

USSA Chess Tournament 2017

Report ~ Shaheed Tobias(Nelson Mandela University, Port Elizabeth)



**Wits Sports Pavilion**

The USSA(University Sports South Africa) Chess Tournament for 2017 was held at The University of Witwatersrand's(Wits) East Campus from 3-9 July 2017. Since Wits is one of the most renowned Universities in Africa, it was expected that they would host an excellent tournament that would be talked about for years to come-and they did not disappoint!

When one thinks back on a successful tournament it is often hard to think on one specific thing that stood out for you as a well-run tournament would usually display several good traits. But I am going to be bold and say that the administration of the tournament was on point! Therefore before any specific details are spilled on the tournament itself, I would just like to take this opportunity to congratulate the technical staff who ran the tournament excellently .Mr.Njabulo Xulu(Intern at Wits Sports), Mr. Tebogo Rabothata(Wits Manager of Competetive Sport Clubs), Mr. Edwyn Wyngaard(USSA Chess Chairperson), Mr. Divesh Sookdeo(USSA Tournament Secretary) and Ruan Steenkamp(Chief Arbiter) have definitely worked together well to give the players a wonderful experience! To those who I have not mentioned, my apologies. Thank you all.

Part of a well-oiled machine, that being the tournament, is always some good quality fuel needed for it to run optimally. At a chess tournament, I personally believe that good rest and good food put together makes for good fuel! The chess players were all given single rooms to sleep in which comprised of a

single bed, a basin and even a microwave and a fridge in some rooms. The main residences for chess players were the Jubilee Residence and Sunnyside Residence on the East Campus. The food that we were served was definitely of a high quality and I commend the kitchen staff for such a lovely dining experience. We were treated to a selection of dishes at breakfast, lunch and supper(some days with 2 or more options per category!!) Many of the players whom participated in the tournament sacrificed their opportunities to go home for the holidays as USSA was scheduled for June this year(Not December) and they will surely go back to their university residences to await the reopening of classes. To their surprise, the players were treated to lovely home-cooked meals such as Macaroni and Cheese, Bacon and Eggs and even some pap to compliment the meat! This made people who didn't go home feel much better. I take my hat off to Wits for looking after our tummies-they even served fish often-even our brains were taken care of!



**A good breakfast sets your day!**



**I have fond memories of supper time!**

The most important part of the week was arguably the fighting chess games which were on display to students as well as public spectators. In the open section we had 194 participants and in the girls section there were 99 participants making it a total of 293 combined participants! I am positive that it was worth the time spent to drive down to Wits just to have a look at the boards-especially those top 25 tables being played with electronic boards!(Games for the **Open section** can be downloaded at <http://chess-results.com/tnr290531.aspx?lan=1&wi=821&turdet=YES> // Games for the **Women's section** can be downloaded at <http://chess-results.com/tnr290549.aspx?lan=1&wi=821&turdet=NO>).



**The Chess Venue featuring USA Chess Chairperson Mr.Edwyn Wyngaard. Photo by Reuben Salimu**



**Veroe September of CPUT(blue top) waiting for the round to begin. Photo by Reuben Salimu**

The tournament featured many titled players who were keen to make their mark. In the women's section we had **WIM Tshepang Tlale(Rating: 1876)**, **WCM Michelle Fisher(1764)**, **WIM Sune Du Toit(1655)**, **WCM Mari Rachelle Voges(1554)** and **WFM(Cora Engelbrecht)**. In the open section we had **FM Matt Pon(2131)**, **FM Roberto De Abreu(2111)**, **FM Roland Bezuidenhout(2084)**, **FM Stefan Du toit(2013)**, **CM Marcel Roberts(1876)** and **CM Caleb Samuel(1668)**. What made this an event even more interesting was that the tournament was played as an individual and a team tournament with combined scores for universities in both sections determined the winner(top 5 in the women's section and top 10 in the open section). The time controls were 60/60 plus 30sec increment per move from move 1 and it was played over 9 rounds.

