

CHESS

April 7th 2007

Michael Adams

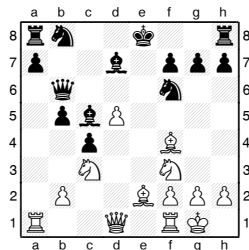


Lopez lives on in inaugural tournament

Recently a tournament was held in the birthplace of the Spanish priest Ruy Lopez, the inventor of the venerable opening of the same name. It is probably best that he is remembered for this and not for his more controversial suggestions, such as placing your opponent with the sun shining into his eyes. Perhaps it is as well that he lived several hundred years before the invention of Pocket Fritz.

This inaugural tournament was a great success for Gabriel Sargissian, a team-mate. He scored a massive 6.5 out of 7 against good quality opposition; his similarly large score in the chess Olympiad last year was instrumental in Armenia's victory.

There were not too many Ruy Lopez openings played during the tournament in Zafrá. Most of the games began 1.d2-d4, but there were many interesting battles and the balance was redressed with a rapidplay tournament afterwards where the Ruy Lopez was compulsory.



Ponomarev, R - Sokolov, I
Magistral Ruy Lopez Zafrá
2007

Ivan had snatched a hot pawn earlier in the game and now he is ready to castle his king into safety after 13.Nf3-e5 0-0. Instead Pono strikes with a far sighted sacrifice.

13.Be2xc4 **b5xc4**
14.Qd1-e2+ **Ke8-f8**
15.Nf3-e5

White has no immediate threats but it is very difficult for Black to complete development and coordinate his pieces.

15... **Bd7-f5**
Perhaps 15...Kf8-g8, sidling the king out of the danger zone, was safer.

16.Nc3-a4 **Qb6-b5**
17.Na4xc5 **Qb5xc5**

Exchanges normally help the defender but in the game it is Black's developed pieces that get swapped while his rooks continue to slumber.

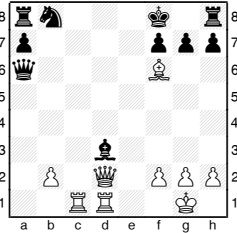
18.Ne5xc4 **Qc5-d4**
19.Bf4-e5 **Bf5-d3**
20.Qe2-d2 **Qd4xd5**

It was no better to capture the knight 20...Qd4xc4 21.Rf1-c1 Qc4-g4 22.h2-h3 Qg4-d7 23.Qd2xd3 gives White massive compensation.

21.Rf1-d1
Following an inspired sequence of moves Pono gets a bit too clever. He should have cashed in his chips with a large positional edge by 21.Be5xf6 g7xf6 22.Nc4-e3 Qd5-d7 23.Rf1-d1.

21... **Qd5xc4**
22.Ra1-c1 **Qc4-a6**
The strain of a difficult defence may explain why Ivan missed his chance to escape with 22...Qc4-e6 23.Qd2-b4+ Kf8-g8 24.Qb4-b7 h7-h6 when Black's king finds safety.

23.Be5xf6



23... **Nb8-d7**
The knight finally joins the fray as the bishop is untouchable: 23...g7xf6 24.Qd2-h6+ Kf8-g8 25.Rd1xd3 leads to mate.

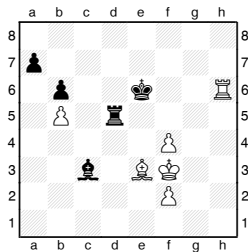
24.Bf6-c3 **Bd3-b5**
25.Qd2-g5 **Nd7-f6**
26.Qg5-c5+ **Kf8-g8**
27.Bc3xf6 **h7-h6**

The bishop leads a charmed life as it is immune from capture for the second time on the f6 square. Both 27...g7xf6 28.Rc1-c3 and 27...Qa6xf6 28.Qc5-c8+ are decisive.

28.Bf6-c3 **Ra8-e8**
29.Rd1-d6 **Qa6-b7**
30.Qc5-f5 **Qb7-e7**

The final blunder dropping a piece but after 30...a7-a6 31.Qf5-g4 Rh8-h7 32.Rc1-e1 the miserably placed rook on h7 leaves black with a lot of problems.

31.Qf5xb5
1-0



Sokolov, I - Sasikiran, K
Magistral Ruy Lopez Zafrá
2007

Here is an instructive endgame from the last round where White's persistence nets him an important half point.

51... **Bc3-f6**

Self pinning is always a dangerous business but here the results are particularly disastrous. After 51...Ke6-f7 52.Rh6-h7+ Kf7-e6 53.Rh7xa7 Rd5xb5 Black should hold the endgame.

52.Kf3-e4 **Rd5xb5**
53.Be3-d4 **Rb5-f5**
54.f2-f3

A very unpleasant zugzwang: none of the major pieces can move without material loss so black advances his 'a' pawn.

54... **a7-a5**
55.Bd4xb6 **a5-a4**
56.Bb6-d4 **a4-a3**
57.Bd4-e5 **a3-a2**
58.Be5-a1

This precise retreat finally runs Black out of pass moves so he resigned, as after 58...Ke6-f7 59.Ke4xf5 Bf6xa1 60.Rh6-a6 White wins the pawn and the game.

1-0

CHESS

April 14th 2007

Michael Adams

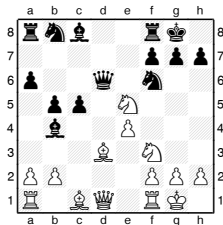


Writing is on the wall for old ways of settling scores

In recent tournaments, the traditional score sheets have been replaced by the new hi-tech MonRoi recording system. This is an electronic device that enables you to score your moves using a touch pad. Considering the quality of the handwriting of many chess players, this idea definitely has potential. Sadly for technophobes like myself it is quite fiddly and, particularly when you are under some pressure from the clock, it is easy to enter the wrong move. In my first experience with it, I had resorted to pen and paper by round two.

One other feature of the MonRoi system is that the moves can be fed directly to the internet without the need for a sensitive board. This attribute, which is achieved by making the entire playing hall a wi-fi zone, is distinctly double edged and has led to concerns about cheating.

On the plus side, it has enabled me to bring you some games from the Foxwoods Open in Connecticut, which I think is the only tournament in the world to be held on a Native American reservation. The overall winner after a tie-break was Gata Kamsky who seems to have regained all his playing strength after his eight-year hiatus from the game while attending law school.



**Vavrak, P - Harper, W
Foxwoods 2007**

In this game Black is swept away by a deluge of neat combinations.

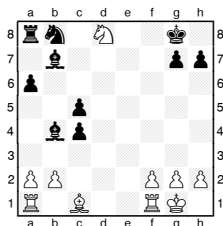
- 13. Ne5xf7 Rf8xf7
- 14. e4-e5 Qd6-c6
- 15. e5xf6

The first tactic was quite straightforward but the exchange of knights has highlighted White's lead in development and if now 15...g7xf6 16. Bc1-h6 Black's king is looking vulnerable. Instead he tries to give up material to activate his pieces.

- 15... Bc8-b7
- 16. Bd3-c4

Not an easy move to see, this clever riposte wins material after a lengthy forcing sequence. Black was hoping for 16. f6xg7 Nb8-d7 when he has mobilised his forces with decent play for the pawn.

- 16... b5xc4
- After 16...Qc6xf6 17. Bc4xf7+ Qf6xf7 18. Nf3-g5 White has the initiative as well as the exchange.
- 17. Qd1-d8+ Rf7-f8
- 18. f6-f7+ Kg8xf7
- 19. Nf3-e5+ Kf7-g8
- 20. Ne5xc6 Rf8xd8
- 21. Nc6xd8



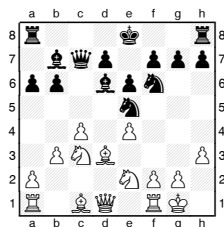
Now the dust has settled Black's only hope is to corner the elusive steed.

