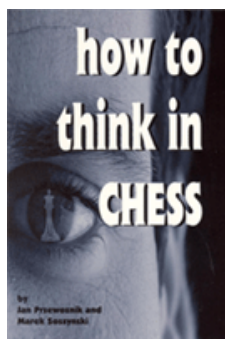




COLUMNISTS

Dutch Treat

Hans Ree



CHESS THEATRE

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Dangerous Rest Days

On the final day of the Dutch championship, won by Jan Smeets, a journalist asked me if I knew how Roman Dzindzichashvili was doing. The journalist was not a chess specialist, but apparently he followed the subject with interest and as he was about my age, he may have been in the grip of nostalgia.

I told him that I thought that Dzindzi was doing well. A few years ago he was a chess coach at the University of Texas and though this engagement has been terminated for undisclosed reasons, it seems to me that with his private lessons and multitude of DVDs, Dzindzi still earns a decent wage.

“Does he have a successor in the chess world?” asked the journalist. Obviously he meant to ask if there were still top players around with a similar colorful way of life.



Roman Dzindzichashvili

Photo by Robert Oresick

Now it must be said that in the past Dzindzi's lifestyle has made a few real victims who probably wouldn't use the word 'colorful' for his behaviour, but it is certainly true that his former Bohemianism, living hand-to-mouth and often on the run from creditors, made for lively stories. No, such Bohemians are not to be found anymore among the top players.

Good for them, I must admit, but a pity for the journalists. There is much weeping and gnashing of teeth among our group about the sad respectability of modern chessplayers.

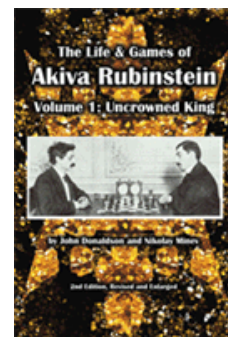
However, I could tell my colleague that there may be a ray of hope: the fine that recently was imposed on the team of Tomsk-400 at the Russian team championship that was held near the Black Sea resort Sochi. The reason had been a 'breach of sporting discipline,' which according to the Russians is a well-known code expression for an alcoholic drinking-bout.

Apparently this had occurred on the rest day before the seventh round and on the face of it the breach of sporting discipline must have been severe, as on the next day Tomsk was wiped out 5½-½ by TPSK Saransk. One of the five players who lost his game was my compatriot Loek van Wely, though I do not think that in his case alcohol had been the cause. He is not like that. The fine by the way was moderate: 1000 rubles, which comes to about 40 dollars. The rich club Tomsk, winner of the European Club Cup

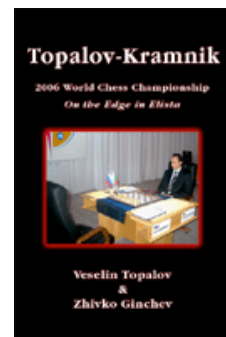
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in 2006, will still be solvent.

I was reminded of a similar incident at the European team championship in the Bulgarian city Plovdiv in 1983. Before the last round our Dutch team was in fifth place, but we had played very well. If match points, not board points, had counted, I think we would have been in second place behind the Soviet Union.

Anyway, we still had high hopes for a medal, as in the last round we would meet the comparatively weak team from Denmark. Therefore we would easily overtake England, which had to play Yugoslavia, and probably also Hungary, as they would meet the mighty Soviet Union and would almost certainly be beaten heavily.

All teams were sponsored, in a way that we didn't quite understand, by local companies. Unfortunately, as it turned out, our sponsor was a wine grower and on the rest day before the last round we were to visit his winery.

It may have been that his products, not only wine but also stronger stuff, were a bit too stiff for our refined habits, or maybe we actually had a drop too much, but in any event the effects were horrible. One team member burst into tears, then passed out and could only be revived with much effort. The others were in a festive mood that must have appeared even more frightening to outsiders.

When we arrived back at our hotel, stumbling out of the bus while roaring silly songs, we were observed by Yefim Geller and our team member Genna Sosonko, who had wisely stayed at home. "You have a fine team," said Geller to Sosonko. "But aren't they lacking a bit in sporting discipline?"

The next day we beat Denmark by only $4\frac{1}{2}$ - $3\frac{1}{2}$, which we considered to be a catastrophe. England stayed out of reach and the chance to overtake Hungary had never really existed, as they had negotiated six ultra-short draws against the Soviet Union and lost only by $4\frac{1}{2}$ - $3\frac{1}{2}$.

