



# WORLD SCHOOLSTEAM CHAMPIONSHIP 2023

Written by: **IA Alon Shulman**

In this article I would like to share my experience as **Deputy Chief Arbiter** at the **2023 World Schools Team Championship** that took place in **Aktau, Kazakhstan**. I wish to present my point of view as for the duties and actions expected from DCA as I see them. Being a leader of a group of arbiters, turning them into a united cohesive unit working as one. One for all and all for one.

I wish also to share some incidents that took place in the event and how we approached them.

Consequently I would like to share the whole experience in lovely Aktau in an illustrative way.



I had the privilege of being appointed by FIDE as **DCA** at an event that took place for the first time. There have been individual World School championships in the past but there had never a team one.

I am humbled, grateful and appreciative for the trust bestowed upon me at this position. It was my first visit to Kazakhstan which proved to be an exhilarating experience.

**Aktau** is a city of around 200,000 inhabitants, located in western Kazakhstan, on the eastern shores of the Caspian Sea.

There are no direct flights from **Tel Aviv** to **Aktau** so I went via **Baku**. The 8 hour connection in Baku enabled me to visit the World Cup games that took place in the **Marriott Hotel Boulevard** at the Azerbaijan capital city. I have fond memories from that hotel where arbiters were accommodated during the 2016 Baku Olympiad.

I had a short but sweet visit in Baku, greeting friends and colleagues, having a good time. Thank you Polina for all your help during my visit.

Following my World Cup visit I headed back to the airport for the short 45 minute midnight flight over the Caspian Sea to Aktau.

**Kazakhstan** marks a double jubilee for me. Kazakhstan is to be my 50<sup>th</sup> visited country and Aktau airport to be my 100<sup>th</sup> visited airport.

**Aktau** might not be as famous as Almaty and Astana, but it deserves more respect. Aktau is the oil and gas production capital of Kazakhstan and it's seaport is becoming a more and more a significant trading route for Kazakhstan.

**Kazakhstan** seems to have a positive upsurge of international chess activities lately and they seem to have made the utmost effort in running this event.

Arbiters were accommodated at the wonderful **Caspian Riviera Grand Palace hotel** which is overlooking the Caspian Sea.



**Aktau** has a nice promenade along the sea and some beaches. Plenty of spots to swim in the vicinity of the hotel. August can get very hot so best to start the day early. On the other hand water temperature could be surprisingly cold.

Locals in Aktau are very friendly. Kazakh and Russian are the main languages. I never felt any problem managing.

## Arbiters team

I was teamed with a very capable team of principals. Starting with **CA Marco Biagioli (R)** who did a magnificent job. Marco is a hugely experienced arbiter. He masters all intricate aspects of running events both in the professional combined with the inter-personal aspect as a team leader. It is no secret that team events, are in general more complicated to manage compared to individual events. In team events you have team compositions that are changing every round. That means 70 captains have to upload their lineup every round to chess-results.com, and do it on time. There would always be issues here.



In team events you need to calculate team results. This needs to always be double checked.

In team events you need before each round to place team names on the display board and put the correct new lineup for the next round, flags, teams and individual players in the right order.

Those are part of those extra chores obstacles and responsibilities you face in team events.

In addition to Marco at the helm, we had **Oleg Rinas** as my co-DCA. Oleg was in charge of the U18 section while I was appointed the U12 section. Oleg proved to be very capable and dedicated DCA.

We also had 2 highly qualified and experienced pairing officers; **Petar Katanić-Vujić** from Serbia and **Swapnil Bansod** from India. Both encompass comprehensive mastery of Swiss-Manager software which is pivotal, especially in fast pace events. Petar and Swapnil would be an asset as pairings/T.A.P officers in any major event.

In addition for them securing fast and accurate pairings they were on call to assist the arbiters team at any time.

# ARBITERS





(Sitting L-R): IA **Tania Karali** (Fair Play Officer, GRE), IA **Swapnil Bonsod** (U12 Pairings Officer, IND), IA **Alon Shulman** (Deputy Chief Arbiter, ISR), IA **Marco Biagioli** (Chief Arbiter, ITA), IA **Oleg Rinas** (Deputy Chief Arbiter, KAZ), IA **Petar Katanić-Vujić** (U18 Pairings Officer, SRB), IA **Vahagn Khachatryan** (Fair Play team, ARM).

