was in a "war" with chess organizers. That this war mandated that FIDE hold competing events against "private" tournaments such as Wijk Aan Zee and others.

The bouncing checks in Las Vegas was a low light. If memory serves, the winners Alexander Khalifman had to wait over six months for full payment. By the way, in the United States to knowingly write a check without sufficient funds in the account is a banking fraud. A felonious act. A recent FIDE declaration that Kasparov was a "liar" during a press conference was a good one. FIDE Deputy President Markopoulos had to write an open letter of apology trying to explain which side spoke with the greatest integrity. That had me laughing for ages. What a paradigm of virtue he is! Is it any wonder that Garry had decided enough was enough? Others will have their own favourites such as fixed tournaments and awarding Grandmaster titles to players no one had ever seen compete. The list of mistakes seems nearly endless.

Recently, I think Karpov misspoke when he talked about chess disappearing in the next four years. What Tolya likely meant was, "professional chess". Viewed from this qualification he is of course right. A large number of our colleagues have quit. Matthew Sadler of the UK, Jeroen Piket from the Netherlands were both top national players when they stopped. Kasparov's retirement was the biggest blow of

all to the professional class. If professional chess is to survive, a change of FIDE leaders is a mandatory first step. Despite the efforts of the FIDE to damage chess, it will live for another hundred years, at least. Today's professionals are more likely to be chess teachers than players. This trend will continue as long as the current FIDE "leadership" remains in place.

My view is that the 2006 FIDE elections is going to be the biggest chess story of the year. Either we get four more years of the reign of error or we get a breath of fresh air and a chance to get off our knees. I've known Bessel Kok for twenty years and I can't think of a more highly qualified, respected and capable candidate for change. If professional chess players care about the survival of their sport, they will enthusiastically encourage their federations to vote for Bessel Kok and a new future.

If the above makes for uncomfortable reading, just imagine the reactions of corporate sponsorships. After making personal contact with a top officer of a company to offer a written proposal, the officer takes the written proposal to his team and tells them, "Chess is cool! My kids play chess. Let us have some fun and host a chess event." The proposal gets passed around the office and ends up on the desk of some internal marketing division. The marketing people do a quick Google search, which spits out different versions of the above history and informs that on top of everything else, the "Honorary Chairman" of the FIDE is a convicted embezzler. A felon is an Honorary Chairman of a world organization?! Exasperation is the order of the day. Along with the rest of the stories, the immediate reaction is an alarmed, "Time out! We don't want to get involved with this group. Hell, the chess players don't even know who their own world champion is! We can't guarantee that coverage of our event will even be positive. Let us just keep to the tried and true and take a pass." In no time, the company team has nixed our proposal in order to spend its marketing dollars on other sports. This is the legacy that the reign of error has brought us. If chess has a future for professional players we are going to have to rebuild the credibility of our damaged image and get our own house in order. Otherwise chess is going to have the most over qualified teachers of any sport. Ever.

With kind regards,
Yasser Seirawan

[Yasser's three-part article on FIDE previously appearing at [ChessCafe.com](http://www.chesscafe.com) may be found in the [ChessCafe](http://www.chesscafe.com) Archives at:

<http://www.chesscafe.com/text/freshstartnewdawn.pdf>
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<http://www.chesscafe.com/text/freshstartnewdawn3.pdf>]

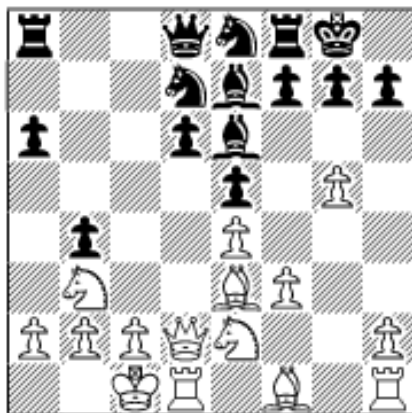
From the same issue, the annotated game by GM Mikhail Golubev:

White: S. Karjakin (2660)

Black: V. Anand (2792)
Corus A Wijk aan Zee NED (1)
14.01.2006

Sicilian, Najdorf - [B90]

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 a6 6.Be3 e5 7.Nb3 Be6 8.f3 Be7
9.Qd2 0-0 10.0-0-0 Nbd7 11.g4 b5 12.g5 b4 13.Ne2 Ne8



After the Karjakin-Anand game (Round 1 of Corus-2006), this complex variation was tested in Leko-Karjakin (Corus Round 2), and, a bit later, on January 28, it simultaneously occurred in three other grandmaster games in other events!

