

75th Tata Steel Group B, Wijk aan Zee, 12–27 January 2013

			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Total
1	Arkadij Naiditsch 2708	GER	*	1	1	½	½	½	1	0	1	0	1	½	1	1	9
2	Richard Rapport 2621	HUN	0	*	0	1	½	1	1	1	½	½	½	1	1	1	9
3	Jan Smeets 2615	NED	0	1	*	½	½	1	0	½	1	½	1	1	½	1	8½
4	Sergei Movsesian 2688	ARM	½	0	½	*	½	1	½	½	1	1	½	1	½	1	8½
5	Daniil Dubov 2600	RUS	½	½	½	½	*	0	1	1	0	½	½	1	½	1	7½
6	Romain Edouard 2686	FRA	½	0	0	0	1	*	½	1	½	1	1	½	1	0	7
7	Jan H Timman 2566	NED	0	0	1	½	0	½	*	½	½	0	1	1	1	1	7
8	Sergei Tiviakov 2655	NED	1	0	½	½	0	0	½	*	½	1	½	1	1	0	6½
9	Maxim Turov 2630	RUS	0	½	0	0	1	½	½	½	*	½	½	½	½	1	6
10	Robin Van Kampen 2581	NED	1	½	½	0	½	0	1	0	½	*	0	0	½	1	5½
11	Nils Grandelius 2572	SWE	0	½	0	½	½	0	0	½	½	1	*	0	1	0	4½
12	Predrag Nikolic 2619	BIH	½	0	0	0	0	½	0	0	½	1	1	*	0	1	4½
13	Alexander Ipatov 2587	TUR	0	0	½	½	½	0	0	0	½	½	0	1	*	½	4
14	Sipke Ernst 2556	NED	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	½	*	3½

The Mikhail Golubev Interview



Mikhail Golubev is a Ukrainian Grandmaster and, in 2005, for one special issue, was Guest Editor of *The British Chess Magazine*. Your *Aged Editor* caught up with him and was pleased to ask

some questions.

Mikhail, what does chess mean to you, please?

It may be easier to figure what it does not mean to me. In short, I was more or less a promising junior in the 1980s, a professional player in the 1990s, a chess journalist in the 2000s. These days I am mainly occupied with journalism. In late November the regular 25-minute long chess TV program in the Russian language, 'Shkola Chempionov' – Cham-

pions' School – was launched in the Odessa regional channel, Krug. Possibly, it is the only regular chess programme on Ukrainian TV these days. I am one of several people who are involved in this project. In November–December we made six episodes. It is also possible to watch them on the internet.

Finding sustainable TV sponsorship is what concerns me at the moment.

Is the game popular in the Ukraine with the young, middle-aged or old?

Generally, chess is less popular in the Ukraine than it was in Soviet times. Probably this is to be expected: now people have more choice. Alas, it is not possible to say exactly how many regular players we have in the country. Some structural changes are needed in our federation, and not only to count competitors.

Chess is definitely considered to be a sport in the Ukraine. But we, first of all, have football as the dominating sport (for over eight years as a chess correspondent in our main newspaper over 14 of the 16 pages were given over to one sport. *OK, sorry!* Here there is too much football: once I enjoyed this sport. But lately, I really, have had enough of it.) Then we have all the Olympic sports. And chess belongs to, *de facto*, the third category, 'non-Olympic sports'. I am sure – and I am not the only one who believes this – that our game deserves a higher place in our society. Our country does not have comparable successes in most other fields. Boxing and corruption are two fields where the Ukraine is placed similarly highly.

And I see you have concentrated on writing rather than playing.

My move to regular chess journalism in 1998 – the first chess website in this country – was called 'Chess Sector'. In particular, there was a separate Ruslan Ponomariov page, which was useful at the time, when it had not been easy for foreign organisers to contact Ruslan direct. The site was updated by me until 2003. In 2000 I worked with KasparovChess.com, which was an important experience. This was partly organisational work: almost twenty school teams, mainly from Odessa, have been playing in an internet schools championship.

After that I started to take other journalistic jobs and continued to play semi-

professionally. But in the late 2000s I lost most of my remaining motivation as a player. My last classical tournament was the Mikhail Podgaets Memorial in November, 2010. I started it with two bad losses, but eventually shared first place with two IMs.

I was quite happy with my last game as Black against S. Bogdanovich, and regarding my last round encounter as White versus I. Gorbunov, there had been at least a curious novelty, found over the board. Maybe, some day I shall

return to classical time limits – who knows? But, speaking frankly, I do not want to be an active under 2500 Grandmaster or to spend many hours on my own preparation. Playing up to the age of forty was, perhaps, enough for me. I would be glad to play in good rapidplay events, but it is really hard to locate them. In 2012, I played in an excellent rapidplay in Chisinau, the Capital of Moldova.

Let us talk a little of your compatriots. I met Ruslan Ponomariov at the Hastings Centenary Dinner. I served champagne to his table. How is he today, I wonder... ?

