

## BLAST FROM THE PAST

League times dipped its hands into the photo archives of Kim Bhari who has a big collection of priceless photos documenting the rich history of Kenyan chess. League times will bring you a select offering of these incredible pics in each issue. Enjoy!



KCB team member Philip Singe leads his Kenya Polytechnic team to top honours at a 1994 Delphis Bank event.

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## GM NIGEL SHORT'S BODYGUARDS

The beaming Kenyan contingent at the Elista Olympiad 1998. From left to right: Humphrey Andolo, Kim Bhari, John Mukabi, Joseph Kanyingi, Nathan Ateka and right at the back, securely placed, is Grandmaster Nigel Short. And yes, all his bodyguards were 'shorter' than him!



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# 02

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WEEKLY NEWSLETTER  
OF THE NAIROBI CHESS  
LEAGUE

# League Times

## this issue

Photos from the archives  
Week 2 & 3 report  
KCB vs Nairobi Gambit  
Picture Gallery  
Kim Bhari interview  
Player profiles



## Next weekend league fixtures (16 May 2009)

Start time: 2pm

### ROUND 8

Kabete CARES  
Vs  
Thika Lost Boys

Nairobi Gambit  
Vs  
Malezi Chess

Trojan Knights  
Vs  
Sicilian Simbas

KCB  
Vs  
Safaricom

### ROUND 9

Sicilian Simbas  
Vs.  
Malezi Chess

Thika Lost Boys  
Vs  
Nairobi Gambit

Trojan Knights  
Vs  
KCB

Safaricom  
Vs  
Kabete CARES

## League gets down to business by Mehul Gohil & Kim Bhari

The league organizing process is finally on auto-pilot. Teams are arriving at the venue on time, transition between rounds is hassle free and smooth and best of all we are now getting to see some truly gritting onboard chess action.

The current league is basically a test model by the Nairobi Chess Club. It has helped the club to understand what exactly the current chess environment requires in terms of league management and organizing. All this new information will ensure that the next one will be bigger, better and badder!

The inclusion of new teams with new players who have never involved themselves in serious chess competition before may have diluted the 'strength levels' and proved 'easy points' for the big three but it is also a welcome indication that there are Kenyans

out there who want to play chess and be involved in chess.

This league therefore also constitutes a first step in getting Kenyan chess back to where it was in the 90's when tournament attendance registered in the hundreds. A sort of back to the future scenario!

The Week 3 action was rather subdued and the league fever seemed to have lost momentum. Hopefully this is simply the calm before the chessboard storm as KCB and Nairobi Gambit meet the Sicilian Simbas and show us all what the 'Big Three' can truly do. The KCB vs Nairobi Gambit clash was a marvelous appetizer.

Still no Chess Kenya officials seen to be spectating! Hopefully this will change in the spirit of the FIDE motto 'We are one family'.

## PLAYER PROFILES



**PETER GILRUTH**  
(Sicilian Simbas)

The current Kenya No.1 and the most experienced international in the field. He has remained undefeated in serious local games since August 2007 whilst remaining an active player - a 20 month streak that is a Kenyan chess record. He was the country's best performer at the recent Dresden Olympiad where he defeated International Master Richard Polaczek of Belgium.



**BEN MAGANA**  
(KCB)

Regarded by many players within Kenyan chess circles as the most talented tactician since the mercurial Humphrey Andolo. Ben Magana also has the most dominant local tournament record of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Amongst his biggest achievements was taking the prized scalp of Grandmaster Ahmed Adly at the 2007 African championships.



When Ben Nguku of KCB dribbled past the tactical landmines Ricky Sang of Nairobi Gambit had planted on the K-side, you could see the circumoral muscles on the spectator's faces flex in anticipation.

It was indeed a spectators' feast. The temperatures in the Atwoli-Beltz game were just beginning to rise when Wang'ombe Mugo unleashed what must be the move of the tournament so far - a positional sacrifice that left Githinji Hinga wondering whether he was cut out for 'Top Dog' chess. The only thing that seemed clear in the monumental KCB vs. Nairobi Gambit tussle was the clinical precision of Magana's technique against Martin Oyamo.

Defensive chess is not exactly a Kenyan chess culture; most of the current generation of players have been brought up on tactical ugalis and combinational sukumawikis that were the staple diet of the 90's Humphrey Andolo.

***" Some Kenyan players need coaching on how to understand the Sicilian Defense...they don't seem to get it...you can't start attacks against my king when the center is destabilized" – Ben Nguku***

That's why when Ben Nguku step by step used defense *to attack* you could understand why Ricky Sang had suddenly started sweating.

Make no mistake, Rick Sang is a very strong player. It's just that Ben Nguku is an era-defining player. Good moves which Ricky Sang discovers via hard work at the board are simply reflex action for Nguku.

