



## COLUMNISTS

### *Dutch Treat*

Hans Ree



## Classical Chess

At the reception following the opening ceremony of the Corus tournament Alexander Morozevich, Alexander Khalifman and Alexander Grischuk were talking together, which reminded me of a few lines from a limerick celebrating three well-known Dutch writers. These go: Jacques Gans, Jacques de Kadt and Jacques Presser/ by accident met an SS-er. But I don't want to give the impression that there was an SS-er at the Corus reception.

In fact, the three Alexanders had been joined by Rustam Kasimdzhanov and the Dutch IM Hans Böhm, who later told me what the conversation had been about. Classical chess. They had said that they were glad to play classical chess again, where a game can take seven hours, and Böhm had said what I would have said, had I been there. “Ha, you call that classical chess? If so, it is a watered-down version for spoiled brats. In our time, classical chess meant playing for five hours, then after a two-hour intermission spent on analysis, two more hours of playing, an adjournment again and then a few days later, on what was cynically called ‘the free day’, the final session of the game on which at that time you had spent most of your nightly hours analysing.” He might have added that people played a thirty-round candidates’ tournament under these circumstances.

Khalifman of course knew all about it from his own experience, but the youngsters shuddered and decided that this kind of classical chess would be too much of a good thing.

I must admit that I loathed adjourned games when I had them myself, but now I deplore their abolishment.

In older times, at Dutch fairs, people were lured into a dark tent where the surprise they had been promised turned out to be a bowl filled with liquid cow-shit, in which they none-suspectingly put their



hands. When they came outside, they urged everyone to visit the place, because they didn't want to be the only ones who had been had.

Is this the case with me, now that I recommend so heartily the adjournments that used to make me suffer? I don't think so. Adjournments forced you to search for the truth and the truth is worth some discomfort.

There are different opinions though. Ponomariov once said in an interview that searching for the truth in chess was good for older people. He himself preferred to consider chess as a sport. And as he also said that chessplayers start to decline after they have turned thirty, he seems to imply that searching for absolute truth is an activity for people who are not able to live and act anymore, a Nietzschean view that cannot easily be dismissed.

The Corus organizers were terribly unlucky this year. The first setback was that FIDE had its finals for the World Championship coincide with the tournament. Last year FIDE Commerce's Artiom Tarasov had announced war against Corus. Was this the first step in this war? FIDE bosses Ickicki and Makropoulos emphatically denied this to the Corus people and said that the real reason was that Moscow's Hall of Columns was only available during the second half of January. In fact, the finals were not to be played in this Hall at all, but in Hotel Metropol.

First the tournament lost Anand, who wanted to concentrate on the World Championship. Then they lost Kramnik, who wanted to prepare for his match against Fritz, which was later postponed and probably will never happen. Then they lost Ivanchuk and Ponomariov and finally they lost Kasparov, who, with little incentive to play left, let it be known that he had caught a virus that made his doctor forbid him to fly.

A doctor will forbid everything that the patient wants him to forbid, but it must be admitted that an airplane is an unhealthy place. But are there no trains anymore between Moscow and Amsterdam?

When Emanuel Lasker had to travel to the US for the New York 1924 tournament, his trip started in Finland, where he had done a tour. After some time, the Finnish boat was stuck in the frozen sea. In Hamburg the ship Westphalia was waiting to bring the European

masters to New York, but it wouldn't wait very long.

Lasker left the Finnish ship and walked many miles on the frozen sea to the mainland, where he bought a ticket for Berlin and Hamburg to be just in time for the Westphalia to bring him to New York, a trip that lasted two weeks in itself. I think, Kasparov, who is so fond of historical traditions, should have taken Lasker as an example.

Actually, it must be said that this story is in Hannak's biography and that not all stories in his book are true. I looked at a map and wondered where it could have been that Lasker stepped on shore. No details are given by Hannak. Anyway, if the story is not true, Kasparov still should have taken the legend as an example.

Despite a few notable absences, Corus is still a wonderful tournament with ten players out of the top twenty taking part in the main group and more than a thousand others in all kinds of other competitions.

There is a strong rivalry between Jan Timman and Loek van Wely, Timman's successor as Dutch number one. In the second round Timman played a hair-raising variation that he had introduced in 1980, when Van Wely was eight-years old and didn't study opening theory yet. Apparently in later years he hadn't caught up.

