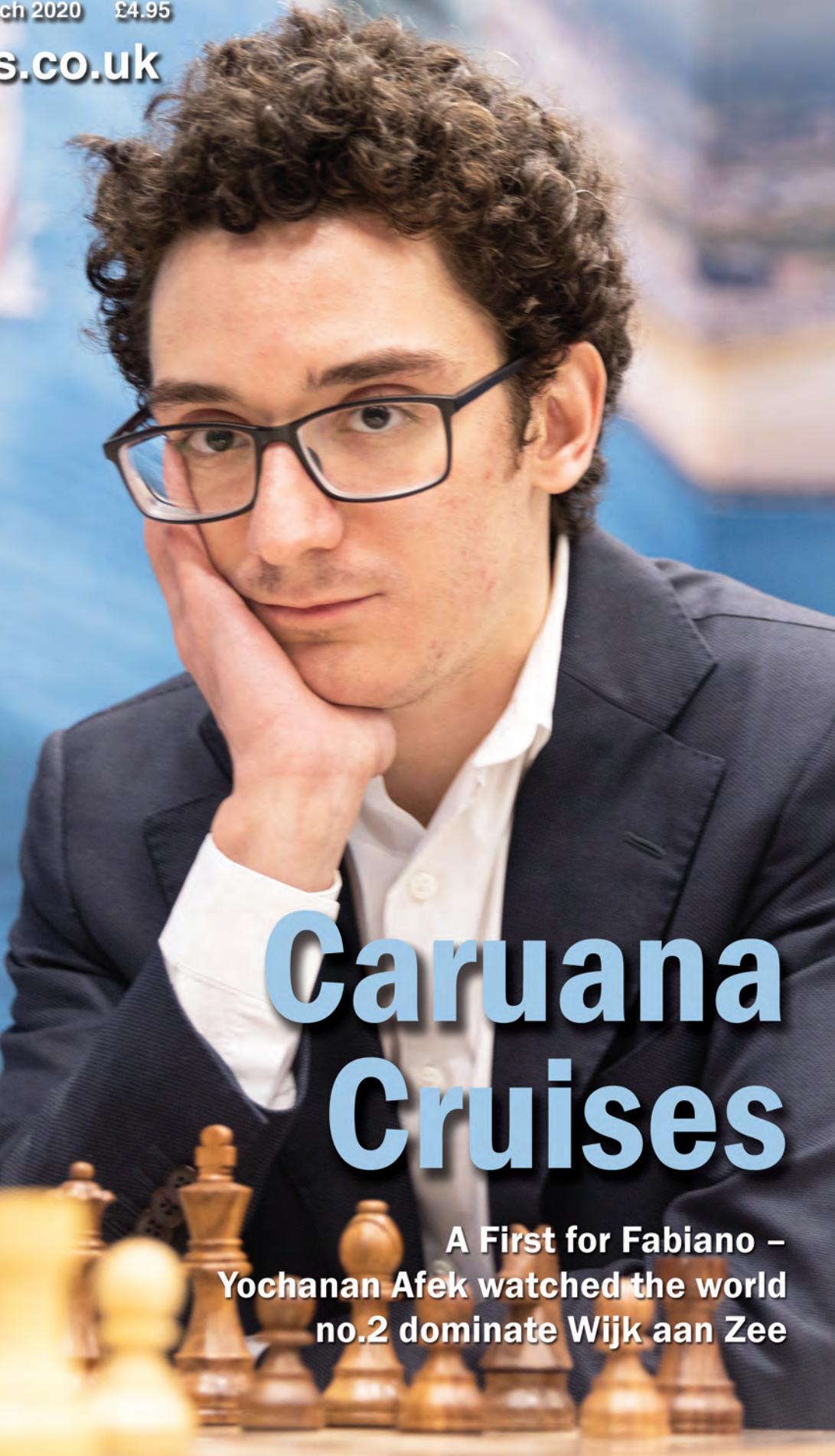


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Caruana Cruises

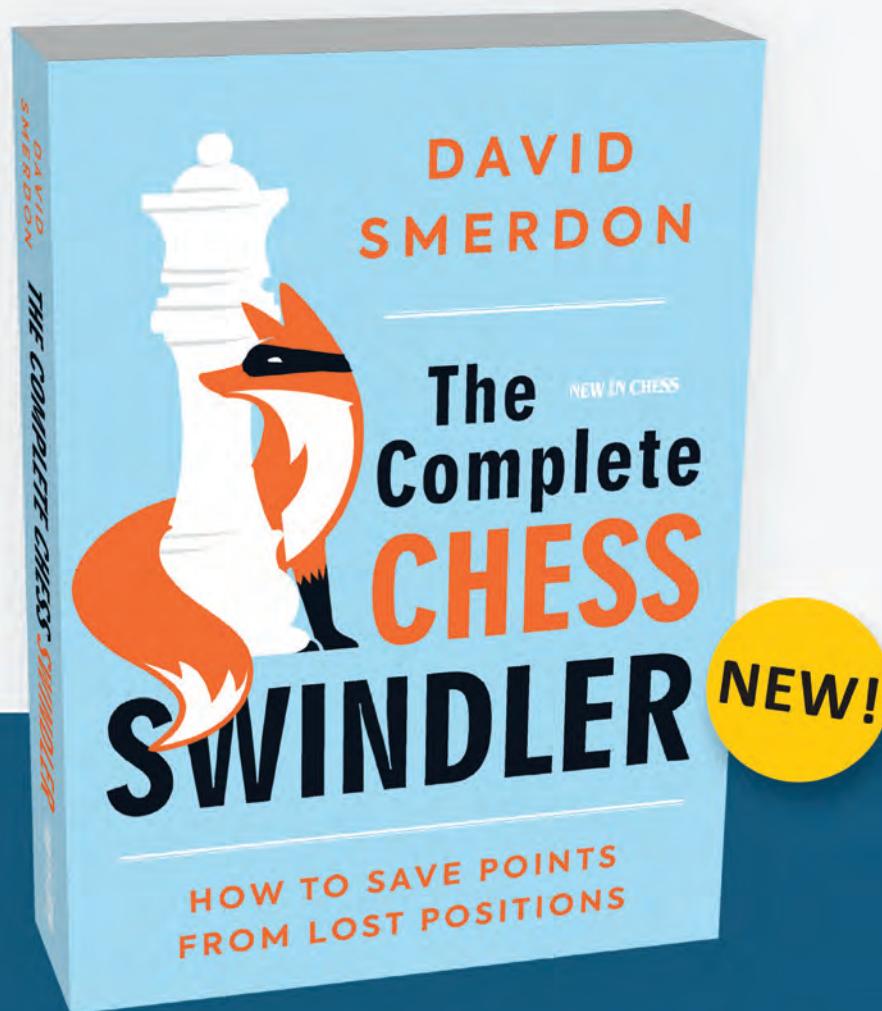
A First for Fabiano –
Yochanan Afek watched the world
no.2 dominate Wijk aan Zee



Karpov vs Fischer! – John Saunders saw Karpov take on Robert Fischer at Gibraltar
Ending Masterclass – Jon Speelman presents two high-level, instructive endgames
An Introduction to Prophylaxis II – Jose Vilela demystifies this important concept



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Twitter: @CHESS_Magazine

Twitter: @TelegraphChess – Malcolm Pein

Website: www.chess.co.uk

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Errata – Our apologies for the gremlins creeping in and the printing error on the cover of our previous issue, which was, of course, the February 2020 CHESS.



Chess Editorial

By Executive Editor, IM Malcolm Pein

@TelegraphChess

Caruana's Candidates Campaign

Don't underestimate this achievement: Fabiano Caruana's result at Wijk aan Zee, the pre-eminent all-play-all on the calendar, was on a par with those achieved on the Dutch coast by Garry Kasparov and Magnus Carlsen. Not only did the world number two match the highest-ever winning score of 10/13, he achieved a margin of victory over Carlsen of two full points.

This remarkable performance featured a finishing spurt of 6½/7 after a 3½/6 start and was reminiscent of Caruana's seven straight wins at the Sinquefield Cup back in 2014. It also propelled the American back to within 20 points of Magnus Carlsen on the rating list. Caruana at 2842 is just two points shy of his highest-ever rating, with Carlsen down to 2862 and Ding Liren adrift on 2805.

Seven of the top 12 rated players are in the Candidates tournament (Caruana, Ding Liren, Grischuk, Nepomniachtchi, Radjabov, Giri and Wang Hao), which begins on March 15th. The eighth Candidate is Kirill Alekseenko, who scored an uninspiring 6½/10 at Gibraltar and dropped out of the 2700 club. He is ranked 39 on the live list as I write.

Yochanan Afek covers Fabi's fabulous exploits inside. I'd like to highlight one of the coming men, Daniil Dubov, who had a solid '+1' performance at Wijk, after playing some sparkling and highly innovative chess in 2019. Dubov clearly benefits from having been involved in Carlsen's training set-up and is just outside the 2700 club on 2699.

D.Dubov-Yu Yangyi

Wijk aan Zee 2020

Slav Defence

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♜f3 ♜f6 4 ♜c3 e6 5 ♜g5 h6 6 ♜xf6 ♛xf6 7 e3 ♜d7 8 ♜e2 ♜b4

Having played White in this position countless times, I have always found 8...g6 a tougher nut to crack. This is the standard choice and if necessary the queen goes back to d8 when Black is very solid.

9 0-0 0-0 10 ♜c2 ♜xc3 11 ♜xc3 dxc4 12 ♜fd1 c5

As so often in this QGD structure, Black's principal task is to activate his light-squared bishop. 12...b5 13 ♜e5 ♜xe5 14 dxe5 ♛g6 15 ♜f3 might appear unattractive, but 15...b7 16 ♜d7 ♜ab8 17 ♛e3 ♛f5 18 ♛e7 ♛xe5 becomes quite murky, so here White might prefer 13 b3.

13 ♜xc4 a6 14 ♛a3



So that if 14...b5? 15 ♜xb5.

14...b6 15 ♜b5

This is reminiscent of Fischer-Spassky, 6th matchgame, Reykjavik 1972, where Fischer took the lead in the match:



Daniil Dubov scored '+1' for a share of fourth and a 2774 performance at Wijk. The 23-year-old is now up to 37th in the world.

Spassky's 14...a6 was met by 15 dxc5 bxc5 17 0-0 and White was better. Afterwards it was determined Black should play actively with 14...b7 15 dxc5 bxc5 16 ♜xc5 ♜xc5 17 ♜xc5 ♜a6, as in Timman-Geller, Hilversum 1973, where Black later activated his bishop by sacrificing his d-pawn with ...d5-d4, a recurring theme in the QGD.

15...♜d8?

After 15...♜a7! 16 ♜ac1 ♜c7 17 ♜xd7 ♜xd7 18 dxc5 ♜xd1+ 19 ♜xd1 bxc5 is only a tiny edge, or if 16 ♜xd7 ♜xd7 17 dxc5 bxc5 when Black's good bishop compensates for the isolated pawns. Topalov-Anand, the decisive 12th game of the 2010 World Championship match at Sofia was a classic example:



Anand continued 16...♝f6! 17 dxc5 ♜xe4 18 ♜xe4 bxc5 when his bishop going to b7 gave him good chances and he won the game to take the match.

16 ♜c6 ♜a7 17 dxc5! ♜xc5 18 ♛b4!



An incredibly annoying move: b6 is impossible to defend without going into full retreat mode, after which Black is confined to the first two ranks.

18...♝d7 19 ♛d6 ♜f8 20 ♜d2 ♜c5 21 ♜ad1

Dubov even rejected 21 ♜b8, winning the exchange, as it allows a little counterplay with 21...♝b7 22 ♜xb7 ♜xb7 23 ♛e5 ♛g6.

21... $\mathbb{W}e7$ 22 $b4$ $\mathbb{W}xd6$ 23 $\mathbb{B}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$
 24 $\mathbb{B}6d2$ $f6$ 25 $h4$ $h5$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $e5$ 27 $\mathbb{B}c1$
 $\mathbb{B}a8$ 28 $\mathbb{B}c6$ $b5$ 29 $\mathbb{B}b6$



29... $\mathbb{W}h8$

Or if 29... $\mathbb{B}b8$ 30 $\mathbb{B}c2$ $\mathbb{B}d8$ 31 $\mathbb{B}c7$ $\mathbb{B}d6$
 32 $\mathbb{B}xb7$ $\mathbb{B}xb6$ 33 $\mathbb{B}xc8$.

30 $\mathbb{B}c2$ $\mathbb{B}f7$ 31 $\mathbb{B}xa6$ 1-0

Two other notable results were the performances of the young stars Jorden van Foreest and Alireza Firouzja, who played his in first elite all-play-all since leaving Iran. Firouzja took the early lead and was on 5/7 before he ran into the big guns and probably was a little too gung-ho as he scored 0/4 against Caruana, Carlsen, So and Anand. He ended up with an anything but solid 6½/13, which included the notable scalp of Anish Giri. In turn, last year Van Foreest scored +3 -3 -7. This year he played more solidly for +3 -8 -2, a very impressive performance that outscored Anish Giri.

Van Foreest benefited from a blunder in the seventh round by Alexander Vitiugov who then nearly made a magnificent comeback with a fine cheapo near the time control. We join the game after 36 $\mathbb{B}c1$ $b6$.



Black is three clear pawns up, but with both players very short of time White uncorked 37 $\mathbb{g}4!$ and now 37... $\mathbb{B}e8$ is visually unattractive, yet wins for Black after 38 $\mathbb{g}xf5$ $\mathbb{B}xb5$ 39 $\mathbb{a}xb6$ $\mathbb{a}xb6$ 40 $\mathbb{f}xe6$ $\mathbb{B}c4$. 37... $d4$ also wins, but why not take?

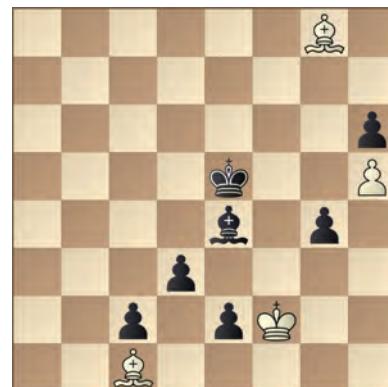
37... $\mathbb{f}xg4$ 38 $\mathbb{B}xc5!$ $\mathbb{B}xc5$ 39 $b6$ $\mathbb{a}xb6$
 40 $\mathbb{a}xb6$ $\mathbb{B}c6$

Without the insertion of $g4$ and ... $f4$ this could be met by ... $\mathbb{B}a8$ followed by ... $\mathbb{B}a1+$ and ... $\mathbb{B}b1$. Cunning, indeed, from Vitiugov, but Black is still winning.

41 $\mathbb{B}c7$ $\mathbb{B}xb6$ 42 $\mathbb{B}xb6$ $c4$ 43 $\mathbb{B}d1$ $\mathbb{B}g6$
 44 $\mathbb{B}xg4$ 45 $\mathbb{B}f5$ 45 $\mathbb{B}f3$ $c3$ 46 $\mathbb{B}g1$ $\mathbb{B}f7$
 47 $\mathbb{B}d4$ $c2$ 48 $\mathbb{B}b2$ $d4$

There's no stopping the avalanche.

49 $\mathbb{B}f2$ $e5$ 50 $\mathbb{B}d5+$ $\mathbb{B}f6$ 51 $h4$ $\mathbb{B}g6$
 52 $\mathbb{B}g3$ $\mathbb{B}d3$ 53 $\mathbb{B}c1$ $e4$ 54 $\mathbb{B}b2$ $\mathbb{B}f5$
 55 $\mathbb{B}g8$ $h6$ 56 $\mathbb{B}c1$ $e3$ 57 $\mathbb{B}b2$ $\mathbb{B}e4$
 58 $\mathbb{B}c1$ $g5$ 59 $h5$ $g4$ 60 $\mathbb{B}h7+$ $\mathbb{B}e5$
 61 $\mathbb{B}g8$ $e2$ 62 $\mathbb{B}f2$ $d3$ 0-1



A nice 'two penny arcade' finish occurs after 63 $\mathbb{B}xh6$ $g3+$ 64 $\mathbb{B}e1$ $g2$ or 63 $\mathbb{B}d2$ $g3+$ 64 $\mathbb{B}e1$ $g2$ 65 $\mathbb{B}f2$ $c1\mathbb{B}$ 66 $\mathbb{B}xc1$ $e1\mathbb{B}+$ 67 $\mathbb{B}xe1$ $g1\mathbb{B}+$.

If Carlsberg did Chess Festivals

From the pre-eminent all-play-all to the world's finest Open, Gibraltar. What Wijk and Gib have in common is not the highest number of rating points, but a festival atmosphere; there is so much more going on than just the main event. It's what I have always done at the London Chess Classic – make sure people can both watch and play, and ensure there is something for pretty much everyone.

At Gibraltar there were master classes from Veselin Topalov, Shakhriyar Mamedyarov and Alexander Beliavsky, with the whole shebang kicked off by no less than Anatoly

Karpov who gave a simultaneous. Not only can you meet a legend, you can also play one at Gibraltar, as our contributor Tim Wall found out.

A.Beliavsky-T.Wall
 Gibraltar 2020



Tim may well have thought he was winning, but the former Candidate found a way out.

39 $\mathbb{B}f5$ $\mathbb{B}a6$

Not 39... $gxf5$ 40 $\mathbb{B}xf5$ $\mathbb{B}g8$ 41 $h4$ when White is playing for a win.

40 $\mathbb{B}f4!$ $d4$ 41 $\mathbb{B}e5$ $d3$ 42 $f6$ $\mathbb{B}xe6+$

If 42... $\mathbb{B}g8$ 43 $\mathbb{B}e4$.

43 $\mathbb{B}xe6$ $d2$ 44 $\mathbb{B}f7$ $\mathbb{B}d7+$ 45 $\mathbb{B}f8$ $\mathbb{B}d8+$
 46 $\mathbb{B}f7$ ½-½

I managed to get to play at Gibraltar for the first time and was really enjoying myself before circumstances intervened and I had to leave after five rounds. At least I got to see the famous 'Battle of the Sexes' match, which is played on a giant set in a boxing ring and is enormous fun. The ballroom at the Caleta Hotel was fully booked for the gala dinner and the entertainment started with a belly dancer who was joined briefly by compère and chief organiser GM Stuart Conquest, who has some excellent moves himself it should be noted.



The women's team (l-r: Antoaneta Stefanova, Anna Muzychuk, Zhansaya Abdumalik, Valentina Gunina and Anastasya Paramzina) won the first game of the 'Battle of the Sexes' in just 8 moves!



The Women were captained by Antoaneta Stefanova, who selected her team, and the men by Maxime Vachier-Lagrave, who opted to have as his first pick the early tournament leader Ivan Cheparinov, who was up until then playing some incredible chess. MVL soon regretted his decision.

Ladies vs Men

Gibraltar 2020

Rousseau Gambit

1 e4 e5 2 ♜f3 ♜c6 3 ♜c4 f5?

Played by Cheparinov.

4 d3 fxe4 5 dxe4 ♜f6 6 ♜g5 ♛e7



7 ♜f7+ ♛d8 8 ♜e6+ 1-0

The ballroom was in uproar. Noting that Cheparinov was Stefanova's husband(!), MVL told him he was benched and David Howell was brought in. The Men narrowly won the deciding third game in a tricky queen and pawn endgame.

Places in the two tournaments, the Amateur and Masters are hard to secure – you have to book early. Nobody really minds too much that the playing conditions are not the very best, a wee bit cramped upstairs and not much light downstairs, because the organisers are doing their very best to squeeze as many people in as they can and the general ambience is just so nice.

At the business end of the Masters, there was some chatter about the method of selection for the tie-breaks that decided the winner. The players with the top four TPRs were selected from those on the highest score after 10 rounds. MVL missed out by one TPR rating point to David Paravyan, who emerged the surprise winner as he got the better of Wang Hao in the playoff final. This raised some eyebrows, but it seems a perfectly reasonable method to me. The other question is whether byes should be allowed and again I can't see any problem if they are taken before the concluding rounds.

Leonard Barden

I salute Leonard Barden whose column in *The Evening Standard* has been closed after nearly 64 years. The column was essential



After a most impressive 63 years, 7 months and 27 days, Leonard Barden has sadly panned his last column for *The Evening Standard*, but you can still read him in *The Guardian* and *FT*.

evening reading for chess players in the capital, with its clever puzzles and concise insights that you could always find in the paper on the way home from work. This decision was as inevitable as it is unwelcome after the column had already been forced online and out of the paper. I suspect the *Standard* is in trouble and with talk of WiFi being available on the Underground throughout your journey, not just at stations, I suspect even its medium-term future is very much in doubt.

Len is still going strong in the *Financial Times* after 45 years and also in *The Guardian*, where his column has been running a record-breaking 64 years. *The Guardian* were amazed – I wasn't – how popular their live blog of the World Championship was in 2018. English newspapers and indeed newspapers all over the world are struggling in the face of so much online competition, but it's clear that some papers and periodicals are prospering with pay-to-view models. There is still a market for quality.

You can bet on Carlsen

The champion has signed a two-year sponsorship deal with Unibet and become one of their Global Ambassadors. The deal was announced via a rather cool promotional video and comes hot on the heels of a proposed £4.5 million offer from Unibet to the Norwegian Chess Federation last summer which was turned down, after what was, to put it mildly, a pretty feisty debate in Norwegian chess. Carlsen was furious, and so he's done his own deal.

Promoting gambling or gambling companies is illegal in Norway unless it is gambling provided by the government-

owned Norsk Tipping, but the plan was to get around that by engaging the chess federation's help in lobbying for a change in the law. It sounded a bit far-fetched to me and probably not something a sports federation should be involved in. That's not to say I am against a chess organisation, aside from one working with children that is, taking money from a gambling company. Given that Premiership football teams such as West Ham have logos on their shirts and adverts all round the ground, there is no reason for chess not to have a slice of the action. Unibet have provided odds on chess and rather weirdly sponsored Norway Chess in 2014, calling the tournament 'No Logo Norway Chess' to get around the law.



Magnus continues to be happy to defy the Norwegian federation, signing up to Unibet.



60 Seconds with... Tania Sachdev



Born: 20th August 1986, Delhi.

Place of residence: Delhi.

Occupation: Chessplayer, commentator.

Enjoyable? It's a roller coaster. I do like roller coasters!

And home life? Doesn't suit chess players.

But sometimes good to escape to: White sandy beaches.

Sports played or followed: I play table tennis and love to watch football.

A favourite novel? *The Palace of Illusions* by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni.

Piece of music? Depends on my mood, but in general there is a Drake song for every mood.

Film or TV series? Anything Woody Allen, anything Leonardo Di Caprio, *Love Actually*, *Money Heist*, *Rick and Morty*.

What's the best thing about playing chess? All those powerful emotions it makes you feel.

And the worst? All these powerful emotions it makes you feel!

Your best move? Still to come!

But less memorable than your worst move? That was on the dance floor.

And a highly memorable opponent? Vishy Anand in a simul when I was about 10.

Favourite game of all time? I've seen Ivanchuk-Yusupov multiple times, but it blows my mind every single time.

V.Ivanchuk-A.Yusupov
Candidates match play-off,
Brussels 1991
King's Indian Defence

1 c4 e5 2 g3 d6 3 $\mathbb{g}2$ g6 4 d4 $\mathbb{d}7$
5 $\mathbb{c}3$ $\mathbb{g}7$ 6 $\mathbb{f}3$ $\mathbb{g}f6$ 7 0-0 0-0
8 $\mathbb{c}2$ $\mathbb{e}8$ 9 $\mathbb{d}1$ c6 10 b3 $\mathbb{e}7$ 11 $\mathbb{a}3$
e4 12 $\mathbb{g}5$ e3 13 f4 $\mathbb{f}8$ 14 b4 $\mathbb{f}5$
15 $\mathbb{b}3$ h6 16 $\mathbb{f}3$ $\mathbb{g}4$ 17 b5 g5
18 bxc6 bxc6 19 $\mathbb{e}5$ gxf4 20 $\mathbb{x}c6$
 $\mathbb{g}5$ 21 $\mathbb{x}d6$ $\mathbb{g}6$ 22 $\mathbb{d}5$ $\mathbb{h}5$ 23 h4
 $\mathbb{x}h4!$? 24 gxh4 $\mathbb{x}h4$ 25 $\mathbb{d}e7+$ $\mathbb{h}8$
26 $\mathbb{x}f5$ $\mathbb{h}2+$ 27 $\mathbb{f}1$ $\mathbb{e}6!$ 28 $\mathbb{b}7$
 $\mathbb{g}6!$ 29 $\mathbb{x}a8+$ $\mathbb{h}7$



30 $\mathbb{g}8+$ $\mathbb{x}g8$ 31 $\mathbb{c}e7+$ $\mathbb{h}7$ 32 $\mathbb{x}g6$
 $\mathbb{f}xg6$ 33 $\mathbb{x}g7$ $\mathbb{f}2$ 34 $\mathbb{x}f4$ $\mathbb{w}xf4$
35 $\mathbb{e}6$ $\mathbb{h}2$ 36 $\mathbb{db}1$ $\mathbb{h}3$ 37 $\mathbb{b}7+$
 $\mathbb{h}8$ 38 $\mathbb{b}8+$ $\mathbb{x}b8$ 39 $\mathbb{x}h3$ $\mathbb{g}3$
0-1

The best three chess books: Jonathan Rowson's *The Seven Deadly Chess Sins*, *Positional Decision Making* by Boris Gelfand and David Bronstein's *Zurich 1953*.

Is FIDE doing a good job? Yes! There have been lots of positive changes.

Or your National Federation? Also a yes!

Any advice for either? Can we have an Indian Chess League?

Can chess make one happy? That's a very existential question.

A tip please for the club player: Get your hands on a copy of *The Seven Deadly Chess Sins*!



Fabi gets on a Roll!

Yochanan Afek watched Fabiano Caruana triumph at Wijk aan Zee for the first time

The 82nd edition of the famous Wijk aan Zee tournament once again saw a remarkable festival in the Dutch coastal village, which combined exciting top-level chess with numerous amateur groups for all levels and ages, and all under the roof of the tournament's traditional home, De Moriaan. Hundreds more chess enthusiasts crowded each day into the neighbouring Café De Zon (The Sun), to attend the popular commentary sessions.

The record for winning the Masters belongs to the current world champion Magnus Carlsen, a regular participant here since 2004, who was seeking an eighth victory this year. British players have won the top section at Wijk five times. In 1982 John Nunn shared the top honours with Yuri Balashov before in both 1990 and 1991 finishing outright first, while Nigel Short was clear first in 1986 and joint first the next year along with Victor Korchnoi.

The modern tradition 'Chess on Tour', which sees two rounds of the Masters played away from Wijk in major Dutch cities, has been one of the successes of the past decade, during which the whole event has been supported by Tata Steel. This year, however, just one round, the fifth, went on tour, to the southern city of Eindhoven. Another fine tradition on one of the rest days is a friendly football match in the stadium of the local team Telstar in the town of Velsen. This year Carlsen's side defeated Van Wely's 8-5. In the conference hall of the same stadium a group of masters, your author included, played a mass simultaneous exhibition against regional schoolchildren (as well as a few Telstar players), who enjoyed both football and chess scenes at the very same time.

A Strong Masters

The Category 20 Masters Group (average rating: 2741) was headed up by the current world champion and his former challenger, Fabiano Caruana, while the host country was represented by Dutch no.1 Anish Giri and former Dutch Champion, Jorden van Foreest, the eldest child in the famous chess family from the northern city of Groningen. Wesley So, the winner of 2017 edition, also took part, while the eldest participant was the 15th world champion, Vishy Anand, who has been successful at Wijk on some five occasions.

The rest of the field contained a number of ambitious young stars and members of the 2700+ club: the Belorussian winner of last



Wesley So only added one victory to his early win over Anand, but did remain undefeated.

year's Challengers, Vladislav Kovalev; Poland's Jan-Krzysztof Duda; the Russians Vladislav Artemiev, Daniil Dubov and Nikita Vitiugov; Jeffery Xiong from the USA; and China's Yangyi Yu. The youngest participant was the 16-year-old Iranian Alireza Firouzja, who currently resides with his family in France and played under the FIDE flag.

The opening three rounds produced an unexpected early leader. It wasn't any of the favourites, but rather the youngest participant, Firouzja, who had drawn with Duda and defeated both Kovalev and Artemiev. Another interesting result in early rounds was the following short and highly aggressive battle.

W.So-V.Anand

Round 2

Giuoco Piano

1 e4 e5 2 ♜f3 ♜c6 3 ♜c4 ♜c5 4 c3 ♜f6 5 d3 d6 6 ♜bd2 0-0 7 h3 a6 8 ♜b3 ♜e6 9 ♜c2 d5!?

On an initial glance this looks rather premature in view of White's reply. Most players and also the engines would first prefer the prophylactic 9...h6.

10 ♜g5 dxе4 11 ♜xe6 fxe6 12 dxе4

Black's pawn structure is shattered, but can he take advantage of his momentary pressure along the open lines against f2?

12...♜xf2+!?

The most aggressive approach. An interesting alternative was 12...♛e8!? 13 0-0 ♜d8 14 ♜e1 ♜h5 15 ♜b3 ♜b6 16 ♜f4 17 ♜h2 ♜h5 with equal chances.

13 ♜xf2 ♜g4+ 14 ♛g1 ♜e3 15 ♛e2 ♜xc2



Regaining the sacrificed piece, but the knight has no way back to base.

16 ♜b1 ♜d4!?

The attempt to obtain counterplay with 16...♛h4 17 ♜f3 ♛g3 is met by 18 h4! ♜xf3! 19 ♜xf3 ♛e1+ 20 ♜h2 ♛xh4+ 21 ♜h3 ♛xe4 (21...♛xh3+ 22 gxh3! ♜f8 23 ♜g1 is excellent for White) 22 ♛xe6+ ♛h8 23 ♜g5, after which, despite the formal material equality, White is still better owing to his future control of the open files by his mighty



pair of rooks.

17 cxd4 ♜xd4+?

17...exd4 allows better chances to fight on.

18 ♔h2 ♜f2 19 ♜g4 ♔e3 20 ♜xe6+ ♜h8 21 ♜g1 ♜d3 22 ♜xe5 ♜af8

22...♜xg2 is met by 23 ♔h1! ♜xh3+ 24 ♜h2 ♜xh2+ 25 ♔xh2 ♔e1+ 26 ♔g3 ♜d3 27 ♔c4 ♜e2 28 ♔f3 ♜c2 29 ♔e3! when Black's efforts to obtain a third pawn for his sacrificed piece seem to reach a dead end.

23 ♜g3 ♜e2?



Accelerating the end. A better try was 23...♜f6 24 ♔h1 ♜e2 25 ♜xc7 h6 26 ♜b3 ♜xg2! 27 ♜c8+ ♔h7 28 ♜g4 ♜d3 29 ♜g5! hxg5 30 ♜bd1 ♜c2 31 ♜c1 ♜xb2 32 ♜xg2 ♜xa2 33 ♜xf2 ♜xf2 34 ♜h5+ ♜g8 35 ♜c8+ ♜f8 36 ♜xf8+ ♜xf8 37 ♜f3+ and Black is still fighting.

24 b4! ♜xg2+ 25 ♜xg2 ♜xg2 26 ♜g4!
1-0

After 26...♜f4+ 27 ♜xe2 ♜xe2 28 ♜g2 ♜f4+ 29 ♜f2! ♜xh3+ 30 ♜e3 ♜f2 31 ♜b2 ♜g4+ 32 ♜e2 ♜f2+ 33 ♜d3 ♜g8 34 ♜c1 c6 35 ♜d4 White eventually will convert his material superiority.

Firouzja's sensational start was the talk of the village even when he was defeated in the very next round by Wesley So. That gave So the temporary lead, but it took the Iranian wunderkind just one round to catch up, thanks to the following endgame.

A.Firouzja-A.Giri

Round 5



39...♜e7?

This seems natural, but is wrong. Correct



The players in a future world championship? Firouzja was, though, no match for Carlsen at Wijk.

Fabulous Fabi

The second part of the tournament was dominated by the brilliant gallop set by 28-year-old Fabiano Caruana towards his first Wijk aan Zee title, as he scored an amazing five and a half points from the final six rounds. Caruana secured outright victory with a round to go and still found the stamina to score the only win in the final round of the Masters, against Artemiev. His most important victory was arguably his fortunate win against Anand, which ended the legendary Indian's chances, while kick-starting Caruana's rampage.

was 39...h5! 40 ♔f3 ♜g5 (and not 40...♜f5 41 ♜xh4 ♜g5 42 ♜b4 b6 43 ♜e4!) 41 ♜e5! (41...b6 allows 42 ♜e4) 42 ♜xb7 ♜b5 43 ♜xb5+ cxb5 44 ♜e4 ♜f6, which draws.

40 ♔f3 ♜f5

A superficial glance at this rook endgame might wrongly predict a drawish outcome.

41 ♜xh4! ♜xe5 42 ♜e4+! ♔f6 43 ♜xe7 ♜xe7

Following successful exchanges the resulting pawn ending is still equal material-wise, but White will be the first to create an outside passed pawn.

44 ♔f4 ♔f6 45 g4 a5 46 a4 h6 47 h4 ♔e6
47...b5 is naturally met by 48 ♔e4.

48 g5 hxg5+ 49 ♜xg5!



The further the outside passed pawn, the better, and not 49 hxg5? b5 50 b3 ♔f7 51 ♔f5 ♜g7 52 ♔e5 bxa4 53 bxa4 ♜g6 54 ♔d6 ♜xg5 55 ♔xc6 ♔f5 56 ♔b5 ♜e6! when the black king makes it back in time.

49...♔f7 50 ♔f5 b5 51 ♔e5 1-0

Black is clearly far too slow. A fine example of the common theme in the endgame of exchanges leading to a winning pawn ending.

While Anand managed in the same round to reach 50 percent, scoring his first win against Xiong, the natural favourite, Magnus Carlsen, though still unbeaten, was yet to taste his first victory.

F.Caruana-V.Anand

Round 8



In the early stage of the game Anand had made a risky acceptance of the exchange in return for allowing Caruana a strong and lasting initiative.

37 ♔f6+?

A terrible decision in time trouble. White is at least slightly better following 37 ♔f6! ♜e7 38 ♜d6 ♜xd6 39 exd6 ♜b7 40 ♔e8+ ♔f8 41 ♔c7 ♜b8 42 ♔e6+ ♔e8 43 ♜b5+ ♔f7 44 d5 ♔b3 45 d7 ♔e7 46 ♔f2.

