

CHESS

April 5th 2008

Michael Adams



Kramnik comes across as a good sport but Loek runs out of luck

Newcomers do not always prosper at the annual Amber Rapid & Blindfold extravaganza, which was held in Nice this year. This is probably because competitive blindfold play can prove to be a tricky art to master. Levon Aronian, however, showed he is a very quick learner by topping the combined standings only two years after his debut.

In the first of this week's games we see some typically effective rapid chess, where seizing the initiative pays dividends.

the pressure in a rapid game and works out well here.

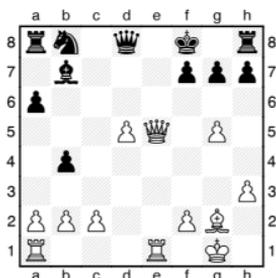
10... e6xd5
11.e4xd5 Bf8-e7
12.Nd4-c6 Qd8-c7

If 12...Bb7xc6 13.d5xc6 Qd8-c7 14.g4-g5 is awkward as the black horse has to return home.

13.Nc6xe7 Ke8xe7
14.g4-g5 Nf6-d7

The other retreat 14...Nf6-e8 15.Rf1-e1+ Ke7-f8 16.Bc1-f4 Nb8-d7 looks better as the queen's knight gets to emerge.

15.Rf1-e1+ Ke7-f8
16.Qd1-e2 Qc7-d8
17.Bc1-f4 Nd7-e5
18.Bf4xe5 d6xe5
19.Qe2xe5



19... h7-h6

Loek needed to reinforce his queenside by playing 19... a6-a5 with reasonable chances; now some very neat tactical points turn the game in White's favour.

20.Qe5-f4 a6-a5

It is not possible to play 20... h6xg5 21.Qf4xb4+ due to the hanging bishop, but now the 'g' pawn gets lodged in Black's throat.

21.g5-g6 f7-f6
22.Re1-e6 Bb7-c8

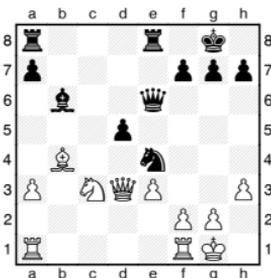
Unsurprisingly, completing his undevelopment doesn't help, but after the better 22...Ra8-a6 23.Ra1-e1 Ra6xe6 24.d5xe6 Kf8-e7 25.Bg2xb7 White ends up material ahead.

23.Re6-e3 Qd8-b6
24.Ra1-e1 Bc8-d7
25.d5-d6 Ra8-a7
26.Qf4-c4

1-0

And now for a couple of blindfold bloopers:

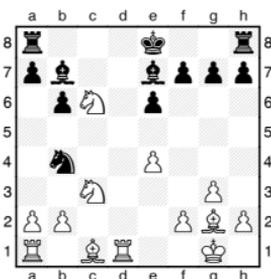
In the first, Gelfand is granted a reprieve after a noble gesture by Kramnik. In the second, Loeky doesn't get so lucky.



Gelfand, B - Kramnik, V
Amber Blindfold Nice 2008

24.Qd3xe4

Kramnik showed astonishing sportsmanship in this game as Gelfand failed to type his intended move 24.Nc3xe4 on the computer keyboard, blundering his queen instead of exchanging knights with a level position. Vlad didn't want to win that way and very generously proposed a draw. 1/2-1/2



Van Wely, L - Leko, P
Amber Blindfold Nice 2008

13... Bb7xc6

Van Wely mentally registered this move as 13...Nb4xc6

14.e4-e5 0-0
15.Rd1-d7

Which explains this move: it would win the game if Black had captured with the knight.

15... Bc6xd7

But now it doesn't.

0-1

Karjakin, S - Van Wely, L
Amber Rapid Nice 2008

9.0-0

It looks logical to play 9.g4-g5, pushing the knight away from the centre, but Karjakin has a much more interesting idea in mind.

9... b5-b4
10.Nc3-d5

I don't believe this is completely sound, but it is the kind of aggressive option that piles on

CHESS

April 12th 2008

Michael Adams



Chaos magic and other open goals

Sequels are rarely better than the originals but in the case of *Gambiteer 2* by Nigel Davies (www.everymanchess.com) we have the exception that proves the rule.

The book expounds a hard-hitting opening repertoire for Black, with the mainstays being the Schliemann variation of the Ruy Lopez and the Albin counter-gambit. *Gambiteer 1* was a similar repertoire for White, but I think the Black choices gel a little better. Davies emphasises the practical value of these off-beat choices in club chess but, in recent times, the openings have also been used successfully at the highest level. Teimour Radjabov employs the Schliemann quite regularly and Alexander Morozevich finds the Albin the perfect opening to work his brand of chaos magic over the chess board, as we see in the game below.

Gelfand, B - Morozevich, A Monte Carlo blindfold 2004

- | | |
|----------|--------|
| 1.d2-d4 | d7-d5 |
| 2.c2-c4 | e7-e5 |
| 3.d4xe5 | d5-d4 |
| 4.Ng1-f3 | Nb8-c6 |
| 5.g2-g3 | Ng8-e7 |
| 6.Bf1-g2 | Ne7-g6 |

This move was first played in 1905 but Moroz was the first strong player to show its viability in modern chess. Instead of fishing for compensation after 6...Bc8-g4, Black aims to regain the pawn.

- | | |
|----------|--------|
| 7.Bc1-g5 | Qd8-d7 |
| 8.0-0 | h7-h6 |
| 9.Bg5-f4 | |

Gelfand doesn't want to return the booty but now his king gets opened up.

- | | |
|-----------|--------|
| 9... | Ng6xf4 |
| 10.g3xf4 | g7-g5 |
| 11.Nb1-d2 | g5xf4 |
| 12.Nd2-e4 | Bf8-e7 |
| 13.Qd1-d2 | |

13.Kg1-h1 was safer.

- | | |
|-----------|--------|
| 13... | Qd7-g4 |
| 14.Kg1-h1 | Bc8-f5 |
| 15.Nf3xd4 | Ra8-d8 |



16.Nd4xf5

The only way to stay in the game was this complicated sequence: 16.Ne4-f6+ Be7xf6 17.Bg2xc6+ b7xc6 18.e5xf6 c6-c5 19.Qd2-a5 but this would be tricky to find even with sight of the board!

- | | |
|-----------|--------|
| 16... | Rd8xd2 |
| 17.Nf5xe7 | Ke8xe7 |
| 18.Ne4xd2 | Qg4xe2 |

The queen is more powerful than the rook and bishop due to the exposed state of the White monarch.

- | | |
|-----------|--------|
| 19.Nd2-f3 | Rh8-g8 |
| 20.b2-b3 | Nc6-b4 |
| 21.Nf3-d4 | Qe2-g4 |
| 22.Bg2-e4 | Rg8-g5 |

The neat 22...Nb4-d3 would have ended the game immediately.

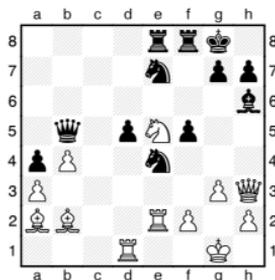
- | | |
|-----------|---------|
| 23.Rf1-g1 | Qg4-d7 |
| 24.Nd4-f3 | Rg5xg1+ |
| 25.Ra1xg1 | Nb4-d3 |
| 26.Rg1-g2 | c7-c6 |
| 27.Be4-h7 | a7-a5 |
| 28.Nf3-h4 | Nd3xe5 |
| 0-1 | |

Joel Benjamin may be the only man to have called John Fedorowicz a wimp and lived to tell the tale. Fortunately, Fed saw the funny side and so this and other tales are recounted in *American Grandmaster*, Benjamin's excellent new book.

