

CHESS

July 5th 2008

Michael Adams



Grand Prix proves to be right formula

Gawain Jones is the latest in a long line of English players who have specialised in meeting the Sicilian in an off-beat manner. He has shared his expertise in his first book, *Starting Out: Sicilian Grand Prix Attack* (Everyman, £14.99).

I watched Gawain in action on the White side as he notched up a couple of impressive victories when he was my team-mate in the recent European championships.

Most of the book focuses on the position after 1.e2-e4 c7-c5 2.Nb1-c3 Nb8-c6 3.f2-f4 but there are also a couple of bonus chapters at the end on 3.Bf1-b5, an interesting recent idea allowing White to transpose into favourable variations of the Grand Prix attack in some instances, or to continue in more traditional manner by simply developing his king's knight depending upon how Black proceeds.

Jones, G - Abhishek, D
World Junior Yerevan 2007

1.e2-e4 c7-c5
2.Nb1-c3 Nb8-c6
3.Bf1-b5 g7-g6
A better option here is 3... Nc6-d4.

4.Bb5xc6 d7xc6
5.f2-f4
Now that White has already achieved the strategically desirable bishop-for-knight swap, he develops in typical Grand Prix style.

5... Bf8-g7
6.d2-d3 Ng8-f6

7.Ng1-f3 0-0
A better idea was 7...Bc8-g4, getting rid of the light-squared bishop which is hard to find a good post for. Another interesting option was 7...c5-c4, trying to create counterplay.

8.0-0 b7-b6
Black doesn't sense any danger and makes some quiet moves, but he should have paid more attention to White's plans. As we shall see he can quickly develop a strong initiative on the kingside.

9.Qd1-e1 Bc8-g4
The worst possible moment for this move as the knight is no longer pinned. 9...Nf6-d7 was preferable although, after 10.f4-f5 there is trouble ahead for the Black monarch.

10.Nf3-e5 Qd8-c7
11.Qe1-h4 Bg4-e6
12.Ne5-f3 h7-h6
12...Be6-c8 13.f4-f5 is no bargain but at least there is some pawn cover remaining.

13.f4-f5 g6-g5



14.Nf3xg5
Not the most difficult sacrifice Gawain has had to make.

14... h6xg5
15.Bc1xg5 Be6-c8
16.Rf1-f3 Rf8-d8
16...Qc7-d6 would have given more hope.

17.Bg5-h6
The direct approach is more than good enough.

17... Nf6-e8
18.Bh6xg7 Ne8xg7
19.Rf3-h3 f7-f6
20.Qh4-h7+ Kg8-f7
21.Qh7-g6+ Kf7-g8
22.Ra1-f1
22.Rh3-h7 was also not bad, but bringing up more reserves means that weight of numbers will have their say.

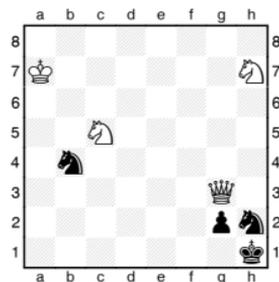
22... e7-e6
23.Qg6-h7+ Kg8-f7
24.f5xe6+ Bc8xe6
25.Rh3-h6 Qc7-e5
26.Qh7-g6+ Kf7-g8
27.Rf1xf6 Qe5-d4+
28.Rf6-f2

Even with what feels like an overwhelming position, it is important to maintain concentration. The rook retreat forced resignation but the blunder 28.Kg1-h1 Qd4xf6 29.Qg6xf6 Rd8-f8 would lead to a roughly level position.

1-0

The 2nd edition of *Secrets of Spectacular Chess* by Jonathan Levitt and David Friedgood (Everyman, £14.99) is a slightly expanded version of the 1999 original, in which they analysed the beauty in chess.

The book is especially interesting to players with little experience of studies who will discover many paradoxical positions, such as the classic below.



A S Gurevich

White to play and win
Bakinskiy Rabochi 1927

It looks as though Black will promote the 'g' pawn and the game will end in a draw, but there is an unexpected way to win.

1.Nc5-e4 Nb4-d3
If 1...g2-g1Q+ 2.Ne4-f2+ wins the queen.

2.Qg3-f2
An amazing concept 2.Qg3xd3 g2-g1Q+ should end in a draw.

2... Nd3xf2
3.Ne4-g3+ Kh1-g1
4.Nh7-g5
With a beautiful zugzwang White will mate next move with Ng5-f3 or Ng5-h3 depending on which of Black's knights give ground.