- 21... Bb7-e4
- 22. a2-a3 Bb4-a5
- 23. Nd8-e6 Nb8-d7
- 24. Rf1-d1 Ra8-e8
- 25. Ne6xg7

The knight is still immune from capture.

- 25... Re8-e7
- 26. Ng7-h5 Be4-c2
- Hoping to target White's weak back rank but a mass liquidation leads to an easily won ending.
- 27. Bc1-g5 Bc2xd1
- 28. Ra1xd1 Re7-e1+
- Keeping material on with 28... Re7-e5 was the last practical chance.

- 29. Rd1xe1 Ba5xe1
- 30. Nh5-f6+ Nd7xf6
- 31. Bg5xf6 Be1-d2
- 32. Bf6-c3 Bd2-c1
- 33. g2-g3
- 1-0



**Vertkin, S - Stripunsky, A
Foxwoods 2007**

Black has established an active position from the opening, and White should tread carefully with 12. Bc1-e3 or 12. Bd3-c2. Instead he expands prematurely.

- 12. f2-f4 Bd6c5+
- 13. Kg1-h2
- It looks logical to keep the king out of the firing line of the bishop on b7 but 13. Kg1-h1 Ne5xd3 14. Qd1xd3 was essential.
- 13... Ne5xd3
- 14. Qd1xd3 Qc7-c6
- 15. Ne2-g3 h7-h5

Containing a double threat, White defends against the first part of 16...h5-h4.

- 16. Rf1-e1
- But allows the even stronger second idea behind Black's last move. Although material loss was unavoidable he could have gone down swinging with the randomizer 16. Nc3-d5.
- 16... Nf6-g4+
- 17. h3xg4
- Sadly forced as now the rook has moved to the 'e' line 17. Kh2-h1 Ng4-f2+ waves goodbye to the White queen.
- 17... h5xg4+
- 18. Ng3-h5 Bc5-f2
- A deadly final touch.
- 0-1

CHESS

April 21st 2007

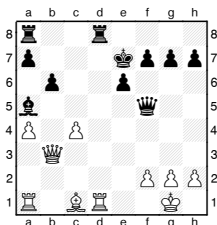
Michael Adams



Dazzled by fireworks of World Cup hopefuls

Germany's expertise in staging big events is not limited to football. The European Individual Championships in Dresden, which has acted as a dry run for the Chess Olympiad to be held in the same venue next year, have been a great success for the organisers. The event attracted a massive entry of 402 players in the main section alone. It is no surprise that with a large number of qualifying spots for the World Cup on offer there were a lot of very strong players at the head of the field producing some spectacular games.

23... **Re8-e2**
24.**Re1xe2** **Qd7-h3**
25.**Nc4-e3**
White still seems to have things under control as 25...Nd5xe3 26.f2xe3 defends laterally.
25... **Rf8-f4**
But this hammer blow forced immediate resignation; having given up one rook Black places the other en prise. Capturing with 26.g3xf4 Bd6xf4 leads to mate and if instead 26.Qd3xa6 Black executes his threat by 26... Rf4-h4 when White is defenceless, the checks quickly peter out after 27.Qa6-a8+ Kg8-f7 28.Qa8-b7+ Kf7-g6.



Tkachiev, V - Potkin, V
Dresden 2007

White has plenty of compensation for the pawn with Black's unhappily placed king and poorly coordinated pieces, but how Tkachiev executes the attack with great energy is very impressive.

20.**Bc1-a3+** **Ke7-f6**
Black's king goes wandering as 20...Ke7-e8 21.c4-c5 is rather awkward.
21.**Ba3-d6** **g7-g5**
22.**Qb3-b2+** **Kf6-g6**
23.**Ra1-a3**
The rook occupies the square vacated by the bishop and gets ready to swing over to the kingside.

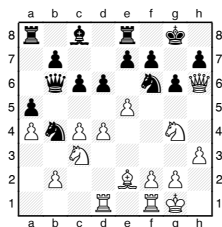
23... **g5-g4**
It looks natural to cover f3 with this move but 23...e6-e5 was a better way to resist.

24.**h2-h3**
Making luft and probing the weak king position.
24... **h7-h5**
25.**Ra3-g3** **f7-f6**
If 25...Qf5-g5 26.Qb2-e2 and one of the pawns drops off.
26.**h3xg4** **h5xg4**
27.**Rd1-d4** **Kg6-f7**
28.**c4-c5**

Consolidating the bishop and avoiding tricks such as 28.Rd4-f4 Qf5xf4 29.Bd6xf4 Rd8-d1+ 30.Kg1-h2 Ra8-h8+.

28... **Rd8-g8**
29.**Rd4-f4** **Qf5-g6**
30.**Rg3xg4** **Qg6-h6**
31.**Qb2-b5**
Unexpectedly the fatal blow is dealt on the opposite side of the board as white's queen slides round the back.

31... **Ra8-d8**
The bishop on a5 has had little influence on the game and just as the queen's rook comes into play White ended the game by:
32.**Qb5-c6**
1-0



Dreev, A - Berg, K
Dresden 2007

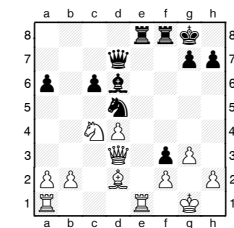
Black's opening has not worked well. Although he has an impregnable hold on the b4 square, there are dark clouds looming in the centre and on the kingside.

19... **d6xe5**
It was essential to play 19... Nf6xg4 20.h3xg4 d6-d5 (Not 20...d6xe5 21.Nc3-e4 When the knight heads for the g5 square), unappetising though it is.

20.**Ng4xf6+**
Black had relied on 20.d4xe5 Nf6xg4 21.h3xg4 Qb6-c5 slowing down the White attack.

20... **e7xf6**
21.**Nc3-e4** **Nb4-d5**
Unfortunately necessary as 21... Re8-e6 22.Be2-g4 f6-f5 23.Ne4-g5 is fairly catastrophic.

22.**c4xd5** **c6xd5**
23.**Ne4-c3** **e5xd4**
24.**Nc3xd5** **Qb6-d6**
25.**Be2-f3**
As there is no compensation for the piece.
1-0



Naiditsch, A - Gustafsson, J
Dresden 2007

In this game Naiditsch has taken on the Marshall attack, the black pawn on f3 looks threatening, but the immediate 23...Qd7-h3 24.Qd3-f1 leads nowhere. Instead Gustafsson comes up with a brilliant combination, first he interferes with the queen's diagonal.

CHESS

April 28th 2007

Michael Adams

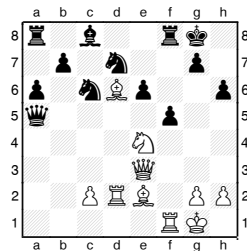


Living legend enjoys a quiet comeback in Spain

Living legend Anatoly Karpov hasn't played much competitive chess of late, but the organisers of the Villa de Cañada de Calatrava Chess Festival managed to entice him to make a rare appearance over the board. This event is a welcome addition to the many interesting rapid events held in Spain. With a substantial first prize of €22,000 it attracted a very strong field that included seven players with ratings of more than 2,700.

Unusually, the games were 25 minutes for all moves without increment. It has become very unfashionable for players to take responsibility for managing their own time, although I am not quite sure why.

Karpov completed the event undefeated although he made too many draws to challenge for a top placing. Alexei Shirov was a popular winner on tie-breaks as he has led the Spanish team in many Olympiads and European Championships.



Shirov, A - Guliyev, N
Rapid Canada de Calatrava 2007

The players are contesting a mind-bendingly complicated line in the poisoned pawn variation of the Najdorf. Shirov has given up material for a lead in development, and as we join the game Black has returned an exchange to try to consolidate his position.