(Standing L-R): **Albert Nygren** (Fair Play team, SWE), IA **Stanislav Yanushevsky** (arbiter, RUS), IA **Innocent Kimera** (arbiter, UGA), IA **Andreas Kontokanis** (arbiter, GRE), FA **Tatiana Varko** (arbiter, KAZ), IA **Valeriy Min** (arbiter, KAZ), IA **Umesh KC** (arbiter, NEP), IA **G. Luxman Wijesuriya** (arbiter, SRI), FA **Khurshed Vatanov** (arbiter, TJK), FA **Abdikhadir Yakhiyayev** (arbiter, KAZ), IA **Constance Mbatha** (arbiter, ZAM), NA **Ivan Mezentsev** (arbiter, KAZ), FA **Bauyrzhan Khamzin** (arbiter, KAZ), **Arman Gabdushev** (organization, KAZ), NA **Aralbek Makhmutov** (arbiter, KAZ),

We had a fine team of match arbiters. During the arbiters meeting I told them:

“ I see some of you are a bit anxious. I want to tell you just not to worry. You are not alone. You are surrounded with support at all times.

As match arbiters I practically only need from you one thing – Your eyes controlling all events in your matches.

Your eyes on the boards,  
your eyes on the clocks,  
your eyes on the players,  
your eyes on the captains,  
your eyes around.

99 % of relevant events happen either on the boards or within 2-3 meters of the boards. I want your eyes there all the time so if something happens, you will be able to describe it exactly.

I don't care if you don't know the exact rule applicable to a situation.

I don't care if you don't know the solution.

I just need you to tell me exactly what happened and alert me if something is off.  
That's it. Together we can take care of the rest if needed.

You can ask me anything anytime, there are no silly questions, there are only over confident arbiters. Good arbiters are always hesitant. Bad arbiters are always confident.

Keep calm and don't rush. Don't feel pressured to make a decision right away to try and look professional in the eyes of players/captains. We don't care what they think. We care about making the right decision.

If something happens, just pause the clock and call me.

I don't care if you call me to the board 100 times. Don't care if you ask me 100 questions.

We first fix the pending issue and then I'll answer you privately anything you want to ask.

If I don't know I will ask. I had asked many questions during my 41 years as arbiter. Some very silly"

The arbiter's team formed quickly working as a team and helping each other. If there was an interesting case during the round we would hold a brief arbiters meeting and discuss it.

## **Technical Meeting**

As mentioned, team events are more complicated to run than individual events. We also had many young and inexperienced players. They have to know all the fair-play regulations and captains need to be on top of how to upload team compositions every round. Remember this is a school event. Those are not national teams and captains are in many cases just parents or teachers escorting their teams.

Marco had explained all regulations during the meeting and also prepared a comprehensive presentation clearly and visually illustrating to the captains the whole procedure of uploading team compositions, step by step. That proved to be very prudent. There were issues of course, but not so many and all were duly dealt with.





## Organization

Organizers had done a great job in taking care of many aspects of the event with a keen eye for entertaining the young players. There were many activities offered, including during the rounds for reserve players parents and captains.

The refreshment area was stocked with a wide assortment of snacks and drinks





## Fair Play

Fair play and cheating had become an epidemic. More and more stories are surfacing about more and more players playing flawlessly in tournaments which do not have fair play supervision. That causes many players to withdraw from those tournaments seeing no point in battling against hidden silicone monsters.

As a result the significance of the fair-play measures is becoming more and more imperative.

Those measures are a necessary evil.

Heading a fair play operation is a serious and delicate issue. You need to find a reasonable balance between securing fair play and on the other hand not destroying the joy of the event.

**Tania Karali** who was the head of the fair-play team did a remarkable job in creating all those balances. A tournament in which more than 1000 games were played and no suspicion of cheating is to be considered a success. The fact Tania is also an A category arbiter is of great significance because it's better for the FPO to be an active arbiter for she has a more comprehensive understanding of the situation and knows who to position herself and her FP team within the framework of the arbiters team. Both teams must work together.



## Green Cards

This part of the article presents only my personal opinion and impression. Some may disagree and it's fine.

As part of the Fair Play operation the green card system was employed. First I would explain the system before I'll share my opinion about it. The idea is that only players who actually play during a round (active players) are allowed to stay in the tournament hall. In other words the green card is like a short tourist visa which expires as soon as your game finishes.



The system works as follows: 4 green cards are distributed to each captain and he is to distribute them before each round to his 4 active players. 5<sup>th</sup>/reserve player can't enter playing hall because he doesn't have a green card. He can stay in hotel or come dance at the recreation area. Security will not allow cardless players to enter.