A tacit rhetorical assumption here is that you are not a chessplayer who is reading this and have probably never heard that

## KCB vs Nairobi Gambit: The art of deadlock *week 2 & 3*

*league chess action review*  
**By the 'Assassin'**

Grandmaster Nigel Short, who is ranked in the World's Top 100, annotated a masterpiece of Ben Nguku in the Daily Telegraph.

You are invited to try and imagine what it would be like for an achievement of yours to be discussed by a person who is among the hundred best in the world at something. At anything. I have tried to imagine; it's hard. Ricky Sang resigned.

Ben Nguku then went over to see the final seconds of the Atwoli-Beltz game. His club counterpart could not do what he did. KCB vs Nairobi Gambit ended in deadlock.



Standings after Week Three.

<u>TEAMS</u>	<u>MATCHES PLAYED</u>	<u>POINTS</u>
Nairobi Gambit	7	26pts
Sicilian Simbas	3	11pts
KCB	3	10pts
Thika Lost Boys	4	8pts
Checkmates	5	7.5pts
Hexasix	4	6.5pts
Team Tarpo	7	6.5pts
Trojan Knights	3	5.5pts
Safaricom	4	4pts
Kabete CARES	2	0pts
Malezi (new entrant)	0	0pts

## The players review

***" I envy these guys. They rely 100% on inspiration every move. No boring technique for them." – Saif Kanani (on going through PGN files of first 4 league rounds)***

***"I must be the daftest organiser around. I could have easily captured the final few seconds of the cliffhanger Dolf-Atwoli game on my camera which has video function" – Kim Bhari***

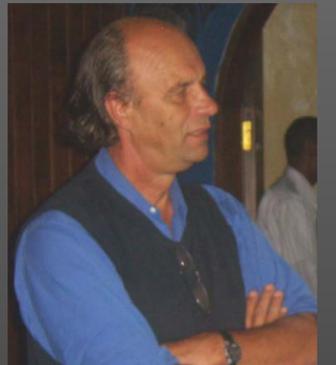


## PLAYER PROFILES



**PURITY GACHIGI**  
(CHECKMATES)

Purity is one of the two leading ladies in Kenyan chess. Last year she was crowned the Kenya Open ladies champion at a Safaricom event in Mombasa. At the recent Dresden Olympiad she was the top performing lady from the East and Central Africa region.



**NIKOLAI VAN BEEK**  
(THIKA LOST BOYS)

Mr. Nikolai is a self-confessed chess addict. When not running his chemicals factory in Thika he is a free-lance chess journalist. Recently he wrote an extensive article on Kenyan chess for a Dutch magazine. He is also a chess organiser and is currently working together with Nairobi Chess Club on the possibility of an internet event.

# PICTURE GALLERY



## An Interview with Kim Bhari

**Q – How do you think the current league is going?**

Kim – I am very pleased a total of 11 teams have registered. Over 3 weekends we have now 50% of the games completed. We have seen some exciting chess with KCB holding Nairobi Gambit to a 2-2 draw. Another positive thing is that many new players have joined in.

**Q – What have been the organizational challenges of getting the league up and running?**

Kim – The biggest challenge has been not knowing what to expect. Some teams only confirmed at the last minute which made life difficult in terms of logistics. Getting a nice venue was not so easy but fortunately Goan Gymkhana was very keen to support us.

**Q – There is talk of the next NCL league being bigger and better. Can you give us a sneak preview?**

Kim – The next league is set to start in Feb 2010. I am planning a prize fund of at least Kshs 100,000/= and will run the league in two divisions each with a maximum 11 teams.

**Q – Is Nairobi Chess Club planning to organise other events apart from the league?**

Kim – We have been thinking about a team event where we can invite our Ugandan and Tanzanian counterparts. Depending on the long weekends available it could be done on the weekend of 20<sup>th</sup> Oct.



We are also planning a new kind of event that will take place over 2 Saturdays from 2:30pm to 8:30pm (3 rounds with 1hr per player). This will allow players to do other things over the weekend.

**Q – Is Kim Bhari back into Kenyan chess?**

Kim – Did I leave Kenyan Chess?? I just took a break from chess politics, completed my MBA, and spent time with my Golden Pawns Aman and Anoushka while they were growing up.

## LEAGUE TIDBITS

### Brilliance Prize.

Currently in the running for the Kshs 5000/= brilliance prize are Akello Atwoli and Dolf Beltz for their gutsy performance in the latest KCB-Nairobi Gambit clash. However, the prize remains open until the final move of the league has been played. So keep putting in the maximum game effort.

### Guest Columnists

League Times is welcoming players and chess fans to contribute to the next issue. The newsletter is rapidly developing a wide circulation outside the chess circle and non-chessplayers are beginning to take an interest in the game.

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League games are played at

GOAN GYMKHANA every

Saturday 2:30pm-6:00pm