

Aeroflot Open: Viorel Bologan first on tie-break!

Prior to the final and 9th round of the Aeroflot Open 2003, two Belarusian Grandmasters, Alexei Alexandrov and Alexei Fedorov, shared the lead with 6½ points. Normally, their last round game would decide the ultimate winner of the competition. However, Alexandrov and Fedorov made a draw quickly, therefore giving chances to the six in the chasing pack who were all on 6 points before the last round.

Some might criticise the Belarusian GMs for their quick draw, but I certainly wouldn't. The motivations to end the game peacefully, share the big money and keep good personal relations in such a situation are obvious. The same problem of quick last round draws arose in another great recent tournament, the US Championship. It is very unattractive for the sponsors to see such results, but to correct the situation, in my view *the system* should be somehow corrected. One quite radical idea, which I like, is to give 0.4 points for a draw with White, and 0.6 points for a draw with Black. Then we can avoid sharing of places by a large number of players, and the possibility to make a quick draw will be less tempting.

So, Alexandrov's and Fedorov's pursuers got their chance, and this chance was taken by Viorel Bologan and Peter Svidler, who won their games against Granda Zuniga and Gregory Kaidanov, respectively. Bologan and Svidler joined Alexandrov and Fedorov and all four players ended the tournament with 7 points. The name of tournament winner (to whom, by the way, a place in the Dortmund tournament was awarded) was determined, according to the average ELO of the winner's opponents (highest and lowest ratings of opponents were excluded from the

calculation, according to the rules). This showed that Viorel Bologan was the Aeroflot Open 2003 winner, the final standing being: **1. Bologan 2. Alexandrov 3. Fedorov 4. Svidler.**

On behalf of the Chess Today team, I congratulate our colleague, Moldovian Grandmaster Viorel Bologan on his victory. Viorel is not only active as a player, but he is also an active chess journalist, the author of countless tournament reports in various chess magazines. I should also of course mention that in 2002, an interview with Viorel Bologan was published in CT-657.

More news of the final day of the Aeroflot Open will be reported by my Moscow colleagues in the next CT issue, and Viorel Bologan's decisive win over Granda Zuniga will be the annotated game.

ELDI Snelschaak Marathon in Mercure Hotel Dordrecht

A special report by GM Mikhail Golubev



Photo By Adri Timmermans

ON 15 February 2003 I participated in the famous, and at the same time unusual tournament – *Open Dutch Blitzchess Marathon*, or *ELDI Snelschaak Marathon*, named after the new tournament main sponsor, *ELDI Chemicals*. 200 players competed in 17 double rounds (i.e. we played two games against each opponent in each of the 17 rounds – 34 games overall).

The Dordrecht Marathon always has a strong list of participants including mainly, but not only, the strongest Dutch players. The previous winners were Piket (1996, 2002), Van Wely (1998, 2000), Kir. Georgiev (1997), Vaganian (1999), Lautier (2001). The first prize in 2003 was as high as 1600 euros, not bad for some 9 hours of work even for a top grandmaster. Taking into account the strong competition from Aeroflot, several possible participants, including Van Wely and Lautier, were absent. Even so there were many famous players competing. The top 10 players were I. Sokolov, J. Piket, P. Nikolic, Y. Seirawan, M. Sadler, U. Andersson, J. Timman, J. Speelman, D. Fridman, F. Nijboer, and were several other GMs including A. Barsov, P. Popovic, D. de Vreugt, J. Gdanski, V. Gurevich and myself.

The tournament battle was quite exciting, participants showed many great ideas, silly blunders, and unpredictable results. The tournament favourite GM Ivan Sokolov made a draw in the first round against an opponent more than 700 ELO points lower! Many club players are quite dangerous in blitz. Also I twice, finished mini-matches against 1900+ players with a 1½-½ score. Yasser Seirawan was on the top board more often than anyone. On this board the games were transmitted for the spectators onto a large display. He won his first 5 matches with a score 2-0, and Jan Timman, Ivan Sokolov and Jeroen Piket played less successfully, but close to the very end Sokolov reached the leaders. Everything was finally decided in the very last round, before which Seirawan was sole leader with a half point margin. Follower Sokolov and Timman won their matches with a 2-0 score, while Seirawan scored only 1½. So, three players shared the first place. The Buchholz system defined the following order of winners:

The final results: 1. Sokolov, 2. Timman 3. Seirawan, (all 25) 4. de

Vreugt (23) 5. Nikolic. 6. Bosboom. 7. Andersson. 8. Popovic, P. (all 22½) 9. Speelman, 10. V.Gurevich 11. Solomunovic, (all 22) 12. Piket, 13 Smeets 14. Fridman 15. Nijboer 16. Sadler 17. Solleveld 18. Mohr 19. Cekro 21½ (all 21½).

