



FIDE WORLD SENIOR TEAMS CHESS CHAMPIONSHIPS 2023

Struga – North Macedonia

September, 18-29th 2023.



CHIEF ARBITER IMPRESSIONS

IA Sasa Jevtic

In this article, I would like to share my experience as the Chief Arbiter at the **FIDE World Senior Teams Chess Championships 2023**, which were organized in **Struga, North Macedonia** from September 18th to 29th. This marked my first appointment as Chief Arbiter at a world championship, a great honor, and a significant responsibility.

Fortunately, the location of the event made it relatively easy for me to travel, as I reside in Paracin, Serbia, which is approximately 460 km away. I opted for a car journey whenever feasible for chess tournaments, finding it more convenient, albeit sometimes slower, than air travel.

The playing venue for this event was the Convention Centre of the Hotel Izgrev, a location well-known within the chess community due to its previous use for the European Club Cup in 2021.

Nestled within a stunning pine forest along the shores of Ohrid Lake, exquisite Hotel Izgrev is located. This luxurious hotel sprawls across an impressive 90,000 square meters, featuring a private beach spanning 500 meters. Moreover, its prime location offers



the convenience of being in close proximity to two vibrant cities, a mere 5 kilometers from Struga and 20 kilometers from Ohrid. Well-connected by quality roads, it is also a mere 15 kilometers from Ohrid airport. In this idyllic setting, Hotel Izgrev SPA and Aqua Park Resort provides a comprehensive array of amenities and services befitting a resort of its caliber.

I arrived at Hotel Izgrev on September 16th in the afternoon and was prepared to commence my duties on the 17th. The majority of the playing hall preparations had been efficiently handled by a dedicated team, including **Marjan Mitkov**, the Secretary of the Macedonian Chess Federation and a member of the Appeals Committee, **Nebojsa Baralic**, another member of the Appeals Committee, **Zoran Stojcevski** who served as the tournament director and myself.

A few arbiters joined us in the evening hours of September 17th, while the majority of them arrived on the official arrival day, which was September 18th.

I don't intend to express dissatisfaction with the workload shouldered by a limited number of individuals. However, I do believe that the organizer should have allocated more resources and personnel to assist in the preparation of the playing venue, starting as early as the morning of September 17th.

APPOINTMENTS

FIDE President, Arkady Dvorkovich approved FIDE Official appointments for FIDE World Senior Teams Chess Championships 2023 as follows:

Chief Arbiter: **IA-B Jevtic Sasa (SRB)**

Deputy Chief Arbiter: **IA-C Shemshiji Agim (MKD)**

Deputy Chief Arbiter: **IA-C Shakari Saeed Yousuf (UAE)**

Chairman of Appeals Committee: **IO,IA Solakoglu Ozgur (TUR)**

Members of Appeals Committee: **IO,IA Baralic Nebojsa (SRB)** and **IM Mitkov Marjan (MKD)**

Tournament Director: **IO Stojcevski Zoran (MKD)**

Besides approved principals, there are have been 1 Pairing Arbiter and 12 match arbiters as follows:

IA-B Kocovski Ivan (MKD) – Pairing Arbiter

IA-C Vujacic Igor (MNE)

IA-C Lakinski Sasko (MKD)

IA-C Yordanova Svetla (BUL)

FA-D Djukic Sandra (SRB)

FA-D Nikolovska Dragana (MKD)

FA-D Krifa Najla (TUN)

FA-D Borges Guilherme Deola (BRA)

FA-D Ilic Zoran (MKD)

FA-D Organdziev Oliver (MKD)

FA-D Pireva Fadil (KOS)

NA Lushevski Boris (MKD) and

NA Simjanovski Saso (MKD)



The FIDE Fair Play Commission has designated two Fair Play Officers, **Karali Tania (GRE)** and **Kontokanis Andreas (GRE)**, who received valuable support from **Driza Arta (ALB)**, **Minovski Gjorgji (MKD)**, and **Merdjanoski Voislav (MKD)**.

