

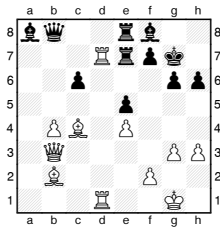
Michael Adams



Blood and thunder, thud and blunder

There was a busy end to the year chess-wise with the first Pearl Spring Super Tournament in Nanjing, China, which was a great success for Veselin Topalov and took his rating well north of 2800.

It was also time for the 3rd FIDE Grand Prix, which was transferred from Doha to Elista less than three weeks before the scheduled start. Fortunately, the level of play has been considerably better than the level of organisation and it was easy for me to select a number of interesting encounters from the event.

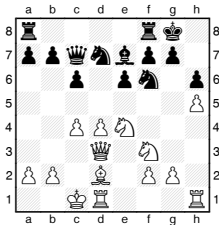


Cheparinov, I - Alekseev, E
Elista 2008

White is in complete control and finds a nice way to finish off the game with a spectacular queen sacrifice.

32.Qb3-f3 c6-c5
33.Qf3xf7+ Re7xf7
34.Rd7xf7+ Kg7-h8
35.Rd1-d7

Black resigned as 35...Re8-e7 36.Rf7xe7 Bf8xe7 37.Rd7xe7 creates an unanswerable threat of Bb2xe5+.



Bacrot, E - Leko, P
Elista 2008

17.g2-g4

A standard idea to open lines on the kingside, but rare in this exact situation.

17... Nf6xg4
18.Qd3-e2 f7-f5
19.Rd1-g1 Ra8-e8

Capturing the knight was another possibility, 19...f5xe4 20.Qe2xe4 Nd7-f6 21.Qe4xe6+ Rf8-f7 22.Nf3-e5 Ng4xe5 23.d4xe5 leads to a complicated position.

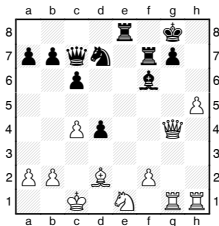
20.Nf3-e1 e6-e5

The thematic 20...c6-c5 was an interesting alternative pawn break.

21.Ne4-g3 e5xd4
22.Ng3xf5 Rf8xf5

More complications ensue after 22...Be7-g5 23.Qe2xg4 Nd7-e5.

23.Qe2xg4 Rf5-f7
24.Bd2xh6 Be7-f6
25.Bh6-d2



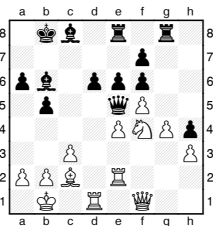
The Black queen edges closer to the White king and it is a question of which side can strike first.

29.h5-h6 Qc5-a3+
30.Kc1-d1 Qa3xa2

The players have skilfully threaded their way through a minefield of complications so far, but now one blunder is enough to lose in this razor-sharp position. After the correct 30...g7-g6 31.Ne1xd3 Qa3xa2, things are still not that clear.

31.Qe4-h7+

This beautiful queen sacrifice brings down the curtain on proceedings, Black resigns as 31...Kg8xh7 (or 31...Kg8-f8 32.Bd2-b4+) 32.h6xg7+ leads to mate shortly.



Gashimov, V - Mamedyarov, S
Elista 2008

Lulled by a long period of manoeuvring, Black calmly retreats his bishop, allowing a neat riposte.

29... Bb6-c7
30.Nf4-d3 Qe5-g3
31.Nd3-f4

The knight returns to embarrass the queen. It's normally quite difficult to corner the most powerful piece, but here the trap has snapped shut.

31... Bc7-b6

There is no escape after 31...e6xf5 32.Rd1-d3, and creating flight-squares by playing 31...d6-d5 32.Nf4-h5 also leads to decisive material loss.

32.Rd1-e1

Black resigns as the threat of Re2-g2 is rather awkward and 32...e6-e5 33.Nf4-h5 also traps the lady.

25... Nd7-e5
26.Qg4-e2 d4-d3
27.Qe2-e4 Qc7-b6
28.b2-b3 Qb6-c5

Michael Adams



Elegant ripostes in the battle of Hastings

The annual Hastings Congress spans the death of the old year and the birth of the new one. This year some more subsidiary sponsors have been found to add to the loyal support given by the local Hastings Borough Council, resulting in a slightly stronger field than usual.

Two players to keep an eye on are the top-seeded Emanuel Berg from Sweden and our own David Howell, whose rating has now surged through the 2600 barrier reflecting his excellent form last year. They are both well-placed to contend for the top positions at the moment. Here we see a pretty miniature from the young Swedish player against another homegrown young talent.

This additional pawn move is too time consuming, 7.Bc1-b2 was better.

7... Nc6xe5
8.Nf3xd4 Bf8-c5
9.Bc1-b2 Qd8-h4

Taking the pawn with 9...Ne5xc4 was good, but Berg rightly tries to maximise the gains from his very promising opening with this aggressive move.

10.e2-e3 Bc8-g4
11.Qd1-c2

Gordon would have been happy to develop but the variation 11.Bf1-e2 Ne5xc4 12.Bb2-c3 Nc4xe3 is rather problematic.

11... 0-0-0
12.Bf1-e2

Surprisingly, the bishop move loses by force, the alternative 12.Nb1-d2 seems to ask for a sacrificial denouement, but perhaps 12...Bc5xd4 13.Bb2xd4 Rd8xd4 14.e3xd4 Rh8-e8 15.d4xe5 Re8xe5+ 16.Nd2-e4 is not that clear cut, albeit extremely dangerous.

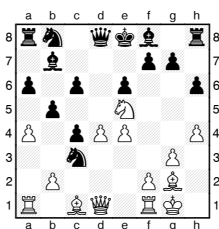
12... Bg4xe2
13.Qc2xe2

Throwing in a check doesn't help: 13.Qc2-f5+ Kc8-b8 14.Ke1xe2 Bc5xd4 15.Bb2xd4 Rd8xd4 16.e3xd4 Qh4xd4 is also calamitous.

13... Bc5xd4
14.Bb2xd4 Rd8xd4
15.e3xd4 Qh4xd4

White resigned as after 16.Ra1-a2 Ng6-f4 the Black horses reign supreme.

**Williams, S - Lock, G
Hastings 2009**



12.Qd1-f3

A typically inventive idea from Williams.

12... Nc3-e2+
13.Kg1-h2 Qd8-f6

13...Qd8-c7 14.Qf3xe2 Nb8-d7 aiming to exchange the powerful knight was much better.

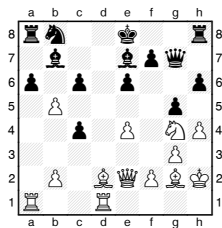
14.Qf3xe2 g7-g5

This game was played on New Year's day so we shouldn't judge this move too harshly, but creating huge weaknesses while failing to complete his development is not a very wise strategy, particularly against a strong attacking player.

15.Ne5-g4 Qf6xd4

Suicidally, opening even more lines 15...Qf6-e7 was indicated.

16.Rf1-d1 Qd4-g7
17.Bc1-d2 Bf8-e7
18.a4xb5



18... 0-0

Neither pawn recapture is playable 18...c6xb5 19.Bd2-c3 f7-f6 20.e4-e5 crashes through, or 18...a6xb5 19.Ra1xa8 Bb7xa8 20.Rd1-a1 Ba8-b7 21.Ra1-a7 wins material, but now Black's position is collapsing in any case.

