

## **BORISLAV IVKOV**

GM, former Yugoslavia, federation / nationality Serbia, born Nov-12-1933, died Febr-14-2022



GM Boris Ivkov in 1972. Photo: Anefo, R.C. Croes

Borislav («Bora») Ivkov was born in Belgrade, then Yugoslavia. He was awarded the Yugoslav National Master title in 1949, the IM title in 1954 and the GM title in 1955.

**Ivkov was the first ever World Junior Chess Champion in 1951 in Birmingham & Coventry.**

**Ivkov won the European Senior Chess Championship in 2006 in Davos, Switzerland.**

## National Tournaments:

**Three times National Champion 1958, 1963, and 1972.** Ivkov won the Yugoslav Championship in 1958 (jointly with [Svetozar Gligoric](#)) with 12.5/19, in 1963 (jointly with the late [Mijo Udovcic](#)) with 15/21, finally as sole winner in 1972 with 12/19.

## International Tournaments:

Boris Ivkov broke through into the group of the world's elite players **with two brilliant wins in strong international invitation tournaments in Argentina between March and May 1955.**

IM Ivkov won as clear first at **Mar del Plata 1955** unbeaten with 11½/15, ahead of GM Najdorf, GM Gligoric, GM Szabo, GM Pachman, GM Panno, GM Pilnik (16 players). Then IM Ivkov won as clear first at **Buenos Aires (CA) 1955** with 13/17, ahead of GM Gligoric, GM Pilnik, GM Szabo (against whom Ivkov had a loss), IM Bisguier, GM Pachman, IM Rossetto, GM Panno, IM Donner, incl. GM Trifunovic (18 players).

**Ivkov earned his Grandmaster title by FIDE that year in 1955 based on his two wins in Argentina.**

*Later the same year, at Zagreb 1955, Ivkov tied 2nd–3rd places with GM Matanovic on 12½/19, ahead of GM Geller, GM Gligoric, IM O'Kelly, GM Trifunovic, IM Bisguier, GM Filip, etc., incl. GM Pirc (20 players); the winner was GM [Vasily Smyslov](#).*

*At the end of year 1955/56, GM Ivkov earned an invitation at the traditional Hastings Congress series, finishing sole third behind joint winners IM Kochnoi (against whom he had his only loss) and Fridrik Olafsson, ahead of reputed GM Taimanov as fourth, and Darga as fifth (10 players).*

Further international tournament wins and near wins followed: **=1st Sarajevo Bosna 1958** with Petar Trifunovic; 1st Belgrade 1959 by 2.5 points (in a minor national event); **=1st Lima 1959** with Ludek Pachman on 10.5/13; **=1st Santiago de Chile 1959** again with Ludek Pachman, above Pilnik as third, Bobby Fischer shared fourth to sixth place; **=1st Beverwijk Hoogovens 1961** together with Bent Larsen on 7.5/9, above Uhlmann, and Olafsson, it was Ivkov's debut at the Hoogovens series; **=2nd Belgrade 1964** (*Spassky won, Ivkov shared second with Korchnoi, ahead of Gligoric, Larsen, Matanovic, Benkö, Bronstein, etc.*); **=1st Zagreb (Tournament of Peace) 1965** with Wolfgang Uhlmann on 13.5/19, ahead of then World Champion Petrosian, Portisch, Larsen, and Bronstein; **2nd Havana (Capablanca Memorial) 1965** (*Smyslov won, half a point ahead of 2nd-4th Ivkov, Geller, and Bobby Fischer, 5. Kholmov, 6. Pachman, etc., 22 players!*); **1st Venice 1966**; 1st Eersel 1966 on 4/5 (a minor event); **=1st Sarajevo Bosna 1967** with Leonid Stein, =1st Málaga 1968 with Drazen Marovic; 1st Stockholm (Christmas 1970); **1st Belgrade 1969** with Lev Polugaevsky, Svetozar Gligoric, and Milan Matulovic, 5./6. Geller, Lengyel, then on sole 7<sup>th</sup> place Botvinnik); **=2nd at Wijk aan Zee Hoogovens 1971** (*Korchnoi won, Ivkov shared second with Gligoric, Petrosian, Olafsson, ahead of Mecking, Andersson, Hort, Hübner, Donner, incl. veteran Najdorf*); **=1st IBM-Amsterdam 1974** with Vlastimil Jansa and Vladimir Tukmakov, incl. Geller, Ribli, Timman, Donner; **1st Cienfuegos (Capablanca Memorial) 1985** on 10/13 in a moderate field; and much later in a veteran event =1st with Portisch at Petrosian Memorial in Moscow 1999 with 5/9.

Ivkov remained an active tournament competitor and at age of 74, he played pretty successfully in the 2007 Canadian Open in Ottawa scoring 6/10 and in the 2008 Canadian Open in 2008 with 5/9. He also played in Legends vs. Ladies team events.

He played in the famous match USSR vs. Rest of the World on board ten, losing 1-3 to Paul Keres. As mentioned, Ivkov was the first ever World Junior Champion in 1951, winning in a swiss system: [Birmingham 1951 - 1° Campeonato Mundial Juvenil \(brasilbase.pro.br\)](#)

### Team events:

The quintessential team player, Ivkov first represented Yugoslavia at the Student Olympiad in 1956 when he helped the team win bronze. **He represented his country 12 times at the Olympiad between 1956 and 1980, winning 15 medals** (6 team silvers, 4 team bronzes, 2 individual board golds, 2 board silvers and 1 board bronze). Ivkov mostly played on board two, never on board one. Ivkov also represented his country six times in European Team Championships, winning 3 team silver medals, a team bronze and an individual board gold.

