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NIGEL SHORT

OPENS UP ABOUT THE
1993 MATCH FOR THE
WORLD TITLE

**I HAVE
A LOT OF
NEGATIVE EMOTIONS
ABOUT THE MATCH.
LOSING TO KASPAROV
WAS A TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCE**

THE ASTANA MATCH: A CLASH OF PERSONALITIES

THE PHILOSOPHY OF CHESS:
SPACE, TIME AND DISTANCE IN THE CHESS ECO-SYSTEM



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Contents



200

**NIGEL SHORT
SPEAKS TO BCM ABOUT WHAT IT
MEANS TO PLAY IN A WORLD
CHAMPIONSHIP MATCH**

- 207 THE RUN-UP TO THE
1993 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP**
By GM Raymond Keene OBE
- 214 European Individuals 2023:
YOUNG PLAYERS DOMINATE**
By GM Aleksandar Colovic
- 226 SPACE, TIME AND DISTANCE IN THE
CHESS ECO-SYSTEM**
By Peter O'Brien
- 231 NEXT YEAR IN JERUSALEM**
By Alexis Levitin
- 235 Openings for Amateurs
NIGHTMARES IN THE NAJDORF, PART IV
ANOTHER UNEXPECTED SYSTEM**
By Pete Tamburro
- 239 Oxford University v Cambridge University:
THE 141ST VARSITY CHESS MATCH**
By IM Shaun Taulbut
- 244 "FITS, STARTS AND CONTINUITIES:
CHESS TOURNAMENTS IN THE USA"**
By Peter O'Brien
- 248 Quotes and Queries
SULTAN KHAN'S BRITISH CHESS LEGACY**
By Alan Smith

THE ASTANA MATCH: THE 17TH WORLD CHAMPION



THE CLASH OF CHALLENGERS

By GM Aleksandar Colovic; Photo: FIDE/ Stev Bonhage, David Llada

After a long time we have a match not between a defending Champion we're used to seeing, but between two Candidates. In a way, we're back in 1974 and the Karpov-Korchnoi match. But there is more to the Astana Match than meets the eye

I read somewhere that the upcoming match in Astana (9-30 April) will be “the least anticipated World Championship match.” This statement clearly indicates the public's dissatisfaction with Carlsen's decision to abdicate, as we have got used to seeing the Champion (and the best player in the world) play the best Candidate. What we get instead, is a match between two Challengers.

In a way, we have a similar situation to 1974, when Karpov and Korchnoi played the final Candidates match. The difference is that they didn't know that Fischer wouldn't play. In Astana, both players will know that a win will crown them a new, 17th, World Champion.

Another similarity with recent history is with the 90s when we had a clearly best player in the World, Kasparov, and a FIDE Champion, first Karpov and then Khalifman. After Astana, we will have Carlsen as a clear number one and a new FIDE Champion.

We will see what implications this will have on the direction chess will take in the near future. Now, let's turn to the analysis of what we can expect in Astana.

IAN NEPOMNIACHTCHI: THE “SENIOR” PLAYER

Even though neither of the players is a defending Champion, I see Nepomniachtchi more as the “senior” in this match. The reason for this is his previous experience of having played a World Championship match.

Nepomniachtchi was badly beaten by Carlsen, but in spite of that he exuded supreme confidence after the match in Dubai. He understood that he lost not because he was a bad player, but due to factors and mistakes that he can avoid in the future. With that realisation he was able to use all the work that went into his preparation and this resulted in a new level of consistency.

I had a chance to observe him closely during the Candidates Tournament in Madrid last year and his demeanour during the games looked like what Botvinnik called “slight irony” towards the opponents. It was another way of demonstrating his confidence and it paid dividends - he won the tournament convincingly.

An important factor in his victories was the stability of his repertoire with the black pieces. The Grünfeld and the Najdorf made way for the Petroff and the combination of Queen’s Gambit Declined, Nimzo-Indian and Semi-Tarrasch. This raised level of opening preparation as a result of his preparation for the match with Carlsen helped Nepomniachtchi feel at ease when playing with Black, thus saving a lot of nervous energy for the battle after the opening.

Nepomniachtchi reached a new level after the match with Carlsen. And here lies a possible danger for him in the upcoming match.

What if he remains on that level and has already reached his maximum? What if the repertoire he prepared for Carlsen and has used since is what he is comfortable with and lacks the element of surprise?

The risk for Nepomniachtchi is to remain the same, known, force. If he remains predictable and content with his current level, that level was sufficient to win a second Candidates in a row, but to win a World Championship match a player must raise the level even higher.



DING LIREN: THE LUCKY ONE

Ding Liren has been very lucky. He wasn't supposed to play in the Candidates Tournament, but then he received unexpected help from a friendly Russian. Sergey Karjakin became over-enthusiastic about the war his country initiated and this got him sanctioned, giving Ding a path to Madrid.

He still needed to comply with a requirement of playing a certain number of rated games, but the Chinese Federation dealt with this expertly, organising events in a record time and ensuring their player was all set for Madrid.

In Madrid it was difficult to keep up with Nepomniachtchi, especially after Ding Liren lost to him in the first round with the white pieces. It appeared that he didn't even try, making seven draws in a row after that loss.

And then, he won three games in a row. Suddenly, he was in contention.

However, the three wins were spoiled by an awful game against Radjabov, which he lost in 26 moves with White.

The dream was over, but, as a true professional, Ding Liren kept trying to win games. It all came down to the last round, when he trailed second-placed Nakamura by a point. Playing with White, he applied pressure in the endgame and capitalised on Nakamura's nerves, which prevented him from drawing what seemed like an easily drawn endgame.

Eventually Ding Liren edged out Nakamura for second place on the tie-break.

Still, this meant nothing: at the Candidates, only the first place matters, as the winner gets to play the big match.

At that moment, he received unexpected help from a friendly Norwegian.

It was the right moment for the Chinese player when Carlsen finally followed through on what he had been announcing in the past. His dissatisfaction with the format plus some personal preferences led him to abandon the World Championship cycle. In such cases, the regulations state that the winner of the Candidates Tournament plays the second-placed player.

After a series of incredible events Ding Liren had made it all the way to the big match.

In spite of being in the elite for quite some time, Ding Liren is a lesser-known person. He gives away very little and even his interviews don't reveal much. It is a conscious choice, as he said in the interview to BCM from the February issue last year. He also said that the attention of others affects his play and this is notable in the last two Candidates Tournaments - in both he started badly and only started to play well when he was off the radar and not considered the favourite any more.

This may be the key for Ding Liren in the upcoming match.

In a match where nobody is a defending Champion, Nepomniachtchi's greater experience makes him the favourite. The role of a relative underdog is exactly what fits Ding's mindset. Free from the additional pressure, and there will be pressure anyway, Ding can find his psychological comfort zone from where he can show the best he's capable of.

When it comes to his opening repertoire, Ding's openings have been very consistent over the years. Closed openings with

White and the Ruy Lopez against 1.e4 and solid d5-based systems (QGD, Slav, Ragozin and Nimzo) against 1.d4.

He has experimented lately with 1.e4, but I think the reason was not actually to change to 1.e4 for the match, but to avoid showing the preparation done in the closed systems. These factors mean that he has more scope for surprises in the match compared to his opponent, who already made the big surprise (switching to Petroff and QGD) for his match with Carlsen. It is another small factor working in favour of the Chinese player.

Eventually, the match will be decided by better nerves and form. The players will prepare to the best of their ability, but the ability on show in Astana will give us the name of the new, 17th World Champion.





Nigel Short opens up about the 1993 match for the World Title, against Garry Kasparov

I HAVE A LOT OF NEGATIVE EMOTIONS ABOUT THE MATCH. LOSING TO KASPAROV WAS A TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCE

By Milan Dinic; Photo: David Llada

As the focus of the chess world turned to the match to decide the new world champion, BCM spoke with Grandmaster Nigel Short about his experience in the world championship match against Garry Kasparov in London, almost three decades ago

The world is about to get a new World Champion in chess who, unlike in the past 10 years, will not be from the West. The Westerner Magnus Carlsen decided to unseat himself from the throne, allowing a Russian and - for the first time in chess history - a Chinese to fight for the supreme title. Almost 30 years ago, a similar historic event took place - but that time a Westerner was trying to unseat a Russian for the first time since 1972.

Together with Reshevsky, Fischer and Carlsen, Nigel Short stands out as the only Westerner in the post-World War Two period to fight for the crown of World Champion. Unlike Fischer or Carlsen, he did not succeed in winning the title. In an exclusive interview with BCM, Nigel Short opens up about the London match against Kasparov in 1993 and the impact it had on his life. Short also talks about who he would like to become the new world champion as well as his current work for the International Chess Federation (FIDE).

British Chess Magazine: What are your expectations from the Match in Astana between Nepomniachtchi and Ding Liren?

Nigel Short: Officially I am completely neutral. On a personal level, I have a slight preference for Ding. I like both of the players, they're both nice guys, but as a chess fan, I prefer Ding.

BCM: Why Ding?

NS: I prefer his chess slightly more. Also, if Ding wins there will be a huge change. China has done amazing things in women's chess but they haven't yet made the ultimate breakthrough in men's individual chess. This would be something which, maybe, would help expand chess massively in China. Chess is not unknown there but it's very far from what it would be if Ding were to win. Even from a utilitarian point of view, it may be a better thing if Ding wins. Either way, I will watch the games with huge interest!

BCM: Who do you think stands better chances?

NS: Ding had some disappointing results recently, but I wouldn't read much into that at all. The match is a matter of focus. Just before I had my greatest success - beating Anatoly Karpov in Linares in 1992 - I finished last in a tournament. I think that recent past performance is irrelevant. Once they sit down and start afresh neither Ding nor Nepo will be thinking of other big tournaments, but will just have one thing in mind - the title of World Champion. I doubt whether Ding's recent poor form is a sign of anything significant, but we'll see.

BCM: Do you think that for chess it will be good news to have a new face as world champion? Is a new face what chess needs?

CHINA HAS DONE AMAZING THINGS IN WOMEN'S CHESS BUT THEY HAVEN'T YET MADE THE ULTIMATE BREAKTHROUGH IN MEN'S INDIVIDUAL CHESS... A VICTORY FOR DING WOULD BE SOMETHING WHICH, MAYBE, WOULD HELP EXPAND CHESS MASSIVELY IN CHINA

CARLSEN WILL COME BACK

NS: It will be very good for China if Ding wins. Magnus Carlsen is a giant figure in the chess world and he's been the dominant figure for over a decade. Unfortunately, he decided to take a step back. I don't think that his retirement will be permanent. I suspect he will come back.

BCM: What makes you think that?

NS: You would think: either you give up completely and retire or you hang on for as long as you can. The impression I got is that he is just taking a pause. He probably will come back, but we will see. I'm finding it difficult to read his mind at the moment. I can certainly understand that - as he is someone who has played so many matches - Carlsen may feel a bit emotionally drained. I only played one championship match and it took a hell of a lot out of me! You can sometimes feel like you are on a treadmill. The treadmill never stops. Carlsen decided to get off it, but he may jump back on again.

THE MATCH AGAINST KASPAROV IN 1993

BCM: Let's move to your world championship experience. It's been almost 30 years since you played your match with Kasparov in London. From a distance, what do you think of the match in London in 1993?

NS: It was a very difficult experience. I have a lot of negative emotions concerned with the match. It was why I wasn't able to

THERE WERE MANY MISSED OPPORTUNITIES, BUT AT LEAST I CREATED SOME CHANCES IN THAT MATCH. YOU ALWAYS LOOK BACK WITH REGRETS AND WITH HINDSIGHT

look at the match for nearly two decades (!) afterwards. The first time I looked at the games from the match was about 19 years afterwards when I was requested to do so for a lecture I gave in Ottawa, Canada.

BCM: *What was it like?*

NS: It was an interesting experience to look at the games again, but it was also painful. I can't say it equates with anything enjoyable. I am not even sure the experience is cathartic!

BCM: *What is in the centre of those emotions you feel when thinking about the 1993 match?*

NS: I lost on a world stage, with everybody watching! It was, in a way, a traumatic experience. I can't say that it was a joy to be there - there were many missed opportunities, but at least I created some chances in that match. You always look back with regrets and hindsight. There are many, many worse things in life than losing a world championship, of course.

BCM: *What are the regrets?*

NS: Strangely enough I think I spent too much time on openings. I didn't give enough time to the actuality of playing a match like this and the emotional pressure. It's difficult to explain it unless you have experienced it. It was unlike anything I had had until that point or have had since. It was far more intense.

I needed to give much greater thought to practical matters like clock handling.

When I started preparing for the match, my opening preparation was vastly

Relationship with Kasparov THERE WERE UPS AND DOWNS, BUT WE HAVEN'T REALLY SPOKEN SINCE 2018

BCM: *How did your relationship with Kasparov develop after that?*

NS: It was up and down. It was pretty good for quite some time. However, I haven't really spoken to Garry since 2018. He asked me if I would be prepared to run in the elections for FIDE president in 2018. Actually, he was not the first person to ask that. When I was first asked to do that my reaction was that I would rather do anything else than that. However, Garry is a very persuasive person. He came and offered a pretty small amount of financial support. I decided to do it. I paid a lot of this out of my own pocket ultimately.

However, at some point, I realised that - despite Garry's protestations about it - he ultimately wanted to use me as some sort of negotiation tool in the race. I said 'no' - if I am running for FIDE president, I am doing that and I will put my team together which was pretty clear on what our strategy was.

When I decided to back Arkady Dvorkovich, Garry was very upset, I think. He wanted to negotiate with anyone or extract whatever concessions he could get to weaken Dvorkovich's chances in the race. However, I didn't see any possibility of compromise with the Makropoulos team.

BCM: *Was this in terms of the ideas or in terms of how to run things?*

NS: Both. Makropoulos was Ilymzhinov's right-hand man for decades. We needed a change, and I just didn't see any grounds for negotiating with them. It was never on the cards. For me, it was absolutely clear I made the right decision [to back Dvorkovich - BCM]. If anything, I should have made it earlier. I think that really upset Garry.

inferior to Garry's. With some clever preparation, I reduced that gap by a very significant degree.

You always look back and say - I should have done this or that. But I did certain things right and I think that is why I got so many winning positions. That is why I managed to shift certain games to positions Garry wasn't comfortable with.

But these other things - handling the clock, the pressure - I didn't give them enough thought. I had to be a little more practical. In the first ten games of the match, I was in time trouble in practically every game. In the second half, I wasn't in time trouble at all. I lost 7.5 to 2.5 in the first half and it was five vs five in the second half. So, being a little more practical helped. You know the saying that the perfect is the enemy of the good and that sometimes you are searching for perfection rather than having the confidence to make a pretty good move instead.

That's basically it. You have got to be really pragmatic when you're playing these matches. You need some things in reserve. I was also lacking confidence. I needed to give all of these matters greater thought, while the fact is that I barely gave them any thought at all.

BCM: *What is the main thing that you were totally surprised by in the match?*

NS: I think it was the pressure of the situation. I felt it very, very intensely. Despite the fact I had played many important games, tournaments and matches before this, nothing compares with the World Championship final. I think it hit me hard.

BCM: *I was talking to one of the leading players in the world recently and we were discussing how top players feel after suffering a defeat. He mentioned one thing – after losing a game, a player has a deep sense of shame, as almost they are naked.*

I WASN'T ABLE TO LOOK AT THE MATCH FOR DECADES (!) AFTERWARDS. THE FIRST TIME I LOOKED AT THE GAMES FROM THE MATCH WAS ABOUT 19 YEARS AFTERWARDS WHEN I WAS REQUESTED TO DO THAT FOR A LECTURE I GAVE IN OTTAWA

Is that true?

NS: It is interesting the language that you - or that player - used there, "almost... naked". Losing this match and being asked to talk about it felt like that. Psychologically, there is a parallel. There is something deeply embarrassing and humiliating to lose like this, very publicly.

BCM: *How did you recover?*

NS: Have I recovered? [Short pauses and then laughs a bit] I honestly don't know the answer to that, it's hard to say.

You can do things in the short term. I went with my family on a holiday in Australia. It took my mind off the thing, for a few weeks...

BCM: *What about the other, almost 30 years – how did you feel?*

NS: Good question.

I DON'T REGRET THE DECISION TO SPLIT WITH FIDE

BCM: *Looking back at the match between the two of you, that match split FIDE and led to years of infighting in the chess community. What is your view of that now, in hindsight?*

NS: Unlike Garry, I don't have regrets about it. There were two options: to take a legal point of view and say that FIDE and Florencio Campomanes [the then president of FIDE - BCM] were not following the



Photo: Kasparov.com

regulations and going to court. The other was to make a break.

The problem with litigation is that it doesn't always bring what you want and it's also very expensive. I am 57 years old and I have enough experience in litigation. Litigation and spending time with lawyers have been avoided. You may feel strongly that you are in the right about something, but that doesn't necessarily mean that is what will come out at the other end added to which there will be the certainty that it will cost you large amounts of time and probably also large amounts of money. Not to mention the opportunity cost of being tied up in this way and not doing more productive things. So, I don't regret the move.