19.Bd2-c3 f7-f6
20.Qe2xc4 Kg8-h8
21.h4xg5 h6xg5
22.Rd1-h1

A nice touch, Williams brings his rook into the action in an unusual way.

22... Qg7-f7
23.Kh2-g1+ Kh8-g7
24.b5xc6 Nb8xc6
25.Ng4-h6

Black resigned as 25...Qf7-e8 26.Qc4xe6 doesn't look like a promising position to start the year with.

**Gordon, S - Berg, E
Hastings 2009**

5.a2-a3

5.g2-g3 is the main line, this move cuts out possibilities of an annoying check on b4, but doesn't further White's development.

5... Ng8-e7
6.b2-b4 Ne7-g6
7.b4-b5

5... Ng8-e7
6.b2-b4 Ne7-g6
7.b4-b5

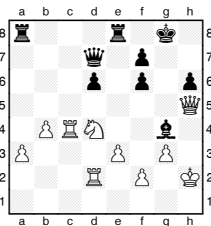
Michael Adams



Bowled over by Svidler's speedy start

The emergence of Magnus Carlsen has created more activity in his home country of Norway and recently they held an interesting four-player rapid event there. However, it wasn't the local hero or quick chess specialist Hikaru Nakamura who triumphed, but Peter Svidler.

A good start to the year for Svidler, with a tournament victory and his personal favourite pick, Andrew Strauss, being appointed England cricket captain. He needed just a little bit of luck in the game below.



**Lie, K - Svidler, P
Gjovik 2009**

30.Rc4-c7

White is easily winning with extra material and Black's remaining pawns are isolated and weak. Either 30.Qh5xh6, or 30.Qh5-h4 should be good enough, but Lie thinks he can see a way to keep the initiative at the cost of an exchange.

30... Re8-e5

Svidler declines the offer and fights back by upping the confusion level.

31.Qh5-h4

Better was 31.Qh5xe5 f6xe5 32.Rc7xd7 Bg4xd7 33.Nd4-c2 Bd7-f5 when Black has slim chances to hang on.

**31... Qd7xc7
32.Qh4xg4+ Re5-g5
33.Qg4-f3 Ra8xa3
34.Nd4-f5**

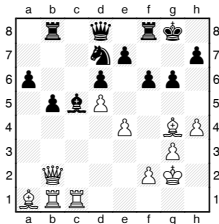
By now, the win has slipped away as if 34.Qf3xf6 Qc7-c1 35.Qf6xh6 Rg5-g6 turns the tables.

**34... Qc7-c1
35.Rd2xd6 Ra3-a1
36.Nf5xh6+ Kg8-h7
37.Rd6xf6**

The final blunder after 37.Nh6xf7 Qc1-g1+ 38.Kh2-h3 Qg1-f1+ 39.Kh3-h2, it would be a draw by perpetual check.

37... Rg5-h5+

White resigned as Svidler's next move will be Qc1-h1 mate in any event. This possibility would not have worked in the last variation as the rook could be captured with check.



**Nakamura, H - Lie, K
Gjovik 2009**

The computer is fond of Black's two extra pawns, but in a rapid-game this is a treacherous position for a carbon-based life form to negotiate.

**25... Nd7-e5
26.Bg4-e6+**

An unusual but very powerful post for the White bishop.

**26... Kg8-g7
27.Qb2-e2 Qd8-b6
28.f2-f4 Ne5-f7
29.h4-h5 Rb8-b7**

It is not easy to work out the best way to defend. Lie tries to bring his rook into play along

the 'c' file, but it becomes apparent that it is needed on the back rank. Advancing his passed pawns with 29...b5-b4, also introducing the extra option of challenging the White queen by playing Qb6-b5 was probably a much wiser option.

**30.h5xg6 h7xg6
31.Rc1-h1 Bc5-d4
32.f4-f5**

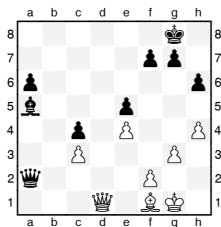
The paradoxical 32.Be6xf7 was also very interesting, 32...Rf8xf7 (or 32...Kg7xf7 33.Rh1-h7+ Kf7-e8 34.Rb1-c1) 33.Kg2-f3 preparing Qe2-h2 looks dangerous.

32... Bd4xa1

Black could survive and maybe even prosper in the long term with 32...Nf7-g5 33.f5xg6 Rb7-b8 now it ends quickly.

**33.Qe2-g4 Nf7-g5
34.Qg4-h4**

Black resigned as his monarch is fatally boxed in.



**Carlsen, M - Svidler, P
Gjovik 2009**

35.Qd1-d5

The crucial moment from the final after the stronger 35.Qd1-d7 White has at least perpetual check, but Carlsen had forgotten about the simple move.

35... Ba5-b6

Suddenly it is not possible to defend f2 and after

**36.Kg1-h2 Qa2xf2+
37.Bf1-g2 a6-a5
38.Qd5xc4 Qf2-c5**

Svidler's technique was good enough for the point and also the tournament several moves later.

Michael Adams



Grandmaster chess guru still Keene after all these years

I first played in a tournament arranged by Raymond Keene back when I was a teenager and have continued to do so frequently up to the present day, including the last three Staunton Memorial Tournaments.

Unfortunately, few seem to have Ray's happy knack of attracting financial support into the game. As Ray retired from active play prematurely in 1983, it is easy to forget what a strong player he was. I reminded myself by flicking through *Grandmaster Strategy*, the collection of his best games. Ray liked to maintain control and build up positional advantages when possible, but he was also capable of more aggressive action as in the attractive victory below.

stages, computers find it hard to recognise the extent of the troubles Black is facing.

18.f4-f5 **e6xf5**
19.Nb3-d4 **Qd8-d7**
20.Bg2-h3 **g7-g6**

Up until now, White has only parted with a pawn but now much more wood is thrown on the fire enabling White's few remaining pieces to become monsters.

21.Bh3xf5 **g6xf5**
22.Ra1-a7

White continues to part with material, this spectacular move gives up a whole rook to draw the Black queen into forking range.

22... **Qd7xa7**
23.Nd4xc6 **Qa7-d7**

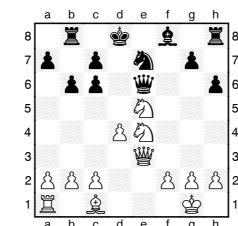
Kovacevic was faced with a very difficult choice, but the only chance was 23...Be7-a3 garnering a lot of material for the queen. After 24.Nc6xa7 Ba3xb2 25.c2-c4, the exposed Black king and the poor coordination of his pieces mean that White is considerably better, a sample line is 25...Bb2-a3 26.Na7-b5 Rf8-e8 27.Qe2-d2 Ba3-f8 28.c4-c5 when the initiative shows no sign of abating.

24.Nc6xe7+ **Kg8-g7**
25.Qe2-h5

There is no good way to meet the twin threats of Ne7xf5+ and Qh5-g5+.

1-0

Although he has not played actively for a long time, Ray still follows current games with an impressively critical eye, as evidenced by this game from the Staunton Memorial where he spotted a deadly tactical possibility that passed both players by.