37...♜xf6 38 exf6+ ♔h7 39 ♔e5 ♜d6

40 f7 ♔g7 41 ♔f3 ♜b3

Even stronger is 41...b5!.



42 ♜g5 ♜d2?!

Black wins more comfortably with 42...♜xd4 43 ♜h7 ♜d8 44 f8♛+ ♜xf8 45 ♜xf8 ♜xf8 46 ♜f2 b5 47 ♜d3 b4 48 axb4 a3 49 ♜c4 ♜e7 50 ♜e1 ♜c2+ 51 ♜d2 ♜xb4 52 ♜c3 a2 53 ♜b2 ♜f6 54 ♜b5 g5 55 ♜d7 f4, after which the black king approaches the kingside pawns while its counterpart is kept busy on the other side of the board.

43 ♜e6



Now simplifying by means of 43...♜xe6! 44 ♜xe6+ ♜xf7 results in a technically winning ending for Black thanks to his queenside pawn majority.

43...♜d8 44 ♜f2 ♜f6

Black still wins fairly easily after 44...♝b3 45 ♜e3 ♜xd4 46 ♜f4 ♜c6 47 ♜a2 ♜d4+ 48 ♜e3 f4+ 49 ♜f3 ♜d2. **45 ♜d7 ♜e4+ 46 ♜xe4+ fxe4 47 ♜e8+ ♜e7 48 ♜e3 ♜b8 49 ♜xa4 b5 50 ♜b3 ♜a8 51 ♜xe4 ♜xa3 52 ♜e6 ♜a1 53 d5 ♜d1 54 ♜e5 ♜f1??**

And a miracle has occurred. After 54...♜e1+ 55 ♜d4 ♜f1 56 ♜c5 ♜f2 57 ♜xb5 ♜xg2 58 d6+ ♜f8 59 ♜d5 ♜d2 60 ♜c5 ♜f2 61 h4 ♜f6 62 ♜c6 ♜f5 63 ♜c4 ♜f4 64 ♜a2 ♜f2 Black still draws.

55 d6+ ♜f8 56 ♜d5 ♜f6 57 d7 ♜e7 58 ♜c6! ♜f2

58...♜xe6+ 59 ♜c7 ♜d6 60 f8♛+ ♜xf8 61 ♜xd6 is game over.

59 ♜xb5 ♜b2+ 60 ♜c6 ♜b8 61 ♜c7 1-0

In the tenth round Caruana defeated Firouzja, while his victory in the penultimate round was a fine example of his impressive coordination and powerful play in complex middlegames, as he inflicted on Duda his sole defeat.

F.Caruana-J.K.Duda

Round 12
Catalan Opening

1 d4 ♜f6 2 c4 e6 3 g3 d5 4 ♜g2 ♜e7 5 ♜f3 0-0 6 0-0 dxc4 7 ♜a4 c6 8 ♜xc4 b5 9 ♜b3 ♜b7 10 ♜d1 ♜bd7 11 ♜e5 ♜xe5 12 dxe5 ♜d7 13 ♜f4 ♜c7 14 ♜c3 ♜c5

14...♜xe5 allows White a strong initiative following 15 ♜ac1 (less clear is 15 ♜xe5 ♜xe5 16 ♜d7 ♜c8 17 ♜xe7 ♜d6 18 ♜xc6! ♜b8 19 ♜xa7 ♜xc6), which leaves Black with



With a powerful victory over Duda, Caruana sealed overall victory with a round to spare.

an unopposed light-squared bishop in return for the pawn) 15...a6 16 a4 owing to the pins along the c-file and long diagonal.

15 ♜c2 b4 16 ♜b1!?

A natural alternative was 16 ♜a4, but White avoids exchanges and prefers an elegant retreat, having spotted that Black's last move created an attractive outpost for the white knight on c4.

16...♜a6 17 ♜f3 ♜ac8?!

The rook doesn't belong here as Black will immediately realise.

18 a3! ♜b8 19 axb4 ♜xb4 20 ♜e3 ♜b7 21 ♜d2! ♜xb2 22 ♜c3 ♜b5 23 ♜a3 ♜b8 24 ♜da1



Converting White's edge is still far from easy, but Caruana has calculated most impressively the following sequence of only moves.

42...♜f6! 43 exf6 ♜xd4! 44 ♜c1! ♜xf6 45 ♜c7! ♜h8

45...e5 fails to 46 fxe5 ♜xe5 47 ♜c8+ ♜e7 48 ♜f5+.

46 ♜c8+ ♜e7 47 ♜xh8 ♜b4 48 ♜c8+ ♜f6 49 ♜d3 1-0



White is more than fully compensated for the missing pawn. All his pieces are ideally placed to target Black's multiple weaknesses on the queenside.

24...♜b7 25 ♜xa7 ♜d7 26 ♜c4 ♜d8 27 ♜e4 c5 28 ♜c2 h6 29 ♜d2 ♜f8 30 ♜d3 ♜d7? 31 ♜d6! ♜b6 32 ♜xc5 ♜d5 33 ♜xd7 ♜xd7 34 ♜c8+ ♜f8

34...♜xc8? fails to the forking 35 ♜xc8.

35 ♜xb8 ♜xb8 36 f4 ♜d8 37 ♜f2 ♜d7 38 ♜e3 g5 39 ♜d4 ♜b4 40 ♜e3 gxf4+ 41 gxf4 ♜f8 42 ♜b5!



The victor ended up two points ahead of Carlsen, the largest ever winning margin since the current 13-round format was introduced. Caruana's 10/13 was only achieved before by Garry Kasparov in 1999 (the first of Garry's three successive victories), and by Magnus Carlsen in 2013.

Carlsen scored his first victory as late as round eight, after which he began to get going, while he finished the tournament unbeaten, surpassing in the process Sergei Tiviakov's record streak of 110 unbeaten classical chess games. The Norwegian's final round draw against So not only decided the fate of the second place, but was also his 120th unbeaten classical game. More than once in Wijk aan Zee he had to demonstrate his defensive skills, surviving inferior positions such as the following.



M.Carlsen-J.Xiong

Round 3



44 g5! hxg5 45 h6

White is three pawns behind, but his advanced passed pawn saves the day.

45...d6 46 b6+ c6+ 47 xc6+!

A well calculated decision.

47...xc6 48 h7 a4+ 49 xe5 h4

50 kf6 g4 51 kg5 h2 52 xg4 kd5

53 gg6 hh6 54 gg5 xh7

Caution! Black even loses after 54...hh2?? 55 kh5.

55 xh7 e5 56 gg4 kd4 ½-½

After 57 kf3 everything is under control.

Both 21-year-old Jorden Van Foreest and 23-year-old Daniil Dubov enjoyed good tournaments and shared fourth. Meanwhile Firouza, who is considered by many experts a future candidate for the world crown, had to settle for an eventual share of sixth place after losing to all four top seeds.

D.Dubov-V.Artemiev

Round 6

Caro-Kann Defence

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 kf5 4 h4 h5 5 c4 e6 6 kc3 ke7 7 cxd5 cxd5 8 kd3 xd3 9 xd3 kc6 10 kf3 kh6 11 xh6

In accordance with the nature of the closed position, as by heading for f5 the black knight was going to play an important role in the centre, while also being an instrumental part of Black's defensive set-up.

11...xh6 12 kc1 kf8 13 g3 g6 14 0-0

kg7 15 ka4 hh8 16 kf5



Last year's Gibraltar Champion, Vladislav Artemiev, had quite a lively debut at Wijk.

16...xc5

Accelerating White's queenside attack. 16...wb6 17 a3 a5 18 da4 a6 might be a better attempt to equalise.

17 xcc5 wd7 18 fc1 hc8 19 wc3

Preparing the standard follow-up, b2-b4.

19...a5 20 a3 a4 21 de1?!

we7 22 df3

White admits that he was wrong and seeks a better future for his knight.

22...d7 23 gg2 cc7 24 wc2 wd8 25 wd1!

Back home appears to be the best spot for the queen from where she can watch over the central pawn, pressure the potential weakness on a4, keep a black rook away from invading down the c-file, and prepare the upcoming kingside activity.

25...dd7 26 dg5 aa6 27 g4!



The hidden intention behind 25 wd1 becomes clear as White's attack begins to gather momentum.

27...hh8

Necessary as demonstrated by 27...hh8 28 gxh5 wh8 29 wf3 gxh5 30 wg3 kf8 31 aa5!, winning a pawn in view of the double threat.

28 ff3 bb6?

The losing move. 28...hxg4 29 wg4 aa8 was essential, although White is clearly better on both wings following 30 wf4 hh5 31 cc5c3.

29 gxh5 wh5 30 wf6+ gg8 31 aa5!

gg4+ 32 kf1 dd8 33 aa8 1-0

J.Van Foreest-D.Dubov

Round 3

c3 Sicilian

1 e4 c5 2 kf3 kc6 3 c3

What used to be an attempt to avoid the heavy theory of the Open Sicilian has become over the years a deeply analysed major line.

3...ff6 4 e5 dd5 5 kc4

Postponing so the once standard 5 d4 is the typical modern handling of this line.

5...bb6 6 kb3 c4 7 kc2 d5 8 exd6

wd6 9 0-0 g6 10 da3 gg7 11 b3 cxb3

12 axb3 0-0 13 d4 gg4 14 h3 kf7

15 xf3 e5 16 kb5 wd7

16...wd5 17 wd3 fc8 18 c4 wd7 is another option for Black.

17 dd1 a6 18 d5 kb4?!

19 aa3 dd2 20 xc2 ac8 21 c4 f5?!



Wrongly declining 21...e4 22 wf4 fe8 23 wf3 xa1 24 xb1 when White's dark-squared bishop and central pawn chain fully compensate for the sacrificed exchange.

22 aa3 ff7 23 ac1 ee8 24 c5 e4

25 ee2 cc8 26 cc4 aa7 27 dd4 f4?

28 ee6

By no means a bad decision, but after 28 c6! cc8 29 ee6 bb5 30 bb4 bxc6 31 dg5! material losses are unavoidable for Black.

28...bb5 29 bb4

Again 29 c6! bxc6 30 dg5! would have been more vigorous.

29...ee3 30 gg5 exf2+ 31 xf2 wf5

32 xf7 ee4 33 cc6



Finally.

33...xf7?



Jorden van Foreest improved significantly on last year's debut in the Masters Group at Wijk. The 20-year-old Dutch star especially impressed against the top half of the tournament table.



Watched by Wesley and Magnus, Fabiano receives his first winner's trophy at Wijk aan Zee.

Missing the last chance to keep on fighting:
 33... $\mathbb{B}xc4$ 34 $\mathbb{B}xc4$ $\mathbb{B}xc6$ 35 $\mathbb{B}xc6$ $\mathbb{B}xf7$ 36 $\mathbb{B}d7+$
 $\mathbb{B}f6$ 37 $c7$ $\mathbb{B}xd7$ 38 $c8\mathbb{B}$ $\mathbb{B}xc8$ 39 $\mathbb{B}xc8\mathbb{B}f5$.
34 cxb7 $\mathbb{B}xc4$ 35 $\mathbb{B}xc4$ $\mathbb{B}e5$ 36 $\mathbb{B}xb5$

$\mathbb{B}b2+$ 37 $\mathbb{B}f1$ $\mathbb{B}e5$ 38 $d6$ $f3$ 39 $gxf3$
 $\mathbb{B}b3$ 40 $\mathbb{B}e2$ $\mathbb{B}e6$ 41 $\mathbb{B}c7+$ $\mathbb{B}f6$ 42 $b8\mathbb{B}$
 $\mathbb{B}f4+$ 43 $\mathbb{B}d3$ $\mathbb{B}d5+$ 44 $\mathbb{B}c2$ $\mathbb{B}a2+$ 45
 $\mathbb{B}c3$ $\mathbb{B}e5+$ 46 $\mathbb{B}d3$ $\mathbb{B}b3+$ 47 $\mathbb{B}e2$ 1-0

The Challengers

The Challengers featured, besides a couple of experienced local and guest grandmasters, as well as the only female player on the podium, the Kazakh IM Dinara Saduakassova, an unusual large number of teenage stars: the Uzbek Nodirbek Abdusattorov, Germany's Vincent Keymer and the Indian Nihal Sarin, who are all just 16, as well as the 18 year olds, Australia's Anton Smirnov and the current Dutch Champion, Lucas van Foreest.

The eventual winner was David Anton Guijarro, who at the age of 24 has already won eight Spanish titles in various age groups and formats. He top-scored with 8½/13 to qualify for next year's Masters. Second place was shared by young Abdusattorov, Pavel Eljanov, who had already won the Challengers back in 2007, and Erwin L'Ami. The following game between two prodigies was especially subtle and entertaining.

V.Keymer-N.Abdusattorov

Round 6



22... $\mathbb{B}d5!$

The first surprise and a clever pawn sacrifice that speaks for itself.

23 $\mathbb{B}xd5$ $\mathbb{B}exd5$ 24 $\mathbb{B}xd5$ $f6!$

White's knight is under siege and in addition Black is ready for ... $\mathbb{B}g6$.

25 $\mathbb{B}d7$ $\mathbb{B}b7$ 26 $\mathbb{B}bd1$

The dominated knight costs white his most important pawn since 26 $\mathbb{B}c5?$ allows

82nd Tata Steel Masters - Wijk aan Zee, Netherlands - 10-26 January 2020 (Category 20, average rating = 2741 Elo)																			
Player		Country	Rating	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Pts	TPR
1	Fabiano Caruana	USA	2822	*	½	½	½	1	½	1	1	1	½	1	½	1	1	10	2945
2	Magnus Carlsen	NOR	2872	½	*	½	½	½	½	½	½	1	½	½	1	½	1	8	2817
3	Wesley So	USA	2765	½	½	*	½	½	½	1	½	1	½	½	½	½	½	7.5	2795
4	Jorden Van Foreest	NED	2644	½	½	½	*	1	½	½	½	½	0	0	1	1	½	7	2777
5	Daniil Dubov	RUS	2683	0	½	½	0	*	½	½	½	½	½	1	½	1	1	7	2774
6	Anish Giri	NED	2768	½	½	½	½	½	*	½	½	0	½	½	½	½	1	6.5	2738
7	Viswanathan Anand	IND	2758	0	½	0	½	½	½	*	½	1	1	½	½	½	½	6.5	2739
8	Jan-Krzysztof Duda	POL	2758	0	½	½	½	½	½	½	*	½	½	½	½	1	½	6.5	2739
9	Alireza Firouzja	FID	2723	0	0	0	½	½	1	0	½	*	1	1	½	½	1	6.5	2742
10	Jeffery Xiong	USA	2712	½	½	½	1	½	½	0	½	0	*	1	½	½	0	6	2713
11	Vladislav Artemiev	RUS	2731	0	½	½	1	0	½	½	½	0	0	*	1	½	1	6	2712
12	Nikita Vitiugov	RUS	2747	½	0	½	0	½	½	½	½	½	0	*	½	½	½	5	2653
13	Yu Yangyi	CHN	2726	0	½	½	0	0	½	½	0	½	½	½	½	*	½	4.5	2631
14	Vladislav Kovalev	BLR	2660	0	0	½	½	0	0	½	½	0	1	0	½	½	*	4	2605



Black a deadly pin with 26... $\mathbb{b}5$.

26... $\mathbb{b}2$ 27 $\mathbb{c}5$ $\mathbb{x}c5$ 28 $\mathbb{d}xc5$ $\mathbb{xe}2$
29 $\mathbb{d}8$ $\mathbb{f}7$ 30 $\mathbb{c}8$ c3 31 $\mathbb{e}4$ c2
32 $\mathbb{f}1$ $\mathbb{x}h2$ 33 $\mathbb{g}1$ $\mathbb{e}2$ 34 $\mathbb{f}1$



A repetition? Not quite!

34... $\mathbb{b}5!!$

White was hoping for 34... $\mathbb{e}3$ 35 $\mathbb{d}6+$ $\mathbb{g}6$ 36 $\mathbb{d}xe8$ $\mathbb{xe}8$ 37 $\mathbb{xc}2$ with a defendable rook ending.

35 $\mathbb{d}6+$ $\mathbb{g}6$ 36 $\mathbb{d}xb5$ $\mathbb{d}2$ 0-1

L'Ami was the only unbeaten player amongst the challengers and especially impressed when making a positional double exchange sacrifice.

E.L'Ami-A.Smirnov

Round 1

Slav Defence

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 $\mathbb{f}3$ $\mathbb{f}6$ 4 e3 $\mathbb{g}4$

5 $\mathbb{b}3$ $\mathbb{b}6$ 6 $\mathbb{e}5$ $\mathbb{f}5$ 7 $\mathbb{cxd}5$ $\mathbb{xb}3$
8 $\mathbb{axb}3$ $\mathbb{xd}5$ 9 $\mathbb{d}3$ $\mathbb{xd}3$ 10 $\mathbb{d}x3$ $\mathbb{a}6$
11 $\mathbb{d}2$ e6 12 $\mathbb{e}2$ $\mathbb{e}7$ 13 $\mathbb{a}3$ 0-0
14 $\mathbb{c}4$ c5?

14... $\mathbb{ac}7$ 15 $\mathbb{c}5$ $\mathbb{fb}8$ would have avoided the upcoming unpleasant events.

15 $\mathbb{xa}6!$ $\mathbb{bxa}6$ 16 $\mathbb{dxc}5$ $\mathbb{fc}8$ 17 b4 f6
18 e4 $\mathbb{c}7$ 19 $\mathbb{c}3$ $\mathbb{b}5$ 20 $\mathbb{a}1$ $\mathbb{c}6$
21 e5 $\mathbb{d}8$ 22 $\mathbb{d}6$



In return for the sacrificed exchange, White enjoys, on top of an extra passed pawn, the superior pawn structure, as well as clear advantage in terms of space and piece activity.

22... $\mathbb{b}8$ 23 f4 h5 24 g3 $\mathbb{c}7$ 25 $\mathbb{e}3!$

The pawn formation has been consolidated. It's time for the king to join the offensive.

25...f5 26 $\mathbb{d}2$ $\mathbb{f}8$ 27 $\mathbb{d}4$ g6 28 $\mathbb{e}1$
 $\mathbb{b}5+$ 29 $\mathbb{xb}5$ $\mathbb{axb}5$ 30 $\mathbb{xa}7$ $\mathbb{cc}8$
31 $\mathbb{c}2$ $\mathbb{a}8$ 32 $\mathbb{d}7$ $\mathbb{e}7$ 33 $\mathbb{e}3$ $\mathbb{e}8$



A little bird just told me

A round-up of what the top players and chess personalities have been saying on Twitter

2700chess - @2700chess

For the first time, there are only 35 players on or above 2700.0 since 2700chess.com was launched in May 2011, when there were 39 (the maximum amount of players on or above 2700.0 was 53) #deflation

Gibraltar International Chess Festival - @GibraltarChess

Congratulations to Ukrainian star Anna Muzychuk on winning the "Go G Best Game prize" at @GibraltarChess. The highest rated woman player at the event, Anna, won this award for her fantastic win over Ori Kobo in round 10. Anna wins £1000 as the Best Game Prize! #GibChess

Tania Sachdev - @TaniaSachdev

Back home from an incredible #gibchess Big love back to all of you for engaging with us, all the heartwarming feedback and comments. Means a lot :)

David Howell - @DavidHowellGM

Been a great 10 days. Congrats to David Paravyan on a stellar performance! Commentary was a lot of fun (especially the 9.5 hours on the final day!). Special thanks to @hammonds_tv and @fionchetta for guiding me through it. Hopefully see everyone at @GibraltarChess next year!

John Saunders - @johnchess

BREAKING NEWS: #GibChess hasn't finished yet! The final event is the Airport Challenge between Paul Haddock and Matthew Wilson. Played every year since 2007, for addicts who just can't get enough chess.

ECF - @ecfchess

ECF online chess is live! Please spread the word. There are clubs on @chesscom and @lichess. Open to ECF members and supporters. You can play in ECF online tournaments, internationals, and gain an online rating.

Magnus Carlsen - @MagnusCarlsen

Luck is no coincidence. Really excited about this partnership. @unibet @UnibetNorge

Simon Williams - @ginger_gm

I just noticed that I have pipped over 40,000 subscribers on my YouTube channel. MASSIVE thanks to you all! Cheers people! I have some crazy and messed up ideas for future videos...

73RD WEST OF ENGLAND OPEN CONGRESS

incorporating the West of England Championship & British Championship Qualifier

Friday 10 - Monday 13 April
(Easter weekend)

at the Royal Beacon Hotel,
Exmouth EX8 2AG

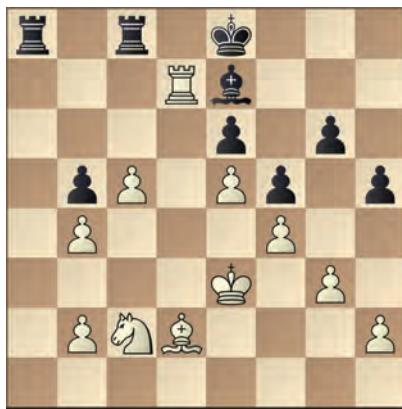
The Championship & Major sections are FIDE-Rated

An ECF Grand Prix event

Details from event Secretary: M. Shaw
mobile 07906682158
e-mail: wecu@hotmail.co.uk



Erwin L'Ami was unbeaten and tied for second in the Challengers – at the same time as playing some correspondence games!



34...d6!

A rare example of a second positional exchange sacrifice in the endgame.

34...xd6 35 exd6 d7 36 d4 a2

Seeking active counterplay behind enemy lines as passive defence with 36...ab8 is met by 37 c3 g8 38 f3 c6 39 d4! bd8 40 e5, after which there is no way for Black's helpless rooks to stop the upcoming avalanche.

37 c3 a1 38 xb5 h1

Or 38...h4 39 gxh4 h1 40 a3 e5! 41 xe5 xh2 42 c4 b8 43 b6+ and wins.

39 h4 g1 40 f2 d1 41 d4 a8 42 e2 g1 43 b5!

White pawns are much the faster.

43...xg3 44 b4! g2+ 45 d3 xb2 46 c6+ c8 47 xe6! 1-0

The second seed, Swedish no.1 Nils Grandelius, had to settle for 50%. Here is one of the reasons why.

N.Grandelius-V.Keymer

Round 13



44...c5! 45 a6+ f5 46 a5?

46 f6+ g5 47 e5 had to be tried.

46...f3+ 47 f2 h2+ 48 g1 f2+! 0-1

In view of 49 xf2 h1#.

The top 10-player all-play-all group was a qualifying tournament for next year's Challengers and featured a wealth of young Dutch talent. However, the winner was the

German IM Roven Vogel, who finished on 7/9, along with the Dutch IM Nico Zwirs whom he managed to defeat in a pivotal final round. From this group enjoy the following instructive miniature between two young IMs from Apeldoorn and Leiden respectively.

T.Beerdsen-A.Pijpers

Round 7

French Defence

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 c3 f6 4 g5 dxe4 5 xe4 bd7 6 f3 h6 7 xf6 xf6 8 d3 xe4 9 xe4 c5 10 e2 a5+ 11 c3 cxd4 12 xd4 e7 13 0-0-0 xa2 14 b5+ d7 15 xb7 c8 16 g3 a1+ 17 c2 a4+ 18 b1 d8?



After 18...d8 19 c2! c4 20 f5! 0-0 21 xh6+ gxh6 22 xxd7 Black is a pawn down and has a weakened kingside, so he might have tried 18...0-0 19 c2 b8 to avoid any sacrificial blows.

19 xe6! fxe6

If 19...xe6 20 c5.

20 d4! a5

White wins too after 20...b5 21 xd7! xb7 (or 21...xd7 22 c6) 22 xb7 f7 23 xa7.

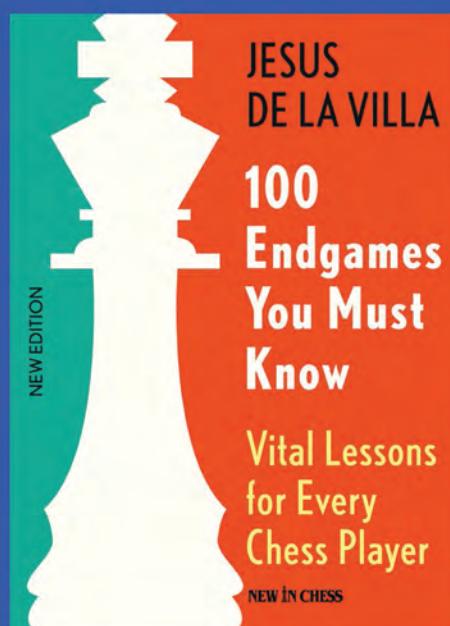
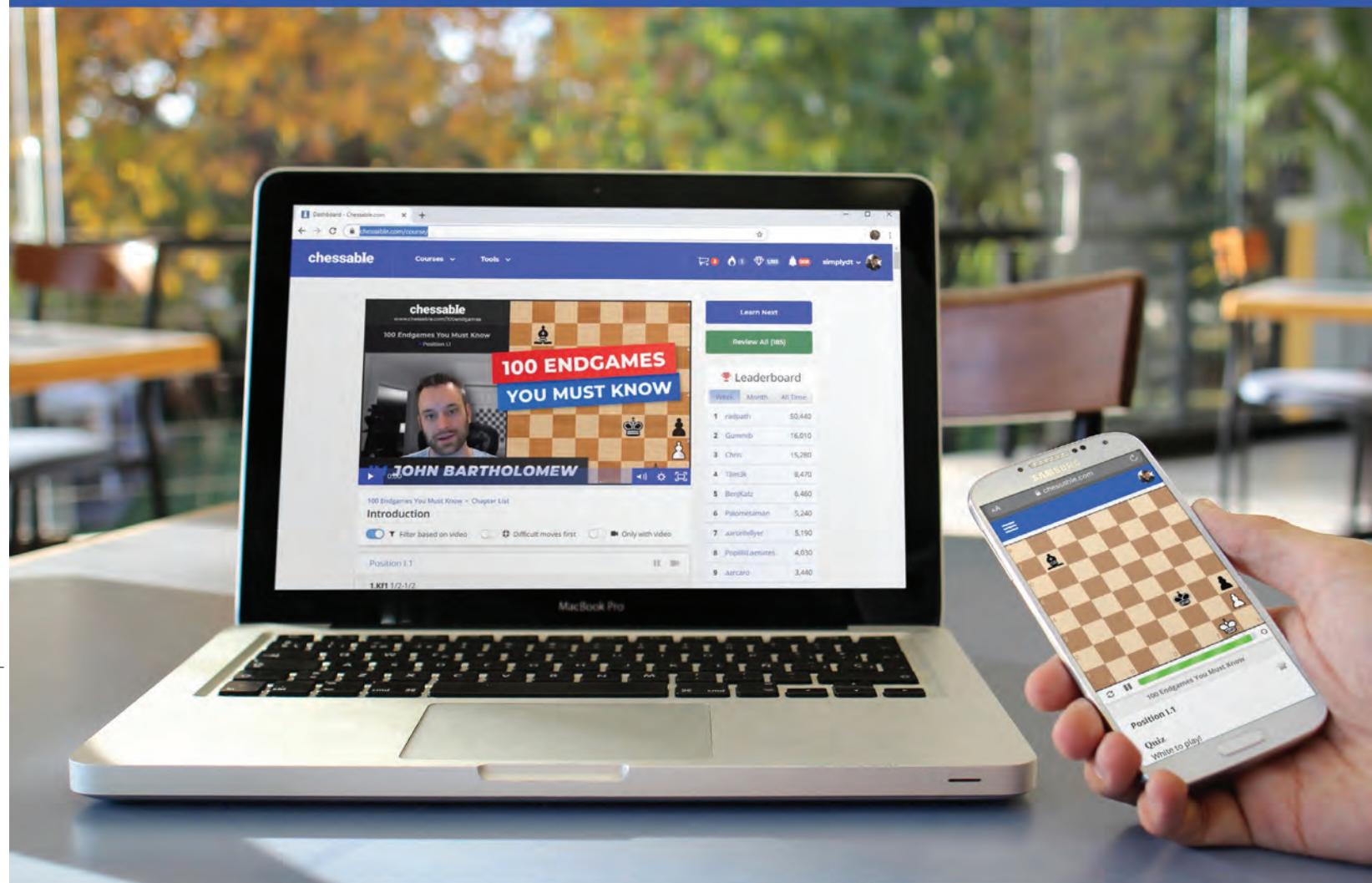
21 g6+ f8 22 xd7 1-0

82nd Tata Steel Challengers - Wijk aan Zee, Netherlands - 10-26 January 2020 (Category 15, average rating = 2602 Elo)																		
Player	Country	Rating	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Pts	TPR
1 David Anton Guijarro	ESP	2694	*	½	1	½	½	½	1	½	1	1	½	0	1	½	8½	2704
2 Nodirbek Abdusattorov	UZB	2635	½	*	½	½	½	1	½	1	½	0	½	1	½	½	8	2686
3 Pavel Eljanov	UKR	2650	0	½	*	½	1	1	½	½	½	½	½	1	½	½	8	2685
4 Erwin L'Ami	NED	2606	½	½	½	*	½	½	½	½	½	½	½	1	½	1	8	2688
5 Surya Shekhar Ganguly	IND	2636	½	½	0	½	*	½	½	½	½	½	½	1	1	1	7½	2656
6 Vincent Keymer	GER	2527	½	0	0	½	½	*	½	½	1	1	½	½	½	1	7	2636
7 Nihal Sarin	IND	2618	0	½	½	½	½	½	*	0	½	½	1	1	½	1	7	2629
8 Lucas Van Foreest	NED	2523	½	0	½	½	½	½	1	*	0	½	½	½	½	1	6½	2608
9 Nils Grandelius	SWE	2673	0	½	½	½	½	0	½	1	*	½	0	1	½	1	6½	2596
10 Jan Smeets	NED	2585	0	1	½	½	½	0	½	½	½	*	1	0	*	1	½	2574
11 Rauf Mamedov	AZE	2659	½	½	½	0	½	½	0	½	1	0	*	1	½	½	6	2568
12 Max Warmerdam	NED	2498	1	0	0	½	0	½	0	½	0	1	0	*	½	½	4½	2499
13 Anton Smirnov	AUS	2604	0	0	0	0	0	½	½	½	½	½	½	½	*	1	4½	2491
14 Dinara Saduakassova	KAZ	2519	½	½	½	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	½	½	½	0	3	2397



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Another New Champion!



The Gibraltar Masters landed up with a seven-way tie for first from which David Paravyan emerged victorious

For much of the past decade it has seemed as if the Gibraltar Masters almost belonged to Hikaru Nakamura, but this year the Rock regular and champion of 2015, 2016 and 2017 wasn't present. Joint top seeds were Shakhriyar Mamedyarov, who would unfortunately fall ill during the tournament, and Maxime Vachier-Lagrange, who had lost a play-off to Levon Aronian back at the 2018 edition.

Once again the many side-shows combined class with entertainment, and unsurprisingly proved popular, as chronicled by John Saunders later in these pages. On the chess board the question was would we get a surprise winner as had happened last year when rising star Vladislav Artemiev triumphed. The final man standing, while once again a talented young Russian, was even more of a surprise winner than Artemiev. In a field of seven 2700s, closely followed by former Gibraltar Champions Ivanchuk, Adams and Cheparinov, nobody had tipped the 21-year-old, 2639-rated David Paravyan. That he meant business, however, was clear when he crushed a Lithuanian IM in the opening round.

D.Paravyan-M.Beinoras

Round 1

Petroff Defence

1 e4 e5 2 ♜f3 ♜f6 3 d4 ♜xe4 4 ♜d3 d5

5 ♜xe5 ♜d7 6 ♜c3!?

Exchanging on d7 has been by far White's main choice, but the text is suddenly quite trendy at the highest of levels, possibly in part because Stockfish initially disapproves of White's structure-wrecking play.

6...♜xe5 7 dx5 ♜b4

Black decides that he might as well collect a pawn (White should gambit rather than cede the bishop-pair and remain pinned after 8 ♜d2). Development with 7...♜xc3 8 bxc3 ♜e7 should be safer, although after 9 0-0-0-0 10 f4 f5 11 ♜e3 c5 12 ♜e2! ♜e6 13 ♜f3 ♜d7 14 a4 ♜ad8 15 ♜e2 ♜c7 16 ♜fb1 b6 17 ♜d1 White was already beginning to turn the screw in Carlsen-Shirov, Isle of Man 2019, as shown by John Saunders in our December pages.

8 0-0! ♜xc3 9 bxc3 ♜xc3 10 ♜b1



10...♜h4?

Avoiding 10...0-0 11 ♜xh7+! ♜xh7 12 ♜d3+ ♜g8 13 ♜xc3, but this looks like the critical line. Also on the Rock a new idea was seen here in 13...b6 14 ♜g3 ♜d7 15 h3? (15 ♜b4 ♜f5 16 ♜h4 ♜e8 17 f4 ♜e6 18 ♜f3 ♜e4 had seen Black defending successfully in Anand-Wang Hao, Isle of Man 2019) 15...♜f5 16 ♜g5 ♜g6 17 ♜b3 ♜e8 (the immediate 17...♜f5 improves things somewhat, although after 18 f4 followed by ♜f2 or 18...♜xc2 19 ♜c3 and then ♜f2, White's kingside roller still looks pretty dangerous) 18 f4! ♜f5 19 ♜f2, which saw the presence of opposite-coloured bishops favour White's attacking ambitions in Jones-Li Di, Gibraltar 2020.

11 ♜a3!

This obvious if new move is the problem with Black's last. Where will his king now find shelter?

11...♜g4?

11...a5! was better, if still strategically quite risky for Black after 12 ♜f3 c6 13 ♜d6 ♜b4 14 ♜e3.

12 ♜b5+ c6 13 ♜xd5! ♜d7

There's no reason not to take the pawn in view of 13...cxb5? 14 ♜xb7 ♜c8 (or 14...♜d8 15 ♜c6+ ♜d7 16 ♜xc3) 15 e6! ♜xe6 16 ♜xb5+ ♜d7 17 ♜fe1+! ♜xe1 18 ♜xe1+ ♜d8 19 ♜a5+ ♜c7 20 ♜e7+.

14 ♜b3 ♜xe5 15 g3 ♜f6 16 ♜fe1

It's already something of a massacre in view of 16...cxb5 17 ♜c3 and 16...0-0-0? 17 ♜a6.

