

ROUND SEVEN REPORT

JAMAICA TAMES “THE MALTESE FALCON”!

The name Humphrey Bogart is synonymous with Hollywood greatness as he was a star of the silver screen – including the immortal 1943 classic “**Casablanca**” which featured other notables such as Ingrid Bergman and Paul Henreid.

What is not known to many is that Bogart was an avid chess player and played chess on set every chance he got. Indeed, there are famous chess scenes in “**Casablanca**”, with the chess aficionado Bogart at the heart of them. It is reputed that these scenes were not in the original script but Bogart loved chess so much that he insisted that they be a part of the movie!

In today’s 7th round (Women’s Section) of the 42nd World Chess Olympiad in Baku, Azerbaijan, Jamaica’s 75th – ranked women faced Malta (*ranked 106*), a beautiful country (*group of seven islands*) in the Mediterranean Sea, south of Sicily, Italy.



Jamaica (R). Early moments against Malta from “Middle Earth”.

The above reference to Bogart came to mind as on learning we were playing Malta last night I immediately thought of one of my favourite Bogart movies – **“The Maltese Falcon”!** Incidentally, this 1941 movie was the directorial debut of the legendary John Huston, Bogart playing the private investigator Sam Spade.

I chatted with World Chess Federation (*FIDE*) Maltese CEO Geoffrey Borg late in the evening and promised that Jamaica would rebound against his team having enjoyed success against Malta in previous Olympiads!

“MIDDLE EARTH” NO MATCH FOR THE WEST INDIES!

After yesterday’s disappointing loss to Belgium, the *“Reggae Chess Ambassadors”* justified my promise, roaring back into contention for their category prize by defeating the women from “Middle Earth” **3-1** after two crushing wins and two tough draws. The first game to end was on board 4, **WCM Melisha Smith** drawing an English opening in 40 moves against the very experienced **Jutta Klotz**.

On board 1 **WIM Deborah Richards** renewed her “acquaintance” with her “client” **WFM Oana Caruana Pulpan** and opened with the patented move of the celebrated Austro-Hungarian-Czechoslovak Grandmaster Richard Réti (**1.Nf3**). Oana responded with **1...f5** heading into a Dutch set-up but Deborah stormed the barricades with excellent manoeuvres in the middle-game which left her opponent reeling against the ropes. It was only a matter of time before the Jamaican broke through securing an explosive victory in 32 moves, the shell-shocked Maltese resigning with checkmate just one move away. This put the Jamaicans in the lead $1\frac{1}{2} - \frac{1}{2}$.

WCM Annesha Smith (*Melisha’s sister*) then went berserk on board 3. Facing **WFM Jamie Farrugia**, Annesha launched a vicious attack in the middle-game to which her opponent had no answer. At one point there were pins all over the chess battlefield as the hapless Maltese was overwhelmed, her pieces unable to move. **NB:** (*For the uninitiated*) Although women were in combat these were **not** “hair pins”!

The end came mercifully in 49 moves with Annesha way ahead on

material and checkmate only a few moves away. This win took the score to an unassailable $2\frac{1}{2} - \frac{1}{2}$ guaranteeing victory for Jamaica.

WCM Ariel Barrett was promoted to board 2 after CM Rachel Miller was given a holiday. Ariel played solidly with the black pieces against **WCM Filipina Thornton**, exchanged queens early in a deferred Queen's Gambit Accepted and drew in 45 moves – each player giving a good account of herself.

In the **8th** round Jamaica will face **South Africa** (ranked 88) in **match 37**. The Jamaicans will have the black pieces on boards 1 and 3 and White on boards 2 and 4, respectively.

SHREYAS' 1ST OLYMPIAD VICTORY RESCUES JAMAICA!

Jamaica's men had a bruising encounter against Sudan in the Open Section, the match ending **2-2** after two draws and each team swapping wins. **CM Brandon Wilson** returned to action on board 4 against **Abdalmalik Abubaker Hassan** and drew an entertaining Closed Ruy Lopez in 32 moves, easily defusing his opponent's attack. It was the first game to end, via a repetition of moves.



Jamaica facing a tough Sudanese aggregation in round 7. Drawn 2-2.

On board 3 the debutant **NM Shreyas Smith** faced the English opening deployed by **CM Asim Ali Elobeid** who quickly went on a wild offensive. Shreyas parried all the threats with **sangfroid**, collecting material in the process. When the smoke cleared Asim was reeling and Shreyas finished with panache, the medics quickly called in with checkmate just two moves away! The game lasted only 25 moves, the victory giving the three-time reigning Jamaica Junior Champion his first win in his debut Olympiad! Jamaica now led **1 ½ - ½**.

FM Damion Davy was promoted to board 1 as FM Warren Elliott was rested after playing six straight games. A three-time Jamaica champion, Davy wielded the black pieces competently, neutralized any aggressive thoughts his opponent (**CM Samir Nadir**) had in a Queen's pawn (*London system*) opening and easily drew in 34 moves. Jamaica 2 - Sudan 1.

FM Malaku Lorne's dreadful run of form continued as his usually sound fortifications were breached by **FM Abubaker Tagelsir's** rampant Slav Defence on board 2, the Jamaican resigning in 39 moves. This excellent win by the Sudanese Master secured the 2-2 draw for his team.

In tomorrow's **8th** round in **match 66** Jamaica will be the favourites against yet another African country, **Mauritania**, the Northwest Africans ranked 26 places below the West Indians who will have the white pieces on boards 1 and 3 and Black on boards 2 and 4, respectively.

RULES OF PLAY

Each player has 90 minutes for the first 40 moves, an additional 30 minutes thereafter, plus 30 seconds per move from move 1. A point is awarded for a win; a half point for a draw and zero for a loss on each board. When the points are tabulated the team with more will be declared the winner and awarded match points. No player is allowed to offer a draw until after 30 moves have been completed.

Jamaica's participation was made possible chiefly by sponsorship from the Government of Jamaica (*via the Sports Development Foundation*), the Jamaica Chess Federation and the Kasparov Chess Foundation.

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2016 September 9 (Friday)*

All photographs courtesy of the Jamaica Chess Federation unless indicated otherwise.