The book also includes a number of annotated games and other fragments with commentary but doesn't get bogged down in lengthy variations, preferring instead to leave ample room for his insights on the lifestyle of a professional chess player.

The chapter on Kasparov v. Deep Blue, where Benjamin was employed as the chief adviser to the mainframe, gives a fascinating take on the match.

Below is a snappy finish against the opponent that Benjamin described as "the worst person I ever met in chess" — so I expect he enjoyed it. You will have to buy the book to find out why, but he puts a convincing case.



Benjamin, J - Gufeld, E Kona 1998

- | | |
|------------|-------|
| 30.Re2xe4 | f5xe4 |
| 31.Qh3-e6+ | |

The intermediate check forces the Black king on to a dark square to set up the combination.

- | | |
|-----------|--------|
| 31... | Kg8-h8 |
| 32.Qe6xh6 | Ne7-f5 |

The checkmate that occurs after 32...g7xh6 33.Ne5-f7+ Kh8-g8 34.Nf7xh6 mate is familiar from the textbooks but it is rare to see it in an actual game.

- | | |
|------------|--------|
| 33.Ne5-g6+ | Kh8-g8 |
| 34.Rd1xd5 | |

As another White bishop has the kingside in its sights, Black resigned.



CHESS

April 19th 2008

Michael Adams



Their day will come – but not just yet

“Never work with children or animals,” actors are often told; perhaps it is advisable not to play chess with them either. A game with your pet is unlikely to crush your ego, although it might present its own challenges.

The problem with taking on the very young, however, is that if the results are disagreeable you end up wondering how, with so much more time to learn, you can have grasped so little.

In the Ruy Lopez Magistral tournament held in Merida recently, I was anticipating some similarly chastening experiences but actually managed to rack up a few points against my youthful adversaries, showing the upside of playing very talented players while they are still very young. That may be the only time when you can beat them.

My opening against the 15 year-old Italian-American Fabiano Caruana had not gone well for me, and a peace proposal had already been rejected, but now I thought my position was looking a little more promising.

21.Bh6xf8 Ke8xf8, evacuating the danger zone, but my opponent leaves his king in the centre to generate piece play.

21.f4-f5 Nd7-e5
22.Ra1-e1 Rh8-g8

After the game, Caruana suggested 22...Ne5xd3 23.c2xd3 Rh8-g8 24.f5xe6 f7-f5, when Black's powerful prelates and White's hobbled knights provide some compensation. Still, White should be better after 25.d3-d4.

23.Bd3-e4 Ne5-g4

I couldn't refute 23...Bd5xe4 24.Nd2xe4 e6xf5 25.Ne4xd6+ Qc7xd6 26.Qh3-d3 Qd6-e6 over the board, but a little electronic advice reveals 27.Re1xe5 Qe6xe5 28.Qd3-d2 Nh5-f6 29.Bh6-f4 winning material. The text move made me a bit nervous, but the attempted combination doesn't work.

24.Qh3xg4 Bd6xh2+
25.Kg1-h1 Nh5-g3+
26.Kh1xh2 Ng3xf1+

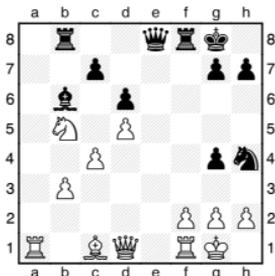
A 33 per cent shot.

27.Kh2-g1

The other two king moves are mated after Qc7-h2, but now all Black's minor pieces disappear and his attack fizzles out. Then it's White's turn.

27... Nf1xd2
28.Nb3xd2 Qc7-b6+
29.Bh6-e3 Qb6-c6
30.Be4xd5 Qc6xd5
31.Nd2-e4

Black resigned, as after 31... Qd5-e5 32.Qg4-f4 Qe5xf4 33.Be3xf4 Black can't save both his rooks.



Hou Yifan - Adams, M Merida 2008

This theoretical position gives Black a dangerous attack.

22.Bc1-g5
22.Qd1xg4 Rf8xf2 is

immediately catastrophic.

22... Qe8-h5
23.Bg5xh4 Qh5xh4
Now Black's squared bishop is very influential.

24.Ra1-a2 Rf8-f6
I was tempted by 24...Rf8-f5 but couldn't see anything clear after 25.g2-g3 Qh4-h3 26.Nb5-d4 Rf5-h5 27.f2-f4 g4xf3, although White is skirting the precipice.

25.Qd1-d3 Rb8-f8
26.Qd3-g3 Qh4-h6
27.Qg3-d3

The queen must cover the back rank as 27.b3-b4 Rf6xf2 28.Ra2xf2 Bb6xf2+ 29.Rf1xf2 Qh6-c1+ is decisive.

27... g4-g3
28.h2xg3 Qh6-h5
29.Qd3-e2

Hou Yifan tries to dampen the flames by returning material if 29.Nb5-d4 Rf6-h6 30.f2-f4 Qh5-h2+ 31.Kg1-f2 Rh6-g6 32.Kf2-e1 White might survive, but I was planning 30...g7-g5, which is hard to meet over the board.

29... Rf6xf2
30.Qe2xh5
After 30.Qe2xf2 Rf8xf2 31.Ra2xf2, Black prospers by not taking on f2 too early 31... Qh5-e5 32.b3-b4 h7-h6 33.c4-c5 d6xc5.

30... Rf2-f5+
31.Rf1-f2 Rf5xh5
32.g3-g4 Rh5-h6
33.b3-b4

I was expecting 33.g4-g5 Rh6-h5 34.g2-g3 Rh5xg5 35.Kg1-g2 Bb6xf2 36.Ra2xf2 Rf8xf2+ 37.Kg2xf2 Rg5-f5+ 38.Kf2-e3 Rf5-f7 with some practical chances.

33... Rf8xf2
34.Ra2xf2 Bb6-e3

I thought this move was the only way to win, but the iron monster shows that after 34...Rh6-g6 35.c4-c5 d6xc5 36.Rf2-f4 c5xb4+ 37.Kg1-h2 Rg6-h6+ 38.Kh2-g3 Rh6-f6 decisively forces the exchange of rooks as 39.Rf4xb4 Bb6-f2+ 40.Kg3-h3 Rf6-h6 is mate.

35.Nb5-c3 Rh6-f6
36.Nc3-d1 Be3xf2+
37.Nd1xf2 Rf6-f4
0-1

Adams, M - Caruana, F Merida 2008

20... Be7-d6
It was safer to play 20...Be7-f8

CHESS

April 26th 2008

Michael Adams



Burying the hatchet by the Black Sea

There were 16 players above 2,700 participating at the recent Russian team championship in Sochi, but the most illustrious side of all contained a couple of famous players a bit past their prime rating; Southern Ural Chelyabinsk had both Anatoly Karpov and Viktor Korchnoi on their team.

Although Viktor is the senior by 20 years, he displayed his ever-enduring stamina by playing 10 of the 11 games compared with Anatoly's three. Those who remember the acrimonious Karpov – Korchnoi World Championship matches might have been surprised to see them playing on the same side for the second year running, but they appear to have decided to let sleeping dogs lie.

Given Karpov and Garry Kasparov are also on better terms, as evidenced by the infamous jail visit by the former to the latter last November, perhaps we only need to wait a few decades for Veselin Topalov and Vladimir Kramnik to also bury the hatchet.



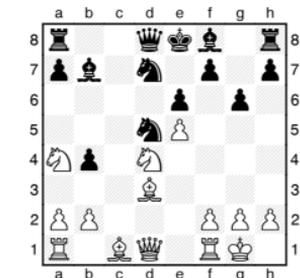
Eljanov, P - Van Wely, L
Dagomys 2008

17... **b7-b5**
Loek needed to withdraw his bishop to cover the kingside by playing 17...Be7-f8.
18.e4-e5 **Nf6-d7**
19.Bd3xh7 **Nd7-f8**

The cheeky bishop can't be captured, after 19...Kh8xh7 20.Qb3-d3+ Kh7-g8 a cascade of sacrifices force mate, 21.Rg1xg7+ Kg8xg7 22.Nf4xe6+ f7xe6 23.Rc1-g1+ Be7-g5 24.Rg1xg5+ Kg7-f8 25.Qd3-h7 and there is no escape for the Black monarch.

