# FMJD TD report 2019-2020

## Shortly after GA

It was really short period after last GA with our standard draughts live.

We completed just four World Cup tournaments:

- Curacao (Nov 19)
- Israel (Nov 19)
- Burkina Faso (Jan 20)
- Turkey (Mar 20)

African World Cups as usually show a lot of talented players. Unfortunately it is very difficult for them to travel to other continents. Similarly in America. We could see in Curacao players from Canada, Cuba (in top 10!), Costa Rica, Venezuela, Trinidad & Tobago, Bonaire, Antigua, Aruba, … we are really global game, we just need to support organisation of world class tournament on other continents.

## Covid

Already in April I organised few events just to test how it works in reality. These were not official tournaments (like PCBEST Cup for clubs) but such a formula gave me more flexibility. After that I started with organisation Cup of Nations. It was really big tournament with 28 teams open and 11 women.

Cup of Nations shows a lot of technical problems like time zones. As I was alone with all this questions, it was big challenge to be active as a referee for the matches played at … 2 a.m. 4 a.m. etc From my perspective it was tournament with … 79 rounds.

Impossible to do it next time alone. Specially play-off with special vide/computer control. It really works but still need some more steps.

This tournament shows also a lot of technical and juridical problems. Some of them are solved, some not. I did a lot to improve that. FMJD should decide how to develop online event. Or may be just ignore it?

In my opinion on-line should be serious part of our activity. Another on-line event “Presidents cup for Schegolev” shows how it is important. If we take a look at 64 online event with hundred of players … the matter undoubtedly deserves to be taken seriously. Much more seriously then general remarks.

# The matches

## *Gerogiev – Boomstra*

Match was ready. KNDB and theirs partners made a tremendous job! Not all expectations of the world champion have been met, so finally he decided not to play. Option with Pan Yiming has been opened. We start discussion with China and KNDB but after two online meeting – finally Pan resign. It was my last duty as a TD.

## *Tansykkuzhina – Sadowska*

Match was ready to be organised in Poland in 2020. According to preliminary agreement prize found should be completed by Poland and Russia together. At the beginning Russia was not ready and after Covid crisis also Polish main sponsor stopped.

During summer option with match in Russia was opened. As we know … even with big names in the Organising Committee and people officially nominated by Russian Draughts Federation we get nothing.

Within a week after Moscow I found a sponsor in Poland for the prize money (20k), Damian Reszka as a Match Director (together with his team) made something fantastic.

Conclusion is clear – we need to ask money in advance (as Poland did!) or financial guarantee on the level similarly as bank use to expect.

# Not finished processes

1. I made two projects about developing On-line events. Documents delivered to Executive Council. Both ignored.
2. I made a project for the system of online requests, confirmations and sending diplomas for the referees/players. System is almost ready (by Alexander Presman). I asked Executive Council to be active included for the final testing etc. My request from September 29$^{th}$ was ignored. A lot mine and Alexender’s work simply ignored.

3. Cooperation with section 64. All my proposition to the Executive Council connected with section 64 has been ignored. Still no renewed official rules (as it was in the past with “bis” annexes.), no ratings, no titles. I was trying to do my best to get common FMJD calendar.

# My resignation

Shortly after Moscow’s disaster I decided to step down as a Tournament Director. Motivation you can see at my document published in December. This document is also included to my report together with information from Natalia and her coach.

I did not leave unfinished topics behind me. As promised to the member of Executive Council, I actively took part in negotiation about potential match Boomstra – Pan. I also delivered (January 7th) to the Executive Council important document “Global Reserve List” created exactly as it is in our Annexes.

Jacek Pawlicki

Szczecin, June 2nd 2021

# Moscow 2020

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# The coach

**A week of "worldwide" rudeness.**

**By E. Watutin**

After many months of preparations and packing the suitcases several times, the decision was finally made to play the match.

The prices of airline tickets have grown unbelievably high and we decided that I would take the bus at the 11th. There should be enough time to regenerate to the 15th.

A little later it turned out that FSB (Russian secret service) approval was still needed, but this problem also seemed to be solved.

**11th of December.**

**As it became apparent later, it was already known on that day that there was no money. However, no one was informed about it. Did any of them know? Juri Czertok? Tamara?**

I get on the bus at 10:45 PM.

**12th of December.**

**At 2 AM at the Russian border point Krasnoje I was thrown out from the bus due to lack of permission from FSB. What exactly went wrong, I have no idea.**

Later, Rastagaev suggested that you can't leave Belarus by land from the 10th and suggested that I read the news on the Internet.  For the lesser-oriented, I would add that such a decision was actually made on the 10th but only came into force on the 20th. And it did not concern the entry to Russia from Belarus.