16...♜d8 17 ♜f1 b6 18 ♜bd1 ♜c7

19 ♜xe5!?

Very tempting, of course, but there was a stronger option in the sneaky 19 ♜xd7+! ♜xd7 20 ♜e3!, threatening ♜f3 and ♜xf7+, or if 20...♜hf8 (20...♜ae8 21 ♜f3 ♜e6 22 ♜xf7+ ♜d8 23 ♜c4 is also pretty much winning for White) 21 ♜h3+ ♜c7 22 ♜f3 with a devastating attack.

19...♜xe5 20 ♜xf7?!

It transpires that 20 ♜d6+! ♜xd6 21 ♜xd6 ♜xd6 22 ♜xf7 would have been stronger. White only has a queen for the two rooks, but while Black coordinates them and makes his king safe, White can pick up g7, i.e. 22...♜he8 (22...♜hg8 23 ♜f4+ ♜e7 24 ♜e5+ ♜d8 25 ♜d6 ♜e8 26 ♜c4 ♜f8 27 ♜e5+ is even worse for Black) 23 ♜xg7 ♜e7 24 ♜f6+ ♜e6 25 f4 ♜f7 26 ♜e5+ ♜d7 27 ♜g2 and White's superior coordination adds up to a virtually decisive advantage.

20...♜f5

20...♜e6? 21 ♜xg7 ♜ad8 was also a far from ridiculous defensive try when the engines suggest that White needs to regroup with 22 ♜a6 c5 23 ♜c1! to maintain a clear plus.

21 ♜xg7 ♜ad8?

Now White is in time to deny the black king use of b7. 21...♜g4 was essential (if 21...♜hg8 22 ♜e7 ♜ae8 23 ♜xd7+! ♜xd7 24 ♜d6+ ♜c8 25 ♜a6+), and after 22 ♜e5+ ♜b7 23 ♜d4 ♜f5 24 ♜e7 ♜ad8 25 ♜d3 White would still have needed to show some precision.

22 ♜a6!



22...♜de8?

This loses mundanely, but 22...♜b8 would have allowed White to reveal his main idea in 23 ♜e7, and if 23...♜de8 there is the pretty 24 ♜xd7! ♜xd7 25 ♜d6+! ♜xd6 26 ♜b7#.

23 ♜d4 c5



23... $\mathbb{W}e6$ covers d6, but loses to 24 $\mathbb{W}f4+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ (or 24... $\mathbb{W}e5$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}d6+$) 25 $\mathbb{W}b8\#$.
24 $\mathbb{W}d6+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 25 $\mathbb{W}b8+$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 26 $\mathbb{W}d6+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 1-0

The pin wins, in view of 27... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 28 $\mathbb{W}b8\#$. 27 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ would also have done the trick.

After four rounds, Paravyan found himself in a chasing pack of 13, half a point behind the only player on 4/4, Ivan Cheparinov. That 100% immediately came to an end, Cheparinov having to settle for a half-point after a predictably entertaining draw with his former boss, Veselin Topalov. The former FIDE world champion is still rated a far-from-shabby 2738, but made headlines for the wrong reasons the next day when he was slaughtered by rising star Rameshbabu Praggnanandhaa.

R.Praggnanandhaa-V.Topalov

Round 6

French Defence

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 4 e5 $\mathbb{Q}fd7$ 5 f4 c5 6 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ b6 8 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 0-0 10 0-0 cxd4

A rare choice, Black having most often tried to block things up with 10...f5.

11 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$

Thematic enough, but also slow and rather unTopalovian.

13 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ 15 f5!?



Attempting to seize the initiative, but Black would still have been solid enough after the calm 15... $\mathbb{Q}c7$.

15... $\mathbb{Q}xf5?$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 17 c4 $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 18 a3 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}fe1$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 20 b4 $\mathbb{Q}xf2+$ 21 $\mathbb{W}xf2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 22 $\mathbb{W}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$



14-year-old Praggnanandhaa crushed a former FIDE World Champion in Topalovian fashion.

Topalov is floundering and needed to find 22... $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ $\mathbb{W}e6$ to stay on the board. Now White can strike.

23 $\mathbb{Q}f6+$! $\mathbb{gxf6}$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}ad1$

Taking control of d4 and so deciding proceedings, since it's going to be mate if 24... $\mathbb{W}c7$? 25 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}d3$.

24... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ $\mathbb{Q}fxd8$ 26 $\mathbb{W}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}h4!$ h5 28 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ f4 29 g4!

By no means obligatory, but still a highly visual and strong method of blowing open lines.

29... $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}gxh5$ $\mathbb{Q}g3+$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}xh4$ 32 $\mathbb{W}xh4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ 1-0

That was the 14-year-old's fifth victory in a row, bouncing back after losing a wild opening encounter to WIM P.V. Nandhidhaa, another of the large contingent of 29 Indians playing at Gibraltar. The next day it was Praggnanandhaa's turn to be outplayed by Wang Hao, after which a default win over Mamedyarov (which could easily have been a great battle to watch), and two draws left him on a pretty respectable 7/10. Talking of Indian wunderkinds, the second youngest grandmaster of all time, 13-year-old Dommaraju Gukesh, was also in action, but found Gawain Jones too tough to handle.

G.Jones-D.Gukesh

Round 5

Sicilian Rossolimo

1 e4 c5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ g6 4 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ e5 6 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ dxc6 7 d3 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 8 a4

Shades of Carl Portman's play from last month, although we suspect that Gawain was more inspired by the world champion.

8... $\mathbb{Q}f6$

This allows White to cause a bit of disruption so Black might also want to consider 8... $\mathbb{Q}h6$?, keeping open the option of ...f6 and ...f7.

9 $\mathbb{Q}g5$!? h6 10 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ c4!?

Undoubling Black's pawns, but this likely asks too much of his position. Instead, 10...0-0

11 h3 b6 had been seen the week before in Carlsen-Dubov, Wijk aan Zee 2020, when perhaps White should simply have continued his development with 12 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$, which should suffice for a small pull.

11 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ cxd3 12 cxd3 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$?

Gukesh continues his maximalist approach, but 13... $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ would have been a somewhat safer approach.

14 $\mathbb{Q}b3$!



It's now far from easy to defend b7 in view of 14... $\mathbb{Q}f8$? 15 $\mathbb{Q}c5$, but 14... $\mathbb{Q}b8$! 15 $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 0-0 is the silicon's dynamic recommendation, and if 17 $\mathbb{Q}xb8$ $\mathbb{Q}xb8$ when Black has all the dark squares and ... $\mathbb{Q}f8-e6$ may even follow.

14... $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$?

Ever the manoeuvre Black would like to make in this structure, but here he really had to find 15... $\mathbb{Q}f6$! 16 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ (16 $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}g4+$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ 0-0 offers reasonable play for the two pawns) 16...b6 to minimise White's advantage.

16 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}c4$

Jones is in his element and now makes full use of the powerful initiative he has been allowed.

17... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}d6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xb7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$?

Another move which one might best describe as maximalist.

20 d4!



The top Brits in action at Gibraltar, where David Howell didn't play, but rather commented.



This doesn't create the best impression, but 5... $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ 6 $bxa3$ $bxcc4$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $d5$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ would leave White with two good bishops.

6 b3 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 7 0-0 0-0 8 d4

White's opening has been a success. He enjoys a pleasant Catalan-style set-up and Black could rather do with an earlier improvement if the offbeat 3...a6 is to remain viable.

8...d5 9 $\mathbb{Q}c2$

Both here and on the next move 9 c5! is tempting, and if 9...a5 10 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ followed by $\mathbb{Q}e1-d3$ with a firm grip on e5. **9... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $bxcc4$ 11 $bxcc4$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 12 e4!**

Correctly aiming to open the position with Black still having to solve the problem of a slightly congested position, which the American WGM should now have likely done with 12... $dxe4$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ c5! when 15 d5 $exd5$ 16 $cxd5$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ simply cannot be bad for Black.

12...a5? 13 e5 $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 14 c5!

19 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 22 h4!

Black has been completely outplayed and it's time to start turning the screw.

22... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}e5$

Only played now that Black's knight has been slightly dragged offside to b5.

26... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}x5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}h5$ h6

30...g6 was perhaps a stouter defence, but after 31 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 32 h5 Black surely wouldn't have survived in any case.

31 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 32 $\mathbb{Q}xh6+$!



Ending a rather Capablanca-like performance with *une petite combinaison*.

32...gxh6 33 $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 34 $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 1-0

It's mate next move.

Paravyan meanwhile remained on the top boards, solidly holding Maghsoodloo, Esipenko and especially Wang Hao as Black, while grinding down compatriot Mikhail Antipov in some 88 moves and generally remaining alert to whatever chances came his way.

D.Paravyan-L.Krysa

Round 5



Better late than never for this advance and now Black never manages to satisfactorily untangle.

14... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ f6

Criticised by the engines, but White's position would also be extremely pleasant and easy to play after 15... $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ a4 17 h4!.

16 exf6 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}b2$

This position may not look straightforward to win, but Paravyan was to lose no time in opening lines for his rook.

35 f4! $\mathbb{Q}e4$

35... $\mathbb{Q}f7?$ 36 $fxe5$ $fxe5$ fails to preserve Black's structure after 37 $\mathbb{Q}xe5!$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 38 $\mathbb{Q}xe5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 39 f6 and there's simply no defence.

36 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 37 $fxe5!$ Olé!

37... $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ 38 $exf6$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 39 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ d3 40



■d4! 1-0

The finish would be 40... $\mathbb{W}f7$ 41 $\mathbb{E}e8+$ $\mathbb{W}xe8$ 42 $f7+$.

While there were arguably too many draws for comfort on the top boards this year, it must be remarked that very few were short, as well as that the penultimate round reminded the world that strong grandmasters can really fight when they need to: 14 of the top 20 boards saw a decisive result. That left some five players on 7/9 pursued by a pack of 16, including Gawain Jones and Michael Adams, who could only admit that he had been rather fortunate.

M.Adams-M.Antipov

Round 9



Most unusually Adams has been totally outplayed, being forced to give up a piece then run with his king from the kingside. After something sensible like 35... $\mathbb{W}b8$ Black's extra piece would surely have prevailed, but instead Antipov was far too keen to force exchanges and exploit White's last move, 35 $\mathbb{H}h4$.

35... $\mathbb{Q}g6?$ 36 $f4!$ $\mathbb{Q}xh4$ 37 $fxg5$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 38 $gxh5$ $\mathbb{Q}e7?$

Now White's kingside pawns even give him the upper hand. Something like 38... $\mathbb{W}d7$ was necessary and after 39 $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ (39... $\mathbb{W}xa4+!$? 40 $b3$ $\mathbb{W}a2$ 41 $\mathbb{W}f5+$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 42 $\mathbb{W}xg6$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ also seems to work, by generating just enough counterplay) 40 $g6$ $\mathbb{W}f5$ 41 $g7$ $\mathbb{W}xf3+$ 42 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 43 $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 44 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}d8!$ Black would have been able to save the game.

39 $g6$ $\mathbb{W}e6$ 40 $g7$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 41 $\mathbb{Q}f1!$ $\mathbb{Q}g8?$

Allowing White a neat finish, but even after 41... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 42 $\mathbb{Q}f8$ $\mathbb{W}h3$ 43 $\mathbb{Q}h8!$ $\mathbb{W}h1+$ 44 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ it seems that White should prevail.

42 $\mathbb{Q}f8+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 43 $\mathbb{Q}xg8!$ $\mathbb{W}xg8$ 44 $\mathbb{Q}g4+$ 1-0 44... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 45 $h6$ is crushing, as is 44... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 45 $\mathbb{W}f4+$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 46 $\mathbb{W}xh6$.

Wang Hao against Esipenko and Paravyan versus Yilmaz were drawn, while the remaining co-leader, Parham Maghsoodloo was defeated by Maxime Vachier-Lagrave, one of only three winners from the chasing pack along with David Navara and Daniil Yuffa. How to have a seven-way playoff? Well, the good or bad news was that the rules specified that the four players with the highest TPR would qualify, meaning that



While Tan Zhongyi went home with the £20,000 prize for the best performance by a woman, a delighted David Paravyan pocketed the overall £30,000 first prize after a dramatic playoff.

Paravyan got in with one of 2760, whereas Vachier-Lagrave's 2759 performance came up just short. The French superstar hasn't been the most fortunate of players in recent years, but did have the grace to admit that he'd "Been so lucky in this tournament" that he "didn't really deserve it."

Come the play-off and the classy Wang Hao easily defeated Daniil Yuffa 2-0 in the 10+5 games, whereas the encounter between Paravyan and his 17-year-old compatriot Andrey Esipenko was much closer. Following two draws, the younger man should have won their first 3+2 encounter, but missed his chance and would be eliminated come Armageddon. That seemingly left Wang Hao favourite to bag the £30,000 first prize, but he failed to accurately follow up a bold piece sacrifice and could only draw the return, making a clearly stunned Paravyan the champion.

The Gibraltar Masters is, of course, known for the strength of not just the elite, but also the female players it attracts. All tournament the world's leading female players landed various blows against the male GMs, with the top prize of £20,000 going to former world champion Tan Zhongyi after a dramatic battle.

Tan Zhongyi-M.Lagarde

Round 10



The position is something of a mess, but after the sensible 32... $\mathbb{Q}c8!$ Black would have remained the clear favourite to prevail, and if 33 $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 34 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{W}d5$ 35 $\mathbb{W}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5!$. **32... $\mathbb{Q}d5?$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}e3!$**

Calmly improving White's worst-placed piece while ruling out any checks on d1.

33... $\mathbb{Q}xe5?$

Extremely greedy. Anything might yet have happened after 33... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 34 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 35 $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}d2$ in the ensuing time scramble.

34 $\mathbb{Q}d1?$

This is not the way to punish Black, however. Possibly only here did Tan spot 34 $\mathbb{Q}c4?$ $\mathbb{W}a1+$ 35 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$, but 34 $a3!$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ (or 34... $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 35 $\mathbb{Q}d1$) 35 $\mathbb{W}b5+$ would have been a killer, and if 35... $\mathbb{W}b6$ 36 $\mathbb{W}e8+$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 37 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{W}c5$ 38 $\mathbb{Q}b1+$ or 35... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 36 $\mathbb{W}e8+$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 37 $\mathbb{W}c6+$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 38 $\mathbb{Q}c2!$ (38 $\mathbb{W}xc7?$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3!$ 39 $\mathbb{W}xe3$ $\mathbb{W}xe3+$ is only a draw) 38... $\mathbb{Q}d2$ 39 $\mathbb{Q}f1!$ followed by 40 $\mathbb{Q}b4+$ and hunting down the black king.

34... $\mathbb{Q}e4?$

Now White simply wins a piece down the b-file. 34... $\mathbb{Q}c3$ 35 $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}d5!$ 36 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 37 $\mathbb{W}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ would instead have left all three results very possible.

35 $\mathbb{Q}b2$ a5 36 $\mathbb{Q}d4!$ 1-0

Even stronger than 36 $a3$, as 36 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{W}b7$ 37 $\mathbb{Q}d8+$ picks off the loose rook on e5.

Leading scores:

1-7 Andrey Esipenko (RUS), Wang Hao (CHN), Daniil Yuffa (RUS), David Paravyan (RUS; champion after a playoff), Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (FRA), David Navara (CZE), Mustafa Yilmaz (TUR) 7½/10
8-23 Parham Maghsoodloo (IRI), Jan Werle (NED), Veselin Topalov (BUL), Aryan Chopra (IND), Mikhail Kobalia (RUS), Murali Karthikeyan (IND), Michael Adams (ENG), Le Quang Liem (VIE), Gawain Jones (ENG), Ivan Saric (CRO), Krishnan Sasikiran (IND), Jules Moussard (FRA), Rameshbabu Praggnanandhaa (IND), Bogdan-Daniel Deac (ROU), Tan Zhongyi (CHN), Daniele Vocaturo (ITA) 7.



Magical Majorca

**Looking for somewhere to play this summer?
GM Stephen Gordon recommends the Llucmajor Open**



If you're looking for an Open tournament with a more relaxed feel that can be combined with a bit of holiday time then I can highly recommend the Llucmajor International Open, which takes place on Majorca every May. The venue is right next to the beach and harbour in the town of Arenal, approximately 20 minutes from Palma airport by car, with many hotel options available.

The tournament schedule is a little unusual with the games for the most part starting in the evening at 8pm local time, the aim being to give the tournament as much of a holiday feel as possible. There are local cycle routes leading to Palma and, for those a little more adventurous, there's always the option to hire a scooter or moped to go and explore. Additionally, there's a large water park just outside of the centre of Arenal to keep the thrill seekers happy.

The tournament in recent years has attracted between 20 and 30 grandmasters and around 50 titled players overall, making it attractive for players seeking norms. Last year 22 GMs were in attendance headed up by the young Russian Nikita Petrov. The tournament started with a couple of upsets – a defeat in round 1 for one of the grandmasters was a clear sign that there would be no plain sailing for anyone.

After five rounds the tournament table started to show those in good form. Denmark's Allan Rasmussen had managed to

race into the lead with 5/5. By that point, without having looked at his games in great detail, I was impressed. Uncompromising opening choices that were played with a lot of energy looked to be the main factor contributing to his perfect score.

Ukraine's Vitaliy Bernadskiy was the closest pursuer on 4½/5. The two met in round 6 and Rasmussen continued his uncompromising approach by employing the Dutch. Judging by the opening however, it seems as though this didn't come as any surprise to the young Ukrainian.

V.Bernadskiy-A.Rasmussen
Llucmajor Open 2019
Dutch Defence

1 d4 f5 2 ♜g5 g6

I think 2...h6 is an important line to be aware of in the 2 ♜g5 Anti-Dutch. After 3 ♜h4 g5 4 e4 (4 e3 is also possible to preserve White's dark-squared bishop) 4...♝f6 5 e5 e6 6 exf6 (or 6 ♜g3 f4) 6...♝xf6 7 ♜g3 f4 Black will win the piece back and although White can throw in a check to prevent Black from castling, there are other positives to Black's position, such as the two bishops, space and central control. Indeed, he has scored well from this position in practice.

3 ♜c3 ♜g7 4 e3 d6 5 ♜ge2 h6 6 ♜h4

♝f6?

The most natural move in the position, and yet it leads to significant problems. 6...g5 7 ♜g3 ♜f6 is safer, although I would still prefer to handle the white pieces after 8 h4.

7 ♜xf6! ♜xf6 8 ♜f4

It's going to be a near impossible task for Black to deal with his light-squared weaknesses.

8...♝f7 9 ♜c4+ e6



10 g4!

White must strike – and quickly, since Black is able to close the centre with ...d5 and get his pieces out, he will be better in the long term with the two bishops and more dynamic set-up (pawns behind pieces).

10...g5



Unfortunately for Black, after 10...d5 White has a couple of nice ways to give up material for a very dangerous attack: 11 gxf5 (probably best, although 11 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ exd5 12 $\mathbb{Q}xd5+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 13 gxf5 is also tempting) 11...dxc4 12 fxe6+ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ with a powerful initiative.

11 gxf5 gxf4 12 fxe6+ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}d5+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}f5+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}g1$ c6 19 $\mathbb{Q}e6+$



White has a winning advantage either way, but 19 $\mathbb{Q}h5+$ looks to be the most clinical, and if 19... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$

19... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 23 h4 $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}xd7+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 26 hxg5

Bernadskiy had done all the hard work by this point. Rasmussen fought on for another 30 moves, but was unable to salvage anything.

The next game might have been my best effort. Although not really of any theoretical value (note that I made an inaccuracy on move 7 in a line that should really be difficult for Black), an opportunity to attack was present, right out of the opening.

S.Gordon-O.De Prado Rodriguez
Llucmajor Open 2019
Dutch Defence

1 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ f5 2 d3!?

This is definitely one of the more testing Anti-Dutch lines available to White. Many of Black's options are risky.

2...d6

It's actually a bit unclear what the best response for Black is. Strangely 2... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ might be the most accurate, after which another weird-looking move in 3 d4 could be the best way for White to fight for an advantage.

3 e4 e5 4 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$

4... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ is another possibility, looking to steal a pawn after 5 exf5 $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ 6 d4 exd4 7 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc2$, but White has very dangerous compensation after a move like 9 $\mathbb{Q}c4$. Instead, 4...c5 is arguably safer, to prevent the centre being opened at an early stage, but Black still has problems to solve after 5 g3 which may be followed by 6 $\mathbb{Q}h3$, the strategy being to target the weak light squares in Black's camp.

5 $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ 6 d4

This line should give White a slight plus...

6... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 7 d5!?

...although after this poor decision Black is OK. 7 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ was preferable – Black is going to have structural issues.

7... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}b5+$ c6 9 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$

10... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ felt a bit more natural when I was considering trying to keep the black knight offside with 11 a3 $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 12 b4.

11 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}b3$



It's important to hold up castling. If its not prevented then there's potential for Black to gain the advantage due to having the central pawn mass.

12... $\mathbb{Q}e4?$!

It feels like Black is asking a bit too much, but this is a difficult position to play, facing the ongoing problem of trying to get the king safe. Indeed, it's easy for Black to drift into major trouble, as shown by 12... $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}g5!$ $\mathbb{Q}c5?$ (13... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ makes it difficult for White to demonstrate an advantage) 14 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ gxf6 (or 14... $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$) 15 $\mathbb{Q}xe5!$ and wins.

13 $\mathbb{Q}g5$

Natural, but it's not a great surprise that the machine finds a very strong continuation

here: 13 $\mathbb{Q}e1!$ d5 14 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ and Black just cannot get organised.

13...d5

Black was counting on locking out White's light-squared bishop, and now White needs to act quickly.

14 $\mathbb{Q}cxe4!$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$

14... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ would have been better, but it's a very difficult decision to make to go material down when behind in development. That said, 15 $\mathbb{Q}f7$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xh8$ $\mathbb{Q}bd5$ does give Black fighting chances. With the knight being trapped in the corner and White's light-squared bishop's range limited, the position is actually quite unclear.

15 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}h5+$

There is obvious compensation for the piece. Black's king will struggle to find shelter for the rest of the game.

16... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$

18... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}h8+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xg6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xg5+$ is bad news.

19 $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}h8+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}h8+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}xg6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$



25 $\mathbb{Q}xd5!$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$

There's no way for Black to save both rooks, which leads to too great a material loss.



Whether playing chess full-time or working in London, Stephen Gordon likes to make the time every May to visit Majorca for the Llucmajor Open, where the Dutch doesn't do too well!



26... $\mathbb{W}f6$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 28 $\mathbb{W}xe4+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 29 $\mathbb{W}xa8$

A rook and five pawns is going to be just a bit too much, even for the mighty two bishops. It's lost anyway, but my opponent now made it quick:

29... $\mathbb{W}b6?$ 30 $\mathbb{W}d5+ 1-0$

Another interesting game unfortunately did not go in my favour. In the following encounter my opponent played a model game in an anti-Najdorf line, by hitting me with a relatively new idea on move 7 that I was not aware of.

G.Souleidis-S.Gordon

Llucmajor Open 2019

Closed Sicilian

1 e4 c5 2 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ a6 3 g3 b5 4 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 5 d3 e6

I made the decision late in my preparation to play 2...a6 and had taken a quick look at this position, noticing that many players opted for 6 $\mathbb{Q}h3$ here. My admittedly very superficial thoughts were that this must be being played to prevent 6...d5? (7 exd5 exd5 8 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ is already very unpleasant).

6 f4

Played quickly.

6...d5?

It might be a bit harsh to mark this as dubious, but given the game continuation I do feel that it's a poor move in a practical sense, offering White an early initiative. 6...b4 7 $\mathbb{Q}ce2$ d5 would have been safer and is an acceptable position for Black.

7 f5!



Again played a tempo. I realised that I had walked into something that was going to be unpleasant. White is pressuring the light squares immediately. It somehow feels early to make this break, but it actually makes sense for White to strike at this moment. The idea had been played quite a few times of late – my opponent mentioned that this idea had been known for a couple of years and that Huschenbeth had won a quick game with it in 2017.

7...d4

The natural continuation. Ideally Black wants to lock the position as much as possible so that White's lead in development will count for less. White, on the other hand, will look to

act quickly to expose the weak light squares in Black's camp.

7...exf5 was the other option. It is a more solid approach, but White is for choice after 8 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$.

8 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$

For a while I considered taking the material with 8...dxc3, but after 9 exf7+ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 10 bxc3 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 12 0-0...



...it did feel as though White had more than adequate compensation and so I decided that I should try to soak up the pressure and keep things as closed as possible. My decision was probably objectively correct, although White is doing well either way. Note too that here the machine suggests White is close to winning.

9 $\mathbb{Q}ce2$ e5 10 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 11 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}e7$

I've played a bunch of natural moves in response to the early f4-f5 push, but it's clear after the next phase that Black is stretched when attempting to keep the position closed, so that the light squares can be bolstered and development completed.

12 c3!

Chipping away towards opening the position, but just as important is to allow the queen to operate on the a2-g8 diagonal.

12... $\mathbb{W}d6$

12...dxc3 would have been safer. The position still feels uncomfortable for Black, although less so than the game. Although giving up some space, Black gains a bit of time due to White not being freely able to play $\mathbb{W}b3$, as the d3-pawn needs attention. 13 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 14 a4 0-0 15 axb5 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ is one example of how Black might be able to hold things together.

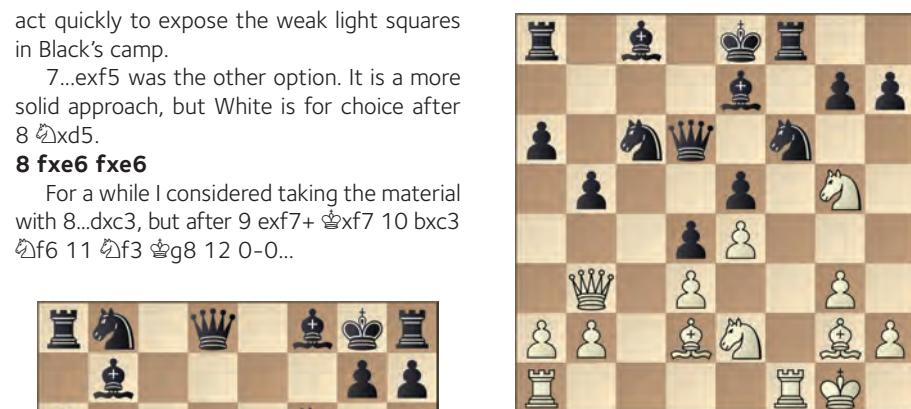
13 cxd4 cxd4 14 $\mathbb{Q}d2$

14 a4 was the move chosen by Huschenbeth in the aforementioned game above: 14... $\mathbb{W}e6$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ h6 16 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$! (there is a lot of potential energy in White's set-up and it shouldn't come as a surprise that this sacrifice works; every single white piece is ready to pounce) 16... $\mathbb{W}xe5$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 19 axb5 axb5 20 $\mathbb{W}xa8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ 21 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}ce7$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 23 exd5 and 1-0 in Huschenbeth-Engel, Apolda 2017.

14... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 15 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$

I still held some hope that I could unravel, but unfortunately White is in time to prevent the bishop coming to e6.

16 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$



17 $\mathbb{Q}f4!$

Highlighting all the defects in the black position. The knight cannot be captured without suffering material loss: 17...exf4 18 e5 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ when White is material up and Black's issues with coordination remain.

17...h6 18 $\mathbb{Q}f3$

18 $\mathbb{Q}ge6$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}ac1$ was more clinical. Black is busted, as shown by 19...exf4 20 e5 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}c7+$.

18... $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$

19... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ was really the last chance to keep the game going, although Black will have a tough defensive task after White forces a transition into a two-bishop ending with 20 $\mathbb{Q}c7+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$.

20 $\mathbb{Q}ac1$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$

Eventually the bishop reaches what would be an ideal square, but it's too late in the day.

21 $\mathbb{Q}xc6!$

The knockout blow.

21... $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}g6$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 24 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 26 d6 $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}e6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 29 d7+ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}f7+ 1-0$

Allan Rasmussen bounced straight back from his defeat to Bernadskiy in round 7.

A.Rasmussen-T.Kantans

Llucmajor Open 2019

English Opening

1 c4 c5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 4 e3 e5 5 d4 exd4

This is not so common and probably more risky than the main line, 5...e4, which practice suggests is the most reliable move. The problem for Black is that White has quite a few options here, so having some knowledge of the theory and how to handle the resulting positions is important.

6 exd4 d5 7 cxd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 10 0-0

White enjoys a lead in development, but will need to make the next few moves count. It feels like Black is maybe one tempo away from being completely fine, but as is often the case, one tempo can be all important.

10... $\mathbb{Q}c8$

This move asks a bit too much, but I don't envy Black's task here – there seem to be problems whatever path is chosen. 10... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ is safer and after, say, 11 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$

(11...cxd4 12 ♜xd4 ♜d7 13 ♜f3 looks very tricky to handle) 12 ♜e2 it might be worth Black giving a pawn for the bishop-pair and some time with 12...0-0 13 dxc5 ♜xe3 14 ♜xe3 ♜f6, although White is still for choice.

11 ♜g5 ♜d6

The following line demonstrates Black's problem with completing development: 11...♜e7 12 ♜xe7 ♜xe7 (or 12...♝e7 13 dxc5 13 d5).

12 ♜e1



Black doesn't appear to have committed any serious offences so far, but the machine already judges that it's a hopeless situation.

12...a6 13 ♜xc6+ bxc6 14 ♜b3 ♜d5 15 dxc5 ♜b8

After 15...♜xc5 16 ♜b7 ♜e7 17 ♜xe6 the rook on c8 hangs.

16 ♜xd5 cxd5

16...♜xb3 17 axb3 cxd5 18 b4 would be an easy conversion for White.

17 ♜xd5

Two pawns down with no development, Black can only last a few more moves.

17...♜e7 18 ♜xe6! fxe6 19 ♜xe6 ♜c7 20 ♜e5 ♜xb2 21 ♜f7+ ♜d8 22 ♜xe7+ 1-0

Finally, let's see a pivotal game from the last round that decided how the top of the standings looked. I'm unsure what happened, but Rasmussen's opponent didn't make it to the game which was an unfortunate way for the tournament to be decided. In this game, Alexander Fier was playing catch-up and needed a full point to get a place on the podium.

V.Bernadskiy-A.Fier Llucmajor Open 2019 London System

1 d4 ♜f6 2 ♜f3 e6 3 ♜f4

It's surprising to see how much popularity this opening has gained in recent years, which is probably in part due to the success Magnus Carlsen has had with it in blitz and rapid events.

3...c5 4 e3 d5 5 c3 ♜c6 6 ♜bd2 cxd4 7 exd4 ♜h5!?

This line is an interesting way of trying to mix things up against the London. Black is aiming to bag the two bishops; the downside

being that it's going to take some time for the c8-bishop to play its part in proceedings.

8 ♜e3

8 ♜g5 is an alternative, but there is an argument to suggest that provoking 8...f6 helps Black after 9 ♜e3 ♜d6 or 9 ♜h4 ♜d6 10 ♜e5 g6, which practice suggests is more than OK for Black.

8...♜d6 9 ♜e5 g6 10 ♜b5

The following game is the one that triggered the popularity of this line: 10 g4 ♜g7 11 h4 ♜xe5 12 dxe5 ♜xe5 13 ♜f3 ♜f6 14 h5 when White has interesting compensation for the pawn, but objectively it seems Black is doing fine, Kamsky-Nakamura, U.S. Championship, Saint Louis 2017.

10...♜c7



11 c4

A novelty that's unlikely to be repeated. 11 0-0 f6 12 ♜ef3 (12 f4!?) is a more natural continuation that seems to lead to a fairly balanced middlegame after 12...0-0.

11...0-0 12 cxd5?

This is the mistake, however. Retreating with 12 ♜ef3 was required when the position is still equal.

12...♜xe5 13 dxe5 ♜xe5

It's pretty clear that White's now in some trouble, and it's not clear what Bernadskiy had missed.

14 ♜c1 ♜a5 15 ♜e2 ♜f4 16 0-0

Unfortunately this is almost necessary. Black now has the technical task of converting the position with an extra pawn.

16...♜xd5 17 ♜h6 ♜g7 18 ♜c4 ♜d8 19 ♜xg7 ♜xg7 20 ♜f3 b6 21 ♜d4+ ♜f6 22 ♜fd1 ♜d8 23 ♜e3 ♜b7 24 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 25 ♜xf6+ ♜xf6 26 ♜xd5+ ♜xd5 27 ♜xd5 exd5



White achieves a rook and pawn ending one unit down, which, as we know in a lot of cases, can be drawn. Here it's going to be difficult however, due to Black having another trump in the active king. I think Fier's play from here onwards is very impressive and instructive.

28 ♜c6+ ♜e5 29 ♜c7 ♜d4!

I'm no endgame expert, but would assess this as brave and correct.

30 ♜xf7 ♜d3 31 ♜xh7 ♜c2!

Great judgement from Fier. I think for some players it would have been tough to abandon the passed pawn, but he judges correctly that he can shed this one to remove White's queenside.

32 b4

After 32 ♜d7 ♜xb2 33 ♜xd5 ♜xa2 Black's queenside pawns are going to win this race.

32...d4 33 ♜c7+ ♜b2 34 ♜d7 ♜c3 35 ♜f1



35...♜e8!

Another instructive decision. Activate the rook and cut off the opponent's king.

36 ♜xa7 d3 37 ♜c7+ ♜xb4 38 ♜d7 ♜c3 39 ♜c7+ ♜b2 40 ♜d7 ♜c2 41 ♜c7+ ♜d1 42 g4 ♜e1+ 43 ♜g2 d2 44 ♜c3 ♜e5 45 f4 ♜e2 46 fxe5 d1 ♜

There are no hopes of a fortress here.

47 ♜b3 ♜d5+ 48 ♜h3 ♜xe5 49 a3 ♜f2 0-1

This meant that Fier caught Bernadskiy on 7 out of 9, which gave him third spot on tie-break. Vitaliy had been on the top tables pretty much from the beginning and so had the best tie-break of the bunch of players finishing on 7 which gave him second. However, in the end nobody was near Rasmussen who had finished a clear point ahead of the field with a very impressive 8/9.

I had a bit of a tough time in the tournament last year, struggling due to being out-prepared on more than one occasion and generally being a bit rusty, having had a break from tournaments for just under a year. However, that definitely wouldn't stop me from recommending the Llucmajor Open to those who are looking to play in a strong open tournament with a holiday feel to it.