20.Bh7-d3
Now White has captured a crucial pawn in front of the Black king for free, and it is only a question of transferring his forces to exploit the open lines.
20... **Qc7-b6**
21.Rg1-g4 **Nc6-a5**
22.Qb3-d1 **g7-g6**
23.Qd1-f1 **Kh8-g7**
24.Qf1-h3

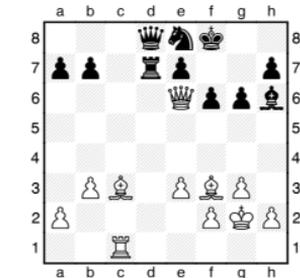
The queen arrives and the heavy artillery finishes the job.
24... **Rc8xc1+**
25.Be3xc1 **Rd8-c8**
26.Bc1-e3 **Na5-c4**
27.Nf4xg6
Black resigned as 27...f7xg6 28.Qh3-h6+ Kg7-f7 29.Bd3xg6+ leads to mate.



Mamedyarov, S - Nepomniachtchi, I
Dagomys 2008

14.f2-f4
Normally White attacks the Black edifices with 14.Qd1-g4 but Mamedyarov brings a foot soldier into the attack instead.
14... **a7-a6**
15.f4-f5 **Qd8-h4**
Black could not take with the 'g' pawn as 15...g6xf5 16. Nd4xe6 f7xe6 17.Qd1-h5+ is rather

awkward. However, 15...e6xf5 16.e5-e6 Nd7-f6 looks like it's a much better bet.
16.f5xe6 **Qh4xd4+**
17.Kg1-h1 **0-0-0**
Unfortunately 17...f7xe6 18.Bd3xg6+ wins the queen.
18.e6xd7+ **Kc8-b8**
Black discovers that 18...Rd8xd7 19.Bd3-f5 Qd4xd1 20.Bf5xd7+ nets the exchange but the king move doesn't inspire confidence either.
19.Bd3xa6 **Qd4xe5**
The only hope was 19...Qd4xd1 20.Rf1xd1 Rd8xd7 trying to steer towards a pawn down ending. Nepomniachtchi prefers a quick death.
20.Rf1-e1 **Qe5-d6**
21.Re1-e8 **Qd6xd7**
22.Bc1-f4+ **Bf8-d6**
23.Re8xh8
Black resigned as 23...Rd8xh8 24.Na4-c5 picks up a piece.



Roiz, M - Kharlov, A
Dagomys 2008

26... **b7-b6**
Black's position is unenviable due to the chronically weak light squares and his sidelined bishop biting on granite, but he could have defended by repelling the White queen with 26...Ne8-c7.
27.Bc3-b4 **Ne8-d6**
Now 27...Ne8-c7 loses as 28.Qe6xf6+ exploits the pin. After the move played in the game, White finishes off with a neat forcing sequence.
28.Bf3-c6 **Rd7-c7**
29.Bc6-d5 **Kf8-e8**
30.Rc1xc7 **Qd8xc7**
31.Bb4xd6 **Qc7xd6**
32.Qe6-c8+ **1-0**

The sting in the tail arrives after 32...Qd6-d8 33.Bd5-c6+ winning a whole queen.

CHESS

May 3rd 2008

Michael Adams



Original thinker who ventured into uncharted territory

Julian Hodgson's originality of play, coupled with his outgoing personality and charisma, made him ever-popular on the chess circuit. I am not alone in missing the company of my close friend and best man since he retired from regular tournament play in 2001.

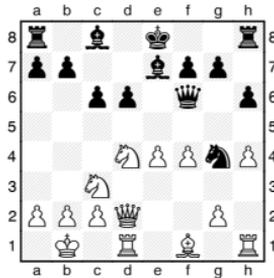
However, the chess world's loss has been his pupils' gain as he has been passing on his knowledge of the game to the budding GMs of tomorrow, keeping up a hectic coaching schedule in a number of London schools. Jules often liked to take his opponents into uncharted territory, where he would fare better at navigating the complications that arose, as we see in the games below.

Any capture leads to immediate mate: 17.a2xb3 Na5xb3 or 17.Qd2xa5 Qb3-c2 if the knight returns 17.Nb1-c3 Qb3xa2 is a nice echo.

17... Qb3xa2
18.Qd2-b4 Re8-e2
Another clever diversion setting up the same mating pattern.

19.Bd3xe2 Na5-b3+
20.Qb4xb3 Qa2xb3
21.Rd1-d2 Qb3-e3
Kuijff resigned as 22.Nb1-c3 Nd7-c5 finishes White off.

Jules's desire to avoid opening theory led him to employ the Trompowsky opening on a regular basis where he quickly became, and maybe still is, the world's leading expert, reflected in his huge score. Here we see one of his many crushing victories with this opening.



Hodgson, J - Polgar, Z
Haifa 1989

13.h4-h5
A very strong move destabilising the Black knight and leaving the queen short of squares.

13... Be7-d8
The normal move was 13...0-0 but after 14.g2-g3 Be7-d8 (If 14...Rf8-e8 White has the option to trap the Black queen with 15.e4-e5 d6xe5 16.Nc3-e4) 15.Rh1-h4 the knight is almost out of bounds.

14.Nd4-b5
Taking advantage of the king remaining in the centre.

14... c6xb5
15.Bf1xb5+ Bc8-d7
The better 15...Ke8-f8 16.e4-e5 is also extremely unpleasant.

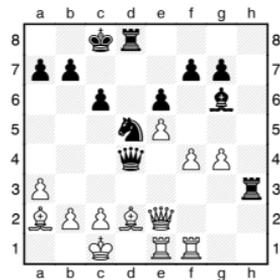
16.Bb5xd7+ Ke8xd7
17.Qd2-e2

Again the steed has nowhere to go.

17... Qf6xf4
18.Rh1-f1 Qf4-g5
19.Rf1-f5 Qg5-h4
Giving back the material is very depressing as after 19...Qg5-e7 20.Qe2xg4 White will pick up the 'g' pawn as well and the d5 square is beckoning the White knight.

20.Qe2-b5+ Kd7-c8
21.Rf5xf7 Bd8-e7
22.Nc3-d5
There is no way to defend the bishop so carnage will ensue along the seventh rank.

1-0



Nijboer, F - Hodgson, J
Dutch Team Championships 1994

All Black's pieces are menacingly poised and Julian uses his swinging rook to detonate the king's cover.

21... Rh3xa3
22.Ba2-b1
The rook can't be captured: 22.b2xa3 Qd4-a1+ 23.Ba2-b1 Qa1xa3+ 24.Kc1-d1 Nd5-c3 mate.

22... Qd4-a4
23.f4-f5 Ra3-a1
24.c2-c3 e6xf5
25.g4xf5 Bg6-h5
26.Qe2xh5
White could have escaped to a lost ending after 26.Qe2-e4 Nd5xc3 27.Qe4xa4 Nc3xa4. Now the roof falls in on the queenside.

26... Qa4-a2
27.Kc1-c2 Qa2-c4
28.b2-b3
The king can't run away as 28.Kc2-c1 Qc4-d3 is a killer.

28... Nd5-b4+
29.Kc2-c1 Ra1xb1+

0-1



Kuijff, M - Hodgson, J
Wijk aan Zee 1989

16.Nc3-b1
White misses the opportunity to block the bishop while angling for the exchange of queens with 16.Nc3-e4. Jules is quick to exploit the difference between the two knight moves.

