

CHESS

July 7th 2007

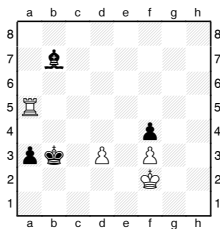
Michael Adams



More brutal than magical, but job done

Recently I represented the Linex Magic Team in the Spanish League, surely the best-named team I have played for since the now defunct U-Boat Worx in Holland — I was assured that the U-Boats in question were only used for observing underwater wildlife. I don't know that our play was all that magical but it was good enough to win the group and qualify for the final in October.

The first game for a new team is always somewhat nerve-racking, as a bad result tends to leave the team captain wondering why he shelled out so many euros flying you in to improve the team's chances. I was taking on a fast-moving Ukrainian and after a complicated struggle it was with some relief that I had arrived at the favourable ending below.



Miroshnichenko, E - Adams, M Lugo 2007

During the game I wasn't sure if it would be possible to prevent White eliminating both pawns for the rook. With precise play it should be possible but as I wasn't able to demonstrate this I needed

a bit of luck to notch up the full point.

45... a3-a2

The most efficient was 45... Bb7-c6, shielding the king from checks. After 46.Ra5-e5 a3-a2 47.Re5-e1 Bc6-b5 48.d3-d4 Bb5-d3 49.Re1-a1 Kb3-b2 wins the rook and the game.

46.Ra5-b5+ Kb3-c3
47.Rb5-c5+ Kc3-d2
48.Rc5-a5 Bb7-d5
49.d3-d4 Kd2-c3
50.Kf2-g2 Kc3-b2

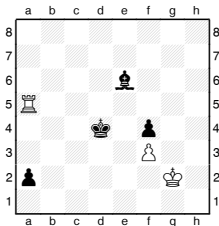
The correct way to win was 50... Kc3-b3 51.Kg2-f2 (if 51.Ra5-b5+ Kb3-a4 52.Rb5-b6 Bd5-c4 53.Rb6-b8 Ka4-a5 the pawn promotes) 51...Bd5-c6 and White must give up the rook as Bc6-a4 is threatened.

51.Ra5-b5+ Bd5-b3
52.Rb5-a5 Bb3-e6

It's too early to cash in as after 52...a2-a1Q 53.Ra5xa1 Kb2xa1 54.Kg2-h3 White eliminates the last pawn. However, my last two moves were counter-productive as the bishop was better placed on d5.

53.Ra5-b5+ Kb2-c3
54.Rb5-a5 Kc3xd4

I couldn't resist the temptation to remove the White pawn but, in fact, the only way to win was to begin retracing my steps with 54...Kc3-b3.



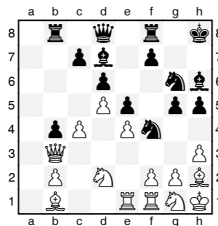
55.Kg2-f2

White misses his chance to grab half a point by 55.Ra5-a3 forcing the Black king offside. The only way to progress is 55...Kd4-c5 56.Ra3-a5+ Kc5-b4 57.Ra5xa2 Be6xa2 58.Kg2-h3 but then the king is too far away to save the final pawn.

55... Kd4-c3
56.Kf2-g2 Kc3-b2
57.Ra5-b5+ Be6-b3
58.Rb5-a5 Bb3-d1

White can't keep checking, as after 59.Ra5-b5+ Kb2-a3 60.Rb5-a5+ Bd1-a4 the pawn promotes.

59.Kg2-h3 Bd1xf3
60.Ra5-b5+ Kb2-c3
61.Rb5-a5 Kc3-b3
62.Ra5-a6 Bf3-b7
0-1



Garcia Padron, J - Jobava, B Torrelavega 2007

In this game from the second weekend, dark clouds are gathering on the White kingside, but he starts to fight back by sacrificing a pawn to secure a good square for his knight.

25.c4-c5 d6xc5
26.Nd2-c4 g5-g4

The most direct, although a preparatory move such as 26... Qd8-f6 was also possible.

27.h3xg4

Missing the chance to get back into the game with 27.g2-g3 Nf4xh3 28.Ng1xh3 g4xh3 29.f2-f4 when the central control provides some compensation for the scraggly extra pawns. Even worse, the text book move opens the 'h' line which is soon flooded by the Black major pieces.

27... h5xg4
28.Ng1-e2

The only move was the very ugly 28.g2-g3, imprisoning his own bishop. Now Black ends the game brutally.

28... Qd8-h4
29.Kh1-g1 Kh8-g7
30.Nc4xe5 Ng6xe5
31.Ne2xf4 Ne5-f3+

The neat interference wraps up the game tidily.

32.g2xf3 Bh6xf4
33.Bh2xf4 Rf8-h8
34.Bf4-e5+ f7-f6
0-1

CHESS

July 14th 2007

Michael Adams



Old-fashioned royal hunt from Belgium

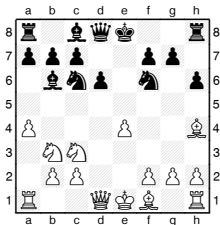
When preparing this column I generally scout the games played in top tournaments hoping to find a cracker, but sometimes the most fascinating encounters take place in smaller competitions. It is always nice to see a player's king being drawn up the board by a cascade of sacrifices, and perishing as his forces are too far away to aid in the defence. But such king hunts are a rare treat. Perhaps they were more common in days gone by as it was considered bad form to decline sacrifices and gambits. The result-orientated nature of modern chess discourages such co-operative play making the games more accurate but also less entertaining.

So to redress the balance here is a modern "blast from the past", a gem of a game from the most recent *New In Chess Yearbook*.

Ahn, M - Ruck, T
Belgian Team Championships, 2007

- | | |
|----------|--------|
| 1.e2-e4 | e7-e5 |
| 2.Ng1-f3 | Nb8-c6 |
| 3.d2-d4 | e5xd4 |
| 4.Nf3xd4 | Bf8-c5 |
| 5.Nd4-b3 | Bc5-b6 |
| 6.Nb1-c3 | Ng8-f6 |
| 7.Bc1-g5 | h7-h6 |
| 8.Bg5-h4 | d7-d6 |
| 9.a2-a4 | |

We should be grateful that White chose this natural move, but in future 9.Qd1-e2 or Bf1-e2 should be preferred



9... **Nf6xe4**

This idea has been seen before but it required great calculation backed up by good judgment to realise how effective it is here.

10. **Bh4xd8**

It was possible to ruin the fun with 10.Qd1-h5 although there is insufficient compensation for the pawn. It is interesting that computer programs are unable to appreciate the strength of the Black sacrifice for some moves to come, and consider White to stand better after the queen is captured.

10...	Bb6xf2+
11.Ke1-e2	Bc8-g4+
12.Ke2-d3	Nc6-e5+

Another piece is thrown in to draw the king further up the board.

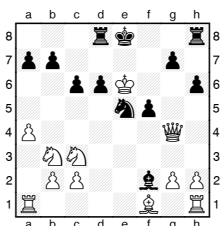
13.Kd3xe4	f7-f5+
14.Ke4-d5	Ra8xd8

Black bravely focuses his energies on the king, which is too isolated from his troops to survive, making no effort to regain material by 14... Bg4xd1 as after 15.Nc3xd1 White's monarch has much better chances to flee to safety.

