

Tournament report from the 16th Cappelle la Grande Open, France 19.-26. February 2000:

Where the masses meet

By Simen Agdestein

The Cappelle la Grande Open is for the many. Altogether 643 participants (new record!) took part this year. Of these 56 were females, 18 above 60 years old, 109 under 20 years old, 104 grandmaster, 60 international master, 383 had FIDE-rating, 1 took a GM-norm, 9 took IM-norms, 2 took WGM-norms and 1 WIM-norm. 49 countries were represented.

It's easy to loose one's breath, looking at the statistics from the tournament.

The winner of the tournament was GM Yuri Kruppa from Ukraina with 7,5 points (out of 9) and a rating performance at 2721. GM Gilberto Milos from Brasil had the same score, but his rating performance was a little lower.

But this tournament is not about one sole winner. Congratulations to Kruppa. Winning such a huge open is a rare experience in life. The financial reward is probably not in the same class. This tournament, however, is not for those seeking either money or glamour. It's for those who wants to enjoy life, play chess, meet friends and eat and drink well. And for that Cappelle la Grande is perfect.

It started in 1985 with a relatively small tournament with 68 players from five nations. It has then grown steadily.

The last three tournaments more than 600 players per year, of which about 100 GMs, from about 50 countries have come to this little place just outside Dunkerque at the upper northwestern corner of France.

Somehow about 300 people are smoothly fed twice daily with splendid three or even four course's dishes and plenty of wine the whole week trough. Someone really deserves all the appraisals there are for this achievement.

For a whole bunch of chess players, this fabulous yearly event is about to become an institution, something that can be plugged into the diary right away. GM Mark Hebden from England has already been there 14 times and, so has the French GM Jean Marc Degrave. Big delegations come from Germany (32 players), Russia (30 players), Poland (25 players), Belgium (18 players) and Norway (16 players). It seems to be the same players coming back year after year.

Talking about Hebden –jolly and happy as usual, he turned up at round 3 with his arm in a big plaster. Somehow somebody had broken his finger in a finger-wrestling match, probably over a bear. He assured me they were still friends, but it didn't look good.

Another topic swirling in the air was Mikhael Gurevich, the number 13 seed in the world, and a few more GM's arrival to the tournament in round 3. They couldn't come earlier as they had to play important matches for Godesberger in the German Bundesliga.

Gurevich even had to leave the tournament with one round to go, this time because of obligations in the Dutch league. He said he took it as holiday. - To meet friends and play card,

he said. With six strokes in a row in Cappelle la Grande and two just before in the German Bundesliga and even two more in Holland, he managed to win 10 games in nine days! He surely had a good holiday.

For my own sake, this definitely was no holiday, coming the hard way (boat, train and bus) with 15 kids between 16-19 years old. For the chess department at *The Norwegian College for Top Athletes* just outside Oslo, where I'm the coach and administrator, this tour is the climax of the year. After the great success last year, when I won the tournament and my then 10 students picked up a hundred or so rating points each, it was a unison claim that we had go back.

The claim for next year's event has not decreased in strength. The youngsters, all stabbed into one dormitorium with a minimum of facilities and not much to do apart from playing chess, find it all just perfect. I vaguely aired if perhaps a new place for our yearly international tournament could be interesting, but, no, they want Cappelle again, and again, and again. Next time we'll probably be 20.

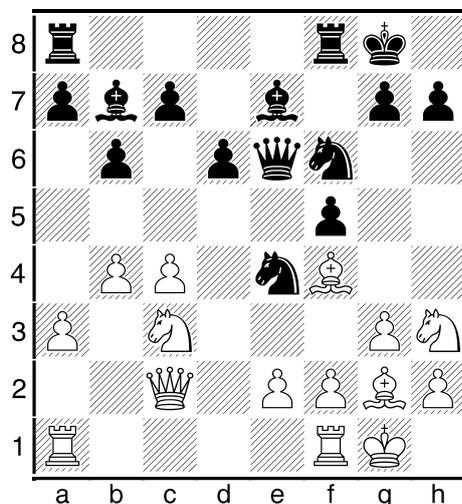
As long as I stay at a nice hotel at least five kilometres away from my students, it's fine for me.