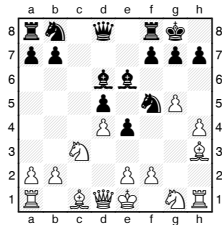


Short, N - Timman, J
Staunton Memorial 2008

In the game Nigel played **19.Qe3-b3** which kept an edge, but later lost on time, despite still having

a good position. Ray spotted the bone-crushing interference 19.Ne4-d6 winning easily after 19...c7xd6 (or 19...Qe6xd6 20.Ne5-f7+) 20.Ne5xc6+ when the unusual position of the Black rook on b8 seals his fate.

We finish with another of Ray's games against another talented player with a less classical style.



Basman, M - Keene, R
Manchester 1981

Basman had essayed his favourite Grob (1.g2-g4) and his position is already not a pretty sight. Now he spies a tactical possibility that rebounds due to his ill-developed forces.

11.Nc3xd5
The other way to grab the pawn, 11.Bh3xf5 Be6xf5 12.Nc3xd5 (12.Ng1-h3 at least gets his bits out.) 12...Qd8-a5+ 13.Nd5-c3 Nb8-c6 gives Black more than enough compensation.

11... **Nf5-g3**

This blow must have been underestimated in order to maintain material equality; White's king becomes exposed.

12.Nd5-f6+ **g7xf6**
13.f2xg3 **Bd6xg3+**
14.Ke1-f1 **Nb8-c6**

15.Bc1-e3
15.Kf1-g2 Bg3-c7 16.Bh3xe6 f7xe6 17.Ng1-h3 was the lesser evil. Now Ray spots a peach of a square for his knight.

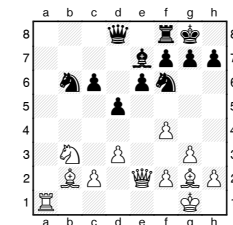
15... **Nc6-b4**
16.Kf1-g2 **Nb4-d5**

17.Kg2xg3
17.Be3-c1 would have kept things going a bit longer.

17... **Nd5xe3**
18.Qd1-d2 **Qd8-d6+**
19.Kg3-f2 **Qd6-f4+**
20.Ng1-f3

Developing the knight is mandatory as 20.Kf2-e1 Qf4xh4 is mate.

20... **e4xf3**
White resigned as 21.Qd2xe3 Qf4xh4+ 22.Kf2xf3 Be6-d5+ forces the queen to intercede.



Keene, R - Kovacevic, V
Amsterdam 1973

Black's position looks reasonably solid, but Ray unleashes a lengthy forcing sequence, including several sacrifices which concludes in a fatal assault on the apparently securely defended Black monarch. The depth of the sequence is such that in the early

Michael Adams



Rewards of a traditional game plan in troubled times

It is always gives me a reassuring feeling to start the chess year at the Corus Tournament in Wijk aan Zee. The organisers' magical recipe of blending fine tradition with the occasional innovation always makes this one of the most hospitable tournaments to compete in.

The sponsorship for the event is the most enduring in chess and players everywhere are grateful in the knowledge that, in these financially troubled times, Corus's commitment to the tournament remains strong and is guaranteed until at least 2013.

20... **Kd7-e8**

Black's pieces cover all the key squares around his king.

21.Qg8-g4 **Qa7-c5**

22.a2-a3

22.Rd1-d4 is met by the strong 22...h7-h5 embarrassing White's queen.

22... **Rb4xb2**

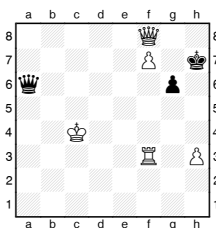
Vassily finds a radical way to deal with the threat to his rook, sacrificing it to conclude matters.

23.Kc1xb2 **Qc5xa3+**

24.Kb2-b1 **Qa3-b3+**

25.Kb1-a1 **c4-c3**

White resigns as 26.Rd1-b1 Qb3-a3 is mate and 26.Rd1-d2 c3xd2 27.Nf3xd2 Qb3-c3+ wins most of white's remaining army.



Kamsky, G - Stellwagen, D
Corus A 2009

63... **Qa1-a6+**

A curious ending to this game; Black has just desperately jettisoned a rook to try and set up perpetual check, but although there is no cover for the white king, the possibility to interpose with either queen or rook looks as though it should win fairly easily. However, Kamsky was not able to solve the problem despite lots of time on the clock.

64.Kc4-c3

The path to victory requires centralisation! It takes a long time, but after 64.Kc4-d4 Qa6-a4+ (64...Qa6-a1+ 65.Rf3-c3 Qa1-g1+ 66.Kd4-d5 Qg1-g2+ 67.Kd5-c5 Qg2-g1+ 68.Kc5-c6 Qg1-g2+ 69.Kc6-c7 Qg2-h2+ 70.Qf8-d6 is a bit shorter) 65.Kd4-e3 Qa4-a7+ 66.Ke3-e2 Qa7-a2+ 67.Ke2-f1 Qa2-c4+ 68.Kf1-f2 Qc4-h4+ 69.Kf2-e3 Qh4-e1+ 70.Ke3-d4 Qe1-d2+ 71.Kd4-c4 Qd2-e2+ 72.Rf3-d3 Qe2-e4+ 73.Kc4-c5 Qe4-e5+ 74.Kc5-c6 Qe5-e4+ 75.Kc6-b6 White wins as if 75... Qe4xd3 76.Qf8-g8+ Kh7-h6

77.f7-f8Q+ comes with check.

64... **Qa6-a1+**

65.Kc3-b3 **Qa1-b1+**

66.Kb3-a4 **Qb1-e4+**

67.Qf8-b4

Kamsky could retrace his steps beginning with 67.Ka4-b5 and transpose to the winning method above, but was understandably confused by the lengthy variations and allows Stellwagen to complete the great escape.

67... **Qe4-a8+**

68.Ka4-b5 **Qa8-b7+**

69.Kb5-a5

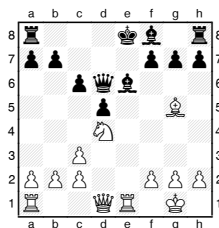
If 69.Kb5-c5 Qb7xf3 the king impedes the control of the queening-square, and 69.Kb5-c4 Qb7-e4+ keeps the checks going.

69... **Qb7-a7+**

70.Ka5-b5 **Qa7-b7+**

71.Kb5-c4 **Qb7-e4+**

½-½



Short, N - L'Ami, E
Corus B 2009

13... **c6-c5**

Black's opening play in this game was ill advised and now the best hope is evacuating the centre immediately with 13... Ke8-d7 14.Qd1-f3 Ra8-e8.

14.Nd4xe6 **f7xe6**

15.Qd1-h5+ **g7-g6**

16.Qh5-g4 **Ke8-f7**

Running the other way leads to trouble down the 'd' file 16...Ke8-d7 17.Ra1-d1 Ra8-e8 18.c3-c4 d5-d4 19.Bg5-f6 Rh8-g8 20.Bf6xd4 is also catastrophic.

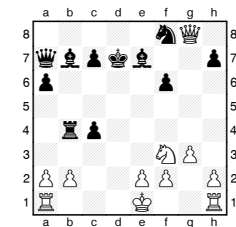
17.c3-c4 **d5-d4**

17...Bf8-g7 was slightly more respectable 18.c4xd5 Rh8-e8 would have completed development albeit with a decisive material disadvantage.

18.Qg4-f3+ **Kf7-g8**

19.Bg5-f6

Black resigned as 19...Bf8-g7 20.Qf3xb7 wins the exchange and several pawns.



Wang Yue - Ivanchuk, V
Corus A 2009

20.0-0-0+

Castling with check is normally a good idea but here it leaves the monarch stranded on the queenside. It was much better to transfer the king the other way: 20.0-0 when it is shielded by an impressive pawn formation and both sides have their chances.