This year's Llucmajor Open takes place May 17-24. For more information visit: www.winterchess.com/en/inicio.html





Augsburg Adventures

Carl Strugnell once again enjoyed a post-Christmas visit to Bavaria

Welcome to Augsburg, the heart of Bavaria and one of Germany's oldest cities. Words like cute and cosy come to mind, but for its modest size one could be quite amazed at the number of rush hour commuters. It is a town that has no inferiority complex towards its bigger brothers, the nearby Munich and capital Berlin.

Augsburg has its own thing going for it, and the inhabitants are quite proud of the historic centre and quality of life. It just so happens that for the past 15 odd years it has been home to a chess memorial totally off the chess-setters' radar, in honour of the late Senator Max Gutmann, a lover of the game and, as his official title suggests, an important man of the region. Having a particularly friendly relationship with the organiser, Johannes Pitl, I am fortunate to be material of choice for the IM section (there is also a GM tournament in which I played two years ago).



Augsburg, one of Germany's oldest cities.

The playing hall is the conference room of the Ibis hotel we all stay in, and in the evening the players go to the restaurant together in the best of spirits (although some obviously happier than others). As I don't have access to the tournament games (they don't make it to TWIC or even to ChessBase), you will have to be content with my own, the silver lining being that at least I will know a bit about what I'm saying, rather than having to pretend I understand what is going on in another player's mind. To add to this journey into the past, the time control was two hours for 40 moves, one hour for 20 minutes and an extra half hour for the rest of the game. No increments!

Other things worth noting include that I made the tournament part of a diet experiment. I fasted all day and ate over 2,000 calories in one meal after 8pm. Hunger pangs were kept under control with frequent amounts of sparkling water. I do not know if my concentration was better or worse than

normal, but what I could witness for sure was that insulin spikes being nonexistent, I had no emotional instability. So if you are also prey to 'Oh my god, I'm winning, I can't feel my legs', and then shortly after blunder in a totally improbable way, 'I'm losing a pawn, so won't go any further in my calculation', or 'I know this is my theoretical line, but will still use energy in outguessing myself that I have somehow gone wrong', it could be the thing for you.

J.Sieglen-C.Strugnell
Augsburg 2019/20



20...c4! 21 h6 ♜h8 22 ♜a4

White is a pawn up and has the bishop-pair, but on a closer look, his light-squared bishop is passive and Black has a great target on b2.

22...♜b8! 23 ♜a2 ♜b4 24 ♜a6?!

The game shows that White has to be extremely precise in order to keep the balance, which he might have done with 24 ♜c2! ♜d3 25 ♜d2 ♜e5 26 ♜c3.

24...♜d3 25 ♜e3?!

25 ♜d2 ♜c8! 26 ♜c3! was again the right approach.

25...♜xb2 26 ♜c1 c3 27 ♜c2 ♜e5



I've always wanted to make this kind of

'strategy book' invisible move, so took my chance here. It takes away f4 from White's bishop, which was his last hope of finding a target.

28 f4 ♜h8 29 ♜h2 ♜c4 30 ♜c1 ♜c8 31 ♜f1 ♜d4

Slowly taking away the last squares of the white queen.

32 ♜xc4 ♜bxc4 Black's queen can now take her time rerouting to the kingside.

33 ♜a5 ♜b6 34 ♜a3

Or 34 ♜b5 ♜g1+.

34...♚c7 0-1

E.Schmittdiel-C.Strugnell
Augsburg 2019/20
Ruy Lopez

1 e4 e5 2 ♜f3 ♜c6 3 ♜b5 f5

I really love playing the Jaenisch Gambit. It's not to everyone's taste, admittedly, but with careful handling it can be a valuable weapon. Full disclaimer: not to be used against everyone! Firstly, you have to suspect your opponent doesn't want a draw with White or that you're satisfied with that result. Also, if in your preparation you see they haven't faced it in a while, or you fall upon someone that plays all sorts of things, it is certainly a decent choice.

4 d3 fxe4 5 dxe4 ♜f6 6 0-0 d6

6...♜c5 should usually be preferred.

7 ♜c3

7 ♜c4! ♜g4 8 h3 ♜h5 9 ♜c3 ♜d7
10 ♜e3 ♜e7 11 a4 ♜f8 12 ♜e2 ♜xf3
13 ♜xf3 ♜f7 14 ♜d5 led to a win for White in that most high level of blitz games, Caruana-Carlsen, Saint Louis 2019.

7...♜e7 8 ♜d3 0-0 9 ♜c4+

9 ♜c4+ ♜h8 10 ♜g5 ♜e8 11 ♜e6 ♜xe6 12 ♜xe6 ♜d4! 13 ♜h3 ♜d7! restricts White to just a small plus.

9...♜h8 10 ♜xc6 bxc6 11 ♜xc6 ♜b8 12 ♜d1



12...g4

White's last was a novelty and after 12...b4 there is a really long forced line. I didn't see half of it, but quickly grew sceptical in view of 13 dxe5 b7 14 a3! xc6 15 dxc6, and believed things to be unclear at best.

13 d3 d7 14 d5

Now my idea works, well, more or less, so he should have preferred 14 e3!.

14...c5! 15 a3 xf3

15...b7 16 dxe7 xe7 17 g5 wf7 18 e3 d7 19 d5 e6 20 d2 dxe4 21 d3 is unclear, and as I don't see where White could improve...

16 gxf3

After 16 xf3! xf3 17 gxf3 e6 18 e3 Black misses his rook more than White.

16...e6

16...g5 is met by 17 xc7.

17 b6 g5! 18 axa7 xb2 19 bb3

An interesting try, bringing the other rook into play.

19...xb3 20 axb3

The position is equal, but you have to tread carefully.

25...d4

Not 25...xe3? 26 a8! – ouch!

26 xd4 exd4 27 c4! e2+

Where should the king go to find safety?

28 d5!

Forwards! After 28 b4 d2+ 29 a4 (29 a3 d3!) is also very nice, and if 30 d5 e5 31 c3 xf2) 29...d5! 30 exd5 followed by 30...d3! (giving both d-pawns to open lines) 31 cxd3 xc7 32 xc7 a8+ 33 b5 xd3+ 34 c4 xc4+ 35 bxc4 a1 36 c5 g8 (in the nick of time!) 37 b6 f7 Black wins.

28...h5+ 29 c4 e2+ 30 d5 h5+

I repeated for a third time, having thought for so long I forgot the queen had originally been on h5, but the arbiter refused White's claim on the basis that he had first played his move (instead of sealing it), which these days I found to be absurd.

Instead, 30...h6 31 e6?? (a blunder; 31 a8! maintains the rough balance) 31...f5+!! is a beautiful blow, and if 32 exf5 xf3+ 33 xd4 e5+!.

31 c4 f7+ 32 d5 xh2 33 a8 h5**34 b4 xf2 35 xf8+ xf8 36 b3**

36 b5 xf1+ 37 b4 e1 forces a draw.

36...f3+ 37 a4 g1?

The critical moment – and it is a mess. Black definitely has something going for him, but White's counterplay comes in the form of back-rank tactics linked with potential gobbling of the c7-pawn.

20...f4

At default of having found the truth, I settled for this move, but my hat goes off to my opponent for finding a wonderful defence.

Instead, 20...h6! 21 f1 h7! (a deep move, taking everything off the last rank) 22 e2 f7! (overprotection of c7) 23 e3 xe3 24 fxe3 h4 25 f1 remains a mess, and there was also 20...h6!? when the bishop doesn't get in the way of Black's attack, while hoping for 21 f1 h4 22 dxc7 dxc7 23 xc7 h3+.

21 f1!

The journey to China starts with a single step.

21...h4 22 e2 g5 23 e3

23 d1 runs into 23...xf3!, but if White had continued along his route immediately with 23 d3! he would even have stood better.

23...h5

I wasn't enthusiastic about 23...xe3? 24 dxe3! (24 fxe3? xf3 wins as White hasn't time for 25 a8) 24...h3! 25 d1!.

24 dxc7

After 24 a8 xf3+ 25 d3 xe3 26 xf8+ xf8 27 fxe3 the computer prefers White...and now I see its point.

24...xf3 25 d3!

47...c3! 48 xh5+ d2 49 g5+ e3
50 g2+ d1! (50...c1? 51 d3+ b1 52 b6 wins) 51 b6 a1+ 52 b5 b2+ 53 c6 c3+ 54 d7 d3!! was a narrow path to a draw.

48 b6 h2 49 f3+? Missing 49 d3! xc2 50 a2+ c3 51 b2+.

49...xf3 50 xf3

And now I fail to find 50...d3!! 51 cxd3 b8 to save the day.

50...b8? 51 xd4!

And not 51 b3 d3!.

51...h4 52 c4?

There was 52 f3 xc2 53 xh4 or even 52 b3! h3 53 f3 e2 (or 53...h2 54 xh2 xh2 55 c4 g1 56 b7 h2 57 c5) 54 g1+ e3 55 xh3 d4 56 b4! and wins.

52...h3 53 f3 e2 54 g1+ d3

55 xh3 xc4 56 a5 c5 57 a6 c6 58 g5 f4 59 e6 e5

Thankfully I didn't fall for 59...e3?? 60 b7.

60 c7 xc7 61 bxc7 xc7 ½-½

I'm the first to go astray (37...h7! 38 b5 and only then 38...g1 was correct), but White will do me the honour as well.

38 e8+! h7 39 e7 g4 40 g8+ h6 41 f5+! g5 42 xg7+ f4 43 f7! xe4 44 xd6+! e3 45 c4+! e2 46 e5! h3 47 b5

Schmittdiel has made a lot of good moves and after another one in 47 d3! and then 47...f1 48 xh5+ d2 49 d5 xc2 50 c5 it would all have remained rather unclear.

47...d1?**ENJOYED THE ARTICLE?**

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Solutions on pages 53-54.



Warm-up Puzzles



(1) A.Anwan-E.Goodwin
Coventry 2020
Black to Play



(2) S.Whitehead-S.Dixon
Scarborough 2020
White to Play



(3) A.Bucchi-P.McEvoy
Portsmouth 2020
Black to Play



(4) S.Mamedyarov-N.Abdusattorov
World Blitz Ch., Moscow 2019
White to Play



(5) K.Mork-J.Houska
Norwegian League 2020
Black to Play



(6) C.Strugnell-H.Jagdhuber
Augsburg 2019/20
White to Play





Intermediate Puzzles for the Club Player - Solutions on page 53-54



(7) A.Firouzja-E.Inarkiev
World Rapid Ch., Moscow 2019
White to Play



(8) H.Stepanyan-D.Mason
Telford 2020
White to Play



(9) A.Bodnaruk-I.Gaponenko
European Women's Blitz Ch., Monaco 2019
White to Play



(10) D.Howell-G.Jones
British Knock-out Ch. (blitz), London 2019
White to Play and Draw



(11) O.Robson-D.Hill
York 2020
White to Play and Draw



(12) J.Jackson-H.Hoffmann
4NCL, Daventry 2020
White to Play



(13) M.Carlsen-L.Aronian
London (blitz) 2019
White to Play



(14) L.Head-R.Haria
London (rapid) 2019
Black to Play



(15) J.Moussard-T.Ghamarian
London (blitz) 2019
White to Play



Harder Puzzles for the Club Player – Solutions on page 53-54



(16) D.Gormally-H.Grieve
Hastings 2019/20
Black to Play



(17) T.Kanyamarala-G.Melaugh
Dublin 2020
White to Play



(18) J.Lopez Martinez-E.Real de Azua
Sitges 2019
Black to Play



(19) Ding Liren-M.Vachier-Lagrange
London (blitz) 2019
White to Play



(20) S.Ernst-A.Fier
Groningen 2019
White to Play and Draw



(21) A.Giri-M.Carlsen
Kolkata (rapid) 2019
Black to Play



(22) N.Dzagnidze-K.Lagno
Monaco 2019
Black to Play



(23) S.Mamedyarov-S.Bogner
European Team Ch., Batumi 2019
White to Play



(24) M.Chigaev-A.Sarana
Khanty-Mansiysk 2019
White to Play

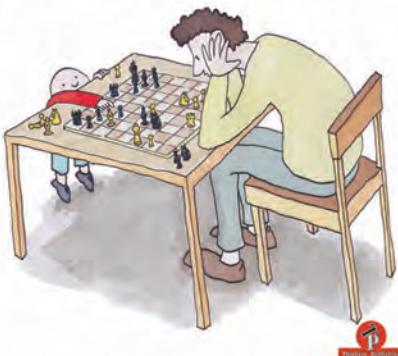




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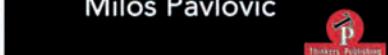
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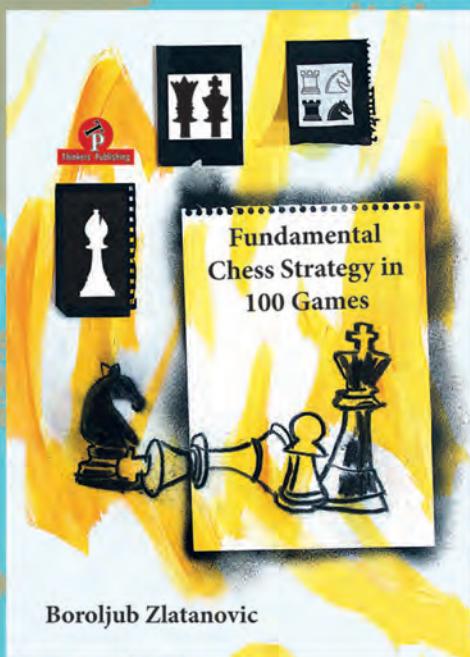
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At Last! Karpov-Fischer!

And other light-hearted Gibraltar tales from our man on the Rock, John Saunders



During his simul on the Rock, Anatoly Karpov plays the Fischer look-alike – the real Robert Fischer is in the red top with his back to the pillar.

Q. "When is a chess tournament not a tournament?"

A. "When it's a festival."

Some of us who are privileged to work at the annual Gibraltar International Chess Festival like to stress the last word of the title. Of course, it's not the first chess event to lay claim to the term. Our magazine's founder BH Wood was way ahead of the game when he gave the name 'Chess Festival' to the annual summer events that he organised from the 1950s onwards. But, for all their popularity and BHW's organisational genius, they couldn't hope to match the Gib event for its stellar playing strength and PR bazzazz, backed up by the full panoply of 21st century technology.

Incidentally, the two festivals are linked in a roundabout way. I happened to notice a post last year on the English Chess Forum in which a legendary figure of British chess nobly owned up to a chessboard disaster: "I was 16 and had White in the Chess Festival in Westcliff in 1955. I have no idea who my adult opponent was. 1 d4 ♜f6 2 c4 e5 3 dx5 ♜g4 4 ♜f3 ♜c6 5 ♜f4 ♜b4+ 6 ♜bd2 ♜e7 7 a3 ♜gx5 8 axb4?? ♜d3 mate. I was too naive to think, why did he make a move losing a piece?"

This calamity befell Stewart Reuben at BH Wood's third festival – and he also happens to

have been the first tournament director of the Gibraltar Festival. It's easy to imagine that a little of what the 1950s teenager learnt from BHW's festival rubbed off on him when it came to developing the Gibraltar event. By the way, before you judge Stewart too harshly for his play in the above game, you should read to the end of this article to witness a similarly disastrous brevity perpetrated by some much higher-rated players than him.

This year's #GibChess kicked off with a simul given by Anatoly Karpov. Of course, he is not the first of his ilk to grace the festival which has also been visited by Spassky, Fischer, Topalov, Anand and Carlsen. What's that you say? When did Fischer visit? Well, OK, I was being a bit mischievous there, but I can tell you quite truthfully that Robert Fischer (USA) has played at Gibraltar. Obviously not the famous one, but a 59-year-old player of that name and nationality, rated 1923, played in Gibraltar this year. And drew with Anatoly Karpov in the simul.

When I learnt this, after the fact, I trawled through my photos of the simul and found one of Karpov's opponents who looked remarkably like Bobby Fischer after he escaped incarceration in Japan and arrived in Iceland in 2005. However, this didn't turn out to be Robert Fischer the younger, who is of

clean-shaven and well-groomed appearance.

There is one more thing to say about Fischer the younger: he was one of the attendees at the weekend seminar which preceded the festival, which was given by Veselin Topalov and Elisabeth Paehtz. This attractive new feature of the festival enables ambitious players to have a close encounter with stars of the game and then get an immediate chance to put what they have learnt into practice as the tournament starts. It certainly seemed to work for Mr Fischer who was delighted with his draw with Karpov (he was one of only four players out of 29 to escape with half a point against the legend).

It was also noticeable that the weekend seminar with Topalov continued informally into the tournament proper, with the affable former world champion dining regularly with seminar attendees. Anyone reading this and themselves fancying a close encounter with a legend of the game will want to know that leading the 2021 #GibChess seminar will be none other than Vladimir Kramnik. Book early to avoid disappointment.

Every evening at #GibChess features a special event which any competitor (or indeed spectator) can attend or take part in free of charge. The evening before the Masters commenced Veselin Topalov gave a



talk on one of his favourite games, and during the tournament there were master classes given by Shakhriyar Mamedyarov and Alexander Beliavsky. The good news is that you can still watch these on YouTube, and you can also get a flavour of the Quiz Night, hosted by Lawrence Trent. More traditional sideshows were the Team of Four Blitz event, featuring some eye-wateringly strong line-ups which could win Olympiads, and the Handicap Doubles Chess blitz tournament.

What has become the unique signature event of #GibChess is the Battle of the Sexes, now into its eighth iteration, in which two teams of six players make moves in turn on a giant chess set in front of an invited audience including Gibraltar dignitaries. This bold, brash event is mainly about having fun, but it also encapsulates everything that's good and forward-looking about the festival – the 'work hard, play hard' philosophy and the dream of addressing gender imbalance in chess.

This year's battle had a Moroccan theme, with loud Moorish music heralding the entry of voluptuous belly-dancer Marta. Not the sort of thing you see every day at a chess tournament, and it certainly proved a novel assignment for me as a chess photographer. The things I have to do for chess, eh? Tough job. Marta was closely followed by an exotically clad Stuart Conquest to display his own not inconsiderable terpsichorean talents. (Of all the video clips I have ever uploaded to YouTube, the one featuring Stuart dancing informally with Tania Sachdev at the end of an earlier 'battle' has received by far the most hits.)

The best way to catch the flavour of this year's Battle of the Sexes is to watch the brilliant three-minute video the #GibChess film crew made of it on YouTube. But the chess content wasn't without interest either. The men's team, skippered by Maxime Vachier-Lagrave in the absence of regular captain Nigel Short (who was on the other side of the world commenting on the women's world championship), was of great strength, but got off to an horrendous start, being obliged to resign after a crunching knight move on the eighth move (a spooky parallel with that Reuben game given above), as readers will have already seen in this month's Editorial.

As CHESS is a magazine which is not afraid to name the guilty men, let's look closer and determine exactly who was responsible for this debacle. Black's first two blameless moves were played by Mamedyarov and Alekseenko, but the highly questionable 3...f5 was played by Ivan Cheparinov. 4...fxe4 was equally dodgy and played, I'm sorry to report, by England's very own Mickey Adams. In mitigation I expect he's not had much experience on the black side of the ropey position left for him by his team-mate. Maghsoodloo's 5...Qf6 is blameless, but then Alejandro Ramirez's 6...We7 is a real stinker (though we should perhaps be as charitable to him as to Adams). Of the women's team, the joy of plonking the white knight down on e6 to end the game went to Zhansaya Abdumalik, after which she returned to enjoy the high-fives and hugs of her team mates.



Above: The boys may look a little blue in this picture, but they took their eight move loss to the ladies in the Battle of the Sexes with remarkable grace. **Below:** Vassily Ivanchuk being interviewed by Tania Sachdev – just one highlight from #GibChess available to watch on YouTube.



My photos show that the men's team took their humiliation with good grace, wearing rueful smiles for the most part. But it was equally obvious that the man most responsible knew who he was. Ivan Cheparinov's head was in his hands. Within seconds, his head was in the basket as his captain Maxime Vachier-Lagrave, like some latter-day Robespierre, announced Ivan's summary sacking from the squad after accusing him of being a 'double agent'. You could see his point: after all, Cheparinov is married to the women's team captain Antoaneta Stefanova. But more fool MVL for picking him in the first place, I say. Nigel Short would never have committed such a selectorial gaffe.

It is to be noted that GMs Adams and Ramirez also lost their heads in MVL's brief but bloody Reign of Terror. Reinvigorated by the inclusion of David Howell, Jules Moussard and MVL himself, the men's team went on to record two wins to take the match by 2-1. But they will have to live with the ignominy of that eight-move thumping for the rest of their lives.

The other thing to say about the Battle of the Sexes is the excellent arbiting. Excellent, that is, for it's unobtrusiveness. You wouldn't catch them defaulting players for wearing

analogue watches as occurs, so I understand, in internal Indian competitions. Also, they didn't comment on collusion between the women's players and the fact that non-playing Elisabeth Paehtz positioned herself near the clock to do the clock-stopping for her team (which reminds me that, on one previous occasion, she prevented the men's team from stopping the clock at all by sitting on it). The laws of chess were made for the obedience of fools and the guidance of wise men... and women.

Incidentally, on the issue of collusion, it was noticeable that the men didn't indulge in this much, not because they were sticklers for the rules, but more because they seemed to enjoy it more when their team mates messed up. I noted one amusing exchange between them. Alejandro Ramirez, getting to his feet to make his move and noticing that one of his colleagues had put him into difficulties with the previous move, turned round to appeal to his team and ask "What am I supposed to do?" – to which Mickey Adams responded "That's your problem!", and the rest of the team simply laughed.

In summary #GibChess was a lot of fun. Enjoy the photos and don't forget to check out those videos online.

ENDGAME

Masterclass



Jonathan Speelman found a couple of endgames from last year's London Chess Classic to be especially instructive, and kindly shares his thoughts on them

M.Vachier-Lagrave-Ding Liren
London 2019
Ruy Lopez

1 e4 e5 2 ♜f3 ♜c6 3 ♜b5 a6 4 ♜a4 ♜f6
5 0-0 ♜e7 6 d3 b5 7 ♜b3 d6 8 a3 0-0
9 ♜c3 ♜a5 10 ♜a2 ♜e6 11 b4 ♜xa2
12 ♜xa2 ♜c6 13 ♜g5 ♜d7 14 ♜xf6
♜xf6 15 ♜d5 a5 16 c4 ♜e7 17 ♜b3

Deviating from 17 ♜c2 ♜xd5 18 cxd5 axb4 19 axb4 ♜a4 20 ♜d2, which turned out well for White in Carlsen-Ding Liren, Saint Louis (rapid) 2017.

17...bxcc4 18 ♜xe7+ ♜xe7 19 dxc4 axb4 20 axb4 ♜c6 21 ♜e1 ♜xa2 22 ♜xa2 ♜a8 23 ♜b3 g6



This would be very acceptable for White if he could get the knight to a decent square (most obviously d5), but his pawns are too weak to survive if the knight attempts a long journey and Ding can arrange to put the bishop on the g1-a7 diagonal, after which it is he who has the chances.

24 b5 ♜c5 25 ♜c2 c6 26 bxc6 ♜d8
27 ♜d2 ♜b6 28 ♜b3 ♜xc6 29 ♜a1 ♜c8
30 ♜c1 h5 31 h4 ♜a8 32 ♜a1 ♜xa1+ 33
♜xa1 ♜d7 34 g3



I was streaming at the time and asked people whether Ding would try 34...g5, which the silicon had flagged up. I'm very impressed that he did, but of course if Black doesn't strike now then it should end in a fairly comfortable draw.



Ding Liren in action against a not-yet-under-pressure Maxime Vachier-Lagrave at the Classic.

34...g5! 35 ♜d2

35 hxg5 ♜h3 36 ♜b3 ♜c5 (or 36...♜xf2+ 37 ♜xf2 ♜h2+ 38 ♜f3 ♜h1+ 39 ♜e2 ♜xa1 40 ♜b8+ ♜g7 41 ♜xd6) 37 ♜f3! h4 38 ♜b3! hxg3 39 ♜xc5 ♜h2+ 40 ♜f1 dxc5 (not 40...gxg2? 41 ♜d3 when White should even win) 41 fxg3 ♜d2 leads to a draw.

35...gxh4 36 c5

The point of this is to deflect the bishop so that it doesn't defend d8, thus setting up a possible perpetual with ♜g5+ ♜f8; ♜d8+.

36...♜xc5 37 ♜g5+ ♜f8 38 ♜xh4 ♜e8

Even stronger was 38...♜g4! 39 ♜xg4 hxg4 40 ♜g2 f5, and if 41 exf5 e4 or 41 f3 ♜f7 42 exf5 gxg3+ 43 ♜xf3 d5 44 ♜b3 ♜a3 when apparently Black's connected passed pawns should win, which is plausible, but I certainly wouldn't have been confident of this during a game.

39 ♜b3 ♜a4 40 ♜xc5 dxc5 41 ♜xh5 ♜xe4 42 ♜h8+ ♜e7



With an extra passed pawn, his queen in the centre and some pawn cover for his king, Ding 'ought' to be winning. Vachier-Lagrave now puts up maximum resistance.

43 ♜c8 ♜d4 44 g4 c4 45 g5 c3 46 ♜g2 ♜d6 47 f3 ♜d2+ 48 ♜h3 ♜d5 49 ♜c6

Engines tell us that 49...♛c4 50 ♜xf7+ ♜d4 is winning because the checks run out and the c-pawn rolls, while in one critical line Black wins the white queen with a skewer. But that would be incredibly hard to play: 51 g6 c2 52 ♜d7+ ♜e3 53 ♜xd2+ ♜xd2 54 g7 c1♛ 55 g8♛ ♜h1+ 56 ♜g4 ♜g1+.

50 ♜c8+ ♜d6 51 ♜f8+ ♜c6 52 ♜c8+ ♜b5 53 ♜b7+ ♜c5 54 ♜a7+ ♜d6 55 ♜b8+ ♜d5 56 ♜b7+ ♜d4 57 ♜e4+ ♜c5 58 ♜xe5+ ♜c4 59 ♜e4+ ♜b3

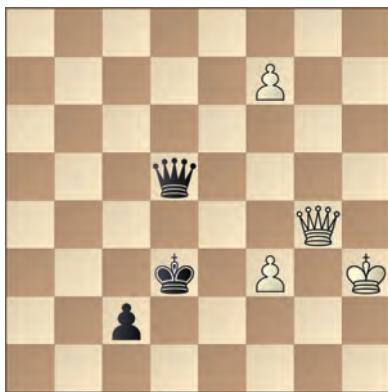
Ding has stemmed the tide of checks at

the cost of the e-pawn and now looks in full control.

60 ♜b1+ ♜a3 61 ♜a1+ ♜b4 62 ♜b1+ ♜c5 63 ♜f5+ ♜d5 64 ♜c8+ ♜d4 65 ♜g4+ ♜d3 66 g6 c2

Presumably Ding thought that he'd found a clear win and went with it, but 66...fxg6 67 ♜xg6+ ♜d2 was much more rational since White has no real counterplay with his pawn so far back (in fact it blocks possible checks along the third rank), and, indeed, tablebases confirm that this is winning for Black. However, from a spectator point of view it's excellent that he tried to win the four-queen ending.

67 gx f7



There are now just seven pieces on the board, so we can check everything exactly with a tablebase (I'm using the freely available one at Lichess.org), which tells us that the position is now drawn. It looks like an utter nightmare to defend, but Vachier-Lagrave did so perfectly.

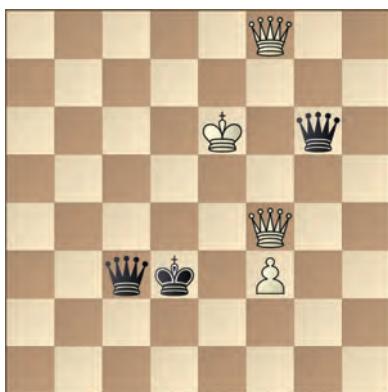
67...c1 ♜

I've never seen an ending like this before in a real game, though there must be some studies.

If 67...♜xf7 White can defend himself with accurate checks, several of them only moves: 68 ♜e4+ ♜c3 69 ♜e5+ ♜b4 70 ♜d6+ ♜b5 71 ♜e5+ ♜c4 72 ♜e4+ ♜b3 73 ♜d3+ ♜b2 74 ♜d4+, etc.

68 f8 ♜ ♜h1+ 69 ♜g3 ♜e5+ 70 ♜gf4 ♜g1+ 71 ♜h4! ♜h1+ 72 ♜g3 ♜ee1+ 73 ♜g4 ♜hh4+ 74 ♜f5 ♜h5+ 75 ♜f6 ♜a1+ 76 ♜e6 ♜a2+ 77 ♜f6!

And not 77 ♜e7? ♜c5+ 78 ♜d7 ♜aa7+ 79 ♜e6 ♜a2+ 80 ♜d7 ♜ca7+! 81 ♜d6 (or 81 ♜c7 ♜2a4+ 82 ♜d8 ♜a8+) 81...♜b6+. **77...♜b2+ 78 ♜e6 ♜b3+ 79 ♜f6 ♜b2+ 80 ♜e6 ♜b3+ 81 ♜f6 ♜c3+ 82 ♜e6 ♜g6+**



Maxime Vachier-Lagrave still came second to Ding, despite performing defensive miracles.

83 ♜4f6!

Side-stepping 83 ♜8f6? ♜c6+ 84 ♜e5 (84 ♜e7 ♜ge8#) 84...♜c5+ 85 ♜e6 ♜e8+ 86 ♜e7 ♜exe7#.

83...♜c6+ 84 ♜e7 ♜c5+ 85 ♜e6 ♜c6+ 86 ♜e7 ♜c7+ 87 ♜e6 ♜b6+ 88 ♜e7 ♜c5+ 89 ♜e6 ♜cf5+ 90 ♜e7 ♜c5+ ½-½

And it's a threefold repetition. Fantastic defence by Vachier-Lagrave.

M.Carlsen-M.Vachier-Lagrave London (blitz) 2019



With the white king so near the a-pawn it should be a draw, though in a game and especially a blitz one, it would feel a bit uncomfortable for White. Some sample lines: 37...h5 38 ♜c4 ♜f6 (or 38...h4 39 ♜a4 ♜c7+ 40 ♜b5 ♜c2 41 ♜xa5 ♜xg2 42 ♜xh4 ♜f2 43 ♜h3!) 39 h4 ♜e6 40 ♜b5 (40 ♜a2 ♜a8 41 ♜b5 ♜b8+ 42 ♜c5 ♜e5 43 ♜xa5 ♜b2 44 ♜a7 ♜c2+ 45 ♜b4 ♜f6 46 g4 hxg4 47 fxg4 ♜g2 48 g5+ ♜g7 49 ♜c4 ♜g4+ 50 ♜d3 ♜xh4 51 ♜a5 also works) 40...♜b7+ 41 ♜c5 ♜b2 42 ♜xa5 ♜xg2 43 ♜d4 ♜h2 44 ♜a6+ ♜e7 45 f4 ♜xh4 46 ♜e5 ♜h3 47 e4 and White is very active.

33...b3 34 ♜xa5 ♜xc7 35 ♜b5 ♜c2+ 36 ♜f3 b2 37 ♜b6

This extremely difficult ending arose in their second blitz game. Black is better due to his connected passed pawns, but it seems that with accurate play Carlsen could have drawn.

33 ♜a7?

This makes it more complicated. It seems that 33 ♜d2! should hold when 33...♜f6 34 ♜a7 ♜e6 35 ♜xa5 ♜xc7 36 ♜b5 ♜c4 37 ♜d3 ♜c3+ 38 ♜d2 ♜c4 is an easy draw or 38...♜b3 39 ♜c2 ♜c3+ 40 ♜d2. Likewise, if 33...♜c5 34 ♜d3 ♜f6 35 ♜d4 ♜c1 36 ♜d5, so Black might try 33...♜c6 and after 34 ♜d3:

a) 34...♜c1 35 ♜d4 b3 36 ♜d5 (he can also go via e5) 36...a4 37 ♜d6 ♜c2 38 ♜d7 (the white king is just in time) 38...♜d2+ 39 ♜e7 ♜c2 40 ♜d7 ♜d2+ 41 ♜e7 and draws, but not 41 ♜c8? b2.

b) 34...b3 35 ♜xb3 ♜xc7 36 ♜a3 ♜a7 37 f3.



Making it hard for the enemy king to advance.

Instead, 37 g4? ♖f6 38 h4 ♕e6 39 ♕g3 ♕d6 40 f3 ♕c6 41 ♖b8 ♕d5 is simply lost, since the black king gets in and White is far from creating serious counterplay.

You'd also wonder about 37 e4 ♖f6 38 ♕e3, but it seems that 38...♕e6 39 g4 ♕d6 40 h4 (or 40 f3 ♕c6 41 ♖b8 ♕c5 42 ♕d3 ♖f2! 43 ♕e3 ♖xh2) 40...♕c6 41 ♖b8 ♕c5 42 ♖b7 (42 g5 ♕c4 43 ♖c8+ ♕b3 44 ♖b8+ ♕a2 45 f4 b1= 46 ♖xb1 ♕xb1 47 ♕d4 ♕c6 is trivial) 42...♕c4 43 ♖c7+ ♕b3 44 ♖b7+ ♕a2 45 ♖a7+ ♕b1 46 ♖xf7 ♕c1 47 ♖b7 b1= 48 ♖xb1+ ♕xb1 won't save White.

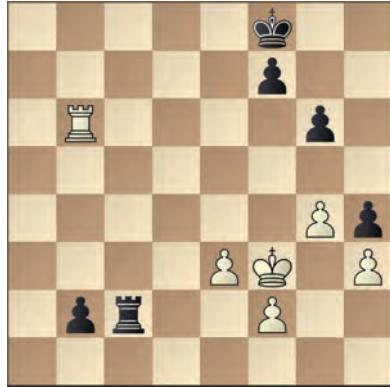


It's far from obvious, but apparently, according to the engines, Black is winning: for example, 49 f4 ♖c3+ 50 ♕d4 ♖f3 51 f5 gxf5 52 gxf5 (or 52 exf5 h5 53 g5 ♖xf5 54 ♕e4 ♖a5 55 g6 ♕c2 56 g7 ♖a8 57 ♕f5 ♕d3 58 ♕g6 ♕e4 59 ♕xh5 ♕f5 60 ♕h6 ♕f6 61 ♕h7 ♖a7) 52...h5 53 ♕e5 ♕c2 54 ♕f6 ♕d3 55 e5 ♕e4 56 e6 ♖xf5+ and wins.

