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WATCHES AND
SCANDALS IN CHESS

TIMING IT RIGHT



TICK-TOCK
TACTICS AND
WATCHFUL MOVES



A HISTORIC SUCCESS AND PROMISE
FOR BRITISH CHESS: **ENGLAND'S EIGHT-YEAR-OLD
BODHANA SIVANANDAN IS WORLD CADET CHAMPION**

TOURNAMENT REPORTS
QATAR MASTERS | FIDE GRAND SWISS | GUERNSEY OPEN



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Chairman Shaun Taulbut
Director Stephen Lowe

Editors
Milan Dinic and Shaun Taulbut

Photo editor
David Llada

Prepress Specialist
Milica Mitic

Photography
David Llada,
FIDE Official - Anna Shtourman,
Qatar Masters Official,
Shutterstock, Wikipedia

Advertising
Stephen Lowe
Enquiries
editor@britishchessmagazine.co.uk

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Postal correspondence:
Albany House, 14 Shute End
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Contents



652 | ENGLAND'S EIGHT-YEAR-OLD BODHANA SIVANANDAN IS WORLD CADET CHAMPION

654 KINGS AMONG COMMONERS IN QATAR
By GM Aleksandar Colovic

**668 Watches and scandals
TIMING IT RIGHT:
TICK-TOCK TACTICS
AND WATCHFUL MOVES**
By GM Aleksandar Colovic

**670 Guernsey Open 2023
A TRIO AT THE TOP**
By IM Shaun Taulbut

688 WIELDING THE KATANA
By Grandmaster Raymond Keene OBE

**692 Openings for Amateurs
ARMSTRONG -
THE AUSTRALIAN GRUENFELD**
By Pete Tamburro

**696 Quotes add Queries
HENRY ERNEST ATKINS**
By Alan Smith

**698 Book review
"GRANDMASTER OF AVANT-GARDE:
THE CHESS ART OF GALINA SATONINA"**
By Peter O'Brien



A double Indian success at the Isle of Man Grand Swiss

ENGLAND'S NEW NUMBER ONE – NIKITA VITIUGOV – FINISHED 24TH

By GM Aleksandar Colovic and Milan Dinic

Photo: Anna Shtourman / FIDE Official

Indians Vidit Santosh Gujrathi and Rameshbabu Vaishali claim victories in the Open and the Women's section. Hikaru Nakamura and Tan Zhongyi won second place and secured to secure spots for the Candidates

The Villa Marina in Douglas, Isle of Man, played host to the FIDE Grand Swiss and FIDE Women's Grand Swiss 2023 from October 23rd to November 6th. Both tournaments served as pivotal qualifiers for the World Championship cycle, granting the top two players in each event spots in the upcoming Candidates Tournaments in 2024.

A total of 164 players from across the globe participated in the Swiss System format, with 114 contenders in the Grand Swiss and 50 in the Women's Grand Swiss. The impressive \$600,000 prize fund was divided, offering \$460,000 for the Grand Swiss and \$140,000 for the Women's Grand Swiss.

Notably, the victors emerged from unexpected quarters. Vidit Gujrathi,

29, claimed the Open event title, while Rameshbabu Vaishali, the 22-year-old sister of Rameshbabu Praggnanandhaa, secured the Women's crown. Both secured spots in the 2024 World Championship Candidates Tournament, alongside world No. 3 Hikaru Nakamura and China's former world champion Tan Zhongyi, highlighting their impressive performances.

The renowned Grand Swiss witnessed an intense climax in the final round, with three leaders contending for the top position: Andrey Esipenko, Hikaru Nakamura, and Vidit Santosh Gujrathi.

In the last round, the leaders faced players who had fewer points; therefore, the pursuers had every reason to push for a win to overtake those ahead of them. These considerations manifested themselves in the opening choices on almost all boards.

It is worth noting that, among the trio of leaders, Andrey Esipenko had the best tie-break, followed by Hikaru Nakamura and Vidit Santosh Gujrathi.

THE GAME WHICH SECURED VIDIT VICTORY

On board two, there was an intense internal struggle visible on **Vidit Santosh Gujrathi's** face as he pondered his choice on move seven.



Alexandr Predke chose the solid Queen's Gambit Declined and, in the usual tabiya arising from this opening, Vidit spent 10 minutes deciding whether to go for a safety-first approach by transposing to an endgame with 7.dxc5 or to choose something else that would keep the queens on the board.

After ten excruciating minutes, Vidit chose the former option. This didn't necessarily mean that he was ready to draw, but this choice did set the calmer course of the game he wanted to play. On the other hand, playing an endgame against a ferocious attacker like Predke was perhaps not a bad idea. It turned out to be very important later on.

The QGA endgame is a calm affair, so both sides comfortably finished development. Perhaps unable to control his impulses and remaining true to his active style, Predke advanced on the kingside with 15...g5.



White replied with 16.♞f4 ♞xd4 17.♙b4 (a *zwischenzug* to worsen the position of Black's king) ♞e8 18.♞xd4, but the position remained balanced after 18...g4.

In the ensuing play, Black was a bit imprecise and allowed White to gain some momentum thanks to the manoeuvre ♞b3-c5.



From players to commentators – David Howell and Jovi Houska previously represented England at the Grand Swiss

Black should have eliminated the knight, and while White's bishop pair would certainly have given him a good reason to play for a long time, Predke would have kept decent drawing chances.

Predke, again, chose the way of complications with **20...♙c6**.

Objectively, this move gives White an advantage, but the narrow path leading to it is incredibly well hidden.

After the critical **21.♘xa6! ♕f3 22.♖xd8 ♗xd8** White has to find the stunning **23.h4!!** (an idea that Vidit actually saw during the game!).

The idea of the move is to chase the rook away from the fifth rank so that the white knight can escape via c5, or in case of **23...♕xe2 24.hxg5 ♘d5 24.♕c5 ♕xa6 25.♕xb6 ♘xb6 26.♗h2!** White has better chances in the endgame as Black's kingside is weak. Incredibly complicated and deep stuff!

After **21.♘xa6** Predke didn't go for these lines and played **21...♘d7**, trying to trap the knight on a6.



In the ensuing complications, White managed to keep his extra pawn and reach a technical endgame with excellent winning chances.

Black cannot regain the pawn by taking on a2 because it fails to **♕b5**, winning the d7-knight.

Vidit made most of the winning chances and in fact converted in an incredibly smooth fashion!

This win brought Vidit the victory in the FIDE Grand Swiss and a spot in the Candidates tournament! It was an incredibly impressive performance by the player who lost in the first round and didn't really believe in a comeback, but he fought every single day and was rewarded for his fighting spirit.

THE DUEL OF THE AMERICAN FAVOURITES: HIKARU VS CARUANA

Hikaru Nakamura was one of the favourites to win the event. He finished second and secured a spot in the Candidates. Still, he started sluggishly: in round one he was in trouble early, which is surprising as his opening preparation is usually top-notch. He was in danger of losing but showed his signature defensive grit and managed to draw against Rasmus Svane.

Nakamura then drew again in round two, but then picked up speed with three consecutive victories. All in all, Nakamura won five games and drew six: enough for a second place, but not the first.

Fabiano Caruana, on the other hand, started well, with two victories. His only - and, as it turned out, most critical - slip was in round 10 when he lost to Nakamura.

In round 10, playing on board one, the all-American derby quickly went into a position with opposite-coloured bishops. They are generally an early sign of a draw, especially if they come out from a forcing line in the opening. In fact, there was a lot under the surface, and the appearances were deceiving.

Hikaru Nakamura chose to transpose to the Four Knights Scotch facing **Fabiano Caruana's** Petroff Defence.

The Petroff was Caruana's fireproof defence in 2018 when he used it to great effect to win the Candidates tournament and later easily hold against 1.e4 in the World Championship match against Magnus Carlsen.

Nakamura's choice, the Four Knights Scotch, is an often-used drawing line for two reasons: it leads to relatively simple positions that are easy to play; and it is incredibly deeply explored, some lines leading to forced draws.

However, Nakamura's strategy in the opening was cunning. It had two layers: if his opponent remembered the most precise way to deal with the opening surprise, then a quick and energy-saving draw would be made. But if his opponent failed to do so, then he would obtain risk-free pressure with a very likely time advantage to boot.

As the game showed, it was the second possibility that happened.

The moment that decided the course of the game was after White's **12.♖d1**



Caruana spent some time recalling his lines and went for the simplifying **12...♙xc3** **13.bxc3 ♖a5**. He could have kept the position more complex with **12...♗e7**, but perhaps he thought Nakamura didn't mind a quick draw (see the first possibility explained above)?



On his way to the Candidates: Second place was enough for Hiraku Nakamura to get a pass for Toronto

He may have been right in his assumption, but that required precision later on.

As they followed an obscure game played between engines, Caruana committed a mistake that sent the game from one possibility to another.



The engine playing with the black pieces chose **18...♖ab8**, while **18...♖ac8** and **18...f6** were also good moves. Caruana played **18...h6?** and after **19.♙f4**, he was already under severe pressure. His appearance at the board showed great concern about the position.

After a further mistake with **19...♗e7?** (**19...♖ad8** was best, but even that is hanging by a thread after **20.♙e5**) White was on the verge of winning after **20.♖e1**, as Black

cannot really defend the pawn on e4. Add to this that Hikaru had more than half an hour's advantage on the clock, and you see the triumph of Nakamura's opening preparation.

Nakamura started to think at this point, and while he didn't play the absolutely best move 20.♖e1, he did make the second-best move in the position 20.♞e3, a tempting option that introduces ideas like ♕xh6.

That sacrifice happened later in the game, and coupled with the doubling on the d-file it also gave White a decisive advantage.



With only eight minutes for 16 moves and his position on the edge of collapse, Black's situation was not enviable. White continued with 28.♞h4, and soon enough, the attack on Black's king forced Black to enter a lost endgame.



Black's rook is hanging, but there is also the threat of ♖e8 followed by ♞g7 mate, so Black was forced to play 31...♞f4, and after the exchange of queens, followed



The unlucky guy: Esipenko entered the last round as the favourite to win first place, but ended up fourth

by ♕g7xf6, White entered a technically winning endgame.

Nakamura didn't allow any chances and won in 40 moves.

OTHER TOP PLAYERS

The 21-year-old Andrey Esipenko stunned everyone with his performance at the Grand Swiss. Entering the final round as one of the three leaders, he was the favourite to win the event. However, his energy didn't last all the way. Despite victories over the likes of Vincent Keymer and Maghsoodloo, he lost in the final round to Anish Giri which denied him a spot in the Candidates.

Esipenko ended in a group of five players (joined by Giri, Maghshodloo, Keymer and Arjun) who finished the tournament on 7.5 points.

Fabiano Caruana ended half a point behind as did the Indian wonder Pragnanandhaa, R and Uzbekistan's big hope, Nodirbek Abdusattorov.

Alireza Firouzja, dubbed by Carlsen as the only "worthy" opponent for the title of world crown, finished with six points

(suffering one loss, to Samuel Sevian) and in 39th place, well below his 3rd initial ranking spot.

England's new number one, Nikita Vitiugov, who changed federations recently, ended up in 24th place. Despite a good performance throughout the tournament, in the last round he lost to Maghshodloo which meant he ended much lower in the rankings than he realistically was during the tournament.

Another English hope, Shreyas Royal, scored 4.5 and missed a GM norm by half a point despite playing exceptionally strong GMs.



This is how I scared Esipenko in the last round – Anish Giri

2023 FIDE GRAND SWISS - FINAL RANKING AFTER 11 ROUNDS

Rk	SNo	Name	FED	Rtg	Pts.	TB1	TB2	TB3	TB4	Rp	K	rtg+/-
1	15	GM Vidit, Santosh Gujrathi	IND	2716	8.5	2671	64	68	0	2876	10	22.4
2	2	GM Nakamura, Hikaru	USA	2780	8	2687	67	71.5	0	2857	10	10.3
3	32	GM Esipenko, Andrey	FID	2683	7.5	2702	70	74	0	2822	10	21
4	16	GM Erigaisi, Arjun	IND	2712	7.5	2681	66	71	0	2806	10	14
5	12	GM Keymer, Vincent	GER	2717	7.5	2673	63	67.5	0	2801	10	12.6
6	18	GM Maghsoodloo, Parham	IRI	2707	7.5	2660	62.5	67	0	2789	10	12.4
7	4	GM Giri, Anish	NED	2760	7.5	2657	62	66.5	0	2770	10	2.2
8	46	GM Sindarov, Javokhir	UZB	2658	7	2707	64.5	68	0	2793	10	20.1
9	47	GM Predke, Alexandr	SRB	2656	7	2702	70.5	75	0	2790	10	20
10	1	GM Caruana, Fabiano	USA	2786	7	2684	67.5	72.5	0	2781	10	-1.1
11	10	GM Duda, Jan-Krzysztof	POL	2726	7	2650	60	64.5	0	2734	10	1.2
12	13	GM Abdusattorov, Nodirbek	UZB	2716	7	2648	61	65.5	0	2748	10	4.5
13	8	GM Praggnanandhaa, R	IND	2738	7	2637	56.5	60.5	0	2734	10	-0.7
14	81	GM Yakubboev, Nodirbek	UZB	2616	6.5	2706	59.5	61	0	2727	10	18.2
15	80	GM Ter-Sahakyan, Samvel	ARM	2618	6.5	2701	62	65.5	0	2751	10	20.2
16	63	GM Yilmaz, Mustafa	TUR	2640	6.5	2699	59.5	63	0	2753	10	17.1
17	44	GM Cheparinov, Ivan	BUL	2658	6.5	2698	64	69	0	2744	10	13.5
18	39	GM Bacrot, Etienne	FRA	2669	6.5	2695	65	69.5	0	2749	10	12.2
19	41	GM Wojtaszek, Radoslaw	POL	2668	6.5	2674	59.5	63	0	2728	10	9.3
20	20	GM Deac, Bogdan-Daniel	ROU	2701	6.5	2671	62	66.5	0	2728	10	4.2



The Women's Grand Prix: A DRAW FOR A VICTORY

In the women's section, Rameshbabu Vaishali's remarkable performance culminated in an unbeaten 8.5/11, earning her the first-place prize of \$25,000 and a spot in the Candidates tournament. The sister of the Indian superstar GM Praggnanandhaa had a great tournament (as did her sibling). This was the first time that a sibling duo had participated in both Open and Women's Candidates Tournaments!

Remaining unbeaten throughout the event, Anna Muzychuk secured second place. With a record of five wins and six draws, she earned a prize of \$17,500. Notably, Muzychuk had already solidified her place in the Women's Candidates by securing a commendable third-place finish in the World Cup. The second Candidates spot was taken by GM Tan Zhongyi.

Vaishali's final game, a draw against Batkhuyag Munguntuul, sealed her victory.

Munguntuul had to play for a win against leader **Rameshbabu Vaishali** for two reasons: one was a grandmaster norm, and the other was a possible qualification in the Candidates. For Vaishali, a draw would secure a victory in the tournament.

Therefore, it was surprising to see Vaishali choose a sharp line in the opening.



Instead of developing quietly with 7...♗e7 or 7...g6 Vaishali went for 7...h6 followed by ...g5.

The surprise worked wonders for Vaishali as, soon enough, White committed a serious mistake.





Vaishali vs Batkhuyag

White had to play 12.d5! ♖e7 13.♙xd7 ♜xd7 14.♞b4, with the idea of ♞xb7, or ♞a4, with good compensation.

Instead, she played **12.dxe5?! but after 12... 0-0-0!** Black got an advantage thanks to her pawn preponderance in the centre after the exchange of queens.



A dream scenario for Vaishali and a very dispiriting start for Munguntuul.

Black continued naturally, centralising her knight and using the semi-open files on the kingside for her rooks. By move 20, she had a comfortable advantage.



Next, Black played ...♞d3 and followed up with ...e5-e4. This allowed White to establish some sort of blockade, but Black was clearly better.



In this position, Black should have played 26...a5 in order to prevent White's counterplay. After 26...♘e5?! chosen by Vaishali, White played 27.a4! and suddenly Munguntuul had counterplay on the queenside. By this point, both players were in serious time trouble, with seven (for White) and four (for Black) minutes to reach move 40.

Black erred further with 27...♙f7?! and after the natural 28.axb5 axb5 29.♖a1 Rameshbabu was now on the defensive!

Luckily for her, after White penetrated along the a-file and Black defended by ...♗c8, Munguntuul started to repeat moves with ♗a8-a7, with Black replying ...♗c8-c7.



White could have continued the game with ♗ea2 but instead decided to claim a draw.

With this draw, Vaishali won the FIDE Grand Swiss! Batkhuyag Munguntuul finished in fourth place.

The seasoned Pia Cramling finished the event in seventh place, scoring seven points. She was joined by Mariya Muzychuk, Antoaneta Stefanova and Leya Garifullina.

Top seed Aleksandra Goryachkina finished on six points and ended up losing 13 rating points. This wasn't the best event for the World Cup winner - she started slowly and then, towards the end, suffered two consecutive losses (to Tan and Estonia's Mai Narva). She drew her final two games to finish in 17th place.

Former world champion Alexandra Kosteniuk fared even worse - she ended the event on 5.5 points and in 30th place.

2023 FIDE WOMEN'S GRAND SWISS - FINAL RANKING AFTER 11 ROUNDS

Rk	SNo	Name	FED	Rtg	Pts.	TB1	TB2	TB3	TB4	Rp	K	rtg+/-
1	12	IM Vaishali, Rameshbabu	IND	2448	8.5	2456	68	73	0	2658	10	30.1
2	5	GM Muzychuk, Anna	UKR	2510	8	2446	68.5	74.5	0	2614	10	14.3
3	4	GM Tan, Zhongyi	CHN	2517	7.5	2444	67.5	72	0	2572	10	8.2
4	40	IM Munguntuul, Batkhuyag	MGL	2366	7.5	2441	64.5	68.5	0	2570	10	30.6
5	25	IM Garifullina, Leya	FID	2402	7	2465	67	69	0	2531	10	19.8
6	21	GM Stefanova, Antoaneta	BUL	2424	7	2430	68	72	0	2520	10	14.2
7	14	GM Cramling, Pia	SWE	2446	7	2409	58	62	0	2506	10	8.6
8	3	GM Muzychuk, Mariya	UKR	2519	7	2403	59	63	0	2500	10	-2.8
9	34	IM Tsolakidou, Stavroula	GRE	2385	6.5	2465	63.5	68	0	2524	10	21.2
10	39	IM Cori T., Deysi	PER	2367	6.5	2464	59.5	63.5	0	2511	10	21.8



A historic success and promise for British chess:

England's eight-year-old Bodhana Sivanandan is World Cadet Champion

Chess history was made as eight-year-old Bodhana Sivanandan from England claimed victory, securing a perfect score of 10 out of 10 in the Girls Under 8 category at the World Cadet Championship held in Egypt.

Sivanandan's remarkable win not only marked England's first triumph in a world youth championship in 25 years but also completed a rare and historic triple crown achievement. In June, she claimed two world championship titles in rapid and blitz in Batumi, Georgia, mirroring her 2022 victories. Her recent win in Egypt makes it a triple crown in the Girls Under 8 category, with an undefeated streak in all 32 games across the three events.