I must admit, I didn't take part in much of the social life apart from the huge lunches and dinners, but I couldn't fail to notice the apparently huge amount of women in the playing hall. They amounted only to about 9 percent of the total, but it still seemed to be women everywhere. Strong they were too and also good looking. In round 6 the following thunderstorm hit GM Tony Miles:

WGM Elena Zayac (Russia, 2340) – **GM Tony Miles** (England, 2579)

16th Open Cappelle La Grande FRA (6), 23.02.2000

1.d4 e6 2.c4 b6 3.Sc3 Lb7 4.a3 f5 5.d5 Sf6 6.g3 Le7 7.Lg2 0-0 8.Sh3 This idea is not so common in this set-up, I could only find two games in my base with it. Still Zayac played quickly and with great confidence, while poor Miles soon had to sweat. **8...Sa6 9.0-0 Sc5 10.Lf4 Dc8 11.Dc2 d6 12.b4 Sce4 13.dxe6 Dxe6?** A natural move, but now Black goes down immediately. **13...Sxc3 14.Lxb7 Dxb7 15.Dxc3 Dc8** is only a little better for white.



14.Sb5! A triple function move, hitting pawns at both c7 and f5 and at the same time

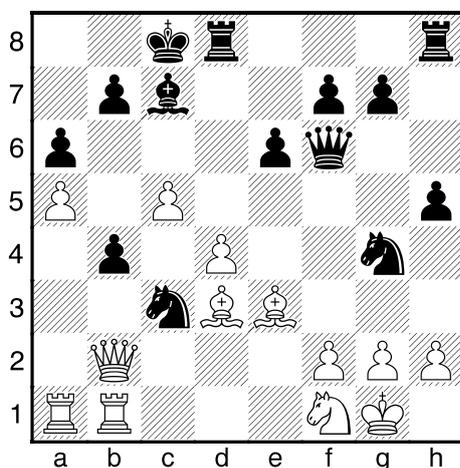
threatening to trap the knight with 15.f3. **14...Se8 15.f3 g5** Miles suddenly started to blitz his moves, a sure sign of absolute desperation. 15...S4-f6 16.Sd4 lose the f-pawn for nothing. **16.Sd4 Dg6 17.fxe4 fxe4 18.Le3** Now it's a piece down for nothing, and Zayac safely brought the whole point home. **18...Lf6 19.Tad1 Sg7 20.c5 dxc5 21.bxc5 Tae8 22.c6 Lc8 23.Sf2 Lxd4 24.Txd4 Sf5 25.Txe4 Le6 26.Te5 Dg7 27.De4 Sd6 28.Dd4 Sf5 29.Da1 h6 30.Ld2 Lc4 31.Txe8 Txe8 32.Dxg7+ Kxg7 33.Lc3+ Kg6 34.Le4 g4 35.Td1 1-0**

Another phenomenon that stroke you walking around in the playing hall, was the large amount of talented, young kids, beating old fellows. This seems to be the era of prodigies. They pop up everywhere, and turn younger and younger every year. The chess family Foisor from Romania with father Ovidio barely ahead of mother Christina on the ratinglist say they don't want to create a new Polgar-family, but with daughters at 10 and 6 both doing well in the tournament, there are similarities. Here we see the patriarch showing the way:

GM Tomas Oral (Chekkia, 2540) – **IM Ovidio Foisor** (Romania, 2424)

16th open Cappelle La Grande FRA (8), 25.02.2000

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Sd2 dxe4 4.Sxe4 Ld7 5.Sf3 Lc6 6.Ld3 Sd7 7.De2 Sgf6 8.Seg5 Lxf3 9.Dxf3 c6 10.0-0 Ld6 11.Te1 De7 12.Ld2 h6 13.Se4 Lc7 14.Sg3 Dd6 15.c4 0-0-0 I try to tell my students to ask themselves, "why not take a pawn that's en prise?". Surprisingly often it's perfectly safe to grab what's given to you. What Oral had in mind after 15...Dxd4, I don't know. 16.Sf5 Dg4 leads to nothing. **16.Le3 h5 17.Ted1 Sg4 18.c5 De7 19.Sf1 Sdf6 20.b4 Sd5 21.b5 cxb5 22.Tdb1** Creative, but why not just take back the pawn right away. He won't get a second chance. **22...a6 23.a4 b4 24.a5 Df6** Black is clearly better now. **25.De2** Going for complications, but it's not enough. **25...Sc3 26.Db2**



26...Txd4! Taking on b1 was also possible, but Foisor prefers winning with the initiative. **27.Lxd4 Dxd4 28.Dxb4 Dxd3 29.Dxb7+ Kd8 30.Tb2 Se2+ 31.Txe2 Dxe2 32.f3 Df2+ 33.Kh1 Dd4! 34.fxg4 Dxa1 35.Kg1 Dd4+ 36.Kh1 Df2 0-1**