Once a player finishes his/her game he has to surrender his green card to his respective match arbiter and is requested to leave the hall. He can't reenter because he doesn't have his green card anymore. The idea is to prevent players leaving the playing hall, gaining access to a cellphone and returning to assist their teammates.

Once all games of a certain team are concluded, arbiter is to hand all 4 cards to the captain so he shall resume distribution sequence before the next round and so forth.

In theory that system looks reasonable but in reality it does not work.

Players did not understand it and didn't always follow it.

Captains did not understand it.

Arbiters were having difficulties enforcing it. You would often see arbiters chasing players forgetting to surrender their green cards.

Security personnel didn't understand it. Even when event was close to the end I still saw security personnel refusing to allow players to leave because they didn't have their green cards. The delinquent players who did not surrender their cards could leave and return as they please.

I've discussed the matter with people whom I trust their opinion and was happy to see a virtual unanimous dissatisfaction with that system.

I can speak only for myself so my suggestion is to allow all players to enter for the beginning of the round. Around 5-10 minutes after initiation of the games, only acting players and captains would be allowed to stay. All others would be requested to leave. A non playing person or any other person failing to adhere to that rule – would be disqualified from the event and not be allowed in for the remainder of the event.

Between you and me I don't have much objection that in some cases a reserve player can stay and support his team. But if someone leaves the hall he can't return.



In other words I believe we must find the balance between securing the integrity of the games and not being overly paranoid and killing the joy of the game and the joy of the event. Stronger supervision, tougher penalties for violators and give us our joy of chess back.

## The Volunteers

Every event especially in our case where you have 70 teams in various hotels and a playing hall which requires back and forth transportation – requires volunteers.

The organizers managed to gather around 100-200 young happy volunteers. The “Angels in Yellow” were everywhere, eager and enthusiastic.

They were greeting you at the airport, fixing your transportation from airport and back.

They were greeting you in your hotel making sure all is fine with hotel and transportation to playing hall and other functions.

They were greeting you at the playing venue

And from our point of view helping us set the playing hall.

You need all clocks to be set – just ask.

You need the names and teams to be put on the display panels and then taken off to prepare for next round – volunteers are already on it - I don't even need to finish the sentence.

## The tournaments

In the spacious hall at the **Halyk Arena**, the two championships took place. The under 12 World School Team Championship and the under 18 World School Team Championship. Total of 70 teams from 52 federations were participating.

### U-12 category

27 teams from 22 federations had participated at the U-12 category.

From the beginning it was clear that the 2<sup>nd</sup> ranked team **Velammal MHS Mogappair** from India - means business.

They placed their top player **A. Aarev** on board 4 and the 2 girls **Pooja** and **Shanmathi** on the first 2 boards.

The formation worked for them well, India winning all their team matches, and winning the championship 4 full points ahead of 2<sup>nd</sup> place.

**A. Aarev** scored 8 out of 8, and was the corner stone of his team's success and got a gold medal for best result on board 4. Board 5 **Ragavan Tanish** scored 7.5 out of 8 and received gold medal for board 5.

The Ukrainian team from the **Lviv Academic Gymnasium** were ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> and finished second with 12 points. They lost only to India. Board 2 **Stanislav Pentsko** scored 7.5/8 and received gold medal on his board.

The host nation Kazakhstan had 5 teams, 4 of which shared 3<sup>rd</sup> place with 10 points. Tie-break placed **National Physics & Mathematic School** and the bronze medal winners.



### U-18 category

43 teams from 39 federations had participated. The dream team from **Istanbul ENKA High School** took the gold. They were significantly stronger than the other teams and won all 8 matches.

Their average rating of 2193 was more than 200 points higher than the one of the second ranked team.

They came with only 4 players and looks it's all they needed. Their first 3 boards, **Isik Can** (2374), **Hasan Celik** (2223) and **Adar Tarhan** (2350) scored 22/24 allowing only 4 draws. **Adar Tarhan** with 8/8 recieved gold medal for board 3.

Silver team medal went to the **Republican School of Physics and Mathematics** from the host nation. They were ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> (1975) and had all of their 5 players play in rotation.

Bronze medal went to **Velammal Vidyalaya Alapakkam** from Chennai India. They also scored 12 points but were third

on tie-break. They're lowest rated player was put on board 1 allowing the rest a probably easier life in scoring many points.

