

GREEK CHESS FEDERATION

PRESS RELEASE 8

Athens, 16.08.2008

Very few things changed at the top of the "Acropolis 2008" international tournament after today's penultimate 8th round. Most top games ended in a draw, something that allowed Smirin and Parligras to retain their lead in the standings. The main beneficiary of today's results was Bulgarian GM Atanas Kolev, who beat Natalia Zhukova and is now alone in third place, half a point behind.

An important victory was scored by Georgian IM Nana Dzagnidze against her compatriot GM Tamas Gelashvili. Thanks to this win, she is now tied for 4th with 8 other players, while she is also one step away from a Grandmaster norm. For this she must beat tomorrow the Serbian IM Alisa Maric. Meanwhile, Gelashvili, the early leader of the event, is now out of contention of the top prizes.

International Master norms may be achieved by Hungarian WGM Anna Rudolf and Kostas Georgiou, if they beat their opponents tomorrow (Turkish IM Atakisi and Polish WGM Zawadzka respectively) with the white pieces. Georgiou is a surprise candidate, who has risen up the standings slowly but efficiently. No such worries for Natalia Zhukova, who has already secured her final IM norm and will soon obtain the title - congratulations!

Today's round saw several drawn games, some for competitive reasons, others due to tiredness, but this doesn't mean that the players didn't try hard. Spanish GM Salgado Lopez perhaps tried too hard, playing 106 moves against Maric before agreeing to the inevitable draw - at least 25 of them were totally unnecessary. In the games Graf-Smirin and Svetushkin-Zubarev, the players with white tried hard for victory but never seemed able to obtain a significant advantage. Dzagnidze's win was one of the best games of today's round, as was the win of Indian IM Roy Chowdhury against IM Karagiannis. Mention must be made of the amazing recovery of 17-year-old Greek Paminos Kourousis, who, after his abysmal start of three losses, has collected 4.5 points out of his next 5 games and is now one of the leading Greek players in the standings.

In tomorrow's 9th and last round, attention is focused on the leading clashes Kolev-Smirin and Parligras-Svetushkin. The results of these two games will determine the winner of the tournament. Smirin has the advantage of better tie-breaks over his co-leader, but also an arguably tougher task, playing with black.

"Acropolis 2008" is organized by the Greek Chess Federation and the Prefecture of Athens, which actively supports the event for the second consecutive year. The Hellenic Post Bank is the sponsor of the tournament.

The event is held at President Hotel (43 Kifissias Avenue, "Europa" Hall) and will last until August 17th. Starting time everyday is 17.00' (14.00' at 17/8). Admittance for spectators is free. The event is covered by the GCF website (www.chessfed.gr/acropolis2008) with results, standings, games, photos as well as live transmission of the most important games of each round.