

Complaint against GM Kramnik's behavior

Grandmaster Vladimir Kramnik has recently been accusing many people publicly, often using insufficient or highly problematic arguments.

Recently he has published a table measuring accuracy in Titled Tuesdays with more than 10 seconds left, showing me in the 3rd place of the most accurate players. Actually I am not sure whether he is accusing me, given that ratings of several other players are marked red (and presumably considered especially suspect), while mine is blue. That said, given his recent statements on the topic, I am less than happy to see such a table and to see myself there, given that he usually publishes such things to indirectly accuse people of cheating.

Not having access to Twitter/X, I copied the screenshot from Lichess and attach it

I do not have exact statistics, but I played about 27-30 Titled Tuesdays altogether, scoring in average something between 7.5 and 8 points out of 11 rounds. Three times I scored 9/11, three times 8.5/11. I once won a prize of \$200 and three other times finished in top 10, yet with no prize. I have never been asked to join Zoom at these events, yet played many rapid events with two cameras, mostly with a similar level of play. And many OTB blitz and rapid tournaments, again showing a similar level of play. With the same ups and downs, including many games played very well with a few seconds left.) In fact, my results in OTB blitz are slightly better than in online blitz, look at these two events to see that I can play very well at times:

https://ratings.fide.com/calculations.phtml?id_number=309095&period=2021-12-01&rating=2

https://ratings.fide.com/calculations.phtml?id_number=309095&period=2024-01-01&rating=2

In both of these events I played many good moves with less than 10 seconds left, by the way.

Why on the Earth would I cheat in Titled Tuesdays? To earn less than \$10 per tournament and risk a big scandal?

If needed, I am ready to make a video on my games from TT, explaining my decisions, just I don't want to spend too much time on it.

Grandmaster Kramnik is a great player, but he does not really understand statistics. Moreover, I am not sure if he understands that he does not really understand statistics. His interpretation of the statistical term „random event“¹ suggests the opposite. When he publicly accused Hikaru, he artificially took a concrete sequence of tens of thousands of Hikaru's games and then wanted to calculate the probability of such results within a given sequence, ignoring that:

- 1) He artificially selected one sentence out of many
- 2) Hikaru's form can vary and cannot be considered random event, and wins might make him play more confidently and better

¹ This seems to be the correct link: https://encyclopediaofmath.org/index.php?title=Random_event

- 3) The form of Hikaru's opponents might vary, they might be tilting after losses
- 4) The series took place at very concrete time, far from random. Time when Hikaru was in a very good form. (I do not know whether they all were played at the same time of the day or on the same day, but my argument remains relevant.)
- 5) Chess players are human beings and psychology comes into play. It is not random.

All in all, it has not been random at all, and calculating probabilities the way he did does not make sense.

Not being on Twitter / X, I have luckily missed most of GM Kramnik's statements, yet his accusation of Tykhon Cherniaev based on a single move (not really so difficult to find) was pretty much inadequate. I am not sure, but I guess that Tykhon might still be a minor. It was not the only case when he was accusing a minor without presenting sufficient proof.

I would like to stress a few things regarding my high precision rate in Titled Tuesdays.

1. I have always had a high precision rate on chess.com, not only in Titled Tuesdays. And yet comparatively low ratings. Being older than most of the opponents and only starting playing online tournaments at the age of 34, I am not able to move the pieces as quickly as the others. Obviously slower play leads to higher precision, but not necessarily to better results. My online ratings are pretty adequate.
2. I only play Titled Tuesdays at suitable day times, I have never played the Late Titled Tuesday, as my brain works worse in the evening and even worse on the day after an evening online tournament. I wake up around 5 a.m. more or less regardless of when I go to bed. And I need 2 hours to fall asleep after a tournament.
3. I do not play Titled Tuesdays during OTB tournaments, nor I play them when feeling unwell. (Although I am not always able to predict my form.)
4. Given that, my precision rate is so high also because I mostly play when feeling good or very good, and mostly skip the events where I would perform poorly, including all Late Titled Tuesdays.
5. I had an incredibly good period in Titled Tuesdays around December 2023, scoring three times 9/11 and once 8.5/11. That said, I won the European Blitz Championship at the same period and scored something like 20.5/21 in a casual blitz tournament in the Czech Republic, with quite some young FMs playing there, some of them being rated around 2400 in blitz. Showing the same level as at the European Blitz, yet against a weaker opposition. There were enough witnesses.
6. I have never been banned for cheating, nor warned.
7. I do not play nonsense openings in Titled Tuesdays, like some others, including Magnus, do.

I find it telling that GM Kramnik believes it to be fine when GM Khismatullin, currently rated 2497 in blitz, reaches a blitz rating of 3056 (moreover, with his own help), whereas I, with my current blitz rating of 2688 and a peak blitz rating

of 3049 on chess.com, end up high in his infamous “statistics”, though not marked red, unlike some others.

I understand that Dennis Khismatullin is currently underrated and that I am overrated, but it is still obvious that GM Kramnik uses dual standards.

I am also afraid of cheaters and my opinions on some players might actually coincide with those of GM Kramnik, yet I find his way of fighting against cheating very bad, and harmful for chess. He has violated more than one article of the Terms of Service. Fight against cheaters in a must, but accusing cheaters and honest players alike does not improve the situation.

In my opinion, it is unacceptable to accuse people publicly without really convincing arguments, and doubly so when they are minors. It is unacceptable to play a Titled Tuesday from other player’s account, depriving some opponents of chances for a prize along the way.

The fact that GM Kramnik is an ex-World champion and a great player is no excuse, as it such people should rather be more responsible, as their statements might do bigger damage.

Moreover, GM Kramnik has violated the Terms of Service of chess.com by playing under GM Khismatullin’s account, possibly also tempting other player, Dennis Khismatullin, to violate those terms of service as well.

In my opinion, GM Kramnik should be removed from the FIDE board, if he is still there. His recent actions might be meant well, but have very bad consequences and deteriorate the image of chess. He should be disqualified at least for three months, similarly to other people who had been more restrained in their accusations and did not get so much attention. Finally, he should publicly apologize for his least founded accusations and publicly admit that he does not really understand statistics.

GM David Navara, Czech Republic, three time European Blitz Champion (once extremely lucky, twice in exceptional form there)

P.S.: I need not mention this, but want to be fair with you. When I was aged around 15, I played a few casual (rated, but not tournament) games from my younger brother’s account on Yahoo.com, as I did not know that it was illegal, nor did my brother (aged around 13 then) know. (In fact, I do not really know if it was illegal, but guess so.) I did not hide it from the opponents and created my own account once they advised me to do so. I did not have my own laptop then, did not have my own e-mail address and did not have internet at home. It was the only time when I violated the terms of service (if it was really forbidden), and I did so completely involuntarily. While it is similar to GM Kramnik’s behavior in this aspect, there are many important differences. He was competing for money and knew very well what he was doing.