Features

Jan 12, 2018 | 10:02 by *chess24 staff*

Paul Keres VIII: Gulliver among the Lilliputians

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Paul Keres ended his amazing sequence of finishing second in four Candidates Tournaments in a row when he lost a match to Boris Spassky in 1965, but while that may have ended the Estonian legend's World Championship ambitions he never quit the game. A decade later, in 1975, he finished above Spassky to win the Tallinn International at the age of 59. Alas, a few months later he was dead. In this final part of his series, Joosep Grents recounts the final decade of Paul Keres' life and reflects on the question of why he never quite became World Champion.

10th World Champion Boris Spassky and Paul Keres at the 1975 Tallinn International. Spassky *would later say*, "Keres was the Gulliver among the Lilliputians, he was a real giant. Botvinnik, I believe, was the leader of the Lilliputians" | photo: Dmitri Prants, ESM F 219:100/C 1046, *Estonian Sports Museum*

You can read the earlier parts of this series here:

- *Paul Keres I: Prince without a Crown (1916-36)*
- *Paul Keres II: A new chess superstar (1936-37)*
- *Paul Keres III: Avro 1938: Rightful challenger*
- *Paul Keres IV: The War Years*
- *Paul Keres V: The 1948 World Championship*
- *Paul Keres VI: The Eternal Second*
- *Paul Keres VII: Last chance in Curaçao*

Once again we've gathered together many of the key games discussed (they're all linked in the text) so you can replay them with modern computer analysis - simply click on a result to open the game. In total there are now 140 games by Keres:

	White	Evaluation	Black
1	GM Keres, Paul	○ 1 - 0 ●	GM Benko, Pal
2	GM Panno, Oscar	○ 0 - 1 ●	GM Keres, Paul
3	GM Spassky, B.	○ 0 - 1 ●	GM Keres, Paul
4	GM Keres, Paul	○ 1 - 0 ●	GM Spassky, B.
5	GM Keres, Paul	○ 0 - 1 ●	GM Spassky, B.
6	GM Korchnoi, V.	○ 0 - 1 ●	GM Keres, Paul

« ‹ … 1953-1959 1960-1962 1963-1975 › »

1963-1975: A veteran's life

by Joosep Grents

At the 1962 Olympiad Keres wrote to Tubin:

> We're playing at a holiday resort near Varna, which was built a couple of years ago. The beach is excellent, the weather nice and the water warm, so I could take a good rest here... if only there wasn't the stupid game of chess. This year I've played six months almost non-stop, so I'm slightly losing my appetite for the game already.

The intensity of 1961-62 slowly started to fade as Keres took his well-deserved rest. However, even though he stopped playing as often as he used to, the subsequent years brought good results for the veteran. There was reason to play less, not only due to his age but the fact that his health had begun to deteriorate. As all tournament players know, good physical form is as important as mental form, and that was especially true of the gruelling Candidates Tournaments of the 50s and 60s, when tournaments would drag on over a period of months. Keres had so far been in good physical shape, as he had always been drawn towards sports, even taking part in the Estonian Tennis Championship on several occasions in his early career. Randviir recalls that at a training camp Keres beat them so badly at table tennis that after one demolition Nei put away his bat and said, "There's more hope of beating the grandmaster at chess!" This gave Keres an advantage in the thirties as well as later in life, as his good physical form allowed him to endure tournament conditions some older masters would struggle with, but the years after 1962 would increasingly be riddled with health issues for Keres. He was soon diagnosed with podagra (gout affecting the big toe), which not only stopped him from playing tennis but meant he would often appear at tournaments in his usual smart suit, but instead of shoes would be wearing slippers.

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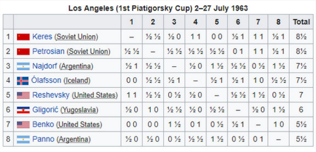

Los Angeles (1st Piatigorsky Cup) 2–27 July 1963

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
1	Keres (Soviet Union)	–	½ ½	½ 0	1 1	0 0	½ 1	1 1	½ 1	8½
2	Petrosian (Soviet Union)	½ ½	–	½ ½	½ ½	½ ½	0 1	1 1	½ 1	8½
3	Najdorf (Argentina)	½ 1	½ ½	–	½ 0	1 ½	½ ½	0 ½	1 ½	7½
4	Ólafsson (Iceland)	0 0	½ ½	½ 1	–	½ 1	½ 1	1 0	½ ½	7½
5	Reshevsky (United States)	1 1	½ ½	0 ½	½ 0	–	½ ½	1 ½	0 ½	7
6	Gligorić (Yugoslavia)	½ 0	1 0	½ ½	½ 0	½ ½	–	½ 0	1 ½	6
7	Benko (United States)	0 0	0 0	1 ½	0 1	0 ½	½ 1	–	1 0	5½
8	Panno (Argentina)	½ 0	½ 0	0 ½	½ ½	1 ½	0 ½	0 1	–	5½

Keres triumphed in the strongest chess event held in the USA in almost 40 years | source: *Wikipedia*

1963 started well, as he triumphed in the First Piatigorsky Cup, played in Los Angeles, sharing first place with Petrosian while outpacing Najdorf, Olafsson, Reshevsky, Gligorić, Benko and Panno.

Douglas Griffin
@dgriffinchess · **Follow**

Winners of 1st Piatigorsky Cup (Los Angeles,1963) Tigran Petrosian & Paul Keres, with Mrs Piatigorsky (via worldchesshof.org). #chess

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Curiously, he fell ill during the tournament, but still managed to win - something his reputation may have had something to do with. Isaac Kashdan notes in his introduction to the “First Piatigorsky Cup”:

> Keres first became ill on an evening when he had two adjourned games to complete. He had decisive advantages against both *Benko* and *Panno*, but each had planned to continue. When word came that Keres would be unable to play, however, both opponents promptly resigned. This may be the first case in chess history that a player who asked for a postponement was rewarded with two points.

That speaks volumes for Keres’ character and how he was perceived in the chess world, and it’s no wonder that the players wanted him to become FIDE president later on. Before the next Candidates event he would play in Beverwijk - where he shared first place with a new Estonian Champion, Iivo Nei - and then continue his winning ways in Buenos Aires, where he tied for first with the now World Champion Tigran Petrosian. Olympiads passed in their usual rhythm, as the USSR continued to dominate. In Varna, Keres took an individual bronze and followed it up with individual gold in Tel Aviv, both times on board four.

