



COLUMNISTS

An Arbiter's Notebook

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The 2005 Aeroflot Festival

In 2002 the Association of Chess Federations organized a Chess Festival in the Hotel Rossija with the Aeroflot Company as the main sponsor: 369 players participated and everybody considered this to be very successful. In 2003, 476 players participated; in 2004, this number jumped to 645; and this year to 673. In the meantime, the Russian Chess Federation proved to be an excellent partner in the organization of the festival. In this Notebook I shall relate some interesting stories from the 2005 Aeroflot Festival.

The Tournaments

In previous years we had three tournaments per festival with the following requirements:

- Tournament A: a rating higher than 2450
- Tournament B: a rating lower than 2451 and higher than 2199
- Tournament C: a rating lower than 2200 or without a rating

This year there were four tournaments and the required ratings were:

- Tournament A1: a rating higher than 2550
- Tournament A2: a rating higher than 2399 and lower than 2551
- Tournament B: a rating higher than 2199 and lower than 2400
- Tournament C: a rating lower than 2200 or without a rating

It was expected that more players rated higher than 2600 would participate this year and this is what occurred; 36 of the top 100 players from the January 2005 FIDE rating list competed. Last year we had 39 title norms, and this year “only” 29 norms, which is still quite an impressive number. The following table shows the number of title holders in the festival:

	GM	IM	FM	WGM	WIM	WFM
A1	96	5				
A2	44	103	14	5	3	
B	3	23	42	5	16	2
C		1	1		3	9
Total	143	132	57	10	22	11

There were 18 WGM's, of which 8 also hold the title of IM and they are included in the table. The oldest player was Fiodor Kuznetsov (RUS), born 18-5-1920; the youngest player was Mikhail Timofeev (RUS), born 21-5-1997.

Hotel Rossija

The Hotel Rossija is one of the largest hotels in Moscow. It is located in the centre of the Russian capital and has about 3,000 rooms. The games were played in two halls. The tournaments A1, A2 and B were played in the so called Golden Hall and Tournament C was played in a restaurant. The distance between the two halls was about 400 meters. My office was close to the Golden Hall and I walked to Tournament C at least three times per round. I asked for a bicycle, but unfortunately one was not available. Of course, these daily walks proved very good for my physical condition.

The Tournament Schedule

The schedule is quite tough. Tournaments B and C started at 9:30 AM, while tournaments A1 and A2 started at 15:30 PM. On February 16, the day of the second round, tournament B played the third round at 16:30 and on February 17 the players of tournament C had to play two games, the first one at 9:30, and the second one at 16:30. Hopefully, the reader will understand that this festival was hard work for the chief arbiter and his two deputies. My daily schedule was more or less as follows: **07:30** Wake up, **08:15** Breakfast, **08:45** Inspection and preparation of the playing halls **09:30** Start of the round for Tournaments B and C **14:00** Finish of the round **14:30** Receiving of the results **15:00** Making pairings tournament B and C **15:30** Start of the round for Tournaments A1 and A2 **22:30** Finish of the round Tournament A1 and A2 **23:00** Making pairings Tournaments A1 and A2. **23:30 or later** Dinner.

The Start of the Festival

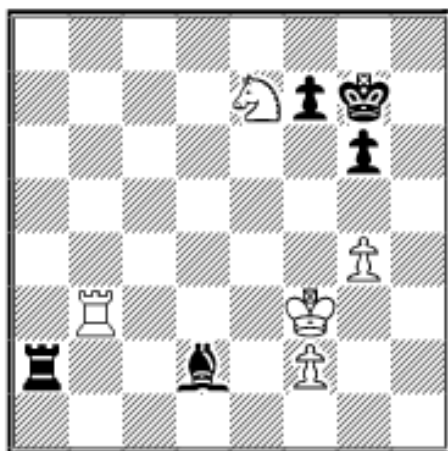
The start of the event was quite chaotic. Because of the very bad weather several planes could not land in Moscow and were directed to St. Petersburg, Nisjini Novgorod, and other places. Therefore, we did not know when a majority of the chessplayers, who were en route to Moscow, would arrive. On February 15, the day of the first round, 10 players from tournament B and 10 from tournament C were not present at 9:30 AM and they received a bye (= ½ point). One of the players, coming from Columbia, arrived just before the start of round 4 and he received 1½ points (3 x ½ = 1½). In the Tournaments A1 and A2 the situation was much better: only 2 players from A1 and one player from A2 received a bye. These tournaments started at 3:30 PM and the players were very cooperative when we began making new pairings. In one instance, I agreed to start a newly paired game one hour later to give the players an opportunity to prepare.

What is the Correct Result?