It's night, it's freezing and I'm standing with my luggage in the middle of nowhere. Fortunately, there were "friendly people" who for 35 euros took me to the station in Orsza. Thank you for not shooting me in the head.
At 9 AM I am back at home. I write to everyone about all possible options. I go to sleep.

At that time Natalia flies into Moscow-Domodedovo airport (with a stop in Zurich), but border control does not let her through.

**I hope that Natalia will write about everything herself.**

She is promised a hotel, and I am going to sleep late in the evening.

**12th of December.**
**In the morning a surprise awaits me - they did not give the hotel to Natalia (they didn't even allow her to rent a room by herself), Natalia spent the night without sleep.**

**I will leave room for Natalia's account again.**

I have the impression that the border guards do not know that to deprive a person of the possibility to sleep, it is simply lawlessness.

Again I had to sign up for the PCR test. In the face of uncertainty about new FSB decisions and unbelievably high prices for air tickets, we again decide (me and Jacek) to buy a bus ticket, but with a demand to be sure that my name will be on the list on the border in Krasnoje (we write about it to Czertok and Rastagajew).

They still feed Natalia with promises and various stories and rarely with something concrete. At last she is given airplane food so she would not starve to death.

**14th of December.**
**Another sleepless night of Natalia.**

I am doing a test.

At 12:00 the operation to free the Pretender starts. At about four o'clock it succeeds.

In the evening, not receiving any reaction from Czertok and Rastagajew, I write to them again and ask if they intend to apologize to me for the previous trip. The answer is, as usual, silence.

I declare to all three of them (Jacek, Czertok, Rastagajew) that I will not move from Minsk without a guarantee that they already know about me at the border in Krasnoje.

**15th of December.**

Girls are playing practice games, according to my recommendations.

There is no new information - at 5 PM I go for a walk. Phone call from Jacek: plane ticket is in my inbox (extremely cheap), departure at 9 PM.

I managed to get to the airport on time, I fly in, there are no problems with border control.

Of course, no one is waiting for me.

At the hotel reception they expect me to pay for the hotel - I'm totally surprised, I don't have local currency (russian rubles needed). It is already midnight. Czertok suggests asking Nika for help. In the end, she pays for my hotel.

**16th of December.**

There is a meeting at 10 AM. It turns out that the organizer has no money for prizes. Natalia refuses to play without signing an agreement with prize guarantees.

> **At the reception desk they want money again.**
>
> **Rastagajew announces that he was expecting the Belarusian Federation to pay for me!! (I am absolutely convinced that there are more "interesting incidents" in**

**future waiting for us.)**

**I explain that according to the conditions of this match, as a coach I should have a hotel with boarding. In response I hear "show me such documents". I explain that it is not my duty to show the documents to him. He starts another story that Nika is Natalia's coach (Nika lives in a room with Natalia and feeds herself - as previously agreed). I declare that we know better who Natalia's coach is.**

**Rastagajew consults with the receptionist. They decide that I can stay in the room till 2 pm, and then I will have to be moved to another room. Rastagajew leaves. The receptionist tells me to pay for the hotel. I refuse and state that I will leave the room, as discussed, at 2 pm. I am at the reception desk with my luggage on time.**

At last, I get a new room, for the moment they do not demand from me to pay for it.

We eat dinner, as usual we pay for it ourselves.

We train, prepare for the match.

In the evening at dinner (at the invitation of Janek Maggi, who also paid for everything) we find out that there is a chance that the match could actually take place - FMJD has a plan B, it can insure the prize fund with 30,000 euro.

**17th of December.**

At breakfast I find out that Natalia was woken up by Rastagajew and Airat - they brought her some contract. We read it and discuss it. I go to the game room alone to talk (I try not to drag Natalia into this whole gobbledygook).

I demand that the money (10,000 rubles) that we lost for the hotel and the food that was guaranteed in the match conditions be put on the table.

**At this point, it turns out that the second part of the match will also be taking place in Moscow!!!** I ask for new plane tickets from Moscow. At this point, my ticket to Minsk already costs 91,000 rubles (about 1000 euro). We are told that we will take a train to St.

Petersburg at night. I declare that after everything that has already happened - to take a train at night with luggage is a mockery and bullying of Natalia. **At this point (apparently he is trying to solve the ticket problem) Rastagajew says that it is still not sure where the second part of the game will be played!!!**

I reply that once they know it, we will continue the conversation.

And this is where the meeting ended. The draw at 11 AM was not held.

At lunch (at our expense) it is explained that FMJD will only secure the prizes (30,000 euro) with a guarantee. A new match schedule is being published (first round on saturday, the 19th). We are still preparing for the game. We eat dinner, paying the bill ourselves.

8 PM - they call us in emergency mode for a meeting. Everyone is present except Aleksiej Czyżow (he does yoga, he was lucky).