OPENING CEREMONY

The opening ceremony was organized on the summer terrace of the Hotel Izgrev on Monday, September 18th, at 20:00. After the playing of the FIDE and North Macedonian anthems, players, guests, and officials were welcomed by the President of the Chess Federation of North Macedonia, **Sasha Bogdanovikj**, the Honorary Chairman of the FIDE Event Commission, **Ozgur Solakoglu**, and the deputy director of the Agency for Youth and Sport in North Macedonia, **Isak Lizami**.

During the opening ceremony, guests enjoyed a cocktail party followed by a musical performance by one of the country's top music artists, Andrijana Janevska. She sang some well-known international hits and some Macedonian traditional songs.



ARBITERS MEETING

The Arbiters' meeting took place in the playing hall on Monday, September 18th, at 21:30, following the Opening Ceremony. I had the privilege of chairing the Arbiters meeting, in the presence of both Deputy Chief Arbiters, the Pairing Officer, and the Fair Play Officers, as well as almost all Match Arbiters. Only one Match Arbiter was absent, due to visa collection in Istanbul and a very tight flight schedule.



The Chief Arbiter explained the general duties of the arbiters in accordance with the Laws of Chess and their specific responsibilities for this competition, both before the start of the rounds, during the rounds, and after the conclusion of all the games. A dedicated Viber group was established for the Arbiters and Fair Play



Officers to facilitate communication and information sharing. All Arbiters and Fair Play Officers were members of the group and actively participated in its use.

TECHNICAL MEETING

The Technical Meeting took place in the playing hall on Tuesday, September 19th, at 11:00. This meeting was also led by myself in the presence of one Deputy Chief Arbiter, the Pairing Officer, Tournament Director, Fair Play Officers, and the Chairman of the Appeals Committee. The vast majority of team captains attended the meeting.

In addition to myself, the Tournament Director and the Chairman of the Appeals Committee addressed the captains and extended greetings on behalf of the Organizing Committee and FIDE.



I have explained all the important elements of the Regulations, with a particular focus on tournament regulations, team composition regulations, captains' duties and privileges, and appeals procedures. The Fair Play Officers provided an explanation of all matters related to anti-cheating measures. During the Technical Meeting, a reserve member of the Appeals Committee was chosen, namely Kradolfer Georg (SUI).

At the conclusion of the Technical Meeting, all teams officially submitted and signed their team compositions and line-ups for the first round.

I realized that it might have been more effective if I had arranged for a projector and screen, along with a prepared presentation, to aid the captains in comprehending and following all the instructions and explanations.

PLAYING VENUE

The playing venue consisted of a large playing hall, a front corridor, toilets, a storage room, a random anti-cheating control room, and a smoking area. The playing hall was spacious and equipped with a ventilation system. Additional lighting was implemented to meet the required standards. A total of 60 boards (15 matches) were broadcasted live.



Two large panels displaying the Championship title and the logos of the organizers and sponsors tastefully decorated the playing hall and the area in front of the main entrance. Additionally, two FIDE flags and North Macedonia flags were prominently placed in central locations, while the flags of all participating federations were printed and displayed on two roll-up banners at the main stage.



Adequate space was provided between the matches, and all team captains were supplied with chairs. Match arbiters were also provided with their own desks for comfortable work.

Toilets were conveniently located close to the playing hall, featured sufficient cabins, and were easily monitored and controlled by the Fair Play team.

COMPETITION FLOW

According to the regulations, there were two sections, S50+ and S65+. Due to the insufficient number of women's teams, they competed alongside men in the open section.

I have appointed Deputy Chief Arbiters to oversee the monitoring of arbiters and the overall competition flow as follows: DCA IA **Shemshiji Agim (MKD)** for the S50+ section and DCA IA **Shakari Saeed Yousuf (UAE)** for the S65+ section.

In the S50+ section, 22 teams participated, including three women's teams, with a total of 102 registered players. Among them were 26 GMs, 10 IMs, 3 WGMs, and 4 WIMs.

In the S65+ section, 26 teams participated, including two women's teams, with a total of 120 registered players. Among them were 21 GMs, 16 IMs, and 2 WIMs.