16... Qb4-b3
17.Be2-d3

CHESS

May 10th 2008

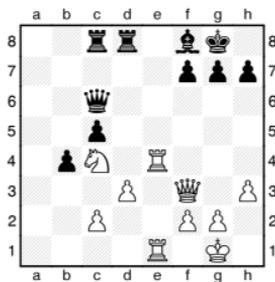
Michael Adams



Oiling the wheels of industry in the Baku beyond

As we were gazing out across the Caspian Sea on the free day of the first FIDE Grand Prix in Baku, our Azeri hosts revealed that recent economic conditions have presented them with an unexpected, if not unwelcome, problem. They don't have enough banks to hold all their oil money.

Judging by the news on CNN, these developments were less welcome in Britain. Particularly for absentminded Grandmasters who left their vehicles at home with an almost empty petrol tank. This well-financed event should nevertheless keep the players mobile for a while.



Although Vugar Gashimov is considered the least strong of the three local players, he showed he was well at home in this company and could have even won outright if he had grabbed this opportunity in the first round.

Gashimov, V - Bacrot, E
FIDE GP Baku 2008

33.h3-h4

Black's position is rather

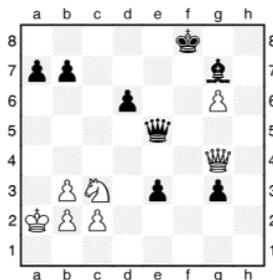
unpleasant, but Etienne blunders immediately by playing an odd rook move that allows White a combination.

33... Rc8-b8
34.h4-h5

Now Vugar misses his chance. 34.Qf3xf7+ would have won a pawn as the Black king must sidestep with: 34...Kg8-h8. If the queen is captured 34...Kg8xf7 35.Nc4-e5+ Kf7-g8 36.Ne5xc6 forks the rooks as well.

34... Qc6-c7

and the Frenchman later escaped with half a point.



This sharp Sicilian Dragon, contested between two players that are likely future contenders for the World Championship, was one of the most exciting games of the tournament.

Radjabov, T - Carlsen, M
FIDE GP Baku 2008

31... e3-e2

Magnus needs to find a safe spot for his king, which he could have achieved with 31...Bg7-f6 32.Qg4-d7 Qe5-e7.

32.Qg4-f3+

Carlsen had calculated 32.Qg4-c8+ Kf8-e7 33.Qc8xb7+ Ke7-f6 allows the monarch to stroll to safety, but 32.Qg4-d7 leaves Black unable to avoid perpetual after 32...Qe5-e7 33.Qd7-c8+ Qe7-e8 34.Qc8-f5+ Kf8-g8 35.Qf5-d5+

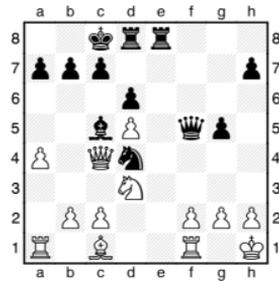
32... Kf8-e8

Now there are only a few spite checks.

33.Qf3-f7+

33.Qf3xe2 Qe5xe2 34.Nc3xe2 g3-g2 is also hopeless.

33... Ke8-d8
34.Qf7-g8+ Kd8-d7
35.Qg8-f7+ Qe5-e7
36.Qf7-f5+ Kd7-d8
37.Qf5-a5+ b7-b6
38.Qa5-d5 e2-e1Q
39.Qd5-a8+ Kd8-d7
40.Qa8-b7+ Kd7-e8
0-1



Mamedyarov, S - Radjabov, T
FIDE GP Baku 2008

17.Bc1-e3

It appears White can play the strong 17.b2-b4 when Black's bishop has nowhere to run to. However, Radjabov had prepared a beautiful line: 17...Re8-e4 18.f2-f3 (18.Qc4-a2 Nd4-f3 threatening Re4-h4) 18...Nd4xf3 19.Qc4-b3 Re4-e2 20.Rf1xf3 (20.b4xc5 Qf5-h3 is a beautiful conclusion) 20...Qf5-g4 21.Rf3-g3 Re2-e1+ 22.Nd3xe1 Qg4-e2 23.h2-h4 Qe2xe1+ 24.Kh1-h2 Qe1-g1+ 25.Kh2-h3 Qg1-h1+ 26.Kh3-g4 Qh1xh4+ 27.Kg4-f3 Rd8-f8+ 28.Bc1-f4 Rf8xf4+ 29.Kf3-e2 Rf4-f2+ 30.Ke2-d1 Qh4-h1 mate. Some pretty good homework! Mamedyarov did well to sense the danger and calculate accurately over the board.

17... Nd4-f3
18.Nd3xc5 d6xc5
19.Rf1-d1

White's position looks precarious but he has enough resources to hold.

19... Re8-e4
20.Qc4-f1 Nf3-d4
21.Qf1-d3 Qf5-e5
22.Be3xg5 Rd8-e8
23.Bg5-d2 Re4-h4
24.h2-h3 Qe5xd5
25.c2-c4 Qd5-c6
26.Qd3-g3 Nd4-f5
27.Qg3-d3 Nf5-d4
28.Qd3-g3 Nd4-f5
29.Qg3-d3 Nf5-d4
30.Qd3-g3 Nd4-f5
½-½

CHESS

May 17th 2008

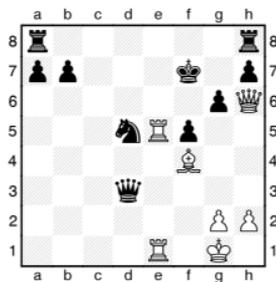
Michael Adams



Teenager hits a winning streak after false start

The 52nd Southend Congress, dedicated to the memory of its long-time organiser Jack Spiegel, squeezed seven games into the Easter weekend.

It didn't start auspiciously for David Howell when he was defeated by Mark Hebden in the first round. However, the 17-year-old then reeled off an impressive streak of six wins, securing first prize with a round to spare for probably his best result to date. His lack of draws was not untypical for this remarkably bloodthirsty event: there were only eight out of the 28 games played, with most encounters providing plenty of excitement for the spectators.



**Howell, D - Wells, P
Jack Spiegel Memorial,
Southend 2008**

An interesting position from the critical game in the tournament, between winner and runner-up. Howell has imaginatively parted with a lot of material to make the Black king feel uncomfortable.

27... Ra8-c8

Pete should have played down

the critical line 27...Qd3-d4+, when David would have to throw a bishop into the mix along with the three pawns. Play continues 28.Kg1-h1 Nd5xf4 29.Re5-e7+ (29.Qh6-h4 Nf4-e6 defends) 29...Kf7-g8 30.Re1-e5 Nf4-h5 31.Qh6-c1 h7-h6 32.Qc1-c7 Ra8-f8 33.h2-h3, leading to a strange situation where Black is tied up and will find it hard to untangle, despite the huge material edge. Certainly he can at least take a perpetual with 33...Nh5-g3+ 34.Kh1-h2 Ng3-f1+. The rook move looks sensible but the bishop turns out to be an important part of the ongoing assault.

28.Bf4-g5

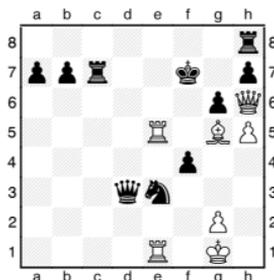
Now the initiative proves more than enough for the sacrificed loot.

28... 29.h2-h4 30.h4-h5

Rc8-c7 f5-f4

Bringing another unit into the attack causes the foundations to cave in.

30... Nd5-e3



31.h5xg6+

Even stronger was 31.Bg5-f6 as the prelate can't be captured: 31...Kf7xf6 32.Qh6xf4+ Kf6-g7 33.h5-h6+ is mate next go.