Garry has said that it was a major error in his life. Maybe it was for him, but it wasn't for me.

BCM: *Getting back to Carlsen – chess is, as ever, caught up in the minefield of global political events. After the Asana match, we will have a world champion from either Russia or China and the world's strongest player will be from the West, largely supported by Western*

federations. Do you think there is a chance of a schism in the chess world?

NS: I doubt it. On that note, isn't it interesting that - the last world match was between two Europeans and now it's between two Asians!

THE NEW FIDE ROLE

BCM: *Let's move to your current role in FIDE. In June last year, you resigned as vice-president of FIDE in the wake of being handed a three-month suspension ban by the global governing body's Ethics and Disciplinary Commission. Now, you have a new position.*

NS: I am the Director of Chess Development. I deal with small federations. I can have an effect and I am having an effect in certain *places*.

BCM: *What is on your agenda?*

NS: I am trying to strengthen relations between federations and their government, the Olympic Committee, helping find potential sponsors and discussing things such as chess and education. One of the key areas of focus of mine will be governance -

it's almost impossible to assist federations if they don't have good governance. It would be like trying to fill a bucket which has a big hole.

BCM: *But you resigned as FIDE VP after a dispute with the US Virgin Islands Federation. How does that go with your new role of helping small federations?*

NS: The original judgement [of the FIDE Ethics and Disciplinary Commission - BCM] said that I was trying to improve governance. That was in the original decision they made.

So, I think things have to be done diplomatically. I am now in a different position and have a different role - I am an employee of the Management Board of FIDE. It has its advantages and its disadvantages. It's a move which I requested myself from Arkady Dvorkovich even before we met in Belgrade, in March 2022.

BCM: *What has been the reaction of smaller federations so far?*

NS: Mostly positive. I have had glowing reports from a number of places I have been to. Among one or two places where changes are probably needed, there has been a bit of a pushback.

BCM: *Does that include the US Virgin Islands?*

NS: I don't want to talk much about them. All I want to say is that in October 2021 the US Virgin Islands Federation were required by FIDE Council to change their statute. We're now in 2023 and they haven't done so.

BCM: *What does that then say about the power of FIDE in general?*

NS: FIDE has a lot of power. It's a question of whether FIDE wishes to exercise the power it has at its disposal.

GARRY WAS NOT PREPARED TO BECOME WORLD CHAMPION WHEN HE BEAT KARP OV

- I joked about this before, but it's not a joke in a way. If you consider the first Karpov-Kasparov match 1984-1985, when did Garry register his first win? It was in game 32. My first win was in game 16. I joked that I was twice as fast as Garry. But there is a strong element of seriousness about this comment. Garry was not prepared for a world championship match back then. He was a brilliant player, far more talented than I was, but he wasn't ready for that intensity.

Had Karpov won the match 6:0, which - by the way - he should have done when he was five-nil up and in a winning position in the match, you might have seen a totally different Garry Kasparov. Would he have come back with great strength later on or would he have suffered a career collapse and perhaps been in a psychiatric hospital for the rest of his life? Hard to say.

BCM: *Do you think it should?*

NS: It should.

BCM: *So, why hasn't it done that so far in the case you mention above?*

NS: For decades the question of governance hasn't been at the top of FIDE's priorities. That is changing, certainly with the new leadership. However, you can't expect things to be changed overnight. I would like to see things improving at a faster rate. We recently joined the Sports Integrity Global Alliance, a UK-based organisation. This means that we will have some outside scrutiny. This is the first time we will have a reputable organisation examining FIDE and recommending what should be changed. The procedure is that they make recommendations and give us a certain amount of time to implement them. At the end of that period, they do a report. I think this is very welcome.



The run-up to the 1993 World Championship

BY GRANDMASTER RAYMOND KEENE OBE

Thirty years ago Britain's Nigel Short challenged Garry Kasparov for the world title in London, sponsored by The Times. The BCM will be celebrating this august event in fitting style and in due course. This month I set the ball rolling with my recollections of the preliminary manoeuvres which led to the first world title attempt by an Englishman, since the days when Howard Staunton, chess champion and Shakespeare scholar, bestrode the chess world like a colossus, as Shakespeare himself described Global Hegemony in his tragedy, Julius Caesar.

1 January 1993

The past year had been an *annus mirabilis* for chess. Twelve months had gone by, at the start of which an astounding 15-year-old girl, Judit Polgar, became the youngest ever grandmaster. Soon after, Nigel Short defeated living chess legend, Anatoly Karpov, to penetrate further into the FIDE world championship cycle than any Briton had ever done before. Finally, it was a year in which Bobby Fischer emerged from two decades of self-imposed hibernation to make a dramatic comeback and seize headlines by playing a match in the centre of war-torn Yugoslavia.

As the culmination of all this, on 10 January in El Escorial, Nigel Short commenced play against Dutch grandmaster Jan Timman in the final eliminator to decide who would challenge champion Garry Kasparov for his crown later that year. For British chess fans, this would become the most important chess event since competitions were officially launched at London in 1851.

For three years, Nigel had been homing in inexorably on this goal. As a first step, he had to fight his way through to the massed ranks of grandmasters at the Manila Interzonal of 1990. Then came the head-to-head elimination matches, starting, ironically, against Jon Speelman, Nigel's friend and colleague on the English team. Speelman fell, but only after giving Nigel some severe frights. Next, in Brussels 1991, Nigel was pitted against White Russian Boris Gelfand, rightly tipped by Kasparov himself as a future challenger. After a shaky start, Short won through again, only to be rewarded with a semi-final against the redoubtable Anatoly Karpov. This was set for April 1992, in the Spanish town of Linares.



A step away from the Match for World Champion: Short's showdown with Karpov in Spain

Photo: Rosa de la Nieves / Nigel Short Twitter

Linares, 1992

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Short	0	½	½	1	½	1	0	1	½	1	16
Karpov	1	½	½	0	½	0	1	0	½	0	4

Alone of the world's chess commentators, I had predicted a win for Nigel against the man who had held the world championship for a decade. Ultimately, after yet another poor showing in the early games, Nigel vindicated my confidence, taking the contest by a two-point margin.

Having vanquished Karpov, his opponent in the final qualifier, Timman, seemed less formidable, but the Dutchman was a deadly and experienced opponent. Nevertheless, once again, I predicted a Nigel win, probably again by a two-point margin.

Nigel had been criticised in the past for an owlsh, academic approach to the fierce realities of chessboard combat. He was widely said to lack that ultimate killer instinct which makes or breaks the true champions of the game. If so, he had gone to great lengths to eradicate this weakness and was now considered one of the toughest competitors psychologically on the international circuit. Short had already, perhaps even prematurely, announced a Muhammed Ali-type verbal war against Kasparov, declaring him to be "thoroughly unpleasant and widely disliked". Meanwhile, Kasparov had retorted to the question as to who would be his opponent in the championship with the withering quip: "my opponent will be Short and the match will be short!" That putdown cannot have done much for Timman's morale.

Whatever Nigel's sporting psychology for the coming match may have been, all of his off-board moves would have been planned by his constant companion, the wily old Czech fox, the late Lubomir Kavalek, mentor, guru and *éminence grise*, who had steered his protégé thus far, and now had Kasparov, and the consequent multi-million prize, in his sights; ironically, a few games into the title match itself, Short brutally dismissed Kavalek, and, to adapt another Shakespearean phrase, sent him bootless home.



Karpov and Short together with Timman and Ljubojevic

Photo: Rob Croes / Dutch National Archi

1 February

Nigel Short's win in the twelfth game against Timman, had left him just half a point away from the right to a historic challenge against the world champion Garry Kasparov. For two and a half weeks, the two warriors of the mind, Short and Timman, the English and Dutch grandmasters, had been locked in unremitting cerebral combat in the tiny Spanish mountain town of San Lorenzo de El Escorial, 45 minutes from Madrid. The town is dominated by the brooding monastery fortress, designed and built by King Philip II. From there he planned the Spanish Armada of 1588, while Philip's library still contains the world's oldest chess manuscript, ordained by King Alfonso the Wise in 1283. The play itself was conducted in a small pink colonnaded eighteenth-century theatre, with room for just 100 seats, built by Philip's successor King Charles III - of Spain.

The quality of the games had been varied, reflecting, undoubtedly, the enormous stress of the occasion. Although there was much criticism of the level of play in the first half of the match, the second amply redeemed itself, with some of the most exciting, ingenious and nerve-racking play seen at this rarefied level.

Game one was an up and down struggle: both players missed wins, and it justly ended in a draw. For game two Short dismayed his supporters, drifting in the opening, then blundering away a piece. He lost without a fight and the corpus of Dutch journalists supporting their man in Spain were heard to chorus that Short was out of his depth. Still, mental resilience is one of the hallmarks of any great champion, and

Short had almost made it his trademark, to bounce back immediately from such cataclysmic defeats.

Game three was all Nigel's, Timman being swept away by a series of devastating sacrifices, while in game four Timman overpressed and lost from a good position. From being one down, Nigel now led by a point. However, in game five he conceded a draw, from what had been an almost winning position, while for game six, with the normally advantageous white pieces, Short was struggling from the very start. Evidently, he had suddenly found himself trapped in some sort of mental quagmire.



Nigel Short under Jan Timman's eye

*Photo: Rob Bogaerts / Anefo /
Dutch National Archives*

The festering boil burst in game seven, possibly the worst of Nigel's career. Planless opening play led to the loss of a pawn. Amazingly, he dragged on his hopeless resistance, while Timman's supporters merely chuckled at his plight. This was the nadir of Nigel's fortunes. Scores were even again and remained so for game eight, in which Nigel sought the haven of a swift draw to rebuild his shattered confidence.

Now came the sudden crisis of the match. Game nine was a bloodthirsty, merciless battle. Not one commentator dared predict the outcome. The moves seemed crazy, illogical. Only hours after Timman had slumped in his chair and acknowledged defeat, in the hardest game of the match, could commentators even remotely piece together what should have happened. Timman, mauled and shattered after this psychological assault, succumbed quickly in game ten. He fought back in game eleven to win a long endgame, but game twelve, another bloodthirsty battle, finally demonstrated Short's dominance.

Final Match result

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
Short	½	0	1	1	½	½	0	½	1	1	0	1	½	7½
Timman	½	1	0	0	½	½	1	½	0	0	1	0	½	5½

Nigel Short thus went through triumphantly to challenge Garry Kasparov.

8 February 1993

On this day at 12.00 noon, FIDE, the World Chess Federation, opened the bids for the Short-Kasparov match. There were only two bids: what might be termed a ludicrous joke of one million Swiss Francs from Santiago de Compostela in Spain, whose city fathers appeared to be caught in a 1970s time warp where world title prize funds were concerned.

The other was a joint approach from Belgrade and Sofia of a world record 5.6 million US dollars. The problem here is that the prospective host was the notorious and shady

Jezdimir Vasiljevic whose Yugoslav Bank had funded the Fischer-Spassky match in Belgrade the previous year. The required bank guarantee for FIDE was, of course, made on Vasiljevic's own bank. FIDE could not possibly countenance a match in the Belgrade of that time, while the sheer legality of using Serbian funds to play in Sofia must also have been open to doubt.

That FIDE had now driven themselves into this corner was solely the fault of their short-sighted business managers. It was surely obvious that the primary interest would come from the UK, once it was known that Short had actually qualified to play Kasparov. This fact became known on Saturday January 30. At that point Manchester made a feverish effort to cobble a bid together, but they were ultimately defeated by the ridiculously inadequate 5-day deadline, which FIDE had imposed for the submission of bids.

10 February

Recognising the futility of trying to accept either the microscopic Spanish bid or the internationally unpalatable Yugoslav one, FIDE reopened the bidding, with a fresh deadline of Monday 22 February.

23 February

On 17 February Kasparov visited London to play 25 consulting teams of four to raise about £30,000 for the Sick Children's Trust charity. The venue, Simpsons-in-the-Strand, the ancient home of chess where the Anderssen - Kieseritzky immortal game had been played in 1851, was swamped by the press. As a result of Short's challenge for the world crown, the media interest in Kasparov's trip was staggering. On the due date of 22 February, no fewer than three British offers emerged to stage the world chess championship match. One, from Manchester, in support of its Olympic bid for the year 2000, and two more from London, a magnificent response.

The only other bid was, once again from the hopelessly over-optimistic Santiago de Compostela, but the Spaniards had failed to increase their offered prize fund of 1,000,000 Swiss francs. All three British bids dwarfed this, each one offering at least £1,000,000, in itself a record for a British chess event. Unfortunately, FIDE mismanaged the bidding process and succeeded in enraging the players as well. With three interesting bids on the table they failed to consult the players properly and swiftly announced that Manchester, which had in fact offered less than their main rival bidder, Channel 4 TV, would be the venue.

26 February – Tanks on FIDE's Lawn

In a dramatic press release, Kasparov and Short announced to the world that they were withdrawing from FIDE's jurisdiction and reopening the bidding process themselves.

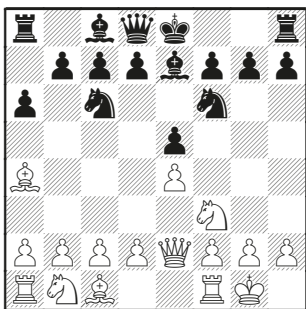
The rest is history and will be covered in future columns and articles, leading up to and covering the first genuine contest for the world chess championship held outside FIDE auspices since 1948.

Here is Short's most impressive win from the Candidates cycle which brought him to the foot of Kasparov's throne.

Nigel Short - Anatoly Karpov C86

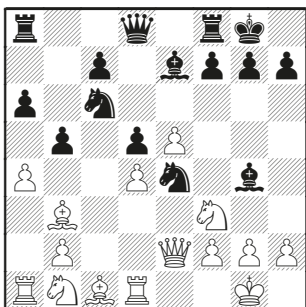
Candidates semi-final Linares ESP (8),
04.1992

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 a6 4.♙a4 ♘f6
5.0-0 ♙e7 6.♚e2 The so-called Worrall
Attack, and a refreshing change from the
standard 6.♗e1, which has been analysed
almost ad nauseam. The queen move,
which was a favourite of the great World
Champion Alexander Alekhine, is more
logical, in that it frees the white king's rook
to slide in to d1, in support of the central
advance c3 and d4. Diagram



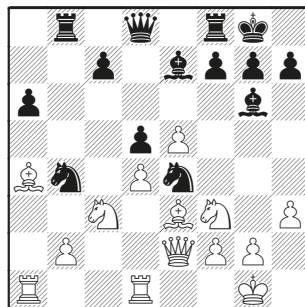
6...b5 7.♙b3 0-0 8.c3 d6 In game six
Karpov had tried 8... d5 9 d3 d4 10.♘bd2
♙c5 11.♙c2 ♙b6 12.♘b3 ♙g4 but this
had proved insufficient.

9.d4 ♙g4 10.♖d1 exd4 11.cxd4 d5 12.e5
♘e4 13.a4



13...bxa4 A further exchange in the same
vein as his tenth move, but it seems to me that
Black's queenside now becomes too exposed
and that 13 ... b4 would have been somewhat
superior. A possible continuation then is 14.a5
♙h4 15.♙e3 ♘e7, with the idea of ...♘f5.

14.♙xa4 ♘b4 15.h3 ♙h5 16.♘c3 ♙g6
17.♙e3 ♖b8

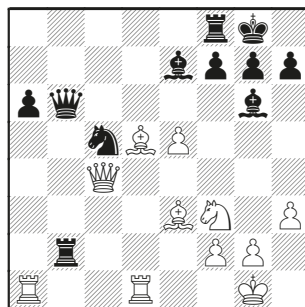


18.♘a2 A star move challenging one of
Black's most active pieces.

18...c5 This thrust leaves Black with weak
pawns on the a and d-files. However, Black's
hand is more or less forced, since White was
threatening the simple ♖dc1 when Black has
a permanent wound on the open c-file in the
shape of his enfeebled and backward pawn.

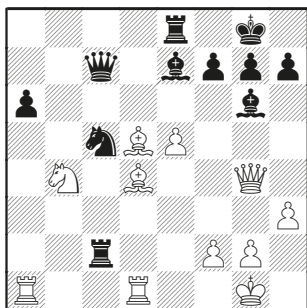
19.dxc5 ♘xc5 20.♘xb4 ♖xb4 21.♙c6 ♚b6
The only way to maintain material parity.

22.♙xd5 ♖xb2 23.♚c4



Establishing an unpleasant pin against Black's knight on c5. If now 23 ... ♖b4 the 24. ♖c3 maintains the pin. Black cannot free himself with 24 ... ♗b5 on account of 25. ♘d4.

23... ♖c2 24. ♖g4 ♗c7 25. ♘d4 ♖c3 26. ♘c6 ♖e8 27. ♘d4 ♖c2 28. ♘b4 The ultimate humiliation. Black's wandering rook is now trapped and has no safe square within the heart of White's camp.



28... ♖d8 Making the best of a bad job.