37...h5

The obvious move, but given that a couple of moves later Carlsen could have drawn by inducing ...h4 and then attacking it, I wonder whether it was 'correct'?

38 h3 ♕f8 39 g4 h4



This looks very nice, fixing a weakness on h3, but it is also a weakness itself and it seems that Carlsen could now have drawn by jettisoning the f2-pawn. However if Black doesn't play 39...h4 then White can exchange on h5 when he should presumably at worst be able to draw with king and rook against king, rook, f- and h-pawns.

40 g5

Missing 40 ♕f4! ♖xf2+ 41 ♕g5 ♕e7 (or 41...♕g7 42 ♕xh4 ♖g2 43 ♕g5) 42 ♕xh4 ♕d7 43 ♕g5 ♕c7 44 ♖b4 ♕c6 45 h4 (45

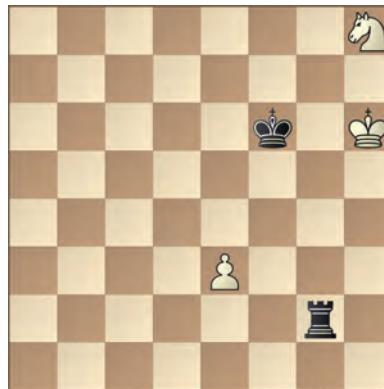
e4 ♕c5 46 ♖b8 ♕d4 47 h4 ♕c3 48 h5 gxh5 49 gxh5 ♖f1 is an easy win) 45...f5! (a brilliant try flagged up by the engine; 45...♕c5 46 ♖b8 ♕c4 47 h5 gxh5 48 gxh5 ♕c3 49 h6 is just a draw) 46 ♖b8.



Rather amazingly, this is zugzwang, though when I set it up and gave White the move there did seem to be a very narrow path to a draw (see below). Here 46...♖g2 47 ♕xg6 fxg4 48 ♕g5! draws, but not 48 h5? g3 49 h6 ♖h2.

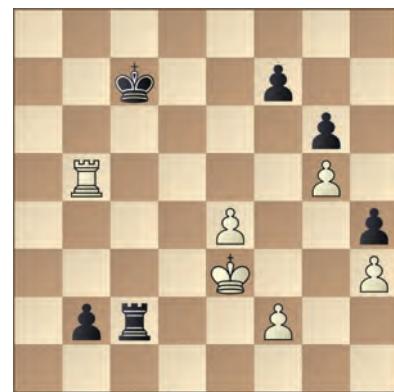
Noteworthy too is the line 46 gxf5? ♖xf5+ 47 ♕xg6 ♖b5 48 ♖xb2 ♖xb2 49 h5 ♕d7 50 h6 ♕e6!. Without the e-pawn this would be a draw, since with the king on h8 and pawn on h7, White would be in stalemate, but here Black wins: 51 ♕g7 ♕e7 (51...♖g2+ 52 ♕f8! would draw without the e-pawn, but Black can just play 52...♖h2 then ...♕e7, transposing a couple of tempi later) 52 h7 ♖g2+ 53 ♕h8 (53 ♕h6 ♕f7 transposes to the previous note) 53...♕f7 54 e4 ♖a2 55 e5 ♖a8#.

Here, another interesting position occurs after 50...♕e7 (instead of 50...♕e6!) 51 h7 ♖g2+ 52 ♕h6 ♕f7 53 h8 ♕+ ♕f6.



This is pretty easy. Black wins the e-pawn through zugzwang and then just has to maintain control: for example, 54 ♕h7 ♖g4 55 e4 ♖xe4 56 ♕g6 ♖a4 57 ♕f8 ♖h4+ 58 ♕g8 ♖g4+ 59 ♕h8 (or 59 ♕h7 ♕f7 59...♕f7 60 ♕h7 ♕g8#).

40...♕e7 41 e4 ♕d7 42 ♕e3 ♕c7 43 ♖b5



After 43 ♖b3 ♕d6 44 ♕d4 ♖xf2 45 ♖b7 ♖d2+ 46 ♕c3 ♖h2 47 ♕d4 Black can win by taking the h3-pawn and then arranging to capture the rest of White's pawns in return for his passed h-pawn: 47...♖xh3 48 ♖xb2 ♖g3 49 ♖b6+ ♕e7 50 ♖b7+ ♕f8 51 ♕e5 h3 52 ♕f6 ♖f3+ 53 ♕e5 h2 54 ♖b1 ♖g3 55 ♕f6 ♕g8 56 ♖h1 ♖g2 57 ♕e7 (or 57 e5 ♕f8 58 e6 ♖f2+ 59 ♕e5 ♖e2+) 57...♖xg5 58 ♖xh2 ♖e5+.

43...♕c6 44 ♖b8 ♕c5 45 f4 ♕c4 46 f5 ♕c3 47 ♕f4 White also fails to save the day after 47 ♖c8+ ♕b3 48 ♖b8+ ♕a2 49 ♖a8+ ♕b1 50 fxe6 fxe6 51 e5 ♕c1 52 ♖b8 b1= 53 ♖xb1+ ♕xb1 54 ♕d4 ♖h2 55 e6 ♕c2 56 ♕e5 ♖xh3 57 ♕f6 ♖e3.

47...♖g2 48 ♖fxg6 ♖fxg6 49 e5 ♖e2 50 ♖b6 ♕c2 51 ♖c6+ ♕d1 52 ♖d6+ ♕c1 53 ♖c6+ ♕c2 54 ♖b6 ♖c4+ 0-1

Driving the white king back before cashing in. With the king cut off there won't even be a race after Black takes the rook, so Carlsen resigned.

Let's now return to that zugzwang position, which arose in the notes to move 40 and see how it isn't quite a reciprocal one, since White to move can just draw.



46 ♖b3! ♖g2 47 ♕f4!

Black wins after 47 ♕xg6 fxg4 48 ♕g5 g3 49 ♕g4 ♖e2!.

47...fxg4 47...♖xg4+ 48 ♕f3 ♖xh4 49 ♖xb2 should be a draw too, as the tablebases confirm.

48 e4 ♕c5 49 e5 ♕c4 50 ♖b8 ♕c3

Or if 50...g3 51 e6 ♖e2 52 ♕xg3 ♕c3 53 ♖c8+ ♕b3 54 ♖b8+ ♕c2 55 ♖c8+ ♕d1 56 ♖b8 ♕c1 57 ♖c8+.

51 e6 ♖e2 52 ♖c8+ ♕b3 53 ♖b8+ ♕c2 54 ♖c8+

And White draws fairly easily after 54...♕b1 55 ♖e8! or 54...♕d1 55 ♖b8 ♕c1 56 ♖c8+.

Readers' Letters



Longest Capture-Free Games

Whilst trawling through some of my old games (now saved on a database rather than paper scoresheets), I was reminded of this game from several years ago. The game was played in the East Glamorgan League between Aberdare (now regrettably disbanded), and Bridgend, with a time control of 30 moves in an hour and then 25 minutes to finish the game.

Playing through the game again I cannot say that the moves were very well played from either side. However, what I think may be remarkable is the fact that White managed to achieve Black's resignation after 34 moves without a single pawn or piece leaving the board.

I have been playing competitive chess for some 45 years and have never achieved this before or since. I would very much like to know how common such games are.

David Robinson, Bridgend

D.Robinson-S.Woodrow

East Glamorgan League 2010
London System

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1 d4 g6 2 ♜f3 ♜g7 3 ♜f4 d6 4 e3 e6
5 ♜e2 ♜e7 6 ♜bd2 ♜d7 7 c3 b6 8 0-0
9 ♜b7 9 a4 ♜f6 10 h3 0-0 11 a5 h6
12 ♜c2 ♜d7 13 ♜ad1 b5 14 ♜b3 a6
15 c4 c6 16 c5 d5 17 ♜c2 ♜h7 18 ♜d6
19 ♜fd8 19 ♜d3 ♜f5 20 ♜h2 ♜f8 21 g4
22 ♜e7 22 ♜e5 ♜e8 23 f4 f5 24 ♜df3 ♜a7
25 ♜h1 ♜h7 26 ♜g1 ♜c8 27 ♜f2 ♜c7
28 ♜h4 ♜g8 29 ♜g2 ♜e7 30 ♜g3 ♜e8
31 ♜dg1 ♜e7 32 ♜h4 ♜h8 33 ♜g5+
34 ♜g7 34 ♜gf7 1-0

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Ed. – We wonder if this might be the longest decisive game not to feature a capture.



Not all Opposite Bishops Endings are Drawn!

I recently played a pretty rubbish game (I was far too slow at meeting the Philidor), but the endgame was interesting.

C.Wood-N.Sprung

Bavaria 2020



33...♜g7?

Black needed to activate his bishop. 33...♜f4! draws, as seemingly does 33...d3!?.

34 g3!

Perhaps remarkably, this seems to win.

34...♜f8 35 f4!

My old *Fritz* does not understand, but my opponent was now visibly shocked. He is confined to a few squares, while my pieces can threaten to penetrate. Despite the opposite-coloured bishops, I should win, although it is tricky.

35...♜e8 36 ♜f2 ♜d7 37 ♜e2

I was not sure of winning, so I started to manoeuvre, hoping for a slip to make it easy. For a student around noon, this might be clever. For an old man late in the evening, it was risky, particularly as I am not used to 30-second increments and my hand tremor makes it hard to record the moves.

37...♜f8 38 ♜d5 ♜e8 39 ♜d3 ♜e7 ?

40 ♜f3 ♜d6 41 ♜h5 a5



I think not a 'slip', as lost tempi do not matter. Black cannot save the f7-pawn,

without letting my king penetrate. He could then give up d- and a-pawns. Readers can decide whether that might help.

42 ♜xf7 ♜e7 43 ♜d5 ♜d8 44 ♜e4 ♜e7
45 ♜f3 ♜c7 46 ♜e4 ♜d6 47 ♜d3

The right square, preventing ...d3, which is another variation to calculate.

47...♜c7 48 h4

Only now after lengthy reflection does my old *Fritz* think White has a real advantage.

48...♜d8 49 ♜e4 ♜d6 50 ♜f3

50 ♜e2 must win here, as it does on move 63.

50...♜e7 51 ♜g4 ♜f7 52 ♜h5 ♜g7
53 ♜e4 ♜e7 54 ♜c6 ♜d8 55 ♜d5 ♜c7
56 ♜g4 ♜d8 57 ♜f3 ♜f8 58 ♜e4 ♜e7
59 ♜d3 ♜c7 60 ♜f3 ♜d7 61 ♜e4 ♜d6
62 ♜d1 ♜d8 63 ♜e2 ♜e7?!

This looks dubious (see later), as it obstructs the king's return to g7. However, alternatives are no better, since Black is in zugzwang. Have I organised this, or did it just happen?

63...♜c7?! 64 ♜f3 ♜e7 65 g4 ♜b8 66
g5 ♜d6 67 g6 ♜e8 68 ♜f8 69 ♜d5
g7 70 ♜d3 h5 71 ♜e2 ♜h6 72 ♜xc5
wins, and 63...♜b6?! is also bad: 64 ♜f3 a4
65 ♜g4 ♜e7 66 ♜h5 ♜f7 67 ♜xh6.

64 ♜f3 ♜f8 65 ♜g4 ♜e7 66 ♜h5 ½-½



Now *Fritz* says 66...♜f7 should draw, but I think White should win. However, at 23:00, needing 80 minutes to get home, I offered a draw, and he accepted. I knew I could win, but didn't want to play another 20 moves, with both of us short of time.

Play could continue: 66...♜f7 (if 66...♜g7 67 ♜g6) 67 g4 ♜g7 (Black also loses after both 67...♜g7 68 g5 hxg5 69 fxg5 ♜f8 70 g6+ ♜g7 71 ♜g4 ♜d6 72 ♜f3 ♜c7 73 ♜e4 d3 74 ♜xd3 ♜e5 75 ♜d5 ♜d4 76 ♜c6 ♜e3 77 ♜b5 ♜f2 78 ♜e4 ♜h6 79 h5 ♜e3 80 ♜xa5 ♜g7 81 ♜b5 ♜f2 82 a3 bxa3 83 ♜b1 ♜d4 84 ♜a2 ♜e3 85 b4 cxb4 86 ♜xb4 ♜d4 87 c5, and 67...♜d6 68 ♜xh6 ♜xf4+ 69 g5 ♜e3 70 ♜h5+ ♜g8 71 ♜g6) 68 g5 ♜h7 69 g6+ ♜g7 70 ♜g4 ♜d6 71 ♜f3 ♜c7 72 ♜e4 ♜d6 73 ♜d5 ♜xf4 74 ♜xc5 and wins.

Later, I regretted my draw offer. If one does not try hard, time spent on chess really is wasted.

Chris Wood, Munich



How Good is Your Chess?

by Grandmaster Daniel King



We have a new superstar in the chess world. Alireza Firouzja, born in Babol, northern Iran, near the Caspian Sea on 18th June 2003. I am writing this as the halfway point has just been crossed at Wijk aan Zee, and the Iranian is sharing the lead. His performance in the Netherlands has brought him up to no.20 on the live rating list. No matter how the tournament finishes for him, this is a breakthrough performance.

How does a 16-year-old get so good? It's that usual combination of intensive playing, expert tuition, and special character.

First the playing. The '10,000 hours' theory cannot be ignored. In just a few years, Firouzja has packed in more game-time than many of us will in a lifetime of chess. His schedule is crammed with tournaments. According to my database he played 128 rated classical games in 2018. In 2019 the tally was 106 classical games. Interspersed throughout, he has played in several serious rapid and blitz tournaments, including the World Rapid and Blitz in 2018 and 2019 – where he proved his worth.

A silver in the recent World Rapid shows that Firouzja doesn't just have promise, but that he is already delivering. When he isn't playing in over-the-board tournaments, he hones his skills by playing in online events. The Fischer Random World Championship tournament in autumn last year also provided excellent experience and demonstrated his all-round natural talent.

What about tuition? In 2016, the highly experienced player and trainer, Ivan Sokolov, began coaching the Iranian team which included Maghsoodloo, Tabatabaei and Firouzja. In an interview published on ChessBase news in July 2018, Sokolov praised all three, but described Firouzja as "world champion material". He compared him to Anand because of his speed of thought. Like Anand, he sometimes said he was too speedy, that sometimes this spilled over into impulsiveness, but overall this rapidity of calculation was a phenomenal skill.

And character? That comes through in many ways. Firouzja seems to have no fear of the top players – that is massively important, perhaps because he has already faced many of them at blitz and rapid events where he knows he is able to match them. Away from the chessboard it is hard to imagine the agonising decision that he had to make in refusing to play



The teenage star of world chess, Alireza Firouzja, at Wijk aan Zee. One has to wonder if the Iranian-born talent might now be lured away from life in France by Rex Sinquefield's millions.

for the Iranian Chess Federation and to leave the country of his birth.

I hope that he feels liberated mentally by that, but it is something that will always be with him. By way of comparison, when Viktor Korchnoi defected in 1976 he experienced a lift in his results. But there are others, now forgotten, who suffered after leaving their homeland. Perhaps, like Korchnoi, Firouzja will have enough support to take him to the next level wherever he eventually lands – perhaps in France, where he currently resides, perhaps elsewhere.

I feel I ought to finish on a word of caution before we all get too carried away. Although his result in the Tata Steel Masters is splendid, we will only see what Firouzja is really made of once he plays in a few elite tournaments. Often the big guys need a few games before they can really size up a player. Once they have discovered the newcomer's strengths and weaknesses, then they take aim and fire, and in the strongest events, where there are simply no weak players, there is nowhere to hide. The biggest challenges are yet to come for Alireza Firouzja.

Before we get into the test game, I'd like to look at a snippet from a game that shows his fearless and enterprising style. It was played when Firouzja was just 13 years old.

A.Firouzja-M.Bluebaum
Moscow 2017



In a wild game played with enterprise by both sides, the Iranian has already sacrificed the exchange and now strives to open up Black's king in textbook manner:

24 d5! ♖xd5 25 ♖xd5 ♕xd5 26 ♕c2 ♔c8 27 ♕d1 ♕f3?

Black could have saved himself with 27... ♕e4, after which the game should end in a draw: 28 ♕c5 ♕xf4 29 ♕xc6+ ♕c7 30 ♕a8+ ♕b8, and so on.

28 ♕f5+ ♔b7 29 ♖d7+ ♔a8



30 ♖xa7+! ♔xa7 31 ♖b8+ ♔xb8 32 ♕xf3

And he managed to win the endgame. The combination was no doubt seen a mile off by Firouzja.

I'd like to take you through a game of his that also shows off this inclination to attack. These days top players have to be universal in their style, but I always rate that basic ability to go for the enemy king. Top chess isn't just about grinding out positions with a slight advantage.

Begin after the first diagram. Whenever Black has moved, stop and try to guess White's reply which will be on the next line. Try to analyse as much as you would in a game – it could earn you bonus points. The article will test your standard of play or, if you prefer, just enjoy a fine game.

A.Firouzja-G.Quparadze
Batumi Olympiad 2018
Sicilian Kan

1 e4 c5 2 ♖f3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♖xd4 a6 5 ♖d3 g6 6 ♖c3 ♗g7 7 ♖e3 ♗e7 8 ♖d2 0-0 9 ♖f3 d5



10 ♖h6

Three points. Considering that every single one of Black's pawns stands on a light square, doesn't it make sense to exchange off the dark-squared bishops? In particular, Black's king position will be weakened.

There were lots of alternatives, but most not very good. Instinctively, it doesn't feel right to exchange pawns with 10 exd5 (only *one point*), as that helps Black to develop:

10... ♖xd5 11 ♖xd5 exd5 12 c3 ♖c6. The queen's bishop, which was blocked in by a pawn on e6, can now find a square on e6 or g4.

10 0-0-0, 10 0-0, and 10 h4 all allow 10...d4. The consequences aren't always fatal, but let's not go there.

10 e5 aims for a French Defence position, but isn't very bright as the e-pawn comes under fire: 10... ♖d7 and there is trouble.

10... ♖bc6

11 h4

Four points. The attack starts in earnest. It looks brutal, but in fact this is a precise move, as the alternatives show. Let's suppose instead that White had exchanged bishops first: 11 ♖xg7 ♗xg7 12 h4 dxe4 13 ♖xe4 h5 – blocking the attack. That's why the bishop should remain on h6.

If 11 0-0-0, Black takes the opportunity to close the centre, gaining space: 11...d4 12 ♖e2 e5 13 h4 ♖a5 – exchanging queens and the danger is over.

As above, 11 exd5 ♖xd5 feels like it is doing Black a huge favour.



11...dxe4

Instead, what would happen if Black had tried 11...d4 12 ♖e2 e5? Answer on the next line.

A point for 13 h5 with a huge attack. Perhaps this is all too obvious! But it gives the opportunity to show what would happen if White had exchanged first: 13 ♖xg7 (a mistake!) 13... ♗xg7 14 h5 ♖g8 covers the h6-square. Naturally this would have been impossible with the king still on g8.

12 ♖xe4

Two points. There is a precedent... Dgebuadze-Castellanos Rodriguez, Collado Villalba 2008, saw instead 12 ♖xg7 (*one point*) 12... ♗xg7 13 ♖xe4 ♖a5 14 ♖xa5 ♖xa5 15 h5 and White still had a fine initiative. But Black could have played 13...h5 14 0-0-0 e5 and he would have found his feet.

12 ♖xe4 (no credit) allows 12... ♖xd2+ 13 ♖xd2 e5.

12... ♖a5

I suspect that Dgebuadze exchanged queens in order to avoid 12... ♖xh6 13 ♖xf5, but this is still very promising for White: 14 ♖d2 h5 15 0-0-0. The knight on e4

looks particularly menacing.

13 c3

Two points. This gives us a little insight into Firouzja's character. The endgame was also promising for White: 13 ♖xa5 (*two points*) 13... ♖xa5 14 14 ♖xg7 ♗xg7 15 h5, exactly as in the Dgebuadze game. But the prodigy prefers to attack with the queens on the board.

13... ♖e5

14 ♖xg7

Two points. Instead, 14 ♖xe5 ♖xe5 or 14... ♖xh6 15 ♖xh6 ♖xe5 brings Black's queen over to the kingside.

14... ♖xf3+

15 ♖xf3

One point.

15... ♗xg7

16 h5

Two points. Press on before the pawn is blocked.

16... ♖g8



17 0-0-0

Five points. A strong and confident move. Firouzja knows instinctively that the capture on a2 will not jeopardise his king, and will merely place the queen offside, as well as being a colossal waste of time. The most important thing is that White succeeds in bringing the queen's rook into play, and that will give him a superiority of forces on the kingside.

Alternatively, 17 ♖f4 (*three points*), bringing the queen over to the kingside, is logical. Although I have been counselling against early exchanges, if White plays 17 hxg6 (*three points*) it might be useful to see how Black recaptures and then play accordingly

17... e5

If 17... ♖xa2, White should just carry on as though nothing has happened: 18 ♖f4 is heading in the right direction.

18 hxg6

Three points. For the same reason as above: let's see how Black recaptures and

then think again.

18 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ (*three points*) heads towards the black king and specifically threatens to break through on the h-file.

18 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ (*two points*) is also good, although it gives Black the chance to put up some kind of defence with 18...h6 19 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$. It takes a bit of thought to crack it at the very least.

18...fxg6

Instead, 18...hxg6 19 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ aims straight down the h-file.

19 $\mathbb{Q}c4$

Three points. A good move, but to my eyes 19 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ (*five points*) is the most appealing as there is a direct threat. If 19...h6 20 $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}dg1$ is, unsurprisingly, completely crushing.

19... $\mathbb{Q}c7$



20 $\mathbb{Q}g5$

Five points. There is no need to slow down.

White's position is so good that it is possible to play a safe move like 20 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ (*one point*), but it does make it harder to produce the final breakthrough after 20... $\mathbb{Q}f5$, for example.

20 $\mathbb{Q}xg8$ (*two points*) 20... $\mathbb{Q}xg8$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ goes in with tempo, which appeals.

20... $\mathbb{Q}f5$

This is not the best defence. First we should clear up what happens on 20... $\mathbb{Q}xc4$. White wins with 21 $\mathbb{Q}xe5+$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}d6$. Game over. If 22... $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$.

That's why 20...h6 is a better try. Perhaps you'd like to have a think how you might cope with this. This is deep – get calculating! Answer on the next line.

There are basically two decent continuations. The simplest is 21 $\mathbb{Q}xg8$ $hxg5$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}h7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xg8$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}xg5$, and the extra pawn, plus rook on the seventh, should be winning, but the bishop does hold things together for a bit. *Three points* for this continuation.

21 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ (*one point*) is more ambitious, but White has to find some powerful moves: 21... $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xe5+$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$!. In this way Black hangs on as there is no

breakthrough on the h-file. Here White must play precisely: 24 $\mathbb{Q}f4$!. The only move to win. It's necessary to provoke the g-pawn forward so that there is no possibility of closing the h-file: 25 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ h5 26 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}xh5$, and it looks like White is winning on the spot, but 27... $\mathbb{Q}h3$? 28 $\mathbb{Q}xh3$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ at least prevents the immediate threats. However, 29 $\mathbb{Q}h5$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ should be sufficient.

There are some very computery moves in that variation, and over the board, I can see most players rightly going for the endgame. Playing with such precision is nigh on impossible over the board.



21 $\mathbb{Q}xh7+$

Seven points. Other moves are available – but we shouldn't concern ourselves with them. From this moment on, it is all downhill. Firouzja has calculated through to the finish.

21... $\mathbb{Q}xh7$

22 $\mathbb{Q}h1+$

One point.

22... $\mathbb{Q}g7$

23 $\mathbb{Q}h4$

Three points. Threatening checkmate in one move.

23... $\mathbb{Q}f7$

24 $\mathbb{Q}h8+$

One point.

Instead, 24 $\mathbb{Q}h7+$? $\mathbb{Q}f8$ would turn the tables.

24... $\mathbb{Q}f8$

25 $\mathbb{Q}xf7$

Three points. This could have played on the last turn – *balance your score* if you did so then.

25... $\mathbb{Q}xf7$

26 $\mathbb{Q}h7$

One point. The only move to win, but not difficult. Everything happens with tempo – a threat or a check.

26... $\mathbb{Q}e6$

27 $\mathbb{Q}g7+$

One point.

27... $\mathbb{Q}e8$



28 $\mathbb{Q}d6+$

Three points. The same score for 28 $\mathbb{Q}h8$ – which will force resignation if not checkmate.

28... $\mathbb{Q}xd6$

If 28... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}c7$ checkmate.

29 $\mathbb{Q}f7+ 1-0$

Three points. Forcing mate in two. Instead, only *one point* for 29 $\mathbb{Q}xg8+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}xf8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}h8+$, winning the rook in the corner, but dragging out the game unnecessarily.

Just after I finished writing the article, Firouzja was defeated in successive rounds by Carlsen, Caruana and Anand! This just underlines the point I made in the introduction: we won't find out his true strength until he has had more games against the top players. There is still a long way to go.

Now add up your points:

0-15	Unlucky
16-31	Average Club Player
32-39	Strong Club Player
40-45	FIDE Master
46-52	International Master
53-61	Grandmaster

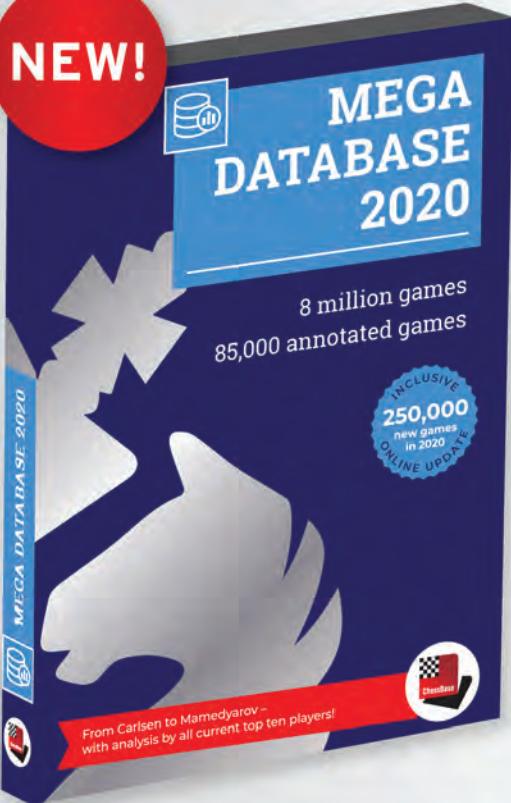
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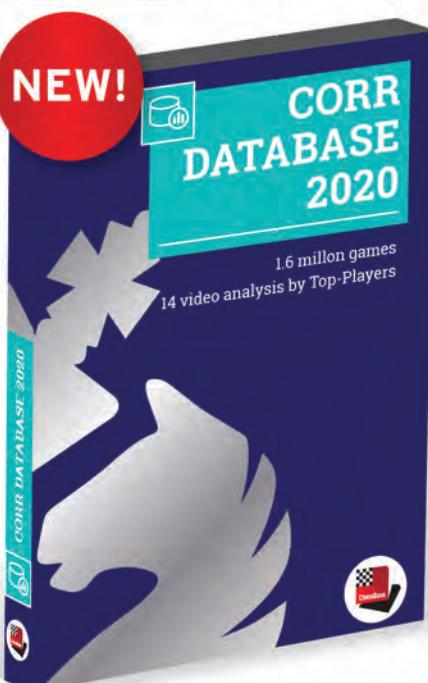
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Never Mind the Grandmasters...

Here come the amateurs – by Carl Portman (carl.portman@hotmail.co.uk)

Someone recently said to me, "I love reading your column because it shows me that I am not the only one that always loses games." Ouch, I thought. I explained that I don't always lose, but that I am happy enough to put more losses than wins or draws in because I believe that this is where we learn more about ourselves as chess players and people.

So, just for that gentleman, I am going to cock-a-doodle-do to the chess world about a recent victory, with humble apologies to my opponent who just happened to catch me on a particularly creative evening.

Without any further ado, let me begin with one Emory Tate. Never heard of him? Neither had I until I procured a copy of the wonderful book *Triple Exclam!!! The Life and Games of Emory Tate, Chess Warrior*, written by the passionate chess player Daaim Shabazz of the USA.

I want to focus on just one line in the book from one of Tate's games. You'll see it in the game that follows. I wish I had met Tate or stood watching him play. It seems to me that as well as being so utterly in love with chess, he was generous and kind to others, while also being uncompromising on and off the board if he had a cause. Dare I dedicate this game to a man I never met? Well, forgive me, but I am going to, because without him I would never have played it.

As with all of my games, there are plenty of mistakes (remember, I am an amateur), but enough of the good stuff also for me to mark this as one of my most memorable games.

C.Portman-S.Turner
Leamington League:
Rugby A vs Banbury A
Alekhine's Defence

1 e4

In keeping with my promise to myself to play 1 e4 as often as possible this season.

1...f6

Of the many possible replies to 1 e4 this is one of the options that can turn into tremendous fun on the chess battlefield. I decided upon the line I wanted to play, and had in mind the great Emory Tate. He played uncompromising chess – win, lose, or draw – and I was in the mood for just that.

2 e5 d5 3 c4 b6 4 a4

No holds barred.

4...a5 5 a3!



IM Emory Tate (1958–2015) was a fine tactician and dangerous attacker, regularly beating GMs with his swashbuckling and highly original play, not least his 4 a4! against the Alekhine.



And here it is. The Tate variation of the Alekhine. Tate first played it in the 1988 U.S. Air Force Championships. He was quoted as saying with glee: "I made all these pawn moves, put my rook on a3 and then moved it over to g3".

Now we can all agree that I am flying in the face of common sense and chess protocol. Moving so many pawns and bringing a rook into play on the fifth move is something that a child would do. Yet this is chess, and chess is wonderful. There are no rules to being yourself and being creative, so let us upset the Puritans and have some fun. I note that no less a player than Anna Muzychuk has essayed this variation in her younger years.

5...d6 6 exd6 exd6 7 d4 d5

The rook on a3 is now attacked...

8 c5

...which is why I played 7 d4, to support this advance.

8...d6d7 9 g3



And here he is! The rampant rook sets his sights on g7. One of the main points is that people play openings they are comfortable with and understand not just the moves, but the general positions and themes. However, in this line (as just one example), the fox is well and truly put amongst the chickens. Black players won't be used to a rook bearing down the g-file at such an early stage in the Alekhine.

Black cannot play 9... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ now because the pawn on g7 would die. It's all about upsetting the opponent's rhythm, while trying not to compromise your own understanding of what's going on. I mean, all of this might be rubbish, but at my level in a league game in Rugby on a dark, cold January evening, it is well worth a try. Besides, it is fun – pure, unadulterated fun.

9... $\mathbb{Q}f6$

This piece has gone from g8 to f6, d5, b6, d7 and right back to f6 in the first 9 moves. Lovely geometry. Yet White still only has one major piece developed. The weirdness and charm of chess can truly never be fathomed.

10 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ g6

I guess Black is trying to work out what to do with his king. Is it a fact that in the Alekhine Black is used to castling? Yet here, remember the rook on g3.

11 $\mathbb{Q}g5$

11 $\mathbb{Q}e2+$ was the other move I was thinking of playing, and if 11... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}b5$.

11... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 12 h4

Maybe not best, but my mindset was hell-bent on destruction. In a way this move also 'develops' my rook on h1 as it can now come into play.

12...0-0 13 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ c6

Possibly a waste of tempo – so important in chess.

14 h5

I promise I did not think about GM Simon Williams or AlphaZero with this pawn push. All I thought about was infiltration and killing royalty.

14... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 15 hxg6 $\mathbb{Q}xg6$



I invite the reader to mentally remove everything from the g-file except for the king and rook. This is how I was thinking during the game. The g-pawn has gone. If you showed this position to a beginner they might have difficulty working out how it had 'disappeared', but it is easy to see how much of a nuisance that rook is on g3.

16 $\mathbb{Q}h3!$?

I wanted to attack, of course, but I also heard the wisdom of Caissa in my head and elected to bring out my full army before going for the kill. If I could have seen a direct way forwards without playing the knight move, I would have done something else. I saw 16 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ needless to say, but wanted the knight on f4.

16... $\mathbb{Q}e8$

Fair enough. This pins my bishop to the king, but the downside is that it does keep his rook

on f8. I was aware that I had the move $\mathbb{Q}e3$ available at almost any time, but I wanted to remain with those latent threats on the g-file. I felt that if my attack did not work then Black would take over quickly. My d-pawn is weak and my queenside as a whole is loose. I need to focus everything against the black king.

17 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$

I am not sure this is correct. Each time I remove one of my pieces, it is one less unit to attack with. That said, I wanted also to remove a defender of his. Swings and roundabouts. The key to chess is which pieces to keep on and which to swap off.

17... $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}f4$

I have options with this horse. It might even be useful going to h5 at some point.

18... $\mathbb{Q}d7$



Understandable. Black brings his final queenside minor piece into play. If he had a couple of moves, he could play his bishop to g7, knight to f6 and would be fine. However, as I said, tempi are everything and we must make the most of every move.

19 $\mathbb{Q}f1$

After a good think. I am pleased to note that the engine concurs.

19... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}d3$

20 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ was my other thought, but its carapace of beauty is very thin. After 20... $\mathbb{Q}g7$, what next? I must move my queen or take the bishop on g6.

20... $\mathbb{Q}ae8?$

The engine gives 20... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ as the best move, whereas after the text it swings wildly from even to '+3' for White.

21 $\mathbb{Q}xd5!?$

It was time. Who sang the song 'It's Now or Never'? It looked right, and I was getting short of time. Predictably the engine wants to pour freezing cold water over my lovely move and play the best one instead which was...21 $\mathbb{Q}xh7!!$. Now for a long, but pretty forcing and highly interesting line: 21... $\mathbb{Q}h7$ (21... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ fxg6 23 $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ is also winning for White) 22 $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ fxg6 23 $\mathbb{Q}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}xg6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}h7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}xg7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ and wins.

21... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}d8??$

The losing move. 22... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ was the only move and the one I expected, when I likely would have gone 23 $\mathbb{Q}c7$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}xe8$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}hh3$.

23 $\mathbb{Q}h5!$



It is rare that I get the opportunity to play a move like this, so I was chuffed. Again, note how much damage that rook on g3 has done, without having to budge from there.