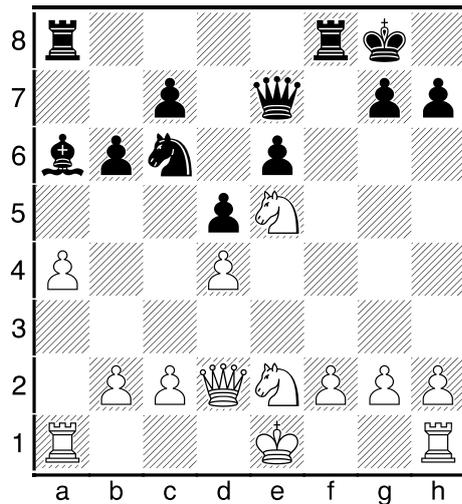
This report has not been much about what happened on the top boards. I'm not jealous or anything, although I wouldn't mind having been dragged out of the mud where oxygen was scarce and up among the few on the stage. The tournament just seemed to be more for the

masses than the top players, and my focus this year was certainly at the masses. Here we see the tournament winner “bravely” sacrifices a pawn:

IM John Shaw (Skottland, 2392) – **GM Yuri Kruppa** (Ukraina, 2561)

16th open Cappelle La Grande FRA (6), 23.02.2000

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Sd2 Sc6 4.Sgf3 Sf6 5.e5 Sd7 6.Lb5 Le7 7.Sb3 a5 8.a4 Sa7 9.Lxd7+!? For some reason most people retreat the bishop to d3 in this position, but again; "why not take a pawn that's en prize?". **9...Dxd7 10.Sxa5 b6 11.Sb3 La6** This is a serious bishop. **12.Lg5 0–0 12...f6** looks more natural. **13.Lxe7 Dxe7 14.Dd2 Sc6 15.Sc1 f6!** Finally Black takes action, just in time before the white king escapes. **16.Se2 fxe5 17.Sxe5**



17...Dh4! 18.g3 Giving back the pawn with 18.0-0 Lxe2 19.Dxe2 Sxd4 seems best. Now Black can force a very good ending. Note 18.Sxc6 Txf2 and Black wins. **18...Sxe5!** 18...De4 may also be good, but to simplify in complicated positions is a nice art. **19.De3 Sf3+ 20.Dxf3 Txf3 21.gxh4 Taf8** White's position is crippled. **22.Tf1 Th3 23.a5 Tb8!** A nice move, taking the sting out of any counter play. **24.Th1 Txh4 25.f4 bxa5 26.Txa5 Txb2** Everything falls now. **27.Kd2 Lxe2 28.Kxe2 Txc2+ 29.Kd3 Tc4 0–1**

The country with the most representatives was actually Germany with 32 players. I must admit, this surprised me a little. But after a couple of seasons in the German Bundesliga and the little insight this has given me of German chess life, I probably should have become used to German proportions.

I must say, I'm deeply impressed by German chess life. You have three good magazines, all run commercially or without support from the federation, an enormously strong Bundesliga, good conditions for players at the national team, plenty of tournaments and strong players and perhaps 100 000 registered chess players. I tell you, this is another world from what I'm used to up here in the cold North.

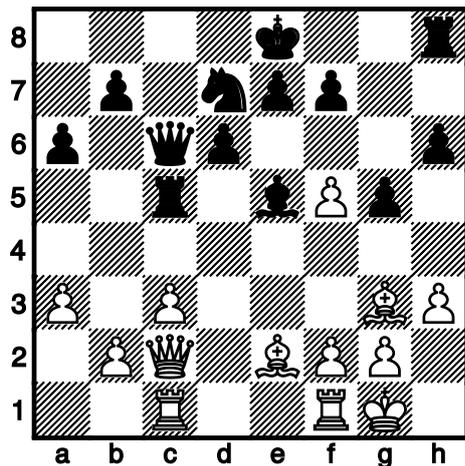
The best German player in Cappelle was Thomas Luther with 6,5 points and a rating performance at 2619. I had the interesting experience of playing white against him in the French, a rare instance for a dedicated 1.d4-player. I thought I tricked him when I started with 1.d4 e6 2.e4!?, but later found out that Luther is a French expert, even writing articles for ChessBase on the opening. The opening was still a success for me, but it faded out to a draw.