22.Bd6xf8 **Nd7xf8**

The counterintuitive 22...Kg8xf8 was an interesting possibility with the idea of 23.Ne4-d6 Qa5-c5 swapping queens. White would keep the initiative going with 23.Kg1-h1.

23.Ne4-d6 **b7-b5**

This is much too loosening; 23...Qa5-e5 was better.

24.Be2-f3 **Bc8-d7**

25.Nd6xf5
Simple but effective.

25... **e6xf5**

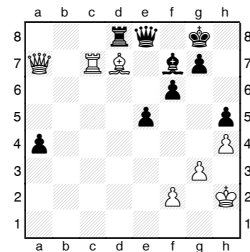
26.Rd2xd7 **Nf8xd7**

27.Bf3xc6 **Ra8-d8**

If 27...Qa5-b6 28.Bc6-d5+ Kg8-h7 29.Qe3xb6 Nd7xb6 30.Bd5xa8 Nb6xa8 31.Rf1xf5 leads to a technically winning ending

28.Bc6xd7 and only a handful of moves out of theory, Black resigned as 28...Rd8xd7 29.Qe3-e8+ wins a rook.

1-0



Gritsak, O - Bacrot, E
Rapid Canada de Calatrava 2007

Bacrot had been bossing this game most of the way, but now White's activity provides good compensation for the pawn.

52... **Qe8-e7**

Safer was 52...Qe8-f8.

53.Bd7xa4 **Qe7-e6**

54.Qa7-b7

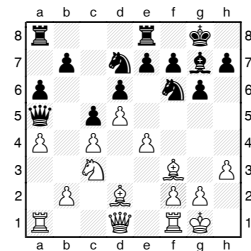
The players trade inaccuracies as the clock ticks on. After the precise 54.Rc7-b7 Rd8-f8 55.Ba4-b3 Qe6xb3 56.Rb7xb3 Bf7xb3 a draw is inevitable.

54... **Qe6-d5**

The final blunder after the

correct 54...Qe6-f5 Black seizes the initiative again. Now after: **55.Rc7xf7** Black resigned as 55...Qd5xf7 56.Ba4-b3 is a deadly skewer.

1-0



Ivanchuk, V - Gritsak, O
Rapid Canada de Calatrava 2007

15... **e7-e6**
Very careless, Black should have withdrawn the lady by 15...Qa5-c7.

16.Nc3-b5 **Qa5-b6**

17.a4-a5

Now Gritsak is unable to maintain contact with the d6 pawn. He fights on bravely but the result is never in doubt.

17... **Qb6-d8**

18.Nb5xd6 **Re8-e7**

19.Nd6xb7 **Qd8-b8**

20.d5-d6 **Re7-e8**

Black's only hope is that he might corner the knight in return for the squandered pawns but Ivanchuk quickly disabuses him of the idea.

21.b2-b4 **Qb8xb7**

If 21...c5xb4 22.Ra1-b1 Qb8xb7 23.e4-e5 Nf6-e4 24.Qd1-e2 and White regains the piece with compound interest.

22.e4-e5 **Nf6-e4**

23.Qd1-c2 **f7-f5**

24.e5xf6 **Nd7xf6**

25.b4xc5 **Qb7-c6**

26.Bd2-e3

White could win material immediately with 26.Ra1-e1 but Ivanchuk is happy that the unbreakable pin enables him to cash in at leisure.

26... **Ra8-c8**

27.Ra1-b1 **Re8-d8**

28.Rb1-b6 **Qc6-a8**

29.Rf1-b1 **e6-e5**

30.Rb6-b7

Ironically, now Ivanchuk closes the diagonal but after 30...Ne4xc5 31.Rb7xcg7+ the discovered attack is the sting in the tail.

1-0

CHESS

May 5th 2007

Michael Adams



Inspired mix at Malmo produces pleasing clash of styles

One brilliant play at a tournament sometimes leads to a domino effect and inspires the other players to a flurry of fireworks. However, the opposite can also occur, resulting in a rash of uneventful short draws and long turgid endings. It is hard to explain these phenomena but they often occur.

One theory is that the invitational strategy of the organisers is responsible for the entertainment quality of the games. This is a bit of an oversimplification, as deciding who to invite is more of an art than a science, but perhaps some lessons can be learnt from the Sigeman & Co event in Malmo, where the organisers seem to have played a blinder in this respect.

Their varied mix of players, which includes the current youngest grandmaster in the world, Parimarjan Negi, Topalov's closest confidante Ivan Cheparinov, venerable Dutch Kingpin Jan Timman, and several enterprising Scandinavian players has created a pleasing clash of styles to the relief of newspaper columnists everywhere.

Berg, E - Hermansson, E Sigeman & Co Malmo 2007

In a sharp Sicilian Black plays a heavy price for a moment of imprecision.

10... **Bf8-e7**

A natural developing move, but Black should have challenged the centralised knight by 10... Qd8-b6.

11.e4-e5 **Nf6-g8**

This retreat looks strange but it turns out the natural continuations: 11...d6xe5 12.f4xe5 Nf6-d5 13.Nd4xe6 f7xe6 14.Qe2-h5+; 11...Nf6-d5 12.Nd4xe6 f7xe6 13.e5xd6 Be7xg5 14.Qe2xe6+ both allow very dangerous sacrifices.

12.Nd4-f5

There were also some strong safe options but this is more in the spirit of the position.

12... **e6xf5**
13.e5xd6 **f7-f6**
14.Bd3xf5 **Ke8-f8**

After 14...f6xg5 15.0-0-0 Bb7-c6 16.f4xg5 Black is severely pinned down, but this had to be tried as now White gets a material advantage as well as the initiative.

15.0-0-0 **f6xg5**
16.d6xe7+ **Qd8xe7**
17.Rd1xd7 **Qe7xe2**
18.Nc3xe2 **Bb7xg2**
19.Rh1-g1 **Ng8-e7**
20.Rg1xg2

20.Rd7xe7 Kf8xe7 21.Rg1xg2 also wins material but White prefers to keep on attacking.

20... **Ne7xf5**
21.Rg2xg5 **g7-g6**
22.Ne2-g3 **Nf5xg3**
23.h2xg3 **Ra8-e8**
24.Rd7-a7 **Re8-e1+**
25.Kc1-d2 **Re1-e7**
26.Ra7xa6

And White soon converted the ending with two extra pawns into victory.

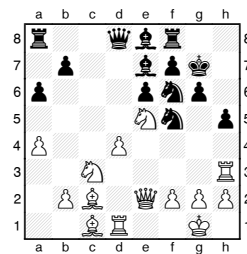
Cheparinov, I - Hermansson, E Malmo 2007

After his Nadjorf was mauled in the game above, Hermansson, who didn't enjoy the best of luck in this event, had switched to the solid Berlin variation for this game. Unfortunately, again he is struggling to complete his development and after the blunder

24... **Bf6-b2**

25.Nc5-a4

Black resigned as surprisingly 25...Bb2xa3 26.Na4-b6 Ra8-a7 27.Bc7-b8 wins a whole rook. Better was 24...b7-b5.



Cheparinov, I - Negi, P Malmo 2007

Cheparinov has patiently manoeuvred his pieces so they have the Black king in their crosshairs.

25... **Nf6-d7**
26.d4-d5

This central breakthrough is the straw that breaks the camel's back.

26... **Nd7xe5**
27.d5xe6

A crushing intermezzo, 27.Qe2xe5+ Be7-f6 is not so powerful

27... **Nf5-d4**

Self-pinning doesn't look too desirable but 27...Qd8-b8 28.Bc2xf5 is devastating.