Having 21 points, I shared 20th place with four other players, having the best Buchholz in the group. The latter fact is not surprising, because I finished with ½/4 in the two last rounds, losing 0-2 to Seirawan, and then ½-1½ to Piket. Before that, my results against the top 19 players were not disastrous: 2-0 vs. Nijboer, 1½-½ vs. Popovic, Solomunovic and Mohr, 1-1 vs. de Vreugt, Bosboom and Gurevich, and ½-1½ vs. Fridman.

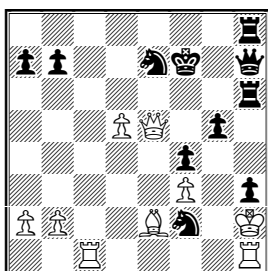
Despite an unimpressive personal result, I should say that the tournament was absolutely wonderful. Together with six main organizers, there were 19 other arbiters who worked on the tournament; therefore it is not surprising that rounds started in accordance with the previously published schedule. The pleasant and spacious tournament venue was provided by the luxurious Mercure hotel, which is also one of the event sponsors. In the playing hall, the pairings were automatically shown on several big screens. It was no problem to eat and drink in the tournament buffet even between rounds, but there was also the main hotel restaurant and even a McDonalds, situated some 100m away from the Mercure hotel. The media were present throughout the whole of the tournament. Organizers put every possible effort into helping invited foreign players find a hotel - this resulted in the fact that I didn't even see the town of Dordrecht, because it was not necessary for me to leave the hotel. But I was very happy to see such a tournament. Chess organizers in other countries who plan to put on something similar can be strongly advised to visit one of the next Open Dutch Blitzchess Marathon, to see how it's done in Dordrecht.

In this issue's CBV file I provide first board games (source – the tournament site blitzchess.nl), and also some of the relatively more sensible of my games that I was able to reconstruct after the tournament end. Apart from the event site, nice reports with photos are available at chessbase.com and schakers.info.

One more blitz game ...

Luc Vanstreels –Mikhail Golubev

Event: blitz game Eynatten, 02.2003



This position occurred in a blitz game that I played recently in the Eynatten, Belgium chess club. At this point, we found that the chess clock wasn't working properly, and started to analyse, instead of play.

29.♖c7 ♜e8 30.d6 ♜e6 31.♙c4 ♗g4+ 32.fxg4 ♚c2+ 33.♜xh3 ♚xc4 34.♚f5+ ♜g8 35.♚xg5+ ♗g6 36.♜xc4 ♜e3+ And draw. Is chess not beautiful?

Annotated Game

□ **V Bologan (2630)**

■ **Z Granda (2623)**

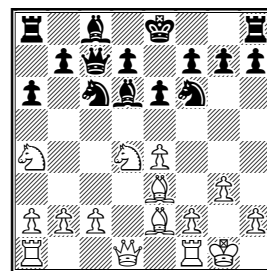
Event: Aeroflot Open Moscow (9),
19.02.2003 B49

Annotations: **GM Mikhail Golubev**

1.e4 c5 2.♗f3 ♗c6 3.d4 cxd4
4.♗xd4 e6 5.♗c3 ♚c7 6.♙e2 a6
7.0-0 ♗f6 8.♙e3 ♙b4

At the highest level in modern chess, Black often declines the chance to play classical Scheveningen positions, which arise after 8...d6. This is a matter of fashion, the Scheveningen is not yet refuted of course!

9.♗a4 ♙d6 10.g3



This subvariation clearly has theoretical value. In 2000, Anand, defeated Shirov with it in the FIDE Wch Final.

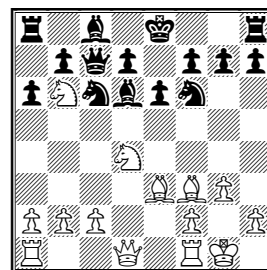
10...♗xe4

I would prefer to call this move dubious, but will limit myself to 'risky'. Anand's move was 10...b5. It so happened that I witnessed one of the most important recent games on this topic: 11.♗b6 ♜b8 12.♗xc8 ♜xc8 13.c4! (13.a4 occurred in Shirov–Anand, FIDE Wch Final New Delhi/Teheran 2000.) 13...♗xd4 14.♙xd4 bxc4 15.♜c1 ♚b8 16.♙xc4± Svidler–Macieja, Bundesliga 2002/2003. Peter Svidler won that game, and later said that he found 13.c4 in the same way he finds all his best novelties, during the game!