15. **Qd1xg4**

Hanging on to the queen leads to immediate death after 15.Qd1-d2 c7-c6+ 16.Kd5-e6 f5-f4 mate

15...	c7-c6+
16.Kd5-e6	



16... **0-0**

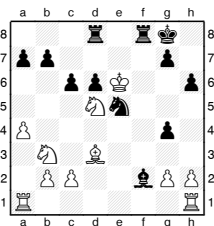
A startlingly beautiful way to complete development, declining two options to remove the lady,

although the mundane 16...f5xg4 was also very good.

17. **Nc3-d5**

Desperately trying to bring his other forces into the game. A more ingenious defence was 17.Qg4-c4 setting up discovered checks when the king moves, but Black can refute it with the unusual sequence 17...Rf8-f7 18.Nc3-d5 (18.Nb3-d4 Ne5-g6 19.Nd4xc6 b7xc6 20.Qc4xc6 Ng6-f4 mate is a neat finish) 18... Rd8-e8+ 19.Nd5-e7+ Rf7xe7+ 20.Ke6xd6+ Ne5xc4+ 21.Bf1xc4+ Kg8-f8 when the exchange of checks is resolved in Black's favour as mate follows shortly.

17...	f5xg4
18.Bf1-d3	



18... **g7-g6**

A real pity, this move is good enough for a comfortable victory but 18...Rd8-e8+ 19.Nd5-e7+ Kg8-h8 20.Ke6xd6 Rf8-f6+ 21.Kd6-c7 Re8xe7+ 22.Kc7-d8 Re7-d7+ 23.Kd8-e8 Rf6-e6+ 24.Ke8-f8 Rd7-d8 mate was the spectacular conclusion the game deserved. Black may have been concerned about 19.Ke6xd6 when after Re8-d8+ 20.Kd6xe5 Rd8xd5+ 21.Ke5-e4 there is a deft quiet move, g7-g5, which would be hard to anticipate, and mate follows by Rf8-e8 or Rf8-f4.

19.Rh1-f1	Kg8-g7
20.Nb3-d4	Rf8-e8+
21.Nd5-e7	Bf2-h4
22.Bd3xg6	Re8xe7+
23.Ke6-f5	Rd8-f8+
24.Kf5-e4	Ne5xg6+

Missing another chance to finish quickly by 24...d6-d5+ 25.Ke4-e3 Ne5-c4+ 26.Ke3-d3 Re7-e3 mate. The rest is an anticlimax as the White king continues his travels to safety, but once the dust has settled Black is a piece and a pawn up for no compensation.

25.Ke4-d3	Ng6-e5+
26.Kd3-c3	Bh4-f2
0-1	

CHESS

July 21st 2007

Michael Adams



Anand's chips run faster and fry opposition

Since Kasparov's retirement it has been hotly debated as to who is the Number 1 player in classical chess. The main contenders are Anand, Topalov and Kramnik but none of them have been consistent enough to step into his shoes.

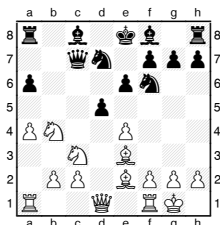
In rapidplay it is a different story as there is a substantial gap between Viswanathan Anand and the rest. The quicksilver Indian confirmed his dominance by scoring another tournament success in the limited overs form of the game in Leon recently. His brain seems to run on a faster processor. Neither Ponomarev nor Topalov were able to put up a serious challenge and Vishy clinched victory by winning both his matches 3-1.

Topalov needed a bit of luck to even make it into the final. In this crucial first game from his semi-final match his opponent missed a great opportunity.

spot with 40...Ne2-f4 as the queen cannot be captured due to mate 41.d6xe7 Rd8xd1. Instead he played:

40... Qe7-f7
41.Kf1xe2 Qf7-c4+
42.Ke2-e1 Qc4-b5
43.Rd1-d2 e5-e4

Black still held the upper hand but Topalov made the most of his reprieve and managed to win the game 27 moves later.



Anand, V - Topalov, V
Leon 2007

12.Nb4xa6

The discovered attack on the knight would enable Topalov to regain his pawn after 12.Nb4-a2 d5xe4, so Anand takes the courageous decision to sacrifice a piece. The three connected passed pawns and lead in development provide good compensation.

12... Bc8xa6
13.e4xd5 Bf8-d6
14.h2-h3 e6xd5

It was safer to complete mobilisation with 14...0-0 15.d5xe6 f7xe6, which leads to a complicated middle game.

15.Nc3xd5 Nf6xd5
16.Qd1xd5 Ba6-b7

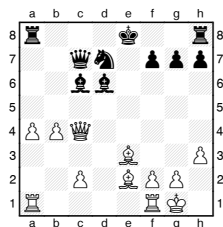
Veselin probably didn't like the way the White pawns start rolling in the variation 16...0-0 17.Be2xa6 Ra8xa6 18.b2-b4 as 18...Bd6xb4 loses material to 19.Qd5-b5, but leaving the king in the centre requires Black to walk on eggshells.

17.Qd5-c4 Bb7-c6

Better was 17...Qc7xc4 18.Be2xc4 Bd6-e5 but Topalov may have been reluctant to simplify the position as it was necessary for him to win the game to take the match into a tiebreak. Now

Vishy swiftly whips up this violent attack.

18.b2-b4



18... Qc7-b7

It was too late for 18... 0-0 19.b4-b5 Bc6-b7 20.Qc4xc7 Bd6xc7 21.c2-c4 Rf8-e8 22.Be2-g4 when the pawn trio starts motoring. After Black's move several of White's pawns are under attack but his exposed king means that the tactics rebound on him.

19.Ra1-d1 Bd6-e7

The bishop must retreat as 19... Bd6xb4 is refuted tactically by 20.Rd1xd7 Bc6xd7 21.Be2-f3.

20.b4-b5 Bc6xg2
21.Rd1xd7 Ke8xd7

Black is too much material down after 21...Qb7xd7 22.Kg1xg2 0-0 23.Be2-f3 so the king goes walkabout.

22.Qc4-g4+ Kd7-e8

A better chance to randomise the game was 22...f7-f5.

23.Qg4xg2

24.Kg1xg2 Ra8xa6
25.b5-b6 Ra4-a5

If the rook comes behind the passed pawn 25...Ra4-b4 26.Rf1-a1 Black's king comes under fire as he is unable to castle e.g. 26... Ke8-d7 27.Ra1-a7+ Kd7-d6 28.Ra7xe7 Kd6xe7 29.Be3-c5+.

26.Rf1-d1 Be7-g5

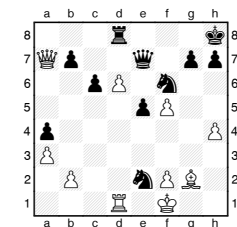
More resilient was 26...Be7-c5 27.b6-b7 Ke8-e7 28.Rd1-d5 Bc5xe3 29.Rd5xa5 although White should win eventually.

27.b6-b7 Ke8-e7
28.Be3-b6 Ra5-e5

29.Bb6-d8+

This clever interruption promotes the 'b' pawn and brings the game to a pretty conclusion.

1-0



Topalov, V - Kasimdzhanov, R
Leon 2007

Here Kasim could win on the

CHESS

July 28th 2007

Michael Adams



Bu makes his mark in Ottawa

The recently concluded Ottawa Open resulted in an impressive victory for the young Chinese player Bu Xiangzhi. The Chinese have been very successful in the women's game. In team events they have been on the podium at every Olympiad since 1990, winning four consecutive Golds in the process. In individual events they boast two former World Champions, Xie Jun and Zhu Chen, and the current Women's Champion Xu Yuhua.