Against Slim Bouaziz from Tunisia, Africa's first GM, Luther showed that he's updated on more openings than the French:

GM Thomas Luther (Germany, 2509) – **GM Slim Bouaziz** (Tunisia, 2371) [B90]

16th open Cappelle La Grande FRA (8), 25.02.2000

1.e4 c5 2.Sf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Sxd4 Sf6 5.Sc3 a6 6.Le3 Sg4 7.Lg5 h6 8.Lh4 g5 9.Lg3 Lg7 10.h3 Se5 11.Sf5 Lxf5 12.exf5 Sbd7 Judit Polgar played 12...Sbc6 against Shirov in the EuroTel Thropy-tournament last year. 13.Sd5 Tc8 14.c3 Sf6 15.Le2 Sxd5 16.Dxd5 Dd7 17.0–0 Tc5 Not 17...Dxf5? 18.Lg4 18.De4 Dc6 19.Dc2 Lf6 20.Tac1 Sd7 21.a3 Le5



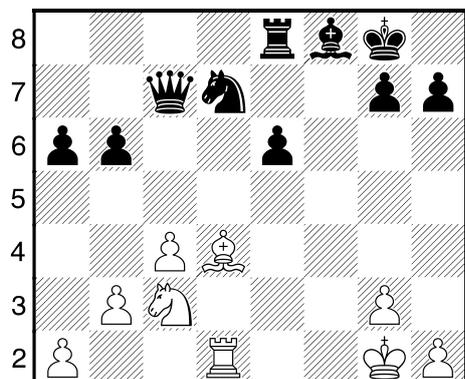
22.b4! Surely a surprise for Bouaziz. Black is forced to open the c-line, in which he soon after is being killed. **22...Txc3 23.Dd2 Lf6 24.Lf3 Dc7 25.Txc3! Lxc3 26.Tc1 Lxd2 27.Txc7 Kd8 28.Tc2! 1–0** Simple chess. White takes on b7 next followed by a deadly rook invasion on c8.

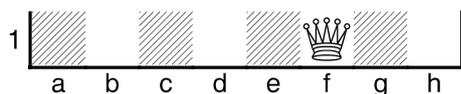
Of promising young German talents, I had the pleasure of talking to Elisabeth Paetz (15, please check her age) in the bar at the hotel the day before she beat one of my students. I guess 5,5 points and a rating performance at 2332 is about normal for her.

IM Florian Handke (please check his age), another young German talent, scored 5 points, which was good for a rating performance at 2499. Here is a nice finish against a good scalp:

GM Peter Haba (Chekkia, 2517) – **IM Florian Handke** (Germany, 2413) [A33]

16th open Cappelle La Grande FRA (4), 21.02.2000





White's pieces are hopelessly uncoordinated, something Handke perfectly takes advantage of.
27...Lb4 28.Td3 Se5 29.Lxe5 Or 29.Te3 Sc6! 29...Dxe5 30.Df3 Tf8 31.De3 Df6 White can't defend everything. **32.g4 Df1+ 33.Kg3 Lc5! 34.Dxe6+ Kh8 35.De2 Lf2+ 0-1**

German players with rating and performance:

1. GMThomas Luther	6,5/2619
2. IM Florian Handke	5/2499
3. IM Georg Seul	6/2492
4. GM Thomas Paethz	6/2450
5. Gerhard Lorscheid	5/2372
6. Ludger Koerholz	5/2342
7. Elisabeth Paethz	5,5/2320
8. Stefan Hamm	4,5/2284
9. Boris Latzke	5/2273
10. Lothar Schnitzspan	5,5/2234
11. Heinz Schlefing	5/2209
12. GM Felix Levin	4/2208
13. Werner Diehl	5,5/2196
14. Gernot Blum	4/2149
15. Axel Vehreschild	5/2112
16. Juergen Marth	4/2097
17. Andreas Meschke	4/2081
18. Peter Straub	5/2064
19. Mira Kierzek	4/2038
20. Frank Offermanz	4,5/2028
21. Ernst Fromme	4/2017
22. Dirk Angermunde	4,5/2001
23. Joaquin Diaz	4/1975
24. Alexander Flachsbart	4/1973
25. Andreas Mertens	4/1963
26. Daniel Klaus	4/1951
27. Johannes Magar	4/1890
28. Manfred Freialdenhoven	3,5/1855
29. Klaus Haverkamp	3,5/1824
30. Jurgen Baumeister	4/1799
31. Gerhard Roerig	3,5/1767

(In the statistics is said 32 German players, but I can only find 31. Also check the titles and spelling.)