These results often cost him dearly, however. Ill-health was becoming an increasing annoyance for the chess artist, but he still seemed young at heart, displaying a tendency to prioritise chess events and simultaneous exhibitions over his own health. While in his youth that was only natural, as young players are hungry for success and playing only boosts their desire to play more, it became problematic as he grew older. He tended to ignore health issues as long as they hadn’t developed further than being a mere annoyance. After the life he’d lived coping with annoyances was second nature, but this was not exactly good for him. In his correspondence with Eduard Tubin, a close friend, he wrote that after the Olympiad in Tel Aviv he was planning to have his tonsils removed, as recommended by his doctors. In his next letter he already wrote that he had decided to postpone the operation in favour of playing the Hastings tournament of 1964/65. While it was a decision that led to tournament victory, it did nothing but damage to his health. During the last days of the tournament he was already complaining that he had pain in his toes. He chose to ignore it and play a simultaneous exhibition tour instead of resting. The inevitable then caught up with him.

> Such behaviour was rather dubious on my part and playing had already become troublesome during the first simultaneous exhibition. After I had played in three exhibitions, it culminated in my withdrawing from the last two exhibitions as it had become physically impossible for me to walk. At the moment I am resting at the house of the CHESS editor Wood, but my foot does not seem to be getting any better - it is still swollen, and if I take a step with it or touch it at all, it hurts like hell.

Chess was his life. He would consciously ignore the recommendations of his doctors to reduce his chess schedule and get both general rest and rest for his feet. It was as if chess was a drug and Keres couldn’t get enough of it, despite the fact it led to worsening health issues. A cynic would call it an addiction, but an idealist would label it the true dedication of an authentic chess artist. Call it as you will, it was quintessential Keres. He couldn’t imagine a life without chess and, as a consequence, still remained a strong player despite his age and health issues. He would struggle with his ageing body, but his mind remained sharp.

> The external symptoms now include pain in my toes and recently in my right elbow and wrist as well. In Marienbad the baths I took during the tournament even made these symptoms worse and, as a result, I was unable to move my hand at all for a prolonged period of time. When I had to take Hort’s rook on c1 my hand only reached c3, so I had to change hands to reach c1!

A struggle for the body, yet another first place for the mind (shared with Hort). Such results did nothing but cement the health issues, but they also confirmed that Keres was still at the top.

Spassky and beyond

Keres was still to play in two Candidates cycles, with the one he entered in 1965 played in a knockout format. Fortune deserted him, though, as he was immediately forced to play the favourite, the rising star Boris Spassky. Keres prepared for Spassky with the now established Iivo Nei (who would later go on to assist Spassky in his match against Fischer) and even sought Suetin's assistance, but while his self-confidence was high in some matters, his general outlook was less optimistic. Nei:

> One could feel that Keres had a somewhat pessimistic mindset for this event. The grandmaster thought that this was his last chance. I assumed that purely in terms of chess strength he would still beat Spassky, so I tried to encourage him, especially because after Spassky things might have been a little easier.

The match was played in Riga, and it was the first serious match that Spassky had played so far. For Keres, it was one of the last. *He won the first game* when Spassky's enthusiastic play led nowhere but to a quick collapse. However, Boris was gracious in defeat, and even joined in with the applause of the crowd after resigning.

Heuer:

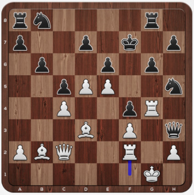
> One external detail was already worth my presence in Riga: Spassky's applause. Has anyone ever seen the like of that before? I couldn't believe at the time that this was mere courtesy (try acting like that yourself after a loss!). A while later, I asked Spassky about it: “By the way, I was told that before the match with Keres you were caught saying that this is not yet your time, as if you're waiting for the next cycle. Is that true?” “No! I was in good form and full of hope.” “But after losing the first game to Keres you applauded with the crowd. Such a rare gesture looked like an anticipation of fatality, a demonstration of your acceptance of possible defeat.” Spassky could not hide his surprise over such a gudgeon-like idea *(Heuer refers to a Russian fairy tale featuring a cunning gudgeon fish)*: “I applauded because Keres really played well.”

Yes, it was wrong to see Spassky anticipating potential defeat. On the contrary, such self-discipline demonstrated the readiness for something else.

But after a draw in the third game, Spassky demolished Keres to score 3/3 in the following games, defeating Keres in his beloved Nimzo as well as on both sides of the Spanish. Nei:

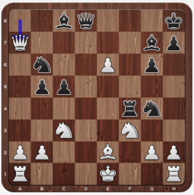
> Unfortunately it turned out that in this match Keres failed in his main opening, the Spanish. I tried to bring his attention to the Spanish during our preparation, but Keres said that he had played the Spanish all his life and we should be looking at something else...
>
> As a coach, I feel confident enough to say: the biggest mistake in our preparation was that we underestimated the importance of the Spanish. Keres was hoping that his vast experience and corresponding knowledge must be greater than Spassky's... But soon we found out the bitter truth: Spassky had prepared extremely well for this match. I have not seen him as well-prepared for anything else, even when I trained and worked with him later on.

Keres now found himself in a somewhat confounding position where he had two games to overcome a two-point deficit. We should remember, though, that trailing in a match was something of a Keres specialty, since he had trailed in most of his matches. Time after time, when all hope had seemingly sailed beyond the horizon, he managed to find resources to turn matches in his favour. In his youth it all came “easily”, but going against the young generation as a veteran was a somewhat different matter. Nevertheless, Keres went at Spassky all guns blazing and managed to *win a miniature in the 8th game*, as Spassky failed to force a draw and was surprised to admit that he was already experiencing fatigue despite his young age and the physical preparation he'd done for the match.



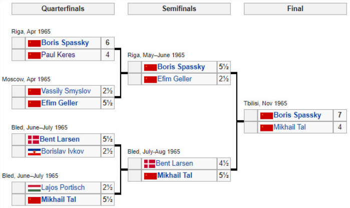
After Keres played 25.Rf2! Spassky resigned. The threat is Bf1, and the price of saving the queen is very high

In the end, though, it was youth that would triumph. Spassky entered a “maze of complications” *by playing the King's Indian* instead of a more solid opening in the crucial game. That might hint at immaturity, but it proved a gamble worth taking.



The wild position after Keres played 17.Qxa7 - not a textbook way to play with Black when all you need is a draw!

His victory meant that the match ended 6-4 in Spassky's favour, and Keres' streak of finishing runner-up in the Candidates Tournament in four consecutive cycles had finally been broken.



