



COLUMNISTS

Susan Polgar on Chess

Susan Polgar



Breaking Through by Susan Polgar

The Changing Chess Scene

Ever since the retirement of Garry Kasparov, the #1 FIDE world ranking has been up for grabs. While most thought that Anand's recent good results would finally propel him to the top spot, he fell short by four points because the games he played in league play will not be rated until the season is over. That state of affairs gave Topalov the necessary margin to maintain his dominant position, despite losing many points from the Elista world championship match against Kramnik and the Hooageveen tournament in Holland.

The new name in the top five is the talented Shakhriyar "Shak" Mamedyarov, the two-time world junior champion, who vaulted to the #4 position. I expect him to be a force to be reckoned with for a long time to come. Meanwhile, the newest member of the exclusive 2700 club is Krishnan Sasikiran of India. He became only the second Indian player to break this mark; the first is, of course, Anand. The only American player in the top twenty is Gata Kamsky, with a 2705 rating.

	The 2700 Club		
1	Topalov, Veselin	BUL	2783
2	Anand, Viswanathan	IND	2779
3	Kramnik, Vladimir	RUS	2766
4	Mamedyarov, Shakhriyar	AZE	2754
5	Ivanchuk, Vassily	UKR	2750
6	Leko, Peter	HUN	2749
7	Aronian, Levon	ARM	2744
8	Morozevich, Alexander	RUS	2741
9	Adams, Michael	ENG	2735
10	Gelfand, Boris	ISR	2733
11	Radjabov, Teimour	AZE	2729
12	Svidler, Peter	RUS	2728
13	Polgar, Judit	HUN	2727
14	Ponomariov, Ruslan	UKR	2723
15	Navara, David	CZE	2719

16	Grischuk, Alexander	RUS	2717
17	Shirov, Alexei	ESP	2715
18	Bacrot, Etienne	FRA	2705
19	Kamsky, Gata	USA	2705
20	Akopian, Vladimir	ARM	2700
21	Sasikiran, Krishnan	IND	2700

ACP World Rapid Chess Cup

The first ACP World Rapid Cup took place from January 4-8 at the Londonskaya hotel in Odessa, Ukraine. It featured a knock-out tournament with 16 qualifiers playing a series of individual matches to determine the winner of the event. Each match consisted of two rapid games at a time control of 20 minutes with a 5 second increment.

If a match ended in a tie, two additional blitz games were played at a time control of 3 minutes with a 2 second increment. If the playoff match ended in a tie, an Armageddon blitz game was played, where White gets five minutes and Black gets four minutes, but Black only has to draw to win the match.

The total prize fund was \$136,000, distributed as follows:

- \$4,000 to each player eliminated in the first round
- \$6,000 to each player eliminated in the quarter-final
- \$10,000 to each player eliminated in the semi-final
- \$20,000 to the runner-up
- \$40,000 to the winner

	Round 1	
Leko	1½-½	Sokolov
Rublevsky	1½-½	Naiditsch
Shirov	1½-½	Smirin
Gelfand	2-0	Nakamura
Morozevich	3-2	Harikrishna
Radjabov	1½-½	Bareev
Bacrot	3-2	Bologan
Ivanchuk	2-0	Amonatov
	Round 2	
Leko	2-0	Rublevsky
Gelfand	1½-½	Shirov

Radjabov	1½-½	Morozevich
Ivanchuk	1½-½	Bacrot
Semi-Final		
Leko	3-2	Gelfand
Ivanchuk	2-0	Radjabov
Final		
Leko	2½-1½	Ivanchuk

Big Bang at Corus

The first big traditional tournament of 2007, the Corus event, was held from January 12-28 at the Dutch seaside town of Wijk aan Zee. This year the average rating of the fourteen players in Group A was 2719, thanks in part to the participation of the top three players in the world: Topalov, Anand and Kramnik. However, it was the young maverick Teimour Radjabov who took an early lead until about the halfway point. After that Topalov took the lead by a full point until there were just three rounds to go, but then in Round 11, Topalov lost from a winning position to Peter Svidler of Russia.

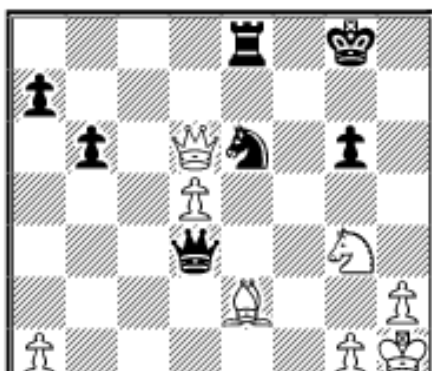
Topalov's loss paved the way for Radjabov to catch up with him and setup a showdown between the leaders in the last round, which turned out to be an exciting but relatively short draw. This in turn allowed Olympic champion and former #3 in the world, Levon Aronian from Armenia, to jump into a tie for first by beating Sergey Tiviakov.

Here is one of the most exciting games from Corus between two of the premier attacking players in the world.

