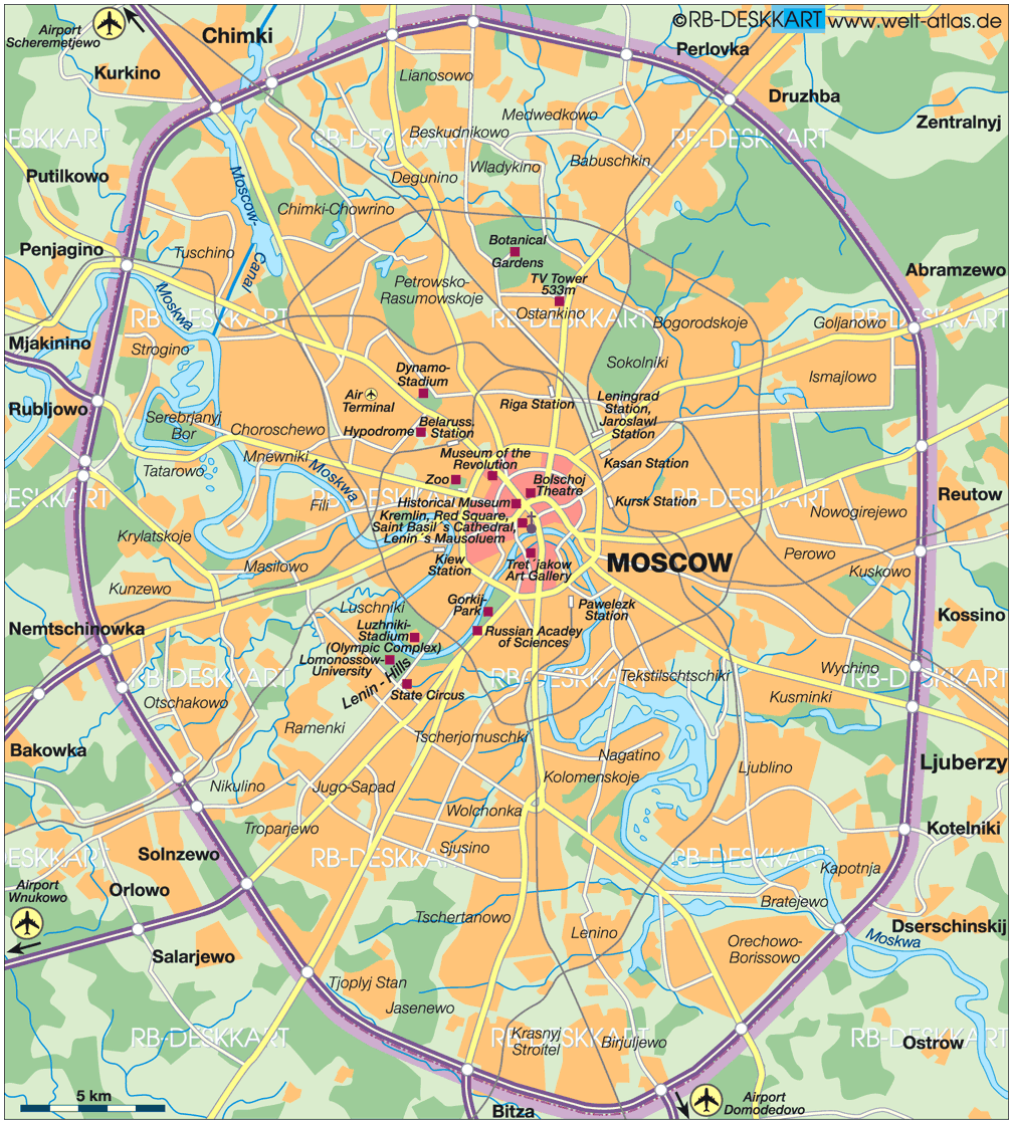
Uzbekistan Chess Olympiad Reflections (7) by Dr Lyndon Bouah

Greetings family, friends, colleagues and the broader chess community from Uzbekistan.