Quarterfinals		Semifinals		Final	
Riga, Apr 1965		Riga, May–June 1965		Tbilisi, Nov 1965	
Boris Spassky	6	**Boris Spassky**	5½	**Boris Spassky**	7
Paul Keres	4	Efim Geller	2½	Mikhail Tal	4
Moscow, Apr 1965		Bled, July-Aug 1965			
Vassily Smyslov	2½	Bent Larsen	4½		
Efim Geller	5½	**Mikhail Tal**	5½		
Bled, June–July 1965					
Bent Larsen	5½				
Borislav Ivkov	2½				
Bled, June–July 1965					
Lajos Portisch	2½				
Mikhail Tal	5½				

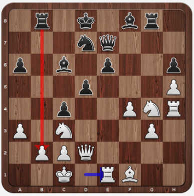
Boris Spassky would go on to win the Candidates, but narrowly lost the World Championship match against Tigran Petrosian | source: *Wikipedia*

Also gone, it seemed, were his chances of ever playing a World Championship match. Heuer:

> Some readers of "Our Keres" have noted that my description of Keres that night, as only speaking of his ruined work (constantly analysing the missed 27.Qa5 in the game), gives the impression of trying to add an artistic veneer. Be that as it may, it was fascinating to observe. It was, after all, the end of an era; twenty eight years of continuous effort had been nullified, but the defeated Keres did not grumble. What one could see was that even deep inside he was still engaged in concrete and active analysis. In sport, victory is seemingly all-important, and the same applies to chess as well, but sometimes we overemphasise victory and winning. For a creative mastermind it signifies neither the end nor the start of the world. And so I realised that Keres will soon be back at the board.

Aftermath

What followed the Candidates Tournament for Keres at first hardly suggested that he was losing his stride. This is apparent in the Soviet Championship played on his home turf, Tallinn, where he started off well, *winning in style against the reigning Soviet Champion Korchnoi*.



24...Rxb2! saw Keres open up Korchnoi's king, with Viktor unable to withstand the pressure

He also managed to beat *Kuzmin in a miniature*, but in the next round he got carried away after refusing Taimanov's draw offer, blundered a pawn and lost the game. Somewhat typically for Keres, he then played without vigour, drawing 11 of his 12 remaining games and finishing 6th.

Curiously, if one examines the tournaments Keres played in, this scenario was far from atypical. It is as if he had decided in his mind which games were crucial, and upon losing them he would visibly go on to lose drive and motivation. His loss against Taimanov in this tournament illustrates the point quite vividly. As does Iivo Nei:

> I wouldn't say that Keres was riddled with superstition. Somehow, however, he had a very old-fashioned stance, something along the lines of believing that when things were starting to going wrong for him, they would go wrong; or that when the start was good then the end would be similar. I had already experienced this on our trips - Keres was influenced by external factors, external omens... I would say that it leaned toward some kind of fatalism...

> I should stress that it was not really superstition, but it was something similar. It was probably characteristic of chess artists: when his games did not seem to go well, it was as if he lost belief in himself. So that when he played badly, he played very badly. Comparing him to his great rival and in many ways complete antipode, Botvinnik, one could claim that an out-of-form Botvinnik played better than an out-of-form Keres. An in-form Keres, however, was often better than an in-form Botvinnik, or certainly at least at the same level.

The locals couldn't care less about the mishaps of one tournament, though, and in his 50th year Keres remained a true national hero in Estonia. His 50th birthday was celebrated appropriately:

Olimpiu Di Luppi
@olimpiuurcan · Follow

Footage from Paul Keres' spectacular golden jubilee celebration (Tallinnfilm, 1966).

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Ovations aside, his health had not improved and he was even hospitalised for a month in 1966. He only played one tournament at the end of 1966, in Stockholm, where he triumphed with 7/9 over a field that could only muster Bent Larsen as the top player.

“Gulliver among the Lilliputians” (Spassky)

If you stay at the top of the chess world for as long as Keres did, there are inevitably changes you have to undergo and witness throughout your career. As the 60s ended and Fischer started to draw more attention, Keres started to feel his age. After all, the generation in which he had grown up with was so different from the one which dominated the 1970s.

In general, what did Keres make of the antics that surrounded the Fischer - Spassky match? He speaks of it in his letters to Böök:

> It is very unlikely I would go to that mad match - already enough grandmasters are packed together there. When reflecting on the 'battles' prior to the match you have to feel sorry that the chess world had to go through something like that. Alekhine was also pretty similar in this regard, but the current generation surpasses Alekhine in such behaviour…
>
> The match in Iceland is keeping everyone on the edge of their seats not only with its games but also with some other noteworthy statements surfacing before and during the match. No previous World Championship match has seen such disarray. It is hard to understand dear Bobby - it is likely that not everything is 100% in order in his upper compartments. This, however, doesn't stop one from playing great chess. I think people have shown too much patience with him. Next time he should immediately be called to order at the first appearance of 'symptoms of illness'.

The more frenzied Fischer's antics became, the more the personality of Keres contrasted with such behaviour and appealed to those seeking order and stability in the chaos. So again, it is no wonder he was considered a good candidate for the FIDE presidency. Indeed, considering that Keres grew up in the presence and company of gentlemen like Capablanca, Euwe, Lasker and Alekhine, it is completely understandable that he would scoff at the arrogance and manners (or rather the lack thereof) of players like Fischer. But such an attitude not only rejected but underestimated the power and influence of such behaviour. Ultimately it constituted a clear psychological weakness on Keres' part, especially when speaking of…

Why did Keres never claim the crown?

Now, after covering all the Candidates Tournaments where Keres had at least some shot at the title, let's focus on another matter - his character and the reasons he never claimed the ultimate crown.

The question is simultaneously both puzzling and obvious, depending on the viewpoint you adopt to address the question. Some, like Reshevsky, spoke of Keres lacking the “killer instinct” that World Champions tend to exhibit, while others, especially his Estonian colleagues such as Kivine, speak of the context of the Soviet Union and the aftermath of World War II as the crux of the whole matter. Some expressed seemingly paradoxical but logically defendable opinions, such as Petrosian, who noted:

> It is far more difficult to be “only second” on four consecutive occasions than it is to win the Candidates Tournament.

The fact that we have eyewitness accounts and many authoritative opinions is exactly why there are, and likely always will be, arguments on the matter. The man whose opinion would carry the most weight, i.e. the man himself, remained silent, though needless to say his silence was also the subject of endless interpretations. The result is that we reach a certain *impasse* when we try to address issues as interconnected and hard to pin down as his character, the nature of his results and the reasons for such results. Some speak of the Soviets as definitely stopping Keres, while others speak of character flaws such as his gentleness as a human being.