So far, however, this success has not carried over to the men's game but the presence at the top of the national rating list of three young players rated above 2680 suggests this may change in the future.

British chess fans will get a rare opportunity to see top Chinese players, including Bu, in action in a special challenge match between China and the UK in Liverpool from September 4 to 9.

If there is one striking characteristic of Chinese players it is their tactical awareness. The clever conclusion to the game below shows that Bu has this asset in abundance.

Bu Xiangzhi - Rensch, D Ottawa 2007

Black was hoping that White would acquiesce with the exchange of queens but Bu short-circuits a long technical process with a flurry of neat tactics.

20.Nc6-e7+ Kg8-f8

Better was 20...Kg8-h8 but 21.Rc1-c7 keeps an iron grip on the position.

21.Rc1-f1 Qg4-e6

Black can't exchange queens as 21...Qg4xd4 22.Rf3xf7 is an immediate mate; and 21...Re8xe7 22.Qd4-d8+ Re7-e8 23.Rf3xf7+ isn't very promising

22.Qd4-d6

The mundane 22.Ne7-d5 also wins a lot of material but this leads to a nicer finish.

22... Re8xe7

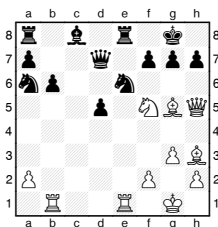
22...Qe6xd6 23.Rf3xf7 mate is an amusing echo of the last variation.

23.Rf3xf7+ Qe6xf7

24.Rf1xf7+ Kf8xf7

25.Qd6-d5+

and Black resigned as once Bu picks up the rook on a8 he has a decisive material advantage.



Sandipan, C - Tiviakov, S Ottawa 2007

It is clear that White has excellent compensation for the two pawns but after an inspired sacrifice Black is surprisingly helpless and there is no good defence to a slow build up.

22.Bg5-f6 g7xf6

Ignoring the gift doesn't help, after 22...Na6-c7 23.Nf5-h6+ Kg8-f8 24.Bf6-e5 the pressure is overwhelming.

23.Qh5-h6

Now the Black pieces are paralysed and there is no good way to bring Black defenders to the kingside. Once Sandipan brings his rooks into the attack the end is in sight.

23...

24.Rb1-d1

Na6-c5

Qd7-b7

Tiviakov must have been tempted to defend the pawn on f6 but there is an immediate win with 24...Qd7-d8 25.Rd1-d4 Nc5-e4 26.Re1xe4 d5xe4 27.Rd4xd8 Re8xd8 28.Nf5-e7+ Kg8-h8 29.Bh3xe6. Hence the queen is forced further offside.

25.Rd1-d4

26.Re1xe4

27.Qh6xf6

Nc5-e4

d5xe4

Black is completely powerless to prevent mate in three.

27...

28.Nf5-h6+

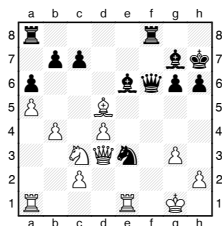
29.Qf6-h8+

30.Nh6-f5 mate

Qb7-c7

Kg8-f8

Kf8-e7



Yermolinsky, A - Milov, V Ottawa 2007

23.Qd3xe3

Yermo is already in a lot of trouble. The best practical try was 23.Re1xe3 Be6-f5 24.Nc3-e4 Qf6xd4 25.Ra1-e1 Qd4xb4 26.c2-c3 hoping for some swindling chances. Now, carnage ensues on the dark squares.

23...

24.Nc3-e4

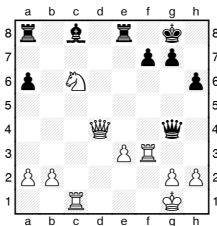
Ra8-e8

White is already lost as 24.Bd5xe6 Re8xe6 25.Qe3xe6 Qf6-f2+ 26.Kg1-h1 Qf2-f3+ 27.Kh1-g1 Bg7xd4+ is none too pretty.

24...

Qf6-d8

This subtle withdrawal caused White to resign as his queen is lost after 25.Bd5xe6 Bg7xd4.



CHESS

August 4th 2007

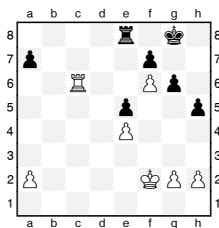
Michael Adams



Jovanka scores a pretty win to salvage pride

The Canadian summer of chess continued with the eighth Montreal International. This was a bloodthirsty event that provided great entertainment for spectators and ended in triumph for the globetrotting Vasily Ivanchuk, who sprinted to the finish with a trio of wins. In an interesting subplot, Chukky added some more points to his substantial ELO leaving him not far short of the top of the rating list.

The players' fighting spirit was demonstrated early on in this harmless-looking ending from the first round.



Harikrishna, P - Sutovsky, E Montreal 2007

29... **Re8-e6**
Black should play 29...g6-g5, giving his king a route into the game. After 30.Rc6-a6 Kg8-h7 31.Ra6xa7 Kh7-g6 32.Ra7-a6 Re8-c8 Black's activity enables him to make an easy draw in the rook ending.

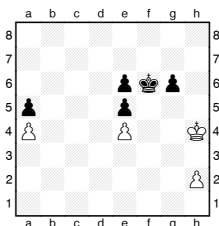
30.Rc6xe6 f7xe6
Sutovsky judged the king and pawn ending would be all right as the advanced pawn on f6 will be collected by Black's king, but

Harikrishna finds a study-like win.

31.g2-g4 **h5xg4**
There is no choice as after 31...Kg8-f7 32.g4-g5 the protected passed pawn guarantees victory, but now a passageway opens up for the white king.

32.Kf2-g3 **Kg8-f7**
33.Kg3xg4 **Kf7xf6**
34.Kg4-h4 **a7-a5**
If 34...g6-g5+ 35.Kh4-h5 a7-a5 36.a2-a4 the 'g' pawn and the game is lost immediately.

35.a2-a4
The queenside is fixed and the first zugzwang forces Black to retreat.



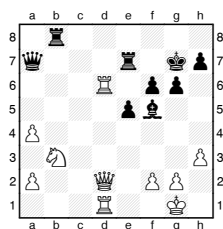
35... **Kf6-e7**
The more logical 35...Kf6-f7 doesn't help after 36.Kh4-g5 Kf7-g7. 37.h2-h3 is the crucial tempo move, forcing the Black king to give ground and winning as in the game. It is worth noting 37.h2-h4 would only lead to a draw after 37...Kg7-f7 38.Kg5-h6 Kf6-f7 39.Kh6-h7 Kf6-f7.

36.Kh4-g5 **Ke7-f7**
37.Kg5-h6 **Kf7-f6**
38.h2-h4 **Kf6-f7**
39.Kh6-h7 **Kf7-f6**
40.Kh7-g8

The second zugzwang caused Black to resign as after 40...g6-g5(40...Kf6-e7 41.Kg8-g7 wins) 41.h4-h5 the White pawn promotes first with check.

Nigel Short, handicapped by a bout of toothache, had a torrid time in this event but English pride was salvaged by a good performance by Jovanka Houska in the women's event which ran alongside. In this game she scored a pretty win against the talented American Irina Krush en route to a second equal finish. Jovanka will be part of the strong field at the Staunton Memorial

event held at Simpson's in the Strand from August 6 to 18.



Houska, J - Krush, I Montreal 2007

34... **Qa7xa4**
Understandably, Irina is reluctant to allow the pawn to advance to a5, but it was more sensible to play 34...Rb8-c8 with decent counterplay.