A strange situation arose in round one. After the pairings of round 2 were published the Indian GM Sasikiran told me that I had to make new pairings,

because the result of the game Tsekhovsky – Sasikiran was not 0-1, as it was published, but 1-0. I told him that it was very difficult to change published pairings, but I could change the result and from round 2 the pairings would be made according to the correct standings.

However, I was quite angry that somebody had made a mistake, so I tried to discover what had happened. The available documents were the scoresheets and the round protocol made by the senior arbiter. I first checked the protocol and it showed 1-0. This means that no mistake was made when the results were saved to the Swiss program. Then I checked the scoresheets and 0-1 was written on top of both, which was confirmed by the match arbiter and the players. But then I discovered that Sasikiran had written 1-0 on his scoresheet, but not in the place where the result is normally written. This was, by the way, the final position after 39.Nxe7.



Apparently somebody had overstepped the time (Sasikiran?) or Tsekhovsky had resigned, because after 39...Bg5 40.Nd5 Bh4 Black is clearly better. The next morning I met Sasikiran in the breakfast hall and I asked him to explain what had happened. My first question was, “Did you see a flag in one of the displays?” He answered, “Yes, I did and it was in my display.” My second question was, “What times did the clocks show when the clocks were stopped?” He answered, “His clock showed 1:00, my clock showed 0:59.” Then it was very clear that the match arbiter had made a mistake and I corrected the result with the full support of Sasikiran. If a prize for fair play had been available, he would have received it. Then I informed GM Tsekhovsky at the start of the round that he had won his first round game, he was very surprised, but accepted the result.

Is it Possible to Change the Pairings?

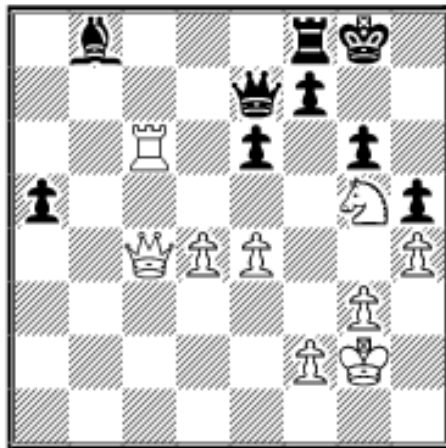
Something similar happened in Tournament C. Instead of 1-0, the result was written as 0-1, which the players discovered when the pairings were published. Again, I had no intention of changing the pairings, although it was very easy to do so. Yet, three of the four players who were involved very urgently requested me to change the pairings and I agreed provided that the fourth player would agree as well. They could not find him and I decided to inform him about the situation. When he proved to be unavailable after several attempts to reach him, I decided to take the risk that he would also agree and I changed the pairings. I was present in the hall at the start of the round and I then informed the player about the changes. He told me that he had stayed with some friends in Moscow and had not even checked who his opponent was.

Al Modiakhi

Grandmaster Al Modiakhi from Qatar is quite often in zeitnot, but he almost always knows how many moves he has to play, even when he does not record them. In round one he played grandmaster Mamedyarov from Azerbaijan; both players were in zeitnot and neither wrote the moves. Then Black's flag fell and the question arose: "Did Black play at least 40 moves?" Both players started to reconstruct the game and agreed that the position shown in the diagram below was reached. But all attempts to reach the final position failed (see the second diagram). It was impossible for the two grandmasters to find the correct continuation of the game. Many spectators and some arbiters surrounded the board, and suddenly a boy of about 14-years old who had followed the game showed the move that was played.

Mamedyarov,S (2657) - Al Modiahki,M (2581)

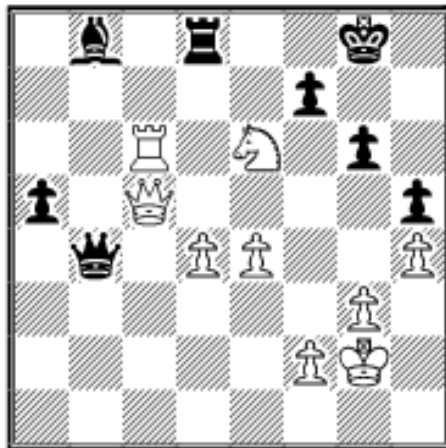
1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.e3 Nf6 4.Nc3 e6 5.Nf3 Nbd7 6.Bd3 dxc4 7.Bxc4 b5 8.Bd3 b4 9.Ne4 Nxe4 10.Bxe4 Bb7 11.0-0 Bd6 12.a3 bxa3 13.b4 Nf6 14.Bd3 Nd5 15.Bxa3 Nxb4 16.Bxb4 Bxb4 17.Ba6 Rb8 18.Bxb7 Rxb7 19.Qa4 0-0 20.Qxc6 Rc7 21.Qa6 Bd6 22.Rfc1 Rxc1+ 23.Rxc1 Qd7 24.g3 g6 25.Kg2 Rb8 26.Rc6 Bc7 27.Qc4 Bd6 28.e4 a5 29.Ra6 Bb4 30.Ne5 Qb7 31.Rc6 Rf8 32.Ng4 Qe7 33.h4 h5 34.Ne5 Bd6 35.Nf3 Bb8 36.Ng5



37...Qd7

After this move was played, it was very easy to find the final moves.