31... Qd3xg6 32.Qh6-h4 Ne3xg2

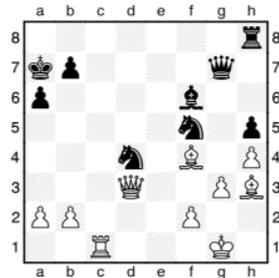
After 32...Rh8-f8 33.Qh4xf4+ Kf7-g8 34.Qf4xe3 the extra piece decides. Now a series of well-calculated checks finishes the game.

33.Re5-e7+ Rc7xe7 34.Re1xe7+ Kf7-f8

If 34...Kf7-g8, 35.Qh4-g4 is decisive.

35.Bg5-h6+ Kf8-g8 36.Re7-g7+ Qg6xg7 37.Qh4-d8+

1-0



**Hebden, M - Ward, C
Jack Spiegel Memorial,
Southend 2008**

Chris Ward didn't have much luck, a trend that was evident in this game where some tempting attacking possibilities turn out to be mirages.

29... Nf5xh4

This is OK if followed up correctly, but 29...Bf6-e5 was safer, preventing the White rook hitting the seventh.

30.Rc1-c7 Nh4-f3+

Chris should have swapped queens with 30...Qg7-g6 31.Qd3xg6 Nh4xg6 32.Bh3-g2, although White still has compensation.

31.Kg1-h1 Qg7-f8 32.Bh3-g2 h5-h4 33.Bg2xf3 h4xg3 34.Kh1-g2 Nd4xf3

Black was relying on 34...Rh8-h2+ 35.Kg2xg3 Bf6-h4+ 36.Kg3xh2 Qf8xf4+ 37.Kh2-g2 Nd4xf3 38.Qd3-e3+ Qf4xe3 39.f2xe3 with a drawish ending. Hebden can improve with 35.Kg2-g1 when, despite the state of the White king, his attack gets in first after 35...Nd4xf3+ 36.Qd3xf3 Qf8-b4 37.Bf4-e3+ Ka7-b8 38.Qf3xg3.

35.Qd3xf3 Qf8-b4 36.Bf4-e3+

Winning the bishop and the game.

36... Ka7-a8

A better try was 36...Ka7-b8 when the computer suggests 37.Qf3xf6 Qb4-e4+ 38.Kg2xg3 Qe4-h1 39.Rc7-f7, when the White monarch continues to lead a charmed life and walks away from the checks to secure victory. In a practical game 38.f2-f3 Qe4xe3 39.Qf6xh8+ Kb8xc7 40.Qh8-c3+, forcing a winning pawn ending, would be a more likely conclusion.

37.Qf3xf6 Rh8-e8 38.Qf6-e6 Re8-f8

1-0

CHESS

May 24th 2008

Michael Adams



A rare move order – with a drop of poison

At the closing ceremony of last year's M-Tel Masters, after securing first place with a score of 5.5 out of 10, Veselin Topalov wittily remarked: "Next year I will try and win the tournament with five points." If I hadn't finished last with 4.5 out of 10 I would have found it even funnier.

In fact, this year Veselin scored 6.5 points, normally a very good bet for at least a share of first place in such an evenly matched field. However, it shows the extent of Vasily Ivanchuk's achievement: he took first place a whole point and a half ahead.

Chucky was simply unstoppable, winning his first five games in a row and finishing with a rating performance not far short of the magical 3,000 mark.

Another surprising withdrawal, White was probably not that concerned about the possibility of the knight being captured, but it is hard to see another useful move.

23... **b7xa6**

A big error. Cheparinov will regret allowing the White rook into his position. 23...Rf8-d8, targeting the d6 pawn, was a much better idea.

24.Rc1xc6 **Bc8-b7**
25.Rc6-c7 **Bb7xe4**
26.Rc7xd7 **Qf6-f5**
27.Rd7-c7 **Be4xb1**

Due to the fork the piece has been regained but the knight on b1 wasn't doing much and now White's remaining forces coordinate very effectively.

28.Nf3-g5
Ivan might have underestimated this move as the steed had moved in the reverse direction earlier in the game.

28... **Bh6-g7**

The open 'h' line comes in handy if the horse is captured 28...Bh6xg5 29.h4xg5 Qf5-e4+ 30.Bf1-e2 h7-h5 31.0-0 is very unpleasant for Black.

29.Bf1-c4
This late development of the bishop is rather strong.

29... **Bb1-c2**
30.Qd1-d5 **h7-h6**

30...Bc2xa4 would have put up more resistance but the result is not in doubt after 31.Ng5-f7+ Rf8xf7 32.Qd5xa8+ Rf7-f8 33.Qa8-b7.

31.Rc7-f7 **Qf5-c8**

After 31...Rf8xf7 32.Ng5xf7+ Kh8-h7 33.Nf7-g5+ the rook on a8 is hanging.

32.Rf7xg7
Black resigned as 32... Kh8xg7 33.Qd5xe5+ Rf8-f6 34.Qe5-e7+ soon leads to mate.

Ivanchuk, V - Bu Xiangzhi M-Tel Masters Sofia 2008

Knowing that Bu is a big fan of the a7-a6 Slav, Ivanchuk has used a rare move order that contains a drop of poison, refraining from d2-d4 for the time being.

5... **b7-b5**
6.b2-b3 **Bc8-g4**

Bu isn't paying attention and continues in the standard manner, but he is in for an unpleasant surprise as Chucky reveals the hidden point of his move order.

7.Nf3-e5 **Bg4-h5**

This is pretty careless: 7...e7-e6 seems to avoid catastrophe as 8.c4xb5 a6xb5 9.Bf1xb5 c6xb5 10.Nc3xb5 Bg4-f5 is not as clear as in the game. Another possibility was 7...Bg4-e6, which admittedly looks a bit awkward but Black can continue development with g7-g6 and Bf8-g7, limiting White to a small edge.

8.c4xb5 **c6xb5**
9.Bf1xb5+ **a6xb5**
10.Nc3xb5 **e7-e6**

Surprisingly, there is no good way to prevent Nb5-c7+ as 10...Nb8-a6 11.Qc2-c6+ Nf6-d7 12.Ne5xd7 is decisive. Despite losing a ton of material Bu fights on for some time but resignation was already an option.

11.Nb5-c7+ **Ke8-e7**
12.Nc7xa8 **Nf6-d7**

It is clear that White can easily extricate his knight, but Vasily decides to target Black's awkwardly placed monarch for a bit first.

13.Bc1-a3+ **Ke7-f6**
14.Ba3-b2 **Nd7xe5**
15.f2-f4 **Nb8-d7**
16.Na8-c7 **Bh5-g6**
17.Bb2xe5+ **Nd7xe5**
18.f4xe5+ **Kf6xe5**
19.Qc2-c3+ **Ke5-f5**
20.0-0+

Castling with check is not normally a bad idea but, in fact, 20.e3-e4+, allowing the White queen to swing along the third rank, would have been even better.

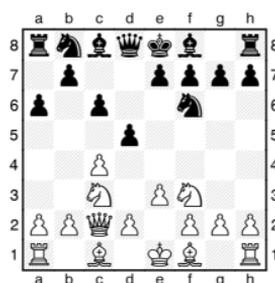
20... **Kf5-g5**
21.a2-a4

And Bu resigned 11 moves later.

Topalov, V - Cheparinov, I M-Tel Masters Sofia 2008

22.Nc3-b1
An unexpected knight retreat. Veselin didn't want to aid his opponent's development by playing 22.a6xb7 Bc8xb7.

22... **Bg7-h6**
23.Ng5-f3



CHESS

May 31st 2008

Michael Adams



Charitable coach shows his class in US championships

This year the US Chess Championships had great reason to thank Frank K Berry, an international arbiter who provided the funding for both the men's and women's events. The rather downbeat nature of chess in the United States is demonstrated by the fact that, without his generosity, it would have been very difficult to hold these championships at all.