For as long as I have followed the USSA Chess Tournaments I have noticed that the tournament has always featured many unrated and inexperienced chess players which not only can hurt one's rating, but also can make a strong player skeptical about his/ her opponent. These players usually tend to be very unpredictable and can make stronger players feel uneasy. Hence, many upsets were seen throughout this tournament. In the girls section we saw **Saiyuri Naidoo(UKZN)** draw against Liezl Engelbrecht(NWU), **WCM Rachel Mari Voges(NWU)** draw against **Rene De Beer(TUKS)** and **Nobuhle Ndunakazi(MUT)** draw against **WIM Sune Du Toit(TUKS)** in Round 4. In Round 6 we had only one upset with **WCM Rachel Mari Voges** beating **WIM Tshepang Tlale(WITS)** with the white pieces. The girls section saw some good chess in round 8. **WFM Cora Mak** lost to **WCM Michelle Fisher** with the black pieces and **WCM Rachelle Mari Voges** lost to **WIM Sune Du Toit** to set up an epic final round. With **Sune Du Toit** and **Michelle Fisher** on 7/8 they both needed wins as they were playing different opponents. **Sune** drew to **Tsepang** on board 1 and **Michelle** beat **Rene De Beer** which means that **Michelle Fisher** ended on 8/9 to take the girls section! This was an especially great moment for **Michelle** as she just recently took second place at the 2017 Zone 4.3 Individual Chess Championships-women's section. Congratulations **Michelle**! SEE FULL

RESULTS AT <http://chess-results.com/tnr290549.aspx?lan=1&art=4&wi=821>

### Final Ranking crosstable after 9 Rounds

Rk.	Name	Rtg	1.Rd	2.Rd	3.Rd	4.Rd	5.Rd	6.Rd	7.Rd	8.Rd	9.Rd	Pts.
1	WCM Fisher Michelle	1764	53b1	24w1	23b1	43w1	4b½	2w½	8w1	3b1	10w1	8,0
2	WIM Du Toit Sune	1655	97w1	82b1	12w1	6b½	3w1	1b½	13w1	8b1	4w½	7,5
3	WFM Mak Cora	1503	89b1	32w1	16b1	33w1	2b0	11w1	7b1	1w0	14b1	7,0
4	WIM Tlale Tshepang	1876	87w1	83b1	11w1	9b1	1w½	8b0	28w1	6b1	2b½	7,0
5	Engelbrecht Liezl	1526	20w1	29b1	60w1	13b½	8w0	9b1	23w1	10b½	19w1	7,0
6	Ndunakazi Nobuhle	1314	62b1	44w1	14b1	2w½	10b½	12w1	22b1	4w0	16b1	7,0
7	Engelbrecht Nadine	1304	11w0	45b1	49w1	34b1	35w1	15b1	3w0	19b1	12w1	7,0
8	WCM Voges Rachelle Mari	1554	51b1	30w1	27b1	10w½	5b1	4w1	1b0	2w0	28b1	6,5
9	Samons Marcelle	1340	56b1	40w1	22b1	4w0	30b½	5w0	18b1	26w1	23b1	6,5
10	De Beer Rene	1407	91w1	26b1	35w1	8b½	6w½	23b½	30w1	5w½	1b0	6,0
11	Manganyi Cecilia	1231	7b1	25w1	4b0	74w1	17b1	3b0	46w1	14w0	36b1	6,0
12	Ngobeni Masana Muade	1131	65b1	17w1	2b0	36w1	72b1	6b0	25w1	32w1	7b0	6,0
13	Naidoo Saiyuri	1280	99b1	31w1	18b1	5w½	43b½	16w1	2b0	22w1	-0	6,0
14	Mthunzi Lina	897	86w1	38b1	6w0	15b0	73w1	40b1	17w1	11b1	3w0	6,0
15	Mauvhelwana Ndalama	1125	47b1	22w0	46b1	14w1	27b1	7w0	16b0	34w1	39b1	6,0
16	Masilana Tsakani	996	80b1	50w1	3w0	73b1	42w1	13b0	15w1	33b1	6w0	6,0
17	Mehlape Mahlatse	1092	57w1	12b0	58w1	39b1	11w0	41b1	14b0	56w1	32b1	6,0
18	Mukwasi Marvellous	0	90w1	37b1	13w0	24w1	22b0	57b1	9w0	58b1	41w1	6,0
19	Chisi Sandra	1044	25w-	-1	68w1	50b1	97b1	48w1	36b1	7w0	5b0	6,0
20	Mabala Mokatshoene	1122	5b0	47w1	24b0	61w1	57w0	84b1	35w1	52b1	33w1	6,0
21	Matlala Maepe	1030	37w0	88b1	61b1	22w0	24b0	79w1	83w1	46b1	30w1	6,0
22	Yende Thokozile	969	75w1	15b1	9w0	21b1	18w1	33b1	6w0	13b0	25b½	5,5
23	Buys Charmaine	1217	42w1	73b1	1w0	26b1	25b1	10w½	5b0	31w1	9w0	5,5
24	Shinga Sibongakonke	700	52w1	1b0	20w1	18b0	21w1	71b½	31w0	49b1	44b1	5,5
25	Matlala Hlaudi	1078	19b+	11b0	29w1	60b1	23w0	35b1	12b0	47w1	22w½	5,5