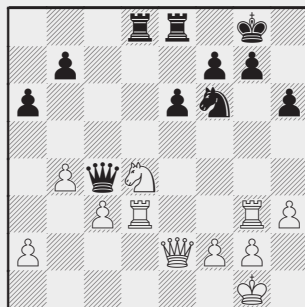
The young prodigy's dominance was evident throughout the tournament, securing the title with a round to spare, boasting a significant two-point lead over her closest competitor, Yi Ruiyu from China, before the 11th and final round.

She secured her crown in round 10 with a nice combination to finish off her opponent:

Bodhana Sivanandan – Mehriban Ahmadli

FIDE World Cadets Chess Championships, Round 10

1.e4 ♖f6 2.♗c3 d5 3.e5 ♜fd7 4.♜xd5 ♜xe5 5.♗c3 ♙f5 6.d4 ♜ec6 7.♗f3 ♜b4 8.♙b5+ c6 9.♙a4 e6 10.0-0 ♙e7 11.♜e2 ♜d7 12.c3 ♜d5 13.♜g3 ♙g6 14.♙c2 ♙xc2 15.♙xc2 0-0 16.♜d2 ♜7f6 17.♙fe1 ♙b6 18.♜g5 ♙d8 19.♜h5 h6 20.♜xf6+ ♜xf6 21.♜f3 c5 22.♙ad1 ♙c7 23.dxc5 ♙xc5 24.h3 ♙g3 25.♙e3 ♙xe3 26.♙e3 ♙c7 27.♜d4 ♙ad8 28.♙ed3 a6 29.♙d2 ♙a5 30.b4 ♙d5 31.♙e2 ♙e4 32.♙e3 ♙d5 33.♙dd3 ♙c4 34.♙g3 ♙fe8



35.♖xg7+!

35...♗xg7 36.♖g3+

1-0

Bodhana Sivanandan achieved a significant milestone in December last year, securing a joint second prize in the UK women's blitz championship held at Leamington Spa. By sharing the English title, she shattered the previous age record for a national women's champion by over four years. Her outstanding performance stood out amidst opposition led by experienced rivals on an international scale.

"I don't really have a secret. I just played naturally and win the games," Sivanandan told Chess Base India, which featured her in a video with renowned British player, Peter Lee. Recognized for her exceptional talent, Sivanandan's goal is to become the youngest grandmaster globally, a feat she is steadily pursuing with her outstanding performances.

The English Chess Federation (ECF) extended its congratulations to Bodhana Sivanandan for her historic victory: *"The ECF offers its hearty congratulations to WCM Bodhana Sivanandan, the new World Cadets U8 Girls Champion for 2023. Bodhana is the first English player to win a World Cadets or Youth title for twenty-five years, since Nick Pert and Ruth Sheldon won the Under 18 and Under 18 Sheldon respectively. Well done Bodhana!"*

Sivanandan's unparalleled success at such a young age deserves praise and recognition. Combined with her determination and skill, this young player is promising to be a formidable force in the game. With adequate support she will achieve that and, hopefully, also become a beacon of inspiration for aspiring young players thought the UK.

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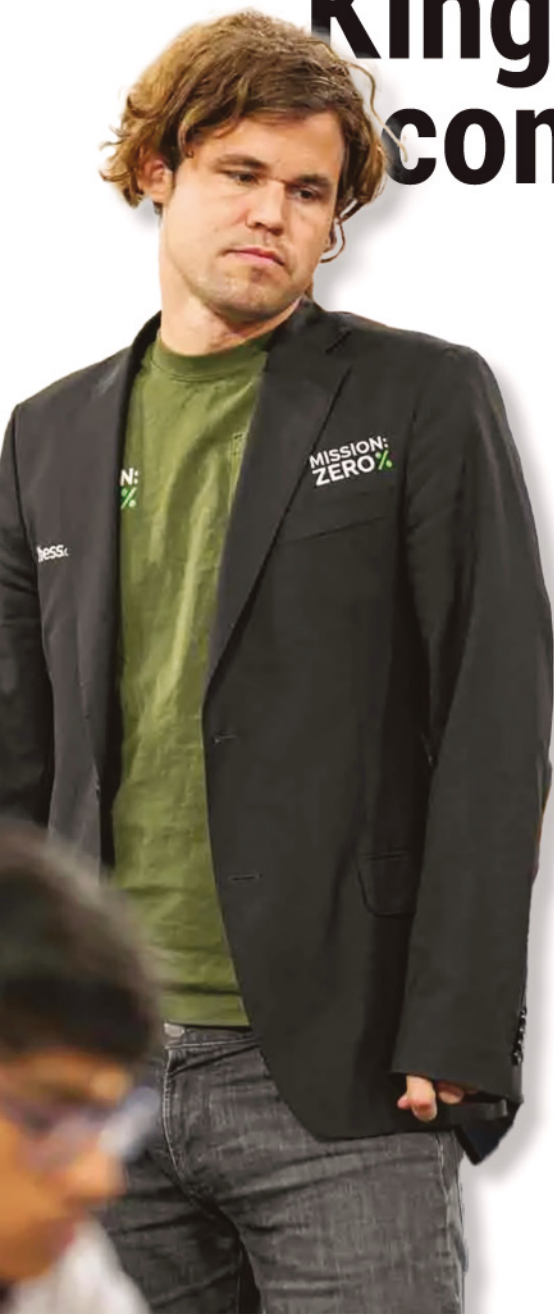
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Kings among commoners in Qatar

By GM Aleksandar Colovic / alexcolovic.com

Photo: Qatar Masters Official



Kasparov told me many years ago not to play tournaments with amateur conditions, because then you will play amateur chess.

Magnus Carlsen

The devoted pupil religiously followed his teacher's wise advice when reaching the summit of the chess world. Elite round-robins were the diet that he relied on, constantly playing the world's best, without a single break such as a weaker opponent in an open tournament.

This advice has been followed by every single prodigy who made it to the top. It's excellent advice, if only everybody could follow it.

A lot has been said about the elite playing each other, guarding their rating and their earnings. There are many reasons for this state of affairs, the main one being that it is in the mutual interest of both the elite players and the private organisers who wish to have that elite playing each other all the time.

Democratic tournaments like the World Cup, or the extremely strong Qatar Masters, are a rare occurrence where the elite mixes with the rest. Being a rare occurrence, it is usually not too difficult for the elite to keep their level and show their usual skill. They simply don't have the time to 'adapt' to the lower levels of the opposition.

The question of what would happen if the elite were more exposed to playing lesser mortals has already been answered thanks to the weekly Titled Tuesdays. The sheer number of games played there clearly tell us the inevitable, something that Kasparov knew long ago - you play weaker players, you start to play weaker yourself.

While it is still the best players in the world who win those Tuesdays, we constantly see 'surprises' of weaker opponents beating the elite players. Every single one of them has lost games to 'weak' players. Carlsen lost to Tillyaev, rated 2287 on 21 May, Nakamura lost to Benedetti, rated 2262 on 15 August, Kramnik lost to Sreyas, rated 2075 on 1 August and so on: the examples are many.

By constantly playing weaker opposition these players cannot sustain their level and rating and they would inevitably drop down.

While the above examples are from online chess played at faster time controls, the Qatar Masters gave us the proof that the same applies to classical chess, too. In fact, the Qatar Masters only confirmed what we knew from earlier: taking Kramnik as an example, he played in the Qatar Masters in 2014 and 2015, failing to beat players like Halkias, rated 2519 and Shyam, rated 2484. In the Isle of Man Open, which he played in 2017 and 2018, he failed to beat Trent (2427), lost(!) to Tarjan (2412), and drew with Sundararajan (2445) and Kashlinskaya (2447).

In this year's Qatar edition, more favourites felt the cut-throat reality of open events. The first one to succumb was Carlsen.

Alisher Suleymenov – Magnus Carlsen

Qatar Masters (2), 12.10.2023

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 Probably after this game Carlsen will think more than twice if the idea of using the Queen's Indian comes to him. He lost badly to Giri in Wijk aan Zee in January with the same opening. Some openings, irrespective of their objective merit, just bring bad luck.

4.a3 ♖a6 The more fighting option compared to the traditional 4...♗b7.

5.♞c2 ♗b7 6.♘c3 c5 7.e4 cxd4 8.♘xd4 ♖c5 The alternative is 8...♘c6, but many years ago the plan 9.♘xc6 ♖xc6 10.♞e2! d6 11.g3 was considered very unpleasant for Black.

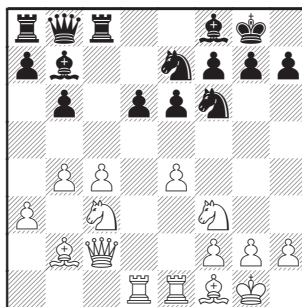
9.♘f3 The more popular move is 9.♘b3.

9...♘c6 10.b4 ♖e7 Carlsen aims for the hedgehog formation. The alternatives are 10...♘d4 and 10...♗d6.

11.♗b2 ♞b8 The immediate 11...d6 was also possible.

12.♞d1 0-0 13.♗e2 d6 14.0-0 ♞c8 A standard hedgehog formation, usually considered a great choice when playing for a win with Black. With all the pieces on the board and no immediate simplifications, the stronger player can hope to outplay the weaker one.

15.♞fe1 ♗f8 16.♗f1 ♘e7?





The man who caused a stir in Qatar:
Alisher Sulaymenov

The knight transfer to g6 is not uncommon in the hedgehog, but here it fails tactically.

16...a6? This is a standard move in the hedgehog, but here it runs into 17.♘d5! exd5 18.exd5 ♖e7 (or 18...♗e5 19.♗xe5 dxe5 20.♙xe5 ♕d6 21.♙xf6 gxf6 22.♞f5 with ♙d3 to follow.) 19.♙xf6 gxf6 20.♞xe7! ♙xe7 21.♞e4 with a winning position for White - all of Black's army is stranded on the queenside and in spite of being a rook down White's attack is unstoppable after ♙d3;

16...♗e5 was best. After 17.♗xe5 dxe5 18.f3 a5 Black is somewhat worse, but the position remains playable.

17.♗b5! Opening the long diagonal and attacking the pawn on d6.

17...♗e8? Black avoids both ♗xd6 and ♙xf6, but this only makes things worse.

17...♗g6 was better, though after 18.♙xf6 gxf6 19.♞d2 ♜d8 20.♞e3 White has unpleasant pressure.

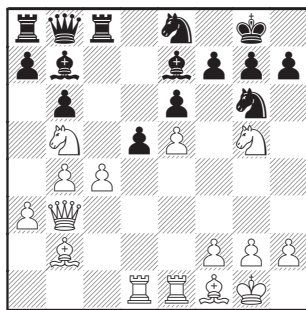
18.♗g5! Threatening e5.

18...♗g6 19.e5! White's play is very energetic.

19...d5 19...dxe5? 20.♙xe5 traps the queen.

20.♞b3 Introducing ideas like ♞h3 and the one that happened in the game!

20...♙e7



20...dxc4 21.♞h3 h6 22.♗xf7! ♙xf7 23.♞d7+ ♙e7 24.♗d6+ ♗xd6 25.exd6 is simply devastating.

21.♗xf7! ♙xf7 22.cxd5 Black's position falls apart. A very surprising turn of events after Black's early mistakes, as usually the hedgehog is more resilient than this.

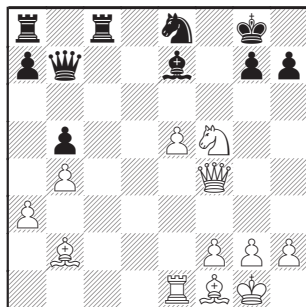
22...♙xd5 22...exd5 23.♞xd5 amounts to the same.

23.♞xd5! exd5 24.♞xd5+ ♙f8 25.♗d4 With the devastating threat of ♗e6.

25...♗f4 26.♞f3 ♙g8 27.♞xf4 White's attack continues and he's not even material down, having two pawns and a bishop for a rook.

27...♞b7 28.♗f5 The threat is ♙c4 now.

28...b5



Stopping ♔c4, but White can simply take the pawn.

29.♙xb5 ♙f8 30.♙c4+ ♖h8 31.♖h6 Carlsen had had enough.

31.♖h6 ♜e7 32.♖f7+ ♔g8 33.♙b3 is just too sadistic.

1-0

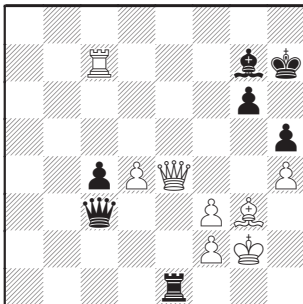
This game reminds me of Jonathan Penrose's crushing win against then World Champion Mikhail Tal at the Leipzig Olympiad in 1960. When asked, he said he was showing that game in lectures until the end of his life. Suleymenov can do the same now.

Things weren't easy for the former World Champion as two rounds later he couldn't beat Pranesh (2515), in spite of having a solid advantage and pressing for a win. In fact, thanks to his opponent's excellent play, Carlsen ended up almost losing - these types of wild swings of the evaluation are not something we see in games between elite players and they clearly indicate loss of control and uneven level of play.

Even in the games he won, Carlsen's level was not up to his usual standard. Take a look at the following example.

**Magnus Carlsen -
Subramaniyam H Bharath**

Qatar Masters (5), 15.10.2023



White is obviously winning, but Carlsen's next choice is telling.

30.♜d5?! This should also win, but it's the lazy choice! Carlsen had almost one hour left at the clock by this stage, so time wasn't an issue here, but rather an unwillingness to apply himself to the maximum.

I am convinced that in a high-level game against an elite player Carlsen would not have had problems calculating the forcing sequence 30.♜xg7+! ♔xg7 31.♙e5+ ♖f8 32.♜a8+ ♔e7 33.♜b7+ ♖f8 34.♜c8+ ♔e7 35.♜c7+ The point of the checks is to include the bishop in the attack. 35...♔e8 (or 35...♔f8 36.♙d6+ ♔g8 37.♜c8+ ♔f7 38.♜f8+ ♔e6 39.♜e7+ ♔d5 40.♙e5! threatening mate with ♜d6. 40...♔c6 41.d5+ ♔b6 42.♜d6+ ♔b7 43.♙xc3 winning the queen and the game.) 36.♜c6+! ♔e7 37.♙d6+! The bishop enters the fray with decisive effect. 37...♔f7 38.♜d7+ ♔g8 39.♜d8+ ♔g7 40.♜f8+ ♔h7 41.♜f7+ ♔h8 42.♜f6+ ♔h7 43.♙f8 with inevitable mate on g7.

30...♜c1? Black was in time trouble, so he misses the most resilient defence.

30...♜d3! 31.♜xc4 ♜xc4 32.♜xc4 is still winning for White, but it would have prolonged the game, something that could have been avoided by being more precise on the previous move.

31.♙h2 Defending against mate. Now White wins quickly again.

31...♜e2 32.♜f7 ♜xf2+ 33.♔g3! Taking the rook leads to perpetual check.

33...♜h6 34.♜xg7+ ♔g7 Winning a piece.

34...♜xg7 35.♜xg7+ ♔xg7 36.♔xf2

1-0

When playing weaker players, motivation is a big problem for the stronger player.



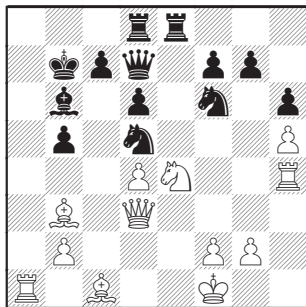
Struggling: Magnus Carlsen

There is nothing to prove and there is pressure to win because that would be the 'normal' thing to happen. Compare that to the maximum motivation of the weaker player, who still knows how to play some chess, and you have the stronger player drop their level while the weaker player raises his, thus increasing his chances. Motivation can be a great equaliser that strengthens the weak and weakens the strong.

Carlsen's tournament became a complete catastrophe when he lost with White to Karthikeyan in round seven. That game was also marred by an uncharacteristic blunder.

Magnus Carlsen -
Murali Karthikeyan

Qatar Masters (7), 18.10.2023



The position is rather unclear. Here Carlsen could have regained the pawn.

22. ♖f3 This is fine, but it seems it was connected with miscalculation.

22. ♘xf6 ♘xf6 23. ♔xh6! the combination works as after **23...gxe4 24. ♖f3+** White takes the knight on f6 with equality;

22. ♔xh6 is also possible, with taking on f6 next, as here the move that worked in the game **22...♖xe4?** doesn't work because of **23. ♔xd5+ ♘xd5**. In the game, with a queen on c6, Black could recapture here with a queen, defending the rook on e4. **24. ♖xe4** and White is an exchange up.

22...♖c6 23. ♔xh6? The combination worked one move earlier, but now it doesn't.

The simple **23. ♘xf6 ♘xf6 24. ♖xc6+ ♔xc6 25. ♔xf7** led to an equal position. Black's control of the d5-square and the excellent pieces are compensation for White's bishops.

23...♖xe4! Not a difficult shot.

24. ♖xe4 24. ♔xd5 ♖xd5 is a simple win for Black.

24...gxe4 Black has two knights for a rook and a winning position, which he converted without issues.

0-1

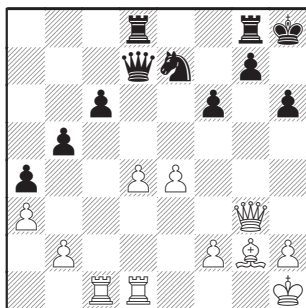
There was more drama for Carlsen as his last-round game was typical of a game in an open where both players blunder left and right. He was lost soon out of the opening, then turned it around and was winning, then he blundered and was lost again, only to be pardoned by his opponent, Puranik (2618). But Carlsen was feeling generous and blundered again in a double-rook endgame and was lost one more time, with his opponent returning the compliment with an eventual draw. Carlsen's rating loss was 17 points.

Giri followed in Carlsen's steps

Giri was another player who suffered for the same reasons. He had great difficulties beating Rohith Krishna (2434) in round one and in round five committed an uncharacteristic blunder.

Rudik Makarian - Anish Giri

Qatar Masters chess24.com (5), 15.10.2023



Giri chose a fighting line against the Catalan and he got a complex position where it was still White who was exerting some pressure. Now, however, Giri commits a blunder that you wouldn't normally expect.

34...♖a7? 34...♖e6 was better, with the position still being tense.

35.d5! The simple point is that 35...cxd5? 34.♖c7 wins the knight on e7. Quite strange that Giri should miss this.

35...c5 36.♖e3 White simply goes after the pawn on c5.

36.d6 ♖c6 37.♖d5 is a more forceful continuation; after 37...c4 38.f4 White's pawn mass marches forward.

36...♟g6 Black cannot defend the pawn on c5: 36...♖c8 37.d6 ♟g6 38.d7 ♖cd8 39.♟h3 is pretty hopeless, as Black cannot take the pawn on d7 after 39...♟e5 40.♖xc5 ♖b7 41.♖d5 and the pawn is safe.

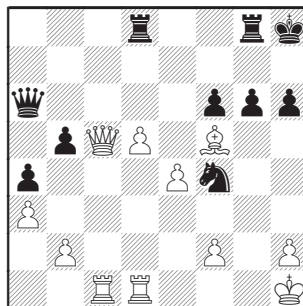


Anish Giri (Photo: David Llada, Arhvice)

37.♖xc5 White is just a pawn up and has a winning position.