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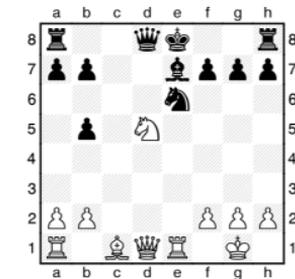
July 12th 2008

Michael Adams

That's nothing new, it's one of Garry's gadgets

When Garry Kasparov retired from professional chess for a career in the murky world of Russian politics in 2005, he did so with a gigantic database of opening novelties that had been left unplayed.

As theoretical developments have progressed, Garry has occasionally let on which "discoveries" came as no news to him. So, when Arkady Naiditsch produced a stunning idea against the upholder of the Petroff Defence, Vladimir Kramnik, in the recent Dortmund tournament, most of the chess world was agog. Kasparov, however, had found a similar idea nine years previously, showing that Kramnik may have been wise to avoid this defence during their world championship match.



Naiditsch, A - Kramnik, V Dortmund 2008

16.Bc1-f4

Kasparov's home analysis had produced the closely related idea 16.a2-a4 b5-b4 17.Bc1-f4 Ne6xf4 18.Re1xe7+ Ke8-f8 19.Re7-e5 Qd8-d6 20.Qd1-d2: a souped-up version of the game as the b4 pawn can be captured with check in some variations.

16...
17.Re1xe7+
18.Re7-e5

Although the Black king is misplaced there doesn't seem to be much danger, but White's surprising next move is very unpleasant to face.

19.Qd1-d2

Vladimir plays safe and accepts an inferior position, hoping to be able to hang on for a draw. The critical line was 19...Qd6xe5 20.Qd2-b4+ Kf8-e8 (20...Kf8-g8 loses simply 21.Nd5-e7+ Kg8-f8 22.Ne7-g6+) 21.Ra1-e1 (another interesting option was 21.Qb4xb5+ Ke8-d8 22.Ra1-d1) 21...Nf4-e2+ 22.Kg1-f1 Ra8-c8 23.f2-f4 Qe5xd5 24.Re1xe2+ Ke8-d7 25.Re2-d2 Rc8-c5 and Black survives.

20.Re5-e1

The knight retreat has left White with a dominant steed on d5, and Kramnik is not able to complete his development in time before a tactical problem arises.

20...
21.Ra1-d1
22.Qd2-e3

The alternative 22...Rh8-d8 23.Qe3-b3 Kf7-f8 24.Nd5-e7 is similar to the game.

23.Nd5-e7
24.Qe3-b3+
25.Re1xe7
26.Qb3xb5

and Naiditsch's good technique enabled him to convert his material advantage into the full point 16 moves later.

Kramnik losses in Dortmund are as common as bank errors in your favour. One day earlier all was smooth sailing for Vlad.



Kramnik, V - Van Wely, L Dortmund 2008

Van Wely's position looks

Ne6xf4
Ke8-f8
Qd8-d6

quite solid, but Kramnik shows that his forces lack proper coordination.

17.Bd3xe4
18.c4-c5

Blunting the light-squared bishop by preventing Black from playing c6-c5.

18...

19.a2-a3

The dark-squared bishop is also pushed offside.

20.d4xc5

It looks logical to reposition the rook and leave room for the bishop to retreat to c7, but 20...Rc7-c8 21.Ra1-d1 Rc8-d8 22.Rd1-d6 is awkward.

21.b3-b4

The queen must pin the white 'b' pawn to avoid dropping a piece.

22.Qh3-g3

With the queen also drawn over to the queenside the Black king looks very lonely, but 22...f7-f5 defending along the second rank may hold on.

23.Ne5-d7

Interrupting the rook's influence on the kingside forces, a fatal weakening of the dark squares.

23...

24.Nd7-f6+
25.Bb2-e5



25...

26.Qg3-h4
27.Nf6-h7+

The other knight check 27.Nf6-d7+ Kf8-e8 28.Be5-d6 Bb6-d8 29.Nd7-f6+ was even better.

27...

28.Be5-d6
29.Rf1-d1

There is no need to hurry as there aren't any constructive defensive moves, hence Van Wely resigned.

d5xe4

b6xc5

Bb4-a5

Qe7xc5

Qc5-b5

Ba5-b6

g7-g6

Kg8-f8

Rc7-c8

h6-h5

Kf8-e8

Rc8-c7

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July 19th 2008

Michael Adams



A board you would have bet the chateau on

I have just been visiting my predecessor as Weekend chess columnist at his humble sun-drenched abode in Gascony in France. It has been a very enjoyable few days at the chateau with David, his girlfriend Rebecca and Scrumpy the adorable, if slightly confused, boxer dog.