In round 1 of the open section we had a quiet round with only Mbuso Dladla(UZ) beating Veroe September(CPUT) with the white pieces; In round 2 we saw CM Marcel Roberts(NMMU) follow up his round 1 draw with a loss to Sqalo Khanyile(MUT). In round 3 we saw Matsobane Mailula(UL) draw with FM Matt Pon(WITS), Rohan King(TUKS) draw with FM Roland Bezuidenhout(TUKS), FM Stefan Du Toit(SUN) draw with Thato Kabi(VUT) and Waldo Van De Venter(NMMU) draw with Shaun Sepuru(WITS). No real significant upsets were recorded after round 3 as the tournament was decided when FM Roberto De Abreu(WITS) beat FM Stefan Du Toit in Round 8 with De Abreu taking a draw in round 9 to secure first place with 8/9!!

SEE FULL RESULTS AT <http://chess-results.com/tnr290531.aspx?lan=1>

Rk.	Name	Rtg	FED	1.Rd	2.Rd	3.Rd	4.Rd	5.Rd	6.Rd	7.Rd	8.Rd	9.Rd	TB1	TB2	TB3
1	FM De Abreu Roberto	2111	RSA	166b1	114w1	13b1	9w1	5b1	2w½	7b1	4w1	8b½	8	0	56
2	FM Bezuidenhout Roland	2084	RSA	103w1	27b1	18w1	19b½	20w1	1b½	39w1	6w½	5b1	7,5	0	56
3	Mailula Matsobane	1803	RSA	36b1	33w1	41b1	6w½	60b1	37w1	5b0	13w1	10b½	7	0	56,5
4	FM Du Toit Stefan	2013	RSA	30b1	115w1	117b1	7w½	43b1	10w1	6b½	1b0	18w1	7	0	54,5
5	Mgobhozi Bhekinkosi	1837	RSA	97w1	119b1	22w1	63b1	1w0	23b1	3w1	14b1	2w0	7	0	54,5
6	FM Pon Matt	2131	RSA	100w1	177b1	54w1	3b½	8w1	21b1	4w½	2b½	15w½	7	0	53,5
7	Kabi Thato	1682	RSA	188w1	125b1	12w1	4b½	19w1	14b1	1w0	20b½	22w1	7	0	52
8	Maredi Alex	1813	RSA	157b1	169w1	57b1	26w1	6b0	34w1	13b½	12w1	1w½	7	0	51,5
9	Mamonyane Thabang	1771	RSA	146w1	111b1	53w1	1b0	105w1	22b0	88w1	36b1	34w1	7	0	49
10	CM Samuel Caleb	1668	RSA	107w1	67b½	80w1	61b1	87w1	4b0	65w1	19b1	3w½	7	0	49
11	Mbanjwa Mlungisi	1384	RSA	87w0	162b1	100w1	116b0	118w1	25b1	61w1	39b1	20w1	7	0	42
12	Lengwati Lungile	1267	RSA	129b1	69w1	7b0	30w1	63w1	65b½	42w1	8b0	40w1	6,5	0	50,5
13	Chueu Calvin	1511	RSA	72w1	98b1	1w0	127b1	114w1	38b1	8w½	3b0	41w1	6,5	0	50,5
14	Van De Venter Waldo	1884	RSA	116b1	133w1	29b1	20w½	113b1	7w0	45b1	5w0	43b1	6,5	0	49
15	CM Roberts Marcel	1876	RSA	93w½	61b0	156w1	106b1	25w1	87b1	18w½	64b1	6b½	6,5	0	45,5
16	Ogundipe Timi	1130	RSA	192b1	37w0	147b1	28w1	18w½	44b1	19w0	65b1	53b1	6,5	0	44,5
17	Lekgothoane David	1294	RSA	63w0	97b1	177w1	45b0	154w1	74b1	49w1	47b1	19w½	6,5	0	42,5
18	Mashigo Hluli	1470	RSA	75b1	77w1	2b0	96w1	16b½	27w1	15b½	24w1	4b0	6	0	54
19	King Rohan	1632	RSA	90b1	123w1	127b1	2w½	7b0	32w1	16b1	10w0	17b½	6	0	52,5
20	Sepuru Shaun	1594	RSA	150w1	38b1	62w1	14b½	2b0	113w1	60b1	7w½	11b0	6	0	51
21	Xulu Lindokuhle	1855	RSA	73b1	126w1	28b1	50w1	37b½	6w0	64b½	34w0	71b1	6	0	50
22	Mabuto Briswell	1394	RSA	185b1	155w1	5b0	73w1	24b1	9w1	37b0	51w1	7b0	6	0	49
23	Mathuthe Jacob	1301	RSA	91b0	109w1	77b1	80w1	50b1	5w0	56b1	28w½	29b½	6	0	49
24	Mlungwana Mxolisi	500	RSA	102w1	65b1	40w0	48b1	22w0	31b1	105w1	18b0	70w1	6	0	48,5
25	Dlamini Tshepo	0	RSA	42w1	70b1	63w0	71w1	15b0	11w0	102b1	128b1	64w1	6	0	48