Before each round, the Chief Arbiter provided players with reminders and important information. Additionally, there were ceremonial first moves made by political figures from the



North Macedonian community and FIDE representatives during the championships. The competition

generally adhered to the schedule, with each round starting precisely at 15:00, except for one round when an unexpected lengthy speech by one of the invited political figures caused a delay of 3-4 minutes. The Pairing Arbiter performed admirably, receiving assistance from one of the Match Arbiters when making changes to team compositions in the morning. His experience and cooperation skills helped prevent any potential issues. Team pairings were promptly published online and displayed at the tournament venue shortly after the previous round concluded. Individual pairings were also available after the deadline for submitting changes to team compositions had passed.



Since there were 24 matches and 12 Match Arbiters, each was responsible for overseeing two matches. Occasionally, Match Arbiters had to switch positions to avoid conflicts of interest when their federation's team was playing. The Match Arbiters conducted themselves professionally, arriving at the playing hall on time and assisting their colleagues when having small breaks during the rounds or after their matches concluded.



The default time was 15 minutes, and there were no issues with late arrivals. Only a few games were not played, mainly due to player illnesses when substitute players were not available.

The Fair Play Officers sought assistance from the Arbiter's team on various matters, including randomly selecting players for anti-cheating checks.

The official doctor of the championships, **Milot Rizvani**, had a significant workload due to the senior participants' susceptibility to various types of infections or ailments. Fortunately, no serious issues arose, although his constant presence remained essential.

INCIDENTS - CASES

Israel team - Yom Kippur

In round 6, the Israel team made a special request to start the round at 11 am for religious reasons based on the Yom Kippur holiday. The Kosovo team agreed to this request, and the round commenced earlier.

Not recording the moves in accordance to Article 8 of FIDE Laws of Chess

Senior championships, particularly within the S65+ category, require special attention from arbiters due to their unique nature.

Due to their age, instances have occurred where participants may inadvertently forget to record their moves or begin recording them in advance which is not in accordance to Article 8 of FIDE Laws of Chess. Typically, in such situations, a player would receive a warning, with the most severe penalty being the addition of 2 minutes to the opponent's clock for repeated misconduct.

Incomplete team to start the match

A rather interesting situation occurred during Round 8 of the S65+ section. In the match between Finland Turku and Sweden Skane, the Swedish team had only two players present when I announced the start of the round.

According to Article 7.2 of the FIDE General Regulations for Competitions, it states:

"In L1 tournaments, at the start of any round a participating team has to be present with more than 50% players. If 50% or less of the players are present at the start of any round the players present are not allowed to start their games. For other levels this is not obligatory, but recommended."

Furthermore, Article 1.2 of the FIDE General Regulations for Competitions defines L1 tournaments as all official FIDE events.

The Match Arbiter initially considered that having 50% of the team members (two present players) was sufficient and started the match. However, upon noticing this situation a few minutes later, I halted the match and clarified the reasons for my decision to both teams. The team captain of Sweden Skane explained that they did not have substitute players and that two of their team members were feeling unwell. I informed them that they needed a minimum of three players to continue the match. With the assistance of a Fair Play team member, the team captain of Sweden Skane left the playing venue to

retrieve one of the two remaining players. Fortunately, the third player arrived before the default time, and the match resumed.

During the match, team captain of Finland Turku protested and wanted to lodge the appeal because the player (and team captain) of Sweden Skane team abandoned the playing venue.

I explained to him the relevant section of Article 11 of the FIDE Laws of Chess, which indicates that players may leave the playing venue only with the permission of the arbiter.

Although not entirely satisfied with my explanation, the team captain of Finland Turku finally decided not to lodge an appeal.

Dealing with the visually impaired team

In the S50+ section, the "North Macedonia Blind" team took part, and we arranged for them to have a fixed board number in a more private area of the playing hall. Three out of four team members on their side were not able to play their games on regular chessboards like the other players and utilized their specialized equipment instead.

Many of their opponents were unfamiliar with the specific rules and protocols for playing against visually impaired players and using their specialized chess equipment. Consequently, before each match, we provided a brief introduction to explain how the match would be conducted. Fortunately, there were no significant issues, and the matches proceeded smoothly.



In general, with the exception of a few minor cases that required the Chief Arbiter's involvement, there were no major issues and incidents during the event. As a result, there were no appeals made, and consequently, the Appeals Committee did not need to make any decisions. This indicates that the tournament proceeded smoothly with minimal disruptions or disputes, which is a positive outcome for all participants.