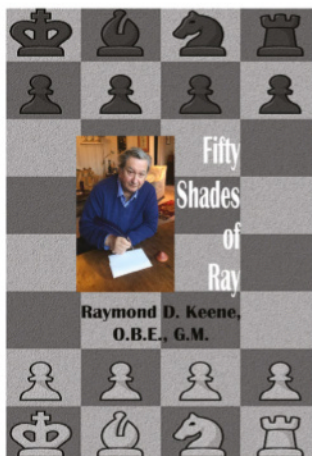
29. ♘xc2 ♖xc2 30. e6 At last White's true intentions are revealed; Black's king has been his target all along. White threatens ♗xg7 checkmate and if 30 ... f6 then 31. ♘xf6 ♖xf6 32. e7+ ♗h8 33. exd8 ♗+ ♗xd8 34. ♖ac1 ♖xd1 35. ♗xd1 with a decisive material advantage.

30... ♖f8 31. exf7+ ♗h8 32. ♖e1 ♖g6 Perhaps Black had been relying on playing 32... ♖xd5 in this position but in that case, Short would have available the brilliant denouement 33. ♗xg7+ ♖xg7 34. ♖e8 checkmate.

33. ♖e8 ♖xe8 34. fxe8 ♗ ♖xe8 35. ♖xc5 ♖xc5 36. ♗e6 Black has no defence to ♗g8.

1-0

Hardinge Simpole



is delighted to announce
the publication of

Fifty Shades of Ray

Chess in the year of the
Coronavirus Pandemic

Raymond D. Keene

*With an Introduction
by CJ de Mooi*

EUROPEAN INDIVIDUALS 2023:

YOUNG PLAYERS DOMINATE

By GM Aleksandar Colovic; www.alexcolovic.com

Photo: <https://eicc2023.com/>



**DARDHA
DANIEL**

**SARANA
ALEXEY**

**SHEVCHENKO
KIRILL**

The European individual championships, Open and Women, took place in a quick succession in the Balkans. The open was held from 3-13 March in Vrnjjacka Banja in Serbia and the women's was held from 18-29 March in Petrovac in Montenegro.

The open section ended in a triumph of the young players. With no rest days, perhaps it was to be expected that the players with more stamina would triumph.

As if to prove this point, the first half of the event was dominated by the inimitable Anton Korobov from Ukraine. He started with 5/5 and 6.5/7 before finishing with



only two draws and two losses, spoiling a fantastic event. The power of his play (in spite of a couple of inaccuracies) is demonstrated in the following game against his compatriot Ponomarev, played when both players were on 4/4.

Anton Korobov - Ruslan Ponomarev

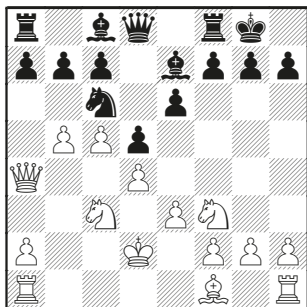
23rd ch-EUR Indiv 2023 Vrnjanska Banja SRB (5.1)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3 ♙b4
Everybody plays the Ragozin nowadays.

5.♙a4+ ♘c6 6.e3 0-0 7.♙d2 ♙d6 A rare move, inviting c5. The usual choices are 7...♙e8, 7...dxc4, 7...a6 and 7...♙d7.

8.c5 ♙e7 9.b4 ♘e4 10.b5 Forceful play by White.

10...♘xd2 11.♙xd2!



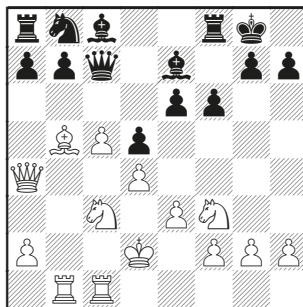
White reckons that the king will be safe in the centre because the centre is closed and keeps the knight on f3 for better control of the e5-square.

11...♘b8 12.♙d3 White has space advantage and wonderful development, but Black is solid and can undermine the queenside pawn pair of c5 and b5.

12...c6 12...a6 is an alternative. 13.♙ab1 ♙d7 14.♙hc1 ♙e8 with unclear play as Black prepares ...b6 or ...♘d7.

13.♙ab1 cxb5 14.♙xb5 ♙c7 Black obtained breathing space on the queenside to develop his pieces.

15.♙hc1 f6?!



Black takes control of the e5-square, but this is a bit too slow.

15...♘c6 looks more natural, developing the queenside. Perhaps Black was worried about 16.♙xc6 bxc6 17.♘e5 and White's initiative looks threatening (perhaps this was the reason why Ponomarev didn't want to allow a knight on e5 and played ...f6), but Black has 17...♙f6!, when the pawn on c6 is taboo and after 18.♘d3 e5! Black obtains good play.

16.♙d3! ♘c6 17.♙c2 White shifts the direction with tempo, freeing the b5-square for the knight in the process.

17...f5 18.♘b5 ♙b8 19.♙c3 Controlling the e5-square and intending the incursion on the next move.

19...a6 20.♘d6! ♙xd6 21.cxd6 ♙xd6 22.♙b6 White now plays for domination using the weakened dark squares.

22...♙d8 23.♙c5 ♙f7 Black is passive and there is little he can do.

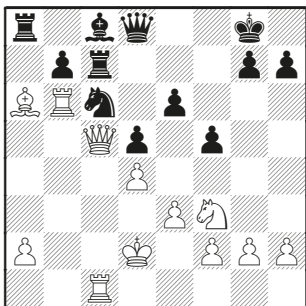
An attempt to stir things up with 23...f4 is met by 24.e4 and Black hasn't achieved anything.

24.♙xa6? White regains the pawn, but this activates Black's pieces.

A move like 24.g3 would have highlighted Black's lack of ideas. White can further

strengthen his position and decide when to put a knight on e5. For example: 24...♖c7 25.h4 ♖e8 26.♘e5 ♙d7 27.♗d6 ♜ac8 Black is completely tied down, but there is no immediate breakthrough.

24...♖c7?



Black misses his chance.

24...f4 was now possible as there is no e4 as there was in the note to Black's 23rd move. 25.a4 fxe3+ 26.fxe3 ♜xa6 27.♜xa6 bxa6 28.♗xc6 ♙d7 29.♗xa6 ♗b8 when Black finally starts to take advantage of White's "centralised" king. 24...♙d7!? was another good move, sacrificing on b7 so that after 25.♙xb7 ♜a5 the white queen cannot continue to defend the rook on b6. 26.♜xc6 ♜xc5 27.♜6xc5 ♗b6 leads to unclear play.

25.♙e5! ♗h4 Seeking counterplay.

26.♙e1? This gives Black a second chance.

26.g3! ♗xh2 27.♙d3 was decisive, the point being that the threat of ♗d6 cannot be stopped so Black doesn't have time to take the bishop on a6.

26...♗xh2? But Black misses his opportunity for a second time.

26...f4! would have kept Black in the game. 27.♙f1 (27.♗d6? fxe3! is the point.) 27... fxe3 28.fxe3 ♗xh2 gives Black counterplay: for example, 29.♗d6 ♜f7+! 30.♙xf7 ♗h1+ 31.♙f2 ♗xc1 with unclear play.

27.♗d6 Now White breaks through to the black king.

27...♗g1+ 28.♙e2 ♗xc1 29.♜xc6! Eliminating the piece that covered the d8-square, and now threatening ♗d8 mate.

29...♗b2+ 30.♙f3 ♜f7 31.♜c7 Black's pieces on the queenside never got into the game.

31...♜xa6 32.♜xc8+

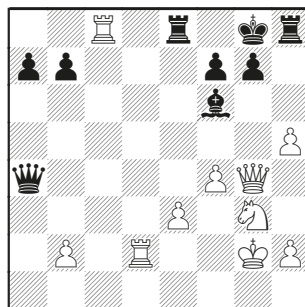
1-0

First place was shared by three players on 8.5/11 and the medals were determined by tie-break. The winner was Alexey Sarana (23), playing under the FIDE flag at a moment when the Russian Federation was already part of the Asian Federation. Second place was taken by Ukrainian Kirill Shevchenko (20), now playing for Romania, while third was Daniel Dardha (17), a Belgian of Albanian origin.

Crucial for Sarana's win were his three victories with the white pieces in rounds six, eight and nine. The first one of those featured a cute combination on the theme of deviation.

Alexey Sarana - Valentin Dragnev

23rd ch-EUR Indiv 2023 Vrnjacka Banja SRB (6.10)



The queen on a4 defends the rook on e8. White's next two moves effectively chase

away the queen from the only available squares from where she defends the rook.

33.b3! ♖b5 The only square.

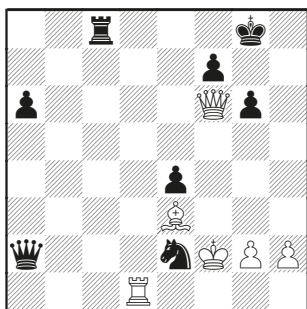
34.♗f5 But now there are no more squares left. Black loses a rook, so he resigned.

1-0

Second-placed Shevchenko must have enjoyed the finish of his game against Kobalia, a player known to support current Russian politics. The game was emotionally charged as Shevchenko refused to shake Kobalia's hand at the beginning of the game, which was taken as an insult by the Russian player, who submitted an official complaint after the end of the game. The complaint was rejected, but this didn't stop Kobalia from venting his frustrations on social media after the tournament.

Mikhail Kobalia - Kirill Shevchenko

23rd ch-EUR Indiv 2023 Vrnjackska Banja SRB (7.12)



Black is winning and he wraps it up with a pretty combination.

33...♗c3+ 34.♖d2 ♗xd2+! 35.♗xd2 e3+ Liberating the e4-square for the knight. White resigned as he either loses the queen to a fork on e4 or d5 or after ...exd2 the d2-pawn will promote on the next move.

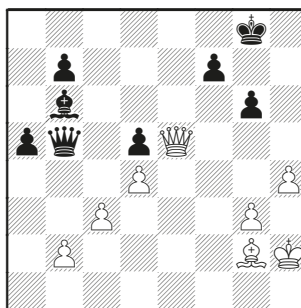
0-1

A peculiarity in Shevchenko's results is that his wins came in pairs - in rounds one and two, six and seven and nine and ten.

Dardha earned a shared first place after a last-round win against the hero of the start, Korobov.

Anton Korobov - Daniel Dardha

23rd ch-EUR Indiv 2023 Vrnjackska Banja SRB (11.5)



White can draw whenever he wants (for example he can continue giving checks on b8 and e5), but a win would probably have given Korobov the title, so he pushes forward.

30.♖h3 ♗d7+ 30...♗xb2 is also possible. White can give perpetual on e8 and e5, so he doesn't risk anything, but, unfortunately, the Short-esque king march to h6 doesn't work: **31.♖g4? ♗xg2 32.♖g5 ♗d2+** and the king must go back as **33.♖f6 ♗d8+** leads to mate.

31.g4 ♗c7 32.♗xd5 ♗e7 Black creates counterplay against White's king, thanks to the opposite-coloured bishops.

33.♗e4?! ♗e4 After this, the tables are turned as it's Black who starts to push for a win.

33.♗e4 ♗d6 34.♗e8+ ♖g7 35.♗e5+ was the way to bail out and agree to a draw after **35...♗xe5 36.dxe5 b6.**

33...♗f6! The threat is ...♗f2.

34.♖g2 ♗xh4 35.♖f1?

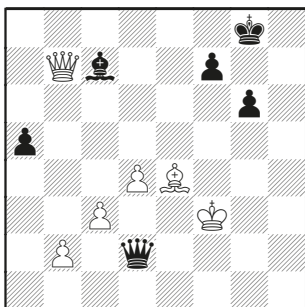
The king runs away but chooses the wrong path.

35.♔f3 was a better way to run, because after 35...♖g3+ 36.♕e2 ♖xg4+ 37.♕f3 the bishop joins the defence and the king is safe.

35...♖xg4 36.♖xb7 After this Black manages to involve the bishop in the attack.

36.♕f3 was more resilient, though after 36...♖h3+ 37.♕e2 ♖h2+ 38.♕d3 ♖xb2 with the very dangerous a-pawn Black should be winning.

36...♖d1+ 37.♔f2 ♖d2+ 38.♔f3



38...♕f4! White is mated now.

39.♕xg6 ♖e3+ 40.♔g2 White made the control and resigned as after 40.♔g2 ♖e2+ 41.♔h3 ♖h2+ 42.♔g4 ♖g3+ 43.♔f5 fxg6+ he loses the piece and is also going to be mated.

0-1

A heart-break for Korobov, but the young take no prisoners.

Two notable results were the fourth-placed finish of the Greek player Kourkoulos-Arditis and the 15-year-old Gurel from Turkey.

I have known Kourkoulos-Arditis since 2013. In the game we played at

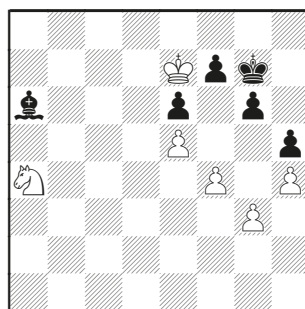
the Paleochora open, he fell into my preparation, started spending masses of time and improved (!) on Grischuk's play by entering complications the elite player didn't dare go into. He played an excellent game and drew without too much trouble.

Therefore I wasn't really surprised that the 25-year-old Greek had a great tournament and finished fourth on a tie-break.

Here's the final phase of his beautiful technical win against the strong Danish Grandmaster.

Stamatis Kourkoulos-Arditis - Rasmus Svane

23rd ch-EUR Indiv 2023 Vrnjacka Banja SRB (5.11)



White was pressing the whole game and in this tricky endgame Black must try to prevent the knight from attacking the f7-pawn.

58...♕b5? The decisive mistake, after which the knight reaches the d6 or the g5 square.

58...♕c4! allowed the bishop to continue the dance to prevent the knight from reaching the vital squares. 59.♖c5 ♕d5 60.♖d7 ♕b7 61.♖f6 ♕c6!

59.♖c5! Threatening ♖e4-d6(g5).

59...♕c6 60.♖b3 Now the threat is ♖d4.

60...♔e4 61.♖d4 Black is in zugzwang; he is forced to give way.

61...g5 61...♔d5 62.♗b5 and the knight comes to d6.

61...♔d3 62.♗f3 and the knight goes to g5.

62.fxg5 ♔d3 63.♗c6 Going to d8 now.

63...♔c2 64.♗d8 ♔g6 It appears that Black has erected another fortress, but this one is short-lived.

65.♗b7 ♔e4 66.♗d6 ♔g6 67.♗e8+ ♔g8 68.♗f6 ♗f8 69.♗g7 Threatening ♗xe6 and if the bishop moves then the pawn on h5 falls.

1-0

The openings of the 15-year old Turkish player Gurel suggest that he has been coached by GM Solak, a good friend of mine who now lives in Turkey. One of these lines is the sharp line in the Slav Defence that the prodigy used to great effect in the game from the sixth round.

Arsenyi Nesterov - Ediz Gurel

23rd ch-EUR Indiv 2023 Vrnjaska Banja SRB (6.43)

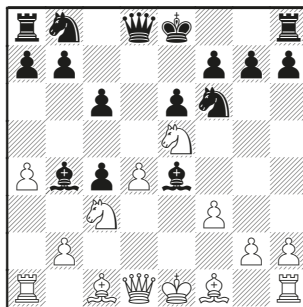
1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♗f3 ♗f6 4.♗c3 dxc4 5.a4 ♔f5 The main line of the classical Slav was one of Solak's favourites.

6.♗e5 e6 The alternative is 6...♗bd7.

7.f3 ♔b4 The sharper choice.

The alternative 7...c5 leads to the so-called Elista endgame after 8.e4 ♔g6 9.♔c3 cxd4 10.♖xd4 ♖xd4 11.♔xd4 which featured in the World Championship matches in Elista in 2006 between Topalov and Kramnik and in Sofia in 2010 between Topalov and Anand.

8.e4 ♔xe4!



Otherwise Black won't have compensation for the stranded bishop.

9.fxex4 ♗xe4 10.♔d2 ♖xd4 11.♗xe4 ♖xe4+ 12.♖e2 ♔xd2+ 13.♔xd2 ♖d5+ There are thousands of games in this sharp variation. The king can go to any square (except e3) but objectively speaking White's chances are somewhat higher, though Black has good drawing chances, especially if White forgets his preparation.

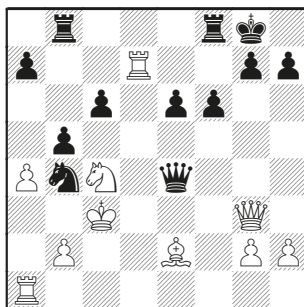
14.♔c2 ♗a6 15.♗xc4 0-0 Black can also castle long, but this is all still just theory.

16.♖e5 ♖ab8! Preparing ...b5.

17.♔e2?! White has many options, such as 17.a4, 17.♖e1 (the engine's preference), 17.♖d1, 17.♖c1. The engine shows that this is already an imprecision and gives Black at least equal play.

17...♗b4+ 18.♔c3 Played by Kramnik back in the 90s, but it's better to put the king on b3.

18...b5! 19.♖hd1 f6! 20.♖g3 ♖e4 21.♖d7?



After this White should lose by force after walking around with his king.

