

## Reflections (4) SA Closed 2017 by Dr Advocate Lyndon Bouah



The 2017 edition of the SA Closed is in full flow. The Closed is a special event as a player strives throughout his or her career to play in this event. Many top players never made it to the Closed. I played in my first SA Closed in 1989 at the age of 16 and came in the top three. At that stage SA was still divided in chess terms and SA held a Closed for white players and one for Black players.

I first heard of the SA Closed when I started playing in 1987. I was told that a SA Closed was held in Durban 1986 and thereafter in Worcester in 1987. In 1988 the SA Council on Sport hosted an Olympic a games in Cape Town of which chess was part. In 1989 Deon Solomons won the SA Closed hosted in Bellville South. In 1991 the Chess Association for the People of South Africa hosted another Closed at CPUT campus. Deon Solomons again won this with me being second.

From 1993 the first combined SA Closed was held at Claremont chess club in Cape Town. This was also the trials for the players to participate in the African Team Championships in Egypt. I ended in the last three places and was very disappointed with my play. In 1994 a SA Closed/ trials took place at CPUT again. This time I did myself justice and ended with one loss, six wins and six draws thus guaranteeing myself a spot for the second time in the Olympiad team.

In 1995 we had a stranger SA Closed in that Angolan players were allowed to play in the event. This event was held in Cape Town. I didn't play as the organiser forgot to invite me! There were no cellphones at that time and he simply said Lyndon I couldn't get hold of you after the invitations were sent out! Emails were also rare at time!IM David Gluckman won this event.

In 1998 the next SA Closed was held at Bruma Lake in Johannesburg. This was a nice event and marked the entry of Kenny Solomon. One of my fondest memories was when Eddie Price called an

urgent meeting and said that someone is having more than their allotted two cups of Milo or hot chocolate! Yes the good old days!

In 2000 we played in Port Elizabeth. Here a certain Nick Van Der Nat made his triumphant debut and won the event.

In 2001 the SA Closed went to Johannesburg as the Chessa Council took a decision to host it in an uneven year so that players have enough leave in the Olympiad year. This event was won by IM Watu Kobese who then incidentally came joint first in the African Championships that year.

In 2003 the event was held in Kempton Park off Pomona Road. An interesting event and my fondest memory was of IM Stanley Chumfwa being chased by a dog on the grounds !He just made it into the hall with husband shoes!

In 2005 we made history when we staged the SA Closed at Newlands Cricket field. Since that time it has been hosted in Cape Town. Let's look at the recent winners:

1995 - IM David Gluckman

1998 - Mark Rubery and IM Watu Kobese

2000 - Nick Van Der Nat

2001 - IM Watu Kobese

2003 - IM Watu Kobese and GM Kenny Solomon

2005 - FM Nick Van Der Nat

2007 - IM Henry Steel

2009 - FM Nick Van Der Nat

2011 - IM Henry Steel and IM Watu Kobese

2013 - IM Donovan van Den Heever

2015- IM Daniel Cawdery

In this present field we have however not two former SA Closed Champions but three! And the third Former champion is ..... The grand old man FM Charles De Villiers. Charles first competed in the SA Closed in 1971 and has the following impressive results:

1. 1975 - Piet Kroon and Charles de Villiers

2. 1977 - David Walker and Charles de Villiers

3. 1981 - Charles de Villiers

4. 1985 - Clyde Wolpe and Charles De Villiers

5. 1987 - Charles de Villiers

6. 1989 - Charles de Villiers

What an impressive string of results. Charles of course also won the SA Open as well and if my history books is correct then he is a seven time SA Champion! Impressive I think you will agree!

In today's games : Women



Modi versus Frick. The young Modi beat Frick unexpectedly.

van Zyl versus Marais. The game ended in a draw after interesting play.

February versus Laubscher. Both players tried to get the edge and although February appeared to have the spatial advantage Black had enough counterplay.

Oberholzer versus Megan Van Niekerk. Van Niekerk took the point.

Fisher versus Joubert. Fisher made up for yesterday when she beat Joubert.

Robyn Van Niekerk versus Grobbelaar . Grobbelaar continues her superb start by beating Van Niekak who appeared to have it all under control!

## 2. Open

Bhawoodien versus Benjamin. A real slugfest. Mohammed dipped into his fathers bag if tricks and came up with his own tricks which was a delight to behold.

Klaasen versus Van Rensburg. A tough one between the two talents. A draw was agreed to.

Ovcina versus Mosehle. A draw was agreed to between the players.

Kobese versus Mnguni. kobese showed why he is known as the old lion.

De Villiers versus Van Den Heever . van Den Heever couldn't pierce the armour of De Villiers.



Barrish versus Mabusela. The latter showed why he has played three times at Olympiads when he beat Barrish.

### 3. Senior

Pick versus Bhawoodien. The latter continues his rich vein of form.

Willenberg versus November. Roland took this one.

Ohlson versus Goosen . The former looked good but the latter garnered the point.

Saffier versus Fredericks . The two players had a slug festival but agreed to a draw when all the major pieces were coming off.

Pesa versus Southey. Pesa played an attacking game and was richly rewarded for his efforts.

Lewis versus Lawrence these two protagonists first played against one another at school in 1978 and continued this tradition forty years later ! Lewis played well and brought home the point!

### 4. B Section



James versus Basson was an intriguing game. Basson played an early weakening of the king side which cost him dearly.

Kleinsmidt versus Erlank. Erlank lost after what looked like a drawn position.

Kromhout versus Lawerlot. A crush by white which reminded me of those old games where pieces are sacrificed with abandon.

Basson versus Willenberg was a gruelling affairs which lasted the full distance! Willenberg finally triumphed but Basson can be proud of his performance,

Nkosi versus Mfundisi was a crush by Nkosi. Not well played by Black,

Vermaak versus Gandhi. Gandhi lost for the second night and will want to seek revenge tomorrow.

Jacobs versus Kuhlase - not sure.

#### 5. Under 23

Essop versus Gluckman. Essop played very well and brought the point home.

Du Toit versus Verster. Du Toit was in no mood to take prisoners and beat Verster after the debacle of yesterday.

Khumalo versus Lubbe was a crush by Keithonsky.

du Plessis versus Bornheim. Bornheim was cool, calm and collected. He withstood the supposed attack and then went on to win the game!

Adams versus Van Der Merwe. Adams I playing well and found a good tactic to finish the game!

The games in the top sections were all on chess24 this afternoon.

Enjoy the day!

Regards.

Lyndon Bouah