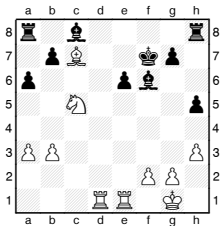
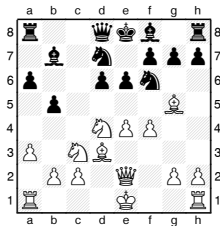
28.Qe2xe5+ **Be7-f6**
29.Qe5-e3 **Rf8-h8**
30.Nc3-e4 **Nd4xc2**

A better try was 30...Ra8-c8 hoping for some back-rank inspired swindle.

31.Rd1xd8 **Ra8xd8**
32.Qe3-f3 **Bf6-e5**
33.Bc1-g5 **Be8xa4**

A merciful release from the continuing suffering after 33... Nc2-d4 34.Bg5-f6+.

34.Qf3xf7 mate



CHESS

May 12th 2007

Michael Adams

Guildford team triumphs in Four Nations Chess League

The conclusion of the Four Nations Chess League (4NCL) recently threw up an unusual result. First place was taken by Guildford 1, followed by Guildford 2. Most foreign leagues have rules allowing only one team from each club per division and they find our rules rather eccentric.

The 4NCL has shown an admirable reluctance to get too bound up in red tape and, until fairly recently, allowed players to swap teams mid-season, as in the instance where Ingrid Lauterbach of Barbican played the same opponent twice in successive weekends. It does have to be said that two teams from the same club heading the same division is not very desirable; some might have found Australia's domination of the Cricket World Cup a bit one-sided, but at least they didn't play Australia B in the final. Not an easy problem for the league's organisers to resolve.

For the moment, many congratulations to Guildford and their sponsor Nigel Povah, although he may be concerned about the club's strength in depth, as their third team only managed a mid-table finish in the second division.

Kosten, A - Rudd, J
4NCL 2006-07

6..... c5xb4
Opening lines on the queenside is very dangerous 6...d7-d6 was more sensible.

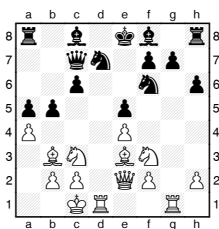
7.a3xb4 Nc6xb4
8.Bc1-a3 Nb4-c6
It was time to grovel with 8...Bg7-f8

9.Nc3-b5
This position is assessed as catastrophic for Black in Kosten's book *The Dynamic English*; in the game it works out rather less well than that.

9... Ng8-e7
Now 9...Bg7-f8 was essential.
10.Ba3-d6 0-0

Black has a choice between dropping a rook with 10...a7-a6 11.Nb5-c7+ or allowing his queen to be trapped after
11.Bd6-c7 Qd8-e8
12.Nb5-d6

The colossal material advantage caused Black to resign a few moves later



Jones, G - Collins, S
4NCL 2006-07

13..... b5-b4
Allowing the queen access to the c4 square is unwise; better was 13...Bc8-a6

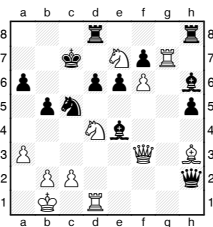
14.Qe2-c4
Another good possibility was 14.Bb3xf7+ Ke8xf7 15.Qe2-c4+ Kf7-e7 16.Nc3-d5+ Nf6xd5 17.e4xd5 with a massive attack for the piece.

14... Nd7-c5
The kingside collapses after 14...b4xc3 15.Qc4xf7+ Ke8-d8 16.Rg1xg7 Bf8xg7 17.Qf7xg7 when Black can't save both the rook and knight.

15.Be3xc5 Bc8-a6
16.Nc3-b5 c6xb5
17.a4xb5 Bf8xc5
18.Rg1xg7

A crushing breakthrough: the weak f7 point caves in along with the rest of Black's position. Black was counting on 18.b5xa6 0-0 when his king escapes to safety.

18... Bc5-e3+
19.f2xe3 Qc7xc4
20.Bb3xc4 Ba6-c8
21.Nf3xe5
1-0



Hunt, A - Gormally, D
4NCL 2006-07

Gormally was anticipating 25.Qf3-c3 Bh6xg7 26.f6xg7 Rh8-e8 when Black's extra material will tell. Instead a brilliant sacrifice

25.Rg7xf7
25... Kc7-b6

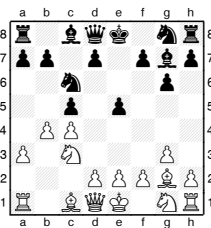
The queen can't be accepted immediately as 25...Be4xf3 26.Ne7-d5+ Kc7-c8 27.Rf7-c7+ Kc8-b8 28.Nd4-c6+ Kb8-a8 29.Nd5-b6 is a picturesque mate. However, Black could have played the stronger 25...Qh2xc2+ 26.Nd4xc2 Be4xf3 when there is no deadly discovered check and the position remains murky.

26.Qf3-c3
With the queens still on the board Black's king is too exposed.

26... Qh2-e5
27.a3-a4 Rd8-d7
If 27...Nc5xa4 White gives mate instantly with 28.Ne7-d5+ Be4xd5 29.Qc3-c7 mate

28.Ne7-g6
and Black resigned as after 28...Be4xg6 29.Rf7xd7 Nc5xd7 30.Qc3-c6+ the lonely king won't last long. If instead 28...Nc5xa4 29.Qc3-a3 and the rook on d7 drops off.

1-0



CHESS

May 19th 2007

Michael Adams

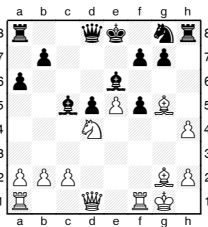


Square deal boost for Russian renaissance

The continuing renaissance of chess in Russia has been demonstrated recently by the very strong Russian Team League. This structure is popular with professionals as they play all nine games in a row, travelling only once and collecting more game fees.

Thumbing their noses at global carbon emission issues, most European leagues tend to play their games over several long weekends a season, two to four games each time, often utilising a bank holiday in the process. This benefits amateur players who don't necessarily want to lose holiday time to their chess ventures.

We start with a salutary lesson from the First League, which is actually the second division, in the dangers of pawn snatching.



Moiseenko, V - Kostin, A
Russian teams Sochi 2007

16.... Qd8-b6

Black has a sound game after 16... Ng8-e7 but he recklessly decides to grab the poisonous pawn on b2.

17.c2-c3
18.Kg1-h1
19.Nd4xf5

This opens even more lines towards his monarch but it is the only consistent continuation.

20.Qd1-a4+ Be6-d7

If 20...b7-b5 21.Qa4-b3 keeps the pressure on as 21...Be6xf5 22.Ra1-e1 Bf5-e4 23.Re1xe4 d5xe4 24.Qb3xf7mate is not possible.

21.Qa4-c2

21.Qa4-b3 was stronger with slim survival hopes for Black.

21... Bc5-b4

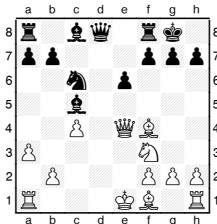
Black couldn't find the antidote. With 21...Bd7xf5 22.Qc2xc5 Ng8-f6 he could have completed development, and had good chances to emerge unscathed.

22.Ra1-d1

Now all the White pieces are pointed at the Black king and he is cut to pieces in the crossfire.

22... Ra8-c8
23.Qc2-b1 Bd7xf5
24.Rf1xf5 Qe5-e2
25.Bg2-f3 Qe2-b5
26.Rf5xd5 Qb5-b6
27.Qb1xb4

Black resigns as 27...Qb6xb4 28.Rd5-d8+ Rc8xd8 29.Rd1xd8 mate is a fitting end with Black's knight and rook still occupying their starting positions.



Gelfand, B - Bocharov, D
Russian Teams Sochi 2007

12.Ra1-d1

The natural 12.Bf1-d3 is well met by 12...f7-f5 13.Qe4-e2 e6-e5

Qb6xb2
Qb2xc3
Qc3xe5

14.Nf3xe5 Rf8-e8 with a powerful pin down the 'e', line so Boris finds a more imaginative idea.