The winner, Yuri Shulman, like many American players, spends much of his time coaching, as do GMs in the UK. Shulman must be congratulated on starting a not-for-profit foundation, "Chess without Borders", to promote chess in underprivileged schools around the world, as well as on his championship triumph.

14.h2-h4 Ra8-c8
15.Rh1-h3 Nc6-b8
16.d4-d5

White could continue lining up his pieces in the direction of the Black king with 16.Rh3-g3, but prefers to strike before the knight can be recycled off the back rank.

16... e6xd5
17.Rh3-g3 f7-f6

The ugly 17...g7-g6 18.e4-e5 also doesn't look very healthy.

18.Nf3-d4

A promising sacrifice, but after the simple 18.e4xd5 Qa5xd5 19.Qe2xe7 Qd5xd3+ 20.Kf1-g1 Rf8-f7 21.Qe7xf7+ Kg8xf7 22.Nf3-e5+ f6xe5 23.Rg3xd3 the tactics are resolved in White's favour.

18... d5xe4
19.Qe2-g4 Rf8-f7
20.Bd3xe4 h7-h5

Black would like to exchange bishops but 20...Bb7xe4 21.Qg4xc8+ is a problem, so he prods the White queen.

21.Qg4-f5

21.Qg4-e6 was stronger.

21... Bb7xe4

Gurevich misses the opportunity to make some exchanges after 21...Qa5xf5 22.Be4xf5 Rc8-c5 23.Bf5-e6 Bb7-d5 24.Be6xf7+ Kg8xf7 Black is only slightly worse.

22.Qf5xc8+ Kg8-h7
23.Qc8xb8 Qa5-d2

This desperate counterattack can be repelled in a number of ways but Akobian finds an appealing solution exploiting the vulnerability of Black's king.

24.Qb8-e8 Be4-d5
25.Rg3xg7+ Kh7xg7
Or 25...Rf7xg7 26.Qe8xh5+ Kh7-g8 27.Qh5xd5+.

26.Nd4-f5+ Kg7-h7
27.Nf5xe7 Bd5xg2+
28.Kf1-g1

1-0



In this game, Fedorowicz gets ensnared in a nasty opening trap.

Becerra Rivero, J -
Fedorowicz, J
Frank K Berry USA
Championships Tulsa 2008

11... e6-e5

Theory considers 11...d7-d6 12.h2-h3 e6-e5 a better option and it will soon become apparent why.

12.f4xe5 Qc7xe5
13.Bd2-f4 Bc5xd4+
14.Kg1-h1 Qe5-c5
15.Ne2xd4 Qc5xd4
16.e4-e5

This forcing sequence is very natural and now it turns out that, despite the extra piece, Black is in a whole heap of trouble.

16... Ng4-f2+

Unfortunately, evacuating the centre is not possible as 16...0-0 17.Bd3xh7+ picks up the queen.

17.Rf1xf2 Qd4xf2
18.e5xf6 d7-d6

Neither 18...Qf2xf4 19.Qd1-e1+ Ke8-d8 20.f6xg7 Rh8-g8 21.Qe1-a5+ Kd8-e7 22.Ra1-e1+ Ke7-f6 23.Qa5-c3+ Kf6-g5 24.Re1-f1, nor 18...g7xf6 19.Qd1-g4 d7-d5 20.Qg4-g7 Qf2xf4 21.Qg7xh8+ Ke8-d7 22.Ra1-f1 looks very appetising either.

19.Qd1-e1+

I would have preferred to keep queens on with 19.f6xg7 but, regardless of this, Black is in great difficulties.

19... Qf2xe1+
20.Ra1xe1+ Bc8-e6
21.f6xg7 Rh8-g8
22.Bf4-h6 Ke8-d7
23.Bd3xh7 Rg8-e8
24.Bh6-g5 Be6xa2

The ending is hopeless in the long term, as although after 24...f7-f5 the g8 square is obviously well covered, White will gradually win by advancing his 'h' pawn, starting with 25.h2-h4.

25.Re1xe8 Ra8xe8
26.h2-h4 f7-f6
27.Bg5xf6 Ba2-g8
28.Bh7-f5+

1-0

Akobian, V - Gurevich, D
Frank K Berry USA
Championships Tulsa 2008

White has lost the right to castle but he turns this to his advantage by developing his rook in a different but very effective way.

CHESS

June 7th 2008

Michael Adams



The harder they fall to a risk-taker

Alexander Morozevich has always been good at carving up fields with strong players outside of the world's top 20. His memorable victories in Biel, with large plus scores in 2003, 2004 and 2006, live long in the memory.

In the recent tournament in Sarajevo, he turned in a repeat performance, cutting a scythe through what most players would find to be very solid opposition.



Morozevich, A - Movsesian, S Sarajevo 2008

25.Nd4-f5

White has a large positional advantage due to Black's passive light-squared bishop and his knights, which are falling over each other. A solid move such as 25.Re1-e2 looks very promising, but Morozevich shows his bravery by making a stunning positional sacrifice to establish a steed on the perfect attacking spot. Few players would be willing to take this risk with good alternatives available.

25... g6xf5
26.Ng3xf5 Rd8-d7

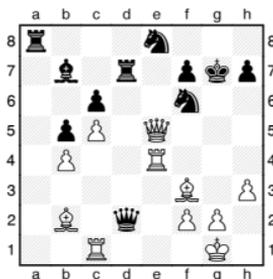
Movsesian's best hope was to dislodge the knight

immediately, although, after 26...Qc7-d7 27.Re1-e7 Qd7xf5 28.Qb3xf7+ Kg8-h8 29.Re7xb7 there is more than enough compensation for the piece.

27.Nf5xg7 Kg8xg7
28.Qb3-c3

Morozevich lines up on the dark squares but this is a slip – the very direct 28.Qb3-e3 h7-h6 29.g2-g4 batters down the front door.

28... Qc7-f4
29.Re1-e4 Qf4-d2
30.Qc3-e5



30... Ra8-a2

There was a surprising opportunity to escape here after 30...Rd7-d5 31.Re4-g4+ Kg7-f8 32.Bf3xd5 Nf6xg4 33.h3xg4 (better is 33.Qe5-h8+ Kf8-e7 34.h3xg4 c6xd5 35.Qh8-e5+ Ke7-d7 and Black seems to cling on). 33...f7-f6 the intermezzo removes all danger.

31.Re4-e2 Qd2-h6

It looks logical to give up the queen but the attack persists decisively after 31...Ra2xb2 32.Re2xd2 Rb2xd2 33.Qe5-g5+ Kg7-f8 34.Qg5-h6+ Kf8-e7 35.Rc1-e1+ Ke7-d8 36.Qh6-f4 Kd8-c8 37.Bf3-g4 when it's not possible for the king to find peace on the queenside.

32.Rc1-e1 Ra2xb2

Sergei would have been pleased to see the back of this bishop but now the White rooks take over.

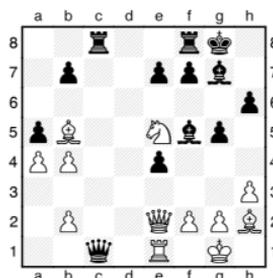
33.Qe5xb2 Ne8-c7
34.Bf3-g4

Forcing the Black rook off the second rank.

34... Rd7-d3
35.Re2-e7 Nc7-d5
36.Re7xb7 Rd3-d2
37.Qb2-e5

1-0

I haven't seen much coverage of the Uzbek Championship in the chess press, but this incisive finish by the winner is highly visual and deserves a wider audience.



Khamrakulov, D - Iuldachev, S Championship of Uzbekistan Tashkent 2008

21.g2-g4

It may have been stronger to play the safe 21.Bb5-c4 Qc1xe1+ 22.Qe2xe1 Bg7xe5 23.Bc4xf7+ Rf8xf7 24.Bh2xe5 but the game continuation is more fun as an orgy of captures ensues.

