

Swings and Roundabouts

Getting into the Swing of Things...

Still a few problems with the organisation of the event: technical issues delayed the publication of individual pairings, and incorrect board order when they did go up leading to preparation against the wrong opponent for example. This was not well communicated; I noticed a banner on chess-results asking captains to resubmit teams, but it was easy to miss!

We are however starting to establish a routine, with a rota for coaching sessions, understanding the meal times, and a much more reasonable schedule of bus transfers. The bus to the venue now leaves at 1:30pm and is scheduled to return every half-hour from 5pm onwards rather than making everyone wait for a full bus first. At least that's the theory; it was only due to Olivia's putting her foot down firmly that the 7:30pm bus left on time after the round. The driver wanted to hang on until 8pm. Taking his name and the implied threat to report him worked a treat – well done Olivia. That extra half hour is *really valuable* time in the evenings for going through games, not to mention eating etc..



Queues of buses disgorging players at the venue.

The bus did leave on time for round 2, but unfortunately the driver took a wrong turn which added 15 minutes to the journey, making the process of getting through security in time for the start of the match a *little* fraught. And they'd changed the procedures for checking in bags and phones at the gates (possibly due to feedback from players yesterday) which added to the confusion and stress. We're considering giving feedback ourselves on the lack of communication generally at the event, as well as the failure of some officials to treat players with courtesy and respect...

Round 2

Women's Team

Wales Women had black on the odd boards against Greece (2 blacks in a row – must be due White tomorrow!). Playing on board 17, above Uzbekistan-Russia (board 19) and China-Colombia (board 20) the team had the opportunity to see some of the top teams' games.



Before the round, the team also witnessed the marriage proposal by Indian journalist **Niklesh Jain** to Colombian player WIM **Angela Franco Valencia** – which she accepted, much to the delight of everyone nearby.

Co-incidentally, we now know that Wales will be playing Colombia in Round 3: Angela will be Shayanna's opponent, on board 4.

Back to the chess... out-rated by an average of 315 points per board, things went much as expected. Would have been great to squeeze out a draw or two, but it wasn't to be.

Bo.	27	 Greece (GRE)	Rtg - 71	 Wales (WLS)	Rtg	4 : 0
17.1	WGM	<input type="checkbox"/> Botsari, Anna-Maria	2252 - WFM	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Richmond, Jane	2053	1 - 0
17.2	IM	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tsolakidou, Stavroula	2393 - WFM	<input type="checkbox"/> Smith, Olivia	2013	1 - 0
17.3	FM	<input type="checkbox"/> Avramidou, Anastasia	2260 - WCM	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sivarajasingam, Venetia	1771	1 - 0
17.4	WFM	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Markantonaki, Haritomeni	2149 - WCM	<input type="checkbox"/> Sivarajasingam, Shayanna	1788	1 - 0

Imogen had a rest day, so she and I decided to do a bit of shopping. We took a taxi to Batumi, which was an experience, involving a U-turn on the motorway and the driver constantly on his mobile. Seems the rules of the road are merely guidelines here... like the time the coach went the wrong way around a roundabout on the way to the hotel from the airport. Well, it was shorter.



Batumi Mall, a 4-floor modern shopping centre in the city centre.

Batumi Mall has entertainment on the top floor including a petting zoo, "12D" cinema (looked like a simulator ride) and amusement arcade; a supermarket and food outlets on the ground floor; and fashion and homeware on 1 and 2.

All the stores were local brands or designer "vintage" outlets – none of the Western shops ubiquitous to every shopping centre in the UK – and everything at very good prices, less than a third of what we'd expect to pay in the UK. We bought some clothes! Afterwards we had Spicy Italian subs and cookies from Subway, as we'd missed the hotel lunch. Made a nice change 😊.

Open Team

Meanwhile in playing hall 2, the Wales Open team were against the very under-rated Swaziland. That's the trouble when nations have few opportunities to play rated games outside their own country: Francis's opponent was a junior, whose only rated games have been in Swaziland, many against other juniors. He played well and held on for a draw, nonetheless giving our team a **3½ - ½** victory.