### World championship cycle:

He played in **five FIDE Interzonal tournaments** in 1964, 1967, 1970, 1973, and 1979.

His result as shared sixth-seventh in the **1964 Interzonal in Amsterdam qualified him** (the sole fifth finisher, Stein, and the shared sixth-place finisher, Bronstein, were excluded as qualifiers due to the country limitation clause, with Ivkov advancing instead directly, and after a play-off with Reshevsky, also Portisch), **for the 1965 Candidates**, where *Boris Ivkov lost to Bent Larsen 5.5-2.5 in the Quarterfinals*.

Ivkov just missed qualifying for the Candidates at the Interzonal in Rio de Janeiro in 1979 as shared fifth to sixth with Sunye Neto, the big surprise (Hübner, Portisch, and Petrosian won ex-aequo, and all advanced, Timman was unlucky fourth. Sax, Torre, Smejkal, Vaganian were among the beaten).



23th Beverwijk tournament in 1961, the joint winners Larsen & Ivkov. Photo: Anefo, Harry Pot

**Ranking:** Ivkov's peak was **world number 9 in 1956** (historical rating by Cessmetrics), then regularly in the world's **top twenty / top thirty between the mid-1950s and the mid-1970s**.

He was also long time Yugoslavian number two after Svtozar Gligoric. Ivkov was awarded the International Arbiter title in 1986.

Ivkov beat five World Champions, Fischer (twice), Petrosian (twice), Smyslov, Tal, Karpov, Korchnoi (twice), Geller (thrice), Hort (thrice), Szabo (multiple times), Portisch (multiple times), Larsen (multiple times), or Gligoric (multiple times), but versus the mentioned top players, Ivkov always has a negative record, sometimes brutally, he did especially badly against Keres, no win.

Borislav Ivkov in great shape, during that Argentine journey, Ivkov met his future wife 😊

**Mar del Plata (March 1955)**

- 1-Ivkov - 11.5**
- 2-Najdorf - 11
- 3-Gligoric - 10
- 4-Pachman - 9.5
- 4-Szabó - 9.5
- 6-Panno - 9
- 7-Pilnik - 8.5
- 8-Toran - 8
- 9-Wexler - 7.5
- 10-Rossetto - 7
- . . . --- (16 players, incl. also Letelier)

**Buenos Aires CA (April & May 1955)**

- 1-Ivkov - 13**
- 2-Gligoric - 12.5
- 3-Pilnik - 12
- 4-Szabó - 11.5
- 5-Rossetto - 10
- 5-Bisguier - 10
- 5-Pachman - 10
- 8-Panno - 9.5
- 9-Donner - 9
- 10-Trifunovic, Martin, Guimard, Toran - 8
- . . . --- (18 players, incl. also Sanguineti)



Borislav Ivkov married "Miss Mar del Plata", **Olga Maria Kesic (1936-1975)**:

<https://de.chessbase.com/post/bamberg-miss-mar-del-plata-und-ausserdem-ein-bankueberfall>

<https://en.chessbase.com/post/bamberg-1968-round-11-miss-mar-del-plata-and-a-bank-robbery>



V. Korchnoi (80) and B. Ivkov (77) in 2011 at the Botvinnik Memorial Rapid invitation tournament in Suzdal, Russia. The second oldest player in the field, Korchnoi won the event unbeaten at 7/9.

This tournament in August 2011 was commemorating the centenary of the birth of Mikhail Botvinnik who was born August 17th 1911, and featured players (Korchnoi, Portisch, Ivkov, Uhlmann, Taimanov, Vasiukov, Alexander Nikitin, etc.), who had competed versus Botvinnik, Yuri Averbakh, already the oldest GM in the world, acted as arbiter. Spassky had to decline.

It was the last game between Korchnoi and Ivkov, a draw agreed, they first met 55 years earlier at Hastings Congress in 1955/56, where Korchnoi got the GM title for his co-win with F. Olafsson.

Sources:

[Bora Ivkov - Wikipedia](#), Portrait in Wikipedia

[The chess games of Borislav Ivkov](#), Chessgames, with games to replay

[Borislav Ivkov, 1933-2022 \(Chess.com\)](#), Obituary by Peter Doggers)

[Remembering Borislav Ivkov \(1933-2022\) \(ChessBase\)](#), Obituary by André Schulz

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Pictures:

[Borislav Ivkov 1963 - Category: Borislav Ivkov – Wikimedia Commons](#)

[Hoogovenschaaktoernooi, Wijk aan Zee 1971 Gligoric - Ivkov – Wikimedia Commons](#)

[IBM-Amsterdam 1974 - Geller vs. Ivkov – Wikimedia Commons](#)

[snezenky\\_a\\_machri\\_2013\\_gal05\\_06,5.jpg \(976×700\) \(praguechess.cz\)](#)

[snezenky\\_a\\_machri\\_2013\\_gal05\\_09.jpg \(1000×630\) \(praguechess.cz\)](#)