2022 Olympiad winners Uzbekistan have been proving that the central Asian country is a chess powerhouse to be reckoned with. The team from **School 5 Xatirchi** who were only ranked number 26, surprised in clinching 4<sup>th</sup> place !

What is even more impressive is that there were 3 girls in the team. **Dilnura Rabbimova**, **Zilola Aktamova** and **Shakhirzoda Bashritdinova**, helped their team bounce back after a first round loss, winning 5 matches with **Zilola Aktamova** clinching silver medal on board 3.

## Cases

Every tournament has its cases which require arbiter's intervention. If all would have been going smooth they would not have needed us and we would have to get a real job.

### 1. He didn't press the clock – I demand a win

At my U-12 section there were 27 teams. Remember that they are schools, not national teams. Players are young and in addition most of them were unrated or low rated. That requires a much softer approach and more tolerance. We were expecting heightened emotions and drama. You know to expect that in this age and level of players.

In one of the lower matches one player was clearly winning. His material advantage was huge. Another fact I believe most of you know, players play all the way until there is checkmate on the board, there is no concept of resignation. I had a feeling they don't even know what resignation is.

The losing player claims his opponent played a move without pressing the clock and demands a win.

Now with young children I would rather deal with the captain and have him relay the instructions to his player/s.

I remember with a smile arbitering at the individual world schools a couple of years ago. Category was girls under 7. 2 girls from the same federation were playing one next to each other. I don't think they were older than 6, maybe 5. They were apparently good friends and used to being together. Every time I would pass near their table I noticed they were sitting more and more closer together. At one point I saw they were actually sharing one chair. It was so sweet, so cute. Two tiny girls huddling together.

I contacted their captain/supervisor and explained to him the situation. He quickly explained to them in their language to act like true politicians and stick to their respective chairs. I had no further issues with them for the duration of the event.

Here I did the same, informing the captain the claim was of course rejected and to continue the game. The player did not take it too kindly and started sobbing. Captain was embarrassed and tried to comfort the player. It didn't help much, player was sobbing louder while banging pieces and banging the clock. I told captain to make it stop. Captain was unable but the game ended in mate shortly after.

The losing player still sobbing ran away. I told captain to chase him and retrieve the green card for us.



I've explained to the match arbiter that I had exercised judgement. "We as arbiters have great power. Because of it we exercise restraint and reserve sanctions only for extreme cases. There was no need for any penalty in that case, we need to do our utmost for the games to flow."

## **2. Player left playing area and while it was her turn**

I was approached by a captain of one of the teams complaining one of the opponent's players had left the playing area during her turn and it's against regulations.

Now the setting of the playing hall was that there was a main hall and a sign over the door saying "Exit" but it led to the toilets.

I informed the captain the player did not leave the playing area (I confirmed that with the FP team) and regarding leaving while it was her turn - that is not conclusive because she might have left while it was not her turn. Anyhow I've issued the player a warning (via the captain who promised he will make sure that does not happen again).

The complaining captain was not satisfied, claiming again it was against regulations. I answered again – "Ok I issued a warning". Captain again was not content and requested to speak with CA. I said "Sure no problem".

Marco came and told captain the same thing.

The team of the complaining captain had a chance for a medal if they were to win the match. The suspecting offending player was a little girl.

It is upsetting to see to what length people are willing to go in an attempt to maybe eke a win on a technicality.

But Karma is a **bch**, little girl won the game, her team won the match and complaining captain's team's hopes for a medal were extinguished.

## **3. Can captains agree to a draw when their players are absent?**

Tournaments are fresh fields which can provide ideas for arbiters exams questions and introspection about laws of chess.

Like a crime reporter going to court to get stories, an arbiter would get a handful of cases in tournaments.

**41<sup>st</sup> school** was a team representing **Turkmenistan**. They didn't have to travel from far but due to reasons beyond their control they had only 3 players. That meant they would default board 4 every round.

In spite starting each match with -1, they actually fared not bad at all. Like a boxer fighting with one hand behind his back they won 4 matches, drew 2 and lost 2. They shared places 8-12 out of 27 teams. One could only imagine if maybe a 4<sup>th</sup> player could have propelled them to a medal.

Anyhow round 4 they played a team from the Maldives. Board 4 from the Maldives was sick and didn't come.