Kramnik played the better move, 21.♖e3, and scrambled to a draw after 21...♘d5+ 22.♘xd5 cxd5 23.♙d3 Kramnik, V (2780)-Van Wely, L (2635) Tilburg Fontys 1998 (8) ½-½.

21...♖c2+ 22.♙d4 e5+ 23.♙c5 ♘a6+ The engine indicates the better move-order: 23...♙f7! 24.♙xh7 ♘a6+ 25.♙d6 ♙xf7 and mate shouldn't be far off.

24.♙d6 ♙f7 25.♙d3 This is the difference. White is not forced to take on f7 now. Black is still winning, though.

25...♖xd7+ 26.♙xd7 ♘c5+? This lets the win slip.

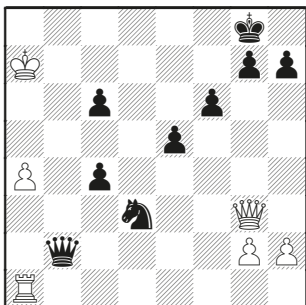
26...♖b3! was strong: the idea is that, after 27.♙xh7+ ♙xh7 28.♖xb3, ...♘c5+ allows Black to regain the queen and retain material advantage after 29.♙c7 ♘xb3 30.♙xb8 ♘xa1

27.♙c7 ♘xd3 28.♙xb8 bxc4 The position remains sharp, but it's objectively equal only after one move.

29.♙xa7? But this natural move is not it.

29.♙a8!! was the only way for White to keep the balance. It's impossible to explain why.

29...♖xb2?



29...h5!! was the only way to win now. The idea is to prevent ♖g4.

30.♖g4 Now White gives perpetual check along the h3-c8 diagonal. A crazy game!

½-½

Geographically, the United Kingdom is still part of Europe, so the British players have the right to participate in the European Championship. A young crop of players decided to go to Serbia and test themselves against the continent's finest players.

Generally speaking, the British did well. GM Fernandez and IMs Clarke and Willow won rating points (scoring 7/11), IM Royal played at his rating (6.5/11), while only IMs Wadsworth (5.5/11) and Grieve (3.5/8) lost rating points. For reasons unknown to me, Harry Grieve withdrew from the tournament and was not paired in the last three rounds.

The remaining British players who participated were Khandelwal (4.5/11), Onslow (5/11) and Cox (5/11).

EUROPEAN INDIVIDUAL CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP 2023 TOP 10

Rk	NAME	RTG	Pts	Rp
1	GM Sarana Alexey	2668	8.5	2787
2	GM Shevchenko Kirill	2668	8.5	2758
3	GM Dardha Daniel	2610	8.5	2716
4	IM Kourkoulos-Arditis Stamatis	2520	8	2743
5	GM Bacrot Etienne	2659	8	2694
6	GM Nguyen Thai Dai Van	2651	8	2715
7	GM Santos Latasa Jaime	2655	8	2702
8	GM Esipenko Andrey	2680	8	2698
9	GM Kuzubov Yuriy	2616	8	2670
10	GM Dragnev Valentin	2561	8	2692



**OLIWIA
KIOLBASA**

THE WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP

The women's event developed similarly to the open. Like Korobov, Kiolbasa started with 5.5/6, but, unlike Korobov, she remained in contention for first place until the end.

Here's an exciting game between the two leaders in round six.

Oliwia Kiolbasa – Irina Bulmaga

23rd ch-EUR Indiv w 2023 Petrovac MNE (6.1)

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 a6 4.♙a4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 A possible move that aims to avoid mainstream theory. However, there is theory everywhere in the Ruy Lopez.

5...b5 6.♙b3 ♙d6 Black defends the pawn on e5 and in such cases the threat is ...♘a5, going after the light-squared bishop on b3. The more usual moves are 6...♙e7 or 6...♙c5.

7.d3 A surprising move, as in the Ruy White usually guards the light-squared bishop like the pupil of her eye. However, the move is approved by the engine.

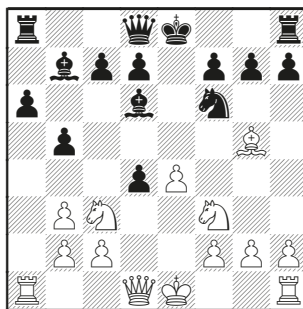
7.a3 would have been natural, though after 7...♘d4 8.♙a2 c6 9.d3 0-0 Black seems to

be doing fine. She needs to sacrifice a pawn after 10.♘xd4 exd4 11.♘e2 ♙c7! 12.♘xd4 d5, obtaining good compensation.

7...♘a5 8.♙g5 ♘xb3 9.axb3 ♙b7 Black defends the pawn on b5 by defending the rook on a8.

10.d4! The only way to keep some initiative.

10...exd4?!



10...h6! Inserting this attack on the bishop is more precise. After 11.♙h4 exd4 12.♙xd4 ♙e7 13.0-0-0 ♙c5 14.♙d2, which leads to an advantage without the move ...h6, here can be met by 14...g5! 15.♙g3 0-0-0 with unclear play.

11. ♖xd4 0-0 Here 11... ♗c7 doesn't work. After 12.0-0-0 ♕c5 13. ♖d2 the pin on the h4-d8 diagonal is unpleasant, as White threatens ♜d5 or e5.

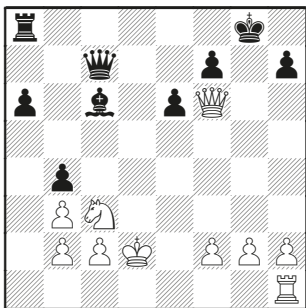
12.e5 Inviting complications that will last for the most of the remaining 48 moves!

12.0-0-0 was better, preparing e5, which cannot be stopped. 12... ♕e7 13.e5 ♜d5 14. ♜xd5 ♕xg5+ 15. ♖b1 gives White a solid advantage.

12... ♕xf3 13. ♕xf6! gxf6 14.exd6 ♖e8+ 15. ♖d2 ♕c6 16. ♖ae1 16... ♖ad1! ♖e6 17. ♖c1 was better, as the exchange of rooks in the game only helped Black.

16... ♖e6! With her last move, Black manages to stabilise the position.

17.dxc7 ♖xc7 18. ♖xe6 dxe6 19. ♖xf6 b4!



White has won a pawn, but Black's counterplay gives her sufficient compensation.

20. ♖g5+ ♖h8 21. ♖f6+ ♖g8 22. ♜d1 ♖a5? This is out of place.

22... ♖d8+ 23. ♖c1 ♕e4 24. ♜e3 ♖c8 gave Black good play on the queenside.

23. ♜e3 ♖d8+ 24. ♖e2! With ... ♖a5 Black tried to prevent the white king from hiding on the queenside, but the king can walk to the kingside and be safe there!

24... ♕b5+ 25. ♖f3 ♖c7 26.h4! Intending ♖h3-g3 or simply ♖g3-h3.

26... ♖c6+ 27. ♖g3 ♖c7+ 28. ♖h3 After walking around for quite five moves (♖d2-e2-f3-g3-h3) the white king finally finds safety.

28... ♖d7 29. ♜g4 Threatening ♜h6 or ♖h6 and ♜f6.

29...h5 30. ♖g5+ ♖f8 31. ♜f6 ♖d4 32. ♜xh5 White has won a second pawn and the attack on the black king continues.

32... ♖d5 33. ♖h6+ ♖e7 Now it's the black king's turn to walk around the board.

34. ♖f6+ ♖d6 35. ♖f4+ e5 36. ♖f6+ Taking the pawn on b4 with check was also quite good.

36... ♖c5 37. ♜g3 Threatening ♜e4.

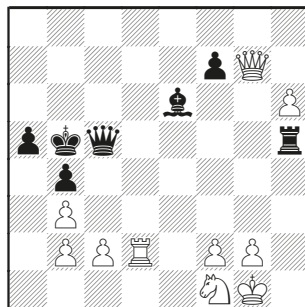
37... ♕d7+ 38. ♖h2 ♖b5 39. ♖e1 On move 39 the rook enters the game!

39... ♕e6 40. ♖e2 Defending the pawn on c2 and emphasising the winning advantage by playing such a move when more direct ones like 40.h5 were possible.

40...a5 41.h5 The pawn march is decisive.

41...e4 42.h6 ♖f5 43. ♖g7 ♖d6 44. ♖xe4 Taking more material and threatening ♖h4.

44... ♖h5+ 45. ♖g1 ♖d1+ 46. ♜f1 ♖d5 47. ♖d4 ♖c5 48. ♖d2



Black is really helpless. The threat is h7 now.

48...♖g5 Only prolongs the inevitable. An endgame three pawns down is obviously hopeless.

49.♖xg5+ ♜xg5 50.♖d8 ♜h5 51.♖h8 White wins by simply advancing the kingside pawns.

51...♔c6 52.♗e3 ♔d7 53.g4 ♜h4 54.♔g2 ♔e7 55.♔g3 ♜h1 56.f4 f6 57.f5 ♔d7 58.♗d5+ ♔d6 58...♔f7 59.♖h7+ loses the bishop.

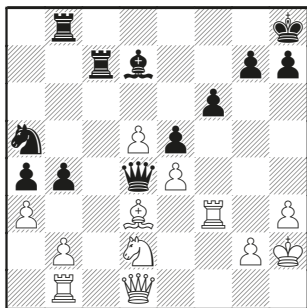
59.♗xf6 ♔c6 60.h7

1-0

However, a slow starter, Meri Arabidze, who started with two draws and another one in the next two rounds (2.5/4), started to gain pace and won three games in a row. This set up the clash with the leader Kiolbasa in round eight.

Oliwia Kiolbasa - Meri Arabidze

23rd ch-EUR Indiv w 2023 Petrovac MNE (8.1)



The Chigorin Variation of the Ruy Lopez led to a very complex middlegame battle where Arabidze outplayed her opponent. After some imprecisions, the position still remains favourable for Black, but White should be able to hold. However, in this position, Kiolbasa miscalculates the position.

41.♔c2? Provoking ...b3 in Black's favour.

41.axb4 ♖xb4 42.♔e2 with the idea of ♜c3 effectively neutralises Black's initiative on the queenside.; 41.♜c1 ♜bc8 42.♜xc7 ♜xc7 43.♖b1 was also preferable, exchanging the passive rook on b1.

41...b3 42.♔d3 ♗b7 Black improves the position of the knight.

43.♜g3 ♗d6 44.♗f3 ♖f2 White has worsened the position of her pieces while Black has improved that of hers. She has a clear advantage now.

45.♗g1 ♖f4 45...♜c2! was quite strong, possibly thanks to the pawn being on b3. 46.♗e2 ♜bc8 and White won't be able to keep the position for much longer.

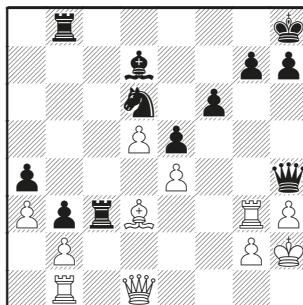
46.♗e2 ♖h4? Black errs, too. The queen is offside on h4.

46...♖h6! was better, as the queen controls the c1-h6 diagonal, thus preventing ♜c1, which exchanges White's passive bishop.

47.♗c3? White misses her chance.

47.♜c1! was crucial. White is out of danger now as the pawn on e4 is taboo in view of 47...♜xc1 48.♖xc1 ♗xe4? 49.♖c7

47...♜xc3!





A powerful sacrifice, again possible thanks to the monster pawn on b3 that White invited there with tempo!

48.bxc3 ♖xe4 **49.♗xe4** ♜xe4 **50.♖b2** ♜c4 White cannot really hope to hold this position. The passed pawns will just come forward at some point and White has no counterplay.

51.♖d3 ♜c5 **52.♜g1** ♜xa3 Adding the a-pawn to the mix.

53.♜a7 ♜d6 **54.c4** ♖c8 Stopping c5.

55.♖c3 h6 A luft is always useful in the endgame.

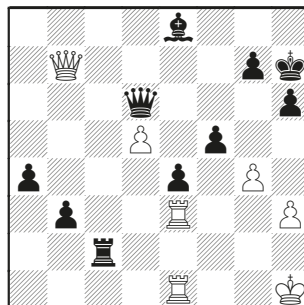
56.♖d2 56.c5 gives nothing after **56...♜xd5**.

56...♖c5 **57.♗h1** ♗h7 **58.♖e2** f5 Finally the pawns start marching forward.

59.♜b7 e4 **60.♖e1** ♗e8 60...♗b5 was a nice alternative, winning the c4-pawn.

61.♖ce3 ♖xc4 **62.g4** A desperate attempt, but, as is usually the case, it will be White's king who will suffer now.

62...♖c2!



The mate on h2 shouldn't be underestimated.

63.♖1e2 ♖xe2 **64.♖xe2** ♜g3 Collecting more pawns.

65.♖g2 ♜xh3+ **66.♗g1** ♜e3+ **67.♗h2** ♜f4+ **68.♗g1** fxg4 **69.♜e7** g3 Threatening mate on c1.

70.♜c5 ♜f3 **71.♖b2** e3 **72.♜c3** a3 It's just too much, so White resigned.

0-1

As it turned out, this was the decisive game of the championship. Kiolbasa and Arabidze shared first place with 8.5/11 but the first tie-break was their mutual duel.

Other notable results were Poland's three players in the top six (Kiolbasa, Maltsevskaya (third) and Kulon (sixth), the last two with 8/11) and Greece's Tsolakidou's fourth place (on tie-break). Stavroula has always been a great talent, but she's spent the last few years studying in the USA, so it's good to see her back playing well.

These events were the first ones with a very small number of Russian players (playing under the FIDE flag). As things stand, it's not going to be the last. With Russia now part of the Asian Federation, the scenery in European chess has already undergone a major change. Who is to profit from it remains to be seen.

EUROPEAN INDIVIDUAL CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP 2023 FINAL RANKING AFTER 11 ROUNDS - TOP 20						
Rk	SNo	NAME	FED	RTG	Pts	rtg +/-
1	9	IM Arabidze, Meri	GEO	2433	8.5	12.1
2	15	IM Kiolbasa, Oliwia	POL	2406	8.5	23.6
3	20	IM Maltsevskaya, Aleksandra	POL	2388	8	20
4	31	IM Tsolakidou, Stavroula	GRE	2358	8	15.1
5	27	IM Melia, Salome	GEO	2366	8	11.2
6	49	IM Kulon, Klaudia	POL	2290	8	17.8
7	6	IM Javakhishvili, Lela	GEO	2443	7.5	2.3
8	24	IM Garifullina, Leya	FID	2372	7.5	11.5
9	69	FM Toncheva, Nadya	BUL	2192	7.5	84.8
10	26	IM Sargsyan, Anna M.	ARM	2371	7.5	3.9
11	22	IM Guichard, Pauline	FRA	2379	7.5	5.2
12	36	IM Daulyte-Cornette, Deimante	FRA	2344	7.5	18.2
13	32	IM Cyfka, Karina	POL	2350	7.5	5.7
14	11	GM Danielian, Elina	ARM	2431	7	-0.8
15	16	IM Buksa, Nataliya	UKR	2405	7	0.7
16	10	GM Socko, Monika	POL	2432	7	3.9
17	28	IM Bivol, Alina	FID	2365	7	5.9
18	2	GM Gunina, Valentina	FID	2478	7	-12.5
19	5	IM Osmak, Yuliia	UKR	2445	7	-4.5
20	14	Wagner, DinaraWGM	GER	2411	7	0.7



Source: Shutterstock

SPACE, TIME AND DISTANCE IN THE CHESS ECO-SYSTEM

By Peter O'Brien

THERE ARE SEVERAL GOOD REASONS FOR REFLECTING ON THE ROLE OF THESE THREE CRITICAL AND INTER-RELATED ASPECTS AT THIS JUNCTURE IN WORLD AND CHESS HISTORY

Let's begin with a global perspective. Few would deny that we are at an epoch-defining moment in relations among nations. The half-millennium during which a small group of European nations, subsequently joined by the USA, effectively dictated "Everything, Everywhere, All at Once" (to borrow the title of the Oscar-winning film) is now effectively over. The new international framework will be progressively more and more shaped by those continent-sized mega-countries which include the lands where the royal game, in its various forms, actually originated. Those mega-countries, especially China and India, are indeed today on the absolute frontier of chess, measured by the exceptional numbers of young Grandmasters who have entered the dizzy heights of international rankings. Their presence is reinforced by that of several sizeable countries, especially in Central Asia, which similarly produce today numerous young players of stunning quality. Moreover, the historical virtual dominance, under the Western system, of male players, has been somewhat weakened by the emergence of very fine women players from those same Asian countries.

The global changes and the chess changes we observe now are of course the outcomes of processes which have been gathering momentum for a few decades. Time is critical when we are discussing sustainable and sustained revolutions in the order of things. It might please romantics to imagine that upheavals can be compressed into very short periods, where the before and the after bear scarce resemblance to each other. Yet life is rarely like that. When we study today's "Wealth of Nations" we are, just as was a famous Scottish pragmatist and philosopher Adam Smith, talking about a new internal order of

politics, economy and society designed to impact the international order of countries. Chess is by no means the only sport practised by individuals but where nurture by the State can transform results *en masse*. However, because skill across the 64 squares has been widely supposed to correlate positively with desirable mental attributes that can have societal benefits, it is a game where significant encouragement by governments has often been the norm.