Topalov, Veselin (2783) – Shirov, Alexei (2715)

Corus A, Wijk aan Zee NED, 01-13-2007 [D89]

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 cxd5 Nxd5 5 e4 Nxc3 6 bxc3 Bg7 7 Bc4 c5 8 Ne2 Nc6 9 Be3 0-0 10 0-0 Bg4 11 f3 Na5 12 Bd3 cxd4 13 cxd4 Be6 14 d5 Bxa1 15 Qxa1 f6 16 Qd4 Bf7 17 Bh6 Re8 18 Bb5 e5 19 Qf2 Re7 20 f4 exf4 21 Qxf4 Qb6+ 22 Kh1 Bxd5 23 exd5 Qxb5 24 Qxf6 Qe8 25 Qd4 Rd8 26 h3 Rf7 27 Rxf7 Qxf7 28 Qc3 b6 29 Ng3 Nb7 30 Ne4 Qe7 31 Nf6+ Kf7 32 Nxh7 Kg8 33 Nf6+ Kf7 34 Ng4 Kg8 35 Qd2 Re8 36 Qf4 Qd6 37 Qf2 Qc5 38 Qg3 Qd4 39 Kh2 Nd8 40 Qd6 Ne6 41 Be3 1-0



World champion Vladimir Kramnik did not lose a single game, and even won his last game in impressive fashion, but he only managed to finish a half point behind the winners in clear fourth.

Anand had his ups and downs. He recorded



Here are the final standings:

1-3	V. Topalov, L. Aronian, T. Radjabov	8½
4	V. Kramnik	8
5	V. Anand	7½
6	P. Svidler	7
7-8	S. Karjakin, D. Navara	6½
9	R. Ponomarev	6
10-12	L. van Wely, S. Tiviakov, A. Motylev	5
13-14	A. Shirov, M. Carlsen	4½

Unfortunately, the story from Corus that captured the most attention was the accusation that Topalov may have been cheating by receiving hand signals from his manager. IM Martin Breutigam, a journalist for Germany's largest newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, reported this just before the big game between Topalov and Kramnik in Round 12. Here is an excerpt as translated by ChessBase:

For over a year rumours have persisted that Veselin Topalov of Bulgaria may have used illegal resources to win the title at the world championship in San Luis, Argentina. The allegations raised by other participants in the world championship, who however did not want to be named, was that his manager Silvio Danailov may have been surreptitiously signaling him moves checked with a computer.

Just a conspiracy theory of bad losers? Or does the 31-year-old, who in the meantime has lost his title, secretly receive help in some of his games?

Many people, myself included, feel that such charges are unwarranted unless clear evidence can be presented. Here is a comment from GM Jonathan Rowson as published on ChessBase:

I am disappointed that Chessbase decided to publish the English translation of Brentigam's article. I felt the behaviour of Topalov and Danailov in the WCC match with Kramnik was outrageous, but this sort of article does nothing to ease whatever damage was done. As far as I

could make out from Brentigam's observations, there was a lot of selective circumstantial observations about Danailov's movements, but nothing even approaching concrete evidence.

I hope that FIDE will make an official statement about this fiasco, as it is an embarrassment to our entire sport for chess to be slandered in such fashion.

AF4C Withdraws Sponsorship

The new year began with bad news for the USCF. The AF4C has withdrawn its sponsorship of the 2007 U.S. championship. USCF President Bill Goichberg explained their decision as follows:

Unfortunately, according to the organizer, before we received that proposal, AF4C's main sponsor did an internet search on AF4C and the Championship, found postings by Sam Sloan, learned that he was on the USCF Executive Board, and decided to pull out.

Don Schultz heard something similar from Erik Anderson, and I later spoke to Henderson who told me the same thing, that AF4C's sponsor pulled out because they found internet postings by Sam Sloan and learned that he was on the Executive Board.

This is why I was so vehemently [opposed](#) to Sloan's candidacy. It is incomprehensible to me that he could be elected to the USCF Executive Board. This is also one of the reasons that I am running for the USCF Executive Board, to help fix this mess. In the upcoming months, I will discuss many important issues on my [blog](#). Please join me in this mission to reform the USCF. Thanks for your support!

The Susan Polgar National Events in Corpus Christi, Texas

The Susan Polgar National Open Championship for Girls and the Susan Polgar National Chess Challenge for Boys will take place on the President's Day weekend (February 16-18, 2007) in Corpus Christi, Texas.

There will be prizes totaling over \$10,000, as well as the opportunity to earn chess scholarships to Texas Tech University, Texas A&M and University of Texas in Brownsville (UTB). There will also be a unique prize for the top family team; it can be any combination of family members. The idea is to encourage families to come together and have fun. There will also be a live concert and many other exciting activities in addition to the Blitz, Puzzle Solving, Simul, Lecture and Chess Training Camp, etc. Come join us for the biggest family spectacle of the year! More information about the event can be found [here](#).

Paul Truong assisted Susan Polgar in the preparation of this column. Susan Polgar is available for chess instruction. For more information, visit the Polgar

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