The 2026 Chess Olympiad is being held in Samarkand in Uzbekistan. 200 countries from across the world have gathered to play in this prestigious event. Uzbekistan is in Central Asia, in the heart of the ancient Silk Road region.



This is my ninth Olympiad that I am attending. The Olympiad is really a breathtaking event. The last one I attended was 2018 in Batumi, Georgia. This is certainly for me one of the greatest chess events on the calendar. Grandmasters and amateurs playing side by side against one another. Legends and master's from all over the globe playing in one event. I played my first Olympiad in 1992. The memories are flooding back to me as I enter the hall each day. Yesterday I told you about my first Olympiad. Allow me dear reader to tell you about my second Olympiad played in Moscow in 1994. Reader, come down memory lane with me!



The road to Moscow started for me in February 1993. The chess authorities in South Africa called for the SA Trials to be held in Cape Town, as a team had to participate in the African Team Championship in Egypt. So instead of calling it a SA Closed, which it effectively was, they called it the SA Trials.

I fared badly in this event. I drew with Maxwell Solomon, Ewan Kromhout and Antonio Bravetti, beat Dan Wolf, but lost heavily to the rest of the field. This of course gave the folks all the ammunition to say that I had not deserved to be in the SA Protea team in 1992. There had been a debate about the 1992 Protea selection, as I had previously indicated. The 1992 team had been a unified team, and some quarters had criticised the composition of the team.

Not only was I unrecognisable in my play, but I also think in hindsight that I should have requested help from my chess organisation. I was using public transport to get to the venue, and this was certainly not conducive.

In September 1994, the South African Trials were held again. This time the top 5 would be going to Moscow to play in the Olympiad. The venue was PENTECH in Bellville, which was within walking distance from my university residence. The scene was now set. 14 players were invited to participate in the SA Trials. The players came from all over South Africa and would all be pressing for the spots on offer.

I ended fourth in the event, as I had scored 1 loss, 6 draws and 6 wins! I was now directly into the SA Protea team and would go to the Olympiad in Moscow.

2. 1994 Moscow Olympiad

The event started with South Africa playing on stage against the United States of America. We scored one draw in the match against the USA when Charles de Villiers held GM Shabalov to a draw. I lost to GM Sergey Kudrin, and the Olympiad was not a great one for me. I only scored 2 wins in the event, and I think I was so happy to have made the team that I had reserved my best chess for the trials and not the Olympiad.

The team that travelled to Moscow was Deon Solomons, Charles de Villiers, Watu Kobese, Maxwell Solomon and me. I was board 4. The manager was the late Francois Kleinhans. South Africa ended on 29 points and in position number 58 out of 124 countries. The results of the African countries were:

Tunisia - 29 points

South Africa - 29 points

Algeria - 28 points

Egypt - 28 points

Morocco - 28 points

Playing the Olympiad in Moscow was of course a dream come true for me as a chess player. We played in the Cosmos hotel, and we were able to meet many players. I enjoyed my blitz sessions with my friends from Mauritius, and of course hearing Afrikaans being spoken in the dining room was a novelty. The voices belonged to Namibia, and I met the current ACC secretary general Otto Nakapunda there for the first time.



Figure 1: Otto Nakapunda

We travelled on the subways and made our way to St Basil's Cathedral and the Kremlin. Many of the figures that we had read about in our history books were now statues and street names in Moscow. We went to the university and met a few local folks, and I corresponded with one friend for quite some time. I enjoyed the event tremendously and, on my off days, I continued to watch the

matches taking place on stage. You could sit in the auditorium and watch the games take place before you, while you are watching the screen. I vividly recall watching the Adams vs. Kramnik game. A particular highlight for me was when the late International Arbiter Jerry Bibuld took us to the Bolshoi theatre to see Swan Lake. Moscow became one of my favourite cities in the world.