35.Rd6xf6 **Kg7xf6**
Surprisingly 35...Bf5-c2 seems to hold here but this was a very hard move to find.

36.Qd2-d6+ **Kf6-f7**
37.Qd6xb8 **Qa4xa2**
Re-establishing material equality but, despite the reduced forces, the Black monarch is in a lot of danger.

38.Rd1-d8 **Qa2-b1+**
It was better to keep this check in hand by playing 38...Qa2-c2 39.Rd8-h8 Qc2-d1+ 40.Kg1-h2 Kf7-f6

39.Kg1-h2 **Qb1-c2**
40.Rd8-h8 **Kf7-f6**
Black was hoping to play 40...Qc2xf2 with some perpetual check possibilities but these can be countered by 41.Rh8xh7+ Kf7-e6 42.Qb8-c8+ Ke6-d5 43.Qc8-a8+ Kd5-c4 44.Qa8-a4+ Kc4-c3 45.Rh7xe7 and the f4 square is covered.

41.Qb8-d6+ **Bf5-e6**
42.Nb3-c5
The knight joins the assault with decisive effect.

42... **Qc2-f5**
Now it is forced mate but there was nothing substantially better.

43.Rh8-f8+ **Re7-f7**
44.Qd6-d8+
Black resigned as 44...Kf6-g7 45.Nc5xe6+ Qf5xe6 46.Rf8-g8+ Kg7-h6 47.Qd8-h4 is mate.

CHESS

August 11th 2007

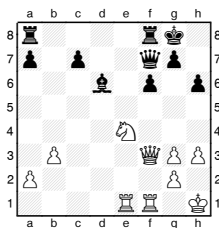
Michael Adams



To Victor and Magnus go the spoils

This period of the summer is always a busy one for chess and fortunately the weather has been conducive for indoor sports.

One of the highlights has been the legendary veteran Victor Korchnoi adding to his overstuffed portfolio of tournament victories with first place in an event in Bosnia.



Korchnoi, V - Stojanovic, M
Banja Luka 2007

20... **Bd6-b4**

A careless move. After 20... Bd6-e5 the position is roughly level, but now Victor shows that his tactical antennae are still finely tuned.

21. **Ne4xf6+** **g7xf6**

If 21... Qf7xf6 22. Qf3-d5+ wins the queen.

22. **Qf3-g4+** **Qf7-g7**
23. **Qg4xb4** **Qg7xg3**

The pawn is recaptured, however, and with the Black king exposed and all four remaining pawns weak and isolated, survival chances are minimal.

24. **Rf1-f3** **Qg3-g7**
25. **Re1-e7** **Rf8-f7**
26. **Qb4-c4**

The direct 26. Re7xf7 Qg7xf7 27. Rf3-g3+ Kg8-h8 28. Qb4-f4 Qf7-f8 29. Rg3-g6 was even stronger, but this pinning move is also very effective.

26... **Ra8-f8**
27. **Re7xc7** **Kg8-h8**
28. **Rc7xf7** **Rf8xf7**
29. **Qc4-f4** **Qg7-g5**
30. **Qf4-b8+** **Kh8-h7**
31. **Rf3-g3** **Qg5-c1+**
32. **Kh1-h2** **Rf7-g7**

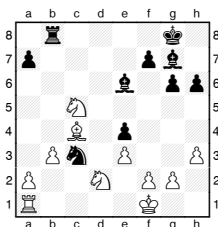
Now a second pawn goes west.

33. **Rg3xg7+** **Kh7xg7**
34. **Qb8xa7+** **Kg7-g6**
35. **Qa7-b8** **f6-f5**
36. **Qb8-d6+** **Kg6-g5**
37. **Qd6-e7+** **Kg5-g6**
38. **Qe7-e6+** **Kg6-g5**
39. **h3-h4+**

Forcing the exchange of queens.

39... **Kg5xh4**
40. **Qe6-c4+ 1-0**

At the other end of the age spectrum, the best-known teenager in world chess, Magnus Carlsen, triumphed in a strong event in Biel. In this game he swiftly converts an advantageous ending into the full point against Alexander Onischuk, co-winner of the event. Later, Magnus won a close-run play-off against the same opponent to take the title.



Carlsen, M - Onischuk, A
Biel 2007

26... **Be6xc4+**

The discovered attack 26... Nc3-a4 27. Nc5xe6 Bg7xa1 28. b3xa4 f7xe6 29. Bc4xe6+ Kg8-f8 30. Nd2xe4 was a better try, for although White has three pawns for the exchange, the double 'a' pawns are of limited importance.

27. **Nd2xc4** **Rb8-b5**
28. **Nc5-a6** **Bg7-f8**

Onischuk relied on his activity to provide compensation, but Carlsen finds a clever way to untangle.

29. **b3-b4** **Bf8xb4**

Black had to try 29... Rb5-d5, but 30. a2-a3 nudging forward the queenside pawns frees White to mobilise his rook.

30. **a2-a4** **Rb5-b7**
31. **Ra1-c1**

Forcing the knight to retreat.

31... **Nc3-d5**
32. **Rc1-b1**

This sets up a fatal pin down the 'b' line.

32... **f7-f5**
33. **a4-a5**

Black would be delighted to lose only a pawn after 33. Nc4-e5 Rb7-b6 34. Na6xb4 Rb6xb4 35. Rb1xb4 Nd5xb4 36. Ne5xg6, but this move, denying the rook access to b6 is much stronger.

33... **Kg8-g7**

If 33... Rb7-b5 34. Nc4-d6 Rb5xa5 35. Na6xb4 Nd5xb4 36. Rb1xb4 Ra5-a1+ 37. Kf1-e2 Ra1-a2+ 38. Ke2-e1 Ra2-a1+ 39. Ke1-d2 Ra1-a2+ 40. Kd2-c3 Ra2xf2 Black gets some chances. However, there is no reason to hurry and White can calmly improve his position with the merciless 34. g2-g3 before collecting the booty.

34. **Nc4-e5** **f5-f4**

This desperate attempt to distract White from playing Ne5-c6 is doomed to failure.

35. **e3xf4** **e4-e3**
36. **f2xe3** **Nd5xe3+**
37. **Kf1-g1** **Ne3-d5**
38. **Kg1-h1**

Preventing any checks and extinguishing Black's last hope.

38... **Rb7-b5**
39. **Ne5-c6** **1-0**

CHESS

August 18th 2007

Michael Adams



Lawnmower mates and car capers

The Staunton Memorial at Simpson's in the Strand, which concludes today, is once again a UK vs The Netherlands encounter and is stronger than ever this year.

Dutch entrepreneur Jan Mol, the principal sponsor, this year hosted an entertaining opening ceremony at his superb property in Covent Garden, where mini remote-controlled dune buggy races were held to decide first-round colours. The players were paired off and we valiantly struggled with the joysticks until someone managed to manoeuvre their machine onto a chess board – often more by luck than good judgment. I was up against Dutch No 1 and car nut Loek van Wely, who was lucky to walk away after writing off his Beemer on the autobahn a few years ago. After the dust settled both buggies emerged intact, and given Loek's reputation I was shocked to have secured the white pieces.

The ably run and aptly named Staunton Hotel in Bloomsbury which, rumour has it, is named after Howard Staunton, is a new supporter of the tournament this year. This family-run hotel looked after the players very well and inspired them to some fascinating games.

**Werle, J - Sokolov, I
Staunton Memorial London
2007**

26.Kf4-g5
The king should have retreated as after 26.Kf4-e3 Nd3xb2 27.Rc4-d4 there are good drawing chances.