Rastagajew gives the floor to some Artiom. He starts with rudeness and insults. I am talking to my protégé: "Please leave the room." She does not leave. I ask this Artiom who he is - I get a rude answer. I go out to the corridor - I call Pawlicki. A moment later Tamara leaves shouting. I don't understand why anyone else stayed there, but I can't leave entirely - what if he'll pull out a knife in a moment?

After this execution is over, there are tears in the lift.

Only one question remains - what was it and why are they walking free?

**18th of December.**

**Evacuation.**

We already had tickets before 3 AM. I am fleeing to the second hotel (I have a ticket for 8 PM).

**A huge request to everyone who can give a hint to which lawyer's office Natalia (and Polish Draughts Association) can turn to with their claims.**

**No one intended to apologize for anything. It is even interesting who will be the first from the Russian federation (or from Russia), and will there be anyone?**

I tried to write concisely.

If someone can explain Rastagajew's actions, please do - my brain is not keeping up with the nonsense of what happened.

It is known what the polish side was hoping for while preparing for this match (regardless of all its problems) - one of the organizers is Czertok, Tamara's husband. The match was beneficial for both sides.

**If the match will take place in Poland in the spring, it should start with the reimbursement of material and moral losses incurred by the polish side, including the lost time of all participants.**

**Damage caused to the Polish Draughts Association is not limited to this - hundreds of our young athletes and their parents wanted to watch a match featuring their idol.**

**God, how embarrassing!**

I would like everyone involved in this process to express themselves in writing as well.

And by the way, I didn't like the hotel very much: very expensive, loud, and for a viral period - a lot of people. Nobody pays attention to wearing masks or keeping a distance.

Evgeniy. 21-12-2020.

# The Player

**Match for the title of World Champion Tansykkużyna - Sadowska**

The history of the organization of the match goes back to July 2019, when the first talks between the two sides appeared. Russia supposedly already had a sponsor for a considerable amount of money, but it also required to find someone on the polish side. After two months, the first sponsor turned up in Poland, who offered excellent financial conditions and the idea of holding the match in both countries, i.e. Poland and Russia (we even chose a hotel in Warsaw). We were planning the match for February 1, 2020, but as it turned out, we left ourselves too short a period for all preparations. In Russia the situation was not yet 100%, the sponsor was provided, but without confirmation. Rastegaev is joining the organization of the match in Russia. So we started to think about a slight postponement of the match, and then it coincided with the beginning of the coronavirus epidemic in Poland and worldwide. The match was therefore temporarily suspended, and the polish sponsor at the beginning of April made it clear that at such times he was unable to undertake the organization of the match. So we lost sponsorship on the polish side. Around May/June, Russia let us know that it will take on the organization of the match in its entirety on the same financial terms. It sounded good! Weeks went by without a sign, and so at the end of July I heard that the organizers were working hard and maybe we could still have a match in August/September. From then on, the swings began and my plans kept changing and adapting to the words of the russian organizers like a kaleidoscope. The match was first moved to October, then postponed for a fortnight, then moved to November, until finally we heard 'We are 100% doing it in the second half of December'. I thought to myself - finally! All this time I was getting ready and waiting impatiently for us to fight each other. I actually found out on approximately November the 28th about the fact that I am flying to Russia on 12th of December. So I had two weeks to deal with all the formalities, which are not easy at all during the pandemic. With the help of people close and kind to me, I have succeeded! It's

time to pack up, the last draughts' repetitions, the last training on Skype with the trainer, buying a new dress, it will be fine! But here the story only begins...

I picked up the visa the day before departure, the coronavirus test is done, everything required is printed, I am going to the airport. I had a flight through Switzerland, direct flights to Russia were cancelled. The Warsaw - Zurich route went smoothly, I got a lot of messages from fans from all over the world, I was excited to play. In Zurich, I encountered the first disturbing signals. I received an email from my coach Evgeni Watutin that he had not been allowed to cross the belarusian-russian border and had to go back to Minsk. I got worried (he is no longer a teenager, he has small health problems too), but I did not think I could have a similar problem. I initially associated it with the complicated political situation in Belarus and the strict regime. However, when it comes to my boarding of a plane to Moscow, the first fears begin that it may be the same for me too. At first I was not allowed to board the plane, because I only had invitations in russian and no document from the russian Ministry of Sport in english. Surprised, I explained that, after all, I have a visa and other documents handed over to me, and that I am flying for a good cause! The match for the title of World Champion. As the plane was already 30 minutes late (by myself and another brazilian gentleman), the ladies gave in believing that in Russia my documents will be convincing and they will let me in. I, too, was convinced of that.