SIDE EVENTS

The rest day was on Monday, September 25th. On that day, two side events were organized.

In the morning, there was a boat ride to the famous St. Naum, where approximately 50 participants had the chance to enjoy all the beauties of Lake Ohrid, the St. Naum monastery, and nearby restaurants.



In the evening, a blitz tournament was organized. Twenty-seven players participated, and the winner was the top-seeded player, GM Arkell, Keith C (ENG). After the Blitz tournament, Aleksandra Gakidova, a member of the Organizing Committee, delivered symbolic prizes. The arbiters' team for the Blitz tournament consisted of IA Jevtic Sasa, IA Shemshiji Agim, and IA Vujacic Igor.



RESULTS

As it was mentioned earlier, this event was played in two categories: S50+ and S65+. 9 rounds were played with the standard time control of 90 minutes for 40 moves, plus 30 minutes to the end of the game and 30 seconds increment starting with move one.

There have been no any norm for international titles achieved.

Final Ranking after 9 Rounds - S50+

Rk.	SNo	Team	Games	+	=	-	TB1	TB2	TB3
1	1	USA	9	7	1	1	15	26	0
2	2	England 1	9	6	2	1	14	24,5	0
3	5	Iceland	9	6	2	1	14	24	0
4	3	Italy	9	6	2	1	14	23,5	0
5	4	N. Macedonia Alkaloid	9	5	2	2	12	22	0
6	12	Canada	9	4	2	3	10	21	0
7	6	Montenegro	9	4	2	3	10	19	0
8	8	England 2	9	4	1	4	9	19,5	0

9	7	Poland	9	4	1	4	9	19,5	0
10	9	Slovakia	9	4	1	4	9	19	0
11	18	Uruguay	9	4	1	4	9	18,5	0
12	17	Wales Silures	9	4	1	4	9	18	0
13	14	England W50	9	3	3	3	9	17,5	0
14	10	China ShenZhen W50	9	4	1	4	9	17	0
15	16	Sweden	9	2	4	3	8	17	0
16	11	Austria	9	2	3	4	7	16,5	2
17	15	USA 5 Brothers	9	2	3	4	7	16,5	0
18	13	England 3	9	3	1	5	7	13,5	0
19	20	N. Macedonia Blind	9	1	4	4	6	11,5	0
20	21	Finland	9	1	3	5	5	13,5	0
21	19	Scotland	9	1	3	5	5	12	0
22	22	N.Macedonia W50	9	0	1	8	1	6,5	0

Individual Board prizes - \$50+

Board 1

Rk.		Name	Rtg	FED	Team	TB1	TB2	TB3	TB4	TB5
1	GM	Adams, Michael	2662	ENG	England 1	2761	0	9	88,9	2
2	GM	David, Alberto	2523	ITA	Italy	2524	0	8	62,5	4
3	GM	Shabalov, Alexander	2465	USA	USA	2472	0	7	57,1	1

Board 2

Rk.		Name	Rtg	FED	Team	TB1	TB2	TB3	TB4	TB5
1	GM	Kaidanov, Gregory	2549	USA	USA	2590	0	8	81,3	1
2	GM	Nedev, Trajko	2465	MKD	N. Macedonia Alkaloid	2550	0	7	78,6	5
3	GM	Godena, Michele	2429	ITA	Italy	2547	0	8	75	4

Board 3

Rk.		Name	Rtg	FED	Team	TB1	TB2	TB3	TB4	TB5
1	GM	Ehlvest, Jaan	2530	USA	USA	2482	0	7	71,4	1
2	GM	Petursson, Margeir	2396	ISL	Iceland	2481	0	7	64,3	3
3	GM	Flear, Glenn C	2405	ENG	England 1	2410	0	7	64,3	2

Board 4

Rk.		Name	Rtg	FED	Team	TB1	TB2	TB3	TB4	TB5
1	GM	Novikov, Igor	2513	USA	USA	2455	0	8	75	1
2	IM	Miljanic, Boro	2331	MNE	Montenegro	2447	0	9	72,2	7
3	GM	Arnason, Jon L	2419	ISL	Iceland	2425	0	8	68,8	3