Bo.	174	 Swaziland (SWZ)	Rtg - 114	 Wales (WLS)	Rtg	½ : 3½
85.1		<input type="checkbox"/> Mbongeni, Mabuza	1560 -	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Blackburn, Jonathan L B	2185	0 - 1
85.2		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nxumalo, Vuyo	1525 -	<input type="checkbox"/> Bullen, Alex	2098	0 - 1
85.3		<input type="checkbox"/> Mziyako, Sobhi	1405 -	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pleasants, Allan J	2090	0 - 1
85.4		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sihlongonyane, Sikhanyiso	1408 -	<input type="checkbox"/> Rayner, Francis	2083	½ - ½

An interesting fact about Swaziland: earlier this year, King Mswati III of Swaziland changed his country's name to **eSwatini**. The new name, which the king announced at celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the country's independence from Britain and his own 50th birthday, means "land of the Swazis" in the local language. The team's Olympiad kit reflects the new name of the country.

Carl had a rest day and spent most of it properly resting. He's had the worst of the jet lag it seems. Hopefully he will be fully recovered for round 3, when we meet New Zealand.

Other Notable Results

There were a few upsets in the Women's section this round, most notably:

- A 2-2 draw by Georgia 3 (seeded 56) v Germany (seeded 9)
- A 2-2 draw by South Korea (seeded 77) v Brazil (seeded 7). Brazil out-rated S Korea by an average of 230 points!

In the Open section, there were a couple of impressive individual results from Ireland against 2nd seed Russia on table 2:

- GM **Alexander Baburin** 2452 drew with Russian GM **Sergey Karjakin** 2760
- IM **David Fitzsimons** 2316 drew with GM **Dimitry Jakovenko** 2747

Well done Ireland!



Watch the excellent brief [round-up of Round 2 on YouTube](#), for the top teams' results and an inside view of play in progress.

Looking Forward

In round 3, Wales Women have white on odds v Colombia and the Open team similarly has white v New Zealand.

Women – Round 3 pairings

Bo.	71	Wales (WLS)	Rtg -	32	Colombia (COL)	Rtg 0 : 0
28.1	WFM	<input type="checkbox"/> Richmond, Jane	2053 -	WIM	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Castrillon Gomez, Melissa	2248
28.2	WFM	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Smith, Olivia	2013 -	WGM	<input type="checkbox"/> Franco Valencia, Beatriz Irene	2191
28.3	WCM	<input type="checkbox"/> Camp, Imogen A L	1940 -	IM	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rodriguez Rueda, Paula Andrea	2298
28.4	WCM	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sivarajasingam, Shayanna	1788 -	WIM	<input type="checkbox"/> Franco Valencia, Angela	2188

Open – Round 3 pairings

Bo.	114	Wales (WLS)	Rtg -	77	New Zealand (NZL)	Rtg 0 : 0
46.1	FM	<input type="checkbox"/> Strugnell, Carl	2327 -	FM	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hague, Ben	2405
46.2		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Blackburn, Jonathan L B	2185 -	FM	<input type="checkbox"/> Kulashko, Alexei	2349
46.3		<input type="checkbox"/> Bullen, Alex	2098 -	IM	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ker, Anthony F	2315
46.4		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rayner, Francis	2083 -	FM	<input type="checkbox"/> Gong, Daniel Hanwen	2276

It will be a challenging match for both teams.

Don't forget you can watch all the games live on Chess 24: <https://chess24.com/en/watch/live-tournaments>

Photographs

With restrictions on what can be taken into the playing hall, it is difficult to get photos of our teams in play. I'm keeping an eye out for any taken by the official photographer, but they are mainly taking pictures of teams in their Olympiad team kit, or for stories of special interest. Leonid has asked some of the other photographers to take photos of the team, which they have but we've yet to get copies.

Leonid is now applying for a press badge. He should be able to take a camera in when he gets it, which will make things easier. He'll also be able to appoint a deputy team captain for some of the time so that he is free to roam the halls and get other photos too. **So, watch this space!**