



COLUMNISTS

Dutch Treat

Hans Ree



Euwe's Heritage

At the chess festival of the Max Euwe Center, last month on the Max Euwe Square in Amsterdam, I met Fietie Euwe, one of the daughters of Max. A week earlier I had met her at another festivity of the Max Euwe Center, that time in Groningen, where I had passed on the 'Euwe Ring' to Genna Sosonko.

"It is almost a full-time job, being a daughter of the great Max," I said to Fietie, who assented and told me that the day before she had been present at the opening ceremony of the *Euwe Stimulus* tournament in Arnhem. She said she liked it, being invited to all these Euwe events, also because she would meet people who she knew from many years ago.

"Look, there is Tabe Bas," I said. Tabe Bas is a retired actor-singer who used to be a strong chessplayer. He is still an outstanding chess kibitzer, attending almost all important Dutch chess events.

He used to visit Max Euwe at his home quite often and he likes to tell the story about an evening when he was playing blitz with Hein Donner at an Amsterdam cafe and Donner suddenly said that he had an irresistible appetite for one of the delicious 'salamanders' – a kind of toasted cheese sandwiches, I think – that Euwe's wife used to make.

"A good idea, but we can't just come to his house and say we want a salamander," said Tabe. Donner agreed that they would need an excuse. An opening novelty would serve perfectly. "Let's go, I'll think of one on our way," said Donner. And so an important novelty in the Nimzo-Indian was born, though I don't know which one it was.

"Really, that's Tabe," said Fietie. "I haven't seen him in thirty years," and she hastened to the bench where he was sitting, to renew the acquaintance.

Apart from the events that I just mentioned, a strong tournament was held in Amsterdam, organised by the *Association Max Euwe*, which is based in Monaco, home of the chess patron Joop van Oosterom.

With all these activities in honor of Max Euwe I was reminded of a line of poetry by Vladimir Mayakovsky – not one of his best – that I once saw written on a wall of a Soviet restaurant: "Lenin lived, Lenin lives, Lenin shall live." It could be truly said about Euwe.

The Amsterdam tournament, *Rising Stars versus Experience*, featured top players of the recent past against youngsters who are top players of the near future, at least some of them. Like last year, it was played according to the Scheveningen system, which means that all games were between a youngster and an older player. Sergey Karjakin had the highest score of all participants.

I went there almost every day and I wondered why this attractive tournament, held in the heart of Amsterdam, attracted so few visitors. It must have been because of the excellent Internet coverage.

Of course all games could be followed live, which is normal. In the playing hall all boards had their own webcam, which is not yet common practice, but not unprecedented. But at this tournament the Internet viewers were really pampered on a scale not yet seen. The commentary room had a webcam too, so that one could see and hear the commentator and later the players themselves, who came to explain their games on one of the demonstration boards.

In fact the Internet viewers could see much more than those who were actually present at the tournament. On the Internet you could watch all games, all the corners of the playing hall and all the explanations in the commentary room, simultaneously on the screen. "We are competing ourselves out of business with such service," said press officer Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam, and he certainly had a point.

Still, there are some good reasons to be actually present at the place where things are happening. One day, when I had no time to go there, I was watching the commentator of that day Gert Ligterink. He took a break, put his microphone on a table, but as it was still open I could follow a conversation between some spectators about old chess books and the

prices they would fetch nowadays. I would have liked to be present in the flesh at that conversation, but probably in the near future Internet viewers will be able to bid instantly on books discussed by the spectators.

Meanwhile, the other Euwe tournament, the *Euwe Stimulus* tournament in Arnhem, was won by the young Zambian Amon Simutowe, nicknamed 'The Zambezi Shark.' The tournament had a formula comparable to that in Amsterdam, young versus old, but this was not a Scheveningen tournament, but a conventional round-robin.



Vincent Rothuis

At this event the Dutch Junior Champion Vincent Rothuis was the public's darling, at least that is how he was described on the tournament's website. He is a very talented player who in the past has proven that he can compete with strong grandmasters, but in Arnhem he scored only a half-point out of nine games. How come?

He played like a man possessed by the idea that every game should be a spectacular fight in which the players go at each other's throat from move one. I can imagine that the public liked it, but the public tends to like spectacular public suicides on the market square also. Watching Rothuis' games in Arnhem I thought of him as a hyperactive child. Not one moment of rest and quiet, always excitement, even when the position didn't ask for it.