With regards to the Soviets stopping him from achieving his goal, I am of the opinion that in 1948 one can clearly observe that Keres was not allowed to win the tournament at the expense of Botvinnik and that he acted exactly in accordance with this “broad instruction”. Evidence for this should be sufficient, and I also plan to discuss this in a later article. However, there is less proof about the period after Stalin's death, and currently I believe that although Keres was still hindered in this regard

Paul Keres in Vancouver in his final month | photo: ESM F 314:342/B 4013, *Estonian Sports Museum*

he had a realistic chance to qualify for a match, making it reasonable to inquire into the reasons why he didn't. There's no easy answer, though. We like to think that things happen for a reason - and of course, they do - but we have a curious natural tendency to seek for reasons that are ultimate and definitive, while the truth is always much more complex than the black-and-white version we hope to construct.

Of course, from a pragmatic point of view, seeking definitive reasons is entirely reasonable, as it allows us to identify weaknesses in our behaviour and rectify potential future shortcomings based on our observations. When it came to Keres, though, this aspect is often absent from his behaviour, especially when it came to rectifying aspects which did not concern the chessboard directly. He was clearly a pragmatist at the board, always looking for clear variations and concrete sequences of moves, as a professional chess player should. But many, including Heuer, have noted that his pragmatism ended when it came to the psychological aspects of the game. He seemed consciously to ignore the psychological issues that potentially stopped him from achieving the goal of becoming World Champion. It was as if fatalism got the better of him in the end. In one of his later conversations with his brother he somewhat bitterly commented:

> They want me to play chess better than everyone else. Look at what I had to endure throughout my career, as well as the conditions I played in. What are they, compared to those of others? You don't really play better than others like that.

The war and a killer instinct

The Second World War was certainly a turning point in Keres' career, one that seemed to freeze him in second place, with the elusive mirage of the World Championship title seemingly within arm's reach yet always remaining out of grasp. The mirage accompanied his whole career, as he narrowly missed first place and thus finished second in the Candidates on four consecutive occasions, not to mention that he had already gained the moral right to challenge Alekhine in 1938. Did Keres really peak at 22 years of age when he achieved the rights of a moral/potential challenger? The young Keres was an optimist by nature and would never have assumed this would remain his best achievement when it came to challenging for the crown. The Second World War, however, was the catalyst for the slow erosion of optimism which lasted throughout his career and seemed to culminate with the creeping fatalism Nei noticed later in Keres' career.

Keres came out of the war by the skin of his teeth, owing his survival largely to factors he did not directly control, whether the random Omakaitse fighter who recognised him in a line of people about to be shot, or the Estonian Socialist authorities who vouched for his innocence in a post-war environment where others who engaged in similar dissident activities were sent to labour camps or executed. These events surely had an effect on him, both as a person and as a chess player. To a large degree you can say he owed his survival to his skill in chess, since that granted him the prestige and fame to make such life-saving events possible.

Keres gives a simultaneous exhibition in Vancouver in May 1975 | photo: ESM F 314:343/B 4014, *Estonian Sports Museum*

"Killer instinct", meanwhile, is an expression those who survived the war could be forgiven for despising, since they knew exactly where it could lead. At the chessboard we find it in its mildest of forms, but Keres still tended to philosophise it out of the game, insisting it was a struggle of White against Black rather than of himself against an opponent. His customary approach was to disregard who he was playing, so that when it actually did matter it could be difficult to handle an unfamiliar pressure. During the inter-war period Keres had mostly played in relaxed tournament environments, where chess players were treated with respect both by the public and other players - in stark contrast to the antagonism which emerged during the Cold War. After the war, he found himself a second-class citizen behind Botvinnik and was disturbed by the atmosphere at the tournaments. His boundless optimism had been curtailed by the war and what followed. But what about a "killer instinct"?

To illustrate what Reshevsky and others are referring to when they speak of "killer instinct", let's take an example of such an instance. I believe that the case of Benko at Curacao is rather telling in this respect. When Benko achieved a good position against Keres but spoiled it in time trouble and lost by unfortunate circumstances (getting flagged in a drawn position after having to pick up pieces he had knocked over while making his last move), he says he thought to himself, "I'm going to beat this guy when it's the most painful for him." Benko gained motivation from the loss and managed to muster all his strength and will-power in order to convert it into his only full point against Keres, thus destroying Keres' tournament. This is exactly the kind of thing Keres was lacking - this primordial aggression and use of an emotion such as revenge as a motivating factor. It was something alien to people of his nature, especially as he matured. The account of such events he gave in his books rarely, if ever, goes into analysing anything beyond the 64 squares. Of course you need to take into account the Soviet environment, where he had to tread carefully to avoid getting burned when speaking of sensitive topics (read: hidden collusion among the Soviets). However, we can also see this disregard for individual psychology in his encounters with the strongest and in his painful reaction to the losses that followed.

The psychological aspect of the game is often completely ignored in Keres' annotations, or laconically substituted with disclaimers such as "a difficult situation", that convey none of the real emotion inherent in the situation. There are few to no value judgements addressed to anything beyond the board. As mentioned before, he would substitute the names of the players, even in his own games, with "White" and "Black", and where others might praise their play in their brilliant games, Keres often criticises his own moves and offers improvements. While it shows a clear tendency in his behaviour, it also makes Keres one of the best chess writers of all time, since his attention is fully at the board, and thus the objective depth with which he analyses is simply breath-taking. The psychological aspect of the game is minimised, but is it something that Keres consciously ignored, or that he simply considered inconsequential? The latter seemed to Heuer to be the case:

> However, when one's natural defence mechanisms are weak-ish, it is still possible to improve; to make psychological adjustments. I dare say that Keres lacked precisely this ability to properly adapt himself, and that may constitute his greatest weakness as a chess player. I clearly recall the times of his unfortunate results and how he showed clear contempt for the articles which tried somehow to provide suggestions on how he could get back on track. As we've seen earlier, these recipes were often provided in a dubious manner and form, but when they spoke about problems of mental competitiveness, they were probably not far off the mark.

Fatalism or choice?

We already touched on another factor when we quoted Iivo Nei on Keres' tendency towards fatalism, often a self-fulfilling prophecy that meant that when things began to go badly they went very badly. If we observe the games of Keres in tournaments other than the Candidates Tournament of which Nei speaks, it becomes clear that Keres played well up to a certain point - until the grave emotional setback of losing to a key rival. In many tournaments, such as the 1941 Absolute Championship, the 1947 Chigorin Memorial, the 1950 Budapest Candidates, the 1953 Zürich Candidates and so on, the same pattern recurs - Keres was among the favourites to win and was at the front until he suffered a loss at the hands of one of his rivals. And even though he often still had a chance to recover and sometimes catch up, the emotional impact was often so grave that he went on to lose or somehow scrape together a bunch of eventless draws in the subsequent games. Or, as he would often put it himself, "...after which I played joylessly".