21... Qc1-c2
22.g4xf5 a5xb4
23.Qe2xe4 Qc2xb2
24.Ne5-d7 Rf8-d8
Not 24...Rf8-e8 25.f5-f6.

25.Qe4xe7 Bg7-d4
26.Bh2-g3 Qb2-d2

Both 26...Rd8-e8 or 26...Qb2-c3 were better chances, but it can't have been easy to anticipate the stunning finish.

27.Re1-e6 Rd8-e8

The rook can't be captured as after 27...f7xe6 28.Qe7xe6+ Kg8-h7 29.Qe6-e7+ Bd4-g7 30.f5-f6 Rd8-g8 31.Qe7-e4+ Kh7-h8 32.Bb5-d3 Black must part with his queen to prevent mate.

28.Re6-g6+
A striking blow. Declining the gift is not an option.

28... f7xg6
29.Nd7-f6+ Bd4xf6
30.Bb5-c4+

Black got fed up with taking White's pieces and resigned as 30...Rc8xc4 31.Qe7xe8+ Kg8-g7 32.Qe8xg6+ Kg7-f8 33.Qg6xf6+ Kf8-e8 34.Qf6-e6+ Ke8-d8 35.Qe6xc4 enables White to regain his original investment with interest.

CHESS

June 14th 2008

Michael Adams



As many win as lose in an Odessa tie

The fourth Pivdenny Bank Cup rapid play, which concluded recently, had the unusual result that half of the field finished in a tie for first place. Anatoly Karpov finished half a point back in fifth place. Although he has probably won more tournaments than any other active player, he wasn't able to get his nose in front here.

There were a large number of decisive games and here are wins by three of the four victors (the quartet was completed by Yuri Drozdovskij).

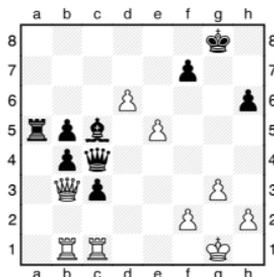
10.Ne2-g3
11.Be3-g5
12.Bf1-d3

The logical follow-up to his last move is 12...Qe8-g6 13.0-0-0 when White's lead in development looks rather alarming, but at least Black has maintained decent central control.

13.Bg5xf6 f4xg3
If 13...Bg7xf6 14.Ng3-e4 Black's game is positionally bankrupt, but it was by far the lesser evil.

14.Bd3xh7+
A neat way to turn the tactics in White's favour, introducing his king's rook into the game is utterly crushing.

14... Kg8xh7
15.h2xg3+ Kh7-g8
16.Bf6xg7 Kg8xg7
17.Qd2-h6+
1-0



Korchnoi, V - Gelfand, B
Pivdenny Bank Chess Cup
Odessa 2008

31... Bc5xf2+
A nice move to make in a rapid game, but the simple 31... Ra5-a2 32.Qb3xc4 b5xc4 was much stronger, as the pawn mass has achieved a new mobility. After 33.d6-d7 Ra2-d2 34.Rc1-d1 Rd2xd1+ 35.Rb1xd1 Bc5-e7, the bishop is exchanged for White's lone passer and the three black pawns then have their say.

32.Kg1xf2
Surprisingly, Viktor could have escaped by declining the gift and playing 32.Kg1-g2 Bf2-c5 33.Qb3xc4 b5xc4 34.Rc1-c2 Ra5-a8 35.Kg2-f3 when the White monarch becomes an active participant in events.

32... Ra5-a2+
33.Qb3xa2
Giving up the queen is hopeless, but there is no choice as

Nh5-f6
Qd8-e8
f5-f4

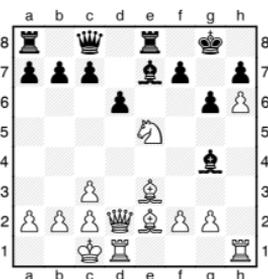
33.Rc1-c2 Qc4-d4+ 34.Kf2-e2 Qd4-e4+ 35.Ke2-d1 Qe4-d3+ forces White away from the defence of his rook.

33... Qc4xa2+
34.Kf2-e3
Or 34.Kf2-g1 Qa2-d2 35.Rc1-d1 c3-c2.

34... Qa2-d2+
35.Ke3-e4 c3-c2
36.Rb1xb4 Qd2xc1
37.d6-d7 Qc1-e1+
38.Ke4-d5 c2-c1Q
39.d7-d8Q+

Making a new queen with check is normally good news but it is Black's pair of ladies that will have the final say.

39... Kg8-h7
40.Qd8-h4 Qe1-d2+
0-1



Ponomariov, R - Gelfand, B
Pivdenny Bank Chess Cup
Odessa 2008

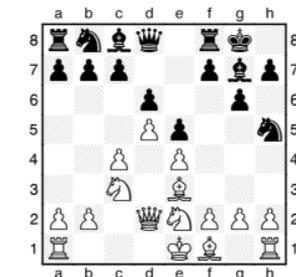
14... Bg4xe2
Black had to play 14...d6xe5 15.Be2xg4 Qc8xg4 16.Qd2-d5 when White has some initiative, Boris assumed the recapture is forced but received a very unpleasant surprise.

15.Ne5xg6
Gelfand missed this deadly zwichenzug winning a crucial pawn.

15... Be2xd1
The suffering would have continued longer following 15... Be7-f6 16.Ng6-e7+ Re8xe7 17.Qd2xe2. Instead there is a quick kill.

16.Qd2-d4 f7-f6
Blocking the dark-square diagonal, but Ponomariov immediately exploits the light-squared one which has been opened up.

17.Qd4-d5+
1-0



Tregubov, P - Golubev, M
Pivdenny Bank Chess Cup
Odessa 2008

In this King's Indian defence, Tregubov has managed to avoid playing the typical f2-f3 allowing his pieces to emerge very quickly. Black needs to tread carefully and Golubev steps on a landmine.

8... f7-f5
It is rather risky to open the game when so far behind in development, safer was 8... Nb8-a6.

9.e4xf5 g6xf5

CHESS

June 21st 2008

Michael Adams



Star's death casts shadow over Armenians

The Yerevan Chess Giants Rapid was overshadowed by the death of the 28-year-old Armenian GM Karel Asrian just hours before the event was due to start. Although Asrian was not himself participating, we were all deeply shocked by the news and the close-knit Armenian chess community was understandably devastated by this body blow.

A half-hour delay to the start of the round provided too small a breathing space for Asrian's stunned compatriots to collect themselves and all their games ended in draws in a matter of seconds. Following a two-day postponement, the tournament, appropriately won by Levon Aronian, Asrian's close friend from childhood, was resumed as the Karel Asrian Memorial.

Asrian was a three-time Armenian champion and played on board three for Armenia's historic gold medal team at the Turin Olympiad in 2006. The image of Asrian holding his county's flag aloft in victory will be indelibly etched in many people's minds. Like many Armenian players, he had a finely tuned tactical antenna as shown in these two nice victories:

Yegiazarian, A - Asrian, K
Armenian Championship
Yerevan 2006

White's pieces have lost contact with the kingside and Asrian is quick to take advantage.

16... **Bd6xh2+**
17.Kg1xh2 **Nf6-g4+**
18.Kh2-g1

The king wisely runs for cover — moving forward is suicidal: 18.Kh2-g3 Ng4xe3 19.Nd4xe6 (or 19.f2xe3 Qd8-g5+) 19... Qd8-f6 20.f2xe3 Qf6-g6+ 21.Kg3-h4 f7xe6 and the lonely monarch won't survive long.

18... **Qd8-h4**
19.b2-b4

It's understandable White wanted to include the queen in the game but 19.Nd4-f3 Bb7xf3 20.g2xf3 Qh4-h2+ 21.Kg1-f1 looks a tougher way to resist.