14.f4

The capture on b4 is dubious – Black is not obliged to take on g5 with the

bishop and can also consider 14...d5 and 14...a5. Other possibilities for White are: 14.Ng3 a5 15.Kb1 a4 (15...Nc7!? and then, usually, 16.f4 a4 17.Nc1 exf4

18.Bxf4 Nc5 as in Smirin-De Firmian, Polanica Zdroj 1995) 16.Nc1 Qb8. Black has also tried 16...Ra5 Akopian-Zagrebelny, Russian League 2004, CT-1263, also 16...b3 17.cxb3 axb3 18.a3 Qc8!? Erenburg-Hracek, Bundesliga 2006, and 16...Nc7 17.Nf5 (17.f4 was Svidler-Kasimdzhanov, San-Luis FIDE Wch 2005: a famous game, which was annotated in CT) 17...Bd8 18.Nxd6 b3 19.Nc4 Be7N 20.cxb3 axb3 21.Nxb3 Nc7 22.Qxd7! Bxd7 23.Rxd7 and in Shirov-Sandipan, Gibraltar 2006 the irrational fight began: 23...Ne6!? (truly creative) 24.Rxe7 Qd8 25.Rxe6 (25.Ra7!?) 25...Qd1+ 26.Nc1 Qxf3÷. In Leko-Karjakin, Wijk aan Zee 2006. Black was OK after 14.h4 a5 15.Kb1 a4 16.Nbc1 Nb6!? 17.Ng3 d5 18.Bxb6 Qxb6 19.exd5 Rd8 20.Bc4 Nc7 21.dxe6!? Rxd2 22.exf7+ Kh8 23.Rxd2 Qc6N (½-½, 29). 14.Kb1 is transpositional: 14...a5 15.Nbc1 a4 and now 16.f4 - 14.f4 a5 15.Kb1, or 14.h4 - 14.h4 a5 15.Kb1.

14...a5



15.f5

Somewhat calmer is 15.Kb1 a4 16.Nbc1 exf4 17.Nxf4 (17.Bxf4 Nc5!? Svidler-Vallejo, Monaco rpd 2004) 17...Bxg5 18.Nxe6 Bxe3 19.Nxd8 Bxd2 20.Rxd2 Rxd8 21.Rd4÷ (as in Almasi-Vallejo, Tripoli FIDE Wch 2004) leading to a complex endgame.

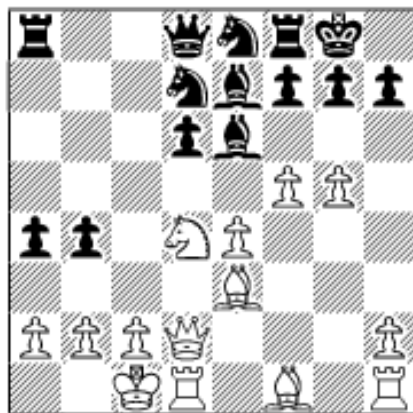
15...a4! 16.Nbd4!?

16.fxe6!? axb3 17.exf7+ Rxf7 18.Kb1÷ has been played at least twelve times since Topalov-Vallejo, Linares 2005. In the game Baramidze-P.H.Nielsen, Bundesliga 2006 White was worse after 16.Kb1?! N axb3 17.cxb3 Rxa2! 18.fxe6 fxe6! 19.Bh3 (the point is 19.Kxa2 Qa8+! 20.Kb1 Qxe4+) 19...Qa5 20.Bxe6+ Kh8.

16...exd4

Maybe Black can also begin with 16...b3.

17.Nxd4



17...b3

Not 17...Bxa2? 18.Nc6!± Svetushkin-Lupulescu, Bucharest open 2005.

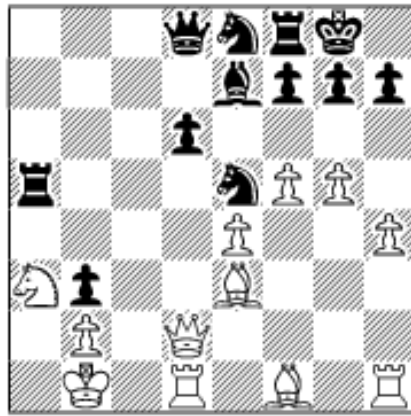
18.Kb1!? bxc2+ 19.Nxc2 Bb3

Possibly stronger than 19...Bxa2+, which was tested in Van Kempen-Tiemann, 18th corr. Wch 2003-4.