The present is, thus, the first period in history where it truly makes sense to regard chess as an international activity. In the opening years of this century the reductions (in real terms) in costs of travel made it so much easier for players and teams to compete in different continents, and thereby create a genuine globalisation of the game. Hitherto, organisation across space and over time had been seriously hindered by sheer logistics. In previous periods, cross-country barriers had been tackled through correspondence chess, the telegraph-driven matches between USA and England at the turn of the 20th century, and the famous radio matches between the USSR and the USA in the mid-1940s. The real breakthrough nevertheless came with the informatics revolution. And even that would perhaps not have made quite the rupture it has had it not been for the global onset of COVID.

In the simplest terms, the transmission of the disease was tackled through severe controls on human face-to-face interaction within and across countries. That recognition of the (literally) life-or-death significance of physical distance automatically gave a huge boost to all activities which could be conducted through using technologies that rendered distance more or less irrelevant. So it is that the “age of maturity” of the superb young players currently dominating the international chess scene has coincided with the years when internationalisation, reinforced by high tech, has become pretty much the hallmark of the game. I say “pretty much” because the geopolitical tensions associated with the new order include, indeed are powerfully shaped by, developments in cybernetics. Hence chess games being played online, especially those at top level, have become objects of suspicion. Policy decisions to block such games from being played at all, through the use of firewalls and other devices, have therefore also become a feature of the current setting.



Up to this point, space, time and distance have been viewed primarily through the geopolitical prism. Nevertheless, for chess itself, space, time and space have always been at the very core of the matter. The board is a highly-confined space. The rules of the game stipulate that this space can, in and of itself, be neither expanded nor contracted. Variants of the game which transform it into 3-dimensional space have been invented and offer exciting challenges. Till now, though, they remain largely of exotic interest. It would, however, be a serious mistake to suppose that comments about the board exhaust the concept of space in chess. As all chess players know, debates and theories about space make up the very heart of countless approaches to the game. The centre and its occupation (or otherwise) constitute a theme underlying many opening systems and a

crucial issue in middlegame discussions. The idea of seeking to constantly restrict an opponent's "operative space" on the board is a fundamental consideration in strategic thinking. One interpretation of the famous "Zugzwang" situation on the board would be to say that it is a situation where "positive operative space" has been reduced to zero and the player, should they wish to continue playing, is obliged to move in "suicidal operative space". The idea of control of space without occupation is highly influential in chess, and may well have parallels in military and political affairs.

At no moment in history has time, however reckoned, been more significant than it is today. For chess players, what was once seen as a slow game has been transformed out of all recognition. During the earlier years of this century, a number of changes to rules and tournament regulations placed an ever greater emphasis on speed in play, and indirectly on reductions in the number of days for tournaments to be completed. The possibility of conducting competitions over the internet, and indeed sometimes playing in more than one tournament on a given day, has given rise to a mushroom cloud explosion in the quantity of high-level games played and available for consultation. Schedules are such that Carlsen has a playing program that would make even a US basketball professional seem a little lazy. All this implies that both chess organisers and players operate today according to calendars that would have appeared far-fetched just a few years ago.

Time, like space, has a very direct relationship to the actual playing of a game. When players focused strongly on direct assaults against the King, the sheer speed of manoeuvre was at a premium. In the crudest terms, a trade-off between material (pieces, pawns) and time occupied the centre of much thinking. As defensive skills improved, and all-out attack became more difficult to carry out, the assessment of time was revalued. Endgame technique required further refinement, to the point where in various positions optimum play meant that time had to be "lost" in order for an advantage to be realised. In short, in the confined space of the board, the role of time is continually changing. In the microcosm that is chess, we can detect some of the factors that play such a key role in the far wider worlds of geopolitics and society.

Time in chess has been given another dimension through the much wider visibility of the game. Its all very well to have the motto "Gens Unus Sumus" (though in the 21st century, the time has long since gone when the admirable sentiment is expressed in an old European tongue). But the realities of today's geopolitics and today's decisive social currents - though the two mostly do not move in the same direction - render it impossible for organisations at the core of the chess world to avoid making rapid statements and decisions on hot issues. Every sport is now forced to take a position on events. The option of silence has been removed - indeed, silence is probably the most dangerous option for an organisation since the

Chess is by no means the only sport practised by individuals but where nurture by the State can transform results en masse. However, because skill across the 64 squares has been widely supposed to correlate positively with desirable mental attributes that can have societal benefits, it is a game where significant encouragement by governments has often been the norm

absence of a public posture will almost certainly be interpreted as a negative by almost everyone.

A common way of thinking about time, in any area of life, is in terms of anniversaries. On that scale, we should not forget how symbolic 2023 is. For the political world and its tensions, a few examples are: India's 75th year; the 75th anniversary of the signing of the United Nations Convention on Human Rights; the 100th anniversary of the signing of one of the most crucial European political treaties, that between the USSR and Germany at Rapallo, Italy; the 65th anniversary of the entry into force of the Treaty of Rome setting up the European Common Market; and (closer to home for this writer) the 100th anniversary of Ireland's Independence and the 50th year since entry into the (then) European Common Market. But the chess world too has its symbolic milestones. It's 75 years since the Moscow/Hague tournament leading to Botvinnik's crowning as world champion; 30 years since Kasparov lost a match to a computer; 10 years since Carlsen won the world title. Events crowd in. In this maelstrom, however, it is the sense of time which is shifting. The pop artist Andy Warhol famously quipped about each person wanting their 15 minutes of fame - today, most would settle for 15 seconds.

The third pillar of this triangle is distance. Mostly people, whether in politics or in chess, think of distance as a great divider, sometimes desired, often not. Right now immigration into the EU is perceived from so many angles, one of which is geographic. In Italy, where I am writing these lines, the focus is exclusively on the Mediterranean Sea. Events here generate so much bitterness and controversy that it is well nigh impossible to tell people that large numbers of people come to EU countries by methods other than half-derelict boats, and do not hit land in Sicily. The twin impacts of COVID and political conflicts have forced enterprises into rethinking their business models based on long-distance value-added chains. "Nearshoring", "Friend shoring", and "Self-Reliance" have become fashionable terms underlining that kilometers matter. In the chess world, physical separation has always been a barrier to greater competition and rapid diffusion of ideas. Historically, and despite many and varied political restrictions, technological advances have tended to weaken the kilometer barrier. In today's setting, though, the political continues to battle with the opportunities afforded by technology.

Distance also counts on the board itself. Put in simple terms, its importance tends to increase as we move towards end games. Questions such as: can the knight leap back fast enough to stop that pawn from queening? Can the king reach the zone where he can prevent the rival from capturing key pawns? Can the rook position itself behind that passed pawn? These questions become not only important but frequently decisive. The response to them will determine the outcome of the game. The use of simple geometry as a way of "shortening distance" is also present on the board. Réti's famous endgame study, where the king follows a diagonal path to permit himself to eventually catch an opposing pawn, is a fine example of this motif.

These notes illustrate a theme of huge importance to life and chess. Space, time and distance are in no sense fixed things. Their meaning and the way they are conceived and measured depend on the vantage points, the aims, and indeed the prejudices of the actors making the decisions. How significant they become is a function of who is doing the interpreting, whether in the geopolitical arena or on the 64 squares. The innumerable subjective visions are what make for the problems - yet also make for the fun.

Next Year in Jerusalem

By Alexis Levitin



Source: Shutterstock

I was on the mountainous island of Ikaria and, as usual, was looking for a chess player. For two weeks, no luck. Everyone played some form of Tavli, but no one, it seemed, outside of the capital city, Agios Kirikos, played chess. The beaches were wonderful, the blue-green sea a miracle, the grilled squid crisp, the feta cheese heavy with the smell of earth, the yoghurt and honey thick with the sweetness of life. But I wanted to find that extra-gustatorial delight that chess provides and I didn't want to abandon the countryside for the busy island capital more than an hour away on a tortuous road.

Finally one morning, at my comfortable rooming house high above the sea in Armenistis, as I made my usual almost hopeless query amidst fried eggs, sliced ham and cheese, and strong coffee, a newcomer's eyes lit up. He had a brow creased with thought and wrinkles at the edge of his eyes that suggested good humor and benevolence. "I play chess" he said with a smile, from beneath a greying mustache, as he held out a firm hand in greeting. I couldn't believe this sudden reversal in fortune. The newcomer seemed not only willing, but eager to play. We rapidly finished our breakfast and I unfolded the wooden set our host had provided after listening, day after day, to my desperate morning pleas for a chess partner in the world of living flesh. Yes, I had my computer with me, though I had deliberately left my cell phone behind in New York. But Chess.com, though always a temptation, just never felt like real life, at least not to me, an aging man whose habits had been established and engraved back in the fifties and sixties, before ungainly room-sized computers had emerged from windowless basement caverns in academia to inhabit snug little hand-held devices in all corners of the earth. So, my new friend and I, two humans incarnated in flesh, cleared away our dishes, retaining only our half-finished coffees, still steaming in their mugs. We set up the pieces, and he brought forth his two closed fists. I guessed right and got white. I opened with my usual Ruy Lopez, as we hunched over the board in happy anticipation. A game, at last!

Abdul was good and I could not ignore the threat of his counterattack. The board grew complex with possibilities. There seemed a balance of wariness and aspiration between us. We were both happily absorbed. Then I saw the classical sacrifice one always hopes for, swooping down on the rook pawn with my white bishop, checking the castled king. My new friend should have thought longer at this point, but instead of simply sliding his king to H8, he took the bishop. My queen swept over to give check from the H file, the king retreated to G8, but to my opponent's shock, my knight suddenly blossomed at the inevitable and fatal G5. He gazed at the board for a moment, then held out his hand with a smile. "Congratulations," he said.

I wanted to play a second game, but Abdul had a commitment. In fact, he was not alone, and his companion, a tall woman from Spain with a comprehending gaze, had sat patiently watching our game. But they had just rented a car with which to explore the interior of the island, and so they had to go. My new friend and I shook hands and we both felt grateful for having had at least one good game of chess after a long dry spell.

No other chess players appeared and life returned to normal. A few days later, exploring the island beyond my usual haunts, I drove to Maganitis, the most remote village at the end of the road. There was a scattering of white houses straggling down a steep mountain side, dropping precipitously to the sea. Before penetrating into the clustered houses perched on both sides of the narrow street winding down past the church to the small port, I saw a hand-painted sign in red, indicating a restaurant on an unpaved side road. I thought I would give it a try.

I had to park on the edge of the dirt road and walk carefully down the steep driveway. Everything in this village seemed to be either up or down. I found a few tables beneath a thin tracing of small Christmas lights. The tiny restaurant was the downstairs of the family house and the waiter was clearly the young son of the family. I ordered my fried squid and toyed with a Fanta. Half-way through my meal, a man dining on the upper level leaned over and called out my name. I was shocked that anyone here at the end of the road, the last outpost of civilization, could possibly know me. Peering up against the lights, I could see a dark face and a broad smile. It was Abdul. We had met again. Clearly fate wanted a rematch. And a friendship, as well.

I quickly finished the remains of my calamari, then climbed the steep stairs to the second floor veranda. A joyous reunion. He was with his woman companion, and we had warm hugs all around. Both of them smiled not only with their lips, but with their eyes. They had traveled all the roads they could find, they told me, visiting small villages in the mountains. Like me, their quest for the furthest possibility, the end of the line, had finally brought them here. They would be leaving Ikaria in two days, they said. They would be flying back to Jerusalem. "I was there once, with my father and brother," I told them. "It was my only trip to Israel. It was 106 degrees that day in Jerusalem and the old philosopher Martin Buber lay dying in his hospital bed. They told us that air conditioning had not yet been installed."

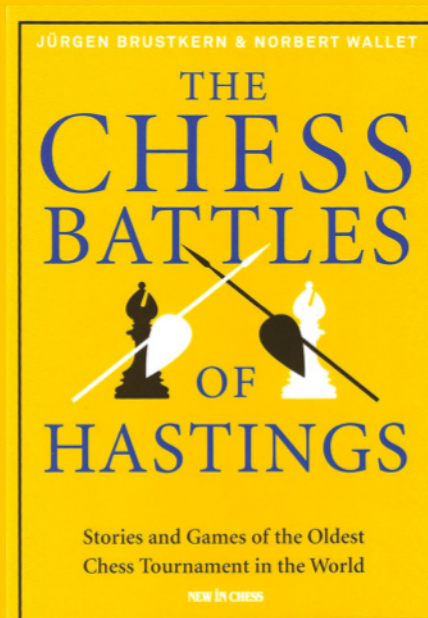
My chess friend was a doctor working in a Palestinian refugee camp, trying to save the children. Turned out he didn't even have a passport. He was a Palestinian and permanent resident in Jerusalem, but a citizen of no official country. Jordan had given him resident status, as had Israel, but no one had offered him citizenship. He may have been the first stateless man I had ever met. His unsettled political condition, however, did not leave him unsettled as a man. He exuded a calm sense of self, of quiet assuredness. His strange status as a kind of political orphan had not left him floating aimlessly in the shifting winds of a hopelessly tangled Middle East. He knew who he was. This was a man one could be friends with for life.

He seemed eager to play, so, after sharing some baklava, we settled down for a welcome post-prandial pleasure. I pulled out my small traveling set, and this time he played white. We both felt a deep pleasure at immersing ourselves once again in the royal game. We found ourselves in a tough struggle, and he retained a slight advantage from the beginning due to my clumsy handling of the French Defense. I had never studied the various lines and wondered why I had defended with a system in which I felt uncomfortable. But there it was. And then we marched towards an end game. We each had a queen and he had two bishops for my lone rook. He also had a passed pawn. I was feeling the tension, but then saw what looked like a brilliant move. With my rook, I had pinned his bishop up against his exposed king. With my queen I snatched a pawn and attacked his immobilized bishop head on. I thought he was finished, but I was wrong. A simple retreat of his queen protected the vulnerable bishop and now he could continue to advance his passed pawn. I was helpless.

I gazed at the board for five minutes and saw there was no salvation. I placed my king flat on the board and reached over to take his hand. "You won," I said with a smile.

We had each won once and we were happy with the games and with each other. We regretted that life would pull us apart and there would be no more harmonious battles on the chessboard, at least not that summer. But we were very happy to have met and to have played each other at least those two times. Abdul gave me his card and we mused about my visiting him in Jerusalem next year. And as I looked into his eyes to say good-bye, I wondered why the greater world, filled with conflicts and hatreds, ancient and modern, could not find a simple human happiness as he and I had done.





The Chess Battles of Hastings

by Jurgen Brustkern and Norbert Wallet;
published by New in Chess

An outstanding book, translated from the German edition into English, celebrating the Hastings Chess Congress. The book is subtitled *Stories and Games of the Oldest Chess Tournament in the World* and features many biographies of players who have competed at Hastings. These excellent portraits, potted biographies, are a feature of the book, together with an examination of the British Chess Explosion in the 1970s and 1980s. For example, there is an excellent biography of Sir George Thomas who was probably the best badminton player in the world at his peak. Wonderful detail on the great players is available in this book and many memorable games are annotated so there are many reasons to get this book.

The book is very well produced by New in Chess and available from their website in hardback at 32.95 euros.

IM Shaun Taulbut

Openings

for Amateurs By Pete Tamburro; ptamburro@aol.com

NIGHTMARES IN THE NAJDORF, PART IV

ANOTHER UNEXPECTED SYSTEM

At the outset of this Najdorf Nightmare study, we mentioned the popular lines for which Black and White are usually booked up: Fischer System, English Attack, ♟g5 with f4 lines, and have since shown "alternate routes" for White. We recommend that players of the white side consider these less trendy paths so as to catch your fellow amateurs in something they don't know so well. We also advise players of the Black forces to be aware of these alternatives as they are systems to be treated very seriously, familiarity or not.

If you have been following this column these past almost nine years, you will know that I like to treasure hunt for instructive games from the "distant" past and study the development of the opening ideas. Our feature game was one picked out by Reuben Fine for his chess column for Chess Review during World War II! It ended up in his book, "Chess Marches On", and he was apparently quite impressed by it as he entitled that chapter "Victory by Annihilation".

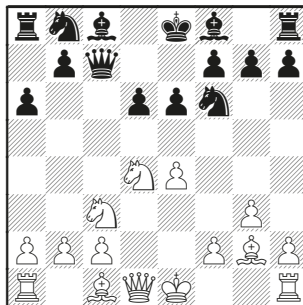
The following game was chosen for this column because Black's response, even though it came out of a Scheveningen, is an easy transposition from the Najdorf and because often amateur players, running into something unfamiliar, will play somewhat conservatively, which in this case would be meeting 6.g3 (see the note to move 2) with e6, rather than playing more aggressively with 6...e5, which we will cover later because it is the more popular approach today.