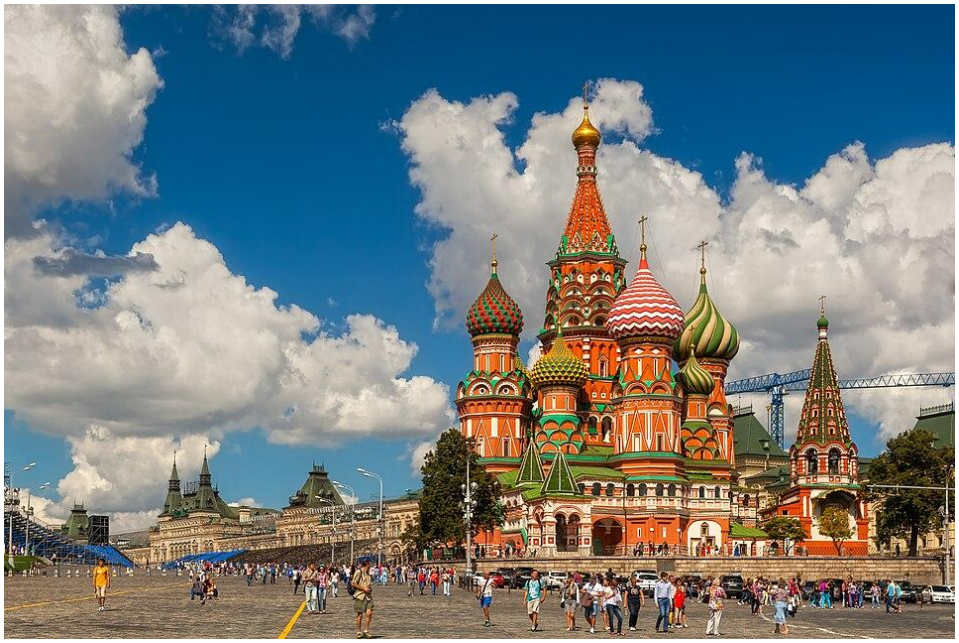


Figure 2: St. Basil Cathedral



Figure 3: Michael Short vs Vladimir Kramnik



Figure 4: Bolshoi Theatre

I am happy that I could represent my country at the Olympiad. To be an Olympian is a special feeling. I had competed with the rest of the world on an equal footing, and I was able to hold my own and qualify for my master title. One of the fundamental principles which appear at the beginning of the Olympic Charter resonates with me and states that:

"Olympism is a philosophy of life, exalting and combining in a balanced whole the qualities of body, will and mind. Blending sport with culture and education, Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the joy of effort, the educational value of good example and respect for universal ethical principles (Olympic Education Toolkit, 2007, a publication by the International Olympic Committee).*"*

The three core values of Olympism are excellence, respect and friendship. Excellence means doing the best, on the field of play or in our professional life. The important thing is not winning, but taking part, making progress and enjoying the healthy combination of body, will and mind. Respect includes respect for yourself and your body, for other people, for rules and regulations, for sport and for the environment.

Friendship is at the heart of the Olympic movement. It encourages us to see sport as an instrument for mutual understanding between individuals, and between people all over the world (Olympic Education Toolkit, 2007, a publication by the International Olympic Committee)."

Alex La Guma writes in his wonderful book that he watched the traditional dancers perform in the old Registan Square. He quotes,

“Away, for we are ready to a man!

Our camels sniff the evening and are glad,

Lead on, O’ master of the caravan

We travel not for trafficking alone;

By hotter winds our fiery hearts are fanned:

For lust of knowing what should not be known,

We take the Golden Road to Samarkand”

In round seven the Grenada Open team played Tanzania. The team won 4 nil for the first time against Tanzania. This was excellent play by all four players. On board one Gilbert Renniel played a measured game against the Tanzania opposite number and brought the point home. On board two, Gennard Robert's took advantage of an opening mistake and sacrificed the exchange. His opponent soon gave it back but by then his two-pawn advantage was enough. On board three youngster Jaedyn Pierre scored a great victory against the Benoni when his opponent overlooked a good knight move which forked the Rb6 and the pawn on d6. On board four Vladimir Mendez won two pawns in the opening when his opponent sacrificed to open lines. Mendez then weathered the storm and brought the full point home. So, we are on an unbeaten streak. Two matches undefeated.