Michael Adams

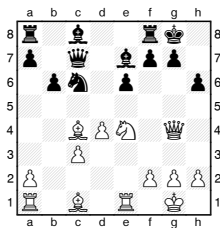


Young guns go for it at the last gasp

The Corus event ended in a triumph for youth with teenagers Sergei Karjakin and Fabiano Caruana winning the A and B groups respectively due to dramatic last-round wins.

The English challenge was not too successful, I had a tough time and Nigel Short sadly blundered away his chances to win the B group in the dying seconds. However, he could still be pleased with a good performance overall.

David Howell had a terrible start but recovered reasonably well and won a nice miniature below.



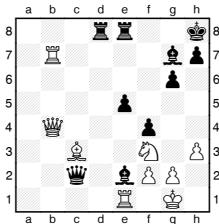
Howell, D - Bitalzadeh, A
Corus C 2009

15... Kg8-h7
16.Bc1xh6 Kh7xh6

The other capture is also disastrous after 16...g7xh6 17.Ne4-f6+ Be7xf6 18.Bc4-d3+ Kh7-h8 19.Qg4-e4 there is no good way to cover h7.

17.Qg4-h3+ Kh6-g6
18.g2-g4

Black resigned as there is no sensible way to prevent Qh3-h5 mate.

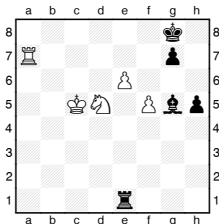


Carlsen, M - Dominguez Perez, L
Corus A 2009

The conclusion to this game shows the power of a rook on the seventh rank.

36.Nf3xe5 Bg7xe5
37.Bc3xe5+ Re8xe5
38.Qb4xf4 Qc2-f5
The threats of Qf4-h6, Qf4-f6+ and Qf4xe5+ are too many to meet.

39.Qf4-h6
Black resigned as 39...Rd8-d7 40.Rb7xd7 Qf5xd7 41.Qh6-f8 is mate.



Wang Yue - Carlsen, M
Corus A 2009

60... Re1-e5
A careless move just at the time control, 60...g7-g6 liquidating material was an easy draw as rook and knight can't win against a rook.

61.f5-f6
This clever breakthrough decides the game.

61... Bg5xf6
There are a number of possibilities, but no way to escape if 61...Bg5-e3+ 62.Kc5-d6 Be3xa7 (62...Re5xe6+ 63.Kd6xe6 Be3xa7 64.Nd5-e7+ enables White to promote his pawn) 63.Nd5-e7+ Kg8-h7 64.f6-f7 Ba7-c5+ 65.Kd6-d7 also

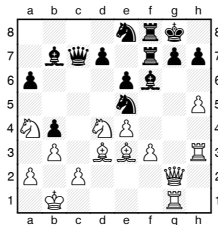
queens and 61...Re5xe6 62.Ra7xg7+ wins the bishop.

62.Kc5-d6
Now the awkward placement of Black's pieces means that the bishop must be exchanged when the 'e' pawn will cost Carlsen his rook.

62... Re5-f5
63.Nd5xf6+ Rf5xf6
64.Kd6-d7 h5-h4
65.e6-e7 Rf6-f7
66.Kd7-d8 Kg8-h7
67.Ra7-a6

Black resigned as 67...Rf7xe7 68.Kd8xe7 g7-g5 69.Ke7-f6 Kh7-h6 70.Kf6-f5+ Kh6-h5 71.Ra6-a8 picks off the pawns.

We finish with a crisp victory for the tournament winner. This impressive win in the first round set the tone for his event.



Karjakin, S - Morozevich, A
Corus A 2009

22.Na4-b2
Karjakin takes the time to bring his offside knight over to join the massed ranks of attackers on the kingside.

22... Ne5-c6
Moving the well-placed knight is not a good idea, it was better to try and activate his comrade with 22...Ne8-d6.

23.Nd4xc6 Qc7xc6
24.Nb2-c4 d7-d5
25.e4xd5 e6xd5
26.h5-h6

This pawn move caused Morozevich to resign a bit prematurely, it would have been nice to see a finish like 26...g7-g6 (or 26...d5xc4 27.Bd3xh7+ Kg8-h8 28.Bh7-e4) 27.Bd3xg6 h7xg6 28.Qg2xg6+ Kg8-h8 29.Qg6-g7+ Rf7xg7 30.h6xg7+ Kh8-g8 31.Rh3-h8+.

Michael Adams

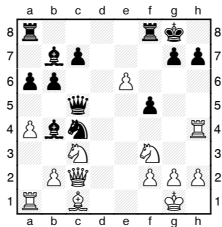


Between the Rock and a hard place

A stay at the Caleta Hotel in Gibraltar in February provides the opportunity to combine a welcome respite from the miserable weather with an interesting tournament in the shadow of the great Rock.

It was an especially pleasant experience for Peter Svidler who continued his good start to 2009 by defeating Vadim Milov in a tie-break to win the Gibtelecom Masters and take the credit crunch busting £15,000 first prize.

Ivan Sokolov gave an unusual simultaneous, playing in the Gibraltar event while delivering his verdict on the "Sokolov Expert Prize", which was awarded to the most striking game of each day in Wijk aan Zee. In this slugfest from the early rounds his opponent outwits him in a very sharp game.



**Sokolov, I - Golod, V
Gibtelecom Masters 2009**

17.Nc3-a2

Ivan could have exploited the loose position of Black's minor pieces with the precise 17.e6-e7 Rf8-e8 18.Qc2-b3 b6-b5 19.a4xb5 a6xb5 20.Ra1xa8

Bb7xa8 21.Bc1-e3 Qc5xe7 22.Nc3xb5 Ba8-d5 23.Rh4xc4 when the 2 pieces are more valuable than a rook.

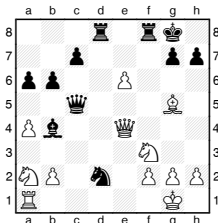
**17... Bb7-e4
18.Rh4xe4 f5xe4
19.Qc2xe4 Ra8-d8**

19...Ra8-e8 keeping an eye on the passed 'e' pawn was safer, but this aggressive option pays dividends in the game.

20.Bc1-g5

The computer suggests the spectacular desperado 20.Bc1-h6, the bishop can not be captured as 20...g7xh6 21.e6-e7 Qc5xe7 22.Qe4xc4+ mops up. The tactical point is revealed after 20...Nc4-d2 21.Qe4xb4, Black's best bet is 20...Rf8-f6 and the complications continue.

20... Nc4-d2



21.Bg5xd2

In contrast to the variation above, 21.Qe4xb4 Nd2xf3+ 22.g2xf3 Qc5xg5+ is no longer playable due to the loose bishop.

**21... Rd8xd2
22.Ra1-f1**

This blunder turns the game in Golod's favour, 22.Nf3xd2 Qc5xf2+ 23.Kg1-h1 Bb4xd2 24.h2-h3 is not especially clear.

**22... Rd2xb2
23.Na2-c1 Rb2xf2**

For the concluding moves of the game, this rook resembles a wrecking ball.

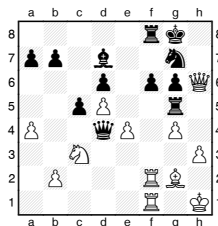
24.Nc1-d3

It was no better to play 24.Rf1xf2 Qc5xc1+ 25.Nf3-e1 Qc1xe1+ when Black emerges a lot of material ahead.

