

The Chess Mind

By Dennis Monokroussos

Player Profile: Mikhail Golubev

It has been quite a while since [our last profile](#), but I'm happy to report a new addition to our series. Ukranian grandmaster Mikhail Golubev is a fine player, obviously, but an outstanding author as well. His books on the [Sicilian Dragon](#), [6.Bc4 Sicilian](#), and the [King's Indian Defense](#) have all received very strong reviews, and I have only good things to say about his work with [Chess Today](#). You'll have the chance to enjoy his annotations for yourself...but first, the interview.



1. Name:

Mikhail Golubev

2. Age:

As far as I know I was born on May 30, 1970.

3. Title:

IGM since 1996.

4. Where you live, where you're from:

Odessa, Ukraine. (Wikipedia has a good [article](#) about this place.)

5. Family:

I can say that I have a daughter Anna, born in 1998. One of many my other relatives is

grandmother Zinaida Suranova (born 1911), the chemist. One of her students in the Odessa University was a future grandmaster Efim Geller.

6. *Other interests:*

Unfortunately, lately it is, first of all, politics, which disturbs me a lot.

7. *Favorite book/author (not chess):*

My opinion on this topic is universally unimportant. But in different years I liked, for example, some books by Stanislaw Lem, Robert Sheckley, Iris Murdoch, Tatyana Tolstaya.

8. *When (and how/from whom) you learned to play:*

I learned to play at 6 - in family, many members of which tried to teach me after I was 5. At some point, they succeeded. To be fair, my family tried, with more moderate success, to develop my interests in other directions too.

9. *Favorite/most influential chess book (if any):*

Polugaevsky's 'Rozhdenie Varianta'. [DM: This book has been translated into English. Originally it was called *The Birth of a Variation*, and it's currently named and available as *Grandmaster Preparation*.] Speaking about my first chess books, 'Puteshestvie v shahmatnoe korolevstvo' by Averbakh & Beilin and, well, 'Prikliucheniya peshki' (the latter was just the chess poem with big pictures as I remember).

10. *Favorite player (other than yourself):*

Mihail Tal, first of all.

11. *A game (not your own) that made a big impact on you:*

I guess that 'Puteshestvie v shahmatnoe korolevstvo' has many such games. Many (or virtually all?) Russian-speaking players of our generation, including top stars, have read this book.

12. *Your best game:*

Possibly the game versus Renzo Mantovani in Biel, 1992. (Actually, this was the only tournament I played in where smoking in the tournament room was allowed).

13. *Your greatest moment in chess so far:*

I had some local achievements in chess (and those whom I supported had their achievements too), but I do not consider these moments as 'greatest'. Indeed, achievements are needed from time to time to keep your balance, to confirm that you are doing more or less the right things. Life itself (and life with chess for those who wish it) is the only great thing in my view. Well, maybe in the past I would have answered to this question somewhat differently.

14. The most valuable thing you did to become the player you are:

I do not think that I did anything special. Since I was 7 and at least until I made a final GM norm, playing chess clearly was the main occupation in my life. Even when odds were against this. I played chess and tried to improve my play. Maybe not sufficiently, but perhaps only the world champion can say with a full confidence that he tried sufficiently. So, it is relative. From some point it became hard for me to improve. Essentially, I like chess where both sides have visible chances: a guy who manages to create some miracle, wins. Such play requires a lot of energy. Still, throughout my career I learned a bit to play many other types of positions. In the subjective sense, it was valuable.

15. What you value most about the game:

Chess can be attractive in many different ways. That is why it survived for so long and that is why we can survive for so long with chess. (What to say, sometimes I like even the endings). The game joins people from different countries, creating horizontal links in the world, which is politically divided.

16. Your chess credo:

I am not sure that I ever had a chess credo. My life outside of chess needs such things more.