Now that he no longer has to produce weekly copy, Monsieur Norwood has adopted a number of new hobbies — spread betting, tennis, perudo and glider flying. Not forgetting however, to allow himself a bit of time for relaxation at the poolside.

In the evenings there was time to mull over past glories with a glass or two of the local armagnac. We reminisced about the last time Dave and I played together, enabling our team, Solingen, to clinch the German Bundesliga against a well-financed outfit from Berlin.

I held Vladimir Kramnik to a draw on board one and Dave put the boot in to his Russian opponent further down the order.

Norwood, D - Chekhov, V Bundesliga 1997

Chekhov has made the mistake of adopting Dave's favourite modern set up against him and his position is unpleasantly cramped. His early draw offer invoked an emphatic "Nein!" from our red-blooded team captain, Herbert Scheidt.

15... Nd7-b6
16.Be2-f3 Ra8-b8

A mysterious rook move; 16... Rf8-e8 was a better idea.

17.Bc1-e3 Nb6-c4
18.Qd1-e2 Nc4xe3
19.Qe2xe3

A welcome trade, eliminating White's dark-squared bishop, but now problems arise on the other colour complex.

19... b7-b5
20.Ra1-d1 b5-b4
21.Nc3-e4

The White pieces slide in harmony towards the Black monarch.

21... Nc7-b5

When Dave is spread betting, he likes to "short", ie bet against companies that are falling apart at the seams. If he could have shorted Black's position at this point he would probably have bet the chateau.

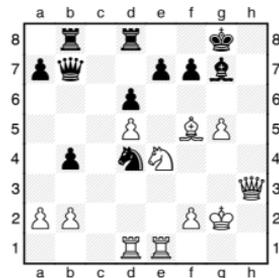
He now starts directing his heavy pieces towards the 'h' line.

22.Bf3-g4 Qd8-b6
23.Qe3-h3 Nb5-d4
24.Kg1-g2 Rf8-d8
25.h5xg6 h7xg6
26.f4-f5 g6xf5
27.Bg4xf5

Dave pondered the very powerful sacrifice 27.g5-g6, f7xg6 28.Ne4-g5, but fearing the wrath of Scheidt if things went wrong, decided to keep things simple.

27... Qb6-b7

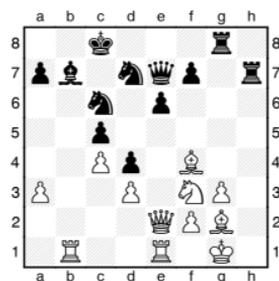
Nudging the king away from the danger zone with 27... Kg8-f8 is met by 28.g5-g6, continuing the dissection of the kingside.



28.Rd1xd4

This neat final touch takes out the last two defenders.

28... Bg7xd4
29.Ne4-f6+ Bd4xf6
30.Qh3-h7+ Kg8-f8
31.g5xf6 Qb7xd5+
32.Kg2-g1 1-0



Norwood, D - Marsh, S Walsall 1992

Games where the opponent's king are drawn up the board to their death were more common in previous centuries, so this game is a rare but beautiful king hunt.

26.Rb1xb7 Kc8xb7
27.Qe2-e4 f7-f5

Otherwise Black drops the rook on h7.

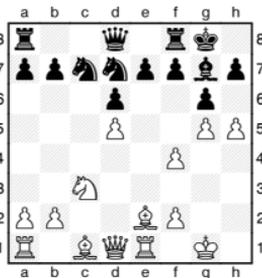
28.Qe4xc6+

Starting a series of checks which force the Black monarch away from his forces to his doom.

28... Kb7xc6
29.Nf3xd4+ Kc6-b6
30.Re1-b1+ Kb6-a6
31.Bg2-b7+ Ka6-a5
32.Bf4-d2+ Ka5-a4
33.Bb7-c6+ Ka4xa3
34.Bd2-c1+ Ka3-a2
35.Rb1-b2+ Ka2-a1

35...Ka2-a3 36.Nd4-c2 mate was the other way to end the game but Black prefers the more aesthetic ending.

36.Nd4-c2 mate.



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July 26th 2008

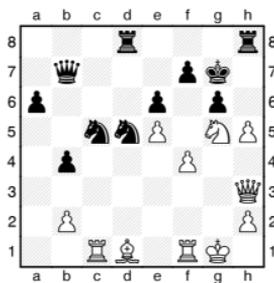
Michael Adams



Multi-tasking Baburin makes up for lost time

Back in 1993, Alexander Baburin set up shop in Ireland. He has enhanced the local chess scene considerably, not only by his play, but also by his active involvement in coaching young talents. Alex also finds time to edit a daily e-newsletter, *Chess Today* (www.chesstoday.net), which is essential reading for chess enthusiasts.