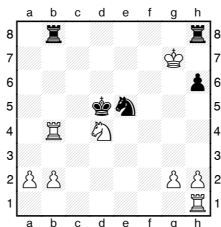
26... h7-h6+
White was counting on 26... Nd3xb2 27.Rc4-c7 with good counterplay but Ivan lures the king forward.

27.Kg5xg6
It was time to find reverse gear with 27.Kg5-h4 g6-g5+ 28.Kh4-h5 Nd3-f4+ 29.Rc4xf4 g5xf4 30.Ng3xf5 when White still has some practical hopes. If 27.Kg5-f6 the late castling 27... 0-0+ comes as an unpleasant surprise.

27... Nd3-e5+
28.Kg6-g7
Werle hoped that the attack on Black's rook would give White time to rescue his own but now the White monarch is stranded.

28... Ke8-e7
29.Ng3xf5+
The rook check 29.Rc4-c7+ Ke7-e6 doesn't help so White grabs another pawn.

29... Ke7-e6
30.Nf5-d4+
31.Rc4xb4
Ke6-d5



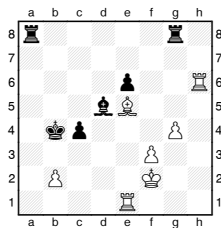
31... Rb8-g8+
If 31...Rb8xb4 32.Kg7xh8 it should be possible to eliminate the last pawn with a technical draw, but Black isn't forced to capture the rook and instead hunts down the White king.

32.Kg7-f6
33.Kf6-e7
Rg8-g6+
33.Kf6-f5 Rh8-f8 is an

immediate mate so there is no escape.
33... Rh8-h7+
34.Ke7-f8 Rh7-f7+
35.Kf8-e8 Rg6-g8
Mate

The White king perishes on the starting square of his opposite number.

To see two lawnmower mates in an event is fairly unusual, but in this case there was another one taking place in the same round.



**Smeets, J - Speelman, J
Staunton Memorial London
2007**

Speelman is facing a thankless defensive task waiting for White to slowly advance his 'g' pawn, so he tried a randomiser, hoping to create some confusion.

44... Ra8-f8
45.Be5-d6+
46.Re1-e3+
Kb4-b3
46.Bd6xf8 Rg8xf8 47.Re1-e3+ Kb3xb2 was Black's idea but by retaining the bishop Smeets sets up a mating net.

46... Kb3xb2
47.Bd6-e5+
48.Rh6-h2
Rf8xf3+

It is essential to give up the piece to prevent mate which would occur after 48...Rf8-f7 49.Kf2-f1+ Kc2-d1 50.Re3-e1.

49.Re3xf3
50.Kf2-e3+
Bd5xf3

Also not bad was 50.Kf2xf3+ Kc2-d3 51.Rh2-h8, but Smeets decides to drive the king offside before taking the material

50... Kc2-b3
51.Rh2-b2+
Black resigned as 51...Kb3-a3 52.Ke3xf3 is a straightforward win.



CHESS

August 25th 2007

Michael Adams



Reigning kings of Scotland

Jacob Aagaard's triumph at the British Championships, held in Great Yarmouth, has kept the title in Scotland. For some years this event had become something of an Indian takeaway as Commonwealth players came, saw and conquered, but after a change in the regulations the Scots have dominated and carried the title north of the border four times.

You now have to go back to the turn of the millennium for the last English winner, when Julian Hodgson took the last of his four crowns. Some of the top English players were in action at the Staunton Memorial instead, but it would be nice to see an English winner soon or else we will have to coax Jules out of retirement.

The vagaries of the Swiss system don't always produce the most worthy winner, but Aagaard led from the start and took on the cream of the opposition for a very well deserved success.

Here we see him in action in an excellent game from round five against the only other participant with a 100 per cent score.

Here Aagaard came up with a radical solution to the White queen corralling his knight on f5. This well-judged sacrifice was typical of his controlled aggressive play during the tournament.

- 12... Nf5xe3
 13.Bf2xe3 e6xd5
 14.Be3-f2 Rf8-e8+
 15.Nc3-e2 d5xc4
 16.0-0-0

White would like to limit the damage to two pawns for the piece but after 16.Qc2xc4 d7-d5 17.Qc4-d3 a7-a5 preparing Bb7-a6 his king would never leave the centre.

- 16... b6-b5

The queenside pawn mass begins rolling towards the white king.

- 17.Ne2-c3 Bb7-c6
 18.Nd2xc4

Giving back the piece leaves White a pawn down with a dodgily placed king, 18.Nd2-e4 had to be tried with fingers crossed.

- 18... b5xc4
 19.Bf1xc4 d7-d5
 20.Bf2-h4

Pert hoped this pin would enable him to consolidate his position but the tactics are against him.

- 20... Qd8-b8
 21.Bh4-g3

If 21.Bh4xf6 d5xc4 22.Bf6-h4 Qb8-f4+ wins the bishop.

- 21... Qb8-b7
 22.Bc4-b3 Ra8-c8
 23.Bg3-h4 Bb4xc3

Aagaard again shows his alertness by taking advantage of the White bishop, ceding control of the b8 square.

- 24.b2xc3

The other recapture 24.Qc2xc3 d5-d4 25.Qc3-c2 Nf6-d5 is just as ugly.

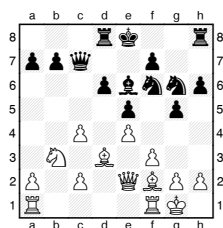
- 24... c5-c4
 25.Bb3-a4 Bc6xa4
 26.Qc2xa4 Rc8-b8
 27.Qa4-c2 Qb7-e7
 28.Rd1-d2 Qe7-a3+
 29.Kc1-d1 d5-d4

This deft touch brings the knight into the attack to conclude the game.

- 30.c3xd4

30.Bh4xf6 d4-d3 31.Qc2-c1 Qa3-a4+ is rather gruesome.

- 30... Nf6-d5
 0-1



Jonathan Rowson wasn't able to clinch a fourth consecutive title, but he could be satisfied with a spirited defence of his crown as a sequence of wins in the last few rounds brought him to within an inch of a play-off.

Rudd, J - Rowson, J British Championship Great Yarmouth 2007

- 18.c4-c5

It was more wise to prevent the knight's incursion with 18.g2-g3, although after 18...b7-b6 Black's better pawn structure gives him a slight edge.

- 18... Ng6-f8
 19.Bd3-b5+ Ke8-f8

The king has a safe haven on g7 so the loss of castling rights is unimportant.

- 20.Qe2-e1 d6-d5

Black's pieces are well placed for the opening of the centre.

- 21.Qe1-a5

21.e4xd5 was a better idea.

- 21... Qc7xa5
 22.Nb3xa5 d5xe4
 23.Na5xb7 Rd8-d2
 24.f3xe4 Nf6xe4
 25.Ra1-e1

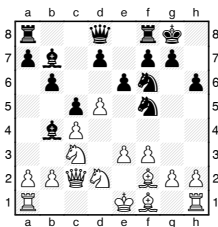
White had to play 25.Nb7-d6, restoring some co-ordination now Black is winning.

- 25... Be6-d5
 26.c2-c4

It's too late for 26.Nb7-d6 Ne4xd6 27.c5xd6 Bd5xg2, but the text also has a tactical flaw.

- 26... Bd5xb7
 27.c5-c6 Bb7xc6
 28.Bb5xc6 Ne4xf2

White resigns as 29.Rf1xf2 Rd2xf2 30.Kg1xf2 Nf4-d3+ is a decisive fork.