37...♖a6 38.♖c6 ♖a7 39.♖c5 ♖a6 40.♟h3 White doesn't take a draw by repetition in a winning position even against a player like Giri.

40...♟f4 41.♟f5 g6



42.d6! A nice tactical solution.

42...♖a8 42...gxf5 43.♖xf5 attacks both the knight on f4 and the pawn on f6. Perhaps this was a better choice as it would have prolonged the game. 43...♖xd6 (43...♟e2 44.♖xf6+ ♖g7 45.♖c7 leads to mate.) 44.♖xf4 ♖xd1+ 45.♖xd1 ♟h7 46.♖d7+ ♖g7 47.♖f5+ ♟h8 48.♖d8+ ♖g8 49.♖xg8+ ♟xg8 50.♖g6+ ♟f8 51.♖xh6+ ♟f7 52.♟g2 the queen

endgame is winning, but at least the game would have lasted longer.

43. ♖d4! Now Black's position collapses.

43... ♖g7 43... ♖gf8 44. ♖e3 g5 45. ♖c7 and White threatens the nice mate after 45... ♖b8 46. ♖h7+ ♖g8 47. ♖xf4! gxf4 48. ♖g1#.

44. ♖xf6 ♖h7 Giri prefers to lose faster.

44... gxf5 45. ♖xh6+ ♖g8 46. ♖xf4 ♖xe4+ 47. ♖xe4 fxe4 48. ♖c5 is a winning rook endgame.

45. ♗g4 ♖f8 46. ♖e5 White plans ♖c7.

46... h5 47. ♖c7 ♖f7 48. ♖xf7 ♖xf7 49. d7 ♖d8 50. ♖e8

1-0

I doubt Giri would have committed this type of a blunder when playing an elite round-robin. In the end he finished with 6/9 and lost eight rating points.

Gukesh swings

Gukesh was lucky to start with a draw in round one against Mohammad Nubairshah Shaikh (2432) because he was clearly lost. Then he won three games in a row against weaker opponents but, when he started to face stronger ones, he couldn't handle the ups and downs of playing a weaker opponent followed by a strong one: he lost in round five to Narayanan (2651), then beat Vashali (2448) and then lost to Paravyan (2599), which effectively ruled him out of contention for the top places. These types of 'swings' don't happen when the level of the opposition is constant, while they are quite common in opens. To his credit, Gukesh won the last two remaining games (though he was lost in the last round against Gupta!) to limit his rating loss to only six points, but this is probably not what he hoped for before the start of the event.



A rollercoaster ride for Dommaraju Gukesh

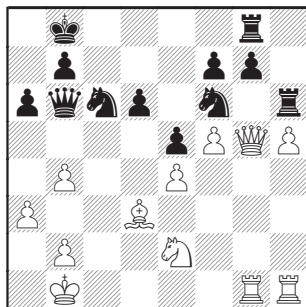
Fedoseev's catastrophe

Perhaps the most startling example was Fedoseev's start of the tournament with two (!) losses in a row.

In round one he missed something in his calculations and was then mercilessly put down by Kushagra Mohan (2412).

Mohan Kushagra - Vladimir Fedoseev

Qatar Masters (1), 11.10.2023



The position is balanced, but Black's next move must have been based on a miscalculation.

25... ♖f2 25... ♗d4 was a good alternative. After 26. ♖e3 ♖xh5 27. ♖xh5 ♗xh5 28. ♗c4 ♖f8 the position is still balanced.

26. ♖c3 ♜b6? Surely Black didn't go to f2 to lose two tempi. It's hard to say what he missed, though.

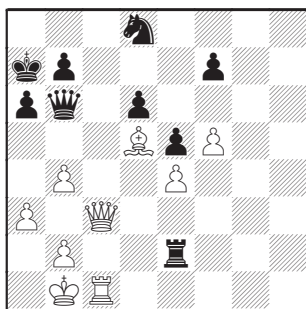
26... ♜f4 was the correct continuation. In fact Black isn't worse after 27. ♜g2 ♖d4 (27... ♜xh5? 28. ♖d5! wins material for White.) 28. ♜f1 ♜g4 29. ♜xg4 ♖xg4 30. ♜hg1 ♖h2! and Black is still in the game though it may look risky after 31. ♜f2 ♜xh5 as the knight on h2 looks in danger. On the other hand, it cannot be trapped either.

27. ♖c4 Now White is firmly in the driver's seat and doesn't allow a single chance until the end of the game.

27... ♖d8 28. ♖d5 ♖xd5 29. ♖xd5 The bishop clearly dominates the knight.

29... ♜gh8 30. ♜xg7 ♜6h7 31. ♜g4 ♜xh5 32. ♜xh5 ♜xh5 33. ♜c1 White switches to an attack against Black's king. Black is lost because his knight cannot effectively get back into the game.

33... ♜h2 34. ♜g3 ♜e2 35. ♜c3 ♖a7

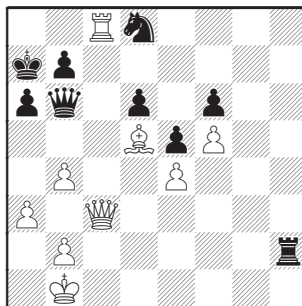


35... ♜d4 was the last chance to put up more serious resistance. White should still win after 36. ♜xd4 exd4 37. ♜c4! still keeping the knight a prisoner by controlling the c6-square. 37... d3 (37... ♖c6 38. ♖xc6 bxc6 39. ♜xc6 ♜xe4 40. ♜xd6 ♖b7 41. ♖c2 wins for White as Black will lose another pawn.) 38. ♖c1! d2+ 39. ♖d1 ♜f2 40. ♜c2 and White collects the d-pawn.

36. ♜b3 Threatening ♜c8 or ♖xf7.

36...f6 37. ♜c8 ♜h2 There is no counterplay after 37... ♜e1+ 38. ♖a2 ♜g1 39. ♜d3 ♜a1+ 40. ♖b3 ♜d1 41. ♜e2 and the knight dies: 41... ♖c6 42. ♖xc6 bxc6 43. ♜c4 with mate soon to follow.

38. ♜c3



Black is paralysed.

38... ♜h7 39. a4 With the threat of a5 to win the hapless steed.

39... ♖f7 40. a5 ♜g1+ 41. ♖a2 Now White threatens the cute ♜a8 ♜xa8, ♜c8xb7 mate.

41... ♖g5 Black defends the seventh rank, though the knight again is the main culprit after

42. ♜g8! Threatening ♜c8.

42... ♖xe4 Black gives up a piece and the rest is simple.

43. ♜xg1 ♖xc3+ 44. bxc3 ♜e7 45. ♖b3 e4 46. ♖e6 ♜h7 47. ♜g4 e3 48. ♜e4 ♜h3 49. ♖c4 b5+ 50. ♖d4

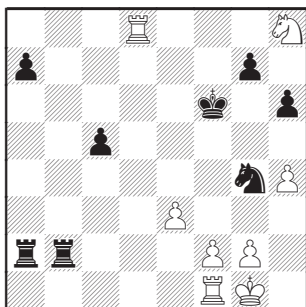
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In round two things only got worse. He was outplayed by Sentil Maran (2298) and the maximum he could hope for were drawing chances that were very difficult to find.

The drama and excitement of Qatar Masters only proves what many have been saying over the years: get the elite to mingle with the 'commoners'. Alas, after such shocks as the elite suffered in Qatar, this is maybe even less likely to happen now

Vladimir Fedoseev - Maran K Senthil

Qatar Masters (2), 12.10.2023



The endgame is very sharp. In view of the passed pawns on the queenside White is the one seeking a draw. While the position is objectively equal, it's not easy at all to calculate the correct counterplay.

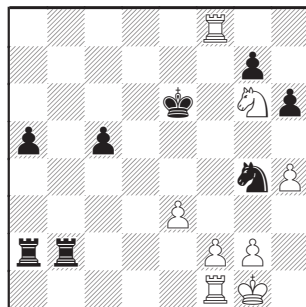
33.♖f8+ 33.♖fd1! was the most direct, including the second rook in the game. After 33...♗xf2 34.♖f8+ ♔e7 35.♔g6+ ♔e6 36.♔f4+ ♔e7 (36...♔e5?? 37.♖d5+ ♔e4 38.♖e8+ ♔e5 39.♖xe5# would be embarrassing.) 37.♔g6+ leads to repetition.

33...♔e6 34.♔g6 a5 Black simply pushes the passed pawn. The pressure is on White to coordinate his pieces and keep the balance.

35.♔f4+ ♔e7 36.♔g6+? This is wrong. The knight was well placed on f4.

36.♖g8! was the correct continuation. 36...♔f7 37.♖c8 ♗xf2 38.♖xf2 ♔xf2 39.♖xc5 with a draw.

36...♔e6?



36...♔d6! was correct, not giving White the chance to return with the knight to f4. After 37.e4 (37.♖d1+ ♔c7 38.♖f7+ ♔b6 the king escapes while the a-pawn will march forward. Here White also needs to think about the problems along the second rank.) 37...c4 38.♖c8 ♔e3! is the only move that wins. After 39.♖e1 ♖xf2 40.♖xe3 ♖xg2+ 41.♔f1 ♖af2+! (41...♖xg6? 42.e5+ saves the game for White. The point is that after 42...♔d5 43.♖d8+ ♔e6? 44.♖d6+ ♔f5 45.♖xg6 ♔xg6 46.e6 the pawn promotes, while after the precise ...♖af2-b2 the black rook on the b-file can stop the e-pawn with ...♖b8.) 42.♔e1 ♖b2! 43.♔f1 ♖xg6 Black wins because after 44.e5+ ♔d5 45.♖d8+ ♔e6 46.♖d6+ ♔f5 47.♖xg6 ♔xg6 48.e6 ♖b8 Black manages to stop the e-pawn.

37.♖f4? A mistake, both objectively (it's a bad move) and psychologically. White had to repeat moves with 37.♔f4 and accept a draw, if Black repeated, or find the correct ♖g8 idea mentioned in the comment on White's 36th move. Perhaps after losing in the first round Fedoseev couldn't accept that he couldn't beat a player he expected to beat easily?

37.♔f4+ ♔e7 38.♔g6+.

37...h5 White's problem is that the rook on f4 takes away the square from the knight.

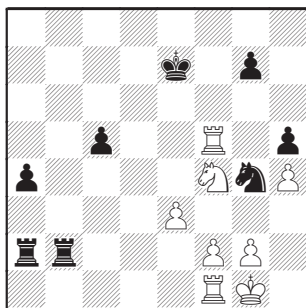
38.♖f8 Echoes from the previous game - just like ...♗f2-b6 there, here Fedoseev

goes to and fro with the rook, losing two tempi and ending up in a lost position. In truth, here the position was objectively lost after the first move (♖f4) while there the retreat to b6 was the decisive mistake.

38...a4 It is again difficult to say what Fedoseev missed, having granted two tempi to his opponent.

39.♖f4+ ♔e7? 39...♔d7 was correct. After 40.♖g8 (40.♖d1+ ♖d2! the king is safe and the pawns advance.) 40...♖xf2! 41.♖xg7+ ♔c6 and the king goes to b5 to support the pawns.

40.♖f5?



Again the rook's move on the f-file is a mistake.

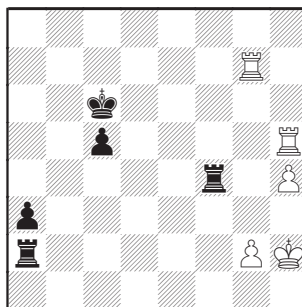
40.♖g8! ♔f7 (40...♖xf2 41.♖xg7+ ♔d6 42.♖g6+ and we see the difference between the king on d6 and c6 - now the king cannot go to b5 to support the pawns. 42...♔d7 43.♖xf2 ♔xf2 44.♔xh5 with objective equality.) 41.♖d8! gave White sufficient counterplay.

40...♖xf2 Now Black is winning again.

41.♖e1 ♔d6 42.♖xh5 ♔xe3? Tempting, but missing the win.

42...♖fd2! was more precise, stopping checks on the d-file and threatening ...a3. 43.♖g5 ♔e5 44.♖xg7 a3 45.♖a7 c4 and the pawns are unstoppable.

43.♖xe3 ♖xf4 44.♖g3 ♔c6 45.♖xg7 a3 46.♔h2?



The decisive mistake.

46.♖a7! was the move to save the game. White was apparently worried that after 46...♖g4 he loses the pawn on g2 and his king is stuck on the first rank, but after 47.♔f1 ♖gxg2 48.♖xa3! is the saving resource.

46...♖a4! Rooks behind pawns! White violated this rule on his last move and now pays dearly for it.

47.♖h6+ ♔b5 48.♖b7+ ♔c4 49.♖b1 ♖c2 The a-pawn will cost White a rook.

50.♖a1 ♔b3 51.♔h3 ♔b2 52.♖f1 a2 53.♖b6+ ♔c3 54.♖f3+ 54.♖a1 ♖b2 with ...♖b1 next wins a full rook.

54...♔d2 55.♖f2+ ♔e3 56.♖xc2 a1 ♖ 57.♖e6+ ♖e4 58.♖h6 ♖g7 Here Fedoseev walked out, never to come back to resign.

0-1

This game was marred by what happened at the end of it, described in more detail a few pages away.

To his credit Fedoseev managed to bounce back by winning four games in a row, though that was anything but easy, his

games lasting on average 70 moves, with two games lasting 83 and 84 moves. This fact also shows the great resilience his opponents, rated between 2374 and 2492, displayed when playing a strong player like Fedoseev.

Why the elite struggle with 'weak' players

There is another danger when it comes to playing weaker opponents at opens. With the general increase of the level of play, it takes more effort and risk to win a game of chess. When playing each other, the elite do not take too much risk because a draw is generally not bad, preserving rating and tournament standing. This means there is a stark difference when playing fellow elite players and weaker opponents in opens.

These differences affect the openings and the style of play. Take the Berlin as an example: it's the favourite of many elite players when they play each other, but they won't get far with it at opens, where play for a win with both Black and White is required. With Fedoseev, just as with Gukesh as described above, we can see this clearly - after his four wins in a row he couldn't adapt to playing a strong opponent and lost in mere 22 moves against Shimanov (2566).

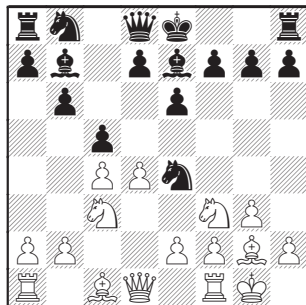
The
winner:
Nodirbek
Yakubboev



Aleksandr Shimanov - Vladimir Fedoseev

Qatar Masters (7), 18.10.2023

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.♘c3 e6 4.g3 b6
5.♙g2 ♙b7 6.0-0 ♙e7 7.d4 ♘e4?



Here's the first sign. Instead of the traditional (and safer!) 7...cxd4 as if by inertia from the previous rounds Fedoseev still seeks complications.

8.d5! The critical reply.

8...♘xc3 9.bxc3 ♙f6 This isn't very good (9...d6 was better, though that leads to a stable plus for White), but it's the only justification of Black's previous move. Taking risks against lower-rated opponents can pay off, but doing the same against seasoned grandmasters is fraught with danger.

10.♙f4! 0-0 11.e4 White has a development and space advantage while Black has little to show for it.

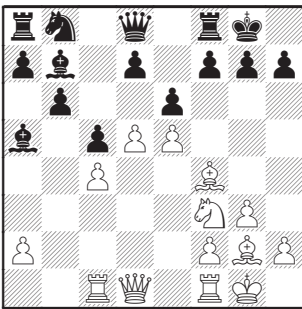
11...♙xc3?! Consistent, but after this Black is lost.

11...d6 was better, though after 12.dxe6 fxe6 13.♙xd6 ♙e7 14.♙xe7 ♖xe7 15.e5 White is simply a clear pawn up.

12.♖c1 ♙a5 13.e5



A huge arena but almost no spectators



Black is already busted. A world-class grandmaster being lost on move 13 is not a common occurrence, but this can easily happen when failing to adjust from playing weaker opponents one day to playing strong ones the next day.

13...exd5 14.cxd5 f6 15.♖b3 ♔h8 16.exf6 ♜xf6 17.♞e5 White's threats are unstoppable. The immediate 17.♙g5 was also good, which still remains a threat, together with ♞c4.

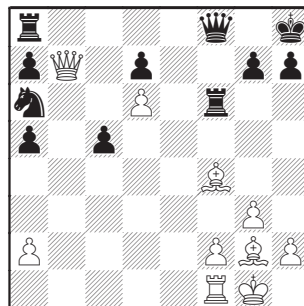
17.♙g5

17...♞f8 18.♞c4 Now ♞xa5 wins a piece in view of the unprotected bishop on b7.

18...♙a6 19.♞xa5 ♙xf1 19...bxa5 20.♞fe1 is just hopeless for Black who plays without the rook on a8 and the knight on b8.

20.♞xf1 bxa5 21.♞b7 Winning the sad rook on a8.

21...♞a6 22.d6



White will remain a piece up, so Black resigned.

1-0

A trashing that you would expect in a simul! It's extremely difficult to adapt from playing for a win at all cost and taking risks against weaker players to being solid and not underestimating your strong opponent.

A tragedy for the end

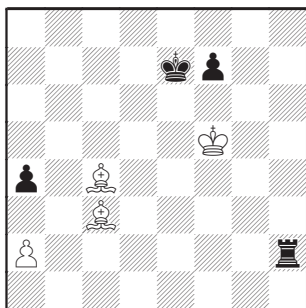
The tournament finished in a tragedy for Erigaisi, who with the dead draw on the board was well on his way to share first place, but blundered horrendously.

Nodirbek **Abdusattorov** –
Arjun **Erigaisi**

Qatar Masters (9), 20.10.2023



Arjun Erigaisi



The position had been a dead draw for many moves by this point. Here, however, after spending more than 11 minutes on his move, Erigaisi played

48...♖h4?? And had nothing more to do than resign after the obvious

49.♔f6+ A very rare case of chess blindness!

1-0

This led to an all-Uzbek blitz play-off for first place, both Abdusattorov and Yakubboev being the only players who managed to score seven points. Yakkuboev won the play-off 2-0, thus winning Qatar Masters.

The drama and excitement of Qatar Masters only proves what many have been saying over the years: get the elite to mingle with the 'commoners'. Alas, after such shocks that the elite suffered in Qatar, this is maybe even less likely to happen now.