I had one of our little arbiters meetings and asked the group 2 questions:

1. What is the result on board 4?
2. Can captains agree on a draw on board 4?

I remember that in the old days you would start white's clock. Nowadays we have article 6.7.1

**"The regulations of an event shall specify a default time in advance. If the default time is not specified, then it is zero. Any player who arrives at the chessboard after the default time shall lose the game unless the arbiter decides otherwise."**

Here we had a 10 minute tolerance so following that time both players lost by default.

So regarding question 1 - since none of the players were present 10 minutes from start of the game – they both lose by default.

Now the second question.

**Article 5.2.3 states as follows;**

**"The game is drawn upon agreement between the two players during the game, provided both players have made at least one move. This immediately ends the game."**

If I understand the rational of the article correctly it effectively forces both players to be present in order for a draw to be valid. Even if captains can agree to a draw on behalf of players, they can't play on behalf of their players.

So the answer to question 2 is **no**.

## **4. Better late then never**

The schedule of the event was that 2 rounds were played each day with time control of 45-10.

First round at 15:00 and second at 18:00.

In that time control it meant that almost all games were to be concluded within 2 hours. That meant there was around 1 hour break between the rounds. In that one hour we had to remove names of teams from the displaying board and set them new lineups back again. Kind of a tight schedule but with all games practically ending within 2 hours and help of our dedicated volunteers, we were ok.

At the beginning of one of the 15:00 rounds we had a problem. One of the teams was missing. We are talking about the entire team. Frantic phone calls were made and it was discovered that it was due to a mistake by the team's captain.

It took about half an hour to fix the matter and drive players to the playing hall.

Their opponents from Cyprus graciously and in sportsmanship agreed first to wait and waive the default win they were entitled to after 10 minutes. After the late team had arrived Cyprus team also agreed to reset the clocks so opponents would have their full time back.

All kudos to the Cyprus team but we, the officials had to be the bad guys.

Allowing one match to start half an hour after all other matches, when we have as mentioned only a 1 hour gap, would have had a potential do gravely disrupt the schedule of the event. If it would have been the later starting round maybe we could have be more lenient, but here we could not allow the clocks to be reset.

## **5. Case 75**

In normal situations every player tries to win his game. However, there are games where it seems players, during some phases of game, are just moving pieces aimlessly without any apparent plan.

In the old days an arbiter could stop a game and declare a draw if he was convinced none of the players are trying to win.

Nowadays this option does not exist and the remedy for an arbiter not to stay in the hall all night are articles 9.6 and 9.6.2:

**9.6 “If one or both of the following occur(s) then the game is drawn:”**

**9.6.2 “any series of at least 75 moves have been made by each player without the movement of any pawn and without any capture. If the last move resulted in checkmate, that shall take precedence.”**

I was summoned by one of my arbiters to a game where players seemed to be playing aimlessly back and forth. They were blitzing their moves seeming intent in outblitzing each other. Just moving pieces back and forth, not capturing anything. So I took out my counter and started to count the moves.

I didn't know how many moves were made from the last capture/pawn move. I was thinking of sending the arbiter to the computer but then Black blundered a pawn. I thought to myself “Ok White would capture the pawn soon and the game would soon be over.”

However, White was so concentrated in outblitzing his opponent that he didn't notice he could capture Black's pawn. They kept playing back and forth. According to my counting they have reached move 60 (without capture/pawn move) when White suddenly noticed he could capture the h pawn which he did move 121. Black started sobbing while the now elated and rejuvenated White player pushes his h pawn to glory. Shortly after, White queened and Black resigned on move 132.

I immediately instructed the players not to leave the table, instructed the arbiter not to write any result and informed the captains I'm to check the computer.

The reason I did so was the case which occurred during the **World Rapid Championship** not too far from here in Almaty, just 8 months earlier in December 2022.

### **The Almaty case...**

Round 6 saw **Mustafokhuya Khusenkhojaev** (2161) from Tajikistan play against Iranian GM **Eshan Ghaem Maghami** (2549).

The young Tajik player gave his much superior opponent a run for his money. From **move 77** he was defending a *Rook vs. Rook + Bishop* endgame. This is one of the common endgames which lasts forever. This is not an easy endgame to win. Black just needs to hold on for 50 moves and try not to get mated in the process.

The young Tajik player managed to defend and reaches move 127 in one piece (literally speaking). From now he only needed to pause the clock and claim a draw based on the 50 move rule. Articles 9.3 and 9.3.2

**9.3 The game is drawn, upon a correct claim by a player having the move, if:**



### **9.3.2 the last 50 moves by each player have been completed without the movement of any pawn and without any capture**

According to the rules only the player can claim a draw based on the 50 move rule. **Arbiters can not intervene** until move 75.