I land at Moscow airport around 6 PM Russian time. At the passport control, I stood for several minutes, a lady guard typed in my details several times, made phone calls, and then called the border guard to take me for a more thorough check. From 6 PM to 10 PM, I have been standing waiting for what would happen to me. I believed that in a minute the organizers would send "this one" missing paper and I would be able to rest peacefully in a hotel. On the other side of the airport my second and friend Nika Leopoldova, who was to be my support during the match, was waiting for me. At 10 PM, a guard comes up to me and says that unfortunately, they will not be able to release me today, because I am not on the list of people who have permission to enter Russia. I do not have time to ask about anything, and he immediately starts to reassure me that I will get a hotel at the airport, that they will

feed me and that I should just wait for the organizers to deliver the necessary document. I believed it, because why not? He led me to a special transit zone (room) for people with similar cases to mine. So I am waiting patiently, Nika keeps asking whether they have finally given me this hotel and I keep writing back: "Not yet, but relax, I will wait, they will surely come for me in a moment". No one has come. After midnight, I go to the guard who is guarding us and ask when they will finally take me to the airport hotel, I would like to go to bed. The female guard looks at me with big eyes and answers: "Nobody will take you to any hotel, you have to wait here". And at that point, I raised my eyebrows for the first time and got seriously worried. I think about what to do, one of the most important sports events in my life is in front of me. After all, I cannot be tired and sleepy, I will pay any price and I will rent a hotel myself. So I ask the guard: "Could I rent a room for tonight?", and then I hear: "Niet, Wam nielzja." (No, you cannot). "Maybe then the VIP Lounge?" - I hear that I can't do that either and that I don't really have any rights. I realized in a flash that I would have to spend that night in a chair. I reported it to higher-ups and I got a response that the organization is theoretically doing what it can and trying to get me out. I am writing "in theory" because I do not know what it was really like. Perhaps nobody really tried, and the fact that I was there and that they were gaining time was good for them? Anyway, I got the message that, at best, they will pull me out on the 13th or, at worst, on the 14th. Here I shed my first tear of frustration, but I kept telling myself over and over again that this must not ruin my preparations and I will do everything to get back in shape quickly. Of course, the worst-case scenario came true, I was released on the 14th around 3 p.m. I have spent 45 hours at the airport...

The treatment of me in this zone can be compared a little bit with that of a prisoner. I went to the toilet only in the guard's assistance, and after coming back from the toilet (even though I didn't take things) I went through a check every time. But ok, nothing terrible after all, it even made me laugh. It was worse with food. On the first evening I didn't eat anything, the whole situation sucked out all my energy and any desire. I ate some nuts and tried to sleep. On Sunday morning they bring us plastic containers with very scarce amounts of food. So I asked the guard if I could go out and buy something from the airport cafés (of course, assisted by the guard 😊 ), and then I heard the same "Wam nielzja". I ask, surprised, how is

it that I am not allowed to buy myself food? Guard: "Well, we are feeding you". I add that I ate these two slices of cucumber and a slice of bread, but after 20 hours of non-eating I would like to have a normal meal and drink something warm. I have met with yet another refusal and the justification that I am here in some way illegally and have no right to move around the airport. What I thought then should be censored, so let us move on. I did not hesitate to immediately inform the organizers that this was a scandal. I have no knowledge whether they have done something about it or not. In a few hours' time, the chief officer appeared in our area and I decided to try to ask him if he would let me buy a sandwich and coffee. He agreed! How surprised I was that someone allowed me to do something. During my stay in the 'russian prison' I asked several different male/female guards if they could get me some tea. It's easy to guess the answer. Once I got boiling water 😊. No more luxuries could be counted on. I got identical food for breakfast, lunch and dinner - still nothing. And on Monday for breakfast I got the same thing again... then I didn't even touch it anymore. I ate breakfast at the hotel at 5:00 PM prepared for me by Nika during the time she was waiting for me since the very morning... It was my first normal meal in several dozen hours. It is noteworthy that I tried to hide my entire stay in the russian transit zone from my mother, whom I did not want to worry. But my mother, like any mother, felt that something was wrong. So I asked Nika to send me pictures of the hotel and how it is outside, which I kept forwarding to my mother with comments like "Colder than in Poland, today -5". The problems started when she asked for a selfie with Nika. A cunning woman 😊.

Once I was in the hotel, I told my mother everything, and then I thought 'the worst is over' and that it could only be better now. How wrong was I... On the first night, not much was happening, everyone knew I was exhausted and that I was not to be bothered with any questions. I spent the evening with Nika in a Georgian restaurant, then sauna and soft bed for a good night's sleep.