QATAR MASTERS OPEN 2023

Rk	No	Name	Typ	FED	Rtgl	Pts.	TB1	TB2
1	19	GM Yakubboev, Nodirbek		UZB	2616	7	2	2775
2	5	GM Abdusattorov, Nodirbek	U20	UZB	2716	7	0	2765
3	13	GM Narayanan.S.L,		IND	2651	6.5	0	2792
4	12	GM Sindarov, Javokhir	U20	UZB	2658	6.5	0	2766
5	2	GM Nakamura, Hikaru		USA	2780	6.5	0	2748
6	6	GM Erigaisi, Arjun	U20	IND	2712	6.5	0	2743
7	7	GM Maghsoodloo, Parham		IRI	2707	6.5	0	2727
8	4	GM Gukesh, D	U20	IND	2758	6.5	0	2674

QATAR MASTERS OPEN 2023

Rk	No	Name	Typ	FED	Rtgl	Pts.	TB1	TB2
9	23	GM Paravyan, David		FID	2599	6	0	2703
10	20	GM Karthikeyan, Murali		IND	2611	6	0	2689
11	3	GM Giri, Anish		NED	2760	6	0	2680
12	31	GM Shimanov, Aleksandr		FID	2566	6	0	2665
13	16	GM Salem, A.R. Saleh		UAE	2632	6	0	2658
	25	GM Jumabayev, Rinat		KAZ	2585	6	0	2658
15	18	GM Puranik, Abhimanyu		IND	2618	6	0	2654
16	1	GM Carlsen, Magnus		NOR	2839	6	0	2650
17	24	GM Sethuraman, S.P.		IND	2598	6	0	2642
	35	GM Kaidanov, Gregory		USA	2554	6	0	2642
19	8	GM Van Foreest, Jorden		NED	2707	6	0	2628
20	11	GM Oparin, Grigoriy		USA	2681	6	0	2606
21	9	GM Nihal, Sarin	U20	IND	2694	6	0	2593
22	10	GM Fedoseev, Vladimir		SLO	2691	6	0	2567
23	88	IM Zou, Chen		CHN	2418	5.5	0	2666
24	43	GM Kevlishvili, Robby		NED	2512	5.5	0	2636
25	79	GM Srihari, L R	U20	IND	2438	5.5	0	2627
26	22	GM Vakhidov, Jakhongir		UZB	2607	5.5	0	2594
27	28	GM Vokhidov, Shamsiddin		UZB	2578	5.5	0	2591
28	132	FM Ashraf, Artin	U20	IRI	2340	5.5	0	2586
29	30	GM Aditya, Mittal	U20	IND	2572	5.5	0	2585
30	157	GM Tan, Jun Ying	U20	MAS	2250	5.5	0	2583
31	27	GM Pranav, V	U20	IND	2579	5.5	0	2570
32	15	GM Aryan, Chopra		IND	2634	5.5	0	2564
33	59	GM Abdisalimov, Abdimalik		UZB	2487	5.5	0	2559
34	36	GM Kuybokarov, Temur		AUS	2584	5.5	0	2558
35	32	GM Karthik, Venkataraman		IND	2563	5.5	0	2557
36	21	GM Gupta, Abhijeet		IND	2609	5.5	0	2556
37	17	GM Mendonca, Leon Luke	U20	IND	2622	5.5	0	2553
38	14	GM Aravindh, Chithambaram Vr.		IND	2649	5.5	0	2547
39	42	GM Vignesh, N R		IND	2527	5.5	0	2531
40	39	GM Visakh, N R		IND	2547	5.5	0	2529
41	54	GM Raja, Rithvik R	U20	IND	2495	5.5	0	2528
42	36	GM Adhiban, B.		IND	2551	5.5	0	2503
43	49	GM Iniyan, P		IND	2510	5.5	0	2475
44	75	Vaishali, Rameshbabu		IND	2448	5	0	2609
45	72	Baskin, Robert		GER	2451	5	0	2577
46	37	Makarian, Rudik	U20	FID	2548	5	0	2568
47	61	IM Madaminov, Mukhiddin	U20	UZB	2484	5	0	2567
48	47	GM Suleymenov, Alisher		KAZ	2512	5	0	2560
49	40	GM Fawzy, Adham		EGY	2535	5	0	2550
50	41	GM Yilmazyerli, Mert		TUR	2533	5	0	2531

WATCHES AND SCANDALS

TIMING IT RIGHT:

TICK-TOCK TACTICS AND WATCHFUL MOVES

AS ANOTHER SCANDAL ROCKS THE CHESS WORLD...

By GM Aleksandar Colovic; www.alexcolovic.com; Photo: FIDE Official

In round two of the Qatar Masters Carlsen was blown off the board by Alisher Suleymenov, rated 2512. You can find the game analysed in detail elsewhere in this issue. If the sensation of the result wasn't enough, Carlsen's reaction on social media only added fuel to the fire. This is what he tweeted:

1/2 I was completely crushed in my game today. This is not to accuse my opponent of anything, who played an amazing game and deserved to win, but honestly, as soon as I saw my opponent was wearing a watch early in the game, I lost my ability to concentrate.

2/2 I obviously take responsibility for my inability to deal with those thoughts properly, but it's also incredibly frustrating to see organisers still not taking anti-cheating seriously at all (no transmission delay, spectators walking around the playing hall with smartphones)

In a separate tweet he added:

I did ask an arbiter during the game whether watches were allowed, and he clarified that smartwatches were banned, but not analog watches. This seems to be against FIDE rules for events of this stature.

Later, in a reply to Nakamura's video, he tweeted:

Just to be clear, I am not accusing my opponent today of cheating. Constantly

using my name for clicks is fine, but this is just lame. Do better.

The public went wild, with yet another round of speculation as to whether Carlsen was actually accusing his opponent of cheating, in spite of his clearly saying that he wasn't, to add one more player on the 'suspicious' list.

Soon after these tweets, the following photo appeared on social media.

Did he, or didn't he?



The issue with the watch deserves special attention. Let's take a look at the regulations and see what they have to say about it.

In the Tournament Regulations of the Qatar Masters, we find the following:

9.9 Fair Play measures will be taken according to the FIDE Anti-cheating regulations.

This means that the organisers decided to follow FIDE's rules. FIDE's Anti-Cheating Protection Measures have the following to say:

Events that require maximum levels of protection:

FIDE Level 1 events (Official FIDE events as defined by the FIDE Events Commission or FIDE World Championship and Olympiad Commission);

Round-robins with an average rating of 2600 or more (2400 for Women's events);

Events with prize funds in excess of EUR 100,000.

The Qatar Masters prize fund of over 100,000 EUR makes it a level one event, therefore requiring maximum protection. The relevant article in FIDE's document is the following:

ii) Watches, pens and other writing devices containing metal are not allowed in the playing area.

It turns out Carlsen was right and he knew the regulations better than the arbiter he spoke to.

It's easy to get upset during a game when you notice that your opponent is not following the rules and it only gets worse when there is nobody to enforce them. Psychologically the player feels at a disadvantage - the opponent is allowed to break the rules and gets away with it. This was Carlsen's problem: he was upset the rules were not followed, though it

is surprising that he couldn't deal with his emotions and even his undoubtedly superior level couldn't save him from a loss.

THE SECOND SCANDAL IN QATAR

There was another (minor) scandal in Qatar, which didn't get so much attention, perhaps because it was overshadowed by the Carlsen incident.

After losing in round one, Vladimir Fedoseev went on to lose in round two as well (both games are analysed in more detail in the other article on the tournament). In the final position of that game, being down a queen for a rook in a hopeless situation and having more than 90 minutes on the clock, Fedoseev simply walked away from the playing hall, leaving his opponent to wait for the time to run out.

(Those who know a bit of chess history will remember that this is a rare copy of Curt von Bardeleben's behaviour - when he suffered a brilliancy against Steinitz in Hastings 1895: instead of resigning or allowing Steinitz to demonstrate the full depth of the combination, Bardeleben just walked away from the playing hall.)

He got a warning for this behaviour and promised not to repeat it. However, on social media he suggested that there was a reason for this behaviour and promised he would reveal it after the tournament.

We are yet to read his explanations.

If there is any moral in this story, it has to be that organisers must take anti-cheating measures very, very, seriously and make them a priority when planning an event. In safe environments players feel calm, at peace and can fully concentrate on their games. This is what the organisers must provide if they want to have scandal-free tournaments. Otherwise, the gnawing doubts and suspicions will destroy everything noble that is still part of our game.

GUERNSEY OPEN 2023

A TRIO AT THE TOP

By IM Shaun Taulbut

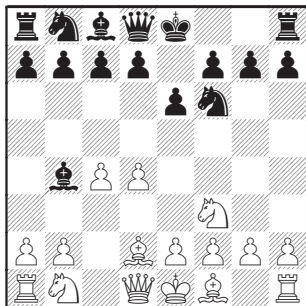
The Guernsey Open attracted three top players, Harry Grieve, Keith Arkell and Danny Gormally, who all finished with 6/7, having drawn their games against each other and won their games against other opponents. The top prizes were 1st £1200, 2nd £600, 3rd £300 and the prizes were shared so each won £700. The prizes were provided by Chessable.

GM Keith Arkell has a solid style with strength in endgames and used the Bogó Indian in the following game on his way to joint 1st place.

Alexander Hertog – Keith Arkell

47th Guernsey Open 2023 St James GCI (7.3)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♙f3 ♙b4+ 4.♙d2

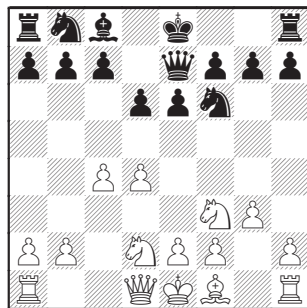


4...♙xd2+ 4...♙e7 is one of the alternatives here, protecting the bishop on b4;

4...a5 and 4...c5 are also good.

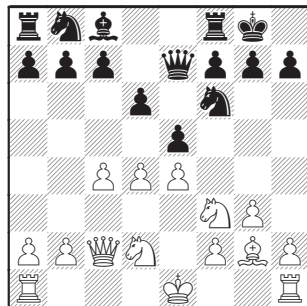
5.♙bxd2 5.♙xd2 d6 6.♙c3 0-0, with a slight edge for White, is better as the white knight is more actively placed on c3 than on d2.

5...d6 6.g3 ♖e7



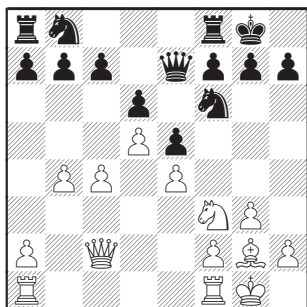
Black aims to play ...e5 which will provide him with a good foothold in the centre and activate his queen's bishop.

7.♙c2 e5 8.e4 0-0 9.♙g2



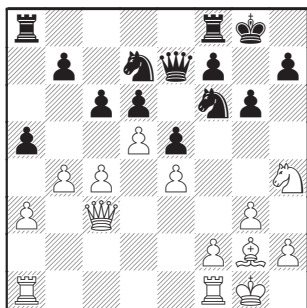
9...♙g4 An important move; Black plans to exchange the bishop for a knight and then play on the dark squares with his knights.

10.0-0 ♙xf3 11.♙xf3 ♙c6 12.d5 ♙b8 13.b4 White expands on the queenside and aims to advance with c5 but Black reacts immediately to counteract this plan.



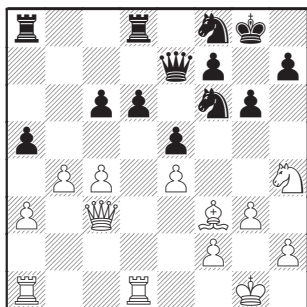
13...a5 14.a3 ♖bd7 15.♗h4 g6 Essential to keep the white knight out of d5.

16.♖c3 c6



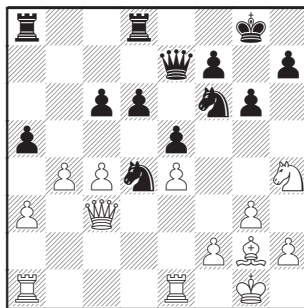
Another important move which allows Black play on the queenside with a possible capture on d5 before White can advance with c5. White decides to exchange and play against the pawn on d6.

17.dxc6 bxc6 18.♖fd1 ♖fd8 19.♗f3 ♗f8



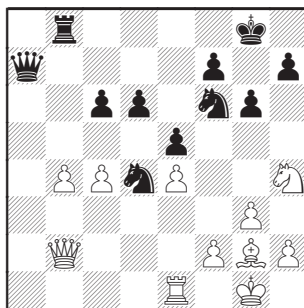
The black knight has a strong role to play in the game with an outpost on d4 in prospect.

20.♖e1 ♗e6 21.♗g2 ♗d4



The strong knight on d4 gives Black a clear advantage and, if White challenges with 22.♗f3, then 22...axb4 is very strong.

22.♖ab1 axb4 23.axb4 ♖a2 24.♖b2 ♖a7
25.♖d2 ♖xb2 26.♖xb2 ♖b8



Black threatens to invade with ...♖a4, attacking the White pawns

27.♖c3 ♖a2 28.♗f3 ♖a8 29.♖c1 ♖b3
Black is now winning as the b-pawn will be captured, but White makes a mistake which ends the game immediately

30.♖g5 ♗xf3+

0-1



'The Caro-Kann: The Easy Way' Thomas Engqvist (Batsford)

paperback, 329 pages in all, available as a Kindle. 8 chapters: Introductory examples played 1885-1922, Classical 3.(c3 and 'Modern' 3.(d2, and with over 100(!) pages for this section alone. *Capablanca* 4... 'f5, Advance with 3 e5, Panov 4 c4, Exchange 4.'d3, Steiner System 2 c4, Two Knights 2.(c3 d5 3.(f3 and finally 'the Breyer' (King's Indian Attack; see later) Variation.

This is a relaxed and friendly read obviously targeted at the weaker club player, perhaps under 1800 Elo. Pleasant to add that buyers will not be blinded with unnecessary jargon, although detailed use of statistics seems a little out-of-place.

I decided to look up the 1.e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. e5 variation and now 3 ... c5. Engqvist dismisses this in a kindly paragraph saying that ... c5 - shades of Tal-Botvinnik WC Match, 1961, and today popular - needs more preparation than the blatant push as early as move 3. Thus, I see that the author is selective rather than obsessed by topicality. Many authors could learn from this.

The last chapter addresses the 1. e4 c6 2. d3 system, labelling it with the name of Breyer. As luck would have it, I have the *New in Chess* Breyer book by Jimmy Adams. Surprisingly, I found only one Breyer game in this massive tome, correctly cited by Engqvist as Breyer-Bogoljubov, Berlin 1920. You may therefore question this labelling, as I do.

Many of the game references were new to me but that old chess *lollipop* - to use Edward Lasker's phrase - Alekhine-Bruce from Plymouth, 1938, is there as so often in Caro books. To the end of his life Mr Bruce had to live this mess down and he lived to a great age! In general, I found the middlegame discussion - possibly the most important aspect of the entire book - clear and persuasive, with many offshoots and alternatives examined.

This is the fifth book from Swedish player and trainer Thomas Engqvist. His other books comprise '300 Most Important Tactical Chess Positions', '300 Most Important Chess Exercises', 'Chess Lessons from a Chess Champion Coach'. These are from the House of Batsford. (The fifth is a *Gambit* book 'Chess Strategy for Kids'.) With a cover price of £17.99 this seems quite a bargain. The author is an International Master and it is naturally a bonus to spot he plays the Caro himself, even in blitz!

**Write to Batsford,
43 Great Ormond Street,
London WC1N 3HZ.
Tell them BCM sent you.**

FROM THE NIC NEW BOOK: THE CHESS BATTLES OF HASTINGS

The princess of Hastings Judit POLGAR

Journeying through 125 years of unparalleled history and chess prowess, Jürgen Brustkern's comprehensive homage, 'Hastings: A Chess Pilgrimage,' delves into the legacy of the world's oldest chess tournament held annually at the English seaside haven. With insightful narratives on 40 captivating figures, Brustkern, along with co-author Norbert Wallet, vividly paints the tournament's remarkable tapestry.

With the permission of NIC, we bring you one chapter from the book, dedicated to Judit Polgar and a chapter about Sir George Thomas.

She is a legend. The queen of the game. Judit Polgar - the strongest female chess player of all time. The only one feared by male world-class players. Because she played fearlessly, bravely and always uncompromisingly to win.

Before the 12-year-old girl travelled to the south of England in late 1988, she had already made history. At the Chess Olympiad in Thessaloniki, Greece, which had just ended, the three Polgar sisters, Sofia, Zsuzsa and Judit, together with Ildiko Madl, sensationally won the gold medal in the women's tournament ahead of the Soviet Union. The three sisters were suddenly the greatest show in the chess world. Alongside chess magazines, the general media also pounced on this unique story of three teenagers who wrested the title long held by the Soviet superpower. The Polgars were suddenly stars. And with her score of 12.5 points from 13 games, Judit was a sought-after guest among chess organisers around the world. After the Olympiad she was supposed to be competing in a tournament in Mexico. But Hastings' tournament director, Stewart Reuben, who was then in Greece, convinced Judit's mother that an appearance at the prestigious British tournament would be the better next step for her daughter.

He was to be proved right. For the first time, Judit was in the limelight all on her own, travelling to the English seaside resort without her sisters. She started in the Challengers and was only number 21 on the



Polgar before her 'moon landing' at Hastings in 1992/93

seeding list with an Elo rating of 2365. It was the strongest open tournament she had ever participated in in her young career. Given all this, she was nervous when she took her first steps on the Hastings stage. On the way to the first round, she almost got lost, accompanied by her mother. Had it not been for a friendly Briton who drove the two Hungarians - who did not know the area - to the Falaise Hall, who knows how the tournament would have turned out. After an early loss to Jim Plaskett, hardly anyone was betting on the newly crowned Olympiad champion. But after the fifth round there was no stopping Polgar. She took the lead with four wins in a row. She led by half a point ahead of the young English star Matthew Sadler.

Judit writes in her book *How I Beat Fischer's Record* that from when she was young she paid little attention to the increased sporting importance of last-round encounters. She was always firmly convinced that it would be sufficient for success to 'just play the best moves' without being distracted by the tournament standings. In this situation she played against the English grandmaster Glenn Flear in a furious attacking style reminiscent of the long-forgotten era of romantic chess.

GAME 1 King's Gambit

Judit Polgar - Glenn Flear

Hastings 1988/89 (9)

*Notes by Judit Polgar,
otherwise Jürgen Brustkern (JB)*

1.e4 e5 2.f4

“What a choice of opening for the decisive last round game - the romantic 19th century favourite, the King’s Gambit,” commented Raymond Keene in the tournament bulletin on Polgar’s choice of opening. Amazingly, the young Hungarian explains in the book mentioned above that this gambit was the only opening against 1...e5 that she knew well! Under the influence of her trainer IM Laszlo Hazai, she almost exclusively used the Spanish Opening in the 1990s and, for example, beat former World Champion Boris Spassky in three games with White in their match in Budapest in 1993.’ (JB)

2...exf4 3.♗c4

‘Until the late 1960s, Spassky was the only top GM who regularly used the romantic gambit against world-class players. The final sequence of a memorable game against Bronstein was even used in the Bond film From Russia with Love. Here is the masterpiece: 3.♗f3 d5 4.exd5 ♗d6 5.♗c3 ♗e7 6.d4 0-0 7.♗d3 ♗d7 8.0-0 h6 9.♗e4 ♗xd5 10.c4 ♗e3 11.♗xe3 fxe3 12.c5 ♗e7 13.♗c2 ♖e8 14.♖d3 e2



15.♗d6!! A fabulous move! 15...♗f8 16.♗xf7 exf1 ♖+ 17.♗xf1 ♗f5 18.♖xf5 ♖d7 19.♖f4 ♗f6 20.♗3e5 ♖e7 21.♗b3 ♗xe5 22.♗xe5+ ♗h7 23.♖e4+ 1-0, Spassky-Bronstein, Leningrad 1960. Spassky remained undefeated with the King’s Gambit throughout his life.’ (JB)

3...♗f6

The tempting 3...♖h4 deprives White of his right to castle, but the king is quite safe after 4.♗f1. Next ♗g1-f3 will cause Black losses of time and will be followed by the rapid occupation of the centre.