The game continued but Khusenkhojaev does not claim a draw. Maybe he was unsure about the number of moves made.

On move 150, Khusenkhojaev pauses the clock. Everyone thinks – Halleluia finally a draw.

#### **BUT NO**

True, he claims a draw, but based on a **3-fold repetition !** not based on the 50 move rule.

Claim is rejected. The position he claimed did not repeat itself 3 times.

Khusenkhojaev seemed to be asking in Russian how many moves were made but he doesn't make any claim. It is only 73 moves from last capture so arbiters still can't intervene.

Game is resumed and a few moves later on move 153 (76 moves from last capture) Khusenkhojaev faces inevitable mate and loses on time. The match arbiter records a win for the Iranian GM and submits the result to the pairings officer.

However, **DCA Ana Srebrnic** and **CA Amir Hashemi** stepped in and after verifying that more than 75 moves were made after White's last capture on move 77, applied article 9.6.2 (the 75 move rule) and changed the result to a draw, even though Black had already lost on time.

In the clash between articles 9.6.2 (75 move) and 6.9 (losing on time) the 75 move rule prevailed.

### **6.9 Except where one of Articles 5.1.1, 5.1.2, 5.2.1, 5.2.2, 5.2.3 applies, if a player does not complete the prescribed number of moves in the allotted time, the game is lost by that player...**

I remember that I was surprised by that decision but delving more into the facts of the case, I realized there is a compelling argument to support the decision of my distinguished colleagues - the 75 rule draw simply happened first, **before** Khusenkhojaev lost on time.

In other words, once move 75 was completed in accordance with article 9.6.2 – the game is a draw regardless of what happens after that point. Both articles describe a result **which automatically happens following a situation**, so since the game was still being played following the completion of move 152, it's a draw at that point. A fact unaffected with Black's loss on time later on move 153.

This case and its repercussions were vivid in my memory. Thanks to my distinguished colleagues Ana and Amir I had my work cut out for me and knew exactly what to do.

#### ***Back to Western Kazakhstan and our game...***

The computer confirmed not the 75 move (it was only 69) but a 5-fold repetition. Same as in Almaty we ruled the game to be a draw even though Black had resigned.

Those 3-fold/5-fold move repetitions can be tricky to call so I generally do not recommend arbiters to do it based on their eyes alone. Positions may look the same but similar is not enough, they have to be identical. At the 2022 Chennai

Olympiad, an arbiter accepted a 3-fold repetition claim by a player only to be proven by the computer later that the claim was not correct. There were many 2-fold repetitions but never a full 3-fold one.

“Don’t trust your eyes here” I told my arbiters “Let the computer make the call. If you are wrong it’s your fault and the whole world will know about your mistake. Just pause the clock and have us check with the computer. Better it be the computer’s fault.”

## Closing Ceremony

Closing ceremony was happy and impressive. The show, the band, the speeches the medals the trophies all in fun and relaxed manner. I did not expect the fireworks display at the end.

I was happy the volunteers were honored, they were more then deserving. Maybe arbiters could have been invited to the stage too. Something to think about.

I was honored to be called on stage, together with GM and Appeals Committee chairperson **Mr. Darmen Sadvakasov** to award the U-12 category individual boards medals. Felt in my right position – look beautiful and keep my mouth shut.



Mr. **Timor Turlov** – President of the Kazakhstan Chess Federation





After the tournament was concluded, closing ceremony finished and trophies and medals awarded - we could allow ourselves to relax a little.

Arbiter **Umesh KC** from Nepal (L) is having a ball.

If there is any Bollywood agent reading this – You might have found here your new ***Shah Rukh Khan***.



## Conclusion

As a whole it was a fantastic event. I was impressed with organizers eye for detail having so many activities for the kids.

Playing hall conditions were very good and spacious. I was happy with the great accommodation conditions given to arbiters.

Volunteers did a great job. **Assem** seemed to be everywhere all hours of the day. All volunteers did a great job but may I also mention top 3 volunteers for me: **Airbalat**, **Ayajan** and **Aileena**, who were always ready to help.

Thanks to organizers **Gulmira Dauletova**, **Anvar Shaikhyamov**, **Dana Shaimardinova** and all that took part promoting the success of this great event.

Good work KAZChess. There was lots of heart and soul in the planning. I'm optimistic about future role of Kazakhstan in international chess events in the future.