Pert, N - Aagaard, J British Championship Great Yarmouth 2007

CHESS

September 1st 2007

Michael Adams

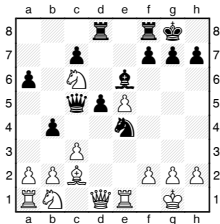


No recycling, just a dazzling winning move

Calling your company Quality Chess Books (www.qualitychessbooks.com) gives you a lot to live up to. But judging by the books I have received from them recently they are doing a good job of living up to their name.

John Shaw and the newly-crowned British champion Jacob Aagaard, the co-founders of the company, have made a strong move in signing up their most high-profile author, the industrious Romanian Mikhail Marin who has acted as a second for Judit Polgar in recent events. Both *Learn From The Legends* and *A Spanish Repertoire For Black* by Marin combine detailed analysis with instructive commentary to produce a book that is appropriate for players with a wide range of strengths. It is sad but true that you often get out of a chess book what you put into it. Actually taking it down from your bookshelf is a good start. Reading these heavyweight works requires dedication, but the rewards for those who make the effort will be considerable.

I also enjoyed *Understanding Chess Tactics* by Martin Weteschnik. Some authors of tactics books achieve rates of recycling of positions well above government targets, but this book has a lot of fresh material. I had not seen this spectacular example in print before.



Gelbmann, N - Gyimesi, Z
Siofok 1996

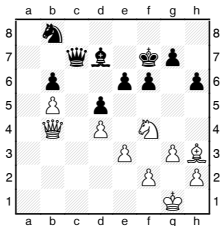
15... Qc5xf2+
Black had calculated this sacrifice would provide at least perpetual check but 15...Qc5xc6 should have been preferred

16.Kg1-h1 Be6-g4
17.Qd1-c1 Bg4-f3
18.g2xf3

White misses a well-hidden resource. After 18.Re1-g1 Ne4-g3+ 19.h2xg3 Qf2xg3 it looks as though White is unable to prevent mate down the 'h' file. However, as indicated on the front cover of the book where this position is displayed, there was a dazzling winning move 20.Qc1-h6 as after 20...g7xh6 21.g2xf3 White is way ahead on material.

18... Qf2xf3+
and after a flurry of queen checks the players agreed a draw.

Here is an exercise from the book where US GM Yasser Seirawan converted his positional advantages by teeing up a fork on e6.

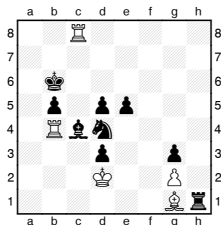


Seirawan, Y - Kogan, B
Philadelphia, 1986

39.Bh3xe6+
Black resigned as 39... Bd7xe6 40.Qb4-f8+ Kf7xf8 41.Nf4xe6+ Kf8-e7 42.Ne6xc7

Ke7-d6 43.Nc7-e8+ is the final fork, picking up the g pawn as well.

Practical Chess Defence by Jacob Aagaard focuses on an area of the game which is rarely written about, highlighting how the detached neutrality of modern computer engines have revealed new defensive possibilities in many games. A recurring theme is how a beautiful variation tends to satisfy an annotator but closer scrutiny, aided by the unemotional computer, frequently picks holes in an attractive concept such as in the game below.



Palevich - Bonek
Correspondence, 1982

White's position looks rather desperate but he found a clever resource.

1.Bg1xd4+ e5xd4
2.Rc8xc4 d5xc4

Aagaard points out that with the nice touch 2...Rh1-d1+ 3.Kd2xd1 d5xc4 Black prevents stalemate possibilities, and the four pawns overcome the rook, for instance 4.Kd1-d2 Kb6-c5 5.Rb4-b1 b5-b4 6.Rb1-e1 b4-b3 7.Re1-e5+ Kc5-b4 8.Re5-e8 b3-b2 9.Re8-b8+ Kb4-a3 and touchdown is imminent

3.Rb4xb5+
If the rook is captured it is stalemate but it is not possible for the king to elude the kamikaze rook so after

3... Kb6-c6
4.Rb5-c5+ Kc6-d6
5.Rc5-d5+ Kd6-e6
6.Rd5-e5+ Ke6-f6
7.Re5-f5+ Kf6-g6
8.Rf5-g5+ Kg6-h6
9.Rg5-g6+

Black bowed to the inevitable ½-½

CHESS

September 8th 2007

Michael Adams



China goes to town in Novgorod

Chinese chess has come a long way since 1978, when Jan Hein Donner famously dismissed the notion that a Western grandmaster could lose to a Chinaman. This opinion proved unfortunate for the Dutchman as, a few days later, he was mated in 20 moves by Liu Wenzhe. At least he can now take posthumous comfort in the fact that he was only the first of many grandmasters to have suffered the same fate.

The Chinese team recently completed an impressive 52.5-47.5 victory over Russia in their match in Novgorod. The home team's only consolation was Russian champion Evgeny Alekseev's commendable 7/10, which was the highest individual score. Despite this, China had the highest overall points haul in the men's section.

The UK team will be China's next victims, sorry, I mean opponents, and by the time you read this the first four rounds of the Liverpool 800th Anniversary Summit Chess Match will have been completed. Spectators are welcome at St George's Hall, Liverpool, for the last two rounds today and tomorrow.

Jakovenko, D - Bu Xiangzhi Novgorod 2007

Jakovenko has his heavy artillery trained on the kingside and it is difficult to create counterplay due to White's solid central control.

27... Nf6-d7

The wish to exchange the powerful knight on e5 is understandable, but the Black horse was doing an important job where it was. It was better to play 27...Qa6-a4.

28.Ne5-g4 f7-f5

It is hard to see anything better but this provokes a deadly sacrifice.

29.Ng4xh6+ g7xh6
30.Qf3-h5

30.Bc1xh6 was also pretty good. There's too much air around the Black monarch for his health.

30... Nd7-f6

One way to refute 30...Be7-f6 is 31.Rd3-g3+ Bf6-g7 32.Bc1xh6 Rf8-f7 33.Bh6xg7 Rf7xg7 34.Rg3xg7+ Kg8xg7 35.Qh5-g5+

31.Rd3-g3+ Nf6-g4
32.f2-f3

The investment is regained and the attack continues.

32... Qa6-e2
33.Rd1-f1 Rf8-f7
34.f3xg4 f5-f4
35.Bc1xf4 e6-e5

If 35...Qe2-c2, 36.g4-g5 is crushing, but now White neatly exploits the newly vacated e6 square to wrap things up.

36.Qh5-g6+ Rf7-g7
37.Qg6-e6+ Rg7-f7
38.Rg3-e3 Qe2xf1+
39.Kg1xf1 e5xf4
40.Re3-e5 Be7xh4
41.Qe6xh6 Bh4-f6
42.Re5-f5 Rd8-f8
43.g4-g5
1-0

Wang Yue - Timofeev, A Novgorod 2007

27... Rb2xa2

It was probably better to reduce White's attacking potential, albeit at the cost of material by 27...Qc7-d8 28.Re4xc4 Qd8xf6 29.e5xf6 e6-e5

28.Nf3-g5

The straightforward 28.h4-h5 Qc7-d8 is OK for Black, but this crafty knight move, tying the queen to the defence of f7 is more potent.