‘Although 3...♖h4+!? prevents castling, White retains a strong centre and free play after 4.♗f1 ♗c6 5.♗f3 ♖g4 6.h3 ♖g6 7.d4.’ (JB)

4.d3

‘4.e5 would be a mistake because of 4...d5!.’ (JB)

4...d5

‘4...♗c6 5.♗xf4 d5 6.exd5 ♗xd5 is the recommendation of Estrin/Glazkov in their book Play the King’s Gambit.’ (JB)

5.exd5 ♗xd5 6.♗f3 ♗b6

Glenn spent eight minutes on this novelty; it is hardly Black’s best choice. After the voluntary knight retreat from the centre, Black will have to look for alternate ways of defending the f4-pawn.

The developing move 6...♗e7 is simple and good. In my later game with Campora in the 1989 New York Open, I won back the pawn with 7.♗xd5 ♖xd5 8.♗xf4, but failed to obtain an advantage and the game was rapidly drawn.

7.♗b3 ♗d6

If Black could castle, he would retain the extra pawn for a long time, with excellent

play. Glenn probably did not expect my next move.



8.♖e2+!

This causes Black more trouble than he may have expected. 'This move obviously surprised Flear, but it is the best way to win back the offending f4-pawn.' (JB)

8...♖e7 9.♘c3 ♙g4?!

This apparently active move does not contribute in any way to the fight around the f4-pawn. As we will see, Black will not be able to take any particular advantage from the occupation of the d4-square after the exchange. 9...♘c6 induces some dynamic modifications in the thematic fight around the f4-pawn. Still, White keeps the initiative: 10.♖xe7+ ♘xe7, and after 11.♘g5 0-0 12.0-0 ♘g6 13.♘b5 White will win back the pawn with an active position.

Since the tension does not favour him, Black should have stepped out of it with: 9...♙e6!. This neutralizes the strong b3-bishop. In this case, White would have problems proving a concrete advantage.

'9...♘c6 is stronger, since the pawn on f4 can be protected with ...♘g6, but 9...♙e6 is probably the best way to equalise.' (JB)

10.♖xe7+ ♘xe7

11.♘e4!



An interesting psychological moment. The aggressive 11.♘g5 may seem better suited for a decisive game. Rather than starting an unclear attack, I wanted to retrieve the pawn and keep a small but persistent advantage.

'This comment shows how crafty the 12-year-old girl was back then.' (JB)

11...♙xf3

Consistently fighting for the d4-square. With a bishop on b3, Black should consider 11...a5!? when 12.a4 ♙xf3 13.gxf3 ♘d8d7 is more or less forced, with the strong idea ...♘c5.

12.gxf3 ♘c6 13.♘xd6 cxd6 14.♙xf4 ♘d4

Now I had my first long think (16 minutes) and designed my plan for the next few moves.

15.♙f2 ♘xb3 16.axb3

The main reason I liked to play the King's Gambit was the possibility of complicating the fight and getting tactical play from the very start of the game. However, I was also aware of the general strategic idea: to get a pawn advantage in the centre and slowly squeeze Black in the ending.

This position illustrates the latter aspect. Black can do very little against the slow advance of my compact mass of pawns. As for the doubled pawns, they are neither weak nor immobile, as the game shows. Besides, having doubled pawns means an

extra open file for the rooks, as Bronstein used to say. In this case, I developed my a1-rook without actually moving it!

16...a6



17.♖a5! ♘d7 18.b4 ♜he8 19.c4

White's queenside attack develops naturally. However, I spent 11 minutes on my last move, wondering whether I needed to include my c-pawn in the attack.

I was tempted by the more active: 19.♞ha1. Then if 19...♞e6 20.b5 ♘d5 21.♙d2 ♜ae8, getting out of the pin and threatening 22...♞e2+.

19...♞e6 20.b5 axb5 21.♞xb5 ♘c6 22.♞c1



22...♞a2

An important defensive resource, slowing down my attack. After 22...♞ae8 I could unleash the well-masked threat created by my last move: 23.d4! ♘xc4? 24.♙g5 followed by 25.b3, winning the knight.

After Glenn's move, the same line does not work: 22...♞a2 23.d4 ♘xc4 24.♞g5 ♞xb2+ 25.♙g3 d5 26.♞xc4+ dxc4 27.d5+ ♘d7 28.dxe6+ ♙xe6. Black has three pawns for a bishop and the connected ones on the queenside are dangerous. The most likely outcome is a draw.

So I needed to find one more prophylactic move before advancing my pawns.

23.♞b3?

The ultra-patient 23.♞c2! followed by ♙e3 and d3-d4 was the correct way to proceed. But how could I be patient at the age of 12 with the tournament win in sight?

23...♘d7?

Missing his only real chance to save the game: 23...♘a4. We both thought that this would fail to 24.d4, threatening a fork with d4-d5. However, the simple zwischenzug 24...♞f6! gains an important tempo for Black, allowing him to take the b2-pawn.

24.d4

After the double oversight, the game has returned to its normal path: White's attack develops systematically. Apart from the fork, there is the strong threat of 26.d5+ ♘c7 27.c5!.

24...♞f6 25.♙g3 b6



26.♞e1!

As mentioned on move 21, to gain something you usually have to give something. Now it is Black's turn to experience this - he avoided the immediate threats, but had to give away the e-file. The threats of ♖e7 or ♖e8 are quite annoying.

26...d5?

Possibly the result of premature panic, this move exposes the black king even more. Black should have created some kingside counterplay with 26...g5, possibly followed by ...h7-h5, inviting me to demonstrate a concrete winning plan.

27.cxd5+ ♖xd5 28.♖e7 ♖c4

The best practical chance, based on series of small tricks. Since 28...♖c6 loses the knight to 29.d5+!

29.♖c3+ ♖b4 30.♖c2 ♖b3 31.♖d2

Black's zwischenzugs have come to an end. In the meantime, my rook has occupied the best square, behind the passed pawn.

31...♖a7 32.d5!

Since White's strategy in the King's Gambit is to clear a path for the centre pawns, we can state that this time it ended in success. The d-pawn, which started its career rather timidly on the fourth move, now displays tremendous power.

32...b5 33.d6 ♖f5



34.♖d3+!! ♖c2?!

Unfortunately, Glenn does not allow me to show my hidden idea. The only way to prevent the threats was 34...♖xb2 35.♖e2+ ♖c1. The king seems to be still breathing but... 36.♖e1!! followed by 37.♖d1 mate!

35.♖c3+ ♖xb2 36.♖c7

Black resigned.

Facing huge material losses, Black resigned. A possible continuation was 36...♖xc7 37.dxc7 ♖b6 38.♖e8 ♖c5 39.♖b8.

When Glenn Flear stopped his clock to congratulate Polgar on the win, it was a real sensation. A 12-year-old won the Hastings Challenger tournament, the youngest winner in the tournament's history. In the women's world rankings from January 1989, the young Hungarian now also occupied the top spot. However, this was only the beginning of her stunning career. In 1990, Garry Kasparov assessed Polgar with macho arrogance: 'She has fantastic chess talent, but despite everything she is a woman. This is all due to the imperfections of the female psyche. No woman can endure a long struggle. She fights against the habit of centuries.' The player who dominated the chess scene of the 1980s and 1990s was to be very much mistaken.

At the time, there was much discussion about Judit's father Laszlo's alleged upbringing experiment, often with critical undertones. Laszlo Polgar enforced 'home schooling' for his three gifted daughters in tough conflicts with the school authorities. With their parents, who were both teachers, the girls learned one thing above all in addition to school subjects: how to play chess. Alongside their not exactly abundant free time, which was spent doing sport, reading, listening to music and meeting friends, chess was at the centre of everyday life for the Polgars. Chess was played, studied and trained for six to eight hours a day. An educationally questionable workload that brought Laszlo Polgar a lot of opposition - just not from the daughters.



The Polgar family: Judit, Zsuzsa, Sofia and father Laszlo

A woman on the moon!

Then the turn of the year 1992/93 approached. In the meantime, Judit's 1988/89 permission to play in the Hastings Premier had lapsed. There are different versions of the reasons why: the tournament committee spoke of inappropriately high conditions for Judit's participation. Judit, however, told the chess journalist Hartmut Metz on record in 1992 that 'three years ago I would have been too weak for such a tournament'. Judit had only played in men's tournaments since the Hungarian women's team's second Olympiad victory in 1990. Now that the player at the top of the women's world ranking list had already passed the Elo 2600 mark, she consequently received another invitation to Hastings.

In the strong double-round category 12 tournament, the Soviet grandmaster Evgeny Bareev, number four in the world at the time, was the strongest competitor. The world-class player had won on his two previous visits to Hastings very convincingly. Since he had been born on 21st November 1966, the 900th anniversary of the famous Battle of Hastings, English journalists jokingly called him 'William, the conqueror'.

Bareev would have drawn level with record winner Flohr with another success. For a long time history actually seemed to be repeating itself. The Russian grandmaster led the field by a whole point before the last round, but now had to face Polgar, who needed a win to catch up with Bareev. There's more: since Polgar had already won the first-round game against Bareev, another win would also mean tournament victory for the young Budapest woman.

The game turned into a triumph for the Hungarian.

GAME 2 French Defence

Judit Polgar - Evgeny Bareev

Hastings 1992/93 (14)

Notes by Jürgen Brustkern

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♙g5 dxe4
5.♘xe4 ♘bd7 6.♘f3 h6 7.♘xf6+ ♘xf6
8.♙e3!? ♙d6 9.♚d3 b6 10.♘e5 ♙b7
11.♚b5+! ♘d7 12.0-0-0 a6 13.♚b3?!

Judit recommended 13.♚e2 in her notes in New In Chess magazine 1993/2.

13...b5! 14.c4?!

Judit accepts the risk of losing control on the light squares.

14...0-0 15.f4 ♖e4

With the idea of controlling the light squares after 16...bxc4. 15...♗b6 looks attractive too, and if 16.c5 (what else?), 16...♙xe5 and 17...♗d5.

16.c5! ♙e7?!

16...♙xe5 retains the advantage.

17.♙d3! ♙xg2?!

This pawn grab looks very risky, especially against Judit, as White obtains an additional file to attack on in the shape of the g-file. The alternative 17...♙d5 18.♖c2 ♗xe5 19.dxe5 seems more solid.

18.♖hg1 ♙d5 19.♖c2 f5!

On the other hand, 19...♗xe5 20.fxe5 was bad, with a considerable space advantage for White.

20.♗g6

This obvious move should have been replaced by 20.c6! ♗f6 (20...♗b8 21.♖g3, followed by 22.♖dg1, teaming up on the g-file) leading to a forced draw after 21.♖xg7+ ♗xg7 22.♖g1+ ♗h7 23.♙xf5+ exf5 24.♖xf5+ ♗h8 25.♗g6+ and 26.♗e5+.



John Nunn recommends the exchange sacrifice 20...♖f6 21.♖g3 (21.c6 ♖xg6 22.♖xg6 ♗f8 23.♖g3 ♙f6 only gives equality) 21...♖xg6 22.♖xg6 ♗f8 23.♖g3 ♙f6 and the subsequent manoeuvre ...♗d8-d7, after which Black has good counterplay in the centre.

Today's computers like the immediate 20...♙f6!, while Judit mentioned the line 20...♖f7 21.c6 ♗f6 22.♗e5 ♖b8 23.♖g6 ♖b6 24.♖dg1. Now her move 24...♗g4? loses to 25.♖6xg4! and if 25...fxg4 26.♙h7+ ♗f8 27.♖g6!, crashing through. However, the computer proposal 22...♙d6! seems awkward to meet.

21.c6 ♗f8 22.♗e5 ♙h4

22...♙f6! is approved by the computer. If 23.♖e2 ♖e7 24.♖h4 (Polgar's suggestion) 24...♗h8! is the way to go.

23.♖e2

Both players had seen 23.♖xg7+! ♗xg7 24.♖g1+ ♗h7, but apparently come to the wrong conclusion. Judit only gave 25.♙xf5+? exf5 26.♖xf5+ ♗h8 27.♗f7+ ♙xf7 28.♖xf7 which looks nice but fails to 28...♙g5!. However, White is actually winning after the slow 25.♖e2! ♖f6 26.♖h5!.

23...♖f6?

The wrong defensive set-up.

24.♖h5 ♖ed8

After this careless move, the Hungarian shines with her extraordinary talent for seeing combinations. Necessary was 24...♖e7, which at least covers all the weak squares on the seventh rank. Now the direct 25.♗g6? ♗xg6 26.♖xg6 ♙f3 27.♖xh6 fails to 27...♙xd1 28.♙xd1 ♖ee8!. 25.♙e2, with the idea of exchanging the strong bishop on d5, retains the advantage and Black would also be hard pressed to consolidate

against slow moves such as 25.♖df1 or 25.♜b1. White has a free attack at the cost of a mere pawn!



25.♖xg7+!!

‘A real “grenade attack”, the consequence of which is a woman on the moon!’ (Keene in the tournament bulletin).

25...♜xg7

Capturing with the queen also loses: 25...♚xg7 26.♖g1 ♕g2 27.♚xh4.

26.♖g1+ ♜h8

26...♜h7 27.♖g4 and the black queen is overloaded. She must give up protecting h6 or h4.

27.♖f7+ ♜h7 28.♖xh6 1-0

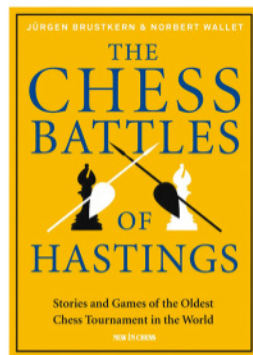
Bareev understandably did not want to be shown the checkmate line 28...♚xh6 29.♚f7+ ♜h8 30.♖g8.

With this model attack, a woman entered the Premier’s list of winners for the first time. The chess world was turned upside down. The media celebrated her success all over the world. Unsurprisingly, they awarded her the honorary title ‘Princess of Hastings’. In the same year, 1993, she became Hungarian National Open Champion, to all intents and purposes the men’s category, and clearly bested ex-World Champion Boris Spassky in a match in Budapest. It was clear that

for a player of this strength, the World Championship had to be the ultimate goal. But the woman who had so thoroughly dispelled all prejudices against women in chess failed in this goal. She tried five times, but was eliminated on each occasion in the early phases of the World Championship cycle.

It had often been predicted that Polgar’s chess career would come to an end when she started a family. She refuted this prophecy as well. In fact, she took a break in 2004 to have a baby. Her son Oliver was born in August. Five months later, however, at the traditional tournament in Wijk aan Zee (now Tata Steel), she increased her Elo rating to 2728 and was ninth in the general world rankings. No woman before her had done this either. She remained an integral part of the world’s chess elite for another decade.

On 13th August 2014, she announced her retirement in an interview with The Times. ‘I noticed more and more the many other things you can do in life,’ she said. But she has remained connected to chess to this day. In addition to her work for her foundation, she finds time to promote chess in schools in many ways. Her tasks also include training the Hungarian men’s national team and her work as a live commentator at large chess tournaments.



**You can order the book at:
www.newinchess.com/the-chess-battles-of-hastings**

A sporting all-rounder

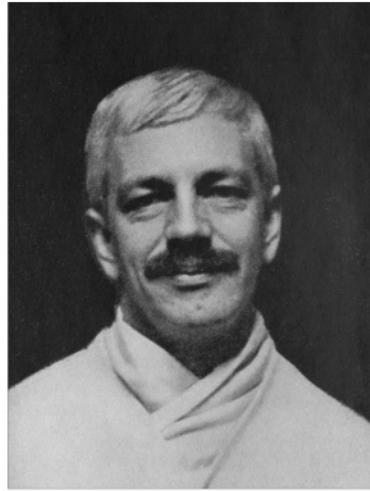
Sir George THOMAS

Chess can be many things. An addiction, a sport, a passion. Players need to find a relationship with the game - somewhere between devotion and pastime. This matter must be resolved. The player needs to know what loss can mean. One can fail at this task. One can pretend that everything is just that - a game, and then mentally be destroyed by losses.

The Englishman Sir George A. Thomas succeeded in constructing a unique and downright enchanting relationship with the royal game. Chess was his joy, his faithful companion, also a source of lifelong happiness. But the gentleman always kept a certain distance. He did not surrender himself to the game to the exclusion of all else. He also had other passions. And it was precisely this nonchalance that gave him the freedom to always see chess as a pleasure, never as fate, always as a source of inspiration, never as a fight.

Thomas came to chess late in life. He was born in Constantinople on 14th June 1881. His father, Sir George Sidney Meade Thomas, the sixth Baronet of Yapton, worked in the Imperial Ottoman Bank, which took care of the financial affairs of the Turkish Government. His mother, Edith Margaret, was the daughter of the President and General Manager of the bank. It was she who introduced Thomas to chess. In the late 1880s, Lady Thomas returned to England with the children.

A wider chess public became aware of the young Thomas when the 14-year-old defeated the great Emanuel Lasker in a simultaneous display in London in 1896 - a success that Thomas was able to repeat in Portsmouth in 1908. He made his tournament debut in Salisbury in 1898, where he came 'only' third in the B tournament, but was able to defeat the two players above him in



Badminton champion Sir George Thomas

their direct confrontations. A year later he became a member of the Portsmouth Chess Club, where he won the first of his 15 (!) club championships that same year. He then succeeded in a similar series of victories in 16 club championships after joining the London Metropolitan Chess Club, starting with his success in the 1912/13 season.

After the four-year chess break caused by the World War, Thomas quickly found his form again, shared third place at the Victory Tournament in Hastings and only lost to Capablanca after a great battle. In the famous six-masters tournament in Hastings in 1922, he performed respectably against Alekhine, Rubinstein, Bogoljubow, Tarrasch and Yates. A year later he triumphed at the British Championships in Southsea. In 1926/27 he took part in the Christmas Congress in Hastings for the first time.

At the 1939 Buenos Aires Chess Olympiad, Thomas was the proud captain of the British team. He had to inform the tournament organisers of his team's withdrawal due to the outbreak of war. At the first post-war tournament in Hastings, 1945/46, he succeeded in beating former World

Champion Dr Max Euwe, another great success. His last tournament was the British Championships of 1949. Thomas finished fourth.

The reputation Sir George Thomas enjoyed for his achievements on the chessboard came to the fore again in 1950 when the World Chess Federation, FIDE, awarded him the title of International Master. But even after a complete study of his brilliant chess career in its entirety, you will not see his full and complete personality. Not even close.

Our image of chess heroes is pretty firmly established, shaped by obsessive chess addicts such as Bobby Fischer, for whom chess is everything and life outside of the 64 squares is an insignificant and uninteresting distraction. 'Chess is life,' said Fischer. Sir George Thomas would never have said that. Perhaps this is a small narcissistic affront for chess lovers and historians. But Thomas's typically British sense of

sporting competition was not limited to the game of chess. What's more, it wasn't even the focus of his sporting activity.