The Russian team championship that I mentioned earlier was a splendid event, but for an outsider it is problematic to pick a team to identify with. Most sports fans like to pick a favorite and I am no exception. But who to cheer for when Finek Gazprom from St. Petersburg meets Economist from Saratov? I wouldn't know.



Loek van Wely

This problem was partly solved for me by the rather surprising participation of Loek van Wely. As his ICC handle is King Loek, he was now called King Loekovich by his fans on a Dutch internet chess forum. I decided to root for his club Tomsk-400, but regrettably they didn't give much cause for jubilation.

I would also have liked to cheer for South Ural, which had Karpov and Kortchnoi on the team. Wasn't it endearing that these former arch-enemies were now playing for the same team? It certainly was, but it shouldn't have been a surprise, as last year they had already done the same.

That year Karpov had said at a press conference that the world should learn a lesson from what they had done. Everywhere there were wars and other grievous conflicts, but the example of him and Kortchnoi showed that seemingly implacable enemies could live together in peace.

Unfortunately, in the past year the world has refused to learn this lesson from Karpov, but who knows, maybe eventually it will.

Alas, in spite of having these two legendary players on the team, South Ural did badly and dropped to the second league. Another Ural team from Yekaterinenburg, with great players such as Radjabov, Shirov, Kamsky and Grischuk, won the championship, while Tomsk-400, the 2005 and 2007 winners, attained ninth place.

Not only his team, but also Loek van Wely himself did uncharacteristically badly. Only in the tenth round was he able to score a win and even this game could not really show that he had overcome his bad form.

One strong move had been enough, and this move he had found already at home during his opening preparations.

***Loek van Wely (Tomsk-400) -
Sergei Dyachkov (Economist 2)***

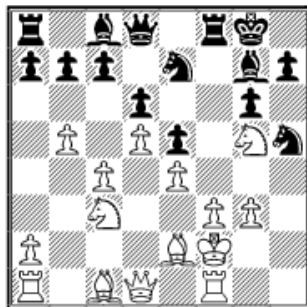
1.d2-d4 Ng8-f6 2.c2-c4 g7-g6 3.Nb1-c3 Bf8-g7 4.e2-e4 0-0 5.Bf1-e2 d7-d6 6.Ng1-f3 e7-e5 7.0-0 Nb8-c6 8.d4-d5 Nc6-e7 9.b2-b4 Nf6-h5 10.g2-g3

A return to an old favorite. In recent years he had preferred the modern move 10.Re1.

10...f7-f5 11.Nf3-g5 Nh5-f6 12.f2-f3

This position is very familiar to Van Wely, who has had it many times as White and a few times as Black.

12...f5-f4 13.b4-b5 f4xg3 14.h2xg3 Nf6-h5 15.Kg1-f2



15...Nh5-f4

This is a novelty. In Taimanov - Gufeld, Moscow 1961, White had played 12. Kg2, which gave Black the opportunity for a promising sacrifice: 15...Nf4 16. gxf4 exf4, when Black threatened not only the simple 17...Bxc3, but also 17... Nf5 with a winning attack. In the game followed 17.e5 Bxe5 18.Nge4 Nf5 and with two pawns for his piece and a strong attack, Black went on to win.

One almost suspects a breach of sporting discipline by Dyachkov. He follows in Gufeld's footsteps without noticing that the position of White's king makes all the difference.

16.g3xf4 e5xf4 17.Qd1-d3

This would not have been possible in Taimanov -Gufeld, as Black would

have won with 17...Bxc3 18.Qxc3 Nxd5 19.cxd5 Qxg5+ (with check!).
Another good possibility for Black would have been 17...Nf5 18.Bxf4 Nh4
+ (again it is important that with the king on g2 this is with check) 19.
Kxg3 Rxf4 and Black would win.

17...h7-h6

But now, with White's king on f2, Black has nothing. After 17...Nc6 18.
bxc6 Qxg5, White just walks away with 19.Ke1 and, after 17...Nf5, White
would simply play 18.Bxf4, which would lose with the king on g2, but
would be fine here.

18.Ng5-e6 Bc8xe6 19.d5xe6 Ne7-c6

Black's last hope is 20.bxc6 Qh4+ which would give him a perpetual at
least.

20.Rf1-h1

Now Black certainly does not have enough for his piece.

20...Nc6-e5 21.Qd3-d2 Qd8-g5 22.Rh1-h3 Qg5-f6 23.Nc3-d5 Qf6xe6
24.Kf2-g2 Qe6-f7 25.Qd2xf4 Qf7-d7 26.Qf4-g3 1-0



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