12... Qd8-b6
13.b2-b4 Bc5xf2+
14.Ke1-e2

It is not easy to extricate the Black bishop.

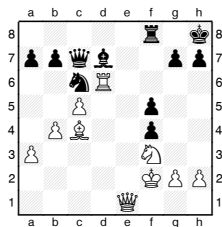
14... f7-f5
15.Qe4-c2 e6-e5
16.c4-c5 Qb6-c7

The sacrifice 16...Bf2xc5 17.b4xc5 Qb6-c7 giving up material to seize the initiative would have been an interesting practical try.

17.Ke2xf2 e5xf4
18.Bf1-c4+ Kg8-h8

White remains a pawn down, but there is a colossal difference in the scope of both armies.

19.Qc2-c3 Bc8-d7
20.Rh1-e1 Ra8-e8
21.Rd1-d6 Re8xe1
22.Qc3xe1



22... Rf8-f6

The difficulties facing Black are demonstrated by the fact that the natural 22...h7-h6 quickly leads to a mating net after 23.Qe1-c3 Kh8-h7 24.Nf3-g5+ h6xg5 25.Qc3-h3 mate.

23.Nf3-g5 h7-h6
24.Ng5-f7+ Kh8-h7
25.Rd6xf6 g7xf6
26.Qe1-d1

The queen steps sideways, menacing Qd1-h5.

26... Qc7-c8
27.Qd1-d6 Kh7-g6
28.b4-b5

and Black resigns as 28...Nc6-a5 29.Nf7-e5+ is catastrophic. 1-0

CHESS

May 26th 2007

Michael Adams

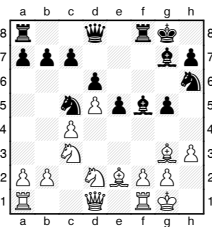


Big names pitch in at the M-Tel Masters

Organising a football match on the free day can be a high-risk strategy at a chess tournament. More than a few players have had to continue their event with a leg in plaster.

At the M-Tel Masters in Sofia there was a special reason for the players to take on PFC Levski in a six-a-side match as the current Bulgarian champions share M-Tel as sponsors. Levski were sporting opponents and managed to win only 6-4, which could have been 6-5 if the referee, Josef Vinatzer, CEO of M-Tel, had blown up just a few seconds later. He did award Chess United a slightly contentious penalty earlier in the match, however. Utilising the technicality that he is a strong chess player, CU sent on Kiprian Berbatov, cousin of Tottenham's star player, as a late substitute. He promptly scored— not bad for a 10-year-old.

A few days earlier the players were busy at the chess board:



Sasikiran, K - Topalov, V
MTel Sofia 2007

15... e5-e4

It's normally a good sign in the King's Indian when the dark

square bishop starts to dominate the board.

16.Nd2-b3
17.Nb3-d4
18.Nd4-c6
19.f2-f4

Opening the position doesn't work well; perhaps the immediate 19.Nc3-b5 made more sense.

19... Bf5-d7
20.Nc3-b5

Better was 20.Qd1-d2. Now Topalov grabs the initiative and pushes White off the board within a few moves.

20... Bd7xc6
21.d5xc6 Qf6xb2
22.Ra1-b1 Qb2xa2
23.Nb5xc7

It looks as if White has created some threats of his own but Veselin unleashes a powerful sequence of moves allowing no time to resist.

23... Nh6-f5
24.Bg3-f2 e4-e3
25.Bf2-e1 Nf5-d4

The knight swings into the centre, again with tempo and the White position is quickly overrun.

26.Nc7xa8 Nd4xe2+
27.Kg1-h2 Ne2xf4
28.Rf1xf4

If 28.Qd1-g4 Qa2xb1 wins on material.

28... g5xf4
29.Rb1xb6

Instead 29.c6-c7 f4-f3 30.Qd1xf3 Rf8xf3 31.c7-c8Q+ Rf3-f8 doesn't help.

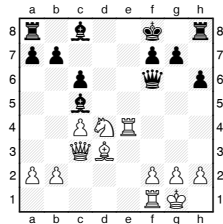
29... f4-f3
30.Qd1-d5+ Nc5-e6

Topalov is precise to the end 30...Kg8-h8 31.Qd5xf3 Rf8xf3 32.Rb6-b8+ Bg7-f8 33.c6-c7 would allow White to prolong the game a little.

31.Qd5xe6+ Kg8-h8
32.Qe6-g4 Bg7-e5+
33.Kh2-h1 f3-f2

It was possible to give mate immediately by 33...f3xg2+ 34.Qg4xg2 Rf8-f1+ 35.Qg2xf1 Qa2-h2 mate, but Veselin thought it was prettier to promote his 'f' pawn. The audience probably agreed as they gave the finish a spontaneous burst of applause.

0-1



Mamedyarov, S - Topalov, V
MTel Sofia 2007

16... a7-a5

Too ambitious. Black should scramble for an ending by 16... Bc5xd4 17.Re4xd4 c6-c5 18.Rd4-d5 Qf6xc3 19.b2xc3 Bc8-e6 20.Rd5xc5.

17.Rf1-e1 Bc8-d7
18.Re1-e3

White's heavy artillery is ominously massed.

18... Bc5-b4

It was better to slide the king out of the danger zone with 18... Kf8-g8

19.Qc3-c2 Qf6-d6
20.Re3-f3 h6-h5

Black had to block the c pawn with 20...Bb4-c5.

21.c4-c5

This sacrifice clears the c4 square and brings all White's pieces into the attack with devastating consequences.

21... Bb4xc5
22.Bd3-c4 f7-f6
23.Nd4-e6+ Bd7xe6
24.Re4xe6 Qd6-d7
25.Qc2-f5 Qd7-d4
26.Re6-e4 Qd4-d1+
27.Bc4-f1 Bc5-d6

Defending the bishop was a tougher defence but after 27... b7-b6 28.Rf3-d3 Qd1-c2 29.Rd3-d7 Bc5xf2+ 30.Kg1-h1 Qc2-b1 31.Re4-e8+ is an unpleasant sting in the tail, winning the Black queen.

28.Rf3-d3 Bd6xh2+
29.Kg1xh2 Qd1xf1
30.Rd3-d7

There is no way to prevent the White queen infiltrating and mating the Black king

1-0

CHESS

June 2nd 2007

Michael Adams



Delving into risky openers and offbeat strategies

Dangerous Weapons: The French by John Watson is the third in the new series of Everyman books containing high risk, high reward opening ideas. Throughout the text, icons alert you to a "Dangerous Weapon" (illustrated by a small picture of a cannon), a "Tricky Transposition", or "Beware" both of which seemed fairly self explanatory. There is also "Roll the Dice" which might seem better advice if you were playing backgammon but which indicates a variation that could also be referred to as a good punt.

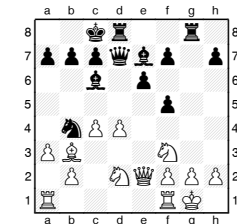
Watson is a highly regarded author with considerable knowledge of the French Defence. Indeed, his previous best seller *Play the French* was reprinted in three editions. His expertise has again enabled him to find many interesting ideas for players on both the White and Black side in an array of different variations with a considerable amount of fresh analysis. I was immediately struck by chapter seven, "Swearing in Church". Disappointingly, this is not portrayed pictorially and refers to the fact that, in the game below, Nimzowitsch considered Black's third move, blocking the c7-c5 advance, to be pretty rum. Of course, Watson shows that it is not as simple as that because Black's swift development compensates for the inability to challenge White's centre with pawn play.