Which doesn't mean that he lacked enthusiasm for the game. But Thomas was not just a highly talented chess player, he was a successful tennis player and above all a star of badminton, probably the best in the world in his heyday. Chess player, tennis star and world-class badminton player - all at the same time. And there is much to suggest that Thomas saw his real sporting vocation in the two athletic sports even more so than in chess. This is not only supported by the fact that Sir George Thomas' relatively late appearance in the chess arena is primarily due to his extensive early involvement in other sports. He also refrained from taking part in the British Chess Championships for years because they were taking place at the same time as an important badminton tournament.

Awards ceremony at the 'Boys Congress' in 1935, Sir George Thomas in the middle of the photo, to the right of him on the picture is Dobell



Sometimes, it seems, a whole life condenses into a gesture, an act, a situation. Then an entire biography, a life path spanning many decades, coagulates into this one moment, into this one event that is remembered and lives on. And this snapshot, this supposedly characteristic and typical act, then symbolises the person. Set in stone, permanent and unchangeable, forever. Maybe that's inevitable because nobody can look at a whole life. But it is not appropriate. Because this determination of a fluid and constantly changing life always moving forward shortens, simplifies, and reduces each person to one point. And because nobody wants to get to this point in their self-view. Everyone portrayed is richer, multi-dimensional and more contradictory than his or her portrait.



Sir George Thomas in 1934/35

Sir George Thomas is associated in chess circles with his downright tragic failure in the final round of the Congress of Hastings 1934/35 (see the following tournament highlight). The image of him is unshakeable: Sir George Thomas, the one who narrowly failed, the one who stumbled shortly before achieving the goal when he could not win against one of the weakest participants in the tournament and thus threw away a brilliant tournament victory.

But if you consider the actual focus in his life, it is likely that another event will have hit the multi-talented individual much harder than the narrow failure in the last round of Hastings 1934/35, for which Thomas is known to chess friends to this day. This event took place 23 years before the unfortunate day at Hastings, and it seems like a striking parallel:

The authors were made aware of the event by chess historian Stephen Jackson. Jackson is probably the person who knows the most about Sir George Thomas's life, and his kind comments were crucial for this chapter:

In 1911, tennis player George Thomas reached the quarterfinals of the Wimbledon

tennis tournament. His compatriot C. P. Dixon was a tough opponent. Dixon had already played in the Davis Cup for England and was considered a candidate for the top ten in the world rankings. But Thomas was not willing to accept the role of a mere sparring partner. Both players had won a set each when in the third set the scales began to tilt more and more towards brilliantly combative outsider. Thomas led 4-1. Then it happened. A contemporary reporter noted that Thomas suddenly 'missed a very easy decisive return with the entire court open, and Dixon later levelled at 4-4 after a bit of help from the net, with Thomas missing chance after chance'. Thomas lost the set he had almost won by 6:8. That was the preliminary decision. The fourth set was lost 3:6.

That one missed point, doesn't that remind you of what happened to Thomas against Michell on the chessboard so many years later? But even this detail of his career does not justify the way that Thomas was often portrayed - as an athlete who could not quite cross the finishing line. On the contrary, you have to admire the versatility of the Briton, because the field where Thomas really dominated everything was

neither chess nor tennis, but badminton. In 1920, as well as in the three (!) subsequent years, he won the All-England singles title in badminton.

Since Great Britain was the Mecca of badminton at the time, Thomas can be considered the world's best player at the beginning of the 1920s. In 1923, his book *The Art of Badminton* was published. Jackson pointed out to the authors that one passage reads:

'I think I am generally considered to be a somewhat phlegmatic player; but if so, then this reputation is wholly undeserved. In fact, I often experience acute attacks of nervousness during important games, although I try to cover it up as best I can with a confident demeanour.'

This is how he played chess. Contemporaries described him as the perfect gentleman who never bothered others. 'But not as dispassionate as he looks,' says an article in the *British Chess Magazine* about the tournament in Marienbad in 1925, 'because colour suddenly shoots into his cheeks when a door slams'. Sir George gradually withdrew from the public eye in the 1950s. From 1934 to 1955 he was President of the International Badminton Federation. He died in London on 23rd July 1972. What a rich life he had led, what dedication he had shown to sport, what respect for fairness and decency he had always maintained. He enriched the chess world immensely, and chess enriched him. But the game of chess was never everything to him.

Hastings 1934/35

The XVth Hastings Chess Congress was exceptional in every way. It was a terrific tournament. With the Cuban José Raúl Capablanca, the Dutchman Max Euwe and the Russian Mikhail Botvinnik, the former and two future World Champions took part. In addition, with Salo Flohr (Russia) and Andor Lilienthal (Hungary) there were



Capablanca, the third World Champion

two further representatives of the absolute world elite. There was particular excitement about the appearance of the 24-year-old Russian talent Mikhail Botvinnik, who was taking part in his first foreign tournament. In this elite field, the representative of the host country, Sir George A. Thomas, was thought to have little chance.

But this tournament was 'his' tournament, his big moment in chess history. Or it could have been. Thomas was then 53 years old. He no longer had to prove to anyone that he was a good chess player who could keep up with the greats from all over the world. He had just won his second British Chess Championships in Chester in 1934, and a year later his game would make an impression in Sopron, Hungary, in Margate and Warsaw. And his reputation from his victory at the tournament in Spa, Belgium, in 1926, when he left a living legend behind in Tartakower, lived on. But this Hastings chess congress was a challenge even for the seasoned top British player which all experts thought was too much for the tournament's second oldest player.

Things turned out differently. Completely differently. Thomas scored a sensational 3.5

points against the five super grandmasters. That in itself is astonishing. But what made this tournament for Thomas the greatest of his entire chess career is the fact that he not only managed to win against the great Capablanca and the new hope of Soviet chess, Mikhail Botvinnik, but also to bring home the full points in an extremely impressive style:

**José Raúl Capablanca -
Sir George Thomas**

Hastings 1934/35 (2)

Notes by Dr. Jakob-Adolf Seitz



José Raúl Capablanca lost less than one game a year in the four decades of his career. Against Sir George Thomas it was that time again and that is why this duel is of great historical importance.

With his double-edged move

20.d5?!

Capablanca was playing for the full point. Instead, the exchange 20.dxc5 ♖xc5 would have equalised completely.

20...b5!

A nice counterattack that blows the white centre apart.

21.♙xb5

Premature would be 21.d6 ♖b6 22.♙f1 c4 and Black has the favourable majority of pawns on the queenside.

21...exd5 22.e5 ♖e4



23.♖xe4?

The start of the losing combination. Absolutely necessary was 23.♙d3 ♖xg3 (23...♖g6 24.e6!) 24.hxg3 c4 25.♙f5 ♖e6 with a better position for Black.

23...dxe4 24.♖d2?

A big mistake. After the forced 24.♖g5 ♖xd1 25.♖xd1 c4! Black stands better but Capablanca would still have been able to put up resistance. The former World Champion plays this game below his usual level.

24...♖xd2

With 24...♖a5 Thomas would have won a piece, but the consequences of 25.♙c4 ♖xd2 26.♙xf7+ ♖h8 27.e6 with the dangerous passed pawns were unclear to him.

25.♖xd2 ♖a5 26.b4 ♖xb5 27.bxc5 ♖xc5 28.♖b2 ♙a8 29.♖dd1 ♖e7 30.♖d4 h6 31.♖d6 ♖xd6 32.♖xd6?

Now the position is lost to all intents and purposes. By capturing with the pawn, White would have generated some counterplay, e.g. 32.exd6 ♖d7 33.♖c1 ♖d8 34.♖c7 ♙d5 35.♖xa7 ♖c5.

32...♖g6 33.e6 fxe6 34.♖xe6 ♖f7 35.♖a6 ♖c7 36.♖b1 ♖e7 37.h4 ♖c8 38.♖b5 ♙b7 39.♖f5+ ♖g8 40.♖e6 ♖e7 41.♖f4 ♙d5 42.♖d6 ♖c8 43.♖a6 ♖c1+ 44.♖h2 ♖c6 45.h5 ♖c2 46.♖f5 ♙e6 47.♖f4 ♖c4 48.g4

♙c8 49.♖xc6 ♜xc6 50.♖xe4 ♔f7 51.♖a4
♜a6 52.♙f4+ ♕e7 53.♙e4+ ♕f6

White resigned.

After a dream start of three points from three games, Thomas then suffered a setback against a future World Champion. In this game, the Dutchman implements a model standard plan in the Queen's Gambit, which should find its place in future middlegame books:

Max Euwe - Sir George Thomas

Hastings 1934/35 (4)

Notes by Jürgen Brustkern



15.f4!

In connection with f5-f6, a classic restriction concept. This and the following moves form the point of White's plan: White leaves himself with a backward king's pawn, but restricts the black bishop and retains constant pressure on f7. However, Black also has counter- opportunities.

15...♙e7

15...♙e4 is regarded today as the best move.

16.f5 b5?!

16...♙f6 was more precise here, as the f5-f6 thrust must be prevented at all costs.

17.♙b3 b4?!



Dr. Max Euwe at Hastings

This pawn advance seems consistent, but the subsequent destruction of the black kingside is more important: therefore 17...♙d8 18.♙e2 ♙f6 19.e4 ♙d4+ 20.♙h1 ♙e5 21.♙h5 was necessary, after which White still has the initiative.

18.f6 gx f6 19.♖xc6 ♙xe3+ 20.♙h1



20...♙b7?!

The best chance was 20...♙e6 21.♙xe6 fxe6 22.♖c7.

21.♖cxf6 ♙e4

21...♙g5? loses material due to 22.♙e2 ♙ad8 23.♖xf7.

22. ♖d2 ♘h8 23. ♙xf7 ♖ac8 24. ♗f6 ♕cd8?

After this, the game can no longer be rescued due to the weak back rank. After the natural 24...a5 25.h3 Thomas could still have resisted for some time.



25. ♖g5!

White simply threatens 26. ♖f6 mate, which can no longer be reasonably prevented.

25... ♗d6

25... ♖d4 also fails to 26. ♙d5!.

26. ♙d5

Black resigned.

But the story, his story, does not end here, it is only just beginning. After this minor setback, the Briton puts on a spurt with 3.5 points from the next four games and only halves the point with the solid Flohr. He leads the field before the last round with 6.5 points ahead of Euwe (6) and Flohr (5.5) in front of all the assembled international chess celebrities.

It's all over. One of the greatest sensations in chess history is imminent. And the pursuers have all along since resigned themselves to their fate. Because what Thomas needs now, compared with the feats he has achieved in this tournament, is just one last small step, a matter of routine, a perfunctory task: a draw, half a point, has yet to be secured. Under normal circumstances that shouldn't

be a problem, because the opponent is the 61-year-old R.P. Michell. Thomas should easily beat him anyway. This time, however, he also has the entire course of the tournament on his side. Michell has played a disastrous tournament and is second to last. Everything bodes well for Thomas. All the outside observers assume that a quick draw would be agreed with the wounded Michell. The British compatriot would not put up any resistance. After all, they are both friends.

But Thomas doesn't want an agreement. He has played the entire tournament with an unshakable fighting spirit and also scored most of the winning games. Again, he will fight. It does not chime with his sense of chivalry to secure victory by a friendly draw without a fight. It's risky. Today's chess professionals would say it's irresponsible.

In fact, everything takes the worst possible turn. In the end he loses. Thomas is still a co-winner, together with Euwe and Flohr. But it's not the triumph, not the milestone in chess history, not David's victory over Goliath and his friends. 'Just' a remarkable result, but not a sensation. Even so, this did not stop the Wiener Schachzeitung amongst others from celebrating Thomas as the 'moral winner of this world-class tournament'. But there are no extra points and no special page in the history books for a moral victory.

So that's Sir George A. Thomas today. For chess historians at least. The person who fell at the last hurdle, who stumbled on the home straight, with victory in sight and the field far behind. And this failure was due to naive notions of fair play. An amateur who had his moment. For many reasons, this view is absurdly diminishing. From a chess perspective, it is completely inappropriate. Thomas didn't just have this one big chance on the chess stage. Nor was it that the last round at Hastings in the 1934/35 tournament would have thrown him off track. He could live with the disappointment, but not with an arranged draw between friends - and that's admirable.



WIELDING THE KATANA

By Grandmaster Raymond Keene OBE

Chess has a quality in common with Martial Arts, namely the ability of the one to simultaneously defeat the many

The most astonishing examples I have seen occur in the films of Japanese director, Akira Kurosawa, whose films *Yojimbo* and *Sanjuro* feature Toshiro Mifune as the invincible Samurai warrior, capable of overcoming a multiplicity of foes at one and the same time. The theme has continued, for example in Quentin Tarantino's *Kill Bill* two-parter, where Uma Thurman wields her Katana (Samurai blade) with complete success against the Tokyo-based gangsters of the Crazy 88 martial arts team.

During my chess career I faced 107 opponents simultaneously at Oxford in 1973; in Leon, Mexico, during the early years of this century, I confronted 19 opponents, without my having sight of the boards (a blindfold simul); while at the start of October this year I won 18, drew two and lost none against the Brighton Chess Club, in an event organised by local Maecenas, Michael Gyure. I do not claim any of these as records: the numbers have been vastly exceeded by many others, particularly in terms of blindfold exploits.

However, the Brighton experience stood out for two reasons: a personal reassurance that (having survived from the Cretaceous Period) my little grey cells had not gone completely awol, and secondly that this exhibition included one of the most interesting games I have ever played, either one to one or in simultaneous displays.

ONE OF THE MOST INTERESTING GAMES I HAVE EVER PLAYED

Raymond Keene vs. Jan ten Sythoff

Simultaneous display vs
Brighton Chess Club (x20)

1.d4 e6 2.♘f3 Of course, I could have invited the French Defence with 2. e4.

2...f5 I was always pleased to see the Dutch Defence. In my entire career I nearly always defeated it, including a number of GM victims, with only one loss.

3.g3 ♘f6 4.♙g2 ♙e7 5.O-O O-O 6.c4 d6 7.♗c3 ♗e4 8.♗xe4 fxe4 9.♗e1 d5 10.f3 c5?!

Both a) 10... dxc4 11.♙e3 ♗d7 12.♖c2 ♗f6 13.♖xc4 ♗d5;

and b) 10... ♗c6 11.fxe4 ♗xf1+ 12.♙xf1 dxc4 13.♙e3 b5 deserved further consideration.

11.fxe4 Perhaps a better try was, 11.cxd5! ♖xd5 (11... exd5 12.fxe4 ♗xf1+ 13.♙xf1 dxe4 14.♖b3+ ♗h8 15.d5 ♗d7) 12.♙e3 cxd4 13.fxe4 ♗xf1+ 14.♙xf1 ♖h5 15.♙xd4 ♖xh2 16.♙f2 ♗c6 17.♖b3 ♖h6 18.♗d3.

11...♗xf1+ 11...dxe4 had been previously played in Hollerman-Hauke, 1-0, Porz, 1987.

12.♙xf1 dxc4 13.d5 ♗c6



Also of interest was 13...exd5! 14.exd5 ♙d6 15.♗f3 ♖f6 16.♗g1 ♙f5 17.♙f4 ♗d7 18.♙xd6 ♖xd6 19.♗d2 b5 20.a4 ♖e5, with chances for both players.

14.♙f4 exd5 15.exd5 ♗d4 16.e3 ♗f5? Black keeps the balance after 16... g5 17.♙e5 ♗f5 18.♗g1 ♙f6 19.♙xf6 ♖xf6 20.e4 ♗d4 21.♖h5 ♙d7 22.♗f3 ♖g7 23.♗xg5 h6, when White has hardly any advantage to speak of.

17.e4 ♗d4 18.♗c2?!



Letting Black off the hook. Far stronger was 18.e5! ♙g5 (18... ♙f5 19.e6 ♙xf4 20.gxf4 ♖d6 21.♗g1 ♖xf4 22.♗f3 g6 23.♖e5) 19.e6 ♙xf4 20.gxf4 ♖d6 21.♖g4 ♙xe6 22.dxe6 ♗f8 23.e7 ♖xf4+ 24.♙f3 ♗f7 25.♖xg7+ ♗xg7 26.e8=♗+, when White's material advantage will prove decisive.

18... ♖b6?! The move has several merits: attacking b2, overprotecting d4 and d6, and enabling the queen to swing over to the kingside. However, it was imperative to deter the advance of White's two central connected passed pawns: 18...g5 18.♙e3 (18.♙d2 ♙f6 19.♗g1 ♙d7 21.♗e3 b5 22.d6 ♙c6 23.a4 ♖xd6 24.axb5 ♗xb5 25.e5 ♙xe5) 18...♙g4 20.♖xg4 ♗xc2 21.♖e6+ ♗g7 22.♙d2 ♖d6 23.♖xd6 ♙xd6 24.♖c1 ♖f8+ 25.♗g1 ♗d4 26.♖e1 (but not 26.♙xg5 ♗e2+!!), and Black has successfully clamped the centre.

19.♖b1?! In the flurry of parallel activity, Black is the beneficiary of more additional lives than they may suspect: 19.e5!

19... ♔d7 20. ♖e3 ♙a6?! Black should play 20... g5 21. ♔e5 ♕f6 22. ♕xf6 ♙xf6+ 23. ♖g1 ♜f8 24. ♙d2 ♖f3+ 25. ♕xf3 ♙xf3 26. ♔e1 ♙xe4 27. ♖xc4 ♙xc4 28. ♙xg5+ ♖h8, when White has nothing better than a perpetual check.

21. ♖g1 ♙xa2?! Just wrong. Correct was 21... ♜f8 22.e5 ♙g6 (22...g5 23.d6 ♕xd6 24.♕d5+ ♖h8 25.♙h5 ♕e7 26.♕e4 ♖f5 27.♖xf5 ♕xf5 28.♕xf5 ♜xf5 29.♙e8+ ♕f8 30.♕xg5 ♙g6 31.♙xg6 hxg6 32.♕f6+ ♖g8) 23.♖h1 (23.♜c1 b5 24.e6 ♕e8 25.♖c2 ♜xf4 26.gxf4 ♙f6 27.♙d2 ♖f5 28.b3 c3 29.♙e2) 23... ♕g5 24.e6 ♕xf4 25.gxf4 ♕e8 26.f5 ♖xf5 27.♖xf5 ♜xf5 28.♙g1 ♜f2 29.♙xf2, when White's slight edge is precipitously balanced.

22.d6 ♕d8 23.e5 c3?



Losing! Black must preserve approximate parity with, 23... ♕c6 24.h4 ♕xg2 25. ♖xg2 ♕b6 26. ♙f1 ♙b3 27. ♖e3 ♜f8 28. ♙xc4+ ♙xc4 29. ♖xc4 ♖f7, when any advantage White may retain is a minimal one.

My next move, winning Black's queen, is most natural but, perversely, a mistake which cedes to Black a comfortable initiative. The move presumes upon a protection which would overload the defence of the c2 square, as follows later.