17. Three tips for amateurs:

I remember how at the Open in Poland in 1992 a tournament guest, former world champion Boris Spassky had a speech before the 1st round, and told the participants: "Dear friends. Please, be afraid of forks, of pins, and of discovered checks!". If something similarly deep is required, I propose: "Learn rules, find partners, play chess". Or, more advanced, "Do not touch pieces without saying j'adoube, do not forget to push the chess clock after you move, do not forget your pen at home". Well, to have interest in chess is hardly a problem or disease. No tips are really needed.

18. A tip for ambitious players:

Accept that you have to suffer at least a bit for achieving better results: to sometimes make moves you don't like making, to learn things which you prefer not to learn, and so on.

19. A game you'd like to present:

I have presented the game I mentioned above, with IM Renzo Mantovani.

20. Any of your work/services you'd like to plug:

I have a [page](#) to write about various chess projects in which I am involved. Additionally, as an experiment, I created a [blog](#) devoted to the latest book, which I wrote. Those readers who had not had enough with my answers, may take a look at these sites.

His game with Mantovani can be - and most certainly ought to be - replayed *here*. (Originally published in Chess Today in 2003.)

Posted by Dennis Monokroussos on *Tuesday July 24, 2007 at 2:15am*

Golubev,Mikhail - Mantovani,Renzo [B87]

Biel open Biel SUI (7), 27.07.1992

[Mikhail Golubev]

This game is one of my most memorable games ,which was played more than 11 years ago. This version of the annotations is new.

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 a6 6.Bc4 e6 7.Bb3 b5 8.0-0 Bb7 [The main move 8...Be7 is safer.]

9.Re1! Nbd7! [9...Be7?! fails to 10.Bxe6! , so Black is urged to play with a king in centre.]

10.Bg5!

10...Qb6 This allows White to start a dangerous attack. [10...Qc7!? has not played often, but it can possibly be recommended.]

11.a4 b4 12.Nd5! exd5 13.exd5+ Kd8 [13...Ne5 14.a5 Qc5 15.Be3! with White's advantage, which occurred later in Adams-Sadler, Dublin Zt 1993.; 13...Be7 has yet to be tested. A possible continuation is 14.Nf5 Ne5 15.a5 Qc5 16.Nxg7+ Kd8 17.Nf5!? Rg8 18.Be3 Qc8 19.Bb6+ Ke8 20.Nxe7 Kxe7 21.f4 Qh3 22.Re2!+/-]

14.Nc6+ [No less, or perhaps even maybe more dangerous for Black is 14.a5!? Qc5 (or 14...Qc7 15.c3 with attack - Adams) 15.c4! (not 15.Nc6+?! Bxc6 16.dxc6 Qxg5) , with the main idea of 15...bxc3 16.Rc1 Bxd5 17.Rxc3 Bxb3 18.Qxb3 Qxd4 19.Qb7 Qa7 20.Rc8+!]

14...Kc7 There were two other moves to consider: [After 14...Bxc6!? 15.dxc6 Qxc6 one of the possible lines is 16.Bd5 Qc8 17.Bxa8 (or 17.Qh5!? Be7 18.Qxf7 , where Black should play 18...Nxd5) 17...Qxa8 18.Qh5 (18.Qe2 Qc6!? with the idea of 19.Qe8+ Kc7 20.Qxf7 Qd5) 18...Qd5 19.Rad1 with good compensation for White. He also could try c2-c3 at an earlier stage.; Another option is 14...Kc8!?, where after 15.a5 Black should play 15...Qb5! (Not 15...Qc7 16.Qg4!! Nxg4 17.Re8+ Qd8 18.Bxd8+/- ; also favours White 15...Qc5 16.c4! with the idea of 16...Bxc6 17.Be3!) , and now 16.c4!? is possible. Caprano-Curtassi, Corr. 1993 followed 16...bxc3 17.Rc1!? cxb2!? 18.Na7+ Kb8 19.Nxb5 bxc1Q 20.Qxc1 axb5 21.Qc3 with good chances for White.]

