 **Unzicker Wolfgang** (26.06.1925 - 20.04.2006)



Grandmaster in 1954, IM 1950. Graduated in law and was an administrative judge in Munich. **He won seven West German Championships from 1948 until 1965**, namely in 1948, 1950, Apr 1953, Nov 1953 (East & West Germany), 1959, 1963, and 1965 (de facto, jointly).

He was the strongest West German player from the late 1940s to about 1970 when Robert Hübner raised. The Oxford Companion to Chess by Hooper & Whyld writes: “Unzicker’s good manners, his sportsmanship and sense of fair play, made him popular at home and abroad.”

**Wins in international tournaments:** **Augsburg 1946** (ahead of 2. Elmārs Zemgalis, 3./4. Povilas Tautvaišas, Fritz Sämisch, 5. Lucius Endzelīns, 17 players, many Germans and Displaced Persons), Bad Nauheim (national) 1948 (incl. Rellstab), **Lucerne 1948/49**, **Heidelberg 1949** (ahead of 2. Rossolimo, 3.-5. O’Kelly, Kieninger, Paul Felix Schmidt, incl. L. Schmid), **Travemünde 1950** (ahead of 2. Bogoljubov, 12 players, Sämisch last), **Hastings 1950/51** (ahead of 2./3. Rossolimo, O’Kelly, ten players), **Lucerne 1951/52** (second win), **Munich (zonal) 1954** (ahead of 2./3. Rabar, Donner, 4. Fuderer, 5. GM Pirc, 20 players, GM title for Unzicker), **Sochi (Chigorin Mem) 1965** (joint with Spassky; 3. Ciric, 16 players, among them nine from the USSR!), **Krems (Karl Eybl Gedächtnisturnier) 1967** (ahead of 2. Szabo, 3. Hort, 4. Bronstein, 5. Ciric, and many Austrians), **Maribor 1967** (ahead of 2. Reshevsky, 3.-5. Ivkov, Matanovic, Zinn, incl. Matulovic, Janosevic, Lengyel, Minev, Robatsch or veteran Pirc; 16 players), IBM-B in Amsterdam 1980 (with Ree), Almada (closed) 1988, **Daugavpils (closed) 1990**, with young Shirov, V. Zhuravliov, and Hoi, Donner Memorial-B in Amsterdam 1994 (with Gligoric, Smyslov, incl. Bronstein, Hort, Pachman)

*He finished shared fourth in the very strong Santa Monica (Piatigorsky Cup) tournament in 1966 (at +2-1=14) with [Lajos Portisch](#); only [Boris Spassky](#), [Bobby Fischer](#), and [Bent Larsen](#) finished above Unzicker, who placed ahead of then reigning World Champion [Tigran Petrosian](#), [Samuel Reshevsky](#), [Miguel Najdorf](#), [Borislav Ivkov](#), and [Hein Donner](#). At [Hastings](#) 1969-70, Unzicker finished second (+4-0=5) after [Lajos Portisch](#) and ahead of [Svetozar Gligorić](#) and former World Champion [Vasily Smyslov](#). He finished second (+3-2=7) to [Viktor Korchnoi](#) at South Africa 1979. As a guest, he was second to [Mark Taimanov](#) in Leningrad at the Baltic Nations 1960 (12 players)*

*At the **Stockholm Interzonal 1952**, Unzicker finished sole ninth; the first eight players finally advanced (Kotov won sensationally, ahead of 2.-4. Taimanov, Petrosian, Geller, 5.= Averbakh, Stahlberg, Szabo, Gligoric), Unzicker surpassed Eliskases, Pilnik, Pachman, H. Steiner, Matanovic, Barcza, Stoltz, etc., 21 player). Unzicker played again at the next **Interzonal in Gothenburg 1955** (won by Bronstein), but finishing below 50%. He lost a friendly match to Keres (+0-4=4) in 1956*