He enjoys himself in Spain, I believe, and sometimes in the Ukraine. In 2011 I assisted Ruslan at the Ukrainian Championship, which he won, and he returned for some time into the world's top ten after that. We cooperate in this way on occasion. It is a pity that at the 2012 Championship, because of unfortunate circumstances, I was not able to be his second. He played Dortmund be-

“The conditions in Soviet clubs were often terrible.”

fore the Ukrainian and I also decided to tell him after this that I could not go with him to Kiev. Maybe I was mistaken. But I was afraid to mess up two of Ruslan's tournaments.

What about Katerina Lahno, the youngest woman GM in history? (I thought that was Judit Polgar)

She married a French journalist and grandmaster, Robert Fontaine, so it is better to ask him perhaps.

How are the Chess Centres of your country? (Should England be copying your methods and ways?)

Actually, I think that we have rather learnt from players in the West how to be more active, and create all these small but important clubs, and so on. Firstly, many people here are still waiting for the Soviet ways to return. (So, people here should accept that they have to spend their own money for clubs.) And it was not too good. The conditions in Soviet clubs were often terrible.

We read of Sergey Karyakin being 'Pride of Your Nation'. Is he on target to become World Champion? I see pictures of him, publish his games, of course...

Sergey Karyakin is already a pride of the Russian nation, federation and country. It is true that people in the Ukrainian chess circles were not happy with his decision to move to Russia. But freedom of movement is much more important here: for too long we lived in a country, the USSR, from which we could not emigrate in a normal, legal, way.

The late Vladimir Savon was from your country, of course. Do you remember him winning the Soviet Championship? That was quite a surprise, I remember! In 1971, I think...

Of course I cannot remember the 1971 Championship. I was one year old! Unfortunately, his further career was not as bright as it promised to be.

I knew him as a gentle, friendly person and played some tournaments where he participated, at the late stage of his career.

Vladimir Tukmakov. We have two of his books on sale in England, published by 'New in Chess'. One is about preparation: the other is an autobiography. Have you read them? (They may be best sellers, I hope.)

His first book (2009) was in Russian, an unusual autobiographical work with many pictures. I own this book and have a high opinion of it. The book was well received. Regarding his second book, I have only just received it! In Odessa it is not easy to buy chess books. (So, one more thing deserves to be changed.) I am not sure whether books written by me are good, but I am a little proud that I started to author books before most of my compatriots. Indeed, Efim Geller was a big exception. Tukmakov, who once won the Olympiad as a team player of the USSR, had twice led the Ukrainian men's team to the gold medals. He is one of our chess heroes, and it is a pity he has been working as coach but outside our country in Azerbaijan. His ideas on how the work of the national team should be organised were not supported by our federation. That is why he changed jobs.

Ivanchuk! Ivanchuk. Do I really have to qualify that statement? Can you explain this incredible man?

Not easily, maybe.

I have known him for thirty years. He is just a man who lives almost entirely – say

80% – inside chess, which still excites him absolutely. In maybe the best tournament of my junior career, the Under 17s in 1984, which was a Swiss with many future GMs, only the first two were given spots in the Soviet Championship, plus an additional spot to the top Under 14 player. On this occasion I took second place with a better tie-break than Ivanchuk, who was third. But as I, simultaneously, took first place amongst the Under 14s, Ivanchuk qualified for the 1985 Soviet Championship. And Misha Brodsky, now a GM and coach to the Ukrainian women's team, who had scored the same number of points as Ivanchuk and myself, was fourth and failed to qualify.

And finally, we in England would like you to visit us again. Can you come and enjoy our culture, food and even weather? (Chess may have to take second place!)

Many thanks. Perhaps I have to reveal that I have never been to the UK. I can tell you

a story. In 2003, in Brussels, despite having a ticket, I was not allowed to go by train to Lille because I had no UK visa. The reason was a problem with illegal immigrants. But still why would one need a UK visa in France? At the station, the policeman said: "When I go to the Ukraine, I will also need a visa, right?" I answered: "Yes, but not to go to Uzbekistan." The French organizer had suffered also: he had to change his plans for Christmas Eve to pick us up, after we had been obliged to change trains.

I am hoping to visit England sooner or later. Especially, I should give it additional thought after one of my favourite cafés, the Harry Potter-style 'Platform 9¾' was closed recently.

Mikhail Golubev, thank you for your time.

Thank you very much for your interest.



Chess Questions Answered

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Step Back in Time



The modern masters seem to think they are the first ones to discover opening novelties, usually with the help of computer software. However, a keen memory can sometimes remember the old games which contained a certain amount of menace in lines that are now topical. John Taylor *Burton upon Trent* wrote:

"I much enjoyed the piece on the Colle System, not so much because I used to play it (I didn't, except very infrequently) but because of the line 3...Bf5 4 c4 which, in your analysis, transposed into the Exchange Variation of the Slav Defence. In 1953 on a school trip to Germany I went into a bookshop in Osnabruck and found a paperback by Alfred Brinckmann called '*Grossmeister Bogoljubow*' – in effect a 'best games' selection. One of the games caught my attention: Bogoljubow–Gotthilf, Moscow 1925, the tournament which saw Bogoljubow's