On the morning of the 15th (Tuesday), I found out that we have to go and do a coronavirus test. I have collected my things in half an hour and met with the others downstairs: me,

Tamara, chief judge Airat and our esteemed organizer Rastegaev. This was our first meeting where I heard salutary: "'I am sorry, Natalia, for how everything turned out. I tried very hard to get you out of there faster, but it did not work out'. I do not even know if I responded to that. I rather told people to leave the subject behind to stop me from thinking about it. Apparently, the organizers promised me some kind of compensation in the form of a spa, a massage and so on. Nothing really came out of it. When the test was done, we went back to the hotel, I rested, ate lunch, nothing special. From the beginning of my stay in Moscow the President of FMJD Janek Maggi was also there. That same evening he invited all of us associated with the match to dinner. It was nice, we talked, laughed, I slowly forgot about the airport situation, for which I was grateful. But we are just about to play a match and we need to establish the details. It is clear that we are postponing the match for at least one day, so that I can get back in shape and sleep the night away. The second point I raised at the end of the dinner, asking the organizer Rastegaev: What about finances? When will we know the exact amount and distribution of prizes? After which, of course, I hear: "Everything is there, I am waiting for a transfer from the sponsor. Tomorrow it should be here'. I think to myself, well, I will not go further into the details in front of everyone. We will come back to it in the morning. Late in the evening, on the 15th, my coach arrives. Nobody picks him up from the airport and, as it turns out upon arrival, he has to pay for his room himself. I thought then that some strange show was starting to happen...

On the 16th at 10 o'clock in the morning, we arranged for everyone involved in the match, i.e. Tamara, me, Nika, Evgenij, Airat, Aleeksej Chizhov, Janek Maggi, Rastegaev and his assistant to discuss the details of the match. First of all, when we play, and... what are we playing for?! We agreed upon the schedule. When it came to financial issues, I heard the same story from Rastegaev again: 'I am still waiting for the transfer. The money should already be in the account'. I thought to myself what kind of circus is this, and I said out loud: 'Until I get to see on paper what money I am playing for, I am not starting the game'. In the meantime, Tamara has decided to declare that she will not take part in such talks, so I and my team were left to fight for our rights on our own. The meeting ended with words: "'give me a few more hours, I will explain it'. Unfortunately, he did not explain anything that day. The day therefore began with a great deal of stress and the suspicion that there is no money

and there will be no money! I was beginning to get fed up with it, but I thought to myself that since we are here, he has brought in so many people and everyone has paid a lot of money - he can't just say that there is no money for prizes?! The FMJD President, knowing the situation, invited us all to dinner after a few hours. Only my team and the main judge with a couple of friends showed up for dinner. There was neither Tamara's team nor the organizer. Right then I knew that the whole match was already hanging by a thread. It was nice at dinner and for a moment we managed to forget about the tense and not very promising situation with the match. At the end of the meeting, however, we could see the light at the end of the tunnel. Janek Maggi announced that if Rastegaev meets the minimum FMJD requirements, they will support the match with €30,000 in prizes. I thought: "whew, we are saved. The match will take place'.

We went to sleep, full of optimism, with the idea that we still have one free day, because we still had things to discuss and agree upon. On the 17th at 8:40 AM, Rastegaev knocks on my room with the main judge. Rastegaev gives me "Dogovor", that is, a letter between him and me, where both parties have their rights and duties, and then he adds: "At 11:00 we start to play the match. All what you wanted is in the agreement. Read it, sign it and we can start." "Oh, and one more thing, the match will probably only be in Moscow, we will not move to St. Petersburg". I said I would read it carefully and then I would come. By the way, we have already bought tickets from St. Petersburg, so another issue was born... We needed new tickets from Moscow. My whole team has read the contract. Immediately we did not like a few points, in which, among other things, the organizer tried to pass the responsibility on to the other side of the contract. In other points it was written that the organizer covers the player's and her coach's full boarding (hotel, breakfast, lunch, dinner). We thought to ourselves - okay, this is how it should be. However, before we sign, let him reimburse the costs we have already borne and buy us new plane tickets from Moscow. If he meets these conditions, I will sign the contract and agree to a €15,000 prize.

My trainer went to Rastegaev on our behalf to handle the contract details. He did not want me to get involved in organizational matters and listen, God forbid, to any more arguments. While there, he heard that none of it was possible. Our terms - which, by the way, were in

fact part of the contract! - would not be met. So we refused to sign the agreement and again we went back to our rooms. Another day went by and we did not know what was happening and where we stood. We have been being asked a lot of questions about when the match would start, and I have kept getting a lot of messages from people wishing me luck in the match. I did not know what to do. Write back "thank you" or that the match is most likely cancelled? After lunch on the 17th to cool down a bit I went with Nika to the city centre of Moscow, to take a walk and look at the beautifully decorated Red Square. We came back to our room at 8:04 PM and got a message: "8:10 PM meeting in the conference room"- Rastegaev. We informed Watutin and went to the conference room to be on time. Rastegaev was waiting there with a man unknown to anyone. Tamara and the main judge appeared after half an hour and then the worst hell began...