15.a5 Qb5 16.Nd4 [Also here 16.c4!? deserves serious attention: 16...bxc3 is forced, and White can continue with 17.Rc1 (or maybe 17.Bxf6!?)]

16...Qc5 17.Be3 The threats now are 18.Ne2 Qb5 19.c4! and 18.Ne6+.

17...Bxd5? [Black is ready to play with three pieces for the queen. With the similar idea, stronger would be 17...Nxd5! 18.Ne6+ (18.c3 does not look convincing) 18...fxe6 19.Bxc5 Nxc5 . I planned to play 20.Rxe6! Nxe6 21.Bxd5 , but it's hard to say whether White's activity gives him an objective advantage. 21...Nc5 22.Bxb7 Nxb7 (after 22...Kxb7 23.Qd5+ Ka7 24.Qf7+ Nb7

White can try 25.Rd1!? Rc8 26.c3) , and now 23.c3!? deserves attention (23.Qd5 Rb8! looks good for Black) ; After 17...Kc8 White can try to attack by 18.Nc6 Qb5 19.c4!? (instead, 19.Nd4 Qc5 repeats the position)]

18.c4! Starting a direct attack. [It was also not bad to win the queen: 18.Ne6+ Bxe6 19.Bxc5 Nxc5 20.Bxe6 fxe6 , and now 21.b3!? (not 21.c3 b3!) 21...Rb8 22.Rc1 - and it's not easy for Black to defend his fortress.]

18...bxc3 [After 18...Bb7? 19.Nb5+ White wins.]

19.Rc1!+/- The Black's king is in danger, and his kingside is not developed - a nice position for White. But the intuition that helped me during the game was only of limited use when later in the same year I prepared the game annotations for New in Chess and Chess Informant. There are many options for Black and in several lines I couldn't find a clear advantage. Now, fortunately, playing programs can help a bit in such cases and I am quite sure that White is better.

19...Qxa5 Or: [19...Ne4? 20.Nb5+! Qxb5 21.Bxd5 Re8 22.Bxe4 Rxe4 23.Bb6+ Nxb6 24.axb6+ Kxb6 25.Rxe4 is hopeless for Black.; 19...Qb4? 20.Rxc3+ Nc5 21.Bxd5 Nxd5 22.Qf3 gives White a crushing attack: 22...Nxc3 (or 22...Qb7 23.Qxf7+ Be7 24.Bg5 , etc.) 23.bxc3! Qb7 24.Qxf7+ Kb8 (24...Nd7 25.Ne6+ Kc6 26.Bb6) 25.Qe8+ Qc8 (25...Kc7 26.Ne6+! Nxe6 27.Bb6+) 26.Rb1+ Kc7 27.Qc6+ Kd8 28.Bg5+ ; 19...Bxb3!? 20.Qxb3 leads to very complicated lines, but the verdict is in White's favour: 20...Nd5 (20...Rb8 21.Qxf7 Kb7 (21...Qh5 22.Qc4+! Nc5 23.Ne6+ with a winning attack.; 21...Qd5 22.Rxc3+ Kb7 23.Ne6! gives White a great advantage: 23...Rc8 24.Rxc8!? Kxc8 25.Rc1+ Kb8 26.Bg5! Qb7 27.Bxf6 Nxf6 28.Rc7!+-) 22.Rxc3 Qh5 (22...Qxa5 23.Re1 Ka8 24.Ra3+-) , and now 23.Ne6! is very strong: 23...Rc8 24.Nd8+! Kb8 (or 24...Rxd8 25.Rb3+!) 25.Ba7+!? Kxa7 26.Rxc8+/- ; After 20...Qd5 , the simplest is 21.Qxc3+! Nc5 22.b4 with a big advantage) , and now White has the amazing 21.Rxc3!! Nxc3 22.Qxf7 with more than sufficient compensation for a rook and knight: 22...Qxa5 (Or: 22...Kc8 23.Qe8+ Kb7 24.Qxd7+ Qc7 25.Qf5 ; 22...Qd5 23.Ne6+ Kc6 24.Rc1) 23.Ne6+ Kc6 24.Rc1! Rb8 (24...Nc5 25.Nd4+ Kb6 26.bxc3+- ; 24...Rc8 25.Rxc3+ Nc5 26.Nd4+ Kb6 27.Rb3+ and White is much better.) 25.Bd2!! (one more nice move) 25...Rc8 (25...Qa4 26.Rxc3+ Kb7 27.b3! Qb5 28.Nd4+-) 26.Rxc3+ (26.Bxc3!? Qa4 27.b3!) 26...Nc5 27.Rxc5+ with a clear advantage.]