For me, the whole crux of the matter is this: Keres earned the moral right to challenge Alekhine in 1938, but never beat the man during the war years, remaining, in his mind, morally second throughout. That is, until Alekhine's death and the Soviet occupation that captured and initially "caged" him. In 1948 he could, for the first time in 10 years, have a proper claim to the title, but the reality was that he was told not to hinder Botvinnik, so the decade-long role remained essentially the same. The fact that he had to play second best to World Champions for more than ten years, while knowing he had what it takes to be the best, must surely have affected him and given birth to the benign fatalism which subsequently grew increasingly malicious with every second-place finish at the Candidates Tournaments in the subsequent 14 years. The man had been second for more than ten years running - was it then really such a surprise that he remained second for another nearly fifteen years? Disappointing? Certainly. Surprising? Perhaps not.

Finalé

Not found

As the crown grew distant, the results started to grow distant from the previous successes as well. In 1967 Keres played in Moscow and Winnipeg, finishing in 9-12th and 3-4th place respectively, as periods of illness returned to haunt him. In 1968 he triumphed in Bamberg, edging out Petrosian and Unzicker to finish ahead of a somewhat weaker field with 12/15.

While his results became less impressive than in his earlier years, his presence in tournaments started to carry a different weight. He was a true asset for the younger generation of Estonian and Soviet players, with whom he could share his vast experience and knowledge when they played in the Olympiads.

Randviir recalls the tournament in Pärnu in 1955:

> I was doing surprisingly well, until I had to adjourn the game against Ragozin in a wretched position. Keres told me, "Jüri, examine this carefully. Tomorrow we will go over the position. Perhaps you can get out of this." So I substituted eating and sleeping for studying the position, while still realising that the chances of escape were less than slim. Then came the "supervisor". Soon it became clear to me that Keres did not come to familiarise himself with the position, but had already analysed it himself. The position was objectively lost, so he offered a bluff variation which, provided the opponent made a slight error, would allow a study-like draw. His intuition (that of a bridge player, it seemed?!) was not mistaken. Ragozin, confident in his win, fell into the trap. When the drawn position landed on the board Keres approached and looked at the position as if seeing it for the first time, and said: "You have no luck with the youngsters, Viacheslav Vasilyevich!" (Ragozin had lost to Nei and drawn with Mikkov).

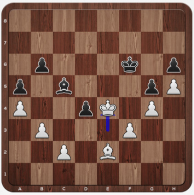
But it was not only the young who benefited from the presence of Keres. Petrosian recalls:

> His path in chess is best characterised by finding the hidden dynamics and coordination between minor pieces. In the later stages of his career, I remember how we - his colleagues - begged him, "Paul, look at this for a second!" (because in the toughest moments even the masters of the chess world put their faith in miracles from some higher power). This was usually followed by a slightly ironic, "Well, I might take a look..." and immediately the bored pieces sprung to life.

Tal:

> I want to tell a story of a night in Skopje (1972). At that time our delegation started unsuccessfully... After five hours of play *(against the Bulgarians)*, we had drawn one and adjourned three games in messy positions where either side could win. I got to the hotel feeling despondent, as the game in which I had at first had a strong edge had been adjourned... *in a boring drawish endgame*.
>
> The analysis of my game was entrusted to Keres. I have to say after thirty years of chess I have become immune to being amazed at things, but his analysis truly astonished me. After a while it became clear that it was possible to play for a win without rooks on the board. The position that had at first appeared dull became more interesting by the minute. The analysis was accompanied with smiling and a cup of coffee after every hour and a half. We finished at about 6am, with the resumption scheduled for 10am...

> Incidentally, the analysis proved to be highly productive, for when on the following day the game was again adjourned, on the 72nd move, Keres and I were perfectly familiar with the position: we had reached it in our analysis the previous night. There was no need for a second resumption: Radulov resigned without further play.



Keres helped to show Tal (White) that not all opposite-coloured bishop endings are drawn!

Botvinnik:

> As Keres aged, he became increasingly sociable, witty and probably also affectionate. The last tournament we played together was in Wijk aan Zee *(1969)*. I caught a cold, but continued playing. I am lying in bed, analysing the adjourned position against Portisch on a pocket chess set - a difficult endgame... Unexpectedly, there is a knock on the door and Paul comes in, "So, can you save it?" I explain that after a long search I've found a single drawn position, but I can't work out how to obtain it. Keres took my pocket chess set, thought for a while and, giving the chess set back, said, "Well, what if you play like this?" We looked at each other and were overcome with uncontrollable laughter - Paul had found a simple way of obtaining the position I was looking for. When we resumed play, *Portisch was stunned - a draw!* This is how he was robbed of 1st place.

It's perhaps surprising, but the relationship between Botvinnik and Keres had warmed up as the years rolled by and both players became increasingly distant from the game of thrones against the backdrop of which their relations had always seemed antagonistic at best. Keres visited Botvinnik in Moscow and afterwards remarked to his wife, "Botvinnik isn't such a bad person after all - he's nice and friendly." Maria Keres laments, "He forgot everything - Paul forgot everything."

His friendliness and chivalrous behaviour earned him the respect of everyone who got to know him even a bit. Many talked of him as the next president of FIDE, but there was nothing Keres could do to that end, as it was an entirely political decision to be taken care of by the Soviet Sports Committee. Although he was admired even in the Sports Committee by his later days, he started to relax a little too much and as a result got into trouble with the authorities after meeting with the Czechoslovak dissident Ludek Pachman abroad. The meeting was condemned, Keres got a scolding from the authorities and he was not allowed to travel abroad for a period of time. In an environment where each of your moves was under the scrutiny of the all-seeing, all-hearing KGB, this should not have come as a surprise. The reason he was under such close watch, though, was because he refused to collaborate with the KGB a couple of years earlier. Such an environment meant there were only a few people who were really close to him. Unzicker speaks of their usual interaction:

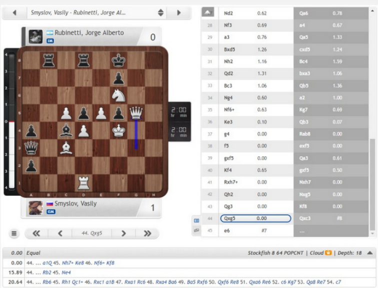
> It was a special, distant friendship - one of aristocratic goodwill. His conduct was always dignified... My relationship with Keres was very close and warm, but he would always refer to me in the plural *(Sie vs Du in German)*. Keres always regarded those he did not know with caution. In a closed circle, he would not conceal his views or opinions, but he never crossed a certain line.

One of the Soviets with whom Keres had close relations was Smyslov. After Keres had dropped out of the battle for the title, the Sports Committee decided he should accompany Smyslov to the Mallorca Interzonal in 1970 - as his second!