We all sat down in a semicircle and the unknown man, named Artem sat opposite us and started his hostile "monologue". After a few sentences, my trainer, seeing the tone of the conversation, asked: "Excuse me, but who are you?" Then he heard the answer: "I don't care who you are, so don't be interested in who I am". My trainer got up and left the room. I thought he went back all the way to his room, but he was hanging around in the corridor. I thought he didn't want to leave me alone and wanted to be still around. An unknown man continued his monologue, insulting us all. First me and my team, and then it was mainly me and Tamara. He claimed that we are shameless, that we should be happy with what we have, that he is paying for our accommodation and in return we are making such spectacles of ourselves. He started shouting that he doesn't give a f* about draughts and we are nobody.

He disrespected us in every sentence. Tamara got up and began her counterattack with an equally loud voice, but with a greater degree of class nonetheless. But nothing could reach the man. Rastegaev was silent, he was walking about and collecting pieces from our board, which had been waiting already prepared for a match. I cannot understand how, after everything that has happened, Rastegaev had the audacity to bring an unknown man to us, who shouted at us that we are zero to him and that he doesn't give a f* about draughts. Going to the meeting, I was expecting the possibility of cancellation of the match, but I was also hoping for explanations and apologies (and quietly counting on compromise). I have been met with insults of the worst kind and was being blamed for the fact that the match

has not really taken place because of us (me and Tamara). When Artem, who was unknown to us, started to raise his voice even more and waving his hands, we all left the room. I only managed to "contain" my anger to the lift. There, my emotions took over and I cried like a child. The crying was the result of helplessness, stress accumulated over the last six days, growing frustration and injustice. The feelings that ruled me then, I wouldn’t wish upon my worst enemy.

I would never have thought that a similar situation could happen at a tournament of such a high rank. Who allowed these people to organize such a serious event? Who trusted them and on what basis? Why didn't anyone check their activities? Why didn't the Russian Federation check what was happening under their name and stamp on all the papers? Dozens of such questions can be asked. But will it change anything? Is anybody going to hold these people responsible? This last question is the one I am most concerned about.

Natalia Sadowska

December 19th, 2020

# FMJD Tournament Director

**FMJD Tournament Director and World Title Match Tansykkuzhyna - Sadowska**

In June 2019, Tamara dethroned Natalia during the Yakutia tournament. She won her sixth title. We have already talked there that it would be fun to play this match in two countries.

At the end of July in Riga, during the World Cup tournament, I met Juri Czertok and we talked about the match. Juri already has very serious details in hand. There are considered large sums of money. Juri is putting hard conditions on us. If Natalia wants to play for such a prize pool, Poland must also significantly contribute to it.

After some time, the situation in Bashkiria changes and it turns out that there are no more such possibilities. On the Polish side, Natalia is approached in December by a company which is ready to invest in her. In principle, it does not matter in what form. Natalia says herself - match.

The company liked that idea very much. Both sides were to put $25,000 each into the prize pool. Half of the matches were to take place in Poland, half in Russia.

J. Czertok is still looking for opportunities in Russia. On our side we are already working on details, a concrete budget is being prepared, we are even choosing a hotel (it is supposed to be prestigious, that's why it's going to be in the centre of our capital city).

February 2020. Our sponsor asks for specifics and insists that we define the other half. J. Czertok says that it is going well! There are still some problems to solve, but the situation is developing. However, we are still covering for them a little in front of the sponsor.

6 March. I am going to the Berlin airport in the morning. Juri calls that they have a sponsor. The match will be in Russia. Moscow or St. Petersburg. Wonderful news, we are arranging for detailed talks as soon as I return from Turkey. On 15th of March, I am returning from Turkey ... straight to my office for a 15-day quarantine. The world has stopped.

Nevertheless, I am of course writing to my sponsor that I have good news. Unfortunately, on 10th of June the sponsor is writing quite laconically: "*Due to the events of 2020 so far and the unpredictability of the second half of the year, we cannot decide on the sponsoring of the tournament for the time being. We cannot predict whether it will be possible to hold meetings among a large group of people in the next quarter, so for the time being we are forced to wait and see how the world situation will develop. Let's keep in touch!*"

I am politely trying to establish whether we can count on anything in the eventuality that the viral situation changes. I receive routine generic responses, but the last one on 29 June is, in practice, clear. We are at the starting point.

Russians are working on the match. I get information that they will be able to do the whole thing in Russia and it will probably be Moscow and St Petersburg. They have already officially formed an organizational committee for the match. The head is Anatoli Karpov, a well-known chess player and member of the Russian Parliament.