19... **Qh4-h2+**
20.Kg1-f1 **Qh2xg2+**
21.Kf1-e2 **Nc5-d7**
22.Ke2-d2 **Ng4xf2**

Capturing a third pawn restores rough material equality but the initiative continues.

23.Be1xf2 **Qg2xf2+**
24.Bc4-e2 **Nd7-e5**
25.Rd1-f1 **Qf2-h2**

The queen is well placed here as the Black bishop controls the h1 square and so it can't be hassled by the White rooks.

26.Nc3-b5

If White meets the threat of Ne5-c4+ by playing 26.Kd2-e1 Bb7-g2 troubles the White rook.

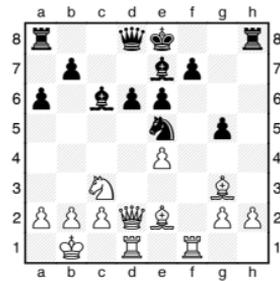
26... **Bb7-d5**
27.Qa2-b1 **Ne5-c4+**
28.Rc1xc4 **Rc8xc4**
29.Nb5-c3

29.Qb1-e1 was better, although now that the material balance is in Black's favour, the win should not be too difficult. Now Karel uses another petit combination to finish off the game.

29... **Rc4xc3**
30.Kd2xc3 **e6-e5**
31.Nd4-f5 **Qh2xe2**
32.Nf5-e7+ **Kg8-h8**
33.Rf1-d1

After 33.Ne7xd5 Rf8-c8+ 34.Kc3-b3 Qe2-c4+, the knight is regained.

33... **Qe2-c4+**
34.Kc3-d2 **Bd5-f3**
0-1



Asrian, K - Galliamova, A
Aeroflot op Moscow 2002

16... **b7-b5**

Galliamova should have played 16...Qd8-a5 aiming to castle long.

17.Bg3xe5 **d6xe5**
18.Be2-h5 **Be7-f6**

If 18...Rh8xh5 19.Qd2-e2 wins material, and 18...Qd8xd2 19.Bh5xf7+ is a very unpleasant intermediate check.

19.Qd2-f2 **Qd8-e7**
20.g2-g4 **Rh8-h6**
21.h2-h4 **b5-b4**

The pawn can't be captured as after 21...g5xh4 22.g4-g5 Rh6xh5 23.g5xf6 Qe7-a7 24.Rf1-g1 Rh5-h8 25.Qf2xh4 the f6 pawn means the queen can't be captured.

22.h4xg5 **b4xc3**
23.Qf2-b6

A very important point that had to be foreseen in advance, the blunder 23.g5xh6 Qe7-b4 allows Black to turn the tables.

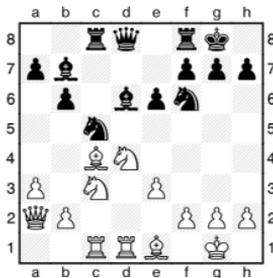
23... **Bc6-b5**
24.g5xh6 **Ke8-f8**

Now 24...Qe7-b4 25.Qb6xe6+ exploits the pin to destroy the black position.

25.Rf1-f2 **Kf8-g8**
26.Qb6-d6

The exchange of queens ends all resistance.

26... **Ra8-f8**
27.h6-h7+ **Kg8xh7**
1-0



CHESS

June 28th 2008

Michael Adams

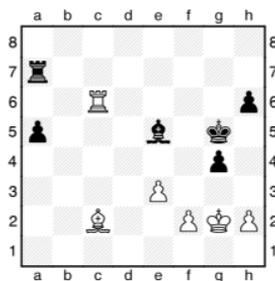


Young gun fast-tracks it to the top

The chess careers of young talents often conform to the pattern of a period of improvement followed by a plateau, before further substantial progress. Magnus Carlsen's career seems to be going along similar lines — but without the plateaux. His latest success was his recent victory in the Aerosvit tournament, held in Foros in The Ukraine.

It is interesting that his growing reputation is intimidating even very high-rated opponents. On the rare occasions that he was standing worse, Carlsen's adversaries seemed very keen to settle for half a point.

His style is quite "universal", and he is excellent at maintaining the pressure throughout the game.



Carlsen, M - Shirov, A
Aerosvit Foros 2008

Carlsen had been putting on the big squeeze in this opposite-coloured bishop-ending for quite a while, and finally gets his reward as his time-troubled opponent cracks due to the tension.

59... a5-a4

It was safer to play 59...h6-h5 so the Black king can hide on h4 if required.

60.Rc6-g6+ Kg5-h5
61.Rg6-e6 Be5-g7

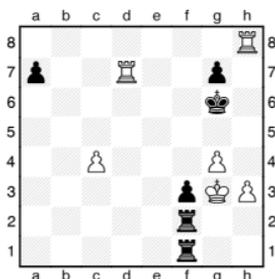
A terrible blunder. 61...Be5-b8 keeping the White king back should hold on.

62.Kg2-g3

Now there is nothing to be done.

62... Ra7-a5
63.Bc2-g6+ Kh5-g5

and Shirov resigned as White has a pleasant choice between 64.f2-f4+ g4xf3 65.h2-h4 mate, or 64.h2-h4+ g4xh3 65.f2-f4 mate.



Shirov, A - Svidler, P
Aerosvit Foros 2008

In this double-rook ending, Alexei Shirov closes an unusual mating net around the Black king.

39.Rh8-g8 Rf2-g2+

After 39...Rf2-c2 40.Rg8xg7+ Kg6-f6 41.Rd7-f7+ Kf6-e6 42.Rf7xf3, the extra pawns decide.

40.Kg3-f4

The White king controls some key squares and suddenly there is no escape.

40... f3-f2

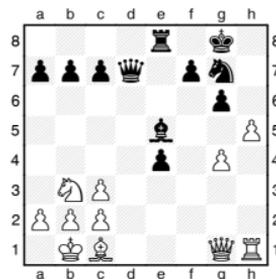
40...Rg2-c2 41.Rg8xg7+ Kg6-h6 42.Kf4-f5 tightens the noose.

41.Rg8xg7+ Kg6-f6
42.Rg7-h7 Kf6-e6

42...Kf6-g6 43.Rd7-g7+ Kg6-f6 44.Rg7xa7 Kf6-g6 45.Rh7-b7 leaves the monarch to await his fate.

43.Kf4-g5

and Black resigned as the threat of Rh7-e7 mate can only be delayed very briefly.



Karjakin, S - Jakovenko, D
Aerosvit Foros 2008

Karjakin had produced some in-depth preparation in this topical Petroff line, and Black's position is unenviable.

30... g6xh5

A strange decision. Opening the 'g' file is clearly hazardous; 30...b7-b6 was better.

31.g4xh5 Kg8-h8

The alternative 31...Kg8-h7 provides a safer spot for the monarch.

32.Qg1-g5 f7-f6

Now 32...Qd7-f5 33.h5-h6 Qf5xg5 34.h6xg7+ wins a piece due to the intermediate check.

33.Qg5-h6+ Kh8-g8
34.Rh1-g1 Qd7-f7
35.Nb3-d4 f6-f5
36.Bc1-f4 Be5xf4
37.Qh6xf4

Simplification should be desirable for the defender, but White's remaining forces coordinate too effectively.

37... Kg8-h7
38.Rg1-g6 Re8-e7

There is not time to push the pawn as 38...e4-e3 39.Qf4-h6+ Kh7-g8 40.Nd4xf5 is curtains.

39.Qf4-h6+ Kh7-g8
40.Qh6-g5 Kg8-h7
41.Nd4xf5 Ng7xf5
42.Rg6-f6

Black resigned as 42...Qf7-g7 43.Qg5xf5+ Kh7-h8 44.Rf6-f8+ wins the house.