24... Rf2xf3+
A deadly discovered check.

0-1

Defending Champion, Hikaru Nakamura, had a chance to get into the tiebreak for first with a late run just as in last year's event. However, he missed a good opportunity in this final-round game between two very strong young talents.



**Nakamura, H - Gashimov, V
Gibtelecom Masters 2009**

30.Qh6xg5

Nakamura starts an exchange of tactical shots, but the reduction in material allows Gashimov to escape. The correct way to break through was the thematic 30.e4-e5 Qd4xe5 freeing up an important central square for the White knight after 31.Nc3-e4 the awkward position of the Black rook is decisive. Taking with the rook also fails 30...Rg5xe5 31.Rf2-f4 Qd4-e3 32.Qh6xg6 is hopeless as all White's pieces are ready to join in the assault.

**30... Qd4xf2
31.Qg5xg6**

Heading for the endgame with 31.Rf1xf2 f6xg5 32.Rf2-e2 Rf8-e8 33.e4-e5 Re8xe5 34.Re2xe5 d6xe5 35.Nc3-e4 was an interesting try to keep the game alive.

**31... Qf2xb2
32.e4-e5**

The piece sacrifice 32.Rf1xf6 Qb2xc3 33.Rf6xf8+ Kg8xf8 34.Qg6xd6+ Kf8-e8 does not lead anywhere.

**32... Qb2xc3
33.e5xf6 Rf8-f7
34.f6xg7 Rf7xf1+**
35.Bg2xf1

Both kings are so exposed perpetual check from one side or the other seems inevitable.

**35... Qc3-f3+
36.Bf1-g2 Qf3-f4
37.Bg2-e4 Qf4-f1+
½-½**

CHESS

February 21st 2009

Michael Adams

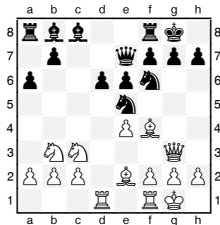


Pressure builds as challengers jockey to take on the champ

Today sees the fourth game of the important Kamsky – Topalov Candidates match which is being held in Sofia, Bulgaria. I won't bore you with the absurd intricacies of FIDE's organisation of the World Championship cycle, but we can be reasonably certain that with a following wind, the winner of this encounter will get to challenge World Champion Vishy Anand.

Writing before the start, it seems to me that the match may well be closer than expected. Although Topalov will rightly start favourite due to his excellent recent form and home advantage in Sofia, Kamsky is a gritty fighter who constantly excels in match play.

Let's see both of them in recent action:



Berg, E - Topalov, V
Dresden Olympiad 2008

14.Bf4-e3

Berg gets ready to advance into enemy territory but it would have been wiser to clamp down

on the Black queenside with 14.a2-a4.

14... b7-b5
15.f2-f4 Ne5-c4
16.Be2xc4 b5xc4
17.Nb3-d2 Bc8-b7

The bishop develops onto an effective post looking down the sensitive long light-square diagonal.

18.e4-e5
18.Be3-d4 was a more modest option, but Berg continues to make full steam ahead.

18... d6xe5
19.f4xe5 Nf6-d5
20.Be3-g5
This proves too ambitious
20.Be3-d4 was required.

20... Qe7-c5+
21.Kg1-h1 f7-f5
22.Nd2-e4
It's not clear if this is desperation due to White's positional bankruptcy or a planned sacrifice. Although the attack fails it is a very close-run thing.

22... f5xe4
23.Nc3xe Rf8xf1+
24.Rd1xf1 Qc5-c7
It's necessary to cover g7 as 24...Qc5-c8 25.Bg5-h6 is too dangerous.

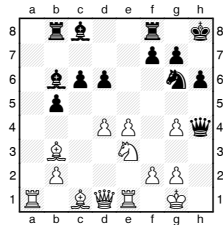
25.Qg3-g4
After this, White runs out of ammunition. 25.Ne4-d6 was a better try, however, 25...Bb8-a7 26.Qg3-h3 Qc7-d7 (26...Bb7-c8 27.Rf1-f8+ Kg8xf8 28.Qh3xh7 turns the tables) 27.Rf1-f7 Qd7xf7 28.Nd6xf7 Kg8xf7 29.Qh3xh7 Ra8-f8 leaves Black with too many pieces for the queen.

25... Qc7xe5
26.Qg4-h5 h7-h6
27.Qh5-f7+ Kg8-h7
28.Rf1-f4

The game is up 28.Ne4-g3 Qe5xg5 29.Qf7xb7 Bb8xg3 30.Qb7xa8 Bg3-d6 intending Qg5-e5 is decisive.

28... Nd5xf4
29.Ne4-f6+ Qe5xf6
30.Bg5xf6 Bb7xg2+
31.Kh1-g1 Bb8-a7+

White resigns as the queen has to be returned to prevent mate.



Kamsky, G - Morozevich, A
Corus A 2009

20... Qh4-f6
Given that White's knight is going to land on f5, 20...Ng6-e7 aiming to swap the black steed was worth considering.

21.Ne3-f5 Kh8-g8
22.Bc1-e3 Bc8xf5
After this capture, White's pawn mass reaches worrying proportions as Kamsky consistently uses exchanges to bring his foot soldiers towards the centre.

23.g4xf5 Ng6-e7
24.Bb3-c2 Rf8-d8
25.b2-b4 c6-c5
This clears the path for the White king's pawn 25...Rb8-a8 could have been tried.

26.b4xc5 d6xc5
27.Qd1-g4
27.e4-e5 Qf6-h4 is less clear so Kamsky ensures Black's queen will be driven away from the kingside.

27... Rd8xd4
Morozevich gives up the exchange to slow down the pawn avalanche, but he's fighting a losing battle.

28.Be3xd4 Qf6xd4
29.Qg4-g3 Ne7-c6
30.e4-e5
The storm clouds gather over the Black king.

30... c5-c4
31.Ra1-d1 Qd4-b2
32.f5-f6 g7-g5
33.Re1-e2 Qb2-b4
34.Qg3-h3

Morozevich resigned as 34...Qb4-f8 35.Qh3-f5 leaves Black helpless, it is rare to see such a convincing demolition of the mercurial Russian.

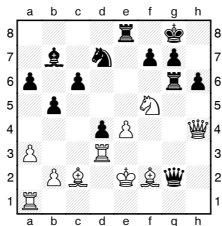
Michael Adams



Champion's error spells pain in Spain

The Linares tournament, being held entirely in the small Andalusian town this year, got off to a violent start with many interesting encounters in the first two rounds.

World champion Viswanathan Anand, back in action for the first time since winning the title, won his first game convincingly against Teimour Radjabov. The following day the pairing system had thrown up another game with the white pieces for Anand; we pick up the action with him favourably placed in a complex middle game.



Anand, V - Aronian, L
Linares 2009

33.Rd3-g3

Anand had two good continuations, but due to an error in his calculations, he enables Aronian to turn the tables. It wouldn't be easy to work out 33.Rd3xd4 Nd7-e5 (33...Rg6-g4 34.Nf5-e3 simplifies favourably) 34.Rd4-d8 Qg2-f3+ 35.Ke2-e1 Re8xd8 36.Qh4xd8+ Kg8-h7 37.Nf5-e7 Qf3-h1+ 38.Ke1-d2 Ne5-c4+ 39.Kd2-c3 Qh1-f3+ 40.Bc2-d3 when White's attack gets there first, ironically the pawn cover impedes the Black monarch. However, it is surprising he

rejected the direct 33.Nf5-e7+ Re8xe7 34.Qh4xe7 Rg6-f6 35.Ra1-f1 Qg2-g4+ 36.Ke2-e1 c6-c5 which allows Black to fight on, but the rook should be worth more than the pawns with White's king in relative safety.