Why does someone choose to adopt such a kamikaze style? It may have something to do with the computer. Chess engines are very good at tactics and when you have them analysing a game, they tend to show tactical lines. For the computer, a game of chess is a sequence of tactical scrimmages.

A game between humans is often different. Doing nothing, or almost nothing, should be part of the human chessplayer's technique. As the late German master George Kieninger used to say: everybody can make combinations, but only a few are able to shift wood. This is an extreme – and one might say extremely dull – attitude, but copying the computer's hyperactive style is another extreme.

Vincent Rothuis himself had another explanation for his mad adventures at the *Euwe Stimulus* tournament. He had recently decided not to become a chess professional and now he could play just for fun. It would not be my kind of fun to perish in glory in almost every game, but it is true that it made for great spectacles.

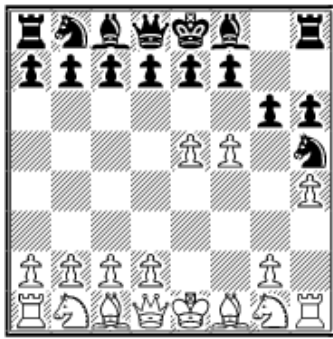
Look how he played against the former World Championship candidate and FIDE president Fridrik Olafsson. At least the game shows that thinking for oneself almost from move one is not confined to Fischerandom. Peter Boel, the tournament's press officer, described it as New Age chess.

Vincent Rothuis – Fridrik Olafsson
Euwe Stimulus Arnhem
Modern Defence [B06]

1.e2•e4 g7•g6 2.h2•h4 h7•h6 3.f2•f4

Already this position is not in my database.

3...Ng8•f6 4.e4•e5 Nf6•h5 5.f4•f5



This amounts to a rook sacrifice, no common occurrence at move 5.

5...d7•d6

After 5...Ng3, White should indeed sacrifice a rook with 6.fxc6 Nxh1, which after 7.Qh5 (or 7.gxf7+ Kxf7) 7...Bg7 would lead to a very unclear position. Olafsson chooses a safer option, providing a square for his king.

6.e5•e6 f7xe6 7.f5xg6 Nh5•g3 8.Rh1•h3 Ng3xf1 9.Qd1•f3 Ke8•d7 10.Qf3•f7

An ambitious move. He wants to pick up the knight only after winning a piece with his g-pawn.

10...Nb8•c6

He could have refuted White's idea by playing 10...Qe8, for after 11.g7 (11.Qxe8+ Kxe8 12.Kxf1 h5 would be good for Black as well) 11...Bxg7 12.Qxg7 Rg8 13.Qc3 Qg6, Black would save his piece.

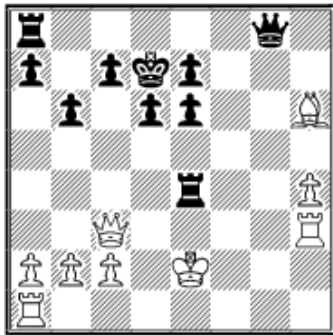
11.g6•g7 Bf8xg7 12.Qf7xg7 Rh8•g8 13.Qg7•c3

White has won his piece, but Black has a strong attack.

13...Rg8xg2 14.Ke1xf1 Qd8•g8 15.Ng1•e2 Rg2•g4 16.d2•d3 b7•b6 17.Bc1xh6 Bc8•b7 18.Nb1•d2 Nc6•d4 19.Nd2•e4 Nd4xe2 20.Kf1xe2 Bb7xe4

A much clearer way to get a big advantage was 20...Rxe4+ 21.dxe4 Qg2+.

21.d3xe4 Rg4xe4+



22.Ke2•d3

After 22.Kf2, the position would still be unclear, though with two pawns for the piece and good play against White's denuded king, Black should be alright.

22...Qg8•g2

Now Black is winning.

23.Qc3•d2 Qg2xh3+ 24.Kd3xe4 d6•d5+ 25.Ke4•f4 Qh3xh4+ 26.Kf4•e5

Given his sense of fun it is possible that he went voluntarily for a quick end.

26...Qh4•f6 mate.