28... Rb8-f8
29.h4-h5 Qc7-d8

If 29...h7-h6, one amusing win is 30.Ng5-h7 Kg8xh7 31.h5xg6+ Kh7-g8 (31...f7xg6 32.Qf6xf8 wins material) 32.Re4-g4 and mate is inevitable.

30.Ng5xh7 Qd8xf6

The frisky steed cannot be captured as 30...Kg8xh7 31.h5xg6+ f7xg6 32.Re4-h4+ Kh7-g8 33.Rh4-h8 is mate. 31.Nh7xf6+ Kg8-g7
32.h5-h6+ Kg7-h8

White wins a piece if the audacious foot soldier is captured: 32...Kg7xh6 33.Re4-h4+ Kh6-g5 34.g2-g3 Rf8-b8 35.f2-f4+ Nd3xf4 36.Rf1xf4. However, now Black's king is boxed in and White aims to manoeuvre his rooks to give a fatal check.

33.f2-f4 Rf8-c8
34.Re4-d4 g6-g5

This desperation hastens the end. 34...a7-a5 still leaves White with work to do.

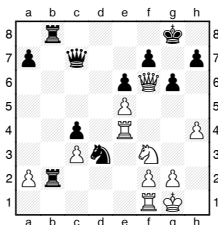
35.f4xg5 Nd3xe5
36.Rf1-d1 Ne5-d3
37.Rd4-d7

The immediate 37.g5-g6 f7xg6 38.Rd4-d7 forces mate immediately but the result is not in doubt.

37... Rc8-f8

37...Ra2-f2 was the only way to prolong the suffering.
38.g5-g6

1-0



CHESS

September 15th 2007

Michael Adams



Lucky feet that almost did the job

The UK v China match, supported by Liverpool City Council and held at the magnificent St George's Hall, was a great sensation. The organiser, Professor David Robertson, should be proud of the results of his hard work and diplomacy.

Midway through the contest, members of the local Chinese community hosted an excellent banquet for the players, organisers and the Chinese Consul at a local restaurant. Our hosts told us that the duck's webs with black mushrooms was a lucky dish and for the UK team that proved to be the case. The day after we out-pointed the Chinese in a round, the only time we were to do so. Perhaps it should become a staple at team meals in the future.

Although we threatened to achieve other successes, the Chinese showed their trademark tactical alertness to maximise their returns whenever they were presented with opportunities, as in the games below. A special mention should be given to the impressive 4/6 score by the UK's Ketevan Arakhamia-Grant, despite a last-round loss from a promising position.

Howell, D - Wang Hao
Liverpool 2007

21.Qe2-f3

As White's king is rather vulnerable, exchanging queens by 21.Qe2-c4 would have been advisable.

21... Bd6-f4

After this weakening move Wang allows White no respite. 22.Bc1xf4 g5xf4 23.Qf3-e2 had to be tried.

22.g2-g3 e6-e5
23.g3xf4 g5-g4

Capturing the knight immediately could transpose after 23...e5xd4 24.c3xd4 g5-g4

24.Qf3-d3 e5xd4
25.c3xd4 Bd7-c6+
26.Kh1-h2 g4xh3

White is able to force the exchange of queens but Black's remaining forces are sufficient to finish the job.

27.Qd3-f5+ Qc7-d7
28.Qf5xd7+ Bc6xd7
29.Bc1-e3 Rg8-g2+
30.Kh2-h1 Bd7-c6
31.Bb3xf7 Bc6-f3

This important quiet move prevents David interrupting the diagonal with a timely d4-d5.

32.Bf7-e6+ Kc8-b8
33.Be6xh3 Rd8-g8

The decisive blow: if 33... Rg2xf2+ 34.Kh1-g1 Rf2xb2 35.Rd1-d2 and White survives.

34.Bh3xg2 Rg8xg2

White resigned as 35.d4-d5 Nf6-g4 36.d5-d6 Rg2-h2+ 37.Kh1-g1 Rh2-h1 is the end.

Short, N - Ni Hua
Liverpool 2007

31.f5xg6

Nigel doesn't sense the danger as after 31.Rc1-h1 h3-h2 32.Rg3-g2 eliminating the dangerous 'h' pawn, White's extra pawn should tell. Now Ni Hua produces a tactical sequence spanning the entire board.

31... h3-h2
32.g6xf7+ Kg8xf7
33.Rc1-h1 Ra8xa2
34.Kb1xa2 Rh5-a5+
35.Ka2-b1 Ra5-a1+
36.Kb1-c2 Ra1xh1
37.Rg3-h3

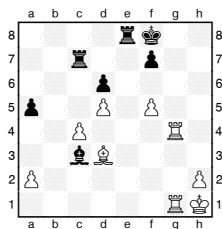
Nigel would have been relieved to find he can prevent the pawn's coronation and retain half a point.

37... Bf6-e5
38.f2-f4 Be5-d6
39.Be3-d2 Kf7-g6
40.Kc2-d3 Kg6-f5

Another way to share the spoils was 40...Bd6xf4 41.Bd2xf4 Rh1-d1+ 42.Kd3-c4 h2-h1Q 43.Rh3xh1 Rd1xh1 44.Bf4-d6

41.Kd3-e2 Kf5-g4
42.Rh3-h7 Bd6xf4
43.Bd2xf4 Kg4xf4
44.Ke2-f2

With material almost exhausted a draw was agreed.



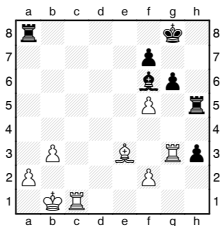
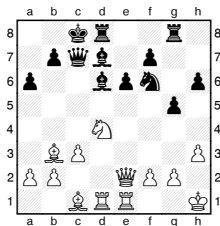
Jones, G - Wang Yue
Liverpool 2007

40.Rg4-g8+

Gawain missed his chance to win a piece with the neat combination: 40.f5-f6 Bc3xf6 41.Rg4-g8+ Kf8-e7 42.Rg1-e1+ Bf6-e5 43.Re1xe5+ d6xe5 44.d5-d6+ and after

40... Kf8-e7
41.h2-h4 Rc7-c8

The game was eventually drawn.



CHESS

September 22nd 2007

Michael Adams



Championship heads down Mexico way

The FIDE World Championship tournament in Mexico City is in its first week. I would like to try to summarise how this event fits into FIDE's overall cycle, (those of you who imagine that the winner will become World Champion and defend his title in a similar event lack the creativity of our governing body), but I am not sure I have fully grasped it myself. Given the frequency with which the rules have changed in recent times, it is a good bet that things will have altered again before long.

A much better idea is to enjoy a fascinating tournament which will undoubtedly throw up many entertaining games. In an event with no weak players to target, wins with the Black pieces will be extremely valuable, so this week I will focus on an excellently played game by one of the pre-tournament favourites, Viswanathan Anand.

theory, as we will see Vishy's homework for this game was quite intensive.

17... c6-c5

Black returns the pawn, trying to weaken White's central influence and to open up his light-squared bishop.

18.d4xc5 Qd8-e7
19.Kg1-h1

It is not clear that the White king is safer here and the loss of time is important, so instead 19.Rd1-d6 looks better.

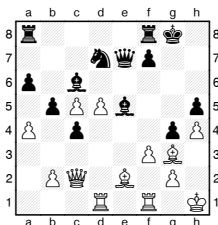
19... a7-a6
20.a2-a4

Aronian has to quickly generate some counter play or Black will pick off the 'c' pawn with the advantage.

