

Bright Side

'Peg chess wiz goes on 'blitz'

DAVID SCHMEICHEL
Sun Media

Helps initiate Downtown BIZ series

Chess fanatics from across the city squared off against Winnipeg's top-seeded female player yesterday at a simultaneous exhibition "blitz" that saw her taking on 12 opponents at once.

The match — held over the lunch hour at Portage Place's Edmonton Court — eventually pitted Russian native Bella Iomdina against 16 different players, while helping to mark the kickoff of the Downtown BIZ's weekly Chess in the Court series.

"This simultaneous play is just for the kickoff, but you can come out to play chess and win prizes every Thursday," said Lola Belaboye, events co-ordinator for the Downtown BIZ.

"There's always a range of

skill levels, because walkups are welcome. And I know that a lot of Manitoba Chess Association players do come out, but that shouldn't discourage you."

'Aggressive style'

It certainly didn't discourage the players who went head-to-head with Iomdina — a rare female presence in what's typically a male-dominated pastime.

"My style is an aggressive style," said Iomdina, who moved to Winnipeg in 1996. "So being a more aggressive type of player usually works better than them being passive or defensive."

"Although there have been

very famous world champions who have played in a defensive style, when playing against me, a person has a better chance if they play aggressive."

A former women's champion in Crimea and Russia, Iomdina used that aggressive style to defeat 12 of her 16 opponents.

But despite a clear advantage going in, she said she wouldn't have been surprised to discover some worthy adversaries in their midst.

"After a few moves, I'll see what type of player they are," said Iomdina, who's been playing chess competitively since the age of 11. "So not necessarily surprised, no. But

I do have to be prepared for strong players."

Chess in the Court is the winter version of the Downtown BIZ's outdoor Chess in the Parks series, and runs Thursdays from noon to 2 p.m. at Portage Place until April 23.

For a full schedule of tournaments and locations, visit www.downtownwinnipegbiz.com.

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WATCH
THE VIDEO

winnipegsun.com/chess

Bella Iomdina takes on all comers.



DAVID SCHMEICHEL/SUN MEDIA

Iomdina is a rare female presence in a male-dominated game.