23... $\mathbb{Q}g7$

It's now mate in six. Can you spot it, dear reader?

Apparently the only move was 23... $\mathbb{Q}e1+$, but after 24 $\mathbb{Q}xe1$ $\mathbb{Q}e8+$ (freeing f8 for the king) 25 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ White is obviously winning.

24 $\mathbb{Q}xg6$

This is fine, but I missed the mate in six: 24 $\mathbb{Q}xh7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}xh7+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}e4+!$ (a key retreat as it prevents Black from playing ... $\mathbb{Q}e1+$) 26... $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}h7!$ (wow; it's mate in one or two now) 27... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}xf6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}gxg7#$. I wish I had seen that.

24... $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}xh7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}xg6+ 1-0$

That rook on g3 is still earning its corn, supporting the queen and so ending the battle. If there was a vote for 'Man of the Match', it would surely be given to this rook. It defended and attacked. It threatened and supported – all from one square.

And there we have it. I remember feeling elated after the game, not just because I had won, but because I had won using an idea. It may have been a borrowed idea (aren't all openings from the past to the present?), but nevertheless it gave me a reason to play the game in a certain way.

Doubtless my opponent has won many fine games with Alekhine's Defence, but on this occasion, he was caught cold by a certain line. It has happened to me plenty of times and I bet Simon will look at this one and find some amazing possibilities for the future.

There are moments when I am sure I am not alone in thinking it is time I gave up serious play. By serious, I mean competition. Yet a game like this reminds me that there's still plenty of scope left, regardless of age or ability, to try out new things, to push myself, and to derive as much pleasure from chess as ever before. I had lost a game that I should have won a few days before this one and I felt devastated. This win helped, although it did not fully diminish that pain.

No one ever said that chess was easy. No one ever said that it would be plain sailing, but one thing is for certain – chess is a mental opiate that I remain addicted to. Thanks, Caissa.



An Introduction to Prophylaxis II

In this, his concluding article, IM Jose L. Vilela explains all about this important concept and one which has confused many a player since Nimzowitsch's day

In 1998 a very comprehensive and ambitious work appeared, *Secrets of Modern Chess Strategy: Advances Since Nimzowitsch*, by IM John Watson. The author synthesised in a very clear manner the journey of the notion of prophylaxis ever since the publication of *My System*.

"So there are two quite distinct notions in Nimzowitsch's original argument: (a) prevention of the opponent's freeing moves; and (b) over-protection of one's own key points. But the prevention of the opponent's plans in general, or even of dangerous non-freeing moves, is not mentioned; and that is the additional sense in which we use the term today."

One of the world's leading trainers, the sadly late Mark Dvoretsky, used to put a lot of stress, both in his daily work as a trainer as well as in his books and articles, on the notion of 'prophylactic thinking'. His thoughts on this subject in *Technique for the Tournament Player* (1995) serve as an excellent complement to Watson:

"It is very important for every chess player to master 'prophylactic thought' – the ability to ask yourself constantly: 'What does my opponent want to do?, What would he do if it were his move now?'"

Dvoretsky later added in *Positional Play* (1996):

"In chess two players compete with each other, and your opponent's ideas may turn out to be in no way worse than your own. Logically, it is clear that the optimal strategy should be to implement your own plans while at the same time interfering with those of your opponent. [...] Players quite often forget to think about their opponents' plans. This is perfectly understandable – a characteristic of human nature, in fact (in real life we also, unfortunately, pay too little attention to other people's feelings and ideas)."

Talking about prophylaxis from the point of view of the side with an advantage, probably one of the most famous 'mysterious rook moves' of the contemporary age was the following.



G.Kasparov-V.Anand
Amsterdam 1996



Following the idea of prophylactic thinking, it would be pertinent to ask oneself: if it were Black's turn to move, how would he play? It is worth investigating as a first option the only immediate break Black has at his disposal, namely 1...b6. Faced with the threat against c5, it would be virtually necessary to answer 2 cxb6, Black would recapture 2...axb6, and the following position would arise:



When comparing this position with the initial one, we can see that Black has eliminated the annoying restrictive effect generated by White's c5-pawn, and, in addition, the a- and c-files have been opened, which Black's major pieces will be able to use to eventually apply pressure against the backward white pawns on those

files. This characteristic of the semi-open files can be even better observed if the reader imagines only the pawns on the board.

It should not be hard to understand that it would be highly desirable for Black, from a positional point of view, to execute the break ...b7-b6. And it is then, after understanding Black's aim, that the player with the white pieces looks for a way to frustrate his opponent's plan.

13 ♜c1!!

Of this move, Kasparov himself wrote in *New in Chess Magazine* (1996/3):

"The two exclamation marks are because of the 'absolute stupidity' of the rook on c1. It stands behind two pawns and there is absolutely nothing to be done on the c-file. There is only one important goal, which compensates for all the stupidities: it prevents 13...b6. Now, after 13...b6, White plays 14 c4 and suddenly we see the strength of the rook on the c-file."

Of course, Kasparov had to calculate, accurately and deeply, the sequence of moves that would be produced in case Black decided to break anyway. Here are his calculations and evaluations of the resulting positions after 13...b6 14 c4:

a) 14...dxc4 15 ♜xc4 and after 15...bxc5 16 dxc5 play transposes to variation 'b'.

b) 14...bxc5 15 dxc5 dxc4 (or 15...a6 16 ♜a4 dxc4 17 ♜xc4 with a clear advantage) 16 ♜c4 and now 16...dxc5 is answered by 17 ♜b5!.



As the black bishop on c5 cannot move due to the double threat against c6, Black must defend it, something that can only be

done by the queen, from b6 or from e7. In the case of 17... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ the decoying blow 19 a4! decides, since 19... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}c7!$ attacks the overloaded queen that is not able to defend both under-fire minor pieces.

Better is 17... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ when after 18 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ (if 18... $\mathbb{Q}a3$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ with clear advantage) 19 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ Black can capture on b5 in two ways:

b1) If 20... $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ the knight is surprisingly trapped after 21 a4! $\mathbb{Q}a3$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}c3!$.

b2) Therefore it is better to play 20... $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xf1$, reaching a position in which Black has a rook and pawn for two white minor pieces.



From a purely material point of view this can be considered balanced, but Kasparov rightly assessed that the greater activity of all the white pieces together with the weakness of the black a-pawn tilts the scales in White's favour.

This was undoubtedly an impressive display of calculation and assessment even from someone who was, at that time, the best in the world. In the real game Anand understood Kasparov's idea and decided to hold back on 13...b6, continuing the fight more calmly with 13... $\mathbb{Q}e8$, but still eventually lost.

The following position comes from a game by former world champion Mikhail Tal, the Magician from Riga. It is a clear example of the practical benefit of prophylactic thinking for the chessplayer who has the initiative, and also teaches us that even the strongest chessplayers can overlook subtle ideas which are prophylactic in nature.

M.Tal-Z.Ribli

European Team Ch., Skara 1980



White has an advantage in development and a passed pawn on the c-file. The game continued 23 $\mathbb{Q}d2$, which is a move with clear logic behind it, as it activates the knight, a piece that on f3 would not have a clear way to assist in increasing the pressure. However, after 23... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}xc4+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}c7+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 32 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $f5$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}a8$ 34 a4 the players agreed a draw.

The initial position could be approached by means of prophylactic thinking in the following way: Black's aim, if it was his turn to move, would be to finish his development by deploying his knight, preferably to c6, a square from where it efficiently blocks White's passed pawn. Additionally we should note that Black might first play the intermediate 23... $\mathbb{Q}f8$, attacking the white rook, which is forced to abandon the sixth rank, and only then develop the knight.

Thus it is worth examining moves that prevent Black from developing the knight. We need to attack twice the squares c6 and d7, and additionally avoid ... $\mathbb{Q}f8$, forcing the rook backwards. This is all achieved with 23 $\mathbb{Q}b5!$, controlling c6 and d7, and at the same time preventing 23... $\mathbb{Q}f8$...



...because of the nice tactical detail 24 $\mathbb{Q}xf6!$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}d5+$ followed by 26 $\mathbb{Q}xa8$, winning a pawn.

Therefore the best for Black seems to be 23...a6, evicting the white queen from its dominant position, but then comes 24 $\mathbb{Q}d5!$. This forces Black to exchange queens and after 24... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ in the ensuing endgame Black continues facing the problem of how to develop his knight.



If Black exchanges rooks on the c-file, or if

he moves the rook away (25... $\mathbb{Q}e8$, for example), he ends up in an unenviable situation, clearly worse, in which the serious problem of not being able to develop the knight is now joined by the strength of the white passed pawn on d5.

I hope you will agree this is an excellent example of prophylactic thinking at the service of the player who, from a superior position, seeks to increase the pressure on his opponent.

One of the great chess players of all times whose style was markedly prophylactic, and as much in attack as in defence, is former world champion Anatoly Karpov. The following game is a very noticeable example of the conversion of a microscopic advantage in the endgame, based solely on not allowing the activation of a bishop hemmed in by its own pawns.

A.Karpov-J.Lautier

Biel 1992



At first the position appears quite level, as not only is the material equal, but both players' pawns are placed symmetrically. Additionally, rook exchanges on the open file are about to occur, something that will reduce significantly the offensive power on the board.

If any advantage can be mentioned for White, it is a certain advantage in space due to the presence of the e5-pawn and, above all, the very passive position of Black's bishop. If Black manages to play ...c6-c5 and open the diagonal for his bishop, without making any concession, White's expectation to achieve an advantage would simply vanish in the air. As such, the fight revolves around the activation of the bishop.

18... $\mathbb{Q}a8$

With the clear intention of defending the bishop so as to be able to play ...c5.

19 $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}d1$



Pure prophylaxis. White agrees to all the exchanges, for the sake of keeping the black bishop shut in.

The first thing to be noticed is the fact that Black cannot play 20...c5 immediately, because the bishop is lost after 21 $\mathbb{Q}xd8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xa8$. If Black, instead, moves his rook away from the d-file, in order to keep his bishop defended and play ...c5 next move, then White takes absolute control of the d-file. This happens in the variation 20... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ (observe that it is impossible for Black to capture on e5 because of the back-rank mate starting with 22 $\mathbb{Q}d8+!$), when the essence of White's advantage has changed, as Black will be able to free his bishop with ...c5, but he will not be able to challenge White's absolute control over the d-file.



Both in this position and the game continuation, Black is under annoying pressure. Lautier chose to exchange rooks and remain with the inactive bishop.

20... $\mathbb{R}xd1+$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$

Definitely the most logical move, as it takes control of the only open file while the bishop is defended, so that ...c5 is threatened.

22 $\mathbb{Q}f3!$

Of course, the whole white game continues to be based on avoiding the liberation of the black bishop.

22... $\mathbb{Q}d2$

Black throws his queen into a counter-attack, invading White's position and threatening to capture pawns. Playing defensively here as White with 23 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ would amount to the loss of every hope of victory after the exchange of queens followed by 24...c5.

23 $b3!$

White sacrifices a pawn, but keeps his opponent tied up.

23... $\mathbb{Q}xa2$ 24 $b4$

An active move, aiming to take advantage of the pin along the diagonal through the advance b4-b5. But there is also another very strong threat, namely $\mathbb{Q}d4$, penetrating to d8. I should also draw the reader's attention to the fact that if Karpov had instead played 24 $\mathbb{Q}d4$, Lautier would have had the resource 24... $\mathbb{Q}a3!$ at his disposal, in order to meet a white check on d8 with ... $\mathbb{Q}f8$.

24... $\mathbb{Q}a1 + 25 \mathbb{Q}h2 \mathbb{Q}a8$



26 $\mathbb{Q}d4$

Karpov elects not to regain his pawn, instead continuing to reinforce the pressure. In the case of 26 b5 $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 27 bxc6 h6 28 g3 a5 Black would have good counterplay, based on his passed a-pawn.

26... $\mathbb{Q}c8$

Defending against the penetration of the queen and threatening for the nth time the cherished liberation ...c5.

27 $c5!$

Consistent prophylaxis again. The bishop remains buried alive.

27... $\mathbb{B}xc5$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$

Now the threat is, of course, b4-b5.

28... $\mathbb{Q}a6$

Lautier eliminates once and for all the threat of b4-b5.

29 $\mathbb{Q}e7$



The queen occupies a strong position in the opponent's territory. Although there are no immediate threats or an unavoidable way to force victory, White has at his disposal plans of gradual reinforcement of the position, amongst which there is the advance of the pawns on the kingside and the careful activation of the white king. Playing this position as Black is certainly very unpleasant, due to the absence of active play and the need to remain permanently alert to the creation of threats by White. It is instructive too to point out that if Black gives back a pawn to free the bishop by 29...c5, then after 30 bxc5 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 31 gxf3 the resulting queen endgame is promising for White, due to the fact that his passed pawn is more advanced than his adversary's.

29... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 30 $h4$ $h5?$

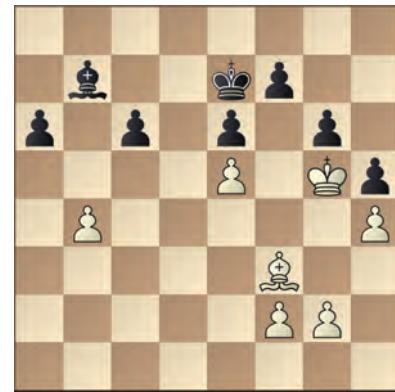
To stop the advance of the white h-pawn, but this incurs a fatal weakening of the dark

squares, especially g5, through which the white king will now be able to walk.

31 $\mathbb{Q}g3!$ $\mathbb{Q}b7?$

Preferable was 31... $\mathbb{Q}b8$, although White's advantage is indisputable after 32 $\mathbb{Q}f4$.

32 $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 34 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$



White's winning plan can be expressed in words, in a crystal-clear manner, without any need of concrete variations. The bishop is placed on e4 to clear the way for the f-pawn and, at the same time, keeping the pin on the c6-pawn. Then f2-f3 followed by g2-g4 is played, when White achieves, in all variations, an outside passed pawn on the h-file. This passed h-pawn advances, forcing the black king to stop it, when the white king will invade via f6 and capture the black pawns, forcing the win. It really is as simple as that.

While all of this happens, Black's extra pawn on the queenside is just a helpless spectator of his king's tragedy.

35 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}a8$ 36 $f3$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$

After 36...c5 37 $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ White wins in many ways. I invite the reader to analyse them!

37 $g4$ $\mathbb{Q}a8$ 38 $gxh5$ $gxh5$ 39 $f4$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 40 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}a8$ 41 $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ 1-0

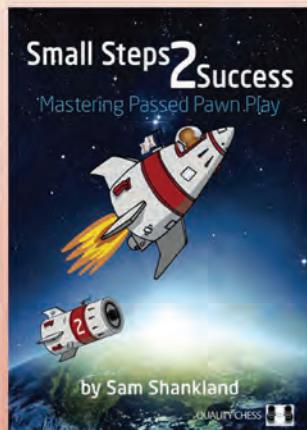
Our journey through the intricacies of prophylaxis has come to its end. It is a subject that could fill entire books if one gets far enough into it, but you should now better understand the basics and may even wish to delve deeper into this important subject.

In conclusion, ask yourself what are the ideas and intentions of the opponent, i.e. which move would our adversary play if it were their turn to move, and take measures to oppose or hinder them. That is the essence of what is modernly understood by 'prophylaxis' or 'prophylactic thinking'. It is basically a process of anticipation of the opponent's plans.

If you are missing a copy of the November 2019 CHESS, in which the first part of Jose L. Vilela's Guide to Prophylaxis occurred, or any other recent issue, contact Chess & Bridge – 0207 486 7015 or via info@chess.co.uk.



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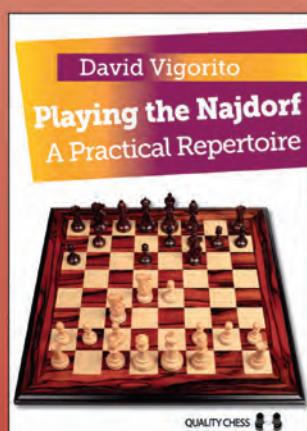
Next we have **The Anand Files**, a rare gem of a book which offers a behind-the-scenes perspective of Anand's World Championship successes against Kramnik, Topalov and Gelfand, including pre-game planning and preparing opening novelties – this is a must-read.

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Wednesday, 18th November 1964

Geoff Chandler enjoyed a trip back in time after purchasing an old scorebook

Today you are on your way to watch a Premier League game of football and whilst walking through the park, you pause a while to watch a group of kids kicking a ball about using a pile of discarded jackets for goalposts. In the real world (a place I rarely visit), you are reading a chess magazine that will be full of good premier league games of chess, but I'm asking you to have a breather and play out this kick about in the park.

I was browsing in a charity shop a few days ago. I spied and bought an old scorebook for 50p. It originally cost 2/6p (half a crown). I paid four times what it cost back then, but the memories it invoked were worth it and – joy of joys – it had a dated game in it. And then you see the last move: '59 ♕xQ Stalemate'. Gold Dust!

The 18th of November 1964. What else happened on that day? Staying with football, that night England beat Wales in the 'Home Championships' 2-1, with two goals from Wignal Jones scoring for Wales. Switching it neatly back to chess, on the 18th of November 1964 Russia beat Spain 3½-½ in the Tel Aviv Olympiad. England (Kottnauer, Clarke, Littlewood, Hindle) were losing by the same score to East Germany, while Scotland (Aitken, Fallone, Bonner, Baxter) drew 2-2 with Paraguay (Wales sent no team to that Olympiad).

Leadbetter-D.Tuzi
Edinburgh League 1964
Two Knights Defence

1 e4 e5 2 ♜f3 ♜c6 3 ♜c4 ♜f6 4 ♜g5 d5
5 exd5 ♜xd5 6 ♜f3

I had not seen this before. Everyone plays 6 0-0 or 6 ♜xf7. I actually spent 10 minutes thinking up a new word for 'T.N.' (I came up with 'Total Nonsense'), then decided I'd better check up on the game move as it looks plausible. I found 225 games with it dating back to 1837.

6...♜xg5 7 ♜xd5 ♜e6?

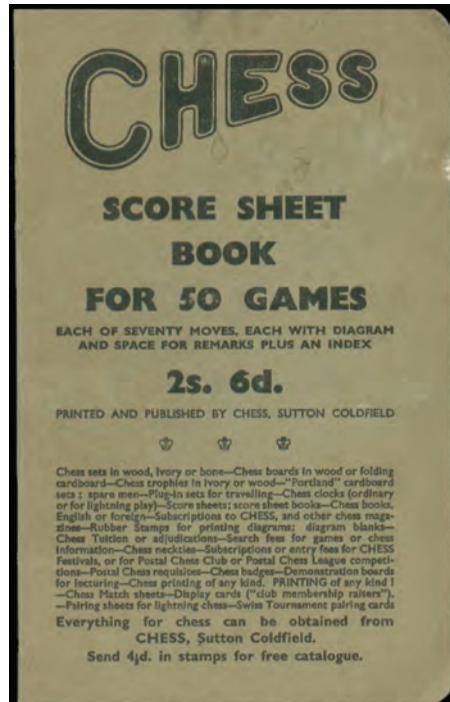
This is just a mistake and without the stalemate bait at the end this game I may have just stopped here.

8 ♜xc6+ ♜d7 9 ♜xd7+ ♜xd7 10 ♜c3

White wants to play d2-d4, discovering an attack on the black queen.

10...c6 11 0-0

White is not interested in playing 11 ♜xf7+ ♜e7 with a black rook coming to f8, so tucks the king away. This next part of the game is the bit where the stray dog runs on to the pitch and makes off with the ball.



11 0-0 f6 12 d4 ♜g6 13 dxe5 fxe5
14 ♜d1+ ♜c7 15 ♜e3 ♜d6 16 ♜e4
♜ad8 17 ♜xd6 ♜xd6 18 ♜c5 ♜f6
19 ♜e3 ♜e8 20 ♜xa7 ♜xc2



Now we have a quick win on the board: 21 ♜b6+ ♜c8/ ♜b8 22 ♜a3, but White was just flicking out the moves waiting for the game to win itself.

21 ♜d2 ♜a4 22 ♜b6+ ♜b8

Now there is a queen sacrifice that suggested itself earlier: 23 ♜xe5! ♜xe5 24 ♜d8 mate. Although White missed it, the move played had a mating idea behind it.

23 ♜d8+ ♜xd8 24 ♜xe5+ ♜a8

If Black tries to hold the rook, it's mate with 24... ♜c8 25 ♜c7#.

25 ♜xd8 ♜f8 26 b3 ♜a7

Suddenly Black is threatening the bishop

and a mate with 27... ♜xf2#.

27 ♜h4

White dug himself out of that one, although there was always 27 ♜a5#.

27...b5 28 ♜e4 ♜d7 29 ♜xh7 ♜e8
30 ♜h5 ♜e6

Black is fishing for a back-rank mate again.

31 ♜f1 ♜d7 32 ♜d1 ♜e6 33 ♜d8+

White has had enough of the back-rank threats so takes off the rooks.

33...♜xd8 34 ♜xd8 ♜e4 35 ♜d1 ♜b7
36 ♜d7+ ♜a8

White now tries to stumble across a checkmate.

37 ♜c8+ ♜a7 38 ♜c7+ ♜a8 39 ♜a5+
♜b8 40 ♜b6+ ♜a8 41 g3



No mate there, so White creates luft. The dog now comes back and chases the white king up the board.

41...♜d3+ 42 ♜g2 ♜e4+ 43 ♜h3 ♜f5+
44 ♜h4 ♜e4+ 45 ♜g5 ♜d5+ 46 ♜g6

Round about here Black saw his stalemate idea.

46...c5 47 ♜a5+ ♜b8 48 ♜xb5+ ♜a8
49 ♜a5+ ♜b7 50 ♜c7+ ♜a8 51 ♜xg7 c4



And now the gamble is on the table. Will White choose to cruise to an ending and play

52 ♜a5+ or...

52 bxc4 ♜g8+

In the final minute the open goal was missed, as Black brings on the desperado queen as a sub.

53 ♜f6 ♜e6+ 54 ♜g7 ♜f6+ 55 ♜g8 ♜f8+ 56 ♜h7 ♜g8+ 57 ♜h6 ♜g6+ 58 ♜xg6 ½-½

The game as it appears in the score sheet book, picked up by Geoff for 50p in an Edinburgh charity shop. Have you ever seen somebody else's old scorebook for sale or allowed a stalemate when winning easily?



Event: UNIVERSITY X CORONA		Date: 18/11/64		
White	Black		WHITE	BLACK
D TUCI	L BADBETTER		P-K4	P-B5
1 P-K4	P-K4	26 P-N3	Q-R2	P-N1
2 N-KB3	N-QB3	27 B-KR4	P-QN4	P-KN1
3 B-QB4	N-KB3	28 Q-K4	Q-R2	K-N7
4 N-KN5	P-Q4	29 QXR P	R-K1	Q-B2CH
5 PXP	IN X P	30 Q-R4	Q-K3	K-N1
6 Q-KB3	Q-N	31 K-B1	Q-Q2	Q-B1CH
7 BxN	B-K3	32 R-Q1	Q-K3	K-R2
8 BxNch	B-Q2	33 R-Q1ch	R-XR	Q-N1
9 BxNch	KxP	34 BxR	Q-K5	Q-R2
10 N-QB3	P-QB3	35 Q-Q1	K-N2	Q-B2CH
11 O-O	P-KB3	36 Q-Q2ch	K-R1	Q-R1
12 P-Q4	Q-N3	37 Q-B1ch	K-R2	Q-B2ch
13 PXP	PXP	38 Q-B2ch	K-R1	Q-N1
14 R-R1ch	K-QB2	39 Q-R4ch	R-N1	K-R1
15 B-K3	B-03	40 Q-N3ch	K-R1	Q-B2ch
16 N-K4	R-Q1	41 P-N3	Q-Q6ch	Q-B2ch
17 NxB	R-XN	42 K-N2	Q-K5ch	Q-B4ch
18 B-QB5	R-KB3	43 K-R3	Q-B4ch	Q-K5ch
19 Q-K3	R-K1	44 K-R4	Q-B4ch	Q-K5ch
20 BXR P	QXP	45 K-N5	Q-B4ch	Q-K5ch
21 R-Q2	Q-QR5	46 K-N6	Q-B4	Q-K5ch
22 B-N3ch	K-N1	47 Q-R2ch	K-N1	Q-K5ch
23 Q-Q1ch	R-XN	48 QXPch	K-R1	Q-K5ch
24 QXPch	K-R1	49 QR4ch	K-N2	Q-K5ch
25 BXR	R-B1	50 Q-B2ch	K-R1	Q-K5ch

REMARKS

(BLACK)

(WHITE)

Forthcoming Events



Feb 28 - March 1 Fareham Congress
www.castlechess.co.uk or call 01707 659080

Feb 29 - March 1 4NCL, Daventry
www.4ncl.co.uk or call 01993 708645

February 29 Kingston Rapidplay
www.kingstonchessrapidplay.co.uk

March 5 Hendon 'First Thursday' Blitz
www.hendonchessclub.com or call 07855 036537

March 6-8 East Devon Congress, Exeter
eastdevonchesscongress.com

March 7 Golders Green Rapidplay
goldersgreenchess.blogspot.com or call 07855 036537

March 13-15 Blackpool Congress
www.blackpoolchess.org.uk

March 14-15 Hampstead U2200 Congress
hampsteadchess.blogspot.com or call 07855 036537

March 17 Muswell Hill Rapidplay
muswellhillchess.blogspot.com or call 07855 036537

March 20-22 Galway Congress
www.galwaychess.com/galway-congress-2020/

March 21-22 Nottingham Congress
nottschess.org

March 21 Kingston Rapidplay
www.kingstonchessrapidplay.co.uk

March 28-29 4NCL, Daventry & South Normanton
www.4ncl.co.uk or call 01993 708645

March 28 Poplar Rapidplay
www.spanglefish.com/docklandschessclub

And for the Online Connoisseur:

March 15 - April 5 Yekaterinburg Candidates
worldchess.com; Alekseenko, Caruana, Ding Liren, Giri, Grischuk, Nepomniachtchi, Radjabov, Wang Hao.

Congress organisers – Don't forget to email editor@chess.co.uk to ensure your event is listed, or if you really want to guarantee a good entry, contact Matt@chess.co.uk to discuss having it advertised.

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Overseas News

GERMANY – David Howell drew both games for Hockenheim at the latest Bundesliga weekend (8-9 February), as his side condemned Solingen to a third defeat of the season. Hockenheim and Baden-Baden are the only sides on 100%, albeit with the perennial champions having played a match more. Gawain Jones also drew both games as he led Munich 1836 to two victories in the Bundesliga Ost, their win over leaders Deggendorf leaving the Bavarian club with an excellent chance of gaining promotion to the top flight.

IRELAND – There was a five-way tie for first between Constantin Lupulesu (ROU), Oleg Korneev (ESP), Matthew Turner (SCO), Sergei Tiviakov (NED), and Tarun Kanyamarala on 4/5 at the Gonzaga Classic Masters (24-26 January), as the annual tournament organised by pupils at Dublin's Gonzaga College continues to go from strength to strength. The total prize fund was €3,500, with the near 200-strong entry ensuring that plenty of money was once again raised for charity.

NEW ZEALAND – Daniel Fernandez triumphed with 7½/10 at the George Trundle Masters in Auckland (4-12 January), finishing half a point ahead of Russian GM Vasily Papin and Australian legend Darryl Johansen. Just two days later the globetrotting young British GM found himself in Tauranga for the New Zealand Open Championship, and remained in top form, racking up a huge 8/9. This time Papin was a point and a half adrift in second, with third place on '+3' being shared by Darryl Johansen (AUS), Brandon Clarke (ENG), Herman van Riemsdijk (BRA), Ben Hague, Kirill Polishchuk, Paul Garbett and Russell Dive (all NZ).

RUSSIA – 28-year-old Ju Wenjun retained for a second time her Women's World Championship title on January 24th in Vladivostok. Ju was forced to dig deep and eventually prevailed only after a rapid playoff against Aleksandra Goryachkina. Both players were visibly feeling the strain throughout much of the match, which had begun back on January 5th in Shanghai. The internet audience could not complain, however: there was sufficient drama on the board and the shortest game was 40 moves, with the longest some 105.

After three draws, Ju took the lead when Goryachkina misjudged a queen endgame.



Aleksandra Goryachkina looks the more relaxed, but both she and Ju Wenjun felt the pressure.

Ju Wenjun-A.Goryachkina 4th matchgame, Shanghai 2020



Black now needed to sit tight with 50... $\mathbb{Q}e8$ (50... $\mathbb{Q}g8?$ 51 $\mathbb{Q}g2!$ is hopelessly lost), and if 51 $\mathbb{Q}xa7?$ $\mathbb{W}d5+$ 52 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}e4+$ with perpetual check.

50... $\mathbb{Q}e7?$ 51 $\mathbb{W}xe7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 52 $\mathbb{Q}g4!$

The all-important pawn lever. Goryachkina must have only factored on 52 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 53 $f3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 54 $g4$ $f5+$.

52... $\mathbb{Q}d6$

Alternatively, if 52... $hxg4+$ 53 $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ when 54 $f4!$ is the cleanest, creating an outside passed pawn after $f4-f5$, or if 54... $f5+$ 55 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 56 $h5$ $gxh5$ 57 $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 58 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ followed by picking off $f5$.

53 $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ $gxh5$ 54 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$

Black is too slow after this, but 54... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 55 $\mathbb{Q}f4!$ would be a decisive zugzwang.

55 $f4!$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 56 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $f5$ 57 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 58 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 59 $\mathbb{Q}c7$

Ju has been extremely precise. Now Black must either capture on $a6$ at last or lose

following 59... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 60 $\mathbb{Q}c6!$.
59... $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ 60 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 61 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 62 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 63 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 1-0

White is far too fast after 63... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 64 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 65 $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 66 $\mathbb{Q}g6$.

The 21-year-old Russian star went for the Mikenas Attack in the very next game and soon had the upper hand, but only equalised the score after it was Ju's turn to blunder in an endgame. With the players tied at 3-3, the match moved after a four-day break one thousand miles north-east, after which Goryachkina enjoyed her best game of the match, completely outplaying Ju in Game 8. The champion, though, refused to panic and, aided by the Nimzo-Larsen Attack and some fine manoeuvring, immediately equalised the score before taking the lead in Game 10, as the former Russian schoolgirl appeared to forget some of her lessons.

A.Goryachkina-Ju Wenjun 10th matchgame, Vladivostok 2020





White's next is fine, unlike 43 $\mathbb{B}g6?? \mathbb{B}a3$.

43 $\mathbb{B}xe6 \mathbb{B}xe6$ 44 $\mathbb{Q}d3?$

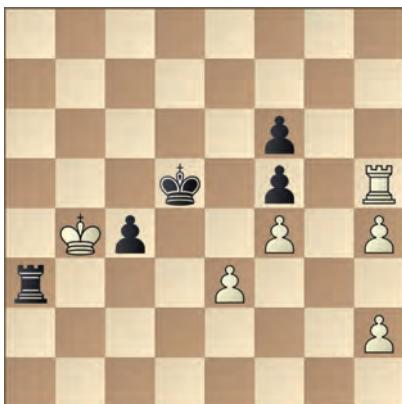
As so often, active defence would have trumped passive defence, i.e. 44 $\mathbb{Q}c4! \mathbb{B}xe3$ (or 44... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 45 $\mathbb{B}g6 \mathbb{B}e4+$ 46 $\mathbb{Q}d3 c4+$ 47 $\mathbb{Q}d2 \mathbb{B}e6$ 48 $\mathbb{B}h6$) 45 $\mathbb{B}g6 \mathbb{B}e4+$ 46 $\mathbb{Q}xc5 \mathbb{B}xf4$ 47 $\mathbb{B}xf6 \mathbb{B}xh4$ 48 $\mathbb{B}xf5$. **44... $\mathbb{Q}d6 45 \mathbb{B}g8 \mathbb{Q}d5 46 \mathbb{B}d8+ \mathbb{B}d6 47 \mathbb{B}c8$**

Naturally White must keep the rooks on.

47... $\mathbb{B}d7 48 \mathbb{B}h8 \mathbb{C}4+$ 49 $\mathbb{Q}c3 \mathbb{B}e7$ 50 $\mathbb{Q}d2$

A necessary backwards step as 50 $\mathbb{B}xh5?$ $\mathbb{B}xe3+$ 51 $\mathbb{Q}d2 \mathbb{B}e4$ would enable Black's king to invade.

50... $\mathbb{B}a7$ 51 $\mathbb{B}xh5 \mathbb{B}a2+$ 52 $\mathbb{Q}c3 \mathbb{B}a3+$ 53 $\mathbb{Q}b4?$



Now White's king gets fatally cut off. 53 $\mathbb{Q}d2 \mathbb{B}e4$ wouldn't have been optimal either, but 53 $\mathbb{Q}b2!$ $\mathbb{B}b3+$ 54 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ seems to draw, and if 54... $\mathbb{B}xe3$ 55 $\mathbb{B}xf5+$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 56 $\mathbb{B}xf6$ or 54... $\mathbb{B}e4!$ 55 $\mathbb{B}h8!$ $\mathbb{B}xe3$ 56 $\mathbb{B}c8 \mathbb{Q}d3$ 57 $\mathbb{B}c5!$ $\mathbb{B}xf4$ 58 $\mathbb{B}xc4+$ $\mathbb{B}e3$ 59 $\mathbb{B}c3!$. **53... $\mathbb{B}b3+!$ 54 $\mathbb{Q}a4 \mathbb{B}e4$ 55 $\mathbb{B}h8 \mathbb{B}b7!$**

Keeping White's king confined to the a-file, thereby enabling Black's active king and c-pawn to carry the day.

56 $\mathbb{B}c8 \mathbb{Q}d3$ 57 $\mathbb{B}h5 \mathbb{C}3$ 58 $\mathbb{B}h6 \mathbb{C}2$ 59 $\mathbb{Q}a3 \mathbb{Q}d2$ 60 $\mathbb{B}d8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 61 $\mathbb{B}c8 \mathbb{Q}d2$ 62 $\mathbb{B}d8+$ $\mathbb{Q}c1$ 0-1

It surely wasn't good match strategy for Ju to essentially play for a draw as White in Game 11, but that was what she did before failing to withstand the tension in the final matchgame.