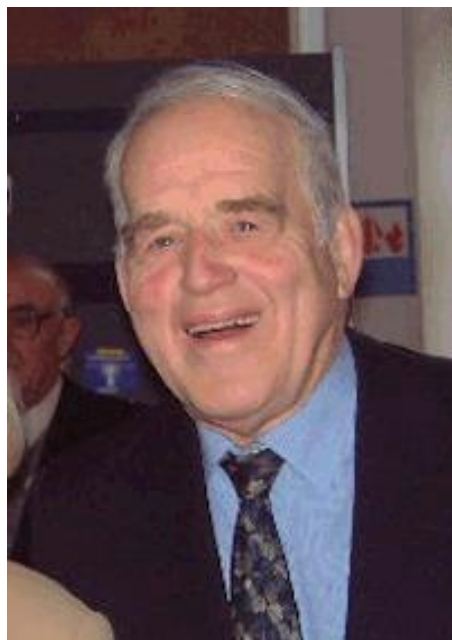
**Individual gold medal on board one in 1950** at the [Dubrovnik Chess Olympiad](#): Unzicker shared the prize for best top-board score (+9 -1 =4) with [Miguel Najdorf](#) for his performance on top board.

During the 1964 Tel Aviv Olympiad, he and his team (Unzicker, Darga, Lothar Schmid, Pflieger, plus Morlock, Bialas) went on to winning the Bronze medal after a sensational 3:1 team victory over the Soviet Union: **Unzicker beat Smyslov on board one.**

In total, **13 participations in Olympiads from 1950-82** (ten on board one, and three on board two).

**‘The World Champion of Amateurs’**: Karpov used to call Unzicker ‘the World Champion of Amateurs’. **Wolfgang Unzicker beat in classical chess games four World Chess Champions: Botvinnik, Smyslov, Tal, Fischer**, and Korchnoi, Keres, Bogoljubov, Larsen, Reshevsky, Gligoric, Szabo, Tartakower, Timman, Miles, Ljubojevic, Uhlmann, amongst many others, *and also played the World Chess Champions Euwe, Petrosian, Spassky, Karpov, and, in a rapid game, Kasparov.*

Chess columnist at the “Süddeutsche Zeitung”. Wolfgang Unzicker chose to be a lawyer and a judge by profession and was for many years the legal advisor to the German Chess Association.



Unzicker playing Uhlmann at the Olympiad in Leipzig 1960, and pictured in later years.

He was **mostly a Top Twenty player in the 1950s and 1960s, and Top Fifty during the 1970s.**

His highest ranking was **no. 10=** together with Portisch, Polugaevsky and Stein (inofficial FIDE Elo rating list in **April 1968**), as the third best Non-USSR player after Bobby Fischer and Bent Larsen.

Highest Sonas Chessmetrics ranking was **no. 14** in **January 1951** (from the Non-USSR players, only Reshevsky, Najdorf, Stahlberg, Szabo, Gligoric, and retired Fine had a higher rating then).



**Unzicker Gala** in Mainz 2005 (Karpov, legendary Arbiter Lothar Schmid, Korchnoi, Unzicker).

In 2005, Unzicker celebrated his 80th birthday with his wife Freia, his three sons and their wives and three grandchildren, a rapid event with [Karpov](#), [Korchnoi](#) and [Spassky](#) took place in his honor.

Unzicker died on April 20, 2006, at the age of 81, during a holiday trip to Albufeira in Portugal.



Wolfgang Unzicker had a classical chess style modelled after the German player and theoretician [Siegbert Tarrasch](#) who had lived from 1862 to 1934. **Famous games of Grandmaster Unzicker:**

**Unzicker, Wolfgang vs. Keres, Paul 1-0**, Alekhine Memorial in Moscow 1956

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.O-O Be7 6.Re1 b5 7.Bb3 d6 8.c3 O-O 9.h3 Na5 10.Bc2 c5 11.d4 Qc7 12.Nbd2 cxd4 13.cxd4 Nc6 14.Nb3 Bb7 15.Bg5 h6 16.Bh4 Nb4 17.Bb1 Rac8 18.Re2 Nh5 19.a3 Nc6 20.d5 Nb8 21.Rc2 Qd8 22.Na5 Rxc2 23.Nxb7 Qc7 24.Qxc2 Qxb7 25.Bxe7 Rc8 26.Bxd6 Rxc2 27.Bxc2 f6 28.Bb3 Nf4 29.Rd1 Nd7 30.Rd2 Nb6 31.Bc7 Nc4 32.d6 Ne6 33.Ba5 Nc5 34.Bb4 Nd7 35.Rc2 a5 36.Bxa5 Qxe4 37.Nd2 Qd3 38.Rxc4 Kh7 39.Bc2 1-0

→ Replay in Chessgames: <http://www.chessgames.com/perl/chessgame?gid=1072626>

**Unzicker vs. Fischer 1-0**, Buenos Aires Tournament 1960

[Wolfgang Unzicker vs Robert James Fischer \(1960\) \(chessgames.com\)](#)

