

I represented Guernsey at the European Small Nations Individual event held in Luxembourg at the beginning of April. The winner qualified for the World Cup and it was a round-robin event for 12 players.



The playing hall



Round 1 vs Pierre Villegas (Monaco).

I scored a credible 4 points of 11, and my best game was against Konstantinos Michaelides of Cyprus, as White after 24 moves I reached the following position :



White has a lead in development and pressure against e5. The game continued 25. Nd4 Kh8 26. Nc6 g5 (An enterprising move - Black decides to go for the attack, but otherwise White will prise open the Black king with f4) 27. Nxb8 Nxb8 and White went to beat off the attack and win with the extra material.

In such a strong event I expected to receive a few losses, and see position below where I was White against IM Fred Berend.



White has a very difficult position and a particular feature is the very bad bishop on g2. The engine's suggestion is the rather surprising (to me) Bh1, although I can see there is some logic to freeing the rook on h2. There was quite some amusement at my expense at the after match meal from Messrs Frick, Sammut-Briffa, & Volpinari, at how the Bishop had become so bad, and that I didn't find Bh1. Black went on to win.

I was Black against IM Michael Wiedenkiller of Luxembourg and he finished his game against me in impressive style.



The game continued 25. f5 gf 26. Nh4 ! (threat Rg3+) Kh8 27. Ng6+ ! (the Knight can't be taken), and White went on to win.



Claude and Phillipe from the Luxembourg Chess Federation gave a guided tour of Luxembourg City on the free day. Peter Sammut-Briffa and myself overlook the steep cliffs in the city.



Inside the Casements (Gun fortifications built into cliffs). A labyrinth of tunnels, and tight spiral staircases.



Renato Frick (Lichtenstein) & Danilo Volpinari (San Marino), in the main square in Luxembourg.



The gates of the residency of the Grand Duke of Luxembourg. The “Red Lion” features on the alternate flag for Luxembourg and is often seen at football matches.



The closing ceremony was held in the casino at Mondorf Les Bains. Left to right, Peter Sammut Briffa (Malta), myself, Sarah (Jersey), Graham Mooney (Jersey).



After the meal some of the group went to the adjacent casino, and tried our luck on the slot machines. Somebody (not me), turned 100 Euros into 800 Euros, see above for the 1st of his large wins.

A thank-you to Luxembourg Chess Federation for organising such a splendid event.

Peter Kirby

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