We join play in an unbalanced middlegame, where White must be for choice, but after 30... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}xc4 \mathbb{B}g6$ 32 $\mathbb{B}f1 \mathbb{Q}e7$ Black might well have held. Instead, Ju wrongly elected to force the pace: **30... $\mathbb{B}e3?$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}xc4 \mathbb{B}b5$ 32 $\mathbb{B}b3 \mathbb{B}e4$ 33 $\mathbb{B}f1!$**

Possibly what Black had missed. She must now lose her pawn on e3.

33... $\mathbb{B}c6$ 34 $\mathbb{B}xe3 \mathbb{B}e8$ 35 $\mathbb{B}e2 \mathbb{B}g6$ 36 $\mathbb{B}f3 \mathbb{Q}h7$ 37 $\mathbb{B}f2 \mathbb{Q}c6$ 38 $\mathbb{B}g3$

38 $\mathbb{B}f7 \mathbb{B}g8$ drives White back, but 38 $\mathbb{B}f4!$ would have been strong, and if 38... $\mathbb{B}g5$ 39 $\mathbb{B}g4 \mathbb{B}f5$ 40 $\mathbb{B}g3 g6$ 41 $\mathbb{B}f4 \mathbb{B}g5$ 42 $\mathbb{B}f2 \mathbb{Q}g8$ 43 $\mathbb{B}h4 \mathbb{B}d8$ 44 $\mathbb{B}g3$, winning.

38... $\mathbb{B}f5$ 39 $\mathbb{B}e2 \mathbb{B}d8$ 40 $\mathbb{B}e3 \mathbb{B}f7$



41 $\mathbb{B}d3+$

Goryachkina is in no rush, but 41 $\mathbb{B}d5!$ would have been very strong: for example, 41... $\mathbb{B}xd5$ (41... $\mathbb{B}xd5$ 42 $\mathbb{B}d3+$ pins and wins) 42 $\mathbb{B}d3+ g6$ 43 $\mathbb{B}g4 \mathbb{B}g7$ 44 $\mathbb{B}f3 \mathbb{B}e7$ 45 $\mathbb{B}xg7 \mathbb{B}xg7$ 46 $\mathbb{B}d2 \mathbb{B}g5$ 47 $\mathbb{B}d4+ \mathbb{B}g8$ 48 $\mathbb{B}f6+$ and it's all over, Black's hapless light-squared bishop continuing to play no part in proceedings.

41... $\mathbb{B}g6$ 42 $\mathbb{B}g4 \mathbb{B}g7$ 43 $\mathbb{B}xg7 \mathbb{B}xg7$ 44 $\mathbb{B}c4 \mathbb{B}b5$ 45 $\mathbb{B}g3 \mathbb{B}xc4$ 46 $\mathbb{B}xc4 \mathbb{B}d7$ 47 $\mathbb{B}e4 \mathbb{B}f6$ 48 $\mathbb{B}e3 \mathbb{B}d6$ 49 $\mathbb{B}c5 \mathbb{B}c6$ 50 $\mathbb{B}g1$

White soon gets on the right track, but might have done so straight away with 50 $\mathbb{B}g5$ 51 $\mathbb{B}h4 \mathbb{B}d5$ 52 $\mathbb{B}c4!$.

50... $\mathbb{B}f5$ 51 $\mathbb{B}f4 \mathbb{B}g5$ 52 $\mathbb{B}h4!$ $\mathbb{B}e7$ 53 $\mathbb{B}e5+ \mathbb{B}g8$ 54 $\mathbb{B}f6 \mathbb{B}h7$ 55 $\mathbb{B}h5!$

The final nail is hammered into the black king's coffin.

55... $\mathbb{B}xh5$ 56 $\mathbb{B}f4 \mathbb{B}e5$ 57 $\mathbb{B}xh6+$ $\mathbb{B}g8$ 58 $\mathbb{B}g6+$ $\mathbb{B}h8$ 59 $\mathbb{B}xh5+$ $\mathbb{B}g8$ 60 $\mathbb{B}g5+$ 1-0

And so it was to be yet another world championship playoff. Ju was lost in the first rapid game, but somehow survived ahead of exploiting her chances in the third. This time she didn't crack in the final game to prevail 2½-1½ and so bag the €275,000 first prize.

Ju Wenjun-A.Goryachkina

15th matchgame (rapid), Vladivostok 2020



43 $\mathbb{B}g6!$

Decisive, unlike 43 $\mathbb{B}f3?$ $\mathbb{B}xe5$.

43... $\mathbb{B}d7$ 44 $\mathbb{B}e6 \mathbb{B}c7$ 45 $\mathbb{B}xh5$ 1-0

USA – Despite Marcus Harvey's victories against them, as we saw last month, Saint Louis Arch Bishops remain the team to beat in the Western Division of the PRO League, having won all six of their matches. Alireza Firouzja did, though, manage to gain revenge for his defeat at Wijk, as he outplayed Fabiano Caruana, while we're even more pleased to report that the UK Lions are off the mark, having drawn with Chicago Wind before defeating Brazil Capybaras, aided by a superb 3½ from Irish IM Alex Lopez.

USA – We are sad to report the death of long-time chess publisher and entrepreneur Bob Long aged 74. He was found murdered in his home in Davenport, Iowa, after an apparent home invasion and robbery. Over a career that spanned close to forty years, Long's various publishing and business ventures – Chessco, Thinkers Press, Gilbert & Lange, and most recently, the Chess Butler – were the launching pad for a number of important titles, most notably Jeremy Silman's *How to Reassess Your Chess*.



The more experienced Ju Wenjun eventually retained her title after a topsy-turvy match, ahead of taking part in the 2nd Cairns Cup in St. Louis, which we'll report on next month.





Home News

BELFAST – Gareth Annesley (Belfast South) triumphed with a perfect score to win the Williamson Shield at the Maynard Sinclair Pavilion over the weekend of January 18th and 19th. Gabor Horvath (Strand) finished a point behind, while Aaron Wafflart (Strand) edged out James O'Fee (Bangor) on tie-break in the Intermediate after they had both finished on 4/5.

BIRMINGHAM – New venture First Weekend Chess congresses will be held on the first weekend of every quarter (May, August, etc) with the next one scheduled for 2-3 May.

DAVENTRY – Guildford and Manx Liberty are the only sides on 100% after four rounds of the top flight of the 4NCL. We'll have a full report on the second weekend of the season next time, but for now do enjoy two fine games from the opening weekend, a crushing win by Britain's long-time no.1 and a King's Indian Attack which actually was a brutal attack.

M.Adams-A.McClement
Guildford vs Cambridge
Sicilian Scheveningen

1 e4 c5 2 ♜f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♜xd4 ♜f6 5 ♜c3 e6 6 ♜e3 a6 7 ♜e2 ♜e7 8 ♜d2!?

This aggressive sideline of the Classical Scheveningen is quite tricky for Black, who probably shouldn't combine the three routine moves which now follow.

8...♜c6 9 0-0-0 0-0 10 f4 ♜c7 11 g4! ♜xd4 12 ♜xd4 e5 13 ♜d3



13...♜xg4?

Likewise, 13...exf4 14 ♜xf4 ♜xg4? 15 ♜xg4 ♜xg4 16 ♜d5 ♜d8 17 ♜hg1 ♜e5 18 ♜xe5 dxе5 19 ♜g3 gave White a huge advantage in Ivanchuk-Van Wely, European Club Cup, Novi Sad 2016. Black's position is suspect in any case, but he should at least try 14...♜e6.

14 ♜xg4 ♜xg4 15 ♜d5 ♜d8 16 ♜b6! ♜d7?

Already the only chance was to ditch the exchange with 16...♜e8 17 ♜hg1 ♜f6, not that White then has to go in for 18 ♜c7.

17 ♜hg1 ♜d8?

Another slip, but Black would also have been getting crushed after 17...♜f6 18 fxe5 ♜xd5 19 ♜xd5.

18 ♜xd8 ♜axd8 19 f5! 1-0

The black knight is lost in view of 19...h5 20 h3 ♜h6? 21 ♜f6+.

S.Ansell-L.Cyborowski
Blackthorne Russia vs Manx Liberty
King's Indian Attack

1 e4 c5 2 ♜f3 e6 3 g3 ♜c6 4 ♜g2 ♜f6 5 ♜e2 d5 6 exd5 ♜xd5 7 0-0 ♜e7 8 ♜a3!?

This in conjunction with White's Chigorin-esque fifth move is an interesting twist on the standard KIA approach of d3 and ♜bd2.

8...0-0 9 ♜c4 ♜c7

9...f6 seems more consistent with Black's fifth move, and if 10 ♜e3 ♜c7 11 d3 e5.

10 d3 b6 11 a4 ♜b7 12 ♜d2 ♜ad8 13 a5!?

Ambitious, but by preparing to sacrifice a pawn White aims to take control of the situation in the centre of the board.

13...♜f6 14 ♜fe1 b5 15 ♜ce5 ♜db4

15...♜xe5! 16 ♜xe5 ♜b4 seizes control.

16 a6 ♜a8

The Polish Grandmaster is drifting. 16...♜xa6?! was risky, but playable, and if 17 ♜xc6 ♜xc6 18 ♜h4 ♜d7.

17 ♜g4 ♜e7 18 ♜f4 ♜b6?

22 ♜xh6 ♜c7 looks risky, but has the computer's seal of approval.

21 h6! g6 22 ♜g5 ♜c7 23 ♜f6 ♜d5 24 ♜g7 b4 25 c4!

Preparing to swing the queen across to the key long diagonal.

25...♜b6 26 b3 ♜d7 27 ♜b2 ♜fe8 28 ♜h8 ♜f8



29 ♜f6

Hardly bad, but there was a lovely win available with 29 ♜g7+!! ♜xg7 30 hxg7 (threat: 31 ♜h6#) 30...h5 31 ♜h6+ ♜h7 32 ♜xf7 (threat: 33 ♜g5+) 32...♜xh8 (32...g5? 33 ♜xg5+ ♜g6 allows White a choice of pretty finishes, including 34 ♜e4+ ♜f6 35 g8#) 33 gxh8+ ♜xh8 34 ♜g5+ ♜g8. It's not that hard to calculate this far, but to sacrifice the queen White would have to have realised that now 35 ♜xe6 is but extremely strong, and if 35...♜f8 36 ♜e8 or 35...d4 36 ♜xg6+ ♜f8 37 ♜xh8 ♜xg2 38 ♜h7+ ♜e7 39 ♜e1+ ♜e5 40 ♜xg2 and wins.

29...♜e7?

29...e5 30 ♜xd8 ♜xd8 limps on.

30 ♜fe5 1-0

30...♜xg2 31 ♜xd7 ♜xd7 32 ♜e5! and ♜f6+ is a killer.



EDINBURGH – The Lothians Allegro took place at the Bainfield Bowling & Social Club on January 12th.

Open: 1 Francisco Sanchez Saez (Spain) 5/5, 2 Alan Tate (Wandering Dragons) 4, 3 Craig Pritchett (Dunbar) 3½.

Challengers: 1 Jim O'Neil 4½, 2-4 Richard Kynoch, Ewan Taylor (all Wandering Dragons, Edinburgh), James Montgomery (Hamilton) 4.

Major: 1 Simon Bate (Civil Service) 4½, 2-4 Sam Coates (Oban), Chihon Ley, Peter Knak (both Edinburgh University) 4.

Minor: 1 David Craig (Hamilton) 5, 2-6 Derek Coope (Oban), Julien Papillon (Govanhill), Tilak Ittigi (Prestwick), Kartike Sharan, Jainill Vadalia (both Glasgow) 4.

Now White drums up a strong attack. 18...♜c8! was better, and if 19 h4 ♜h8 or even 19...♜fe8 20 h5 h6 21 ♜d2 ♜d4.

19 h4! ♜xa6 20 h5 ♜ab4?

Allowing White to lodge a fish bone in the black king's throat. 20...h6! 21 ♜xh6+ gxh6



FRODSHAM – The Frodsham Congress took place, as per usual, at the start of February (31 January – 2 February).

Open: 1 Aditya Munshi (West Nottingham), Chris Doran (Chester) 4/5, 3-4 Oliver Jackson (Cheshire), Bob Newton (Rochdale) 3½.

Major: 1-4 Barry Groves, Steven Potter (both St Helens), Richard Clissold (Winwick), Niamh Bridgeman (Morecombe) 4.

Minor: 1-2 Thisumi Jayawarna (Heywood), Jonas Schult (Germany) 4½, 3-4 Jon Reese (Runcorn), Khalid Khokhar (Northenden) 4.

HARROGATE – Jonah Willow drew with Danny Gormally en route to claiming the £500 first prize at the Harrogate 4NCL Congress (17-19 January), although the rising star was slightly fortunate that Peter Wells didn't quite have enough time to convert a queen against Max Turner's two pieces in the final round.

Open: 1 Jonah Willow (Nottingham) 4½/5, 2-4 Danny Gormally (Alnwick), Peter Wells (Swindon), Max Turner (Berwick-upon-Tweed) 4.

Major: 1-2 Jude Samarasinge (Crystal Palace), Marc Obi (Bedford) 4½, 3 Oliver Graham (Worksop) 4.

Minor: 1-2 Bruce Oliver (Beverley), Noel Bousted (Gosforth) 4½, 3-4 Daniel Dufton (Keighley), Vivien Webster (Halifax) 4.

J.Willow-J.Burnett Harrogate 2020



22 ♜d8+! ♛xd8 23 ♜xf7+ ♔g8 24 ♜xd8
1-0

HASTINGS – Lithuanian IM Antanas Zapolskis triumphed when the Caplin Hastings International closed, as per tradition, with a weekender (3-5 January).

Open: 1 Antanas Zapolskis (London) 4½/5, 2 Tanmay Chopra (Harrow) 4, 3-5 Sylvian Eche (Hammersmith), Francis Rayner (Hastings), Savin Dias (Barnet) 3½.

Intermediate: 1 Alexander van Hoof (Leicester) 5, 2 Matthew Masani (Guildford) 4, 3-7 Brendan O'Gorman (Coulson), Andrew Mata (Tonbridge), Anthony Roberts (Wallasey), Aron Saunders (Downend), Bhramav Rajesh (Chelmsford) 3½.

Under-130: 1-2 Ken Alexander (East Budleigh), Manmay Chopra (Harrow) 4½, 3-5 Jeff Fleischer (Croydon), Paul O'Brien (Worthing), Terence Greenaway (Torquay) 4.



Jonah Willow was slightly fortunate to finish sole first in Harrogate, but the Nottingham teenager will surely be an IM before too long.

LONDON – Lorenzo Lucchi (Lewisham) emerged victorious at the latest Hampstead Under-2200 Congress (18-19 January), his 4½/5 a half point more than Julius Schwartz (Inverness), Stephen Prior (Grantham) and Peter Finn (Wycombe) could score. 9-year-old Max Pert (Billericay) won the Under-1900, also with 4½/5, with Dylan Mize (UCL) and Jeremy Brockes (Hampstead) back on 4, while the Under-1700 saw a five-way tie for first on 4/5 between Tiu Loog (Hanham), Tom Schrade (USA), Alex Brett (Wimbledon), Lukasz Zarzycki (Queen Mary) and Avyukt Dasgupta (Watford). Meanwhile Bogdan Lalic (Hastings) proved too strong at the Muswell Hill Rapidplay on January 21st, with the Major being won by Colin Gentile (Muswell Hill) and the Minor by Frank Usher (Dulwich).

James Holland triumphed at the 5th Kingston Rapidplay on January 25th.

Open: 1 James Holland (Surbiton) 5/6, 2-3 Michael Healey, Nishchal Thatte (both Coulson) 4½.

Major: 1 Oliver Finnegan (Loughton) 5½, 2-3 Oz Ozan (Turkey), Wole Maraiyesa (London) 5.

Minor: 1 Jack Moss (London) 6, 2 Wiktor Piechocinski (Poland) 5.

Last month we promised the full results for the London Chess Classic (30 November – 8 December). It once again concluded with an extremely strong Super Blitz, in which Gawain Jones won an Armageddon encounter in the final against Tigran Gharmanian to pocket the £2,000 top prize.

FIDE Open: 1-2 Rameshbabu Praggnanandhaa (IND), Anton Smirnov (AUS) 7½/9, 3-6 Aravindh Chitambaram (IND), Jules Moussard, Sebastian Maze (both FRA), Martin Percivaldi (DEN) 7, 7-13 Sahaj Grover (IND), Martin Petrov (BUL), Danny Gormally (Alnwick), Mark Hebden (Leicester), Ezra Kirk

(London), Alexander Cherniaev (Hackney), Vaishali Rameshbabu (IND) 6½.

Weekend Open: 1 Steven Jones (Basingstoke) 4½/5, 2 Colin Menzies (Athenaeum) 4, 3-12 Vladimir Petrov (BUL), Jovica Radovanovic (Sandhurst), Terry Chapman (Cavendish), John Merriman (Orpington), Israel Shrentzel (ISR), Thomas Bonn (Hammersmith), Agoston Mihalik (South Birmingham), Juan Manuel Garcia Almaguer (MEX), Lorenzo Lucchi (Lewisham), David Roberts (Bracknell) 3½.

Weekend Under-2050: 1 Harry Li (LSE) 5, 2 Tim Rogers (Hackney) 4½, 3-4 Eldar Alizada (Cumnor), Tony Stewart (Surbiton) 4.

Weekend Under-1825: 1-2 Georgi Aleksiev (BUL), Kane Toh (Cambridge) 4½, 3-6 Cem Ozturan (TUR), Sehyuk Cheon (London), Tashika Arora (Oxford), Kristina Solovieva (Barnet) 4.

Weekend Under-1600: 1 Adrian Santos Ruiz (MEX) 5, 2 Gursharanjit Gill (Southall) 4½, 3-11 Samuel Ward-Riggs, Jorge Apaza (both Battersea), Tony Bynnersley (West London), Lakshan Siddharth (Basildon), Teymour Harandi (Barnet), Manmay Chopra (Harrow), Frank Gillespie (Beckenham), Luiz Ricardo Bissoto, Alexander Iskauskas (both London) 4.

Weekday Under-2050: 1 Benedict Keohane (London) 4½, 2-4 Raymond Boger (NOR), Tim Rogers (Hackney), Peter Wood (Lewisham) 4.

Weekday Under-1750: 1-3 Anurag Singh Chauhan (GER), Julian Llewellyn (Kings Head), Marcel Neo Han Sheng (SGP) 4½.

English Open Women & Girls Rapid Championship: 1 Madara Orlovska (Crystal Palace) 6/7, 2-5 Sheila Jackson (Liverpool), Petra Nunn (Chertsey), Rasa Norinkevičiute (Hastings), Anum Sheikh (Ilford) 5½.

The famous London Junior Championships also took place in December, at the University of Westminster's Harrow Campus (14-15 and 28-30 December)

Under-8: 1 Billy Fellowes (Coventry) 7/7, 2-3 Emils Steiners (Coulson), George Zhao (Barnet) 6; Leading Girl: Seha Konara (Crownborough) 5½.

Under-10: 1 Max Pert (Billericay) 6½, 2 Alexey Lapidus (Richmond) 6, 3-10 Billy Fellowes (Coventry; Leading Under-9), Theo Khouri, Aayush Dewangan, Soham Kumar (all Maidenhead), Yifan Luo (Petts Wood), Ethan B Li (London), Jintian Guo (Wey Valley), Alfred Soulier (Wimbledon) 5½; Leading Girl: Dhriti Anand (Edgware) 4½.

Under-12: 1 Andrey Pichugov (Barnet; also Leading Under-11) 8/9, 2-3 Luca Buanne (Battersea), Kenneth Hobson (Cowley) 7; Leading Girl: Eugenia Karas (Edgware) 6½.

Under-14: 1-4 Anum Sheikh (Ilford; also Leading Girl), Aayan Ismail Mohammed (Newham), Jacob Yoon (Ealing), Jason Lv (Wigston; Leading Under-13) 5/6.

Under-16: 1 Jacob Yoon (Ealing) 6, 2 Jason Covey (Hendon) 4½, 3-5 Alex Barlov (Richmond), Shahjahon Saidmurodov (Newham), Julia Volovich (Cambridge; Leading Girl) 4.

FIDE-rated Open: 1 Tanmay Chopra

(Harrow; Leading Under-21 and Under-18) 5/6, 2 Junhao Xian (Glasgow) 4½, 3-9 Nicholas Tavoularis (Middlesbrough), Nazir Rizvi (Coulsdon), Vishnu Kirupakaran (Harrow), Chirag Hosdurga (Bristol), Thomas Bonn (Hammersmith), Federico Rocco (Hendon), Haran Rasalingam (Dulwich) 4.

NEWRY – Supported by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, the Ulster Rapidplay Championships took place on February 1st at the Sticky Fingers Arts Centre in Newry. Danny Roberts (Civil Service) claimed the title, his 5/6 half a point more than Stephen Scannell (Ballynafeigh) could muster, while Pat McKillen (Muldoons) won the Intermediate with 5½/6, Aaron Wafflart (Strand) and Vincent O'Brien (Ballynafeigh) sharing second half a point in arrears.

PERTH – FM Murad Abdulla dominated the Perth Congress, held at the city's Salutation Hotel.

Open: 1 Murad Abdulla (Aberdeen) 5/5, 2-5 Andrew Green (Edinburgh), Daniel Abrahams (Canada), Duncan Campbell (Oban), Theodoros Vasiliadis (Bon Accord) 4.

Major: 1 Stephen Robinson (Ardrossan) 4½, 2-3 Andrew Sutherland (Perth), Callum Robertson (Dunbar) 4.

Minor: 1-2 David Cubitt (Edinburgh), Lawrence Freel (Hamilton) 4½, 3-4 Kartike Sharan (Glasgow), Ananth Subramanium (Aberdeen) 3½.

STOCKPORT – There were plenty of draws in a hard-fought top section of the popular Stockport Rapidplay on January 26th, which was held at the town's Masonic Guildhall.

Open: 1-2 Paul Macklin (Chorlton), Joshua Pink 4½/6, 3-4 Adam Ashton (3Cs), Robert Shaw (Cheddleton) 4.

Major: 1 Sam Davies (Southport) 5½, 2 Daniel Sheppard (Stockport) 4½, 3-5 John Hall (Alwoodley), Damian McCarthy (Culcheth), Chris Vassiliou (Chorlton) 4.

Intermediate: 1 Sam Parry (Cheddleton) 6, 2-3 Raven Morrello (Chorlton), Philip Cattermole (Macclesfield) 5.

Minor: 1 Dawn Supatan (Ashton) 5½, 2-5 Dale Bax (Chester), Neil Jackson, Alannah Ashton (both 3Cs), Talakalukoppa Amarnath (Chesterfield) 5.

TELFORD – IM Joseph McPhillips played the Swiss Gambit to perfection, drawing with Thomas Sygnowski in round 2 ahead of defeating Ameet Ghasi in the final round to bag the £1,000 first prize at the Shropshire Congress (3-5 January).

Open: 1 Joseph McPhillips (Bolton) 4½/5, 2 Marcus Harvey (Witney) 4, 3-7 Jeremy Fallowfield (Shirley), Stephen Gordon (London), Ameet Ghasi, Henrik Stepanyan, Thomas Sygnowski (all Sutton Coldfield) 3½.

Major: 1-4 Graham Ashcroft (Preston), Robert Clegg (Huddersfield), Tim Lane (South Birmingham), David Stephenson (Hull) 4.



Bath University student Joseph McPhillips is another name to keep an eye out for and defeated Ameet Ghasi to triumph in Telford.

Intermediate: 1-2 Chris Fraser (West Bridgford), Alan Woollaston (South Birmingham) 4½, 3-4 Peter Mellor (Liverpool), George Viszokai (Maddocks) 4.

Minor: 1 Oliver Davies (Manchester) 5/5, 2-3 Dillon Duke (Herefordshire), Dylan Whitney (Newcastle-under-Lyme) 4.

TORQUAY – The Livermead House Hotel played host to the Simon Bartlett Memorial Congress (24-26 January).

Open: 1 Keith Arkell (Paignton) 4/5, 2-4 Alan Punnett (Guildford), Jonathan Underwood (Seaton), Graham Bolt (Exeter) 3½.

Major: 1-3 Yasser Tello (Wimbledon), Brian Gosling (East Budleigh), George Lekoudis (Hastings) 4.

Intermediate: 1 Robert Wilby (Plymouth) 4½, 2 Paul O'Brien (Worthing) 4, 3-7 Dinah Norman (Wokingham), Amanda Jones (Salisbury), Eddie Fierek (Gloucester), Gregor Fotheringham (Tiverton), Piotr Ruszelak (Torquay) 3.

Minor: 1-2 Alan Stonebridge (Wellington), Lana Boztas (Coulsdon), 3-4 John MacDonald (Kings Head), Steven Cawser (Brixham) 3½.

The Trends in Chess Openings

The top twenty openings as played by International Masters and Grandmasters in January

1	=	Reti Opening	237 games
2	↑	Queen's Gambit Decl.	124 games
3	↑	1 d4 ♜f6 sidelines	118 games
4	↓	Caro-Kann Defence	111 games
5	=	King's Indian Defence	110 games
6	↑	Sicilian Najdorf	96 games
7	↑	Sicilian, 2 ♜f3 d6 sidelines	84 games
8	↑	Slav Defence	83 games
9	↑	Ruy Lopez Berlin Def.	76 games
10	=	Nimzo-Indian Defence	73 games
11	↑	Catalan Opening	72 games
12	↓	Sicilian, 2 ♜f3 sidelines	71 games
13	↓	English, 1...e5	70 games
14	↓	English, 1...c5	69 games
15	↑	English, 1...e6	63 games
16	↓	English, 1...♜f6	58 games
17	↑	Grünfeld Def., Classical	48 games
18	↑	Sicilian Kan	47 games
19	↓	1 d4 d5 sidelines	47 games
20	↓	Sicilian, Closed var.	46 games

2,880 games played between 1-31 January where both players were rated over 2400 Elo

Source: TWIC. Compiled by HIARCS 14.



In association with
HIARCS Chess Explorer - hiarcs.com
and The Week in Chess -- theweekinchess.com



Solutions

to Find the Winning Moves (pages 26-28)

1) Anwan-Goodwin

1... $\mathbb{Q}h2+$ 0-1 It's mate down the h-file after 2 $\mathbb{Q}xh2 \mathbb{Q}xf2+$.

2) Whitehead-Dixon

1 $\mathbb{Q}xd5!$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}gxf3$ won a decisive amount of material.

3) Bucci-McEvoy

1... $\mathbb{Q}d5!$ (1... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ also works) 2 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $d3!$ 0-1 White must give up his bishop.

4) Mamedyarov-Abdusattorov

1 $\mathbb{Q}xh5!$ $gjh5$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}xh5+$ 0-1 Mate follows after 3... $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 4 $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$.

5) Mork-Houska

Black spotted a back-rank tactic: **1... $e4!$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 0-1**

6) Strugnell-Jagdhuber

1 $\mathbb{Q}xf8+$! $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ (or 2... $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ 4 $\mathbb{Q}f7!$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}xg7+$! $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}e8+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}xf8#$) 3 $\mathbb{Q}e8+$ 0-1

7) Firouzja-Inarkiev

White went on to win after **1 $\mathbb{Q}d6!$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ (1... $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ also picks up an exchange) 2 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}a8$.**

8) Stepanyan-Mason

1 $\mathbb{Q}b6!$ 1-0 By no means the only winning move, but by far the cleanest in view of 1... $\mathbb{Q}xb6?$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}h8#$.

9) Bodnaruk-Gaponenko

Instead of 1 $\mathbb{Q}b3?$, 1 $\mathbb{Q}f5!$ would have won, and if 1... $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}xe7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}xd3$, thereby leaving both black rooks en prise.

10) Howell-Jones

1 $a5!$ (fixing the weakness; instead, 1 $\mathbb{Q}b7?$ $\mathbb{Q}g3$ threatened 2... $h4$ in the game and after 2 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ $a5!$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}a6$ $\mathbb{Q}d2$ White had to resign) 1... $\mathbb{Q}g3$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ (Black's last enabled him to meet 2 $\mathbb{Q}e1+?$ with 2... $\mathbb{Q}f2$, but now White is fast enough) 2... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ (or 2... $h4$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}xh4+$ $\mathbb{Q}xh4$ 4 $\mathbb{Q}b7$) 3 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 4 $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ $h4$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ $h3$ 7 $a6$ $h2$ 8 $a7$ $h1\mathbb{Q}+$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}b8$ and the draw becomes clear.

11) Robson-Hill

After 1 $a3?$ $a5!$ White was unable to save the game: 2 $b4$ $axb4$ 3 $axb4$ $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 4 $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}c3$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}b3?$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}g1$ 12 $h3$ $e3??$ (never forget to involve your most important piece in the endgame; 12... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ is an easy win, and if 13 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}d4+$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}f2$ or 13 $\mathbb{Q}b4+$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 14 $c5$ $\mathbb{Q}e3$) 13 $\mathbb{Q}e1??$ (13 $\mathbb{Q}b4+$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}c3!$ would

have drawn) 13... $\mathbb{Q}h2$ 0-1,

However, with **1 $\mathbb{Q}xc5!$ $\mathbb{Q}bc5$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}b4!$** White would have forced 2... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ and drawn trivially after **3 $b5$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 4 $a4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 5 $a5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}e3$.**

12) Jackson-Hoffmann

1 $g5!$ (1 $\mathbb{Q}xc3?$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 2 $g5$ $\mathbb{Q}e5!$ 3 $g6$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 4 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ is only a draw) 1... $\mathbb{Q}hxg5$ 2 $h6$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 3 $e5+$! $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 1-0 White will queen first after 4 $e6$.

13) Carlsen-Aronian

1 $e5!$ was a powerful breakthrough and after **1... $\mathbb{Q}h7$ (1... $\mathbb{Q}xe5?$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ wins a piece in view of 2... $\mathbb{Q}xc5?$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}d8+!$, while 1... $\mathbb{Q}fd7$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $f6$ 4 $exf6$ $exf6$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ is even positionally lost, Black having far too many weaknesses all over the board) 2 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}xe7+!$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 4 $\mathbb{Q}exd6$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 5 $f4$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 6 $d7$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}dx8\mathbb{Q}+$ $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}f3$** White went on to convert the extra exchange.

14) Head-Haria

1... $\mathbb{Q}xg3!$ (1... $\mathbb{Q}f2?$ is also quite effective, emphasising White's rather weak light squares) 2 $\mathbb{Q}hxg3$ (or 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ followed by ... $\mathbb{Q}f6-g6+$ with a huge advantage for Black) 2... $\mathbb{Q}h1+$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ (threatening a big check on e4) 4 $\mathbb{Q}f3?$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}g4+$ 0-1 Mate follows on f2.

15) Moussard-Ghamramian

1 $\mathbb{Q}xh7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}h3+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}xg7!$ (the classic double bishop sacrifice, and if 3... $\mathbb{Q}xg7?$ 4 $\mathbb{Q}g4+$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}g5#$) 3... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 4 $\mathbb{Q}h5$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}h7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}xf8+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ won significant material and while retaining a powerful initiative.

16) Gormally-Grieve

1... $\mathbb{Q}c5!$ (a strong and only winning plan; suddenly 2... $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ is a large threat) 2 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}a2+$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5+$ 4 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}a2$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}d5+$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}a2$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}c1!$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ $\mathbb{Q}c4#$ 0-1

17) Kanyamarala-Melaugh

1 $e5!$ (1 $\mathbb{Q}c2?$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2!$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ $c3$ 4 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ is highly promising for Black) 1... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ (1... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ wins due to White's battery on the long diagonal, as does 1... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ $\mathbb{Q}xe1+$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}xe1$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ 4 $\mathbb{Q}e6$) 2 $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ (if 2... $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$) 3 $\mathbb{Q}xe8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe8$ 4 $\mathbb{Q}e6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}xf6!$ 1-0 Completing some fine power play in style, since, of course, 5... $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}xf6#$ is a neat mate.

18) Lopez Martinez-Real de Azua

1... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 4 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ left

Black unable to win, the players shaking hands after 4... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}c4$. However, as shown by the American GM Robert Hungaski, the active **1... $\mathbb{Q}f4!$** would have won, and if **2 $b6$** (or 2 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ followed by bringing the king to c5 or if 3 $b6$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 4 $b7$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ again) **2... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 3 $b7$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 4 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$.**

19) Ding Liren-Vachier-Lagrange

The players repeated moves in the game (1 $\mathbb{Q}a4+?$ $\mathbb{Q}f3$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}a3+$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ ½-½), but **1 $\mathbb{Q}b3!$** (or even 1 $\mathbb{Q}c3!$ $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}c4+$ $\mathbb{Q}f3$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$) **1... $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}b4+!$ $\mathbb{Q}f3$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ 4 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$** would have won in view of White's superior king, i.e. 4... $\mathbb{Q}h3$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ $g3$ 6 $f6$ $g2$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}h2$ 8 $f7$ $\mathbb{Q}a8$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ (Vigorito) and wins.

20) Ernst-Fier

Black's king escaped and he soon won after 1 $\mathbb{Q}h4+?$ $g5$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$, but **1 $\mathbb{Q}f5!$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$** (and not 1... $\mathbb{Q}xf5?$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}xf5#$, while 1... $\mathbb{Q}d2$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}xg6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}xg7+$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 4 $e5+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ leaves White easily active enough to force perpetual) **2 $\mathbb{Q}e6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}f5!$** would have forced a draw, as pointed out by Glenn Flear in his ChessPublishing column.

21) Giri-Carlsen

1... $a4!$ (leaving White with a protected passed pawn, but also the only way to win, as 1... $\mathbb{Q}xb4?$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 3 $b5!$ draws, and if 3... $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ 4 $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}g6$ when White is just in time) **2 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $h5!$** (another only and extremely strong move) **4 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $h4$** (5... $e4$ 6 $fxe4$ $g4$ also does the trick) **6 $b5$** (6 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $e4$ 7 $fxe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $g4$ forces a pawn home) **6... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}b3$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}a2$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $a3$ 0-1**

22) Dzagnidze-Lagno

1... $\mathbb{Q}fx4!$ (1... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ is also strong, but not quite so effective, or forcing) **2 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}d2$** (the defence White was relying on; 3 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ deals with both threats, but fails to 3... $\mathbb{Q}xd3$! 4 $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ $\mathbb{Q}f2+$) **3... $\mathbb{Q}xg3+!$** (the key follow-up) **4 $\mathbb{Q}g2$** (4 $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe1+$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}e3$ is crushing) and now after **4... $\mathbb{Q}c5!$** (or 4... $\mathbb{Q}b4!$) **5 $\mathbb{Q}xe8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe8$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}hg3$** (6 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}e2$ is hopeless for White, so tied up are her forces) **6... $\mathbb{Q}xd6$** Black's superior coordination, small material advantage and safer king would have added up to a decisive plus.