Board 5

Rk.		Name	Rtg	FED	Team	TB1	TB2	TB3	TB4	TB5
1	GM	Thorhallsson, Throstur	2382	ISL	Iceland	2451	0	8	75	3
2	GM	Yermolinsky, Alex	2419	USA	USA	2429	0	6	75	1
3	GM	Davies, Nigel R	2354	ENG	England 1	2338	0	6	66,7	2

Final Ranking after 9 Rounds - \$65+

Rk.	SNo	Team	Games	+	=	-	TB1	TB2	TB3
1	1	Germany Lasker Schachstiftung GK	9	8	1	0	17	25,5	0
2	2	England 1	9	8	0	1	16	26	0
3	3	Slovakia	9	6	1	2	13	21	0
4	5	Italy	9	5	1	3	11	21,5	0
5	7	Germany	9	4	3	2	11	20,5	0
6	6	France	9	5	1	3	11	20	0
7	4	Israel	9	5	1	3	11	19,5	0
8	10	Belgium	9	5	0	4	10	19	0
9	11	Netherlands Orange	9	3	4	2	10	19	0

10	12	Switzerland SG RIEHEN	9	4	2	3	10	16	0
11	8	Finland 1	9	4	1	4	9	20	0
12	18	N.Macedonia	9	4	1	4	9	18,5	0
13	20	England 2	9	4	1	4	9	15,5	0
14	15	Austria 1	9	3	2	4	8	19	0
15	9	Kosovo	9	4	0	5	8	17,5	2
16	14	Switzerland	9	3	2	4	8	17,5	0
17	13	Austria Steiermark	9	4	0	5	8	17	0
18	22	Latvia W65	9	3	2	4	8	16	0
19	16	Germany W65	9	3	2	4	8	13,5	0
20	17	Austria 2	9	3	1	5	7	17,5	0
21	19	Wales Silures	9	3	1	5	7	15,5	0
22	26	Finland 2	9	3	1	5	7	14,5	0
23	23	Finland Turku	9	2	2	5	6	15,5	0
24	21	Sweden	9	1	3	5	5	15	0
25	24	Ireland	9	1	3	5	5	14	0
26	25	Sweden Skane	9	0	2	7	2	13,5	0

Individual Board prizes - \$65+

Board 1

Rk.		Name	Rtg	FED	Team	TB1	TB2	TB3	TB4	TB5
1	GM	Knaak, Rainer	2438	GER	Germany Lasker Schachstiftung GK	2546	0	9	77,8	1
2	GM	Gruenfeld, Yehuda	2388	ISR	Israel	2476	0	8	68,8	7
3	GM	Nunn, John D M	2569	ENG	England 1	2452	0	8	68,8	2

Board 2

Rk.		Name	Rtg	FED	Team	TB1	TB2	TB3	TB4	TB5
1	GM	Kosten, Anthony C.	2352	ENG	England 1	2493	0	8	81,3	2
2	GM	Meister, Jakob	2439	GER	Germany Lasker Schachstiftung GK	2332	0	9	61,1	1
3	IM	Birnboim, Nathan	2346	ISR	Israel	2302	0	8	56,3	7

Board 3

Rk.		Name	Rtg	FED	Team	TB1	TB2	TB3	TB4	TB5
1	GM	Kalinitshew, Sergey	2377	GER	Germany Lasker Schachstiftung GK	2525	0	9	88,9	1
2	FM	Chapman, Terry P D	2248	ENG	England 1	2409	0	8	81,3	2
3	IM	Lanc, Alois	2263	SVK	Slovakia	2234	0	9	61,1	3

Board 4

Rk.		Name	Rtg	FED	Team	TB1	TB2	TB3	TB4	TB5
1	IM	Petran, Peter	2195	SVK	Slovakia	2217	0	9	66,7	3
2	IM	Giffard, Nicolas	2155	FRA	France	2210	0	9	66,7	6
3		Kivimaki, Jaakko	2172	FIN	Finland 1	2179	0	9	66,7	11

Board 5

Rk.		Name	Rtg	FED	Team	TB1	TB2	TB3	TB4	TB5
1		Kollari, Sabahudin	2118	KOS	Kosovo	2267	0	5	80	15
2	IM	Povah, Nigel E	2229	ENG	England 1	2255	0	6	75	2
3		Kierzek, Matthias Dr.	2165	GER	Germany	2174	0	7	64,3	5

CLOSING CEREMONY



The Closing Ceremony was held in the playing hall on September 28th at 21:30.