37.Ra6 Qb7 38.Rc6 Rd8 39.Qc5 Qb4 40.Nxe6 (see next diagram) 1-0



In round 5 Al Modiakhi's opponent was Sasikiran, and again Al Modiakhi was in zeitnot. He was not recording the moves, but Sasikiran was. When Al Modiakhi ran out of time, Sasikiran's scoresheet showed only 40 moves. But Al Mordiakhi was sure he made the required number of moves, so Sasikiran checked his scoresheet and discovered that he had forgotten to record one move. Therefore, the game could continue.

What do we do with a Drunken Player?

During one round I was informed that a player was drunk. This happened once before in my chess career and, in that instance, I declared the game lost for the player who loved Bacchus more than Caissa. In this instance I went to the balcony to observe the player. He did not look very healthy, but he made his moves in an acceptable way. He recorded the moves correctly, although he was in zeitnot, and I saw no reason for any action on my part. Occasionally his friends brought him a cup of coffee, and I was told that some of his friends had to wake him up from time to time, but when I was there I saw no reason to interfere. Therefore, sometimes you do nothing with a drunken player.

Ringling Mobiles

A message was posted at the entrance of the main playing hall that mobile phones had to be switched off and this was also announced several times before the start of the round. Nevertheless, two such situations arose and in both cases the game was declared lost for the player whose phone was ringing.

In one case the player protested and even brought a lawyer who informed us that the phone belonged to the player's brother. I upheld my decision, because even if it was his brother's mobile, he was still responsible for it, as it was in his bag. Also, this player had previously told some arbiters that he had forgotten to switch off his mobile because he was very late for his game. He went to the Appeals Committee and paid a fine of \$200, but only ended up losing his appeal and his money.

Swiss System and Pairing Programs

In this festival I used the recently developed pairing program *Swiss Under Windows* (SUW) 5.1. But I discovered a bug just before the festival began. After a long phone call to the programmer in Holland, I received an update and from that moment everything worked perfectly. I have never felt so relaxed in any Swiss tournament: the pairings were made very quickly; checking of forbidden pairings was an easy task; the final standings with the different tiebreak systems were immediately available; and the prize distribution never before went so smoothly as in this event. Also, the FIDE reports of the four tournaments were immediately available as were the title norm reports.

Some Observations

We used the DGT XL clock in the A1, A2, and B tournaments. I like the clock, but we had some problems in the A1 and A2 tournaments. The time limit was 40 moves in 2 hours, then 20 moves in 1 hour, and 15 minutes for the remaining moves with an increment of 30 seconds per move in this last period. The move counter was not used, which means that at the end of the first period one hour was added to both clocks at the moment one of the players ran out of time. Concurrently, a flag was shown in the display of the player who had used two hours. I do not like this flag because it is not very visible. I prefer a minus ("−"), which is more noticeable and I mentioned this

to the clocks manufacturer. Several of the players and arbiters did not understand that the moment one hour was added to both clocks, the scoresheets needed to be checked to see whether the required number of moves had been completed. It took quite a bit of effort to explain that this was the same situation as with mechanical clocks and a real flag at flag fall.

Note: Organizers who have DGT XL clocks with the serial numbers 27500 – 28500, may return these clocks for replacement free of charge, because these clocks have some defects.

I was very pleased that it was unnecessary to apply Article 10.2, because there was an increment of 30 seconds in the last time period in all tournaments.

Chessplayers often sign the scoresheets without checking whether the correct result is written on them, which can lead to wrong pairings in a Swiss tournament. And if such an error were to take place in the last round it could even lead to an incorrect distribution of the prize fund. Therefore, I would like to remark that chessplayers should only sign their scoresheet after the results are written on both scoresheets. It can also happen that an arbiter might write the wrong result on the scoresheets after the players have signed them. This procedure is completely wrong; the arbiter should write the result before the players sign the scoresheet.

Next Year

There were false rumors that the festival would not be organized next year because the Hotel Rossija would be renovated or even destroyed. There will be an Aeroflot Festival at the Hotel Rossija next year, which the organizers intend to conduct from February 7-17, 2006.

Have a question for Geurt Gijssen? Perhaps he will respond to it in a future column. Send it to geurtgijssen@chesscafe.com. Please include your name and country of residence.

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