**White: *Van Wely* Black: *Timman***

**1. d2-d4 Ng8-f6 2. c2-c4 e7-e6 3. g2-g3 c7-c5 4. d4-d5 e6xd5 5. c4xd5 d7-d6 6. Nb1-c3 g7-g6 7. Bf1-g2 Bf8-g7 8. Ng1-f3 0-0 9. 0-0 a7-a6 10. a2-a4 Rf8-e8 11. Nf3-d2 Nb8-d7 12. h2-h3 Ra8-b8 13. Nd2-c4 Nd7-e5 14. Nc4-a3 Nf6-h5 15. e2-e4 Re8-f8** A deep move, found at the board in Scheeren-Timman, Dutch championship 1980. Scheeren tried to refute it immediately with 16. g4, but after 16...Qh4 Black had a strong attack and won beautifully. **16. Kg1-h2** It's funny that Fritz, confronted with this position immediately takes back Timman's last move, playing 16...Re8. **16...f7-f5 17. f2-f4 b7-b5 18. a4xb5 a6xb5** All this was well known in the early eighties, but Van Wely looked – to use Dutch reporter Gert Ligterink's expression – as if he had seen water burning. In 1982 two important games were played with 19. Naxb5 fxe4. In Kortchnoi-Kasparov, olympiad Luzern 1982, 20. Bxe4 was played and in Alburts-H. Olafsson 20. Na7. Both moves put the correctness of Black's system in doubt and are analysed in incredible and wonderful detail by

Kasparov in his book *The Test of Time*. **19. f4xe5** This move was also analysed by Kasparov (without the insertion of 18. axb5 axb5) and his verdict was, as may be expected with such a witches' brew boiling, "unclear" That is, if White would have accepted Black's sacrifice on his next move. **19...Nh5xg3 20. Rf1-f3 Bg7xe5 21. Na3xb5** Now on 21. Rxg3 Black probably would have played 21...h5 **21...Qd8-h4** With only one piece down and with a raging attack, Black is much better. **22. e4xf5 Bc8xf5** Much stronger would have been 22...Nxf5+. White's position would soon collapse. **23. Ra1-a4 Bf5-e4** And here 23...c4 was better. After 24. Kg1 Bxh3 White would have the defense 25. Rxc4, but instead simply 24...Bd7 would still be promising for Black.



Now White should play 24. Nxe4 Nxe4+ 25. Kg1 Rxf3 26. Qxf3 Qe1+ 27. Qf1 Qg3 28. Rxe4 Qh2+ 29. Kf2 Rf8+ 30. Ke2 Rxf1 31. Kxf1 with an unclear position. I think I'd rather be White. When this variation was pointed out to Timman after the game, he said: "Ah well, it wasn't a game for the ages anyway." Maybe not, but it was fun to watch it. **24. Rf3xf8+ Rb8xf8**

**25. Kh2-g1** Now there is a nice mating combination. **25...Ng3-e2+ 26. Qd1xe2 Qh4-g3 27. Bc1-f4 Qg3xf4 28. Bg2xe4 Qf4-g3+ 29. Kg1-h1 Rf8-f1+** White resigned, one move before mate. Usually it is not considered chivalrous to do this, but Van Wely had a special reason not to allow the mating move. At the beginning of the tournament everybody around can take part in a pool. Participants in the pool are asked to make all kind of predictions, one question being how many mates or stalemates would occur in the two grandmaster groups. Van Wely's answer had been "zero". Had he allowed the mate, he would have destroyed his chances to win the pool.

Copyright 2002 Hans Ree. All Rights Reserved.



[\[The Chess Cafe Home Page\]](#) [\[Book Reviews\]](#) [\[Bulletin Board\]](#) [\[Columnists\]](#)  
[\[Endgame Studies\]](#) [\[The Skittles Room\]](#) [\[Archives\]](#) [\[Inside Chess\]](#)  
[\[Links\]](#) [\[Online Bookstore\]](#) [\[About The Chess Cafe\]](#) [\[Contact Us\]](#)

Copyright 2002 CyberCafes, LLC. All Rights Reserved.  
"The Chess Cafe®" is a registered trademark of Russell Enterprises, Inc.