

2nd Letter from the 2006 Olympiad in Turin, Italy

As you all probably know by now the US Men's team were something of underachievers in round one, with only GM Kaidanov winning and the other 3 boards ending in draws. GMs Onischuk and New Zealander Anthony Ker was the very last game to finish. Ker, like the other New Zealanders, was rated at least 300 points lower than his US opponent. It was a surprise outcome to the matches, surpassed only by India's result at neighboring boards.

The women's team did substantially better with a 3-0 result over Bangladesh and a 2-1 finish against Estonia in the second round. I won't go into detail on this topic as you can get them at many websites before this will even get posted to the USCF website.

I understand the FIDE management will meet tomorrow with the Olympiad organizers to try to address some of the complaints being lodged by the players. More generous portions at meals should be an easy fix, getting TVs into living quarters will not be possible. Not telephones either. It would help if the small post office, that functioned in the Village during the Winter Games, was up and running but it doesn't appear that activation is planned anytime soon. There is a game room for non-chess entertainment but not much else in the form of leisure activities. There used to be several laundry facilities but all the appliances are gone. The playing venue gets a bit noisy at times--more than would be tolerated in any US Swiss. People occasionally even toot the horns of the Fiat cars on display out in the exhibition area, the bleachers are aluminum and walking on them makes quite a bit of tinny noise. I think I am more sensitive to this than the players seem to be since none of them have complained.

One tidbit of gossip: with the FIDE elections coming up next week, and with Bessel Kok a very viable competitor to the incumbent, it seems important to have at least some of his team here to campaign. Especially GM Yasser Seirawan, who has been a very energetic, loyal and vocal supporter. Well, it seems that Yasser planned to arrive on Saturday but suffered the misfortune of having his laptop and passport ripped off at the Amsterdam airport. He hasn't gotten here yet, needless to say. Getting a new passport is not easy task.

There's a line waiting for this computer so I'd better give it up. More another evening....

Carol Jarecki