Uzbekistan Olympiad 2026 Reflections (1) 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.







The country is bordered by Kazakhstan, Kyrgystan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Turkmenistan. Two major rivers, the Amu Darya and the Syr Darya, flow through the country and have historically supported agriculture.



The country's most important city is Tashkent, the capital with more than 3.1million inhabitants. Other important cities in Uzbekistan include Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva, Namangan, Andijan and Fergana. Many of these cities are famous for their historical monuments and were important centres along the Silk Road.



I am here as captain and coach of the Grenada Open team.









In 2024 my wife, Woman International Master, Dr. Denise Bouah was the coach of the Grenada Women's team in Budapest that participated at the Olympiad for the first time. In 2025, I started coaching the Open team and in May 2026 I was officially appointed as captain and coach of the Open team. Denise was reappointed as coach and captain of the women's team.



Grenada is a small island nation in the Caribbean, located northwest of Trinidad and Tobago. It is said that Christopher Columbus sighted the island in 1498 during his third voyage. The French established settlements in the 1600's and named the island "La Grenade". Britain took control in 1763 after the Seven Years war although the island changed hands between Britain and France many times. Enslaved Africans were brought to work on plantations producing sugar, cocoa and spices. Grenada gained independence from Britain on 7 February 1974.

This is Grenada's second Olympiad having made their debut in 2024 in Budapest, Hungary. The team in the Open section is:

1. FM Renniel Gilbert
2. Gennard Roberts
3. Omario Pope
4. Jaedyn Pierre
5. Vladimir Mendez

Captain : Dr CM Lyndon Bouah

The Grenada Women's team is:

1. Rhonda Lambert
2. Achazia Lewis
3. Naziyah James
4. Abiramy Senthilkumar
5. Kanishka Tehalyani

Captain : WIM Dr Denise Bouah



According to Chess.com the Olympiad will feature a record 1971 players, split between an Open and Woman section. There are 208 teams competing in the Open section and 192 Women teams making it 400 in total.

21 out of the 32 players rated over 2700 will be competing in the Olympiad. Despite the absence of GMs Carlsen and Nakamura, it will still be an incredibly strong field. On the women's side only three of top ten players will be competing.

Denise and I attended the captains meeting on Tuesday 14 Sep and we bumped into other captains.





International Arbiter Gunther van den Bergh is the Deputy Chief Arbiter.



This is a highly prestigious position and is a real feather in the cap of South Africa and Africa that he is held in such high regard.

After the captains meeting, we attended the opening ceremony which was held in a Amphitheatre. It was most spectacular with singing, dancing and a display that was breathtaking. If you can find it on you tube, it really is worthwhile. They took the entire gamut of Uzbekistan history and ran through it a visual display complemented by a wonderful narrative.





In round one Grenada played against the following countries: in the Open section we played the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The women played Sri Lanka. Both matches were lost 4-0. In the Open Section, the men played hard but their opponents capitalised on early mistakes. Olympiad debutant Jayden Pierre played an astonishing 76 moves and in a five-hour fifteen-minute battle decided to play for the win when he had a draw against his 2088 rated opponent. Well done to Jayden.

Against Sri Lanka the ladies played well against higher rated and experienced opponents.

In Round one South Africa in the Open section played against the Democratic Republic of Congo and won four nil, in the Women Section the ladies also won 4 nil against the Comores.





Regards

Dr Lyndon Bouah

Reporting live from Samarkand, Uzbekistan