Not found

Keres and Smyslov 22 years earlier

The veterans had some success, but ended with a predictable mid-table finish. Smyslov recalls how during *his game against Rubinetti*, Keres found an interesting continuation after a rook sacrifice which would allow him to win the game. They also discovered the best defence for Black, allowing him to draw, but the gamble once again paid off: Rubinetti slipped, lost control and resigned.



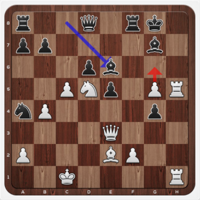
	Nd2	0.62	Qa6	0.78
28	Nf3	0.69	a4	0.67
29	a3	0.76	Qa5	1.33
30	Bxd5	1.26	cxd5	1.24
31	Nh2	1.16	Bc4	1.59
32	Qd2	1.31	bxa3	1.06
33	Bc3	1.06	Qb5	1.36
34	Ng4	0.60	a2	1.00
35	Nf6+	0.63	Kg7	0.69
36	Ke3	0.10	Qb3	0.07
37	g4	0.00	Rab8	0.00
38	f5	0.00	exf5	0.00
39	gxf5	0.00	Qa3	0.61
40	Kf4	0.65	gxf5	0.50
41	Rxh7+	0.00	Nxh7	0.00
42	Qh2	0.00	Nxg5	0.00
43	Qg3	0.00	Kf8	0.00
44	Qxg5	0.00	Qxc3	#8
45	e6	#7	...	

0.00	Equal — Stockfish 8 64 POPCNT | Cloud | Depth: 18
0.00	44. ... a1Q 45. Nh7+ Ke8 46. Nf6+ Kf8
15.89	44. ... Rb2 45. Ne4
20.64	44. ... Rb6 45. Rh1 Qc1+ 46. Rxc1 a1B 47. Rxa1 Rc6 48. Rxa4 Ba6 49. Ba5 Rxf6 50. Qxf6 Re8 51. Qxa6 Re6 52. c6 Kg7 53. Qa8 Re7 54. c7

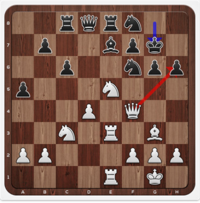
Promoting the pawn on a1 would force a draw, but 44...Qxc3? allowed Keres' cunning plan to be crowned with 45.e6!

It is a curious fact that Keres reached his peak FIDE rating of 2615 at the age of 55, in 1971. However, one should note that the FIDE ratings had only just been established at that point, so for a clearer indicator of ratings one can refer to *chessmetrics*. Chessmetrics puts his rating at the time even higher (2740) and places him 5th in the world on the rating list for April 1971. The only players with a better rating were Fischer, Spassky, Larsen and Korchnoi, all at least two decades younger than Keres! To be fifth in the world at the age of 55 is rather remarkable. In today's terms, it is equivalent to Nigel Short making a leap back into the top 10 within the next 3 years, unlikely as that seems. How did such a rating come about? Well, it was a result of a series of good tournament victories. First he won Budapest 1970 (10/15), then shared first with Tal in Tallinn 1971 (11.5/15) and finally shared second with Tal (9.5/13) in Pärnu 1971. Throughout this period he played 41 games, winning 20, drawing 21 and not losing a single one. While some of these wins were to be expected, against a somewhat weaker field, he still faced 21 GMs at a time when the title was not common at all. But what is a master or a future GM to a legend?

For instance, he *finished in style against Peter Dely*:



24.g6! Bxd5 25.Rh8+! Bxh8 26.Rxh8+ Black resigns. Or *against Bojan Kurajica*:



23.Qxh6+! The point is that if Black takes then after the fork on f7 Black will lose the e7-bishop as well.

These triumphs were to be some of his last, however. His chess union with Smyslov continued as the latter played a match against Portisch to decide the fate of 6th place in the Interzonals, but they could manage no more than a 3-3 draw, which meant that Portisch took 6th. The vast experience of the two players proved insufficient, something Keres later recognised in his letters to Böök:

> You are right - at our age we should write more and play less. What use is being superior in your chess knowledge over your young rivals if you are unable to take advantage of it in practice? In a book you can write exactly how chess should really be played.

Keres continued playing tournaments, but without great success. As he fluctuated between 2-7th places throughout the period from 1971 to 1974 his health deteriorated and it inevitably led him to blame his health for his results. In his letter to Tubin, sent on May 16th, he speaks of the San Antonio and Tallinn tournaments, both of which started well for him, but then quickly fell apart:

> It seems that in both these tournaments my health issues intervened, as when your toes hurt it gets to your head as well.
>
> To clear all this up I headed to Moscow at the beginning of March and stayed at the great grown-up hospital for three weeks. Our hospital in Tallinn sent me there, to this "Kremlovka", but they didn't really find anything new - still the same old podagra... For three weeks I refreshed myself there, lying in the mud, taking sulphur baths and allowing the maidens to massage me all over, so the result is that, at least for the moment, I feel like a human being again. I can't really promise for how long, but I will try to follow the prescription and the "rabbit diet" as well as I can. Perhaps it will keep the situation under control.

But already on June 14th, Böök reads in his letter:

> My chess calendar is rather busy this year. At the turn of the year I played in Texas, then at the Tallinn International, then in May I played the German Open Championship in Dortmund. Then a small break - a week of simultaneous exhibitions - and then Dortmund-Moscow in Spassky's car and, once in Moscow, I realised that my energy was all gone. Such a hellish pace for an old man!

Despite his age and health issues, the man would just not stay still. Before the end of the year, he had taken another two trips, first flying off to Brazil for the Petropolis Interzonal. The difference between the last Candidates Tournaments and this Interzonal was that he flew there without ambitions anymore:

> I will have no false illusions about the tournament in Brazil, but I will not want to get completely beaten up either. Therefore: to put up resistance and take advantage of the fact that everyone will be looking to beat the old patzer! And thus maybe ruin the plans of some young geniuses.

The expectation was not gloomy enough, though. At the start of the tournament his health killed off all optimism, as he was forced to battle constant headaches and high blood pressure as he finished the first 9 rounds with a -4 score. Pills then gave some relief in battling the high blood pressure, as Keres finished the next 8 rounds with a +3 score, but an overall -1 meant 12-13th place. Things did not improve in his last tournament of the year - the 41st USSR Championship in Moscow - where he finished in shared 9th with one win, two losses and a cascade of draws. These disappointing results led to his absence from competitive chess in 1974, as most of the tournaments he had planned to play in did not materialise or had no place for him anymore. Even at the Olympiad he was no longer playing, but was invited as a guest of honour and awarded the title of International Arbiter. The years had done their work and the last hurrah that was to come cost him more than anything ever before.