11.♙f3 ♗f6

11...f5 12.♙xe4 fxe4 13.♗xc6 ♚xc6 14.♗b6 ♜b8 15.♚h5+ g6 16.♚h6 ♙e5 17.♙f4 ♙xf4?! 18.♚xf4 d6 19.♗xc8 ♜xc8 20.♚f6± was Smejkal–Spasov, Oerebro 1966.

12.♗b6!



This is a new and interesting move; earlier occurred 12.c4.

12...♜b8

After 12...♚xb6 13.♗xe6 it is clear without variations that White gets an extremely dangerous attack for a piece.

13.♗xc6 bxc6

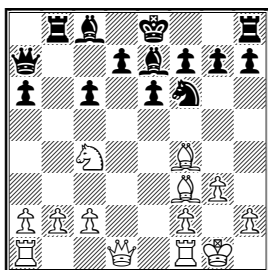
Clearly better for White is 13...dxc6?! 14.♗c4 ♚e7 15.♙b6 ♚d7 16.♙a7±

14.♗c4 ♙e7!

Probably the correct decision – other

moves give White a direct attack:
 14...♖e7?! 15.♗e2! followed by ♖ad1.;
 or 14...♗e5?! 15.♗xe5 (15.♗c5 d5!;
 15.♗e1!?) 15...♗xe5 16.♗f4 ♖xb2
 17.♗d6!? ♖b7 18.♗e3.

15.♗f4 ♖a7



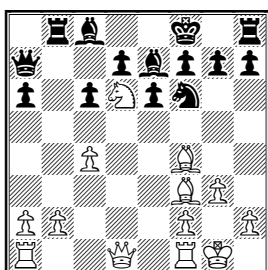
16.♗d6+!?

This is also correct, at least from a practical point of view. After grabbing the exchange by 16.♗xb8 ♖xb8∞ White's initiative evaporates.

16...♗f8!

16...♗xd6?! is extremely dangerous for Black, e.g. 17.♗xd6 (17.♗xd6 ♖xb2 18.♗a3 ♖b8!) 17...♖xb2 18.♖ab1 ♖b7 (18...♖b6 19.♗e3 ♖b5 20.♗c5 ♗d8 21.♖e7+ ♗c7 22.c4+-) 19.♗xc6 dxc6 20.♖xb2 ♖xb2 21.♖xc6+ ♗d7 22.♖a8+ ♖e7 23.♖xh8+-

17.c4



White has obvious long-term compensation, but it's also obvious that the fate of the struggle is not yet decided.

17...♗e8?

A mistake, which is difficult to explain. Black should avoid the exchange by any means possible, hoping to defend and keep his extra pawn.

18.♗xc8 ♖xe8 19.♗xb8 ♖xb8
 20.♖b1±

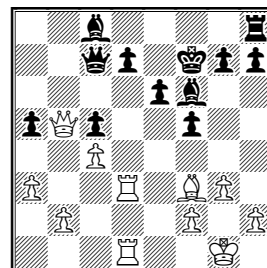
In this position Black has insufficient compensation for his small material loss – and even castling is no longer possible.

20...c5

Normally, Black should try to play

...d5 in such a structure, but how is he to do that with his king in the centre? White then would have chances to open the position and develop an attack quickly.

21.a3 a5 22.♖a4 ♖c7 23.♖fd1 f5
 24.♖d3 ♖f7 25.♖b5 ♗f6 26.♖bd1



26...♖d8?

Not an obvious, but an important mistake, which Bologan confidently exploits. 26...♗d4 was correct. White is better after 27.b4 (or 27.♖xd4!?) 27...axb4 28.axb4, but a lot of play is ahead.

27.♖d6! ♗d4 28.♖1xd4! cxd4 29.c5

If White can take on d4 calmly, he will get a dominating position with equal material. Granda Zuniga decides to defend the pawn, but this way loses even faster.

29...e5?! 30.♖c4+! ♖e7

Or 30...♖f8 31.♗h5! g6 32.♗xg6 hxg6 33.♖f6+ wins. Maybe this was what Black missed when he made his 29th move.

31.♖d5 ♖e8 32.♖xe5+ 1-0

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