20.Rxc3+

20...Nc5?! [After 20...Kd8? White wins by 21.Qd2! (21.Bxd5 Qxd5 22.Nc6+ is also good) ; Necessary was 20...Kb7 , and White's task would be more complicated than in the game. 21.Bxd5+ (also possible is 21.Bd2!? , preserving a very strong attack) 21...Nxd5 (21...Qxd5 22.Qc2 Nc5 23.b4 Qe4 24.Qc1 Nd5 25.bxc5! with a big advantage) 22.Ra3!? (There could be something even stronger, but White should avoid 22.Nc6?! Qb5 23.Rb3 Kxc6 24.Rxb5 axb5 25.Qf3 Ra4! 26.b3 Rb4! 27.Rc1+ Nc5 28.Rd1 Ne4! where it's not clear if he can win.) 22...Nxe3 (22...Qd8 23.Rb3+ N7b6 24.Qf3+-) 23.Qb3+ Qb6 24.Qxf7 Qc7 25.Raxe3 Nb6 (there is nothing better) 26.Re7 Bxe7 27.Rxe7+/- , and this endgame should be favourable for White.]

21.Bxd5 Nxd5 22.Qf3!+-

22...Nxc3 [22...Nb6 23.Qc6+ (or 23.Qxf7+) 23...Kb8 24.Bf4 is easily winning for White.]

23.Qc6+! [Black hoped for 23.Qxa8? Ne2+! 24.Kf1 (24.Rxe2?? Qa1+ ; 24.Nxe2?? Qxe1#)
24...Nxd4 , when he is out of danger.]

23...Kb8 24.bxc3! Ka7 [Or 24...Ra7 25.Qe8+ Kc7 26.Qxf7+ and White wins: 26...Kb6
(26...Nd7 27.Ne6+) 27.Qe8!? Qa2 28.Qc6+ Ka5 29.Nb3+ , etc.; After 24...Qa2 , the simplest is
25.Bf4 (or 25.Bg5 Be7 26.Bxe7) ; Finally, 24...Qc7 loses to 25.Rb1+! Nb7 26.Qe8+ Qc8
27.Nc6+ Kc7 28.Bb6#]

25.Rb1! The threat now is 26.Qb7+! Nxb7 27.Nc6#.

25...Rb8 [Or 25...Rd8 26.Qd5! Rc8 27.Nc6+ Rxc6 28.Qxc6]

26.Qxc5+!! An important resource - otherwise White is lost.

26...Qb6 [26...Qxc5 27.Nc6+ Ka8 28.Rxb8#]

27.Nc6+ Ka8 28.Rxb6 GM Alexey Shirov, who at the time played in the Biel festival's main tournament, liked this game. And my opponent, Italian IM Renzo Mantovani, who I met again few years ago, also preserved not bad memories. So I hope that it was really an interesting game. I also remember that on the day of the game my Chess Informant and magnetic chessboard were mysteriously stolen by someone in a supermarket, so I was in a special mood for playing. Unfortunately, nothing similar has happened to me since then. Even in such a dangerous country as Switzerland. **1-0**