Spelman, W - Stellwagen, D
Hoogeveen 2003

- | | |
|-----------|--------|
| 1.e2-e4 | e7-e6 |
| 2.d2-d4 | d7-d5 |
| 3.Nb1-c3 | Nb8-c6 |
| 4.Ng1-f3 | Ng8-f6 |
| 5.Bc1-g5 | Bf8-e7 |
| 6.Bf1-d3 | d5xe4 |
| 7.Nc3xe4 | Nc6-b4 |
| 8.O-O | Bc8-d7 |
| 9.Bg5xf6 | g7xf6 |
| 10.Bd3-c4 | Bd7-c6 |
| 11.Qd1-e2 | Qd8-d7 |
| 12.Bc4-b3 | |

It looks unnatural to capture with the pawn but the added central control is useful and the "g" line is put to good use.

- | | |
|-----------|--------|
| 15.a2-a3 | 0-0-0 |
| 12... | f6-f5 |
| 13.c2-c4 | Rh8-g8 |
| 14.Ne4-d2 | |
| 15.a2-a3 | |



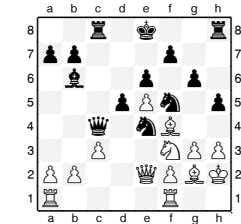
- | | |
|-----------|---------|
| 15.Rf1-d1 | Qd7xd4 |
| 16.Nf3xd4 | |
| 16... | Rg8xg2+ |
| 17.Kg1-h1 | Rg2-g1+ |

White resigned as it is mate in two after 18.Kh1xg1 Rd8-g8+ 19.Qe2-g4 Rg8xg4 0-1

Another new Everyman title is *Play the Caro Kann* by Jovanka Houska, the first book by England's only active professional female player. Drawing on her own experience on the Black side of the opening she has produced a well-researched repertoire book with a decent amount of original analysis. In most variations she has stuck with mainstream theory but there is an offbeat suggestion against the advanced variation. After 1. e2-e4 c7-c6 2.d2-d4 d7-

d5 3. e4-e5 Jovanka recommends 3...c6-c5. She must have a lot of faith in this as she has scored well with the more mainline 3...Bc8-f5 in her own games.

Here we pick up one of her games with the Caro Kann featured in chapter 11 of the book.



Chomet, P - Houska, J
French team championship 2005

Black has achieved the ideal Caro Kann structure with a secure pawn chain on the light squares and a nicely placed dark-squared bishop and two well-posted knights.

23.Qe2-c2
White had to play the precise 23.Qe2xc4 Rc8xc4 24.Nf3-d2 Ne4xd2 25.Bf4xd2, dampening the Black initiative.

23... h5-h4
24.Nf3-d2
Unfortunately, 24.g3-g4 is impossible due to 24...Ne4xf2 and the Bishop on f4 is hanging.

24... h4xg3+
25.f2xg3 Qc4-e2
Easy to miss and very powerful.

26.Qc2-a4+
If 26.Qc2-d1 Qe2xd1 27.Ra1xd1 Ne4-f2 28.Rd1-b1 (28.Rf1xf2 Bb6xf2 is best) 28...Nf2-g4+ 29.Kh2-h1 g6-g5 wins a piece.

26... Ke8-e7
An important move allowing the queen's rook access to the kingside

27.Nd2-f3
There is a snap mate after 27.Nd2xe4 Rh8xh3+ 28.Kh2xh3 Qe2-h5. White might as well have tried 27.Qa4-b4+ but after the accurate 27...Ke7-d7, keeping the rooks connected along the back rank, there is no escape.

27... Rh8xh3+
28.Kh2xh3 Rc8-h8+
29.Nf3-h4

29.Kh3-g4 Rh8-h4+ 30.g3xh4 Qe2xg2+ also leads to mate.

29... Nf5xh4
30.Qa4-b4+ Ke7-d8
White resigned because of 31.g3xh4 Rh8xh4+ 32.Kh3xh4 Qe2-h5 mate

CHESS

June 9th 2007

Michael Adams



The Doc is back with typically sparkling play

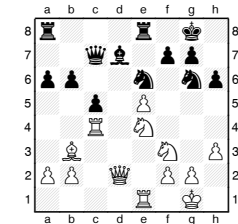
Chess players are not supposed to retire from playing. They should slave away over the board keeping Alzheimer's at bay. However, not many have the staying power of Viktor Korchnoi, who seems to have upped his playing schedule since he moved into his 70s.

The poor sponsorship situation for British chess has led to an above-average number of retirees from these shores who will be featuring occasionally in my columns.

John Nunn was one of the first to fully understand the problems facing professional chess in Britain, which he explained in his depressingly accurate article written in 1991, *The Decline of British Chess*. Although John doesn't play very often these days, the loss of his sparkling, attacking games is partly offset by his new day job, which helps keep high-quality releases for Gambit Books flying off the presses.

He has recently acquired the grandmaster title in problem solving to go with his over-the-board title. Having seen his friend and sponsor of the Melody Amber, Joop van Oosterom, win the World Chess Correspondence Championship in 2005, perhaps John might be tempted to try to add a third variety of GM title to his haul.

"The Doc" was actually sighted over the chess board relatively recently at another of van Oosterom's events. Although unsurprisingly a bit rusty, he rolled back the years to produce this attractive game:



Nunn, J - Smeets, J Amsterdam 2006

White clearly has a more active position and could continue with the simple 26.Ne4-d6 but the Doc characteristically heads directly for his opponent's king with a more violent and even stronger move

26.Ne4-f6+ **g7xf6**

Black seems to have a reasonable number of forces on the kingside but they turn out to be unable to cover the key squares. The knights on the third rank don't coordinate very well.

27... **f6-f5**

If 27...f6xe5 28.Rc4-g4 the rook swings over with decisive effect.

28.Nf3-h4 **Bd7-b5**

If Smeets reinforces his knight, White utilises the newly-opened light square diagonal with the forceful breakthrough 28...Ne6-f8 29.Nh4xg6 Nf8xg6 30.Rc4xc5 Qc7xc5 31.Qh6xg6+ Kg8-h8 32.Qg6-h6+ Kh8-g8 33.Re1-e3 and the final reserves enter the game with decisive effect.

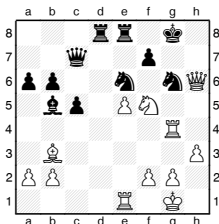
29.Nh4xf5

Regaining a pawn and inching closer to the Black king.

29... **Ra8-d8**

Black declines the material again as after 29...Bb5xc4 30.Bb3xc4 Ng6xe5 31.Re1-e4 Ra8-d8 32.Re4-h4 Rd8-d1+ 33.Bc4-f1 White's smaller force is irresistible.

30.Rc4-g4



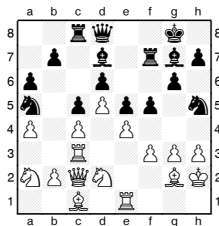
30... **c5-c4**
31.Bb3-c2 **Rd8-d5**

Black could have hung on a bit longer by blocking the bishop's diagonal with 31...Rd8-d3 but 32.h3-h4, bringing another unit into the attack, is crushing.

32.Rg4-h4

Black resigns as after the forced 32...Ng6xh4 33.Nf5-e7+ Qc7xe7 34.Qh6-h7+ Kg8-f8 35.Qh7-h8 is mate.

I played on the adjacent board to John in the first round of the Manila Olympiad. As I was grinding out an uninspired victory I glanced at the board next to me and saw something rather spectacular:



Hsu Li Yang - Nunn, J Manila Olympiad 1992

White's kingside looks a bit fragile but it takes a very imaginative idea to exploit this fully.

22... **Nh5xg3**

First a knight is given up to lure the White king forward.

23.Kh2xg3 **Qd8-h4+**

But this beautiful move is the real idea behind the sacrifice. It is worth a whole queen to strand the monarch behind enemy lines.

