

# **Esbjerg – 23 editions (1976-1988; 1996; 2000-2008)**

## **The North Sea Cup in Esbjerg (Denmark)**

The **North Sea Cup** was a chess tournament played in [Esbjerg, Denmark](#) from **1976** to 1988, and again in 1996, and from 2000 to **2008**.

Until 2003 there was an international invitation ten player [round-robin tournament](#), and amateur section (a [Swiss system tournament](#)). From 2004 the tournament has only one division, a nine- or ten-round swiss system.

Exceptions were the years of 1986 & 1987 as national events: In 1986 the titled section was the play-off for the [Danish Chess Championship](#). In 1987 the tournament was the Danish Juniors' Championship.

**The North Sea Cup is no longer played since 2009.**

**Prominent winners include Bent Larsen, Peter Svidler, Nigel Short, Artur Jusupov, Rafael Vaganian, Alexei Dreev, Emil Sutovsky, Lubomir Ftacnik, Andras Adorjan, Lazaro Bruzon, Leinier Dominguez, Krishnan Sasikiran, Mikhail Gurevich, Jonathan Mestel, Curt Hansen.**

No player did win or co-win twice at North Sea Cup in Esbjerg! Further prominent players include: *Miles, Speelman, Grischuk, Gulko, Tiviakov, De Firmian, Nikolic, Csom, Jansa, Volokitin, Savon, Darga, Keene, Plaskett, Heine Nielsen, Westerinen, Hellers, Karlsson, Sigurjonsson, or Hjartarson.*

### Coming out of hibernation

Introduction by [Troller](#) (Chessgames Contributor)

The West Sea Tournament (Vesterhavsturneringen) was first held in the year 1976 in the port town of **Esbjerg**, Denmark. "West Sea" is the Danish name for the part of the **North Sea** west of Jutland.

In 1977, the first GM played here, and in 1978 this was a regular GM tournament with Bent Larsen as the big name, he swept the event with 11/13 despite a loss to Mestel. In 1984, IM Nigel Short made his final gm norm when winning at Esbjerg, also IM Artur Jussupow made his final gm norm there, when triumphing in 1980.

The event (first series) ran annually until 1985; in 1988 a "last" big tournament was held when the organizers - the Esbjerg Chess Union - decided to break it:

*Not an easy decision and not a very popular one either, as over 200 amateur players had made a habit of spending a couple of weeks on the Danish west coast participating at what had become a regular chess festival: The North Sea Cup.*

*But nothing comes from nothing, and too many of the staff behind the tournament eventually were feeling half past dead and no replacement was in sight. So rather than let the event deteriorate, it was decided to pull the plug on the North Sea Cup.*

Nonetheless, the series was taken up again, unregularly, and after a second break, there was a promising restart in the early 2000s. In the last years of its existence from 2004 until up and including 2008, Esbjerg then has been played as an Open.

### 1st North Sea Cup 1976

Elo: 2282 \* Category: 3

1. Ulrik Rath, Uwe Kunstowicz 7/9

### 2nd North Sea Cup 1977

Elo: 2364 \* Category: 5 \* IM: 7½

1. Jens Kristiansen 9/11 (IM 1979, awarded the GM title in 2012 when World Senior Champion)

### 3rd North Sea Cup 1978

Elo: 2417 \* Category: 7 \* GM: 9½

1. GM Bent Larsen 11/13

### 4th North Sea Cup 1979

Elo: 2444 \* Category: 8 \* GM: 10

1. GM Laszlo Vadasz, IM Jonathan Mestel 9½/13

### 5th North Sea Cup 1980

Elo: 2430 \* Category: 8 \* GM: 9½

1. IM Artur Jusupov 9½/13 (final gm norm, becoming a GM), incl. GMs Csom, Darga, Savon

### 6th North Sea Cup 1981

Elo: 2436 \* Category: 8 \* GM: 8½

1. IM Lars Karlsson 8½/11

### 7th North Sea Cup 1982

Elo: 2434 \* Category: 8 \* GM: 8

1. GM Lubomir Ftacnik 8½/11

### 8th North Sea Cup 1983 (Nordic Championship)

Elo: 2422 \* Category: 7 \* GM: 8½

1. IM Curt Hansen 8½/11 (The World Junior Champion of 1984, he became a GM in 1985)

### 9th North Sea Cup 1984

Elo: 2483 \* Category: 10 \* GM: 7½

1. IM Nigel Short 7½/11 (making his final gm norm, becoming a grandmaster at age of 19), 2./3. GM Mestel, GM Karlsson, 4./5. GM Csom, GM Miles, 12 players, incl. Curt Hansen



Young Nigel - the teenage chess prodigy Nigel Short

### 10th North Sea Cup 1985

Elo: 2468 Category: 9 \* GM: 8

1. GM Andras Adorjan 8/11, incl. Csom, Ftacnik, Plaskett, or Hjartarson, again 12 players

The heart of the North Sea Cup has always been the open section, thus the 11th and 12th edition also bear the name North Sea Cups, regardless of the fact that there were no GM or IM-groups.

### 11th North Sea Cup 1986 (national)

Play-off for the Danish Championship: IM Carsten Hoi defeated IM Jens Kristiansen 2½:½

### 12th North Sea Cup 1987 (national)

The Danish Junior's Championship: Lars Bo Hansen took that title

### 13th North Sea Cup 1988

Elo: 2502 \* Category: 11 \* GM: 7

1. GM Rafael Vaganian, GM Viktor Kupreichik 7½/11, clear third at 7/11: Bent Larsen, 12 players

In September 1995 one of the key figures of the early North Sea Cups, **Finn Larsen**, passed away. His friends at his chess club decided that the best way to honour Finn's memory was to organize a next North Sea Cup, this time also bearing his name:

### 14th North Sea Cup 1996 (Finn Larsen Memorial)

Elo: 2363 \* Category: 5 \* IM: 6

1. GM John Emms 7½/9

As it turned out that event was not just a Memorial, it was also a dry run for a revival after a break of another four years:

15th North Sea Cup 2000: Peter Svidler, Mikhail Gurevich

16th North Sea Cup 2001: Peter Heine Nielsen, Emil Sutovsky

17th North Sea Cup 2002: Lazaro Bruzon, Leinier Dominguez

18th North Sea Cup 2003: Alexei Dreev, Luke McShane, Krishnan Sasikiran

19th North Sea Cup 2004 (Open): Nikola Sedlak

20th North Sea Cup 2005 (Open): Vladimir Belov

21st North Sea Cup 2006 (Open): Gerhard Schebler, Igors Rausis, Stefan Djuric, Aloyzas Kveinys

22nd North Sea Cup 2007 (Open): Karsten Rasmussen

23rd North Sea Cup 2008 (Open): Vadim Malakhatko, who won the last edition of the series

Sources:

<http://www.skakklubbencentrum.dk/vh2000/2histor.htm>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North\\_Sea\\_Cup\\_%28chess%29](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Sea_Cup_%28chess%29)

[https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_North\\_Sea\\_Cup](https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_North_Sea_Cup)