1975

Having played no games of any significance in 1974, Keres was eagerly looking forward to the 1975 edition of the Tallinn International, where Spassky, Bronstein, Taimanov, Gipslis, Hort, Olafsson and others awaited him. The long wait was certainly worth it, as Keres was able to win six of his games and draw all the rest as he won the tournament in style.

Not found

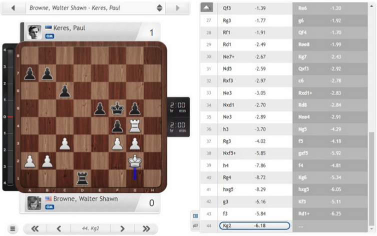
Behind the curtains, though, things were far from as stylish and smooth. Heuer:

> Many were actually astonished to witness this bastion of good taste on the stage in slippers. Those who were able to see him closely and could see behind the stage were despondent. It was clear to us all that his health was bad - very bad. We were unable to correctly evaluate the situation, however, since we took it for an occasional illness - something that would pass.

Spassky:

> In February, during the tournament in Tallinn (which he won brilliantly), Keres became ill. He was barely moving. During one of the rounds he told me, “Boris Vasilyevich, this would seem to be the end of me.” He said the last words silently, with his lips. His illness seemed to get the better of him.

Keres would still go on to travel, and his next tour took him to Canada for a whole month - a trip intensely packed with chess action. He played at the Vancouver Open and then followed that up with numerous simultaneous exhibitions, a TV appearance, a series of open lectures as well as some closed ones for the young hopefuls of Canadian chess. During the whole time he would meet with old friends and local chess people, spending time with them. He managed to win the open tournament with a round to spare and then played what was to be *his last game*.



	Qf3	-1.39	Re6	-1.20
27	Rg3	-1.77	g6	-1.92
28	Rf1	-1.91	Qf4	-1.70
29	Rd1	-2.49	Ree8	-1.99
30	Ne7+	-2.67	Kg7	-2.43
31	Nd5	-2.59	Qxf3	-2.92
32	Rxf3	-2.97	c6	-2.78
33	Ne3	-3.05	Rxd1+	-2.83
34	Nxd1	-2.70	Rd8	-2.84
35	Ne3	-2.89	Nxe4	-2.91
36	h3	-3.70	Ng5	-4.29
37	Rg3	-4.02	f5	-4.18
38	Nxf5+	-5.85	gxf5	-5.92
39	h4	-7.86	f4	-4.81
40	Rg4	-8.72	Kg6	-5.34
41	hxg5	-8.29	hxg5	-6.05
42	g3	-6.16	Kf5	-5.11
43	f3	-5.84	Rd1+	-6.25
44	Kg2	-6.18	...	

Keres ended with a flawless technical game where he nullified Walter Browne's aggression and nicely trapped the white rook

Heuer notes that nothing indicated to the locals what was to come. Keres seemed his usual self, with the only difference being that he looked tired and slightly worn-out to them. There were no external signs of any threat, even when he got back to Amsterdam, where his old friend Euwe met him and, after they talked for nearly six hours (until Keres' next flight), Euwe recounts that Keres seemed completely fine. It is no surprise, then, that when he arrived in Helsinki there was still no sign of anything.

Heuer:

> ...and for some reason I rushed to phone Paavo Kivine, the editor of “Eesti Raamat”. His first words: “You know, Keres has been hospitalised in Helsinki.” Even though these words were uttered with a normal tone, they sent a shudder down my spine. I immediately drove home while others were still finishing their last games in Leningrad.
>
> In Tallinn I heard the following calming news: Keres is getting better - perhaps in a week’s time he’ll be able to leave the hospital. This was on the morning of June 5th. At midday, Finnish radio reported that he was dead.

He died of a heart attack at the young age of 59.

It was the end of an era - an era when a chess player encapsulated the life of a whole nation, which lived through every one of his successes and misfortunes: cheered as one when he was successful and wept as one when disappointments ensued. In the same way, Keres had lived through the successes and tragedies of the Estonian nation. Heuer received letters from ordinary people when writing his biography of Keres, one of which - from a man in Haapsalu - reads:

> I do not have favourites, but at the deaths of Tammsaare and Keres, I cried. Words are meaningless - I rarely write and can't really say what I want to say. One thing is certain: for me, Keres was the symbolic embodiment of the Estonian nation.

Has there ever been another chess player who captured the public imagination of a whole nation to the degree Keres had? It speaks volumes that his funeral was attended by more than 100,000 people. Think about that for a second. A hundred thousand people - 10% of the population - turning out for the funeral of a chess player. It was no less a national tragedy than the Song Festival is a national tradition, with roughly the same number of people attending.

Not found

Video of Keres' body being returned home, the funeral and moments from his life can be seen in footage from the Estonian Film Archives (from 6:43 onward) - h/t to Olimpiu G. Urcan

Keres was later memorialised on the 5-kroon bill, declared the Estonian sportsman of the century and last year a commemorative half a million 2-euro coins - with him engraved on them - were released into circulation. On the basis of individual success in sports, Estonia has had better performing sportsmen, but none of them came even close to representing Estonia and being as beloved a hero as he was. He was not a World Champion, because he was not merely a chess player. Nobody could gather such a following and hero status merely by being a chess player. You had to be more. Once again, he was the embodiment of a nation. Spassky:

> Everything positive that chess culture has been able to produce throughout its history was admirably represented in a single human being. Deep spirituality interconnected with extraordinary chess abilities made Keres famous all around the world. Over numerous years Keres was the factual leader of the chess world, the carrier of the best traditions chess has to offer - a noble being, a knight of the chess world. With his chess books and brilliant games he has made an immeasurable contribution to chess itself.
>
> I have been lucky in life, for Paul Keres and I were friends. I have loved, love and will always love and remember this rare and brilliant person.

Gligorić:

> Paul Keres, who had reached the peak of the chess world already in his twenties, was a true chess idol for my generation...
>
> Secretly, without telling him, I truly admired his strong character and the uncommon calmness with which he was able to withstand losses. Indeed, after losses, I never saw him become glum. He acted as if nothing had happened. His incredible sportsman's decency, courtesy, good-natured humour about himself as well as others made him one of the most beloved players in the whole world, and one who was always treated with great respect wherever he went. He had a tragic role to play, however, always remaining second in the battle for the chess championship.