Alexey Sokolsky – Gerogy Bastrikov

Sverdlosk, 1942

1.e4 c5 2.♟f3 e6 The Najdorf transposition is 2...d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♞xd4 ♞f6 5.♞c3 a6 6.g3 e6 7.♟g2 ♞c7

3.d4 cxd4 4.♞xd4 ♞f6 5.♞c3 d6 6.g3 a6 7.♟g2 ♞c7



Here we are at the tabiya for this system. You should notice that the king's bishop has positioned itself on the long diagonal and is attacking the freeing square d5 and the a8 square occupied by the rook. The black queen finds a useful place on c7 so as to be able to play ♟b7 at some point and also have some influence on the c-file even if there will be no white king heading over there. The question for Black is the placement of the queenside pieces and the timing of b6 or b5. Does the knight go to d7 or c6? Do you play ♟d7 or ♟b7? Does the rook go to c8, b8 or d8? Each decision is related to the other decisions as they must be a coordinated team.

8.0-0 An easy choice for White. In fact, you can already see key parts of the plan: the bishop will go to e3, the f2 pawn to f4, with the g-pawn getting involved as well. There is also the rather obvious direct and indirect attack to prevent d5 by three white pieces and a pawn. Fine noted that g3 and g2 are effectively the same as the traditional g2 and f3 (most likely after f4) in terms of tempi, so White isn't losing time with the fianchetto.

8...c6 Signalling that the bishop is going to d7, setting up as in a Scheveningen.

9.g3 A common precaution in the Sicilian for White as queen or bishop checks by Black along the diagonal can sometimes be awkward. There are other choices: 9.f4 dxd4 10.♖xd4 b5 11.e5 dxe5 12.♗xe5 g5+ 13.g3 h1 g6 14.♗e2 ♖b8 and Black is doing quite well, while White has made his castled position a bit draughtier, especially with an upcoming light-squared bishop exchange;

Taking the knight with 9.dxc6 bxc6 does not inspire this annotator. First of all, Black gets to further support a d5 move. Secondly, the rook will occupy the half-open b-file. For White, try and figure out a cohesive plan here. Then look at the plan unfold in the game. The game plan seems far more harmonious and understandable for the average player, regardless of what a chess engine may say.

9...g6 10.f4 Since the bishop won't be challenging on b7 in order to exchange, this move is quite playable.

10...g7! The freeing 10...d5 is perhaps not quite ready for prime time: 11.exd5 (Curious is 11.e5 dxd4 12.exf6 d5 13.dxd5 exd5 14.♖e1+ ♔d8 15.♗xd5 g6.) 11...dxd4 12.♗xd4 g5 13.♗d3 0-0-0 14.f5 exd5 15.a4 g6 16.d5! ♗b6 17.b4! ♗xb4 18.♖b1 will require cold-blooded defence. However, Black should keep an eye on that possibility.

11.d3 b5 12.g3 White can't get too frisky with 12.g4 because of 12...b4

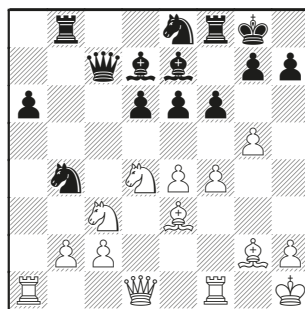
12...0-0 White, who earlier avoided the prophylactic a4 to slow counterplay, finally gives a nod to some queenside caution.

13.a3 ♖ab8 14.g4! This is what your set-up was designed for, so you might as well play it. Note that the white queen has stayed on d1 to keep an eye on d5 and support g4.

14...b4 Making way for a knight retreat doesn't seem to help. If 14...g5 15.g5 d7 16.f5 ♗d8 17.♗h5; or if 14...g6 15.g5 d7 16.f5. A nerve-wracking defensive move like 14...h6 provokes 15.h4 and you have to wonder how many players of the black side would provide such a target for the pawns and dark-squared bishop.

15.axb4 ♗xb4 16.g5 ♗e8 17.d4 17.f5 g6 18.f6 g6 19.h4 There is also this possibility:

17...f6?!



Fine's comment here is priceless: "A mistake for which we can be thankful, because it leads, in Sokolsky's capable hands, to a superb series of combinations." The fans want blood in the arena! To be fair to Bastrikov, his alternatives were not that much fun, either. 17...c6 18.♖xa6; 17...♗d8 18.h4 (18.♗d2);

17...g6 18.f5; 17...d5 18.exd5 ♖xd5 19.♗xd5 exd5 20.b3 After move 17, White's opening plan has been carried out, and the relatively passive response has contributed to its success. Of course, one of the lesser talked about topics in chess is this: once a side has an advantage from the opening plan, does the player know how to carry the middle game or attacking plan? Let's watch how White does it.

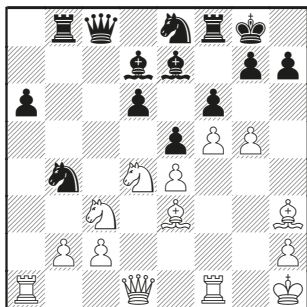
18.♗h3 Some of you attacking fiends may have noticed 18.f5 exf5 19.g6 hxg6 20.exf5 g5 21.♗d5 but Sokolsky's move works, too.

18...♖c8 There's a nasty surprise after 18...e5 : 19.♗e6 Fine, probably because (19.♗e6+ ♗h8 20.fxe5 dxe5 21.g6 hxg6 22.♖f3 ♗xe6 23.♗xe6 ♖c4 24.♗xf8 ♗xf8 25.♖f2±) 19...♖c8 (19...♗xe6 20.♗xe6+ ♗h8 21.g6 f5 22.♗xf5 h6 23.♗e6 ♗f6 24.♖d2 ♗c6 25.fxe5 ♗xe5 26.♗xh6 and it's over.) 20.f5 ♗xe6 21.fxe6+;

If 18...f5 19.exf5 exf5 and now just about everything works: 20.♖d2 (20.♖e2; 20.♗ce2);

If 18...♖c4 19.f5 or even (19.♗d5).

19.f5! e5



Just for the fun of it, play with all the possible replies here. Good practice! 19...exf5 20.♗xf5

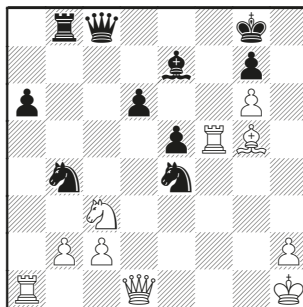
20.g6!! The battering ram.

20...hxg6 If 20...exd4 21.♖h5 h6 22.♗xh6 will mate.

21.fxg6 f5 22.♗xf5 ♖xf5 If 22...♖d8 23.♖h5 ♗f6 24.♗h6+ gxh6 25.♖xh6+- four different mates in five coming.

23.♗xf5 ♗xf5 24.♖xf5 This position is resignable, but Black fights back. Never can tell...

24...♗f6 25.♗g5 ♗xe4!



26.♗d5!! The more obvious queen move works as well, but Sokolsky is in the zone! 26.♖h5 ♗xg5 27.♖af1 ♖c6+ 28.♗g1 ♖c5+ 29.♗g2 ♗d5 30.♖xg5 ♗f6 31.♖xf6 ♗xf6 32.♖f5 ♖b7 33.♖h7+ ♗f8 34.♖xf6+.

26...♗f2+ 26...♖xf5 27.♗xe7+ ♗f8 28.♗xf5 ♗f2+ 29.♗g1 ♗xd1 30.♖xd1+-.

27.♖xf2 ♖b7 It's just a choice of which sword to fall upon. 27...♗xg5 28.♖h5 ♗h6 29.♗e7+ ♗h8 30.♗xc8 ♖xc8 31.♖af1.

28.♖h5

1-0

What do we learn from this game?

1. A harmonious opening plan, even if it leads to a game with even chances, can often triumph over no plan at all.
2. In the Najdorf Sicilian especially, Black needs to search for dynamic play, as conservative, routine, typically "Sicilian" moves can get

you in trouble. Most players know all the thematic moves. The difficulty for most is knowing when and why to play them.

3. For Sicilian players, your mindset is as important as your memorised moves because when you get out of the book you have to have a Sicilian attitude.
4. Once you get an advantage from your opening plan, it is of no use unless you are prepared to implement a successful plan in the middlegame.
5. You need to be alert to tactical possibilities at every moment in the Sicilian in general.

Here are two quick examples recently arising in internet play. The first was my trotting out the ♖xd4 Sicilian in which Black "cleverly"

avoids the main line only to fall prey to not knowing what to do after a6. The second was my giving the ♗f3 line I wrote about in February a try, and, sure enough, Black was puzzled for a bit, developed cautiously and then missed White's thrust.

Game One: 1.e4 c5 2.♟f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♖xd4 a6 5.♙g5 ♟c6 6.♗d2 ♖b6? 7.♟c3 ♖xb2?? 8.♟b1 ♖a3 9.♟d5!! ♖xa2 10.♗d1 ♖a5+ 11.♙d2 ♗d8 12.♙e3 e6 13.♙b6 ♗d7 14.♟c7+-.

Game Two: 1.e4 c5 2.♟f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♟xd4 ♟6 5.♟c3 a6 6.♙g5 e6 7.♗f3 ♙e7 8.0-0-0 ♙d7 9.e5!! dxe5 10.♟xe6 fxe6 11.♙xf6 gxf6 12.♖xb7 ♟c6 13.♟xd7+-The great irony of winning both these games is that your columnist also missed both ninth moves! Everybody has to be alert on every move!

OBITUARY: LUC WINANTS (01 I 1963 – 07 II 2023)

A sad passing, **Luc Winants** (01 i 1963 *Brussels* - 07 ii 2023), GM 1998, IM 1986. He played in 8 Olympiads, enjoyed playing for Slough in the 4NCL. Hugely popular player, fond of the Trompowsky. Defeated the infant Carlsen, the veteran Larsen plus several top internationals in his time! Belgian Champion in 1986.

Stuart Conquest – Luc Winants

Donner Memorial, 1996
Evans Gambit Declined C51

1 e4 e5 2.♟f3 ♟c6 3.♙c4 ♙c5 4.b4 Quite unusual for the English GM. I found only two other Evanses by Conquest in the ChessBase.

4 ... ♙b6 5.a4 a6 6.♟c3! ♟f6 7.d4 I can find this in 'Nunn's Chess Openings' (1999), which hardly surprises. If it is such a wonderful move I wonder why so few seem to play it.

7 ... exd4 8.♟d5 ♟xd5 9.exd5 ♖e7+ 10.♟f1 ♟e5 The late Belgian GM looks to be doing fine, a pawn up and Conquest with a displaced king.



Source: www.chess-and-strategy.com

11.d6 cxd6 12.♙d5 ♖f6 13.♟g5 0-0 14.♟a3 From Cavalier to Coffeehouse?

14 ... h6 15.♟e4 ♖f5 16.♟g3 ♟g6 17.c4 dxc3 18.h4 c2 19.♗d2 ♖h5 20.♟xg6 ♖d1+ 21.♖e1 ♟h8 22.♟g3 ♖xd5 23.♙b2 ♙d4 24.♙xd4 ♖xd4 25.♟c3 ♟e8 26.f3 d5

0-1

James Pratt

OXFORD UNIVERSITY V CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY: THE 141ST VARSITY CHESS MATCH

By IM Shaun Taulbut

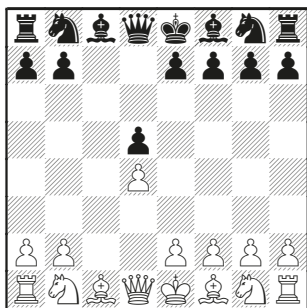
The 141st Varsity Chess Match took place at the RAC Club in Pall Mall on 4 March 2023. The match ended in a 4-4 draw.

We shall look at three of the games, starting with a fine positional win for Oxford on the top board

Tom O'Gorman - Miroslav Macko

141st Varsity Match 2023 London ENG (1.1)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.cxd5 cxd5

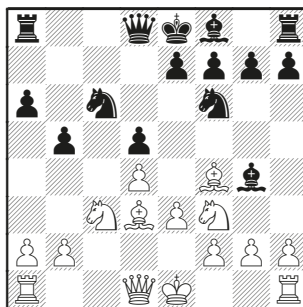


The Exchange variation; more potent than the symmetry would suggest.

4.♘c3 ♘f6 5.♙f4 ♘c6 6.e3 a6
Black plans queenside expansion but development is better.

7.♙d3 b5 8.♘f3 8.&c1 would also be good, aiming at the knight on c6.

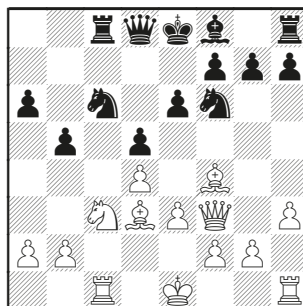
8...♙g4



This move has drawbacks leaving the knight on c6 still unprotected.

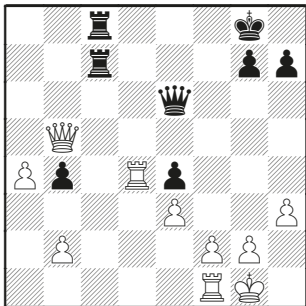
9.h3 ♙xf3 After 9...♙h5 10.♖c1 ♖c8 11.0-0 e6 12.g4 ♙g6 13.♘xb5 ♙xd3 14.♙xd3 axb5 15.♙xb5 ♙d7 16.♘e5 White wins as the black knight cannot capture on e5 because of Rxc8+, so Black must give up the bishop and his queenside pawns on a6 and b5 are weak, which White can play to exploit with a4.

10.♙xf3 e6 11.♖c1 ♖c8



12.0-0 ♖e7 13.♙e2 0-0 14.a4 b4 15.♘b1
♙d6 15...a5 16.♙a6 wins the exchange so
the a-pawn is lost.

16.♙xd6 ♙xd6 17.♙xa6 ♖c7 18.♘d2
♙a8 19.♘b3 ♘e4 20.♙b5 ♖ac8
21.♙d3 f5 22.♙xe4 fxe4 23.♖c5 e5
24.♙b5 exd4 25.♙xd5 ♙e6 26.♘xd4
♘xd4 27.♙xd4



27...b3 28.♖fd1 h6 29.♖d5 ♘h7 30.♙xb3
♖c5 31.♖5d3 ♙g6 32.♖d6 ♙h5 33.♙e6

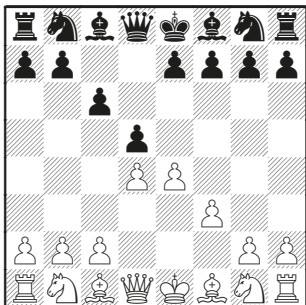
1-0

On Board four, Cambridge won quickly
against the Caro-Kann.

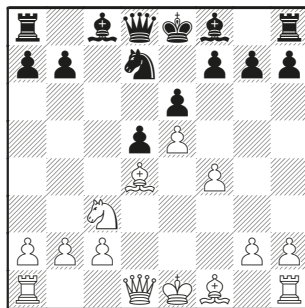
Daniel GH Gallagher - Max French

141st Varsity Match 2023 London ENG (1.4)

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.f3

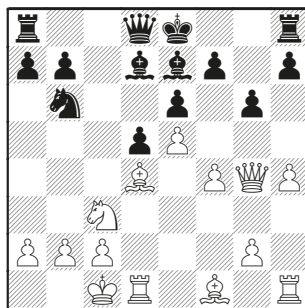


3...e6 4.♘c3 ♘f6 5.e5 ♘fd7 6.f4 c5
7.♘f3 ♘c6 8.♙e3 cxd4 9.♘xd4 ♘xd4
10.♙xd4



The opening has transposed from a Caro-
Kann into a French Defence.

10...♙e7 11.♙g4 g6 12.0-0-0 ♘b6
13.h4 ♙d7

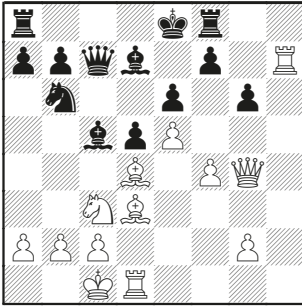


Essential was 13...h5 14.♙g3 ♙d7 as now
White breaks through on the kingside.

14.h5 ♖f8 If 14...g5 15.♙b1 gxf4 16.♙xf4
a6 17.♙h6 ♙f8 18.♙c3 ♘c8 19.♘xd5
exd5 20.e6 wins.

15.hxg6 hxg6 16.♖h7 ♙c7 17.♙d3
17.♘b5 is also good. White now has threats
of sacrificing on g6.

17...♙c5



18. ♖xg6 ♙xd4 If 18...fxg6 19. ♘b5 ♖c6 20. ♙xc5 ♖xb5 21. ♖xg6+ ♔d8 22. ♙xf8 wins.

19. ♙xf7+ ♖xf7 20. ♖h8+ ♖f8 21. ♖g6+ ♔e7 22. ♖g7+ ♖f7 23. ♖g5+

White has a nice space advantage and is better.