**Unzicker vs. Botvinnik 1-0**, ETCC, Final, Oberhausen (West Germany) 1961, board one

[Wolfgang Unzicker vs Mikhail Botvinnik \(1961\) \(chessgames.com\)](#)

**Smyslov vs. Unzicker 0-1**, Chess Olympiad, Final-A, Tel Aviv 1964, board one

[Vasily Smyslov vs Wolfgang Unzicker \(1964\) \(chessgames.com\)](#)

**Unzicker vs. Szabo 1-0**, Bamberg International Tournament 1968

[Wolfgang Unzicker vs Laszlo Szabo \(1968\) \(chessgames.com\)](#)

**Unzicker vs. Tal 1-0**, Milan Tournament 1975

[Wolfgang Unzicker vs Mikhail Tal \(1975\) \(chessgames.com\)](#)



Two gentlemen in a team Bundesliga match in the year 1983. According to Chessgames, Spassky and Unzicker played 15 games (including 2 rapid games) between 1955 and 2005, 14 were drawn. Photo: [WU Spasski BL1983a.jpg \(1397×1023\) \(wolfgang-unzicker.de\)](#), website by his son, Dr. Alexander Unzicker

Wolfgang Unzicker played on board one for West German in ten Chess Olympiads! Namely in 1950, 1954, 1956, 1958, 1960, 1962, 1964, 1968, 1970, and 1976, plus 1974, 1978, and 1982 on board two (West Germany did not take part at all in 1966 in Cuba). Unzicker also played five times at the European Team Chess Championships between 1957 and 1977, always on board one.

The following Team line-up sheets are from the Chess Olympiad in Leipzig, East Germany, organised in 1960:

UdSSR			
Unzicker		Tal	<i>Mosk</i>
Schmid		Botwinnik	<i>Botwinnik</i>
Bialas		Kortsch	<i>BK</i>
Pfeiffer		Petrosjan	<i>Petrosjan</i>

Советские шахматисты рады, что дружеские спортивные связи с шахматистами Германской федеративной республики постоянно развиваются и укрепляются.

Ответственный секретарь  
шахматной федерации СССР *Абрамов / Abramov*  
Leipzig, 9.11.1960

Jugoslavien			
1 Gligorić	<i>Gligorić</i>		Unzicker
2 Matanović	<i>J. Matanović</i>		Schmid
3 Jukov	<i>Jukov</i>		Darga
4 Bertok	<i>Bertok M.</i>		Bialas

De Comodoro el buen "Capitono"  
con sincerolo e cerimonoso efecto

*Lj. St. Tufanovic*



Argentinien			
Naydorf	<del>W. Naydorf</del>	Unzicker	
Eliskasis	<del>W. Eliskasis</del>	Schmid	
Bazan		Dr. Lehmann	
Schweber	S. Schweber	Bialas	
	W. K.		

USA			
Unzicker		Fischer	
Darga		Lombardy	W. Lombardy
Lehmann		Byrne	Robert Byrne
Bialas		Bisguier	A. Bisguier