33... Rg6xg3

34.Qh4xg3

Things have already gone wrong as 34.Nf5xg3 Nd7-e5 35.Qh4-h1 was also rather unpromising.

34... Re8xe4+

35.Ke2-d2

After 35.Bc2xe4 Qg2xe4+ Black picks up the loose knight.

35... Re4-g4

36.Qg3xg2 Rg4xg2

37.Kd2-e2 c6-c5

The smoke has cleared and Black has a material advantage and very active pieces.

38.Ra1-g1 Nd7-e5

39.Rg1xg2 Bb7xg2

40.Ke2-d2

If 40.b2-b4 Bg2-f3+ is awkward.

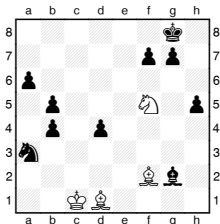
40... h6-h5

41.b2-b4 Ne5-c4+

42.Kd2-c1 Nc4xa3

43.Bc2-d1 c5xb4

A very rare position, Black has seven pawns for the piece!



44.Bd1xh5 g7-g6

45.Nf5-e7+ Kg8-f8

46.Ne7xg6+ f7xg6

47.Bh5xg6 Kf8-e7

48.Bf2xd4 Ke7-d6

Aronian's king arrives in time to secure the queenside pawns and victory is only a matter of time.

49.Bg6-d3 Na3-c4

50.Bd4-g7 a6-a5

51.Bd3-e2 Bg2-e4

52.Bg7-f6 a5-a4

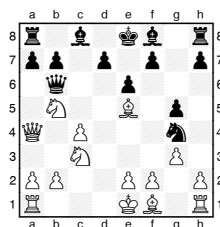
53.Bf6-g7 Kd6-d5

0-1

Complaining about how opening theory is damaging chess is hardly original, but it is noticeable that the number of games where players do not leave their home preparation for the duration of the struggle are on the increase.

The following theoretically important duel must have been quite frustrating for

Magnus Carlsen who followed his opponent's homework throughout.



Carlsen, M - Dominguez Perez, L
Linares 2009

10... Qb6xf2+

In last year's event, Leko, facing Aronian's new idea for the first time, had played 10...Ng4xe5 11.0-0-0 a7-a6 12.e2-e3 Ra8-b8 13.Nb5-d4 here, when the loose Black position gave White an edge.

11.Ke1-d1 Ng4xe5

12.Nb5-c7+ Ke8-d8

13.Nc7xa8 Qf2-d4+

14.Kd1-c2

If 14.Kd1-e1 Bf8-c5, the activity of Black's pieces, especially on the sensitive dark-squares, give sufficient counter chances. It is hard to believe that Black has enough for the sacrificed rook, but wherever the White king runs, he continues to be harassed for many moves to come.

14... Ne5xc4

15.Kc2-b3

Carlson seeing that his opponent, who spent less than five minutes on his clock for the whole game, was very well prepared and reluctant to venture the critical 15.e2-e4 Qd4-d2+ 16.Kc2-b3 Qd2xb2+ 17.Kb3xc4 d7-d5+ 18.Kc4-d3 (or 18.e4xd5 Bf8-g7) 18...Bf8-g7 when White has to choose from a large range of complicated possibilities. One crazy line showing the dangers of the position for the first player is 19.Ra1-d1 Qb2xc3+ 20.Kd3-e2 Bc8-d7 21.Qa4-b3 Qc3xb3 22.a2xb3 d5xe4 23.Ke2-e3 Kd8-e7 24.Na8-c7 Rh8-c8 25.Nc7-b5 a7-a6 26.Nb5-d4 Rc8-c3+ 27.Ke3-f2 e6-e5 and Black's many pawns and active pieces more than compensate for the rook.

15... Nc4-d2+

16.Kb3-c2 Nd2-c4

17.Kc2-b3 Nc4-d2+

18.Kb3-c2

½-½

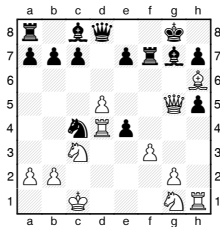
Michael Adams



Accusations stir up mud in Moscow

The biggest story of the Aeroflot Open was the withdrawal of top-seed Shakhriyan Mamedyarov, from Azerbaijan, who hinted in a protest letter that his opponent had made use of a computer during the game.

His adversary, the young Russian Igor Kurnosov, will be familiar here as the winner of this year's Hastings event. The accusation appears to be groundless as the game concluded a short not extremely difficult forcing sequence out of theory. Kurnosov might well never have left his home preparation, although it would certainly not be impossible to calculate the variations over the board. While players should report any suspicions to an arbiter, it is unacceptable to publicly throw mud without firm evidence.



Mamedyarov, S - Kurnosov, I
Aeroflot Open Moscow 2009

16... **Qd8-d6**
Previously Black had played the less impressive 16...Nc4-d6. Another interesting tactical possibility is 16...Nc4xb2 with the idea of 17.Kc1xb2 c7-c5 attacking the rook and menacing Qd8-b6+.

17.Bh6xg7

Taking the knight 17.Rd4xc4

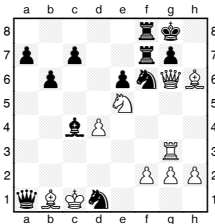
Qd6xh6 18.Qg5xh6 Bg7xh6+ 19.Kc1-b1 e4xf3 leaves Black material ahead.

17...
18.Qg5xh5
19.Kc1-b1
20.f3xe4

The better 20.Ng1-e2 e4xf3+ 21.Kb1-a1 Qf4-g5 is also good for Black.

20... **Bf5-g4**
21.Ng1-e2
If 21.Qh5-h6 Qf4-f2 22.Rd4xc4 Qf2-f1+ Black picks up the White rook.

21... **Qf4-d2**
This killer blow caused Mamedyarov to resign as 22.Rd4xd2 Nc4xd2+ 23.Kb1-c1 Bg4xh5 24.Rh1xh5 Nd2-c4 leaves Black the exchange up for nothing.



Zhigalko, A - Onischuk, A
Aeroflot Open Moscow 2009

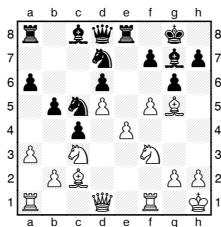
38... **Bc4-d3**
White's is able to beautifully sacrifice his queen to force mate after 39...Bc4-a2 40.Qg6xg7+ Rf7xg7 41.Rg3xg7+ Kg8-h8 42.Ne5-g6 mate. Onischuk at least avoids this but in fact a series of checks would have enabled him to reduce White's attacking potential effectively: 39...Qa1-b2+ 40.Kc1xd1 Qb2xd4+ 41.Kd1-c1 Qd4xe5 42.Bh6xg7 Qe5-e1+ 43.Kc1-b2 Qe1xf2+ 44.Bb1-c2 Qf2xg3 45.Qg6xg3 Rf7xg7 and the danger is averted with a decisive material edge.