23) Mamedyarov-Bogner

After 1 $\mathbb{Q}d3?$ (1 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 4 $\mathbb{Q}c7$ $\mathbb{Q}a5+$ is also an easy draw) 1... $\mathbb{Q}e1$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 3 $a5$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 4 $a6$ $\mathbb{Q}f2$ Black was in time to hold, the player shaking hands after 5 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 6 $a7$ $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}xd6+$, but after **1 $\mathbb{Q}d4!$** White is just in time to win: **1... $\mathbb{Q}g7$** (or 1... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}b5$, and if 3... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 4 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ or 3... $\mathbb{Q}e1$ 4 $\mathbb{Q}b4$) 2 $\mathbb{Q}c3!$ $\mathbb{Q}e1$ 3 $a5$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 4 $a6$ $\mathbb{Q}f2+$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ followed by $\mathbb{Q}d5-b6$.

**24) Chigaev-Sarana**

In the game White failed to find the only way to win, play concluding: 1 ♜c5 ♜e2 2 ♜d5 ♜d3 3 ♜e5 ♜e2 4 ♜g6 ♜d3 5 ♜f5 ♜e2 6 ♜f4 ♜h5 7 ♜g4 ♜g6 8 ♜g5 ♜d3 9 ♜f6 ♜e2 10 ♜f4 ♜h5 11 ♜e3 ♜d1 12 ♜g6 ♜g4 13 ♜e4 ♜h5 14 ♜f2 ♜g4 15 ♜g3 ♜h5 16 ♜f4 ♜e2 17 ♜f5 ½-½. As pointed out by Michael Roiz, 1 ♜d5! was the key move, and if 1... ♜h7 2 ♜xc4 ♜h3 3 ♜d3+

4 ♜xh6 4 ♜c4 ♜g7 5 ♜c5. It may look like Black's king is in time here, but in fact he is quite lost: 5... ♜d7 (or 5... ♜f7 6 c6 ♜e7 7 ♜c5 ♜d8 8 ♜d6 ♜g4 9 c7+ ♜e8 10 ♜b5+ ♜f7 11 ♜d7) 6 ♜d5 ♜f7 7 ♜d6 ♜e8 (7... ♜a4 8 ♜e4 ♜f8 9 ♜c6 aims for a winning pawn ending and 9... ♜d1 10 ♜b5 ♜f3 11 ♜c7 ♜e7 12 ♜b6 ♜d8 13 ♜a6 followed by ♜b7 is hopeless for Black, as shown too by Roiz in his ChessPublishing

column) 8 ♜c7! ♜e7 9 ♜e4 leaves Black in zugzwang, Roiz's sample winning line running 9... ♜e8 (9... ♜g4 10 c6 ♜e6 11 ♜b8 ♜g4 12 c7 ♜d6 13 ♜b7 is very similar) 10 ♜c6 ♜h5 11 ♜b6 ♜g4 12 ♜b5 ♜f3 13 ♜a6 ♜e4 14 ♜b7 ♜f5 15 c6 ♜d6 16 c7 ♜e6 17 ♜a6 ♜f5 18 ♜b7 when 18... ♜c5 19 ♜b8 ♜b6 20 ♜c8 ♜d3 21 ♜e6 ♜a6 22 ♜d5! is a final and fatal zugzwang.

This Month's New Releases

Attacking with g2-g4

Dmitry Kryakvin, 288 pages

New in Chess

RRP £21.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £19.75**

To play g2-g4 is quite possibly the ultimate indication of a lack of inhibition in the attacking department. Everyone knows to push h2-h4 against a kingside fianchetto, but there is something special about the lunge of the g-pawn, especially as it can prove to be extremely effective even when White has castled on the kingside. Russian Grandmaster Kryakvin has produced an interesting and original work devoted to this famous lunge.

The book is in five parts. The first one looks at Botvinnik's heritage and then everything is arranged via opening, with chapters on the Dutch Defence, Queen's Gambit Declined, Nimzo-Indian Defence, Slav Defence, King's Indian Defence and Grünfeld Defence. Some of the early g-pawn advances appear to be much better than others. It is to be expected in various variations against the King's Indian Defence, but Murey's 1 d4 ♜f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♜c3 d5 4 g4 is unlikely to attract many adherents, because despite the initial shock value, it really isn't going to offer enough in return for the straightforward loss of a pawn.



If Black plays without prejudice and

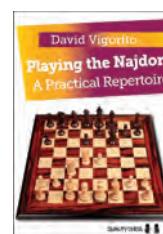
accepts the gift with 4... ♜xg4 then White will be pushed to find suitable compensation. The author likes 4... c5 too, calling it: "Possibly the strongest reaction."

Flights of fancy aside, the g2-g4 advance has proved to be a very effective part of the arsenals of great players, all of whom learned from Botvinnik. Readers will probably find various Kasparov games in the Nimzo-Indian and Queen's Gambit Declined spring to mind. The g4-baton was passed to Richard Rapport in recent times and he has brought the idea to the very early stages of the English Opening, with both 1 c4 c5 2 ♜c3 g6 3 g4? and 1 c4 e5 2 ♜c3 ♜f6 3 e3 ♜c6 4 g4? certain to cause even the most modern of eyebrows to rise.

Some of the prose will force the eyebrows north, too. In the notes to a game between Antoaneta Stefanova and Anna-Maja Kazarian (Riga, 2017), we learn that "The fairer sex is usually not prone to long vacillations and is used to resolving issues by immediately cutting the 'Gordian knot' by way of explaining the early advance of the g-pawn. One wonders what Reuben Fine would have made of such a statement.

Chess-wise, readers will find some very interesting ideas with which they may seek to surprise future opponents, although fans of the Grob Opening will be disappointed to read the rallying cry of "Go on, push that g2-pawn!", only to find the earliest possible case of g2-g4 has been neglected. Fans of the Dutch will, however, need to tighten up their defence against the oncoming g-storm.

Sean Marsh

**Playing the Najdorf:****A Practical Repertoire**

David Vigorito, 544 pages

Quality Chess

RRP £22.50 **SUBSCRIBERS £20.25**

At over 500 pages, U.S. IM David Vigorito's new work on the Najdorf is decidedly chunky. This opening has been popular at all levels for many years so there is a lot of theory. As a result, authors of books on the Najdorf have to make difficult decisions as to how much material to include and how to present it.

Vigorito, who has several other excellent books to his credit, sets out his approach in the very first paragraph, stating: "The purpose of this book is to teach you how to play the Najdorf. Of course a lot of theory will be discussed, but there will always come a point where we are 'out of book' – be it move 25 or move 10 – and then we have to understand what we are doing." However, that is only part of the story. Vigorito's book also aims at a comprehensive and deep coverage of all the important variations. Where other authors have focussed either on instruction and explanation, or on the depth of their analyses, Vigorito ambitiously seeks to provide both.

Najdorf players often have strong preferences and will want to know about the repertoire. Vigorito's repertoire is based on his considerable personal experience and this experience is evident in the quality of his explanation. However, as he himself acknowledges, some of his choices will be controversial.

The very sharpest variation, 6 ♜g5, is the most challenging for Najdorf players and also for the writer of a repertoire book. It is hardly possible to avoid tactical play and a lot of theory. Vigorito mentions 6... ♜bd7 but, atypically, he doesn't express a view on it. He discusses the various options at move seven and goes with 6... e6 7 f4 ♜e7, the old mainline, arguing that it leads to fewer irrational positions than the Poisoned Pawn variation, which he admits "may be ultimately best".

Recent developments have left his line sharper than it used to be and, in my opinion, any advantage in rationality over other lines is strictly relative. Much of the theory is not too difficult to understand, but the key line with 6 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ e6 7 f4 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 9 0-0-0 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 10 g4 b5 11 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 12 g5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 13 f5 0-0!? looks truly scary and would test anyone's powers of calculation. In one of several lines from this point, and having been warned that memorisation is necessary, we reach the following position (from Konguyel-Narayanan, Kolkata 2012):



Here Black must play 17... $\mathbb{Q}f6$!, of which Vigorito laconically remarks, "Not an easy move to spot". He goes on to say: "In the very first game to reach this position, our heroine erred with 17... $\mathbb{Q}e8$?? which is already a losing move: 18 fxe6 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 19 exf7+ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}c4+$ T.Kosintseva-Ju Wenjun, Ankara 2012. We have the advantage of hindsight."

The book goes on to work through the complications which continue for a few more moves. Best play results, not surprisingly, in a draw. Players of either colour may find themselves in trouble if they arrive in this sort of position and their memory fails them. Of course, it is easier to find the solution if you know that there is one, and if you're reasonably confident that you have not already erred. However, no one will feel comfortable playing this variation without some serious study.

Against 6 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ Vigorito advocates 6...e5, meeting 7 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 8 f3 with 8...h5. To my mind this line, played by many strong grandmasters and recommended by other authors (including the Djoknas brothers, in their 2019 book) is a natural choice. Even players who favour the ultra-sharp pawn storm line advocated by Pavlovic in his 2018 work might like to have this ...h5 line ready for days when they don't want a theory contest. The other variations after 6...e5 are also well covered including the positional 7 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ and the 7 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ lines without f2-f3.

Against 6 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ Vigorito recommends 6...e6 followed by 7... $\mathbb{Q}c6$, transposing to the Sozin variation of the Classical Sicilian. His main argument against 7...b5, the main line, is that it requires a lot of hardcore memorisation. As the author acknowledges, this will be controversial. 7... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ has a less

forcing character than 7...b5 so the battle unfolds a little more slowly, but, just as with 7...b5 and the alternative 7... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$, this line is sharp and requires a significant amount of study.

Against 6 h3 Vigorito advocates 6...e5, meeting 7 $\mathbb{Q}de2$ with 7...h5. This has become the main line against 6 h3 in recent years. 6...e5 is also his choice against 6 $\mathbb{Q}e2$, 6 g3 and 6 f4. Most of the nine(!) variations in the Odds and Ends chapter are also met with 6...e5.

At the end of the book the author provides an eight-page appendix on the anti-Sicilians from the perspective of a Najdorf player. The main focus here is on the Moscow variation with 3 $\mathbb{Q}b5+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$. I think the appendix is helpful, given that there are no recent books that cover this, but of course an in-depth discussion of what has become a very popular line would take much more than eight pages.

I remarked earlier that the author was highly ambitious in seeking to combine deep analyses with clear instruction. In my view he has succeeded fully. What we have is a book with the depth of the Grandmaster Repertoire books, but with much more detailed explanations.

Experienced Najdorf players might wonder how much of the instruction adds value for them. I think they'll be pleasantly surprised; as a recent Najdorf returnee, I found Vigorito's explanations to be really helpful. Conversely, a less experienced player might wonder whether the depth of analysis will be of value. I think that, even if he or she doesn't need much depth at the outset, the deep analysis in this book will turn out to be helpful. Very few readers start out by working through everything in an opening book; the rest of us read as deeply as we like and skim the other material, coming back to it later to build up our knowledge as we gain practical experience with the opening. At that point having comprehensive coverage is really valuable.

Vigorito's orientation towards helping the reader understand the opening pervades the book. He clearly explains the plans for both sides, as well as the tactics and positional points. He frequently explains which moves don't work as well as those that do, which is often the best way to understand what is going on and to get to grip with the various subtleties that make this opening so rich. He does not seek to make the material appear simpler than it really is, rather he guides the reader every step of the way.

It's tempting for an author to focus on the sharp lines and those that are currently fashionable with the top players. At less exalted levels, players of the white pieces often adopt less fashionable lines or stick with the lines they grew up with. In addition, because it is so difficult for White to obtain any advantage against the Najdorf, both sidelines and offbeat lines are often adopted to gain an element of surprise, even by grandmasters. One of the strengths of this book is its coverage of these lines, which can

easily sting the unprepared.

Like other Quality Chess publications, this book is very well produced and edited. There are plenty of diagrams, and the layout and typeface are first rate. It is easy to navigate via the contents page and the variation indices at the start of the chapters. However, there is no index of variations at the end nor is there an index of complete games, presumably due to a need to limit the number of pages.

I highly recommend this book. It provides great coverage of the Najdorf and excellent explanations. Even more importantly, at least to me, it is enjoyable to read and a pleasure to dip into. The size of the book might put some potential readers off but, if you want to understand this much-played opening, I don't think there is a better guide.

John Pigott



The Anand Files

Michiel Abeln, 512 pages
Quality Chess

RRP £27.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £25.19**

Subtitled 'The World Championship Story 2008-2012', this new book covers the tough title matches in which Anand defeated Kramnik (2008), Topalov (2010) and Gelfand (2012). It presents the inside story of the three contests.

"*The Anand Files* offers a detailed insight into the strategies Viswanathan Anand used to win three World Championship matches in a row. It takes the reader behind the scenes to show the inner workings of Team Anand, including pre-game planning and preparing opening novelties, some of which have yet to be used." Team Anand refers to the combined might of Peter Heine Nielsen, Rustam Kasimdzhanov, Surya Ganguly and Radek Wojtaszek, "Though other big names outside the core team also helped."

The book has had a long gestation period. The interviews with Team Anand started back in 2013 and the author, who "Had no experience in writing", clearly faced a major task in order to add a work of significance to the bursting libraries of books devoted to title matches. Clearly, this is not an 'instant' match book of the type made popular in the 1970s and 1980s (which, despite the trendy retro-continuity of criticism were actually very welcome works in the pre-Internet times), but rather a very well-structured and serious attempt to offer the best coverage of three very important matches.

It is a fast world and people tend to forget the past rather quickly. Is it necessary to study the games and ideas from 12 years ago? It depends on what one is seeking from

a chess book. The history of the world chess championship has long been a fascination to me and the contents of this book are extremely interesting. It is wonderful to be able to take the place of a fly on a historical wall to see just how Anand prepared for the three big matches. There is so much material here and plenty of original analysis, including much on the openings, which can definitely still be of use despite the passage of time.

How would one even start to prepare for a match with Kramnik? It is worth a thought. In 2008 he was so strong with the Berlin against the Ruy Lopez and with the Petroff standing by as a rock-solid alternative against 1 e4. Anand thus decided to play 1 d4 as his main white weapon; a major decision for a player who up until that point preferred 1 e4.

It is interesting to discover even world champions and their powerful teams can miss very simple ideas in their preparation. When Anand was ahead in his match against Kramnik, it was deemed the perfect time to wheel out the safest opening choices for White. This meant using the Exchange Slav, but Kramnik surprised his opponent with the move order 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♜f3 ♜f6 4 ♜c3 c6, completely ruling out Anand's intention of 1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 cxd5. It is not what we would expect from chess preparation at this level, but it shows the honesty of the material and will perhaps help club players sleep easier when they make mistakes in their pre-game preparation.

Naturally, being surprised by a transposition from a not exactly rare second move was far from the norm in the preparation game. The depths to which the team had to dive down to were, generally speaking, extraordinary. Sometimes one part of the repertoire would end up taking up a lot of time and energy. "Preparation was very tense, and the calmness from a couple of days ago had completely disappeared. Additional stress came from one specific problem in the Vienna Variation that kept nagging away at the team."



"The team looked at no fewer than 18(!) alternatives for Black after 15 ♜h1, not liking any of them! This level of detail in opening preparation can seem absurd, and rightly so. However, the team felt the intended repertoire was busted and couldn't ignore this." Indeed, Kramnik did play 15 ♜h1 against Anand two years later – and the

game was drawn after 37 moves.

We think of the effect a tense match has on the players, not necessarily the team. Yet Kasimdzhanov was initially reluctant to rejoin Team Anand for the match against Topalov, as it had taken him 9 months to recover from the Kramnik match. His period of recovery included "A total lack of energy" and even nightmares.

The prose shines a light on the depth of preparation that goes into the run-up to a big match – and even then the players are not immune to being hit with a big surprise. For example, in the first game of the 2012 match, Gelfand varied from his usual narrow opening repertoire and shocked Anand with the Grünfeld Defence in the first game of the match. He repeated the procedure when Anand switched to 1 e4 in game five, where "The Sveshnikov Sicilian was a huge shock for Anand and his team". Anand has his own surprises planned too. He was interested in playing the French Defence with ...dxe4 against Topalov, but despite being an 'ambidextrous' player, the challenger avoided 1 e4 during the match.

The book is greatly enhanced by a large number of colour photographs, which will be new to readers. It is typical of Quality Chess to go the extra mile with the production values; note the large page count and the hardcover production.

I certainly learned a lot about the three big matches from this volume and Anand himself calls it "The definitive book on those three matches", which is obviously a major endorsement. I would be very interested in reading a follow-up on the matches against Carlsen, but I suppose history is still written by the winners. Meanwhile, this book can be recommended to anyone wanting to take a much closer look at chess at the top.

Sean Marsh

A Nightmare for the Najdorf

Sergei Tiviakov, PC-DVD;

running time: 5 hours, 20 minutes

RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

We tend to associate the strong Dutch GM with 1 e4 c5 2 c3, but he has also played a great many games with 2 ♜c3, intending to wrong-foot many a Sicilian practitioner. Tiviakov's main goal is avoiding the Najdorf, so the bulk of material presented is devoted to 2..a6 3 ♜ge2 followed by 4 g3 and 2...d6 when he examines both 3 ♜ge2 and 3 f4. We wonder if a second volume will follow on 2...c6 3 ♜b5, which is sometimes known as the Tiviakov variation.

A Modern Approach against the Sicilian Vol.1: The Rossolimo Variation

Jan Werle, PC-DVD;

running time: 5 hours, 30 minutes

RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

Dutch GM Jan Werle reminded the chess world at Gibraltar that he is still a pretty decent player, despite having previously pursued a career in law. Now back working full time in the royal game, he recently visited

the ChessBase studio to record this DVD devoted to 1 e4 c5 2 ♜f3 ♜c6 3 ♜b5. Werle assumes little prior knowledge, making this product suitable for most levels of club player, with the repertoire centred around meeting 3...g6 with 4 0-0 ♜g7 5 c3.

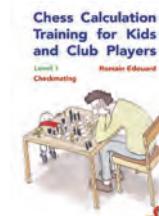
There's also a companion volume, *A Modern Approach against the Sicilian Vol.2: The Moscow Variation*, covering everything you need to know to play 1 e4 c5 2 ♜f3 d6 3 ♜b5+ in its eight(!) hours, while also retailing at £26.95 or £24.25 for Subscribers.



Bobby Fischer Rediscovered

Andrew Soltis, 312 pages, paperback
RRP £16.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £15.29**

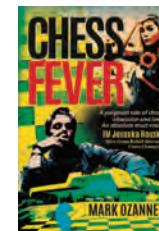
The enigmatic eleventh world champion remains a source of fascination, as well as one of the greatest players of all time. The 72-year-old Soltis initially covered a player and man he knew well back in *Bobby Fischer Rediscovered* and has now updated that 2003 work for publishers Batsford, revising his earlier analysis, while adding an additional six new games, as well as various new thoughts.



Chess Calculation Training for Kids and Club Players: Level 1 Checkmating

Romain Edouard, 152 pages, paperback
RRP £20.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £18.85**

The strong French Grandmaster presents 276 puzzles, while being fully aware of the need for his readers to have just the right thinking and calculation processes so that they can finish off opponents' exposed kings in their own games. Edouard has clearly put a lot of work into getting the structure of the work just right and it is certainly aimed at a lower level than his early puzzle-based works for Thinkers Publishing.



Chess Fever

Mark Ozanne, 168 pages, paperback
RRP £9.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £8.99**

We presented an extract from this gripping new novel in our February pages. Sam



Renshawe is giving up everything to follow his chess dream. It's 1990 and he's in Yugoslavia for the Chess Olympiad where he is playing the most important game of his career. However, events on the board cause him to reconsider his life, especially the recent split from his girlfriend caused by his chess addiction. How much is he willing to sacrifice to achieve his goals?

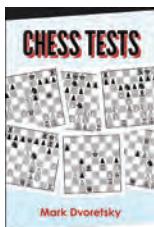


Chess Informant 142

Sahovski Informator, 350 pages, paperback
RRP £32.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £29.69**

The latest 'Informant' contains all the usual sections, not least the leading games and novelties, but also these days a number of columns, including 'Danny's Chess Diary' by Danny Gormally.

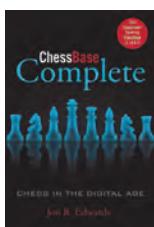
As ever, if you'd also like the material from *Chess Informant 142* in CD format, do just add £10.00 to your order (Subscribers – £9.00), while the CD alone is also available, for just £9.99 or £8.99 for Subscribers.



Chess Tests

Mark Dvoretsky, 208 pages, paperback
RRP £24.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £22.45**

The pen of the Mark Dvoretsky was rarely silent and it turns out that he had finished at least two works at the point of his untimely death in 2016. This new work is one of those and was intended to not only instruct, but also present the "tastiest examples" of various position types. Overall it's hard to disagree with Artur Yusupov's foreword that "*Chess Tests* offers chessplayers material of very high quality for working on various themes, from training combinative vision to techniques of realizing advantages."



ChessBase Complete: 2019 Supplement

Jon Edwards, 96 pages, paperback
RRP £14.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £13.45**

Back in 2014, *ChessBase Complete* was something of a hit for Russell Enterprises, explaining all about how to make the best use

of the many facets of the famous German database program. This supplement looks at the new features added by *ChessBase 13, 14 and 15*, not least all the cloud options, while once again providing a thorough guide to them.



ChessBase Magazine 193

ChessBase PC-DVD

RRP £17.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £16.15**

This issue of *CBM* is dated 'January/February 2020' and has a special focus on the final legs of the FIDE Grand Prix. Other highlights include Mihail Marin taking a look at some of Korchnoi's legendary endgame play in his favourite French Defence, as well as an update on the notorious Traxler variation of the Two Knights.



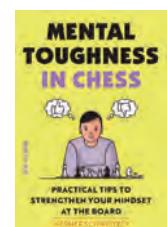
Mastering Pattern Recognition in the Opening

Robert Ris, PC-DVD;

running time: 6 hours, 40 minutes

RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

We all understand that the world's best are partly so strong due to their excellent pattern recognition, but how to go about improving yours? In his latest presentation for *ChessBase* the acclaimed Dutch coach examines 10 key elements of opening play in his bid to help, before following up with a large amount of interactive and further training material.



Mental Toughness in Chess

Werner Schweitzer, 144 pages, paperback

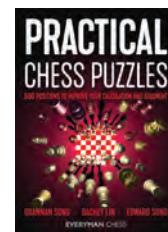
RRP £17.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £16.15**

Self-confidence is a key feature in many a strong chess player and, conversely, many suffer from a lack of it, which can, most commonly, lead to the repeated checking of variations one is calculating. The Austrian coach has studied mental strength in general and in this work, which will surely prove popular, addresses such issues as how to increase your concentration, how to handle disturbing thoughts and feelings during a game, and how to increase your self-confidence.

Old Wine in New Bottles

Mihail Marin, 380 pages, hardback
RRP £32.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £29.69**

This finely produced new work from *Chess Informant* features one of the world's leading chess analysts taking a detailed look at some of his favourite games from throughout chess history. Marin writes well, as ever, while aiming to leave his readers feeling "Enriched, technically and aesthetically".

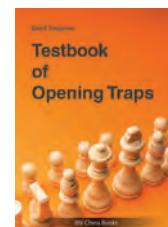


Practical Chess Puzzles

Guannan Song, Dachey Lin & Edward Song,
288 pages, paperback

RRP £17.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £16.19**

The names of the Canadian and American FM and IM authors may not be too well known in Europe, but are of the belief that far too many puzzle books take an overly simplistic approach. Their 600 positions have been chosen for being both realistic and instructive, while along the way a scoring system will help readers keep track of their progress.



Testbook of Opening Traps

Gerd Treppner, 124 pages, paperback
RRP £17.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £16.19**

Do you find yourself falling for opening traps too often or just enjoy trying to spring them? In this work written with the average club player squarely in mind, the late German FM presents 120 typical positions, in each of which the goal is to find the trap ready to be sprung.

The Chess GPS 2: Your Move – Your Choice

Sam Palatnik & Michael Khodarkovsky,
210 pages, paperback
RRP £22.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £20.65**

The highly experienced American authors believe that it can be a mistake to look for the 'best' or 'strongest' move in a position. Instead, they aim to help the reader feel confident in playing the move which looks the most important on the board, such as improving the worst-placed piece. Plenty of examples demonstrate how the search for a good move should be linked to trying to improve the situation of your pieces on the board, while revealing much about how grandmasters think.



Saunders on Chess

Follow me on Twitter: @johnchess or email: johns@chess.co.uk

Elsewhere in this issue you can find my tongue-in-cheek photo-reportage of the sideshows that go together with the serious chess to form the remarkable event that is the Gibraltar International Chess Festival. As I wrote there, one good way to enjoy #GibChess is to catch up with it later online – the work done by the on-site camera crew is really impressive – but nothing can quite match being there in person in order to soak up the atmosphere of the place. I've been to many tournaments which have a lot going for them, but #GibChess reaches the parts other tournaments don't reach.

When I got home after the festival, I took some time to look at the press and publicity output during its course. I don't get much of a chance to do that while I'm there because I'm too busy taking and processing photos, writing reports and disseminating press releases. The irony is that people watching at their leisure at home probably get to follow a lot more of the chessboard action than on-site press functionaries such as myself do, though we are working a few metres away from the action. What followers of the tournament don't get to see is all the hard work that goes on behind the scenes to deliver the various end products such as the live webcasting, interviews with players, etc.

I know I've written about this before, but it's worth emphasising that there has been a technological revolution in the presentation of chess online over the past decade. When I think back to the primitive technology available to provide live commentary only 10 years ago, I want to laugh out loud. Sometimes it consisted of a cheap camcorder mounted on a fixed tripod, and not much more besides. Arbiting teams ruled the roost at chess tournaments in those days and their primary priority was to run the tournament for the players, showing scant regard for information going to the outside world. Typically, a tournament director would be recruited from the ranks of chief arbiters. As head of the organisation he (not often she) would pay some attention to the publicity function in this role, but it might not be high on the list of priorities.

These days the arbiting function remains as important and vital as it has always been, but for tournaments that care as much about delivering a product to spectators and sponsors as to competitors, it now sits in the tournament management structure alongside the publicity function rather than on top of it. In the early days this hierarchical shift might have caused a few difficulties, but I sense that this restructuring process is now largely



Tania Sachdev interviewed the players, such as Veselin Topalov, post-game at Gibraltar.

over. The arbiting function has itself undergone technological and generational change in that time, with modern arbiters now having a better understanding of the goals of a tournament and more comfortable about their role in delivering them.

Most of the above applies to all modern tournaments, but Gibraltar still leads the way in some respects. The organisers are not afraid to recruit festival staff from outside the chess community, putting an emphasis on professional skills such as PR and social media rather than knowledge of the game. One of my roles in the past few years has been in briefing non-chess staff on technical aspects of the game, and I've always been impressed by the speed with which non-chess-savvy staff have been able to assimilate the necessary technical detail and get up to speed.

The last couple of years I've barely needed to do anything of this sort as Gibraltar has retained its staff from year to year. They are now fully integrated into chess and no longer need much assistance. It's also a two-way street: staff recruited from within the chess world are becoming far more professional in their work than was the case a few years back. It's a virtuous circle. I've written here before about my doubts as to whether chess playing has improved significantly in quality over the years, but one thing I'm utterly convinced about is that the quality of top-level tournament organisation and management has improved out of all recognition in the past couple of decades.

"It is amazing to think that not a single player aged in their 30s or 40s will be taking part." I'm quoting myself from the December 2019

CHESS (p.58), writing about the 2020 Wijk aan Zee tournament. (It was true when I wrote it, though 29-year-old Nepomniachtchi later withdrew from the field and was replaced by 32-year-old Nikita Vitiugov.) I was first told something about the 2020 Tata Steel line-up by the tournament director himself, Jeroen van den Berg, in the Isle of Man in October, and he was visibly excited about the youthful composition of the tournament. He only told me one specific name at the time (Firouzja), swearing me to secrecy.

Now it's my pleasure to congratulate Jeroen on his master stroke. Tata Steel richly delivered on the promise of its imaginative line-up, and I for one was riveted to my computer, following live play throughout until my Gib duties intervened (what a shame these two great tournaments overlap). The tournament showed emphatically that the all-play-all format is not dead; it just has to be handled creatively and imaginatively, leavening the superstars with a sprinkling of hungry young guns eager to grasp the exciting opportunity offered them.

Wijk also brought the best out of Fabiano Caruana who, after a relatively fallow year in 2019, seems to be coming to the boil again in the run-up to the Candidates' decider. It reminds me a little of the time just over 50 years ago when I first paid close attention to a world championship match whilst it was in progress. Spassky, held at bay by Petrosian in 1966, came back reinvigorated in 1969 and took the title. If I were Magnus Carlsen, my least favoured Candidates outcome would be the prospect of having to meet Caruana again.

CHESS & BRIDGE

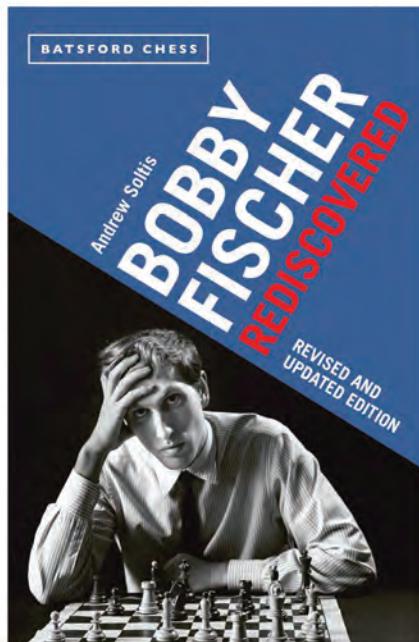
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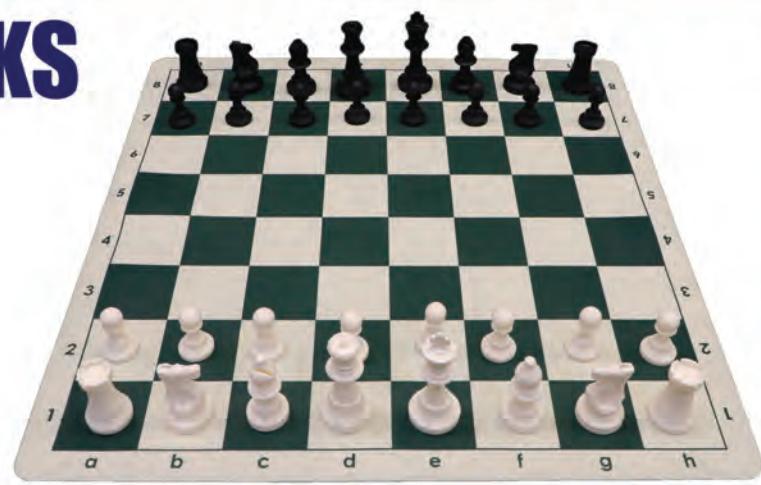
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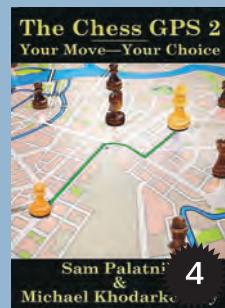
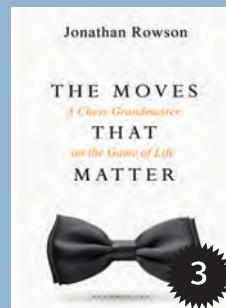
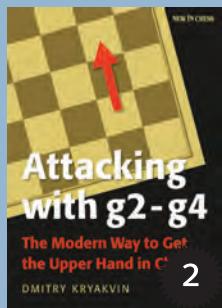
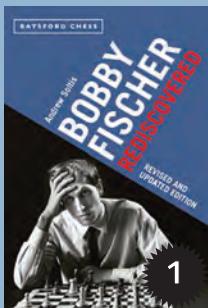


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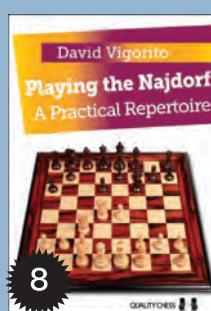
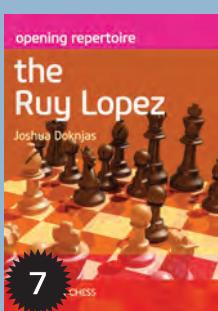
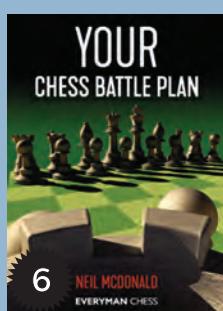
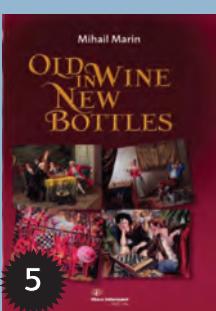
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Robert Ris; PC-DVD, running time: 6 hours, 40 minutes
RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

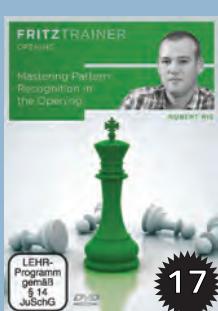
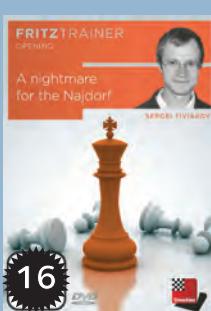
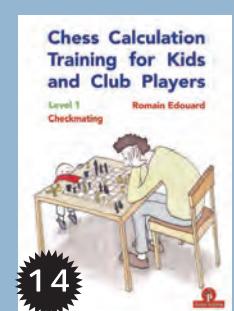
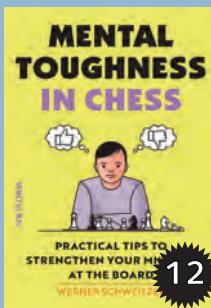
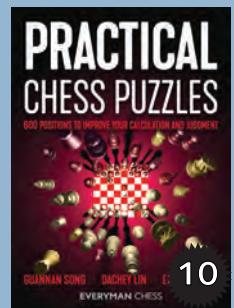
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