- With best wishes to the German Chess Federation  
from their American friends

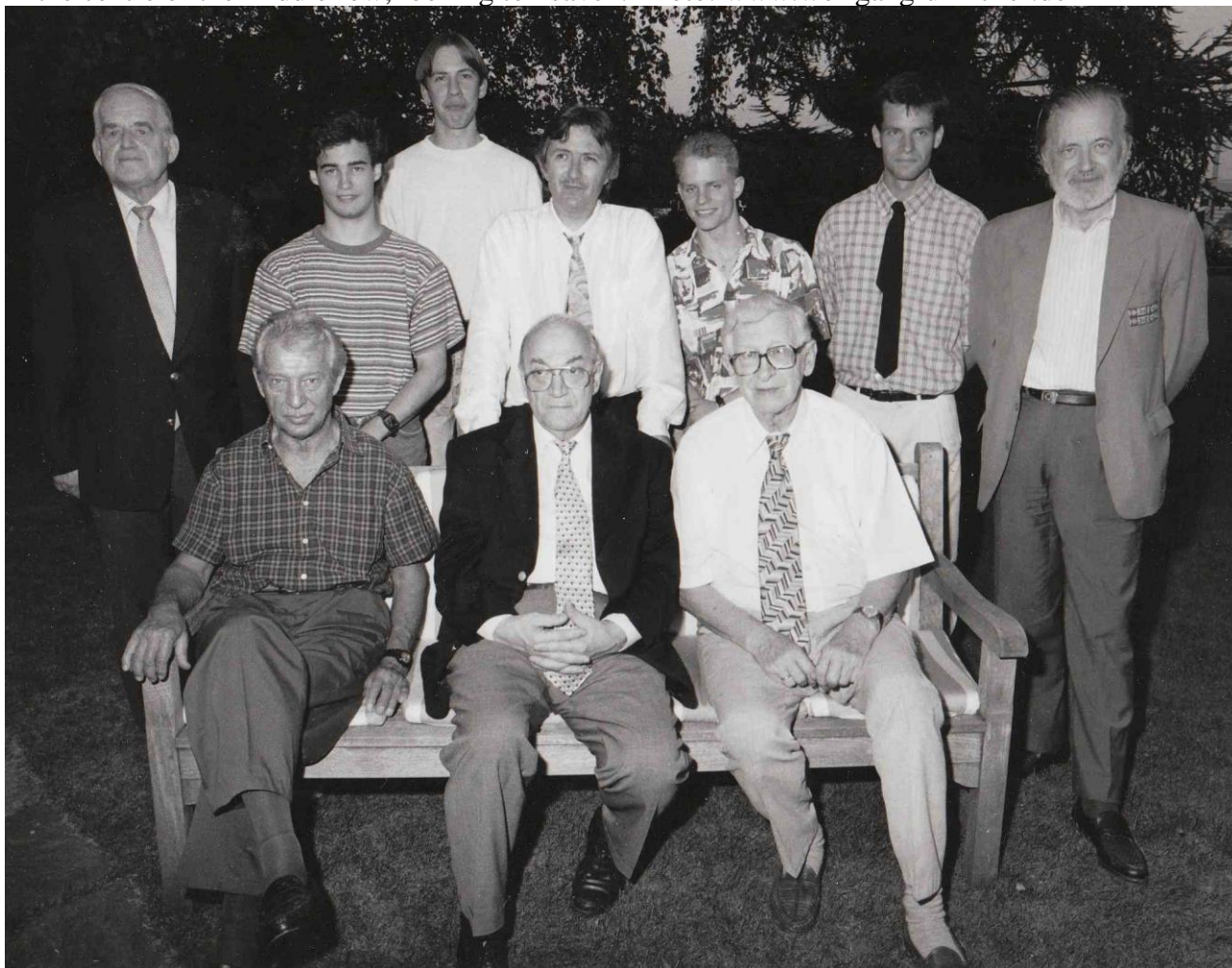
Isaac Kashdan

"With best wishes to the German Chess Federation from their American friends", wrote US (non-playing) team captain Isaac Kashdan.

Apparently, Bobby Fischer had no time to sign for the game on board one versus Unzicker, they played each other three times in 1960, at the great Buenos Aires Tournament, Unzicker could beat Fischer, already a Candidate in their individual game; months later at the Olympiads in Leipzig, Bobby took his revenge, Fischer won in the Preliminaries, the game in the A-Final was drawn.



Buenos Aires 1960: The winners Korchnoi and Reshevsky on the left side in the front row, Fischer in the centre of the middle row, looking to heaven. Photo: [www.wolfgang-unzicker.de](http://www.wolfgang-unzicker.de)



Invited at "Nagler Memorial" in Zürich 1998 in the team with Gligoric, Korchnoi, Smyslov, Larsen. Photo: [www.wolfgang-unzicker.de](http://www.wolfgang-unzicker.de) (Wolfgang played also at Korchnoi 70 Gala, Viktor at Unzicker 80 Gala)



