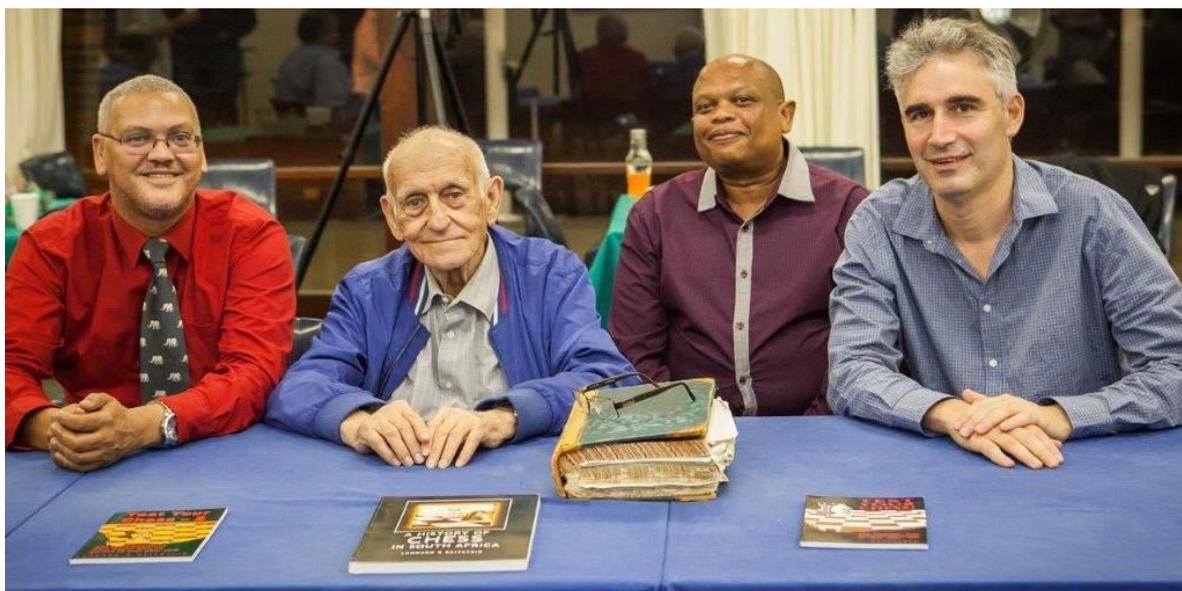


Reflections by Dr Lyndon Bough

Earlier this year the family of Mr. Leonard Rietstein contacted me to become the custodian of the chess documents and other chess material of Mr. Leonard Rietstein who is turning 90 this year. As I have known Mr Rietstein, for close to 20 years now I was honoured and privileged to be requested to be the custodian. The chess material consists of photographs and a massive amount of chess material that I am sorting through.



Dr Bough, Mr Rietstein, IM Watu Kobese, IM David Gluckman

One of gems that I discovered was the minute books of the first Southern Africa Chess Federation. I have the original minute book in my possession and I have decided to quote from there to educate the readers of the early days. The first minute that I found was in fact the founding minute of the national federation. The text has been retyped. It reads as follows:

Minutes of inaugural meeting of the Executive Committee of the CHESS FEDERATION FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA, held on September, 27th. 1947, at the offices of the Dominion Insurance Company, 52, Commissioner Street, Johannesburg

Present Mr. S.A. May (in the chair), Messrs. A. F. Hartz and B.E. Siegheim.

Replies from the following chess clubs, expressing agreement with the proposal to form a Chess Federation had been received: Johannesburg CC, (100), Ons Skaakklub, Johannesburg (100), Durban CC (100), Mafeking CC, (24), Wits University

CC (22), Stellenbosch CC (20), Bloemfontein CC, (20), Lichtenburg CC. (17), Max Euwe CC, Cape Town CC(15), Total 433.

Replies to the first circular, issued in May, appear to indicate that the following clubs will likewise adhere to the plan: Springs CC, Vereeniging CC, East London CC, Kimberley CC.

In view of the satisfactory response it was decided to proceed with the formation of the Federation.

It was resolved that the President and the two Hon. Secretaries would act until the first formal full meeting of the members of the Federation.

The President was delegated to draft the Constitution and Bye Laws and to submit the draft to the next meeting of the Executive Committee for consideration and translation. The Constitution is then at once to be circulated to the constituent clubs.

It was resolved to release for publication on the following Friday the report of the formation of the Federation.

Letters having been received from Australia and Canada the Hon Secretaries were asked to reply.

The holding of a Premier Tournament, open to South African players who have not competed in a South African championship tournament, was discussed. It was proposed that each constituent club is to be entitled to one nomination and to a second nomination if the membership reaches 100. Such Premier Tournaments to be held every second year, the first to take place in Johannesburg during the second half of May, 1948. Duration of the contest to be limited to one week. - The winner of the Premier Tournament to be automatically entitled to compete in the next South African Championship Tournament.

Approve and signed and dated 1/10/47

It is interesting to note from the minutes the following:

1. The first inaugural took place on 27 September 1947 (seventy years ago);
2. The meeting took place in Johannesburg;
3. Johannesburg had at least two clubs with membership of 100 members.
4. There was a chess club called Ons Skaakklub;
5. KZN was represented by Durban chess club;
6. Wits University represented the university sector
7. Western cape was represented by Stellenbosch , Max Euwe and Cape Town;
8. Free State was represented by Bloemfontein
9. North West was represented by Lichtenburg and Mafeking
10. Replies had also been received from the Northern Cape via Kimberley and

11. The Eastern Cape was represented East London
12. Vereeniging chess club was also in favour of the formation.
13. The Constitution and Bye laws would be drafted and discussed at the next meeting.
14. Australia and Canada had written to South Africa
15. It was agreed that a Premier tournament would be held.

The forerunner of the modern day Chessa is thus 70 years old. I shall continue this narrative next month. I have also noted that the name of the chess body was in reference to Southern Africa and not South Africa!

Regards

Dr Lyndon Bouch