24.Kg3-h2

Rather unsportingly, White prefers to lose in a routine manner rather than be mated spectacularly after 24.Kg3xh4 f5-f4 when the escape route is cut off and White can only stave off execution for a few more moves by 25.Kh4-g5 h7-h6+ 26.Kg5xg6 Rf7-f5 27.h3-h4 Rc8-f8 and the king's march to the scaffold is concluded as, despite having almost his entire army remaining, there is no longer any way to prevent 28...Bd7-e8 mate

24... **Qh4xe1**

Black has decisively won material and the game is quickly wrapped up.

25.Nd2-f1 **f5xe4**
26.Nf1-g3 **e4xf3**
27.Bg2xf3 **Na5xc4**

0-1

CHESS

June 16th 2007

Michael Adams



I'll have to go back - my sheep is waiting

It is not often that you see a camel race at an opening ceremony. The FIDE president is not afraid of a bit of exaggeration, but when he described the curtain-raiser for the delayed Candidates Matches in Elista, south-west Russia, as unique it was hard to argue. Other attractions included demonstrations of eagle hunting, wrestling, local dancing and some rather irate looking bulls. Lamb is the staple dish so everyone was eager to see what the prize for "Shepherd of the Year" would be. Not many would have guessed it would be a 29in wide-screen TV - I hope they have electricity out on the steppes.

Gata Kamsky had been presented with a camel calf when he played Karpov here in 1996, which he elected not to take back to New York with him. This same camel, we are told, was produced again. For the drawing of colours for each match a pair of large wooden boxes was produced. As we each selected a box it was opened to reveal either a black or white sheep which was ours to take home, roast or visit when we were next in town, apparently.

My match got off to a good start when I got a bonus half point.

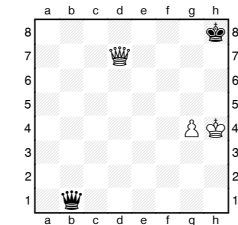
Shirov, A - Adams, M Candidates Elista 2007, Game 4

White had a promising looking possibility in 24.Bf4-d6 as if 24...Bf6-d4 25.Bd5xf7+ Kg8xf7 26.Bd6xc5 and White wins. However, the calm 24...g7-g6 keeps the myriad of pins in Black's favour as neither 25.Kf1-e2 Bf6-d4 26.Bd5xf7+ Kg8xf7 27.Bd6xc5 Rd8-e8+, or 25.Bd6xc5 Kg8-g7 work out for White. The simplest way to head towards a draw was 24.Bd5xf7+ Kg8xf7 25.Rd1-b1. Instead Alexei made a horrible blunder.

24.Bf4-e3 **Kg8-h8**
The simple king move wins the exchange and the game.

25.Bd5xf7 **Rd8xd1+**
26.Kf1-e2 **Rd1-d7**
27.Bf7-b3 **Bf6-d4**
And White resigned once the time control had been reached.

My luck didn't last and I went down 2.5-0.5 in the tiebreak. As I didn't last long I got to watch the conclusion of the most interesting first-round match, Carlsen-Aronian. The Norwegian needed to win to keep the match alive but Levon had steadily reduced the material into a drawn ending and there didn't seem to be much danger with few pieces remaining.

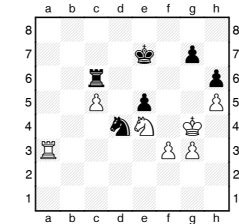


Carlsen, M - Aronian, L Candidates Elista 2007, Game 10

81... **Qb1-h1+**
A more precise way to draw was 81...Qb1-g6 82.Qd7-d8+ Kh8-g7 83.Qd8-g5 Kg7-h7 as the exchange of queens leads to a draw.

82.Kh4-g5 **Qh1-c1+**
One check too many. The best move was the centralising 82...Qh1-e4. Amazingly, Black is now lost.

83.Kg5-g6 **Qc1-b1+**
84.Qd7-f5
Black resigned as 84...Qb1xf5+ 85.g4xf5 or 84...Qb1-b6+ 85.Qf5-f6+ Qb6xf6+ 86.Kg6xf6 are both winning king and pawn endings. After this setback it was impressive how Aronian regained his composure to triumph in the next two blitz games.



Aronian, L - Carlsen, M Candidates Elista 2007, Game 11

White should win this ending but after 43...Rc6-c7 it would not be easy with little time on the clock.

43... **Nd4-e6**
Instead Carlsen tried to set a trap.

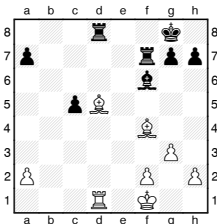
44.Kg4-f5
Now Magnus thought he had tricked his opponent.

44... **Ne6xc5**
45.Ra3-c3
However, it turns out Aronian had seen further, as the intended 45...Nc5-e6 46.Rc3xc6 Ne6-d4+ 47.Kf5xe5 Nd4xc6+ with good chances to make a draw, is refuted by the sidestep 47.Kf5-g6. After 47...Nd4xc6 48.Kg6xg7 the kingside pawns and the game are easily mopped up. An easy error to make in your calculations, as the Black rook was covering this square one move earlier.

45... **g7-g6+**
This desperate intermezzo doesn't help.

46.h5xg6 **Nc5-e6**
47.Rc3xc6 **Ne6-d4+**
48.Kf5-g4 **Nd4xc6**
49.Kg4-h5
The 'g' pawn can't be stopped.

49..... **Ke7-f8**
50.Kh5xh6 **Nc6-e7**
51.Kh6-h7
1-0



CHESS

June 23rd 2007

Michael Adams



Players survive the stamina-sapping Elista schedule

For the first time back-to-back Candidates Matches took place in Elista. This meant that the players had little time to rest and prepare before the second round. As some matches ended earlier than others, successful players had rest periods ranging from a five-day mini-break to just two days for those whose matches were decided in a tie-break. Despite the flaws in the system, the four qualifiers all maintained a very high level of chess over a stamina-sapping period.

Boxers are fond of saying that they don't get paid for overtime and Peter Leko seemed to adopt the same approach to his two matches, needing only nine games, one above the minimum possible, to progress. Here we see an example of his subtle style as he slowly destroys the foundations of Bareev's solid position with precise probing. Then a timely tactical sequence decides the game.

18.d4-d5 e6-e5
Bareev decides to take the safe option but he is never able to recover from this positional concession. It is understandable that he was reluctant to open the game as the rook on h8 could become a bystander but Black had to try: 18...e6xd5 19.c4xd5 Re8xe1+ 20.Ra1xe1 Qc7-c8 21.Bd3-f5 Qc8-d8

19.Bd2-c3 g7-g6
20.Qh3-h4 Kg8-g7
21.Nf3-d2 Qc7-d8
22.Bd3-c2
The bishop switches to the a4 square disrupting Black's coordination.

22... Bb7-c8
23.Bc2-a4 g6-g5
23...Re8-e7 24.f2-f4 is decisive, and 23...Bc8-d7 24.Ba4xd7 Nf6xd7 25.Qh4xd8 Re8xd8 26.f2-f4 gives White a pleasant edge, but this creates more weaknesses.

24.Qh4-g3 Nf6-h5
Instead, if 24...Re8-e7 25.Re1xe5 Bd6xe5 26.Bc3xe5, the dark-squared bishop is worth at least a rook so Bareev continues to harass the White queen.

25.Qg3-f3 g5-g4
26.Qf3-d1 Re8-e7
27.h2-h3
Peter then seizes this opportunity to further expose Black's disorganised pawn structure.

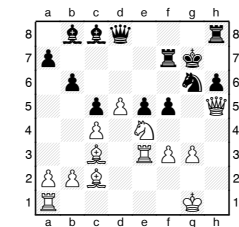
27.. Nh5-f6
28.h3xg4 Bc8xg4
29.f2-f3 Bg4-c8
30.Re1-e3
Targeting the e5 pawn which is not easy to defend.

