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Developing Chess Talent

By Francesco Lupo

To talk about this book without at least mentioning what chess represents for the Dutch city of Apeldoorn would be reductive.

The book itself is in fact the synthesis and the story of an experience that began in 1990 and that, over time, has made the Dutch city a real virtuous example of how chess can have a

positive impact on the entire social context, enriching and integrating the educational and cultural offer and acting as a concrete sport for many young people. In 1999, to support chess development, was even founded a special foundation, the SBSA, acronym for "Stichting Bevorderen Schaken Apeldoorn" (Foundation for the Promotion of Chess in Apeldoorn). The SBSA was operating until 2011 when the chess activities in Apeldoorn have continued, with a new organizing model, with Schaakacademie Apeldoorn (Chess Academy Apeldoorn).

Many initiatives and innovative ideas have enabled many talented young people to develop their skills and achieve great results with chess.

Beginning with Merijn van Delft, one of the authors of the book, an International Master trained at the "school of Apeldoorn", who in turn became the trainer, instructor and coach of many young chess players.

The real driving force behind this incredible chess experience, however, is undoubtedly Merijn's father, Drs. Karel van Delft, a psychologist and a great chess enthusiast.

Karel, together with a group of friends and collaborators, has realized an experience such that, as GM Artur Yusupov writes in the foreword to the book: *"The quite unique thing in the Apeldoorn chess culture is that everybody gets involved in the chess activities: from beginner to grandmaster!"*

The book is divided into several sessions that talk about many topics, starting with the definition of talent in chess and the method to promote the development of this talent in those young people who are provided with it. It is also defined a sort of protocol on how to set up the teaching of chess and how to involve, each one of them in his own specific role, the various components: instructors, coaches, parents and of course the young chess players themselves.

The book also gives a series of suggestions on specific actions as tournaments, conferences, activities in the streets and squares, etc. that contribute, as a whole, to develop a diffused chess culture. Also the communicative aspects are not neglected, with suggestions on how to share the news and information of the various activities.

An all-round manual that has received important recognitions and was recommended in 2010 by the FIDE Trainers Commission.

Proof of the great consideration of the book, but I would say more, of the entire chess experience of Alperdoorn, are the collaborations of many well-known chess players, starting with the already mentioned Yusupov who edited the foreword to the book, to continue, citing only a couple, with Bronstein and Timman.

The paper version of the book has been sold out both in the Dutch edition and in the two English editions, but it is still available in an e-book version in English.

For further information we recommend you to visit <http://www.chesstalent.com/>, website dedicated to the book, now included in our [LINK](#) section. The site is full of references and detailed information and if you want, you can buy the book there.

In conclusion, we would like to add that we are waiting to receive and publish an article from Drs. Karel van Delft in which he will tell us about the chess initiatives still in progress in Apeldoorn.

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