40.Qg6xd3 **Nd1xf2**
There was still a draw available with 40...Nd1-c3 41.Bh6xg7 Qa1-a3+ 42.Kc1-c2 Qa3-a4+ 43.Kc2-c1 (White can't avoid the repetition: 43.Kc2xc3 Qa4-a3+ 44.Kc3-c2 Qa3xd3+) 43... Qa4-a3+ although it would be very difficult to find this on the last move of the time control.

41.Qd3-g6

Black resigned as he is forced

to hand the material advantage over to his opponent with 41... Nf2-d3+ 42.Rg3xd3 Qa1-a5 43.Bh6-d2 Qa5-b5 44.Rd3-f3 when the attack is irresistible.



Vitiugov, N - Maze, S
Aeroflot Open Moscow 2009

16... **Bg7-f6**
This looks like a good Benoni for Black as he has expanded on the queenside and secured some good squares for his knights. Still White will always have possibilities on the kingside and hence I think Maze should have preferred 16...Qd8-c7 retaining the defensive bishop.

17.h2-h4

This is a very clever pawn move after 17.Qd1-d2 Nd7-e5 Black frees his game.

17... **Nd7-e5**
However now this has a serious tactical flaw. It was better to play 17...Bc8-b7 not an ideal spot for the bishop but the rooks are connected safely.

18.Nf3xe5 **Re8xe5**
19.f5xg6 **Bf6xg5**
20.g6xf7+ **Kg8-f8**
21.Qd1-h5

I guess this was missed by Black, 21.h4xg5 Qd8xg5 is quite unclear but now the passed pawn on f7 combined with the marauding queen prove irresistible.

21... **Bc8-d7**
After 21...Bg5-f6 the direct 22.Qh5-h6+ Kf8xf7 23.Qh6xh7+ Kf7-e8 24.Qh7-g6+ Ke8-d7 25.Rf1xf6 is good enough.

22.Qh5xh7 **Bg5-f6**
23.Rf1-f4 **Bd7-h3**
23...Kf8-e7 allows Vitiugov a choice of wins 24.Rf4xf6 Ke7xf6 25.Ra1-f1+ Bd7-f5 26.g2-g4 when the pawn armada rules the waves is one of the prettiest.

24.Ra1-f1 **Nc5-d7**
25.g2xh3 **1-0**

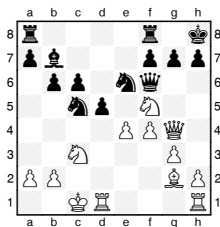
Michael Adams



Winner may regret showing mercy in Spain

Alexander Grischuk and Vassily Ivanchuk were worthy co-winners of this year's attractive Linares tournament. I wonder how Chukky will look back on his decision to grant Dominguez a mercy draw in round six; very generous compensation for some minor infringements he had earlier committed during the time scramble.

Grischuk, who took the title on tie-break, has an aggressive attacking style and provides further entertainment by running low on time in almost all his games. His strong nerve however, perhaps gained during his poker experiences, enabled him to navigate these crises with confidence as in the game below where his opponent takes a gamble partly based on the clock.



Radjabov, T - Grischuk, A **Linares 2009**

18.e4-e5

Radjabov could have regained his pawn with an equal game by playing 18.e4xd5 c6xd5 19.Bg2xd5, or tried the interesting 18.Nf5-d6, but he overestimates his position.

18... Qf6-g6

19.Qg4-h3

Challenging White's pawn centre and hassling the well-placed knight.

20.Nf5-h4
21.Nh4-f3
22.Bg2xh3
23.b2-b4

The queen exchange has reduced White's attacking potential, but 23.e5xf6 Rf8xf6 24.Rh1-e1 would have kept some initiative.

23... Nc5-a6
24.b4-b5

A second pawn goes west as 24.a2-a3 allows Grischuk to create carnage down the long diagonal with 24...c6-c5 25.b4-b5 d5-d4.

24... c6xb5
25.Rh1-e1 b5-b4
26.Nc3-e2 Bb7-c8

Grischuk continues thematically; effectively offering exchanges which Radjabov is reluctant to accept due to his material advantage.

27.Bh3-g2 Bc8-f5
28.Nf3-d4 f6xe5
29.f4xe5 Bf5-e4
30.Bg2xe4

This time White has to acquiesce to the bishop swap as 30.Bg2-h3 Na6-c5 is unpleasant.

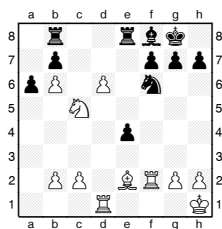
30... d5xe4
31.Ne2-f4 Na6-c5
32.h2-h4 Ra8-e8
33.e5-e6 a7-a5
34.Kc1-b1 Nc7xe6
35.Nd4xe6 Nc5xe6
36.Nf4-d5 Ne6-c5
37.Nd5xb6 h7-h6
38.Nb6-c4 Rf8-f2

The rook's arrival on the second rank hastens the end.

39.Rd1-d5 Nc5-a4
40.Rd5xa5 Na4-c3+
41.Kb1-a1

White resigned as 41...Re8-d8 planning Rd8-d4 is decisive. It was impressive how Grischuk methodically repelled Radjabov's speculative pawn-sacrifice with simple, but very accurate play.

f7-f6



Carlsen, M - Grischuk, A **Linares 2009**

Carlsen, who could have taken his first Linares title if two half points had not slipped away in long endings, is clearly dominating this position. Due to his advanced pawns and very active pieces he breaks through with a clever combination.

28.Rf2xf6 g7xf6
29.Nc5-d7 f6-f5
30.c2-c4

A nice touch, the rook won't run away due to the fork 30...Rb8-d8 31.Nd7-f6+ so Carlsen gets his queenside rolling.

30... a6-a5

Grischuk tries to stem the tide by preventing the 'b' pawn moving forward.

31.c4-c5 Bf8-g7
32.Nd7xb8 Re8xb8
33.Be2-a6

The bishop is given up to clear the way for the pawn's coronation.

33... Bg7-f6

If the piece is captured 33...b7xa6 34.c5-c6 is an unusual trio of passers across the sixth-rank.

34.Ba6xb7

Carlsen takes his idea to its logical conclusion, refusing to allow Grischuk to decline the gift.

34... Rb8xb7
35.c5-c6 Rb7xb6
36.Rd1-c1

The quiet rook-move cleans up.

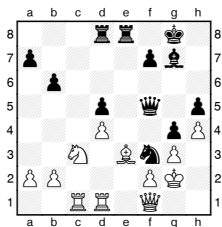
36... Bf6xb2
37.d6-d7
1-0

Michael Adams

Lightning tour of the high life in Montenegro

The European Individual Championships is being held in the pleasant surroundings of Budva, in Montenegro on the Adriatic coast. Perhaps this is why the event has attracted a large number of both amateur and professional players all hoping to pick up one of the 22 available slots for the next World Championship cycle.

After perusing a wide selection of games, I bring you some of my favourites below.



Papadopoulos, I - Volokitin, A
Budva 2009

32... **b6-b5**

This aggressive action on the queenside worked out well as White blundered immediately, the alternative 33.Qf1xb5 Nf3xh4+ 34.g3xh4 Qf5-f3+ 35.Kg2-g1 Re8xe3 36.f2xe3 had to be tried, but it looks dangerous and the initiative rolls on after 36...Qf3xe3+ 37.Kg1-f1 Qe3-h3+ 38.Kf1-e1 Bf8-h6 leaving the monarch stranded in the middle of the battlefield.