In terms of individual achievements in chess, the ultimate goal of becoming World Champion has created the ultimate axiom that a player who has not won the trophy cannot possibly be better at chess than those who have. But while the World Champions are often given credit for achieving the title, players like Keres have proven their strength, not through individual achievements per se, but through the beauty and strength of the games they play. He was extremely combative, which is evident from his overall winning percentage of 70%, a smidgen better than Kasparov's, and one of the highest of all time.

PAUL KERES
7.I.1916 * 5.VI.1975

The tomb to Paul Keres in Tallinn's Forest Cemetery | photo: Ahsoous, *Wikipedia*

So what you can learn from Keres is that even though the game itself is played on 64 squares, the attempt to minimise or even ignore psychological factors beyond the board is not a recipe for becoming a World Champion. It could be argued, though, that it is something more: an undeclared attempt to produce art, a true dedication to the game itself as opposed to a single-minded bid for individual triumph - playing the game in the best way possible. It was always going to be a long journey, but ultimately it is perhaps not such a loss that he never became World Champion. His talent and fame continue to exist both in the beauty of his games and the appeal of a unique and beloved character. Heuer:

> I'm moved to tears when I think about one Russian journalist who had seen both Keres' first and last Soviet Championships. At the first championship he had followed the games enchanted, while at the last he had to describe one of Keres' losses: "How graceful, dignified and telling was his smile when, after having fallen victim to a crushing attack, he offered his hand to Geller. Yes, one can replay the game afterwards, but I feel deeply sorry for those who were unable to witness that smile..."

About the author

Joosep Grents

Joosep is an Estonian chess enthusiast who learned chess at the age of five and began attending the Paul Keres Chess Club two years later. He recently graduated with a degree in History from Charles University in Prague, with his BA thesis set to be published by the university press.

See also:

- *Paul Keres I: Prince without a Crown (1916-36)*
- *Paul Keres II: A new chess superstar (1936-37)*
- *Paul Keres III: Avro 1938: Rightful challenger*
- *Paul Keres IV: The War Years*
- *Paul Keres V: The 1948 World Championship*
- *Paul Keres VI: The Eternal Second*
- *Paul Keres VII: Last chance in Curaçao*

Comments 11

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tschukki

Post

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brandao Apr 26, 2018 | 18:56

Parabéns pela série! A biografia e o currículo de Paul Keres deixam a pergunta de porque ele não chegou à Campeão Mundial...mas ao mesmo tempo não deixa dúvidas da genialidade e grandeza do ser humano e enxadrista. Tinha força e pegada igual ou superior de vários campeões mundiais... Paul Keres é herói nacional em sua pátria, a Estônia. Nesta série há alusões quanto a obstáculos involuntários que surgiram à frente de Paul Keres... Todavia ele próprio nunca comentou sobre isso. Há poucas obras em português ou espanhol , de autoria do próprio Paul Keres ou sobre a vida do mesmo. Mas, a publicação desta série talvez seja indício de mais material em português ou espanhol sobre o grande Keres. Jogou e ganhou contra praticamente todos os campeões mundiais Smyslov, Petrosian, Fischer, Capablanca, Alekhine, etc...) ou soviéticos (Geller, Korchnoy, Bronstein, etc..) de sua época, quatro vezes seguidas segundo no Torneio de Candidatos, mais de uma vez foi campeão soviético (na época praticamente um campeonato mundial de xadrez pela força dos competidores), elogios espontâneos da maioria dos GMs, contemporâneos ou não. Foi protagonista na maioria dos eventos em que participou. Vencedor do Torneio de AVRO 1938, um dos maiores torneios de todos os tempos, senão o maior... Os GMs de seu tempo, quando comentam sobre o entendimento de Keres na análise de posições ou partidas suspensas (partidas aplazadas) mencionam expressamente a compreensão e entendimento superior que ele tinha do xadrez. Pratico e teórico entre os melhores de todos os tempos. Faz falta na bibliografia em português e espanhol mais obras de e sobre Paul Keres. Tomara que surjam!

0 *reply* *report*

Hemingway Feb 20, 2018 | 17:59

Full on Matie

0 *reply* *report*

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jac17 Jan 12, 2018 | 22:21

Great series. Well written series by Joseep. Thanks to c24 .

0 *reply* *report*

2hoch6 Jan 12, 2018 | 21:58

These articles are just gorgeous!

Thanks a lot - and please deliver more!

(@Joosep: Have you ever considered to make a book out of it? The McFarland series of library-binded books matches your level of report! Great!)

In addition: I read an article on CB from V. Horst who also delivered some nice anecdotes about his trips etc. etc. Would be a pleasing addition to this serious reports.

Keep going!

0 *reply* *report*

---

penrhiwch Jan 12, 2018 | 21:02

Thank you for a series of extremely interesting articles. I shall return to my book of Keres's best games with renewed enthusiasm.

0 *reply* *report*

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gomorrell Jan 12, 2018 | 20:40

the first real chess book I ever bought was Keres Complete Games. The games were great of course but what really struck me was how his life was both a reflection of the politics of an intensely ideological and violent time (the interwar period, WWII, Cold War) and an inspiring response to it through the example of Keres' own humanity. Canadian chess players of my generation always have an especially soft spot for Keres -in part because his tour in 1975 was so successful and in part because at the Olympiads he often helped the Canadians and the New Zealand team (NZ is my new home).

Thanks for reminding me of all of that.

0 reply report

ironmanth

Jan 12, 2018 | 19:20

Wonderful elaboration of the Keres history; definitely worth a second, and even third, read. What a genius, and what a gentleman! I recall the sad news back in '75; I had only been playing for three years, and felt that a giant had passed. RIP Paul Keres. You showed us class, beautiful chess, and a fighting spirit over the board, and in life. Thanks for this article!

0 reply report

TurfanFragment

Jan 12, 2018 | 15:36

I don't know how you can afford to put out so much high quality content... it is truly amazing to me. Keep up the good work!!

0 reply report

KaiserW

Jan 12, 2018 | 13:03

Great Article. Keres was wonderful but I never trusted Livo Nei- EVER. The best match of the 1965 cycle was not Spassky beating Keres but it was Spassky crushing Tal.

0 reply report

johnfagg

Jan 12, 2018 | 12:39

Thanks for this. There's a tendency to ignore the tail-end of players careers and yet there are always individual games that show their enduring quality. Really appreciated

A booklet of the games from Bamburg 1968 was amongst my favourites, Keres-Schmid, and Keres-Teufel being early memories. His games collections (I still have 4) are beauties - from the early postal gambits to the deadly serious later stuff.

0 reply report

PaleFire

Jan 12, 2018 | 12:26

Well done. Thank you. One point: Panno and Benko resigning when Keres could not continue doesn't speak so much to Keres's character as it does to theirs.

0 reply report

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