After completing the final round, the diligent organizers quickly prepared the playing hall for the start of the Closing Ceremony.

At the beginning of the Closing Ceremony, the FIDE anthem and the North Macedonian anthem were played and respected by all the present teams and participants.

Speeches were delivered by **Zoran Stojcevski**, Tournament Director, **Sasha Bogdanovikj**, President of the Chess Federation of Macedonia and **Lukasz Turlej**, FIDE Secretary General. The special moment of the evening was a video message and speech sent by **Arkady Dvorkovich**, FIDE President.



After the speeches, the host of the Ceremony, Ana Stojanovska invited the Chief Arbiter, IA **Sasa Jevtic** to the stage to announce the winners. First, the medals were given for the best individual results for each board in both categories (S50+ and S65+).

The honor to award the medal was given to:

Gjorgji Minovski, President of the Skopje Chess Association opje (Board 5)

Voislav Merdjanoski, Member of Executive Board of the Chess Federation of Macedonia (Board 4)

Saeed Yousuf Sahakari, Deputy Chief Arbiter (Board 3)

Ivan Kocovski, Pairing Arbiter (Board 2) and

Nebojsa Baralic, Secretary of the FIDE Arbiters Commission (Board 1)

While all the winners of individual board medals deserved recognition, I took a moment to highlight the exceptional achievement of GM Michael Adams (ENG). He achieved an extraordinary rating performance of 2761 and secured an impressive 8 points out of 9 games, making him the standout individual performer in the entire competition.

Following the conclusion of the individual awards, the eagerly awaited team award ceremony took center stage. The top three teams in each category proudly received their well-deserved medals, and the ultimate champions had the honor of raising a magnificent and well-designed trophy. In a touching display of unity and respect, all present participants and officials paid tribute to the team winners by listening to and honoring their national anthems.

These medals and trophies were given out by:

Ozgur Solakoglu, Honorary Chairman of FIDE Events Commission (Women S65+)

Sasha Bogdanovikj, President of the Chess Federation of Macedonia (OPEN S65+)

Zoran Stojcevski, Tournament Director (Women S50+) and

Lukasz Turlej, FIDE Secretary General (OPEN S50+)



Photo gallery of the best teams



Germany W65 2nd place



Latvia W65 1st place



Slovakia 3rd place (S65+)



England 1 2nd place (S65+)



Germany Lasker 1st place (S65+)



N.Macedonia W50 3rd place



China ShenZhen W50 2nd place



England W50 1st place



Iceland 3rd place (S50+)



England 1 2nd place (S50+)



USA 1st place (S50+)

CONCLUSIONS

The FIDE World Senior Teams Chess Championships 2023 was a very successful event.

While it's worth noting that there could have been a higher participation rate, particularly from neighboring and nearby countries such as Greece, Albania, Serbia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Slovenia, Hungary, and others, the turnout of 48 teams can still be considered quite satisfactory. The event showcased the enduring popularity and competitive spirit of senior chess players from around the world.

I'd like to emphasize a few key elements that truly stood out in this year's FIDE World Senior Teams Chess Championships:

-Outstanding Communication and Collaboration: The event saw exceptional communication, cooperation, and mutual respect not only among the members of the Arbiters team but also with the Fair Play Officers. This collaborative spirit contributed to the smooth competition of the tournament.

-Flawless Competition: It's worth noting that the competition ran seamlessly without any major issues or complaints being brought to the Appeals Committee.

-Top-Notch Playing Conditions: Participants enjoyed excellent playing conditions in a spacious, well-lit, and air-conditioned playing hall. Such comfortable surroundings undoubtedly added to the overall positive experience for players and officials.

These elements combined to make the FIDE World Senior Teams Chess Championships 2023 a truly remarkable and memorable event.

Photo credit: **Mark Livshitz**, Official Photographer of WSTCC 2023