33.Qf1-d3 **Nf3-e1+**

White resigns as the queen is lost.

Kotronias, V - Vallejo Pons, F
Budva 2009

39.Rh3-g3

It was better to capture the pawn as 39.Rf5xf7 Rb6xd6 40.Nh5-f6 wins the exchange. Black could resist a little more with 39...

Kh8-g8 40.Rf7-c7, although he remains in trouble.

39... **Rb6xd6**
40.Rf5xf7 **Rd6-d2+**

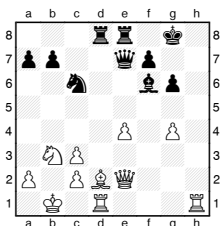
The notorious last move before the time control. Surprisingly after 40...b7-b5, Vallejo could have survived; he has good counter play against the White king, the key variation 41.Nh5-f6 Bf8-g7 42.Rg3xg7 Rd6-d2+ ends in perpetual.

41.Kc2-c3 **Rd2-d1**

Black had to retrace his steps, although 41...Rd2-d6 42.Rf7xb7 is not promising. Vallejo thought the threat of Rd1-c1 mate would buy him time, but overlooks an immediate tactical finish.

42.Rf7-h7+

Black resigned as 42...Kh8xh7 43.Nh5-f6+ Kh7-h8 44.Rg3-g8 is mate.



Jobava, B - Bykhovsky, A
Budva 2009

21... **Qe7-e5**

In this very sharp position, Black

should have tried 21...Qe7-a3 menacing Nc6-b4.

22.Qe2-f3 **Bf6-g5**

Black could have held things together with 22...Re8-e6 23.Qf3-h3 Kg8-f8, now Jobava puts the boot in.

23.Rd1-f1 **Rd8-d7**
24.Bd2xg5 **Qe5xg5**
25.Nb3-c5 **Rd7-c7**

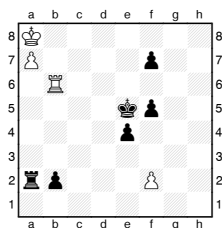
Black doesn't get a moment's respite, the knight can't be captured as 25...Qg5xc5 26.Qf3-f6 is curtains.

26.Qf3-h3 **Qg5-e5**
27.Qh3-h7+ **Kg8-f8**
28.Qh7xg6 **Nc6-d8**
29.Rh1-h5 **Qe5xc3**

Bykhovsky could have fought on a bit longer by giving up his queen 29...Rc7xc5 30.Rh5xe5 Rc5xe5, but with such an exposed king the result is not in doubt.

30.Qg6-d6+

Black resigned as 30...Re7-c7 31.Nc5-d7+ Kf8-g8 32.Rh5-g5+ is rather awkward.



Matsenko, S - Timman, J
Budva 2009

44.Rb6xb2

Brought the game to an abrupt conclusion, now a draw was agreed as after 44...Ra2xb2 45.f2-f4+ stalemate is the result of any Black reply. A lucky escape for White, but perhaps Timman would have appreciated the beautiful finish. The more obvious 44.Ka8-b7 isn't good enough following 44...Ke5-d4 45.a7-a8Q Ra2xa8 46.Kb7xa8 Kd4-c3 47.Rb6-c6+ Kc3-d3 48.Rc6-b6 Kd3-c2 49.Rb6-c6+ Kc2-b1 when the rook can't cope with all the Black pawns.

CHESS

March 28th 2009

Michael Adams



Oxford team overcomes Varsity odds

The annual Varsity Match this year ended in an impressive 5-3 victory for Oxford, despite the fact that they were out-rated by their opponents.

There was considerable foreign influence on proceedings this time as nine of the students hailed from overseas. Traditions were upheld as Henry Mutkin's generosity once again enabled the event to be hosted at the RAC club.

The late Bob Wade was a long-time supporter of this fixture, appearing in many guises including arbiter and adjudicator, so it was appropriate that the best game prize has been named in his honour.

easy to create a flight square for the knight on f6.

14... h7-h6
15.h2-h4 g6-g5

A logical idea, hoping to secure the e5 point for Black's pieces, but it rebounds nastily.

The pawn sacrifice 15... c5-c4 16.g4-g5 h6xg5 17.h4xg5 Nf6-h7 18.Be2xc4 Nd7-c5 19.Qd1-f3 is in the spirit of the Benoni and gives some compensation, the simple retreat 15...Nf6-h7 was also better.

16.h4xg5 h6xg5
17.e4-e5

Schaper was anticipating 17.f4xg5 Nf6-h7 18.Nd2-c4 Nd7-e5 which is not so clear, but this neat move, refusing the pawn, wrong foots the Black pieces and opens the floodgates for White's forces.

17... d6xe5
18.f4xg5 Nf6-h7
19.Nd2-e4 Re8-f8

It is understandable that Black wants to reinforce f7, but the rook occupying this square, which was available to both Black knights, reduces Schaper's piece coordination further. However, the alternative 19...Nd7-f8 20.Be2-c4 is also no bargain.

20.Qd1-d3

Wu comes up with an efficient plan to finish the game involving the transfer of his major pieces to the 'h' file.

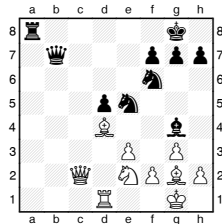
20... b7-b6

It is very hard to give Black good advice, perhaps 20...c5-c4 was worth a try.

21.Rf1-f2 Qc7-d8
22.Rf2-h2 f7-f5

The knight is a goner, as after 22...Rf8-e8 23.Rh2xh7, the rook can not be captured due to mate in two.

23.g4xf5 Rf8xf5
24.Rh2xh7
1-0



Tyomkyn, M - Healey, M
Varsity Match London 2009

22... Ne5-f3+
23.Kg1-h1

White could have ruined the fun with 23.Bg2xf3 Bg4xf3 24.Bd4xf6 g7xf6 25.Rd1-c1 when the liquidated position is in White's favour as the ideal blockading d4 square beckons the White knight. Now the Black stallions run wild.

23... Nf6-e4
24.Ne2-g1

It was better to defend the 'f' pawn with 24.Rd1-f1 moving the rook out of the bishop's range.

24... Qb7-b3

A beautiful deflection.

25.Rd1-c1

The queen can not be captured as 25.Qc2xb3 Ne4xf2 is a mate not often seen over the board.

25... Nf3-e1

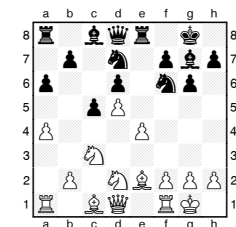
A much prettier move than the equally effective 25...Nf3xd4 26.e3xd4 Bg4-f5 27.Qc2-e2 Ra8-a2 when surprisingly, Black's exposed back rank can't be exploited. In both cases the White queen must be given up.

26.Bg2xe4 Ne1xc2
27.Be4xc2 Qb3-c4

It was simpler to retain the queen with 27...Qb3-b4.

28.Bc2xh7+ Kg8xh7
29.Rc1xc4 d5xc4

The newly created passed 'c' pawn means the ending is easily winning and White resigned on move 43.



Wu, L - Schaper, S
Varsity Match London 2009

12.f2-f4

White starts to roll his pawn mass forward on the kingside.

12... Qd8-c7
13.Kg1-h1 Ra8-b8
14.g2-g4

The expansion continues. This is awkward to meet as it's not