30... Nf6-h5
31.Qd1-e1 f7-f6
Shoring up the centre but creating another hole.

32.Qe1-h4 Nf5-f4
33.Nd2-e4 Re7-f7
34.g2-g3 Nf4-g6
35.Qh4-h5 Bd6-b8
36.Ba4-c2

The bishop has done its job and reroutes to a more enticing diagonal.

36... f6-f5



37.f3-f4
A long period of manoeuvring has not dulled Peter's tactical awareness and he makes the decisive breakthrough. After the routine retreat 37.Ne4-f2 Qd8-g5 Black survives unscathed.

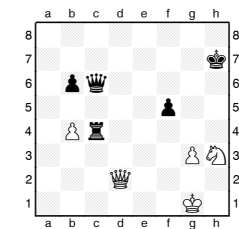
37... Rh8-e8
Relatively best was 37...f5xe4 38.Bc2xe4 Rf7-f6 39.f4xe5 Ng6xe5 40.Bc3xe5 Bb8xe5 41.Qh5xe5 Rh8-e8 42.Qe5-c3 although the extra pawn should prove decisive.

38.Ne4-f2 Rf7-f6
After 38...Kg7-h7 39.Nf2-g4 is extremely destructive.

39.Ra1-e1 e5-e4
40.Bc2xe4 f5xe4

41.Nf2xe4
Black resigns as after 41...Re8xe4 42.Re3xe4 Bc8-d7 43.Re4-e6 the pin fittingly decides the game.

Gelfand, like Leko, didn't lose a game in Elista and here we see him bringing his match to a pretty conclusion.



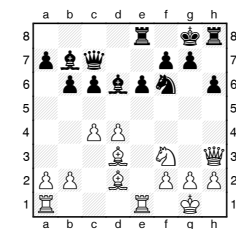
Kamsky, G - Gelfand, B
Candidates Finals, Elista 2007

50.Qd2-e3
Kamsky's only hope is to keep queens on so he avoids 50.Nh3-f2 Rc4-c1+ 51.Kg1-h2 Qc6-h6+ 52.Qd2xh6+ Kh7xh6

50... Rc4-c1+
51.Kg1-f2 Qc6-c2+
52.Kf2-f3

Still trying to avoid the exchange of queens but now there is a cute mate.

52... Rc1-f1+
53.Nh3-f2 Rf1xf2+
White resigned before 54.Qe3xf2 Qc2-e4. Checkmate.



Leko, P - Bareev, E
Candidates Finals, Elista 2007

17... c6-c5

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June 30th 2007

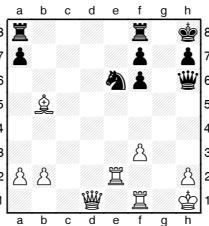
Michael Adams



Knight's scenic route leads to Czech triumph

Due to their proximity to events in Sofia and Elista, recent tournaments in Bosnia and America were pushed out of the limelight. To redress the balance I bring you some interesting games from the winners of both events.

We begin with a important win against the top seed by the talented Czech player Sergei Movsesian, who triumphed in Sarajevo with an undefeated 6.5 out of 10 against a strong field.



Morozevich, A - Movsesian, S Sarajevo 2007

22. Bb5-c4

White brings the bishop back into the action as if 22. Qd1-d2 Qh6-h3 23. Re2-g2 Rf8-g8 the kingside pressure is uncomfortable.

22...

Ra8-d8

23. Qd1-c1

Qh6-h3

24. Re2-f2

The safer option was 24. Bc4xe6 f7xe6 25. Re2-g2 Rf8-g8 26. Qc1-c2 but Morozevich is reluctant to submit to passive defence that aims for a draw.

24...

Rf8-g8

25. Qc1-e3

This sensible-looking centralisation proves disastrous. Either 25. Rf1-g1 or 25. Qc1-c3 would have been playable,

although in a practical game White's vulnerable king is likely to be more relevant than his superior pawn structure.

25... Ne6-g7

Movsesian alertly spots this surprising knight retreat which decides the game. There is no way to prevent the knight landing on g3, often gaining a tempo by hitting the White queen in the process.

26. Rf1-g1

If 26. Bc4-d3 the knight takes the scenic route to g3 after 26... Ng7-h5

26...

Ng7-f5

27. Qe3-e1

Rg8xg1+

28. Kh1xg1

After 28. Qe1xg1 Rd8-g8 29. Rf2-g2 Rg8xg2 30. Qg1xg2 Qh3xg2+ 31. Kh1xg2 Nf5-e3+ picks up the bishop.

28...

Rd8-g8+

29. Kg1-h1

Nf5-g3+

30. Kh1-g1

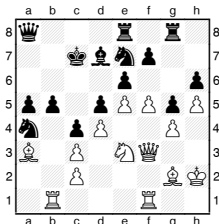
Ng3-f1+

31. Kg1-h1

Nf1xh2

0-1

Alexander Shabalov started off like a freight train in the US Championships taking his first five games en route to winning his second unshared title to go with the one he won in 2003. In the first game we see his trademark attacking style and in the second he shows off his endgame expertise.



Shabalov, A - Ibragimov, I USA-Ch, Stillwater 2007

Black has an extra pawn but that is the end of the good news. White has a raking dark-squared bishop, extremely active pieces and has gained a lot of space on the kingside. Shabalov decides it is time to exploit the exposed Black king.

33. f5xe6

f7xe6

If Black recaptures with the bishop 33... Bd7xe6 34. Rb1xb5 decimates the queenside.

34. Ba3-d6+ Kc7-b6

There are drawbacks to all four squares the monarch can flee to. If 34... Kc7-c8 35. Qf3-f6 Ne7-c6 36. Rb1xb5 Na4xc3 37. Rb5-c5 closes the net, 34... Kc7-b7 35. Bd6xe7 Re8xe7 36. Ne3xd5 leads to carnage on the long diagonal, or 34... Kc7-d8 35. Ne3xc4 b5xc4 36. Rb1-b8+.

35. Bd6xe7

Re8xe7

36. Qf3-f6

The cross-pin wins a crucial pawn.

36...

Re7-h7

37. Ne3xd5+

Kb6-a7

38. Nd5-e7

Now the discovered attack picks up the exchange.

38...

Qa8-b8

39. Ne7xg8

Qb8xg8

40. Bg2-e4

Na4xc3

40... Rh7-g7 was a better try but after 41. Rf1-f3 White is the exchange up with numerous positional trumps.

41. Be4xh7

Qg8xh7

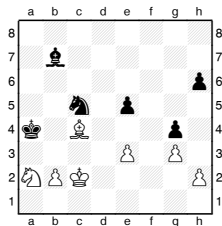
42. Qf6-g6

Qh7-h8

43. Rf1-f7

Black resigns as 43... Nc3xb1

44. Rf7xd7+ Ka7-b8 45. Qg6xe6 leads to mate.



Shabalov, A - Kaidanov, G USA-Ch, Stillwater 2007

Even in a simple ending Shabalov shows tactical alertness can be useful.

47. Bc4-d5 Bb7-a6

If 47... Bb7xd5 48. Na2-c3+ Ka4-b4 49. Nc3xd5+ Kb4-c4 50. Nd5-f6 wins another pawn. Better was 47... Bb7-c8, prolonging resistance. Now a tactical sequence swiftly concludes proceedings.

48. Bd5-c6+ Ka4-a5

49. b2-b4+ Ka5-b6

50. b4xc5+

and Black resigned as 50... Kb6xc6 51. Na2-b4+ Kc6-b5 52. Nb4xa6 Kb5xa6 53. Kc2-d3 is a trivial win.