I thought long and hard before delivering this check, probably my longest cogitation ever in a simul game. I was considering 24.bxc3, which seems to vary between crushing and checkmate: 24.bxc3 ♖e2+ 25. ♖h1 ♖xc3 and now I had missed the resource 26. ♙b3+

♕e6 27. ♙xa2 ♖xa2 28. ♜xb7 ♖b4 (offering White the exchange) 29.h4 a5 30. ♜xb4 cxb4 31. ♕xa8 a4 32. ♖d5 g5 (but not 32... ♕xd5?? 33. ♕xd5+ ♖f8 (33... ♖h8 34. e6 ♕xh4 35.e7 ♕xe7 36.dxe7 h6 37.e8+ ♙+ 38. ♕f7 b3 39. ♙g8#) 34.e6 g5 35. ♕xg5 ♕xg5 36.hxg5 ♖e8 37. ♕c6+ ♖f8 38.e7+ ♖g7 39.e8+ ♙h6 40. ♙e7+ ♖g6 41. ♙f6+ 41... ♖h7 (41... ♖h5 42. ♕f3#) 42.gxh6 a3 43. ♙g7#) 33. ♕c1 and now there are two options: a) 33... gxh4 34. ♖xb4 ♕a5 35. ♖d3 hxg3 36. ♖f4 ♕d7 37. ♕d5+ ♖g7 38. ♖g2 h5 39.e6 wins the house;

b) 33... a3 34. ♖xb4 a2 35. ♖xa2 gxh4 36. ♖b4 hxg3 37. ♖d3 ♕a5 38. ♖f4 ♖f7 39. ♕f3 ♕c4 40. ♖g2 ♖e8 41. ♕g4; and White's additional piece enables a win with leisure.

24. ♕d5+?



24... ♙xd5 25. ♖xd5 c2! This is the overload. I had of course seen it in my calculations, but not necessarily evaluated the concomitant situations with sufficient precision.

26. ♙f1 ♕b5

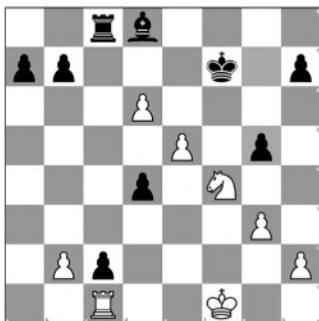


This attempt to deflect the queen from the back row is better deployed via 26...♙h3, but, in each case, 27.♖e1? would be met by 27...♜f3+ when the c-pawn promotes, unopposed, capturing the b1 rook.

27.♖c1 ♙xf1 28.♜xf1 ♜f7 29.♙e3 ♖c8?! Better was 29...♙e6! 30.♙xd4 ♜xd5! 31.♙xc5 ♖c8 32.b4 ♙e6.

30.♙xd4?! Restoring Black's initiative. After 30.b4 b6 31.♙xd4 (31.♜f4 g5 32.♙xd4 cxd4 transposes) 31... cxd4 32.♜f4 g5 33.e6+ ♜f6 34.e7 ♙xe7 35.♜d5+ ♙e5 36.♜xe7 d3 37.♙e1 ♖f8 38.♜d2 ♜xd6, White has an edge.

30...cxd4 31.♜f4 g5 The move is good, but 31...d3 32.♜xd3 ♙e6 33.h4 g5 34.b4 b6 35.♜e1 gxf4 36.♜xc2 ♙xe5 37.d7 ♖c4 38.gxf4 ♙e6 is better. Black has a more than comfortable game.



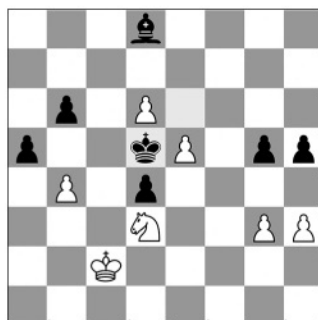
32.♜d3? In this position, White really required attack as the best form of defence: 32.e6+ ♜f6 33.e7 ♙xe7 34.♜d5+ ♙e5 35.♜xe7 ♖f8+ 36.♙e2 ♜xd6 37.♖xc2 ♖e8 38.♜d3 ♖xe7 39.♜xd4, when White faces a difficult rook and pawn endgame, a pawn to the worse.

32...a5?! Black hands back too much of his lead. Necessary was 32...g4 33.♜f4 d3 34.♜xd3 ♙e6 35.♙e2 ♙g5 36.♜f4+ ♙xe5 37.d7 ♖c7 38.h3 gxf3 39.♜xf3 ♙f6, when Black is still favourite in the following endgame.

33.♙e2 b6? It is true to say that Black now has no residual advantage;

33...a4 would have best preserved his advantage: for example, 34.♜b4 (34.♜e1 ♙e6 35.♜d3 ♙xe5 36.♜xc2 ♖xd6 37.♖a1 b5 38.♜xd4 ♖b6 39.b3 axb3 40.♙c3 b2) 34...♙e6 35.♜d3 ♙xe5 36.♜xc2 ♜xd6, with a comfortable lead.

34.♜d2 ♖c6 35.♖xc2 ♖xc2+ 36.♙xc2 ♙e6 37.b4 h5 38.h3 ♜d5??



Although not a blunder of material, this move causes the loss of the game. 38... b5 (38...h4 is also equal) 39.bxa5 ♙xa5 40.g4 h4 41.♜b2 ♜d5 42.♜b3 ♙e6, and Black is level: neither side can make much headway.

39.b5! ♙e6 After my next, I finally succeeded in creating a blockade which is a tribute to the strategies of both Nimzowitsch and his disciple, Petrosian.

40.g4 hxg4 41.hxg4 ♜d5 42.♜b2 ♙e6 43.♙a3 ♜d5 44.♜b3 ♙e6 45.♙c4 Black resigns

1-0

An extraordinary tussle, where Black put up a huge fight before finally succumbing in the endgame.

Openings

for Amateurs By Pete Tamburro; ptamburro@aol.com

ARMSTRONG - THE AUSTRALIAN GRUENFELD

In Purdy's old and great Chess World magazine, he had a high respect for the opening theory that D.M. Armstrong wrote about and played. In the October 1948 issue, Armstrong wrote a theory article with a game of his in a line that is played today by the very best. He reminded us that Capa and Lasker fought it out on this battlefield back in 1914. Now it's Caruana and Carlsen and Nakamura and Mamedyarov. With all these chess geniuses producing these games, what is the average player supposed to understand about it all? The key is to take important ideas away. Sure, look at the variations for the best move order, but that won't make you a better player if you don't understand the importance of why you're playing that line. OK, you get 10 or even sometimes 15 moves and you're just like Capa or Caruana, but do you get what's going on? This Armstrong game has a clear example of how you treat the pawn structure, much as Capa did, but a little differently. If you accomplish that, both you and I will be happy!

D.M. Armstrong - G Karoly [C80]

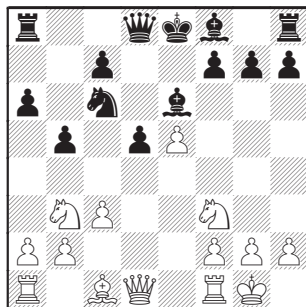
Australian Open; Melbourne, 1948

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 a6 4.♙a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♗xe4 6.d4 b5 7.♙b3 d5 8.dxe5 ♙e6 9.♗bd2 ♗c5 10.c3 ♗xb3 As practised by Carlsen and Mamedyarov in recent years, the preference is now for 10...♙e7 11.♙c2 d4 12.♗b3 (If 12.♗e4 dxc3 13.♗xc5 ♙xc5 14.♙e4 ♗d7 15.bxc3 ♗d8 16.♗xd7+ ♗xd7 17.♗d1 ♗e7 and MCO back then said "advantage to Black," to which Armstrong replied, "clearly absurd". It's best to say it's equal or unclear.) 12...d3

13.♙b1 ♗xb3 14.axb3 ♙f5 15.♙e3 0-0 16.♙d4 as Caruana played in his win over the latter, but there is also (16.♗e1 and 16.♗d4. Which is better will be perhaps determined by elites.).

An alternative is 10...d4, which Lasker played against Capablanca. That resulted in the famous Capa B+N vs. Lasker's R with three pawns each on the kingside. Tarrasch also claimed in annotating the game that Lasker bewitched his opponents! 11.♙xe6 (11.cxd4 ♗xd4 12.♗xd4 ♗xd4 Capa-Lasker to this point. At an amateur level it might be worth a try to grab the pawn: 13.♗f3 ♗d8 14.♙xe6 ♗xe6 15.♗c6+ ♗d7 16.♗xa6 At worst White is equal: knight to f3 or b3 and ♙e3 will untangle things. Black still has to take two moves to castle. Black get active play, but will Black figure out what to do to negate the extra pawn?) 11...♙xe6 12.cxd4 ♗cxd4 13.a4 ♙b4! 14.axb5 ♗xb5 15.♗c4 (15.♗a4!?) 15...0-0 16.♙e3, with a tough ending in prospect.

11.♗xb3

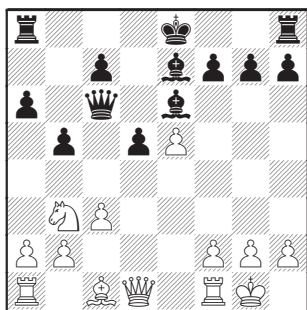


In all the times I've played this online, only one person with Black didn't go with grabbing the bishop for the wonderful advantage of the two bishops. However, look at the position. The two bishops have little scope. One's a glorified pawn. The white knights have enticing squares at d4 and c5 and their one bishop partner can head for e3 to help control those squares for knight occupation. It's not yet a win, but at least it's somewhat of an advantage and a decent plan for coming out of the opening to set up for the middle game, thus delaying my "ten move rule".

11...♙e7 12.♘fd4! He must have read Capa as well! Black's exchanging will make that critical pawn move to c5 very difficult; however, it's hard to suggest anything else other than the text, protecting the knight. It's interesting how that one positional theme haunts Black.

12...♖d7 Suicidal is 12...♗xe5? 13.♖e1 ♗g6 14.♗xe6 fxe6 15.♗d4 e5 16.♗e6 ♖d7 17.♖xd5! ♖xd5 18.♗xc7+ ♔f7 19.♗xd5 and some rudimentary endgame skill will bring home the win.

13.♗xc6 ♖xc6



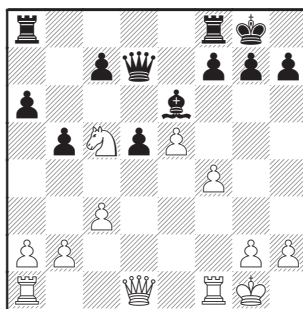
And now the queen is blocking the advance of the c-pawn and gives White time to dominate c5.

14.♙e3 0-0 15.f4 And then of course, lest we forget there are two sides of the chess board, White initiates threatening action

on the kingside. As we saw in the previous games, this can happen fairly frequently.

15...♖d7 16.♙c5! ♙xc5+ Black can try defence with g6, with a plan to get queenside counterplay and c5 in, but White's activity gets there first in exciting style: 16...g6 17.h3 a5 18.♖d2 a4 19.♙xe7 ♖xe7 20.♗d4 ♙d7 21.f5 ♖xe5 22.♖ae1 ♖f6 23.fxg6 ♖xg6 24.♖f3 c5 25.♖e5 f6 26.♗f5±.

17.♗xc5



The knight takes the high ground, and no other minor piece can take him - ever! It's not that there's some brilliant combination afoot. Positional players are confident that such a superior piece placement is an investment in the future. It makes the black queen rook "inefficient" by having to defend the a-pawn from a piece of lesser value and that wretched c-pawn is stuck in the back ranks. Also, you never can tell when a timely e6 thrust will come in down the road. You have to have patience. Your opening gave you an advantage. Now develop its potential.

17...♖e7 18.♖d4 ♙f5 19.b4! Yes, it frees the queen of defence, but it also threatens a ♗b3 move to prevent a5. Black should, however, play a5 right now.

Although the pawn grab was alluring, White apparently didn't like the activity Black would have after 19.♖xd5 ♖ad8 20.♖c6 ♖d2 21.b4 ♖fd8.

19...c6 19...a5 20.♟xd5 axb4 21.cxb4 ♖a3 22.♖ad1 h6 23.♖f2 and White is still in the driver's seat, but at least Black has a target on a2.

20.♘b3 That locks down any a5 thoughts for now.

20...f6 21.♖ae1 White's edge would lessen after 21.exf6 ♟xf6

21...fxe5 22.♖xe5?! There were three choices. Taking with the pawn would create a new phase of the game with the passed e-pawn. Don't forget the knight's ability to support the e6 idea from c5; if Black commits all his pieces to defence on the kingside, then the g1-a7 diagonal can become a hunting ground for the queen. Thus, 22.fxe5 ♟g5 23.e6 ♙e4 24.g3 ♟g6 25.♖xf8+ ♖xf8 26.♘c5 ♙f5 27.♟e5 (27.e7 ♖e8 28.♟f4 ♙h3 29.♘b7 h5 and Black has counterplay on the White first rank: 30.♘d6 ♖xe7! 31.♖xe7 ♟b1+ 32.♘f2 ♟f1+ 33.♘e3 ♟e1+ 34.♘d4 ♟xe7 35.♟e5 ♟a7+=).

22...♟f6 23.♟e3 ♟g6 Awww...he's going to threaten mate. A moral victory.

24.♖e1 Perhaps better to keep the edge is 24.h3 ♙e4 (24...h5 25.♖f3 h4 26.g4 ♙e4 27.♖f2) 25.g4.

24...♙e4 25.g3 Keeping an advantage after the opening is difficult with the clock running. Opening up light squares for that bishop is not forced yet: 25.♖e2.

25...♖ae8 26.♖xe8 ♖xe8 27.♘c5 White's best chance is still 27.h3. Black, hoping to attack the white king, may not be able to take advantage of a steady advance of the kingside pawns as White progresses in his plan to then exchange all the pieces, after which the king and pawn ending is an easy win as the black pawns are stymied.

27...♟h5 28.♟e2 ♟xe2 29.♖xe2 That was very thoughtful of Black to help along the piece exchanges. White can now relax - without being inattentive, though.

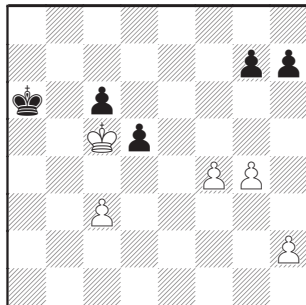
29...a5 29...♖a8 30.♘xe4 dxe4 31.♖xe4 a5 32.a3 axb4 33.axb4 ♖a3 34.♖e3 ♖a2 35.♖e8+ ♘f7 36.♖c8 ♖c2 37.♖xc6 g6 38.♖c5+.

30.bxa5 ♖a8 31.a6 Remember that "inefficiency" we talked about? It rears its ugly head once again.

31...♘f7 32.♘f2 ♙f5 33.a4 bxa4 34.♖a2 ♘e7 35.♘e3 Keeping the knight on c5 is more important. The a-pawn can wait.

35...♘d6 36.♘d4 ♙c8 37.♖xa4 ♘c7 38.♖a2! A retreat with a purpose: a threat to invade the kingside while still keeping pressure on the queenside. Black is all jumbled up. The game is over.

38...♘b6 39.♖b2+ ♘c7 40.g4 ♙xa6 41.♖a2 ♘b6 42.♖xa6+ ♖xa6 43.♘xa6 ♖xa6 44.♘c5



1-0

The opening moves of White beam with pride as their offspring conquer c5 and the backward c-pawn. In all my years of teaching, the easiest positional idea to present to students is what to do against a pawn structure weakness, whether it's in the Nimzo or the Open Defence or anything else with structural issues. They tend also to be lasting weaknesses and frankly give something of a plan to developing players that they can understand. That's it for the various ways of meeting the Open Defence to the Ruy Lopez. The games and players referenced above are worth checking out. It's not always as easy as it looks!

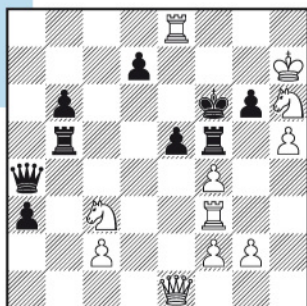
PROBLEM WORLD

by Christopher Jones

cjajones1@yahoo.co.uk

Grandmaster of Chess Composition

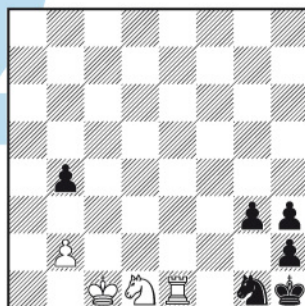
Solutions are given on page 702



Leonid Lyubashevsky and
Leonid Makaronez (Israel)

Mate in 3

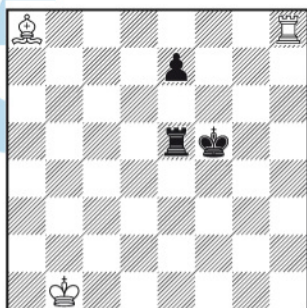
ORIGINAL



Paul Michelet (London)

Mate in 6

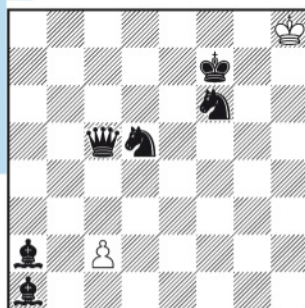
ORIGINAL



Stanislav Hudak (Slovakia)

Helpmate in 3 - 2 solutions

ORIGINAL



Yuri Bilokin (Ukraine)

Helpmate in 6

ORIGINAL

QUOTES AND QUERIES

HENRY ERNEST ATKINS

By Alan Smith

6241 Henry Ernest Atkins was the second BCF champion. He followed up a loss to Napier in the tied match of the 1904 event, with victory at Southport 1905. Victories in the next six championships established a record of seven consecutive wins that stands to this day.

Atkins's tournament record overall is impressive. He finished at least equal third in all but one of these events. He was tenth at London 1922, behind Capablanca, Alekhine, Vidmar and Rubinstein.

The three games below are recent discoveries, the second of which, in particular, deserves to be more widely known.

Henry Atkins - W. Withers

Leicester CC 1895

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 ♘f6 4.d3 ♙c5 5.c3 ♞e7 5...d6 is playable.

6.0-0 0-0 7.d4 exd4? This is at odds with his previous play: 7...♙b6 is best.

8.cxd4 ♙b6 9.e5 ♘d5 10.♙c4 ♘db4 11.a3 ♘a6 12.b4 ♘ab8 13.♞e1 Kh8 13...d6 14.♙g5 ♞d7 15.e6!

14.♙g5 ♞e8 15.d5 ♘d8 16.h3 c6 17.♘c3 cxd5 18.♘xd5 ♞e6 19.♞c1 1-0 19...♞e8 hangs on for a while but 20.♙e7 ♞g8 21.♙d6 is very strong, eg 21...♘dc6 22.♘xb6 axb6 23.♘g5 ♘d8 24.♞h5!

Nottinghamshire Guardian,
9th March 1895



Hastings 1895 was Atkins's debut tournament. He won his preliminary section with +5 =2, half a point ahead of Dr Smith. The game between the two was critical and worthy of the occasion.

Dr Stephen Francis Smith - Henry Atkins

Hastings Amateur, 1895

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♙g5 ♙e7 5.e3 b6 6.♙xf6 ♙xf6 7.♘f3 ♙b7 8.cxd5 exd5 9.♞c1 9...♙d3 0-0 10.h4 transposes into Mason - Loman London 1892 which continued 10...h5? 11.♘g5 g6 12.g4 ♙xg5 13.hxg5 h4 14.f4 and 1-0 in 32 moves.

