

Announcement: the end of my professional draughts career Roel Boomstra, 07-11-2022

It has always felt as a privilege that I was able to make a career out of my biggest passion: international draughts. However, after being part of Topsport KNDB for over 15 years, I have decided to end my professional career at the start of 2023. I am proud of the way I grew as a person and look back with great pleasure on my achieved successes. Almost all my boyhood dreams have turned into a reality. One of my fondest memories is the happiness Rob Clerc, the national coach, and I felt after I won the World Cup in Wageningen in 2013, the tournament in which I beat the leading Russian players in a direct encounter for the first time.

During my professional draughts career, I have already prepared myself for a career in science. Using the Regulations for Top Athletes at the University of Groningen, I graduated as a Master in Science in the field of Physics. During my studies, I mainly got excited by programming. The year 2023 feels as the right time for me to start a career as a Software Test Engineer. I will start working fulltime at the Education Executive Agency of the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, which is located in my place of residence, Groningen.

In my opinion, the community of international draughts is a beautiful place with a lot of active, passionate volunteers. At times however, I do miss the expertise of professionals. I can see the good intentions of the organizers, but nevertheless elite tournaments are regularly not up to the standards that I feel are appropriate to play draughts at the highest level. Besides that, the fact that the number of top international competitors has decreased in recent years, has also contributed to my lower motivation to practice draughts at the highest level. I still hope the draughts organizations will become more professional in the near future.

It pleases me enormously that in recent years, also the other Dutch top players have developed into world class draughts players. Therefore, I am convinced Topsport KNDB will still be very successful in the upcoming years. I feel fulfilled with my career, whereby I will always cherish the beauty of draughts and the fun I have had playing the game. I am very grateful for the contributions to my draughts career from all my trainers, coaches, sparring partners and draughts organizers.¹ Apart from them, I would also like to thank the draughts clubs 'DG Het Noorden' and 'Hijken DTC', I have always felt very welcome there. I will continue to enjoy the game of draughts, just no longer as a professional player.

¹ I would like to mention the following people for their contributions to my draughts career specifically: Annemieke and Feike Boomstra (parents), Henk Stroetinga (trainer), Jan van Meggelen (trainer), Alex Mathijssen (trainer), Nina and Henk Hoekman (trainer and coaches), Irene Buffart (school mentor), Johan Krajenbrink (trainer and technical director KNDB), Jacob Okken (sparring partner), Pieter Steijlen (sparring partner), Alexander Baljakin (trainer), Rob Clerc (trainer and national coach), Pim Meurs (sparring partner), Wouter Sipma (second and sparring partner), Cees Reitsma (elite sports coordinator RUG), Geartsje Zondervan (study advisor RUG), Ton Sijbrands (trainer), Rik Keurentjes (coach, representative), Artem Ivanov (sparring partner), Guntis Valneris (sparring partner), Hardy Menkehorst (sports psychologist), Wim Koopman (chairman Hijken DTC and draughts organizer), Bert Dollekamp (draughts journalist), Arjan de Vries (sports cluster director en draughts organizer), Thalina Prins (partner), all my colleagues at Topsport KNDB (training), the KNDB and NOC*NSF (help and financial support).



World Cup 2013: in the final against Alexander Georgiev.