Apart from the normal standard chess being on display, the traditional **USSA Blitz Open** tournament was played on Wednesday evening which saw 9 rounds of exhilarating blitz being fought between 127 players. Amongst them were the top 10 seeds **FM Matt Pon(2131)**, **Jakob Mnguni(2124)**, **FM Roberto De Abreu(2111)**, **PM Daud Amini(2063)**, **PM Ntando Zwakala(2023)**, **FM Stefan Du Toit(2013)**, **Kulasande Mafanya(1982)**, **Reuben Salimu(1935)**, **Mothupi Lekgau(1917)** and **Waldo Van De Venter(1884)**. First place went to **Stefan Du Toit(8.5/9)** who was level on points with **Jakob Mnguni** but triumphed on tie-break! Third place saw five players end on 7/9 with **Matsobane Mailula(1803)** taking the position on tie-break.

This year certainly upped the bar for USSA tournaments in the future. I commend Wits for allowing the participants to gain such valuable chess and social experience. In the words of **Mr. Wyngaard**, **“There is no better experience than varsity chess! Most students only get 3-5 years to experience it! Most never get to experience it again.”**(USSA AGM Opening Speech, 2017). University chess is surely the key to securing great national players to represent South Africa one day(especially those who recently exited their school structures)! It is a platform for university students to experience an all-university event as

well as for strong and experienced players to face their fellow national and international rivals and teammates in some strong duels over the board. Thank you Wits and USSA.

Moving on to the final awards dinner. This must have been the one day that things did not go completely according to plan. There were issues with the electricity at the hall with the lights going on and off several times and the generator also not working 100%. This resulted in long delays during the presentations and cold food being served. This was however overshadowed by the delicious pudding which was served for dessert (a testament that the brain can be altered directly through the stomach)! It would be silly of me to complain about such a minor aspect of the event when there were so many other great overshadowing experiences. These things were certainly unforeseen and out of the hands of the tournament organizers. We can only hope that these situations do not arise in the future as the final gala dinner is known to be one of the highlights of the tournament. The second most important part of the final awards dinner is the awards ceremony(following the food!). This is arguably the most important part of the entire week for most universities. **Congratulations to University of Pretoria on taking 1<sup>st</sup> place!** Excellent hosts and excellent chess players! **Please see the combined standings below:**