At the beginning of August The Draughts Federation of Russia officially appoints Aleksander Rastegajew as Director of the match. The letter is signed by A. Nikitin, President of the Federation. I have had the opportunity to meet him many times, a nice man, a businessman running a large company operating on world markets.

Alexander is working hard, because despite the support of such great names as Karpov, not everyone will immediately pour money out of their wallets. There is a serious sponsor in St Petersburg, but there is also an issue of the missing signature of the Governor. After some time, the issue is finally settled. I am being informed that the match will take place in the Hermitage, and specific names are being given. But the date is being changed several times due to missing official consents (COVID-19) and other needed signatures.

In the second half of October I received copies of documents from the match director confirming that there are serious preparations in progress for the matches between 15-29th of November. One of the documents is a letter to the Governor of St Petersburg signed personally by Anatoli Karpow. The letter mentions a financial guarantor (AO CPF Severo-Zapad).

The director of the match informs me that NIkitin is coming to St Petersburg - “On Monday, Nikitin is coming to St Petersburg to deal with various draughts matters and indirectly with the matches' matters” (В понедельник Никитин А. Ю. приезжает в Питер решать вопросы пошам и заодно поматчу).

In my 22 years on the Management Board of the FMJD, including the last 11 as the Tournament Director, I have never seen letters signed at this level. Only in Bashkiria and Yakutia. Often without the support of the Russian Federation, and there have even been tournaments in which the involvement of the federation has simply interfered. Just such internal problems that are always present at some level there.

In the end, however, the match had to be moved to December. I talk to Chertok more than once. Juri tells me that it's getting to him. Everything looks great, but he has not seen any specific document with financial guarantees. I know from Juri that 50 000 may be unrealistic, but 30 000 is possible. I am not telling this to Natalia. She is asking me to press on Rastegajew. That is what I do.

In response I got a nice video and a presentation in PowerPoint from Rastegajew, where the budget is shown. Nevertheless, I press on and get an email (30 November):

> *Jacek! Don't worry about it! I'll secure the prize pool in full, just like I discussed with Czertok! If it is possible, we will pay more! We will discuss it! Now the most important thing is how to fly in judge Nurgazijew, you and Natalia during pandemic and how to organize the match on a proper level! Buy the tickets. We will discuss the current issues. I was at the Ministry of Sport all day. With J. Czertok, we are solving the problems connected with your stay in Russia. I hope and I am sure: everything is going to be alright! See you soon!*

We are already taking very concrete measures. Unfortunately, I cannot fly because of serious health problems in my immediate family.  I may be able to fly to St Petersburg if the post-operative check-up is positive. I was able to buy a ticket for Natalia and the coach.

Friday morning, December the 12th. The first message I receive in the morning is an email from Evgeni that he has not been allowed to pass the border and is back home. As it turned out, this was only the beginning of bad news.

Natalia was stopped at the airport. I get in contact with a WhatsApp group dealing with the match. 15 people, including me. The first reaction was to point at each other whose fault it was. I am trying to mitigate everything. I am saying that neither Natalia nor I have any complaints about the arising issues. Everything you write about is important, but not at the moment. What matters now is a person and her name is Natalia, and she has been detained for hours at the airport, practically like a prisoner.

There are a lot of promises, versions, all with a result that is well known. The fact is that the border services were simply doing their job. It was the organizers who completely failed to do their job and did not check (after all, the Tournament Director, as he wrote to me, was all day at the Ministry of Sport!) what really needed to be done. Natalia's legal status was exactly the same as if she wanted to cross the border without a visa. In such a situation, the rules are that you send that person back to the place from where she came from by the same airline. The nearest plane to Zurich was not until Monday 6.35 p.m. However, it is certainly not international standards to be forced to stay two nights at the airport without accommodation. The impossibility of buying something to eat or a hot drink ... I doubt that people would be treated in the same way anywhere in Europe in this situation. The tournament director was keeping me up to date on the next steps. But in fact, it had no impact on Natalia's situation. I pleaded and proposed that we will pay as much as needed for a VIP lounge or whatever. Maybe at least a meal and a coffee?! The match director writes to me that he has solved the issue and that he received the message "I am sitting and drinking coffee with Natalia''. I know from Natalia that someone just graciously let her come up and buy something to drink. Just two different worlds and that is it.

This airport story is an exceptionally drastic, even unprecedented case of the consequences of the organizational failure. If it were a tournament for a hundred people, it happens. But we are talking about one particular person. We are talking about the match for the World Cup. Everything should have been checked two hundred times, because we know what

conditions we are operating under. And yet, in the morning, after an email from Watutin, we knew that something was wrong again!