20... Bb7-c6
21.Nc3-d5

This tempting knight leap works out very badly. It looks natural to eliminate the kingside pawns by 21.f3xg4 h5xg4 22.Be2xg4 Nd7xc5 23.Bg4-f3 Nc5-d3 but the activity of Black's minor pieces still gives him an edge.

21... e6xd5
22.e4xd5 Bg7-e5



The key move, as Vishy explained after the game. Luring forward the White 'f' pawn shuts down the scope of White's light-squared bishop. In the remainder of the game it remains a bystander.

23.f3-f4 Be5-g7
24.d5xc6 Nd7xc5
25.Rd1-d5

There isn't a good alternative to targeting the 'h' pawn, but it leaves the rook offside as well.

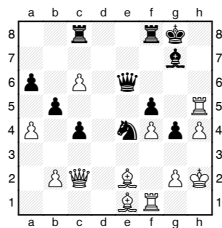
25... Nc5-e4
26.Bg3-e1 Qe7-e6
27.Rd5xh5

With the Black pieces dominating the board, the last chance to gain some activity was 27.a4xb5 Qe6xd5 28.Be2xc4 Qd5-d4 29.b5-b6 which creates some confusion, but Black's extra material should tell with accurate play.

27... f7-f5

Vishy has achieved a winning position by playing natural moves. Now all his pieces have more scope than White's and after the 'c' pawn is rounded up the queenside majority is rather ominous.

28.Kh1-h2 Ra8-c8



29.Be1-b4

The only way to get some practical chances is to "sacrifice" the miserable rook for Black's dominant steed but it is not so easy to arrange, as after 29.Be1-g3 Rc8xc6 30.Rh5-g5 Black can ignore the offering with 30...Rf8-d8.

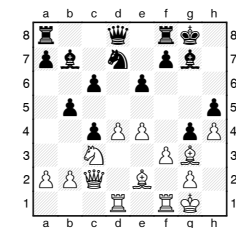
29... Rf8-e8
30.a4xb5 a6xb5
31.Rf1-e1 Qe6-f7

There is no need for anything flashy - Anand simply collects the material on offer. Aronian fights on for quite a while but the result is no longer in doubt.

32.Rh5-g5 Ne4xg5
33.f4xg5 Rc8xc6
34.Be2-f1 Re8xe1
35.Bb4xe1 Rc6-e6
36.Be1-c3 Qf7-c7+
37.g2-g3 Re6-e3

The end is nigh.
38.Qc2-g2 Bg7xc3
39.b2xc3 f5-f4
40.Qg2-a8+

40.Qg2-d5+ Qc7-f7 forces the exchange of queens.
40... Kg8-g7
41.Qa8-a6 f4xg3+
0-1



Aronian, L - Anand, V
Mexico City 2007

We join the game just in time to see the first departure from

CHESS

September 29th 2007

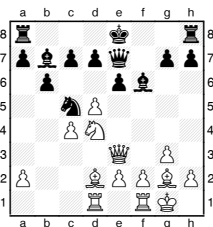
Michael Adams



Battering ram pays dividends for solid Boris

The surprise package of the World Championships in Mexico City so far has been Boris Gelfand. Along with pre-event favourites Kramnik and Anand, he is the only other player with a positive score and is just a half point off the lead. No one has been able to make an impression on his rock-solid Petroff defence, and he has picked up a couple of wins with the White pieces where his in-depth opening preparation has served him well.

By the time you read this we will know whether or not the 39-year-old's stamina holds out to the end.



Gelfand, B - Morozevich, A
Mexico City 2007

15... e6xd5
If 15...0-0 16.Nd4-b5 is unpleasant, so Moroz decides to swap queens.

16.c4xd5 Qe7xe3
17.Bd2xe3 0-0-0

The king defends some pawns on the queenside but is also vulnerable due to the open files there.

18.Rd1-b1 Rh8-e8

19.Nd4-b5 Re8xe3

The exchange sacrifice looks logical as it relieves the pressure, damages White's pawn structure and leaves the useful dark-squared bishop unopposed. However, it proves insufficient as White quickly activates his forces before Black can consolidate. Moroz didn't like 19...a7-a6 20.Be3xc5 a6xb5 21.Bc5-e3 when his queenside structure is vulnerable, but it was probably the lesser evil. Not 19...Kc8-b8 20.Be3xc5 b6xc5 21.d5-d6 c7-c6 22.e2-e3, which leaves an icy draft blowing down the 'b' line.

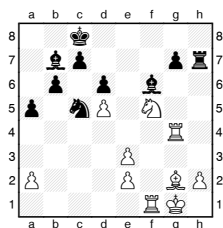
20.f2xe3 a7-a6
21.Nb5-d4 Rd8-e8
22.Nd4-f5 d7-d6
23.Rb1-b4

This clever activation of the White rook targets the g7 pawn to destroy the stability of Black's dark-squared bishop.

23... h7-h5
Preventing the planned 23... Re8-e5 24.Rb4-g4.

24.g3-g4
White continues logically, forcing open squares on the kingside for the rook to swing over.

24... a6-a5
25.Rb4-f4 Re8-h8
26.g4xh5 Rh8xh5
27.Rf4-g4 Rh5-h7



28.Nf5xg7
This neat tactic is the logical conclusion to Gelfand's plan and removes the lynchpin of Black's position.

28... Rh7xg7
If 28...Bf6xg7, 29.Rf1-f7 is decisive.

29.Bg2-h3 Rg7xg4+
The piece must be returned as trying to hang on to material leads to an abrupt conclusion: 29...Rg7-h7 30.Rg4-g8 mate.

30.Bh3xg4+ Kc8-d8
31.Rf1xf6 Bb7xd5
32.a2-a3
Both sides have passed pawns, but now the superiority of the rook over the knight due to its greater mobility is demonstrated.

32... b6-b5
33.h2-h4 b5-b4
34.a3xb4 a5xb4
35.Rf6-f4 b4-b3

It looks tempting to play 35... Bd5-e4 but after 36.Bg4-f3 d6-d5 37.Bf3xe4 Nc5xe4 38.h4-h5 Black must give up his passer to prevent White's pawn from queening.

36.Bg4-f5 Bd5-f7
After 36...b3-b2 37.Bf5-b1 the Black pawn will go no further.

37.Kg1-f2
Gelfand walks his king over to the queenside to corral the passed pawn.

37... Kd8-e7
38.Kf2-e1 Ke7-f6
39.Bf5-d3+ Kf6-g7
40.Ke1-d2 Bf7-e6
41.Kd2-c3

Moroz hopes his fortress will hold but it doesn't take Gelfand long to take a battering ram to it.

41... Be6-f7
42.Bd3-c4 Bf7xc4
If 42...d6-d5 43.Bc4xb3 d5-d4+ 44.e3xd4 Nc5xb3 45.Rf4xf7+ doesn't work out well for Black.

43.Rf4xc4 Kg7-g6
44.e3-e4 Nc5-e6
Or 44...Kg6-h5 45.e4-e5 and the Black edifice is undermined. After 44...Kg6-f6 45.Rc4xc5 d6xc5 46.Kc3xb3 Kf6-e5 47.h4-h5 White's pawns are untouchable.

45.Kc3xb3 Kg6-h5
46.e4-e5 d6-d5
46...d6xe5 47.e2-e3 dominates the knight but allowing the pawn to remain also doesn't help.

47.Rc4-b4 Kh5-g6
48.Rb4-b8 Ne6-d4+
49.Kb3-b2 Nd4-f5
49...Nd4xe2 50.h4-h5+ and one of the pawns achieves a touchdown.

50.Rb8-f8

1-0