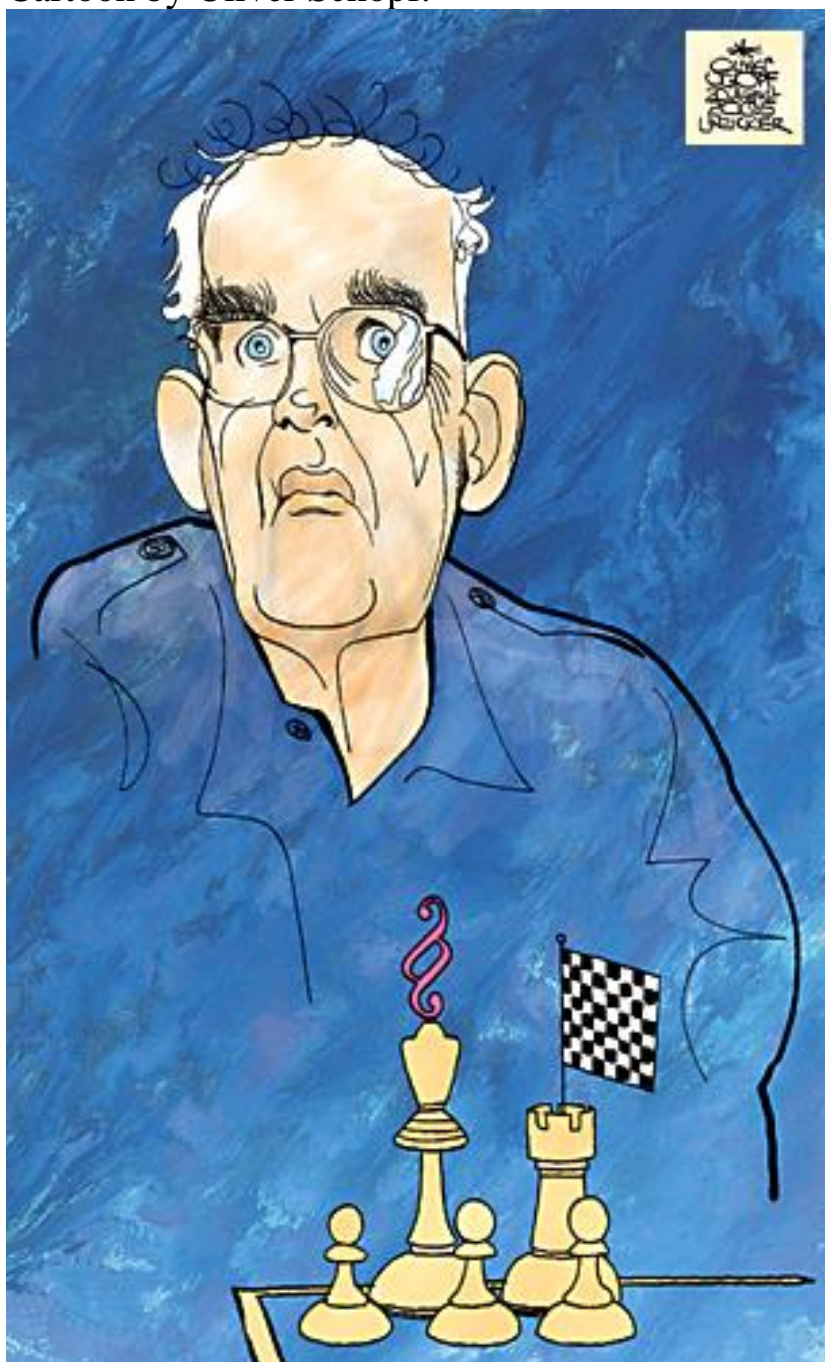


Holidays in Albufeira, 4-17-2006, three days before a heart attack. Photos: Dr. Alexander Unzicker.



Grave (Münchner Westfriedhof)

Cartoon by Oliver Schopf:



link: [http://www.oliverschopf.com/html/d\\_archiv/schach/schach\\_allgemein/schach\\_unzicker.html](http://www.oliverschopf.com/html/d_archiv/schach/schach_allgemein/schach_unzicker.html)

Sources:

<http://www.chessgames.com/perl/chessplayer?pid=11236> (Chessgames)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wolfgang\\_Unzicker](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wolfgang_Unzicker) (Wikipedia)

[Augsburg 1946](#), [Bad Nauheim 1948](#) (strong national tournament), [Heidelberg 1949](#), and

[Travemünde 1950](#) (all won by Unzicker as clear first, he is becoming West Germany's no. 1)

<http://www.saund.co.uk/britbase/pgn/195012hast-viewer.html> (clear first at Hastings 1950/51)

<https://de.chessbase.com/post/vlastimil-hort-wolfgang-unzicker> (Memories by Vlastimil Hort)

**Personal Website of Dr. Wolfgang Unzicker (1925 – 2006),**

established by Dr. [Alexander Unzicker \(alexander-unzicker.de\)](#), his son:

[Wolfgang Unzicker \(wolfgang-unzicker.de\)](#) with rare pictures, many games, and reminiscences!