



## Interview

Alexander Morozevich

### Winner of the Biel Grandmaster tournament 2006

«I have more confidence in myself than in books or in computerbased reparations»

(Interview by Olivier Breisacher)

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Having scored 7.5 points out of 10 games, 29-year-old Alexander Morozevich won in a landslide, and for the third time in three participations, the Biel Grandmaster tournament. His global achievement at the Festival is impressive: 30 games, 18 wins, 10 draws, and 2 losses. In 39 years of history, no other grandmaster ever reached such an average.

Crowned ahead of the young talents Magnus Carlsen and Teimour Radjabov, Alexander Morozevich accumulated a lot of self-confidence and a lot of... Elo points during his stay in Biel. The Moscow-born grandmaster takes a look at his trajectory, talks about his approach to chess and what the future looks like for him and for the checkered world.

#### **Alexander Morozevich, it is your third participation and your third victory in Biel. What is your secret?**

Biel is an important tournament in the milieu and it was fun to win it. I feel especially comfortable here, I like the surrounding atmosphere and the playing conditions. However, it is every time harder for me. In 2004, the tournament had a very high level as well, but a number of my opponents were not in great shape and underperformed.

#### **Before you, only Anatoly Karpov had won three times in Biel...**

It is always good to know that! If the comparison stretched to the number of world titles, it would be even better!

#### **This year, you finished again way ahead...**

It was not as easy as you might think. I had to fight to the end, I made a number of blunders, and my game was sometimes uneven. My victory against Volokitin in the 8th round was very important. The following day, everything happened to my benefit. Carlsen lost, Radjabov did not win, and I defeated Pelletier.

#### **You are mentioning a number of blunders...**

Yes, particularly in my second game against Magnus Carlsen (27. Bg7??). However, I made mistakes in other games, fortunately when I had a winning position, for example against Bruzon (round 1) or against Radjabov (round 4).

#### **What makes the difference between a 29-year-old grandmaster and his much younger rivals?**

On my hand, I would say a better experience and understanding of the game. On their hand, there is



more energy, which allows to maintain some freshness and to calculate all variations faster. But the scales may lean towards one side or the other.

**How do you judge Magnus Carlsen, your executioner in Biel?**

I faced him for the first time in my career. He is a free spirit; he calculates and plays fast. Of course, he still needs training, he can show some impatience. However, this is easily understandable given his young age. He seems to be well coached. The rest depends on him. If he continues on this path, he can go far, very far.

**You came to Biel alone. How did you prepare yourself?**

I was well supported from a distance. I analyzed and prepared the games of the tournament with a few friends at different levels.

**You are considered as one of the most creative and unpredictable players on the circuit. You bring creative chaos onto the chessboard...**

Everybody can define me in a different way. I have more confidence in myself than in books or in computer-based preparations. This allows me to find new ideas sometimes. However, I lack stability, I can often line up good and bad results. This is my weakness. This is what also made a difference with great players.

**What do you mean?**

Most top-10 players are more professional in their approach to chess. They devote most of their time to it. Anand, Leko or Topalov do not necessarily play better than I do, but they are more serious in their work, in their regularity. I can beat any player in a game, I can get ahead in a tournament, but they logically defeat me on the whole. I consider myself partly amateur. Chess remains my greatest passion, of course, but I can do other things for months, before getting back to it. I have other centers of interest; I have friends outside of the chess world. This is my way of life and it suits me.

**This is not enough in order to aim for a world title, for example?**

Indeed. I am not the kind of person who makes big announcements, who argues that I want to be world champion. I am not ready to sacrifice everything in order to achieve this. From this point of view, my fourth place at the last world championship in San Luis in 2005, with 50 percent of the points, suits me very well. I only started serious preparation three weeks earlier. Only during the tournament, did Alexander Beljavsky and Vladimir Barsky (MI) come and support me.

**Will you stick to this philosophy in the future?**

It is not easy to modify one's style completely.

**You are 29, what are your goals?**

I like to play a creative chess. It is understood that I will pursue my career. However, with my current point of view, I try not to become too dependent on the results because they can vary a lot.

**Russia ended only at the 6th rank of the Turin Olympiads last June. How do you explain such a result?**

There are numerous reasons, among which the fact that Russia lacks young blood in its ranks. Our coaches should remember this for the next important competitions. In Turin, our age average was over 30. Given the FIDE time control, the youth, and motivation of our opponents, it was not necessarily an advantage. The second reason is that most of the players of our team were far from their best form.



**What do you think of the reunification final for the world championship between Topalov and Kramnik?**

Any duel with two high-ranked players has to be a plus for chess. There is an obvious interest. However, I would prefer not to make any political judgment regarding the scope of the matches. I have nothing to say. I would certainly not talk about “reunification”.

**Biel, 4th August 2006**

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