Bo.	198	Grenada (GRN)	Rtg	-	177	Tanzania (TAN)	Rtg	4 : 0	PGN
		(c) Lyndon Bouah				(c) Misambo Kilasa			
93.1		□ Renniel, Gilbert	1848	-		■ Henry, Marwa Michael	1807	1 - 0	PGN
93.2		■ Roberts, Gennard	1564	-		□ SAROTA, PATRICK CHRISTOPHER	1688	1 - 0	PGN
93.3		□ Jaedyn, C	0	-		■ Farkad, Abeid	1773	1 - 0	PGN
93.4		■ Mendez, Vladimir	1651	-		□ Rashid, Mansour Sharif	1778	1 - 0	PGN



Figure 5: Grenada Open Team



Figure 6: Grenada Open Team and Grenada Chess Federation

In the Women's section Grenada played Guam. The team lost to Guam in a tight battle.

Bo.	172	Grenada (GRN)	Rtg -	121	Guam (GUM)	Rtg	½ :3½	PGN
		(c) Denise Bouah			(c) Jefferson A Pascua			
82.1	□	Rhonda, J Lambert	1577 -	WCM	■ Ollet, Myra	1686	½ - ½	PGN
82.2	■	Achazia, N.A.Lewis	0 -	WCM	□ Ramas, Carmina Jasmine	1783	0 - 1	PGN
82.3	□	Naziyah, S.A.James	0 -	WCM	■ Benzon, Tiffany	1717	0 - 1	PGN
82.4	■	Senthilkumar, Abiramy	0 -		□ Justo, Alexis Rian	1671	0 - 1	PGN

In the Open section South Africa Played Uzbekistan 3. A nice fixture.

Bo.	55	Uzbekistan 3 (UZB)	Rtg	-	77	South Africa (RSA)	Rtg	3 : 1	PGN
		(c) Murtas Kazhgaleyev				(c) Henry Robert Steel			
36.1	IM	□ Saydaliev, Saidakbar	2475	-	IM	■ Karsten, Jan	2386	1 - 0	PGN
36.2	IM	■ Rakhmatullaev, Almas	2418	-	IM	□ Levitan, Caleb Levi	2316	½ - ½	PGN
36.3	IM	□ Abdurakhmonov, Mukhammadali	2390	-	FM	■ Mhango, Banele	2354	½ - ½	PGN
36.4	IM	■ Omonov, Asrorjon	2347	-		□ Mnyasta, Charlton	2236	1 - 0	PGN



Figure 7: South Africa Open Team

In the Women's section SA played Costa Rica.

Bo.	67	Costa Rica (CRC)	Rtg	-	86	South Africa (RSA)	Rtg	1½:2½	PGN
		(c) Ivan Castillo Trujillo				(c) Kenneth Terence Solomon			
35.1	WIM	□ Rodriguez Arrieta, Maria Elena	1963	-	WFM	■ Badenhorst, Chloe	1997	0 - 1	PGN
35.2	WIM	■ Mayorga Araya, Sofia	2189	-	WIM	□ Laubscher, Anzel	1817	1 - 0	PGN
35.3	WCM	□ Canales Chinchilla, Victoria	1837	-	WCM	■ Nel, Hayley	1864	½ - ½	PGN
35.4	WFM	■ Gamboa Alvarado, Olga Leticia	1904	-		□ Masango, Sizakele	1880	0 - 1	PGN



Figure 8: Team Uganda

Regards

Dr Lyndon Bouah

Reporting live from Uzbekistan