Institution name	Men's total	Women's total	Combined Total
1. University of Pretoria	56.5	32.5	89
2. Vaal University of Technology	58	23.5	81.5
3. University of Witwatersrand	58.5	22.5	81
4. North West University (Pukke)	48.5	31.5	80
5. Mangosuthu University of Technology	49.5	27	76.5
6. University of Limpopo	47.5	27	74.5
7. Tshwane University of Technology	48.5	25.5	74
8. Sefako Makgatho University	43	25	68
9. University of Zululand	44.5	23.5	68
10. University of Venda	41	23.5	64.5
11. North West University (Mafikeng)	45.5	17.5	63
12. Cape Peninsula University of Technology	44.5	17	61.5
13. Nelson Mandela University	45.5	16	61.5
14. University of Fort Hare	37.5	21.5	59
15. Durban University of Technology	37.5	8.5	46
16. Rhodes University	23	14	37
17. Sol Plaatje University	19	15	34
18. University of KwaZulu-Natal	28	6	34
19. North West University (Vaal)	22	6.5	28.5
20. Stellenbosch University	18	8	26

As a first time visitor to Johannesburg, I was amazed by all the tall buildings and beautiful architecture, which I usually just drove past. There was not much time to travel as nine round tournaments played

over five days usually requires ample rest and minimal leisure. Traditionally, the USSA tournament would have two rounds on all days besides the Wednesday-which has one round. This was the day which most people chose to go out and do some fun activities. One of my most puzzling experiences was the way people with GP license plates drove. In fact, I wasn't sure if it was the people from Gauteng who couldn't drive or the people from other provinces who couldn't keep up! I will never know, as even people from Joburg cannot answer this.



**Jubilee Hall Residence**



**Hillbrow Tower**

Despite the cold night time temperatures in Johannesburg, I spotted several chess players in the Melville area of Johannesburg having a lovely time partying with friends before they depart for their respective universities and hometowns on the Saturday morning. Many teams were seen leaving at 5am when other teams were just arriving home after a good night out! The common room was still being kept alive at that time with singles and doubles blitz being played throughout the night. The common room was a great place for all chess players to mingle and pay blitz(As these residences were gender specific!). Thanks also to the security personnel at Wits for making everyone feel safe and welcome.



**Common Hall, Jubilee Hall Residence. More chess was played here than in the tournament!**

Walking around the campus one can strongly feel the aftermath of the Fees Must Fall protests still lingering in the hallways and between the buildings. Wits was instrumental in the Fees Must Fall protests with most of the media coverage coming from this university. But despite all the tough times which were experienced at Wits, it was certainly dampened by the lovely smiles and cheerful “hello’s” which were received from the Wits staff. The cleaning staff were very helpful and professional and the security staff at the gates were always happy to greet you with a good word of encouragement or a positive farewell. I believe that even the people behind the scenes are integral to hosting a memorable event.



**University of Witwatersrand Grand Hall. The building often shown on news television during the Fees Must Fall protests.**

Services such as the all-important spaza shop and the well-known Debonairs could all be found right on the campus which made living there so much more convenient. There were several spots to take lovely pictures at and there were also other sports such as the USSA Rugby tournament being contested for those who just wanted to relax and take their minds off chess.

To the new USSA Committee which was elected on Thursday evening(6 July 2017), I wish you a wonderful term to serve and uphold the students and constitution of USSA chess. I hope that you will get the necessary support needed to grow and maintain university chess and that you can work well as a team to ensure that we can have such amazing tournaments in the future. The next host university will surely have an excellent structure to depend on.

Yours in chess, Shaheed Tobias(Chairperson-NMU)



**Shaheed Tobias waiting for a response to 1.e4!**



**NMU Madibaz Chess Club**



**Common Hall, Jubilee Hall Residence. More chess was played here than in the tournament!**



**Some good team spirit from NMU Madibaz**



**Round 9 clash: FM Matt Pon(WITS) vs CM Marcel Roberts(NMU)!**