11.0-0-0 a6 12. ♘d4 ♘e7 13. h4 b5 14. ♘b3 ♘e8 15. ♖d2 ♖c7

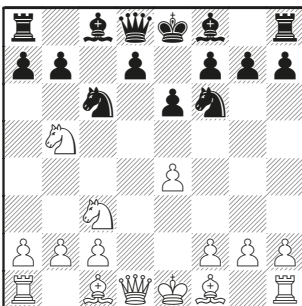
1-0

The Board five game was a fluctuating struggle.

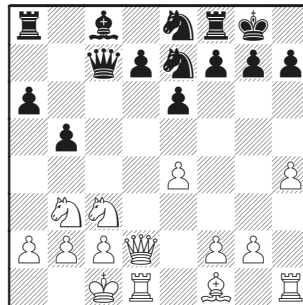
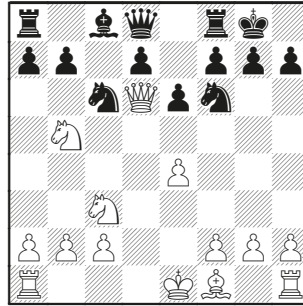
Amardip Ahluwalia - Gwilym Price

141st Varsity Match 2023 London ENG (1.5)

1.e4 c5 2. ♘f3 e6 3. d4 cxd4 4. ♘xd4 ♘f6 5. ♘c3 ♘c6 6. ♘db5



6... ♙c5 7. ♙f4 0-0 8. ♙c7 ♖e7 9. ♙d6 ♙xd6 10. ♖xd6 ♖d8



16.h5 d6 16...h6 is best here as the white pawn on h6 is a danger to Black.

17.h6 g6 18.f4 e5 19. ♘d5 19.fxe5 dxe5 20. ♙e2 gives White an advantage.

19... ♘xd5 20.exd5 ♙g4 21. ♖e1 ♖c8 22. ♙e2 ♙f5

Black now has counterplay down the c-file but is still hampered by the pawn on h6.

THE 141ST VARSITY CHESS MATCH

	OXFORD UNIVERSITY	Rtg	Nat	2023		Rtg	Nat
1w	Tom O'Gorman (Hertford)	2357f	IRL	1-0	Miroslav Macko (Trinity)	2273f	SVK
2b	Emil Powierski (Merton)	2306	GER	½-½	Jan Petr (Trinity)	2282f	CZE
3w	Ashvin Sivakumar (Harris Manchester)	2173f	SIN	1-0	Freddie Hand	2177	ENG
4b	Max French (Wadham, capt)	2226	ENG	0-1	Daniel Gallagher (Pembroke)	2218	ENG
5w	Amardip Ahluwalia (University)	2165	ENG	0-1	Gwilym Price (Clare)	2154	ENG
6b	Dominic Miller (Somerville)	2131	ENG	½-½	Ognjen Stefanovic (Trinity)	2109	SRB
7w	Nujith Jayawarna (St Hilda's)	2118	ENG	1-0	Imogen A L Camp (Queens')	1829wc	WLS
8b	Aditi Agarwal (New)	1578	ENG	0-1	Omeet J Atara (St Catharine's, capt)	1667	ENG



"FITS, STARTS AND CONTINUITIES: CHESS TOURNAMENTS IN THE USA"

**A REVIEW OF "CAMBRIDGE SPRINGS 1904" BY ROBERT SHERWOOD,
RUSSELL ENTERPRISES, NEW HAMPSHIRE, USA, 2022**

By Peter O'Brien

By any reckoning, the 16-player tournament held at the unlikely venue of Cambridge Springs, Western Pennsylvania, from late April until the end of May 1904, has to be considered as one of the finest ever.

Players were invited on the basis of having half from Europe, half from the USA, with the aim of bringing together the best from each place. While inevitably one or two people could not make it, the final line-up was truly exceptional. More than half of the participants have historical ELO ratings of 2500 or above, a quarter of them 2600 or above, and the world champion Lasker (historical rating 2720) was enticed to play his first major tournament of the 20th century.

We are thus deeply indebted to the group of people who have produced this first-rate volume about the event. I say "group" because one of the book's strengths is the variety of perspectives from which the event is analysed.

Robert Sherwood, the main author, had in fact been working with Dale Brandreth since at least 2007 to prepare the book. They had noted that the only prior work on the tournament was one by Reinfeld, back in the 1930s, and that it did not go too deeply.

Brandreth died three years ago, leaving a manuscript plus brief notes entitled "Background to the Tournament" written by the excellent chess historian, Tony Gillam. Fortunately, Sherwood not only persisted with the project, but expanded its scope. The result is a book which contains: a foreword written by Andy Soltis in June 2022; Emil Kemeny's splendid and contemporaneous



(March 1904) "Introduction to the Tournament", slightly edited by Tony Gillam to allow for the slight changes which occurred between March 1904 and the start of the tournament; Gillam's own "Background" mentioned above; then a powerful insight, "The Firsts at Cambridge Springs", also by Gillam; Frank Camaratta, the founder of the US firm House of Staunton, describes with fine photos "The Cambridge Springs 1904 Chessmen"; and a significant section provides concise yet penetrating biographies of the players. Sherwood himself has ensured that the games are annotated using

contemporary engines, hence allowing us to appreciate better the quality of the play. Hanon Russell has done a splendid job in putting all these things together in a most attractive format.

In his foreword Andy Soltis judiciously points out that most, though not all, famous chess tournaments have taken place (and continue to take place) in world known cities, or in locations linked with their sponsors (e.g. Wijk aan Zee). But how many people, even Americans, know anything about Cambridge Springs?

Let's remember that the beginning of the 20th century was still the age of the railroad in the US. And the mighty Erie Railroad had a daily service linking New York with Chicago. Now the distance between these two great cities is around 1300 kilometres. In those days many people making the journey took an overnight stop halfway along - and it happens that Cambridge Springs was that midway point. So, a thriving hotel business had been built up, of which the two leading establishments were The Riverside Inn and The Rider Hotel. The latter, a 500-room hilltop palace, where every room had electric lights and phones, was owned by a redoubtable entrepreneur named William D Rider Jr. To advertise his hotel, he came up with the idea of organising a world-class chess tournament. All participants would have free accommodation and lodging, offered by the hotel, all travel expenses, international and national, would be met by the committee managing the event, and the prize fund would be generous. Rider, like any wise investor, included in the management committee several rich individuals who themselves had a strong interest in chess, and generated contacts with the media to guarantee publicity. Given that some of the US amateur players invited to Cambridge Springs were themselves citizens with major accomplishments in other fields and considerable "influencers", we can conclude that Rider had his bet pretty well covered.

It's worth emphasising this point through the exploits of one of the players, namely Jackson Whipps Showalter. The man from Kentucky was an amateur, but with a historical ELO rating

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of 2470. By the time he was 22, Showalter had graduated from Cornell, graduated with the highest honours from the military academy at Frankfort, and spent two years managing a huge cattle ranch on the Mexican border. He was also an outstanding baseball player and reputed to be the first man in Kentucky to pitch a curve ball, as well as one of the first in the whole of the USA. He carried on, still as a very young man, cattle ranching in Texas, and later on played with the very successful Georgetown baseball team, where too he was "only an amateur". In what somehow seems a perfect fit, this example of "mens sana in corpore sano" followed a healthy diet of beef, bourbon and cigars!

Prior to Cambridge Springs, chess in the US had experienced a mix of shooting stars among its players coupled with a significant number of strong amateurs, plus an intermittent production of chess events at high level. Morphy was, of course, the supreme case of dazzling brilliance among the players, though others such as Paulsen were top-rate. In 1895 at Hastings Pillsbury had produced what was, at that time, one of the finest tournament performances ever

OFFICIALS AND CONTESTANTS IN THE INTERNATIONAL
CHESS CONGRESS TO BE HELD AT CAMBRIDGE SPRINGS.



(earning an ELO rating for that performance of 2805), but the rapid subsequent deterioration of his health had ruined his life. With hindsight, his Cambridge Springs score of seven from 15 could be seen as exceptional - just two years after the end of the tournament, he was dead at the age of 33. The amateurs were mostly "New England intellectuals", though a fair number of good players had emerged all along the Atlantic Coast. From the chess events angle, quite a few matches, including Steinitz/Zukertort, had taken place, while several quite strong tournaments were arranged, though some efforts at top-rate competitions had fallen through.

The emphasis on matches rather than tournaments can, I think, be seen as a continuity for the USA. For an absolutely world-class tournament following Cambridge Springs I think we would have to jump (save New York 1924) some 60 years to Santa Monica 1966, where players of the calibre of Petrosian, Larsen and several others were present. Of course, a number of the US national championships have been very strong but have not had the aura of Cambridge Springs. Matches, on the other hand, have been fairly frequent and at high level. Maybe this strand has been especially

noticeable over the past 30 years, with world championship matches involving Kasparov, Anand, Carlsen, Caruana and Karjakin. Before that, Fischer registered his legendary whitewash results against Taimanov and Larsen on home soil, while the contest between Fischer and Reshevsky has to be considered as world-class.

Organisation of an outstanding tournament has to be managed from a commercial angle, and Cambridge Springs was not wanting in this respect. Photography of the event and players would provide, it was hoped, some useful revenue, though that does not seem to have been particularly successful. The eight boards and sets used for the tournament were sold off, each item accompanied by a certificate signed by all of the players. Even translated to today's prices, the fixed price then of \$15 seems incredibly low. All the same, this approach to creating revenue might be considered a precursor for the auctioning of the (signed) Non-Fungible Tokens connected with the 2022 Grand Prix events held in Berlin (twice) and Belgrade. As Kemeny had perceptively noted in his March 1904 Introduction to the tournament, the efforts to control the publication of game scores

was more or less foredoomed, so nothing was to be earned from that route. The truth seems to be that, without the sponsorship, the financials would have been bad. Despite all the technological and other advances of the past 120 years, I think this remains true for over the board chess events - sponsorship is decisive. For online activities, which are today's (and tomorrow's) world, the verdict might be different. But I would still need to see the estimates before being too confident.

In the USA, chess as a whole seems to have continued in fits and starts. There have been periods with many very strong players, and other quite long stretches where the density has been much lower. The steady influx of immigrants has naturally guaranteed that standards overall will be high. When players of the calibre of Reshevsky, Kamsky, Seirawan, Nakamura and numerous others arrive in a country at a young age, and become citizens,

then quality is not only maintained but enhanced. The establishment of the St Louis Centre is a tremendous addition, benefiting not only chess learning but also the diffusion of the game and its "fusion" with kindred skills, both in the university and in fields such as music. The explosion of internet-based chess has likewise made it possible for many people in the US (and not only there) to make a living from the game in ways that were not possible for earlier generations.

Yet, all this said, there remains the feeling that in various ways Cambridge Springs marked a high point that is perhaps not likely to be matched. It took place at a historical moment when, under Teddy Roosevelt, the USA was fast moving into becoming the dominant world power which it was for the whole of the 20th century; when the focus on Europe was still very strong but starting to shift a little; when, within the following two decades, an incredible transport revolution would occur that transformed economies, markets, and social perceptions; and when the nature and activities of leading social groups were completely upended. Chess would be both a victim and a beneficiary of all this. The little town on the Erie railroad would thus come to acquire a very special place in the history of the game. Let us also not forget the Cambridge Springs Defence, a variation of the Queen's Gambit Declined! The book reviewed here does full justice to that special place.

The tournament took place at a historical moment when, under Teddy Roosevelt, the USA was fast moving into becoming the dominant world power which it was for the whole of the 20th century; when the focus on Europe was still very strong but starting to shift a little.

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	Total
1	Marshall	*	½	1	½	1	1	½	1	1	1	1	½	1	1	1	1	13
2	Lasker	½	*	1	½	½	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	½	1	1	11
3	Janowski	0	0	*	½	½	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	11
4	Marco	½	½	½	*	½	½	1	½	0	1	0	½	1	½	1	1	9
5	Showalter	0	½	½	½	*	½	1	1	1	½	0	½	½	½	½	1	8½
6	Schlechter	0	1	0	½	½	*	0	½	½	0	½	1	1	½	1	½	7½
7	Chigorin	½	0	0	0	0	1	*	½	1	0	1	1	½	1	0	1	7½
8	Pillsbury	0	1	0	½	0	½	½	*	0	1	½	½	0	1	½	1	7
9	Mieses	0	0	0	1	0	½	0	1	*	1	1	1	0	½	1	0	7
10	Fox	0	0	1	0	½	1	1	0	0	*	1	0	1	1	0	0	6½
11	Teichmann	0	0	0	1	1	½	0	½	0	0	*	1	½	0	1	1	6½
12	Napier	½	0	0	½	½	0	0	½	0	1	0	*	0	1	1	½	5½
13	Lawrence	0	0	0	0	½	0	½	1	1	0	½	1	*	½	0	½	5½
14	Barry	0	½	0	½	½	½	0	0	½	0	1	0	½	*	0	1	5
15	Hodges	0	0	0	0	½	0	1	½	0	1	0	0	1	1	*	0	5
16	Delmar	0	0	0	0	0	½	0	0	1	1	0	½	½	0	1	*	4½

QUOTES AND QUERIES

SULTAN KHAN'S BRITISH CHESS LEGACY

By Alan Smith

6230 Daniel King's biography of Sultan Khan has much to recommend it. A detailed account of Sultan Khan's brief career which captures the era nicely. The chapter on the 1928 All India championship was particularly fine. Sultan Khan's best games are annotated and there are cross tables of the events in which he competed.

I was less pleased with the casual approach to the 1933 British championship at Hastings. Sultan Khan scored +9=1-1 to duplicate the record feats of Atkins at Stratford-upon-Avon in 1925 and Yates at Edinburgh 1926. His third victory in the British was arguably his best tournament result. Only one of his wins is given in full. All of his games are available online at www.saund.co.uk/britbase. I have annotated four of them.

Gerald Abrahams - Sultan Khan, rd 3

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 ♘f6 3.♗c3 ♘b4 4.e3 0-0 5.♗d3 d5 6.♗f3 c5 7.0-0 ♗c6 8.♗e2?! 8.a3 ♗xc3 9.bxc3 dxc4 10.♗xc4 ♖c7 is the main line.

8...cxd4 9.exd4 dxc4 10.♗xc4 ♖c7 11.♗c3 ♗d8 12.♗d3 ♖a5 13.♗g5 ♗e7 14.♗d2 ♖b6 15.♗e3 ♗b4 16.♗b1 ♗bd5 17.♗xd5 exd5 18.♗e5 ♗d6 19.♗h1 Bold play, but 19.♖e2 was more logical.

19...♖xb2 20.f4 g6 21.♗d3 ♗e4 22.♖b1 ♖a3 23.♖c2 ♗f8 24.♗xe4 ♖xe3! This is

better than 24...dxe4 25.♖b3 when the e4 pawn falls.

25.♖be1 ♖xd4 26.♖d1 ♖c5 27.♖b3 27.♖xc5 ♗xc5 28.♗xd5 gives some drawing chances.

27...♗e6 28.♗b1 ♖a3 29.♖b5 The pawn grab 29.♖xb7 loses to 29...♖ab8 30.♖c6 ♗dc8 and White's queen is trapped.

29...♗g7 30.♖e2 ♖d6 31.♖f3 f6 32.♗c4 ♖a6 33.♖fd3 ♗f5! Neatly sidestepping White's traps and winning a piece.

34.♖xd5 ♖xd5 35.♖xd5 ♗xb1 36.♖d6 ♖b5 37.♖e6+ ♗h8 38.♖e7 ♖xc4

0-1

Times 3rd August 1933

Sultan Khan - Eugene Ernest Colman, rd 4

1.c4 c5 2.♗f3 ♗f6 3.g3 g6 4.♗g2 ♗g7 5.0-0 0-0 6.♗c3 ♗c6 7.e4 7.d4 is better.

7...d6 8.d3 ♗g4 9.h3 ♗xf3 10.♗xf3 ♖d7 11.♗g2 ♖ab8 12.f4 ♗h8 13.g4 ♗g8 14.f5 e6 15.♗g5 ♗d4+ 16.♗h1 f6 17.♗c1 exf5 18.exf5 g5 19.♗d5 ♖be8 20.♗g2 ♗g7 21.♗e2 21.a3 was a useful precaution.

21...♗b4 22.♗e6 ♖xe6! 23.fxe6 ♖xe6 24.♖f3 ♖e8 25.♗d2 ♗xd3 26.♖xd3 ♖xe4+ 27.♖xe4 ♖xe4 28.♖a1 ♖e7 29.b4

Better than 29.♖xe7 ♖xe7 when Black should hold.

29...♗e5 30.bxc5 dxc5 31.♖f3 ♗g6 32.♖a3 b6 33.♖d3 ♖h6 34.♖d8 ♖g7? Trying to reorganise his pieces, Colman spots one trick: 34...♖f7? 35.♖g8+ ♗h6 36.h4! and Black is getting mated, but misses another. 34...♖f7 or 34...♖c7 were better tries.

35.♖xe5! fxe5 36.♖d6+ ♗f7 37.♖xh6 ♗e7 38.♗f3

1-0

Times 4th August 1933

Sultan Khan - Henry Holwell Cole, rd 6

1.d4 ♖f6 2.♖f3 e6 3.g3 c5 4.♗g2 ♖c6 5.0-0 d5 6.c3 Qb6? 6...cxd4 7.cxd4 ♗d6 8.♖c3 0-0 9.b3 a6 10.♖a4 ♗d7 11.♗b2 Sultan Khan - C.H.O'D. Alexander BCF ch 1932, 6...♗d6 is best.