Until now, Alex never got around to playing in Ireland's national championships, but he debuted with a wallop — sharing first place in this strong event, sponsored by Island Oil and Gas, with a formidable total of eight out of nine.



Hebden, M - Baburin, A Irish Championship Dublin 2008

Both kings are in the combat zone but the rook on h8 is a useful defender for the Black monarch.

27... Qb7-b6
28.Kg1-h1 Qb6-b5

Nudging the queen forward in two moves rather than one is a good idea, as the White king no longer defends the rook on f1.

29.Bd1-g4

This doesn't work out too well as Alex gets to sink his horse into the White position. The dreaded machine suggests the clever tactical idea 29.Qh3-f3 Rh8xh5 30.Bd1-e2 Qb5-c6 31.Qf3-f2 Nd5xf4+ 32.Be2-f3 when a lot of material is hanging, but this would be a very hard line to find and calculate accurately over the board.

29... Nc5-d3
30.Qh3-g3

I think it was better to avoid giving up the exchange with 30.Rc1-d1 Nd5xf4 (the greedy 30...Nd3xb2 might be possible) 31.Qh3-g3, when the complications continue.

30... Nd3xc1
31.Rf1xc1 Nd5-e7

This calm knight retreat shores up the kingside and allows the rook to penetrate down the 'd' line.

32.h5xg6 Ne7xg6
33.Bg4-f3 Rd8-d2
34.h2-h3 Qb5-d3

A powerful centralisation.

35.Ng5-e4 Rd2xb2
36.Ne4-d6 Rb2-b1

Alex, possibly short of time, simplifies to victory but 36... Rb2-b3 could have ended things immediately.

37.Rc1xb1 Qd3xb1+
38.Kh1-h2 Qb1-c1
39.f4-f5 Qc1-b2+
40.Bf3-g2 Qb2xe5

The easiest; after the queens are swapped the minor pieces are no match for the fast-advancing pawns.

41.f5xg6 Qe5xg3+
42.Kh2xg3 Kg7xg6
43.h3-h4 a6-a5
44.Bg2-c6 b4-b3
0-1



Greenfeld, A - Redmond, J Irish Championship Dublin 2008

A very brief game from the co-winner.

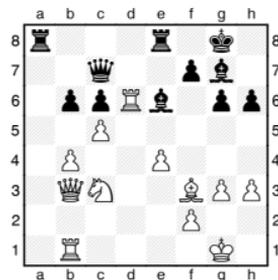
8... 0-0

Black's opening has gone a bit awry, but 8...Be7-c5 would have avoided immediate disaster.

9.d5-d6

Black would drum up some compensation after 9.d5xe6 Bb7xg2 10.Kg1xg2 but Greenfeld's move forced resignation as 9...Bb7xg2 10.d6xe7 wins a piece for nothing.

1-0



Redmond, J - Hebden, M Irish Championship Dublin 2008

This convincing win, demonstrating the power of the two bishops, helped Hebden to secure third place.

26.Qb3-c2

26.Rd6xe6 was the only hope to quell the initiative.

26... b6xc5
27.b4xc5 Ra8-a3

Hebden completes development without allowing White any respite.

28.Rd6-d3 Be6-c4
29.Rd3-e3 Bg7-d4
30.Nc3-b5

The better 30.Nc3-d1 Bd4xe3 31.Nd1xe3 Ra3xe3 32.f2xe3 Qc7xg3+ is also rather dismal.

30... c6xb5
31.Re3xa3 Qc7xg3+
32.Kg1-h1 Qg3xh3+
33.Kh1-g1 Bd4-e5

and White resigned as mate is not far off.

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August 2nd 2008

Michael Adams

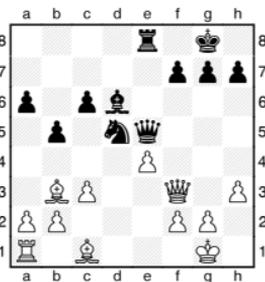


Monarch takes the more scenic route to victory

For players regretting FIDE's decision not to hold a tournament in Siberia this year, the Poikovsky Tournament provided an alternative reason to visit.

Based on the number of spectators present during the World Cup in Khanty Mansisk, I doubt the playing hall was bursting at the seams but following the interesting games online also had its drawbacks; at one stage the website was distributing malware to the audience. Perhaps a bit of a PR own goal.

Alexei Shirov, one of the four winners of the event along with Rublevsky, Jakovenko and Gashimov, was one of the few players to turn down an invite to the new FIDE Grand Prix series, a sign of the increasing number of events as Alexei always keeps up a busy playing schedule. In the game below he sends his king on the scenic route to victory.