10...g6 11.h4 h6! A move to keep his defences flexible: 11...h5 is too static.

12.g4 ♖g7! 13.♔d2 Clearing his back rank in preparation for shifting his pieces to the g-file.

13...c5 14.♖g1 ♖c6 15.♗e2 cxd4 16.♗fxd4 16.exd4 leaves his knights tied to the defence of d4.

16...♗xd4! Calculating that his knight is the better attacking piece.

17.exd4 ♖d6 Threatening 18...♗xd4! 19.♗xd4 ♖f4+ 20.♗c3 ♖ac8+.

18.f4 ♖fe8 19.a3 19.h5 ♖b4+ 20.♗c2 ♖xe2+ 21.♗xe2 ♗xd4+ 22.♗d1 ♗xe2 23.♗xe2 ♖xf4.

19...♖e7 20.h5 ♖ae8 21.♖f2 21.hxg6 does not work; 21...♖xe2+! 22.♗xe2 ♖xf4+ 23.♗d1 ♗xd4 24.♖h2 ♖xe2! 25.♖xe2 ♖xc1+!

21...♗a5 22.hxg6 22.♖c3 ♗c4+ 23.♗d2 puts up more of a fight.

22...♗b3+ 23.♗c2? 23.♗d1 was his last hope.

23...♖xe2+! 24.♗xe2 ♖xe2+ 25.♖xe2 ♗xd4+ 26.♗d2 ♗xe2 27.♗xe2 ♖xf4 28.gxf7+ ♗f8 29.♖cg1 ♗a6+ 30.♗d1 ♗d3 31.g5 ♖f2 0-1, in 32 moves.

Nottinghamshire Guardian,
14th September 1895

Henry Atkins - George Bellingham

Birmingham, 1899

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♗c3 ♗e7 4.♗f4 ♗f6 5.e3 0-0 6.♗f3 b6 6...c5 is best.

7.♗d3 ♗b7 8.0-0 ♗bd7 9.♖e2 c5 10.♖fd1 ♖c8 11.♗e5 ♗e4? Usually a desirable freeing move, but here it just loses a pawn.

12.♗xe4 dxe4 13.dxc5 ♗c6 14.cxb6 axb6 15.♗xd7 ♗xd7 16.♗xe4 f5 17.♗c3 ♖c6

18.♗b5 ♖e8 19.♗a7 g5 20.♗xc6 ♗xc6 21.♗d6 g4 22.♖d2 ♗f6 23.♗xe7 1-0

Sunday Daily Telegraph,
9th April 1899

THE FIRST BRITISH WOMEN'S CHAMPION

6242 The first player to win the British Ladies' championship with a 100% score was Eileen Tranmer. Here is the only surviving game from this feat.

Jane Sadler Rees - Eileen Tranmer

BCF Ladies ch Felixstowe, 1949

1.d4 ♗f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 ♗g7 4.e4 d6 5.f4 c5 6.d5 0-0 7.h3? Neither this nor her next move addresses the needs of her position. In this position, 7.♗f3 is best.

7...e6 8.♗d2? exd5 9.cxd5 ♗xe4! A thematic pseudo-sacrifice.

10.♗xe4 ♖e8 11.♖c2 ♗f5 12.♗d3 ♗xe4 13.♗xe4 f5 14.0-0-0 ♖xe4 15.♗f3 ♗a6 16.♖he1 ♗b4 17.♖b3 ♖b6 18.♖xe4 Not liking the look of 18.♗xb4 ♖xb4.

18...♗d3+! A clever *zwischenzug*.

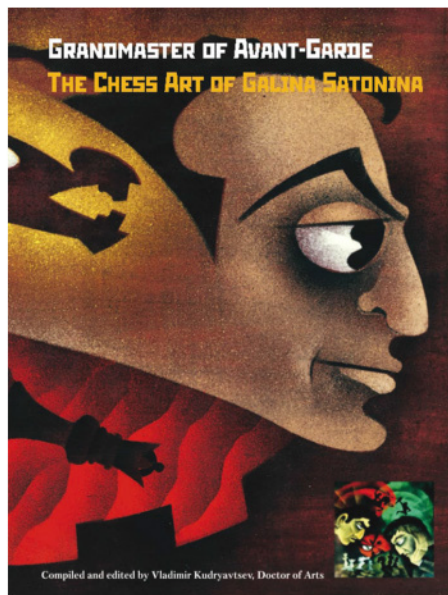
19.♗c2 19.♖xd3?? ♖xb2#

19...♖xb3+ 20.♗xb3 fxe4 21.♗g5 c4+ 22.♗c2 ♖e8 23.♗e6 ♗f6 24.♖g1 e3! 25.♗xe3 ♗b4+! ...0-1 26.♗d2 ♗xd5 27.♗d4 ♗xe3.

Acton Gazette,
26th August 1949

A MULTI-FACETED ART: A REVIEW OF “GRANDMASTER OF AVANT-GARDE: **THE CHESS ART OF GALINA SATONINA**”, COMPILED AND EDITED BY VLADIMIR KUDRYAVTSEV, ELK AND RUBY 2023

By Peter O'Brien



The numerous links between art, especially painting, and chess have been a constant theme in pages of the BCM. What we have not done until now, however, is to focus on a female painter who devoted a major part of her work to persons and subjects strongly identified with chess. Still more intriguingly, the artist concerned had to navigate right through the Soviet period, with all the perils facing artistic expression in those 70 years. For Galina Satonina's life spanned virtually the whole of the 20th century (b. 1905 - d.2000), she was a Kazak, part of her family perished in the bloody 1930s, and she was not afraid to produce works which showed individuals towards whom the Soviet system was not always well inclined.

The book before us is essentially pictorial - it is to be looked at and savoured, though the text of Dr Kudryavtsev's introduction does indeed provide very valuable historical and contextual material. It is far more coffee table than chess board. Rich, intense colours dominate most pages, reflecting Satonina's will to showcase not just the force involved in the chess struggle, but also that in life itself. The message could scarcely be more direct than in the title of a late 1930s piece (oil on plywood) "Chess Tempers the Will and Teaches Us to Win in the Fight". These are not frescoes for the faint-hearted, but rather dynamic blows, aimed to shock and jolt. Where we see softer, gentler colours and shapes, Satonina is not depicting chess but rather her other great loves, music and poetry. Though Philidor of course figures highly in both the music and chess worlds, the triptych of Bach, arguably the greatest of all composers, reflects harmony in music and the world. The creations devoted to Mayakofsky, and in particular his famous poem "Black and White", are directly aimed at life and its perils.

These remarks are enough to demonstrate that Satonina, along with superb chess players such as Romanowsky, Ilyin-Zhenevsky and many others, was in fact utterly imbued with the Soviet idea that everything could and should be revolutionised. In Kazan, her birthplace, an art school was forming even before the Revolution. Despite the chronic shortage of materials with which to work, gifted artists were somehow managing to produce tableaux which indicate that they were certainly aware of the whirlwinds of change sweeping through the art world across the globe. For Satonina herself, significant production of all sorts became visible from the 1930s onwards. She in fact

started the chess dimension of her output by doing frontispieces for books, designing spreads for folding books, producing illustrations of which a caricaturist would be proud, and generally leading the way in showing that chess and chess-related things were a more than worthy subject for an artist. In this versatile approach she paralleled such figures as Duchamp and Man Ray. Like the former, she played with the creation of pocket chess sets. Though the materials scarcity did not allow her to go as far as she would have wished, there is no doubt that she was pioneering one of the branches of the game.

While the first half of Satonina's life certainly produced a splendid range of chess-related design and illustration, the full focus on the game only became apparent from the late 1960s onwards. It was then that a series of massive portraits, often dedicated to individual players but also firmly illustrating the demonic ideas brought by the game, flowed onto the scene. The colours and style unequivocally convey the sharpest messages. In this, her work follows the monumentalism characteristic of the many authoritarian regimes which had dominated so many parts of the world in earlier decades



of the century. For chess players themselves, these two dimensions of her work both offer an exceptionally stark view of the game, and provide a splendid pictorial gallery of many of the greatest names in the game. Certain characters appear more than once, and in different guises. Lasker, for instance, is portrayed with "Einstein on his Mind" (the famous relativity formula crosses the brain of the polymath), as well as in his love of playing cards (about which he wrote in depth). Tal appears more than once, on each occasion as if he were the most aerodynamic form of racing helmet to be worn by a champion downhill racer.

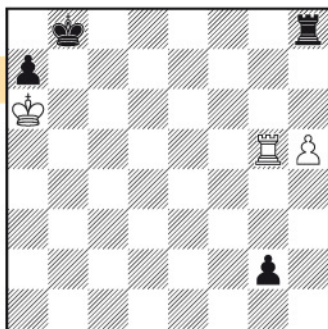
The monumentalism is, all the same, tempered by some later caricature-style work. It is as if Satonina simultaneously wanted to highlight both the life/struggle dimensions of the game and its heroes as well as the lighter elements that can come with tournaments themselves. On the surface, the two features seem paradoxical, almost contradictory. Yet I think she is right to show them both. Why? Because in reality even the fiercest aspects of life can often be handled only if those involved do not lose sight of what can be enjoyed. In this respect her treatment of individual chess pieces seems to me perfectly right. As for so many others, there is no doubt that her favourite piece is the knight. The game would lose so much if the dexterity of the steed were absent from the board. Straight lines and diagonals are all very well - yet surely it is the ability to leap over others, to be constantly shifting from one colour square to another, that gives so much richness to the game.

The book gives us a wonderful look into the work of an artist who had a truly holistic sense of the world. That she chose chess as a vehicle for exhibiting some of her beliefs and ideas is something of which the game can be proud. The words here can only give an impression of what Satonina did. I recommend readers to give themselves the pleasure of looking at the book and forming their own ideas about how another artist saw the game.

Endgame Studies

by Ian Watson

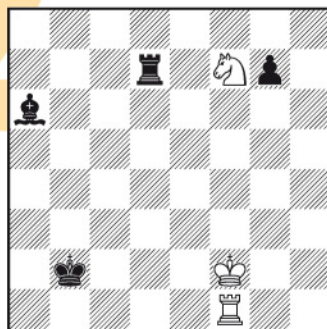
ian@irwatson.uk



A. Wotawa

Deutsche Schachblätter 1941

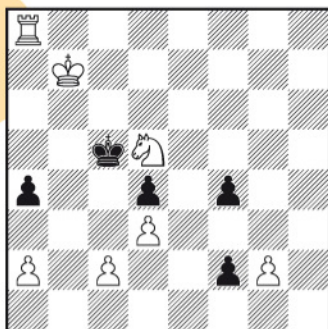
"DRAW" (but see below)



A. Wotawa

Osterreichische Schachzeitung 1952

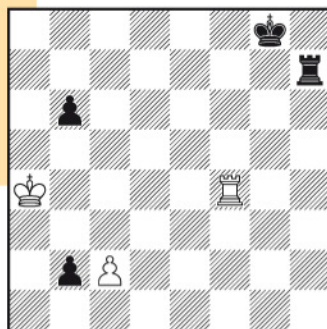
DRAW



A. Wotawa

Deutsche Schachzeitung 1970

WIN



A. Wotawa

Deutsche Schachzeitung 1953

DRAW

BUSTED!

'Busted' means a study which is completely unsound: a draw study where Black can win, or a win study where White can't win.

In the September issue, I told you about test-solving, and shortly after I wrote that column, I had to test-solve eight studies for an online study-solving tourney. I tested our first study this month, the 1941 Wotawa. I successfully solved it, and sat back smugly, because I'd succeeded in solving a toughie, and quickly too. I then tested it using my laptop, which approved. However, I noticed that the diagram is a 7-man position, so, just in case, I decided to waste some time putting it to the 7-man databases. You can guess - they said Black wins. It took me a while to understand why. Here's the composer's solution: 1.♖b5+ ♘a8 2.♖g5 ♖h6+ 3.♘a5 ♖xh5 4.♘a6 ♖h6+ 5.♘a5 ♖h2 6.♘a6 ♘b8 7.♖g7 ♘c8 8.♘xa7 ♖h7 9.♘a8 ♖h1 10.♖g8+ ♘c7 11.♖g7+ ♘b6 12.♖g6+ drawing.

So, what's wrong with that? A clever study with an attractive and clear-cut drawing mechanism, isn't it? What Wotawa, and I, and my computer, all overlooked is that Black can lose a tempo. The trick is 7...♖a6+ 8.♘a5 ♖h5+ 9.♘a6 ♖h2 and we have the same position as after 7.♖g7, but with White to play and he is in an unexpected and pleasing zugzwang. If White tries to keep the black king on the eighth rank, by playing 10.♖b7+ ♘c8 11.♖g7, then Black is just in time to walk along the eighth, force the white rook back, and walk down the board before the white king can get back. Perhaps this study can be remade, with reversed colours, as a win study? The composer would be Wotawa and Syzygy jointly. The original study was good, but the remade one would arguably be better (and sound...).

Now, to do justice to that fine composer, Alois Wotawa, you have three more of his studies (for you to solve). Hopefully, all sound. You may notice the 1953 study is also a 7-man position; so, of course, I tested it on the databases. The databases approved, except that they found that Wotawa's solution has a dual on move eight, so I have shortened the formal solution to seven moves. The 1952 study is also seven pieces but passed the database check with no issues.

Wotawa was an Austrian composer who died in 1970. One of the greats of his era. Many of his studies contain moves that are very surprising indeed, so solving them can be a delightful experience.

The solutions are on page 703.

SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS

This month's problems

Having last month concentrated on helpmates in three, this month we have mixture of direct mates and helpmates and a mixture of three-movers and six-movers! For once, the first problem is not an easy starter; indeed, it is I think much the most difficult to solve. As usual with our distinguished Israeli contributors, there is a lot of play (as you'd expect with both queens on the board, both with great freedom of movement), all of it very accurate. When you see the idea of the second problem (a warm welcome back to Paul, after some time away from BCM) the details should fit into place quite readily. And then two helpmates, by no means the most difficult we've had - as regulars will know, we are looking for collaborative sequences (e.g., in Stanislav's problem two BWBWBW sequences) leading to mate.

Queen's play...

...is how the two Leonids 'subtitle' their problem. Your attention may be drawn to the strong move 1.♖g3. If Black defends against the threat of 2.♖xg6♯ by playing 1...♖g5 then 2.fxg5 is mate. However, he has one adequate defence, 1...g5. This may lead you to the key move - 1.♕e4!. Now we do threaten 2.♖g3 in earnest, for if 2...g5 then 3.♕xf5 will be mate. Black can't capture the white queen, as 2.♘xe4 is mate. But the mobility of the black queen gives rise to numerous defences, all accurately refuted. It turns out that the black queen fulfils many defensive functions specifically by being at a4, and being deflected from that square is disastrous. Thus, 1...♕xc2 allows 2.♕a8!, to be followed by 3.♕d8♯; and 1...♕b3, no longer guarding e4, is met by a nice sacrifice to vacate that square - 2.♕c6+! dxc6 3.♘e4♯. The deflection motif seen after 1...♕a7(!) is even more subtle. Perhaps in examining the position you noted that checks by the h6 knight were indeed only checks, because they granted the black king a flight square at f7, and that if White placed a further guard on f7 with ♘g8 in order to threaten ♘g4♯ in earnest, then he ran into the checking defence 2.♕b3+. Well, 1...♕a7 is the first of the moves we've considered that takes the queen to a square that is not in reach of b3, so now 2.♘g8! does work, with the ensuing variations 2...exf4 3.♕e7; 2...♖xf4 3.♕xg6, 2...♖g5 3.fxe5 and 2...gxh5

3.♕xf5. (1...d5, blocking the b3-g8 line, similarly runs into 2.♘g8!.)

Further lines are 1...♕c4 2.♕xc4 exf4 (or ♖xf4) 3.♘e4 (or here 2...d5 3.Qc6); 1...♕b4 2.♕xb4, followed by 2...♖xb4/♖c5 3.♘d5/♘e4; and 1...d6 2.♕b7! ♕xf4 3.♕e7. A fantastic multitude of squares visited by both queens in their duel, tremendous accuracy (unique second move continuations for White) and no little subtlety. Very well done if you saw even part of the play in this solution!

a six-mover as light relief?!

An experienced solver will expect that White will unpin the black knight in circumstances in which mate will follow on the first rank. This can't be by the white rook's moving off the rank and then just returning to it. So we need to set up a prospective battery mate, and this entails manoeuvring so that the white rook lands up to the west, rather than the east, of the white knight. This is how it's done - 1.♖f1! (there are some transpositional possibilities later in the solution, but not on move one!) ♘g2 2.♘e3+ ♘h1 3.♘b1! b3 4.♖c1! g2 5.♘d1 ♘e2/♘f3 6.♘f2. 4.♖c1 is a nice move - following the white king along the rank constitutes what a problemist would call a Bristol manoeuvre, and at the same time by

(See page 695)

moving to the other side of the d1 square the rook prepares White's ambush (in problemist parlance, an example of the Indian theme). Paul acknowledges the benefit of a 1927 forerunner problem, but his significant development of it rightly stands in his name.

back to helpmates - more light relief?

If you have an acquaintance with helpmates I think that you will find our two this month quite solver-friendly.

In Stanislav's we see two nice battery formations - 1.♔g4 ♕e4 2.♖g5 ♕h7 3.♔h5 ♕f5♯ and 1.♔e6 ♕d5+ 2.♔d7 ♕g8 3.♔e8 ♕e6♯. In Yuri's, we clearly have to promote the pawn. It has to be promotion to either a queen or a knight ... and, pleasingly, it turns out that it is promotion to a knight. What may also be surprising is that White, put in check by Black's first move, has to spend a move re-positioning his king before proceeding with his 'Excelsior' pawn march - 1.♔e8+ ♔h7 2.♖f8 c4 3.♔e7 c5 4.♕e6 c6 5.♕d7 cxd7 6.♕f6 d8=♔♯.

SOLUTIONS TO ENDGAMES

(See page 700)

Wotawa 1952

1.♔e5 ♖d2+ 2.♔e3 ♖e2+ 3.♔d4 ♖xe5 4.♖f6 gxf6 stalemate. Not only is 4.♖f6 a superb move, but the geometry of the conclusion is very pleasing too.
4...♖a5 5.♔g6.

Wotawa 1970

1.♔c7 ♔xd5 2.♔d7 ♔e5 3.♖f8 a3 4.♖f7 f1♖ 5.g4 fxg3 e.p. 6.♖xf1 wins. The surprise about 3.♖f8 is that it puts Black in zugzwang.

Wotawa 1953

1.♖g4+ ♔f8 2.♖f4+ ♔e8 3.♖e4+ ♔d8 4.♖d4+ ♔c8 5.♖b4 ♖a7+ 6.♔b5 ♖a5+ 7.♔c6 draws after e.g. 7...♖c5+ 8.♔xb6 ♖c7 9.♔a6 ♖xc2 10.♖b3 ♔c7 11.♔a5. The dual is in that line: 8.♔d6 also works.

The other sidelines are: 1...♔h8 or 1...♖g7 2.♖b4;

1...♔f7 2.♖g1 as Black doesn't have ...♖a7+ followed by ...♖a1;

5...♖h4 6.c4;

6...♖a2 7.♖b3;

7.♔xb6? ♖a8.



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