7.dxc5 ♗xc5 8.b4 ♗e7 8...♗xf2+?! 9.♖xf2 ♖g4 10.e3 upsets both players' development.

9.♗e3 ♖c7 10.a4 ♖g4? This achieves little: 10...e5 is much better.

11.♗d2 ♗f6 12.♖b3 ♖ce5 13.♖a3 ♖xf3+ 14.exf3! ♖e5 15.f4 ♖c6 16.♖ac1 a6 17.c4 d4 18.c5 Black is positionally lost.

18...♗d7 19.♖c4 0-0 20.♖d6 ♖ab8 21.b5 axb5 22.axb5 ♖a5 The alternatives are no better: 22...♖d8? 23.b6, 22...♖e7 23.b6 ♖d8 24.♖xb7.

23.♖a3 ♖a8 24.b6 Black could have spared himself the rest.

24...♖d8 24...♖c4 25.♖xa8.

25.♗xa5 ♖b8 26.♖xb7 ♖e7 27.♗b4 ♖a8 28.♖a5 ♗b5 29.c6 ♗xf1 30.♗xe7

1-0

Times 7th August 1933

Alfred Mortlock - Sultan Khan, rd 10

1.c4 c5 2.♖c3 ♖c6 3.g3 g6 4.♗g2 ♗g7 5.♖f3 e6 A new idea at that time. Fischer played it, with success, against Petrosian at Belgrade in 1970.

6.e3 e5 7.d3 ♖ge7 8.0-0 0-0 9.a3 d6 10.♖c2 f5 11.♖b1 a5 12.♖a2 h6 13.♗d2 g5 13...♗e6 was a reasonable alternative.

14.b4 axb4 15.axb4 ♖g6 16.♖e1 16.♗c3 makes room for a knight on d2, but takes away a square from his other knight.

16...♗h7 Preparing ...f4.

17.b5 ♖ce7 18.f4 exf4 19.exf4 gxf4 20.gxf4 ♖h4 21.♗c3?? This allows a simple combination.

21...♖xa2! 22.♖xa2 ♗xc3 23.♖f3 ♖xg2 24.♗xg2 ♖g6 26.♖e1 ♖g8 27.♗h1 b6 27.h3 ♖h4 Both 28.♗h2 ♖xf4 29.♖xf4 ♖xf4+ and 28.♖h2 ♗xe1! 29.♖bxe1 ♗b7+ are quite lost.

0-1

Times 11th August 1933

6231 Spare a thought for Sultan Khan's rivals at Hastings. Theodore Tylor lost to Hugh Alexander in round 1, but recovered well to score +8 =2 —1, a performance that would have assured him of the championship in most other years. Hugh Alexander kept pace with the winner until the last two rounds, but losses to Rupert Cross and Sir George Thomas saw him relegated to fourth place. Meanwhile William Winter, the only player to defeat Sultan Khan, had to withdraw after six rounds with chicken-pox.

PROBLEM WORLD

by Christopher Jones

cjajones1@yahoo.co.uk

Grandmaster of Chess Composition

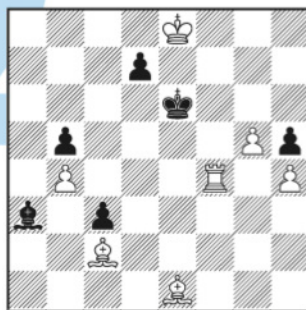
Solutions are given on page 254



Alvaro Pereira, Luis Quaresma and
Kabe Moen (Portugal/USA)

Mate in 2

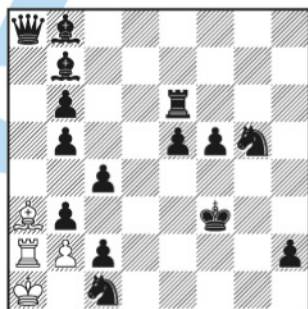
ORIGINAL



Steven B. Dowd
(USA)

Mate in 7

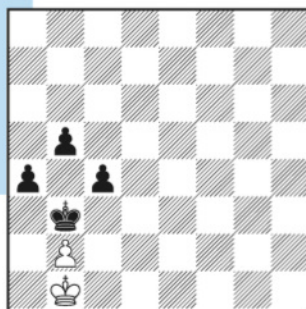
ORIGINAL



Evgeny Gavryliv (Ukraine)

Helpmate in 4 (b)Ph2>f2

ORIGINAL

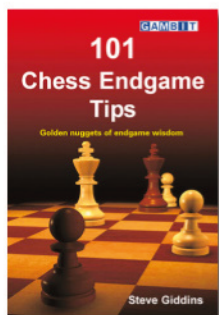


Kurt Keller (Germany)

Helpmate in 4 (see text)

Happy Easter

ORIGINAL



'101 Chess Endgame Tips' - Steve Giddins (Gambit 2022). Figurine algebraic, paperback, 112 pages, latest price and 6-page pdf go to: www.gambitbooks.com. No Index but a detailed 'Contents' and 'Introduction', more than sufficient.

Subtitled 'Golden nuggets of endgame wisdom', this is a reprint of a 2007 work by our former Editor, the FM Steve Giddins, now rather better known as author, alone or with Gerard Welling, rather than just player; gifted linguist.

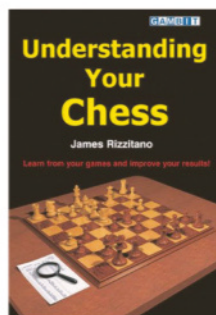
Seven sections feature:

Kings and Pawns, Knights, Bishops, Knight vs Bishop, Rooks, Queens, Strategy and Technique.

Originally published in 2007, this is a welcome update but not a basic primer; beginners or the inexperienced must, for now, look elsewhere! Might prove a welcome prize at a club awards evening. The blurb says 'examples are drawn from an immense variety of sources and based on Giddins's experience as player, coach and pupil'. It was type-set by John Nunn. And selling well on Amazon with a 76% five star rating!

Other titles in the '101' series include *Attacking Ideas* by Joe Gallagher, *Opening Traps and Chess Questions Answered* and *Winning Chess Strategies*, the last three also by Steve Giddins.

(Also see *BCM* 2007 p. 82 for a review by John Saunders.)



'Understanding Your Chess' - James Rizzitano (Gambit Publications 2022). Algebraic figurines, use of Rabars. Reprint of a 2004 publication from the same publisher. 60+ annotated games, index of players, openings and analysts, 'games by other players', very detailed bibliography. Intro by the author, now largely inactive, born 1961.

This book, a paperback, split the critics. Written by an American and largely a tale of busy US chess, it offers much but will not be to every taste. *BCM* 2004 p 141 extends to a modest seven lines of review, calling the author 'unfamiliar' and relatively inactive. It adds the book is 'well written', which it definitely is, but questions the age of the material presented: where was the topicality? The American IM John L Watson, in a piece penned in *CHESS* 09/04 p 58, offers far more detail and praise. Watson speaks of 'rare quality', thorough annotations and cutting edge theory. He points out the use of intuition. Positional factors and gambit play here dealt with by Rizzitano.

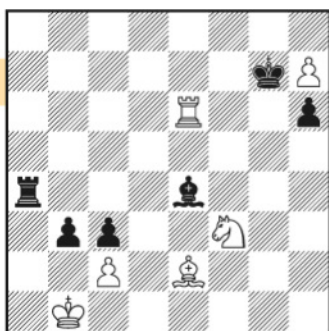
And the games themselves? Strong emphasis on the Lopez and King's Indian, five(!) games against Patrick Wolf, ten versus 'Local Hero' John Curdo and top GMs in the shape of Speelman, Larsen, Benko and even Tal. I found this more enjoyable than many dusty textbooks.

The author is an American International Master. Write to Gambit Publications Ltd, 27 Queen's Pine, Bracknell, Berks RG12 OTL. *And tell them BCM sent you!*

Endgame Studies

by Ian Watson

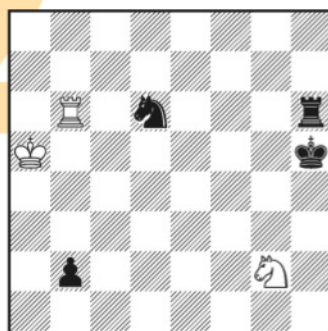
ian@irwatson.uk



A. Maksimovskih & Y. Makletsov

USSR Team Champ 1978

WIN



M. Matous

Subbotnaja Gazeta 1991

DRAW



V. Samilo

Keith JT 2015

DRAW



V. Nestorescu

Dobrescu JT 2014

WIN

Easter Solving Challenge

Four studies from recent national solving championships, which will seriously test your solving skills. There are annual national championships happening all round the year; our own British Championship, sponsored by Winton, is taking place in May. All these championships include a range of problem types: direct mates such as three-movers, helpmates, selfmates, and of course endgame studies. Our first study here is from the Finnish Championship in February, the second from the Dutch Championship in March, and the third and fourth from the Polish Championship, also in March. None are easy, but all are soluble in the time allowed - just!

The Dutch Championship was an open event and was won by the Greek solver Nikos Sidiropoulos. He was the only solver to get full points on the Mario Matous study. The Dutch solving GM Dolf Wissmann only came 18th in his national championship but maybe he had relaxed because he had already won the Finnish Championship which was another open event. In the Finnish event, Dolf and the next three highest-scoring competitors all got full points for the Maksimovskih/Makletsov study.

Kacper Piorun and Piotr Murdzia led the field in the Polish Championship, with Piorun winning on tie break. He got full points on the Nestorescu study but no points on the Samilo, whereas Murdzia got none for the Nestorescu and full points for the Samilo! Both are former World Chess Solving Champions, so these studies are true tests of skill.

Just to remind you of the usual solving procedures: You'll need to set up these positions on a board. In solving events, you can use a chess set and you can move the pieces to try and help you solve. You solve against the clock; for these four studies give yourself an average of 30 minutes for each one, so 120 minutes in total. Points are awarded according to how much of the composer's solution you find, with five points available for each study if you find it all. In the answers, I'll show you where the points were awarded. You need to find the composer's main line; you can also write down sidelines if you're not sure what the main line is, but only the main line moves earn points. So, look for the most artistic, elegant line.

The answers are on page 255.

SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS

This month's problems

This month we have four very different problems, and also three problem composers new to this column - welcome, Alvaro, Luis and Evgeny! The first problem combines the merits of a puzzle (there are two complementary lines of play that are possible, but one proves to be only a try, refuted by a single black defence) and some appealing strategic motifs. Steven's seven-mover should give you a good work-out finding the only way to mop up the beleaguered black king. Evgeny's problem is a helpmate, meaning that in the diagram there is a collaborative *bwbwbwbw#* sequence, with a different (but related) move sequence for part (b), when the pawn at f2 has been moved to h2. Finally we have a seasonal offering from Kurt, who is skilled at producing diagrams that have a meaningful shape (in this case, a cross, befitting its Easter motto) as well as working soundly as problems. In this case, the stipulation is a helpstalemate, meaning that you are to look for one collaborative *bwbwbwbw* sequence at the end of which Black is stalemated.

Which knight mate to threaten?

In our two-mover the outlying white knights might commend themselves to you as candidates for making the key move. In fact, the outlier at a4 is securely kept at bay by the a5 rook (which we don't seem to be able to deflect from its guard of c5) and the b3 rook (ditto for c3). The knight at h5 isn't quite such an outlier, but if we could find a replacement guard for f4 we could threaten mates at f6 and g3, exploiting the pins of the black e2 knight and black e7 pawn. Composers like pin-mates, so this is a hopeful area to explore. If we play 1.♖f1, then we no longer threaten 2.♘g3 (as we've unpinned the e2 knight) but Black is in difficulties against the threat of 2.♘xf6; 1...♙g7 2.♞xe7; 1...♘xd4 2.♖e1 (the knight has walked into another pin, so this switchback works); 1...♞a6 2.♘c5 (so we did deflect that a5 rook after all!); 1...♘g3+ 2.♘g3 - but the refutation is 1...♞b6!, because the attempt to exploit the deflection of the b3 rook, 2.♘c3, fails to 2...♘xc3 (Black exploits the White's unpinning of the knight).

However, 1.♞b8! works, with attractively complementary variations. The threat is now not 2.♘xf6 but 2.♘g3, exploiting the other pin. If 1...e6 2.♘xf6; if 1...e5 2.dxe5 (another

use for the c4 rook); if 1...gxh4 2.♞f4; and if 1...♞xb8 (another deflection) we have 2.♘c3. The problem is greatly enhanced by the fact that 2.♘g3 crops up after one of the defences to 1.♖f1 and 2.♘xf6 after one of the defences to 1.♞b8 - this constitutes a popular and attractive theme named after the eminent composer Sushkov.

The amusing back and forth of the rook in the batteries...

...was what Steven was most pleased to show in his seven-mover. I think that you may have found this quite challenging to solve. The length of the computer read-out that confirms its soundness testifies also to the complexity of the play, with quite a few byways to be eschewed. The play begins with 1.♙g3!, which threatens 2.♖f5 ♙xb4 3.♞xb5 d5 4.♞b6+ ♙d6 5.♞xd6#. The main line of play then proceeds: 1...♙d5 2.♙xd7 ♙c1 3.♙b3+ ♙e5 4.♞c4+ ♙f4 5.♞xf4 c2 6.♞c4+ and now 6...♙d5 7.♞xg4 or 6...f5 7.♙xc2. Unique moves for White all the way (if you have any doubts, your computer should be able to reassure you), and so a considerable constructional achievement by Steven.

(See page 250)

Not too difficult a helpmate four-mover?

In this month's helpmate, we need to liberate the two white officers from their confinement on the a-file. It seems likely that this will involve a move of the a3 bishop, then a move up the a-file by the white rook, and possibly then an eastward move of the rook to guard more squares surrounding the black king. (Incidentally, we start with all eight squares around the black king unoccupied and unguarded: an attractive feature in a helpmate.) It will also be necessary for the black queen to release the pin on the white rook if all this is to happen. But what constructive function could a move by the black queen fulfil? This might lead you to suppose that it will follow the b7 bishop down the long diagonal (a feature known in problemspeak

as a *Bristol*) - and so it proves. The (a) solution is 1.♔g3 ♕e7 2.♕g2 ♖a4 3.♜f3 ♜xc4 4.♘h3 ♕h4, and the (b) solution (with the f2 pawn now at h2) 1.♔e3 ♕b4 2.♕f3 ♖a7 3.♜e4 Rd7 4.♘e2 ♕d2. Two strikingly complementary lines of play and elegantly complementary mate positions.

An Easter greeting from Kurt

When so much ingenuity has been used in creating a diagram that works both as an arresting image and as the basis for a unique line of play it may not take the solver too long to find, and enjoy, the solution - after 1.a3 ♔c1 2.♔a2 b3 3.♔a1 bxc4 4.a2 cxb5 Black is indeed stalemated. May I join in the 'Happy Easter' message of this problem's motto.

SOLUTIONS TO ENDGAMES

(See page 252)

Maksimovskih/Makletsov

1.♖e7+ (1 point) ♔h8 2.♖e8+ ♔xh7 3.♖xe4 (+1 point = 2) ♖a1+ 4.♔xa1 bxc2 5.♖e7+ ♔h8 6.♖h7+ (+1 = 3) ♔g8 7.♕c4+ ♔f8 8.♖f7+ ♔e8 9.♕b5+ (+1 = 4) ♔d8 10.♖d7+ ♔c8 11.♕a6+ ♔b8 12.♖b7+ ♔a8 13.♖b1 (+1 = 5) wins.

Matous

1.♔a4 (1 point) ♘c4 2.♖b5+ ♔g6 3.♘e3 (+1 point = 2) ♖h5 4.♖b3 ♖h3 5.♘d1 (+1 = 3) ♖xb3 6.♘xb2 (+1 = 4) ♘d2 7.♘c4 ♖d3 8.♘e5+ ♔f5 9.♘xd3 (+1 = 5) draws.

3.♘f4+? ♔f7 4.♖b7+ ♔e8 5.♖b8+ ♔d7 6.♖b7+ ♔c8.

Samilo

1.♖e6 (1 point) c1♜+ 2.♖e1 ♜xe1+ 3.♔xe1 ♘c6 4.♔f2 (+1 point = 2) ♘e5 5.♔g3 (+1 = 3) ♘g6 6.♔g4 ♔b2 7.♔f5 (+1 = 4) ♘h8 8.♔e6 ♔c3 9.♔e7 ♔d4 10.♔f8 (+1 = 5) draws.

Nestorescu

1.d3+ ♔d4 2.♕g3 ♘g4+ 3.♔e2 ♘f4+ 5.♕xf4 ♜c6 5.♜a7+ (2 points) ♔c3 6.♜a3+ ♔d4 7.c3+ (+1 = 3) ♜xc3 8.♖d6+ ♕d5 9.♜e5+ (+2 = 5) ♘xe5 10. ♕e3 mate.

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