Natalia was at last in the hotel. But it soon turned out that she had to pay for her meals and also for the coach's accommodation.

In the conditions of the match we had agreed upon that the boarding was to be provided by the organizer. Much earlier I wrote to the Director of the match that Natalia is also inviting Nika Leopoldowa to the match. She wants to live in the same room with her. I also informed that our team wants to come to Moscow not on 15th, as it was planned, but on the 12th of December and we will pay for all of this, of course. I have stressed several times that we should not bother Natalia and the coach with such matters. I asked for the amount and the account number into which I am to transfer the money. The result was that Natalia and Nika had to go to the reception desk after midnight to pay for the hotel. The match director at one point claimed that it was the Belarusian Federation that was to pay for the Watutin's stay. It is not even worth mentioning, as it is more of a medical than a draughts topic.

The beginning of the match must be postponed for obvious reasons. In the meantime, I find out that on 11th of December, probably at the address of the Russian Federation, a letter came from the sponsor (the company mentioned in the letter from A. Karpov) about withdrawing from financing the match. The President of the FMJD is already on site. Rastegajew reassures us that everything will be fine. He says that there are no funds for prizes in the account yet, but there will be. We are setting up a contingency plan, which is that the FMJD will guarantee payment of EUR 30,000. This is in case of temporary delays. I am writing an email to all members of the Board informing about this option. The reactions are not positive, which I fully understand. It is not only a serious amount for our budget, but it is not the kind of expenditure that we should bear. I am trying to convince that it is only a guarantee, although it is subject to considerable risk. It is Wednesday evening, I decided to postpone the match for another day. The first round is to take place on Friday (18th).

Thursday morning. It soon turned out that the Director of the match decided that the FMJD guarantees are simply cash that he has and he declares to everyone that it will be the FMJD who will pay this amount. He also declares that the match will be in Moscow in its entirety. He absolutely does not care about the problem of newly emerging costs. The costs are not

the fault of the people he invited! Of course, apart from breakfast, the guests pay for everything themselves. I immediately see the red light - the Director of the match has elementary problems to spend a few hundred or perhaps a thousand euros. I do not see any reason to take his assurance that the EUR 30 000 will be provided. I am immediately writing an email to the members of the FMJD Management Board that my request of yesterday for such guarantees is no longer valid. We can do this, but only after the match organizers present us the documents. I also inform the match director about it. I repeatedly impose on him that this is the most important issue now. In response, I am getting unimportant information about the fact that there is already a draughtsboard in the game room and how bad is Natalia for demanding from him to buy her a ticket home.

I am publishing a new programme for the first round match on Saturday.

Thursday (December 17th), late afternoon. There is no guarantee or information on this matter from Rastegajew. I am receiving shocking information from Evgeni that there has just been a meeting where someone (it is not known who, except for the first name) has been offending everyone. In a moment, the same thing from Natalia. The rudeness in pure form in the presence of, among others, the Director of the match. Nobody reacted in defense of Natalia and our coach. Having received such terrible information from two sources, I started a frantic search for the emergency phone of our Embassy in Moscow. Luckily, I find out in a moment that they are already in the hotel room.

I am beginning a frantic search for tickets. By midnight, Natalia already has a return ticket. It leaves very soon - on Friday, which has already started in Moscow. An hour later, I have a ticket for Sunday and a hotel (not the same one of course!) for the coach. I go to sleep at about 2 A.M.

One of the more disappointing facts in this story for me is the silence of the President of the Russian Federation. He was in Moscow at the time. From the beginning I wrote to him via FB and email. I know that Janek Maggi also tried to reach him.

After a rude attack on the contender and her coach and the constant ignoring of requests to guarantee that the money paid by the FMJD immediately after the match would be returned, it was impossible to do otherwise - the match was cancelled.  Faith in great names

and high positions, faith in the beautiful budget of the match, in the strength and assurances of its director, faith that the Russian Federation and its reliable President know what they are doing and who they are working with. This faith has pushed me personally to misguided decisions. You have to be accountable for your mistakes.

**I do not see the possibility of me continuing as the Tournaments Director.**

In a state of pandemic, it is not possible to create a calendar for 2021. We have a match between Boomstra and Georgiew in the Netherlands. There, the role of Tournament Director at this stage is already symbolic. The KNDB and activists gathered around it are doing great work and everything will be fine. I'll finish it.

The next event is the World Cup in Estonia. It was postponed to June. Experienced people, the President and Treasurer of FMJD on the scene. There is an excellent moment to appoint (and the FMJD Congress may already officially choose) an interim Tournament Director. What is needed is someone younger, less gullible and firm. A generation change is necessary.

**Sorry, everyone, I have failed.**

Jacek Pawlicki
December 22nd, 2020