20.axb3 axb3 21.Na3 Ne5 22.h4

22.Qg2 was once seen in the "Freestyle" internet tournament game.

22...Ra5!?



Black prepares both ...d5 and ...Qa8.

23.Qc3?N

A bad move (which was suggested by GM Vallejo in Informator 93!). What else does White have? 23.Qe2 d5! Was good for Black in Leko-Vallejo, Monaco (rapid) 2005. Nikolai Vlassov in his CT-1606 notes opined that White has an edge after 23.Qb4! Qa8 24.Bb6 Ra4 25.Qxb3 Qxe4+ 26.Nc2!. Well, probably things are not that clear, but this direction

requires investigation... (I would love to see a Vlassov vs Anand game in this line!). Hardly good for White is 23.Bb5 Qa8! (www.inforchess.com). FM Giddins at BCM Online reported: "After the present game, the players looked at 23.Bd4 and 23.Rh3 here, although neither move seems to pose Black any great problems."

23...Qa8!. 24.Bg2?!

Not much better is 24.Bd3 Nxd3 25.Qxd3 d5!., or 24.Rd4 d5..

24...Nc7!! -+

The first sacrifice, which was "played a tempo and obviously coming from home preparation" (chessbase.com) is the beginning of a beautiful and decisive combination. According to www.inforchess.com, the program Rybka 1,01 Beta 9 needed 31 minutes to realize that Anand's move is good, and 1 hour 9 minutes to verify that it wins... Vallejo in Informator gave only 24...Ra4 25.Rd4÷.

25.Qxc7

Otherwise Black will attack with all his forces.

25...Rc8!! 26.Qxe7 Nc4!



Obviously, not 26...Rxa3? 27.bxa3 Qxa3, which fails to 28.Qa7 +-.

27.g6

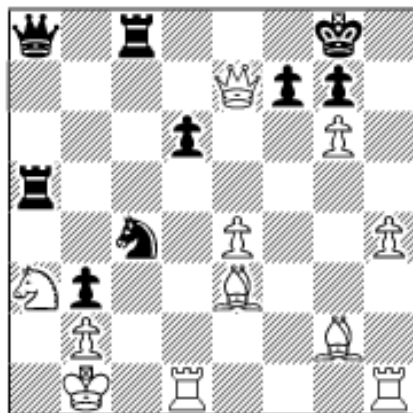
The most tricky defensive attempt was 27.Bc5!?, which gives Black a choice between a number of attractive lines, but not all of them are convincing. The clearest way is 27...Rxa3! (not 27...Rcxc5?? 28.e5! d5 29.e6!) 28.bxa3 (28.Bxa3 Nxa3+ 29.bxa3 Qxa3 30.Rd2 Ra8) 28...Rxc5! 29.a4 (likes of 29.Rd5 lose to

29...Nxa3+ 30.Kb2 Nc4+!) 29...Na3+ 30.Kb2 Rc2+! (the key move) 31.Kxa3 (31.Kxb3 Qb8+! 32.Kxa3 Qb2#) 31...Qb8! ("humanistic"; there is also a forced

mate after 31...Ra2+ 32.Kb4 Qxa4+ 33.Kc3 Qc6+ 34.Kd3 Qc2+ 35.Kd4 Qf2+!
36.Kc4 Rc2+!, etc.) 32.Ra1 b2! and White can resign.

Other lines are much simpler: 27.Bc1 Nxa3+ (or 27...Qc6, Kavalek) 28.bxa3 Rxa3
29.Bb2 (or 29.Bxa3 Qxa3) 29...Ra1+ 30.Bxa1 Qa2#, or 27.e5 Qxg2! (also
crushing is 27...Nxa3+ 28.bxa3 Qxg2!).

27...hxg6 28.fxg6



28...Nxa3+

As it seems, Black wins also after 28...Rxa3
29.Qxf7+ (29.bxa3 Nxa3+ 30.Kb2 Rc2+!
31.Kxb3 Qb8+, mating) 29...Kh8 30.bxa3
Nxa3+ 31.Kb2 Nc4+!, etc.

**29.bxa3 Rxa3 30.gxf7+ Kh7! 31.f8N+ Rxf8!
32.Qxf8 Ra1+! 33.Kb2 Ra2+**

Now 34.Kb1 Qxf8 leaves White with no hope.
So...

34.Kc3

"Here Anand invested a few minutes to find the mate" – chessbase.com.

34...Qa5+!

The only path to a forced victory.

35.Kd3 Qb5+ 36.Kd4 Ra4+! 37.Kc3 Qc4+ 0-1

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