**Shirov, A - Onischuk, A
Poikovsky 2008**

20.Kg1-f1

The standard 20.g2-g3 Qe5xe4 21.Qf3xe4 Re8xe4 22.Kg1-f1 gives White a small advantage, but Alexei begins a glorious king march.

20... Bd6-c5

The immediate 20...Qe5-h2 is well met by 21.g2-g4 as 21...Nd5-f6 22.g4-g5 wins a piece, or 21...Nd5-f4 22.Bc1xf4 Bd6xf4 23.Ra1-d1 leaves White a solid pawn up. Onischuk should have settled for 20...Qe5xe4 21.Qf3xe4 Re8xe4 but there is a lot of suffering ahead as the two bishops will prove very influential.

21.Bc1-d2 Qe5-h2

After 21...Nd5-f6 22.Ra1-e1 hangs onto the booty.

22.Kf1-e2

Again Alexei makes a very brave well-calculated decision when a good safe alternative was available, 22.Ra1-e1 Re8-e6 23.Qf3-g3 Qh2xg3 24.f2xg3 Re6-f6+ 25.Kf1-e2 Rf6-f2+ 26.Ke2-d3 Nd5-c7 27.Re1-e2 is unpleasant for Black but in the game he is deprived of any activity.

22... Re8-e6

It looks as though 22...Qh2-e5 23.Ra1-e1 Qe5xe4+ gets the pawn back but 24.Ke2-f1 is an unpleasant sting in the tail. Nor is 22...Nd5-f6 possible as 23.Bd2-f4 Re8xe4+ 24.Qf3xe4 leaves the queen no escape.

23.Ke2-d3

Very cheeky but the monarch is quite safe here.

23... Re6-f6

24.Qf3-g3 Qh2xg3+

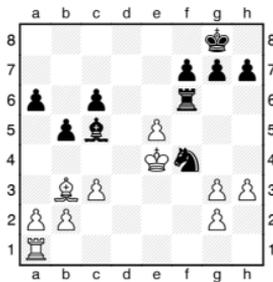
25.f2xg3 Nd5-e7

26.Bd2-f4 Ne7-g6

27.e4-e5 Ng6xf4+

28.Kd3-e4

The king keeps on heading up the board.



28... Rf6-g6

29.Ke4xf4

The extra pawn isn't too important, but the very awkward position of Black's rook

proves too difficult to manage.

29... Bc5-e7

I would prefer 29...Kg8-f8 aiming to cover the 'd' line with 30.Ra1-d1 Kf8-e7, however 30.a2-a4 is more problematic.

30.Ra1-d1 c6-c5

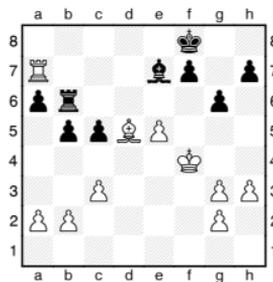
31.Rd1-d7 Kg8-f8

32.Bb3-d5 Rg6-b6

33.Rd7-a7 g7-g6

34.Ra7-a8+ Kf8-g7

35.Ra8-a7 Kg7-f8



Shirov could cash in immediately with 36.Bd5-b7, but he correctly judges that he can reap the harvest more effectively after eliminating all counterplay.

36.b2-b3 c5-c4

37.b3-b4 f7-f6

38.e5-e6 Be7-d6+

39.Kf4-e4 Bd6-e5

40.g3-g4 Be5xc3

41.e6-e7+ Kf8-e8

42.Ra7-c7 Bc3xb4

43.Bd5-c6+ Rb6xc6

44.Rc7xc6 Bb4xe7

If 44...a6-a5 45.Rc6-b6 begins picking off the pawns.

45.Rc6xa6 c4-c3

46.Ke4-d5 Ke8-f7

47.Ra6-c6 b5-b4

48.Rc6-c7 h7-h5

After 48...Kf7-f8 49.Kd5-e6

Be7-d8 50.Rc7-c8 Kf8-e8

51.Rc8-b8 Black is zugzwanged.

49.g4xh5 g6xh5

50.g2-g4 h5xg4

51.h3xg4 f6-f5

Desperate measures to prevent the White king advancing to e6 and ending Onischuk's resistance.

52.g4xf5 Kf7-f6

53.Kd5-e4 Be7-f8

54.Rc7-c6+ Kf6-g5

55.f5-f6

1-0

CHESS

August 9th 2008

Michael Adams



Lalic wastes no time in Mersey killing

The British Championships, which finishes today, is being held at the prestigious St George's Hall in Liverpool. I very much enjoyed playing this impressive venue during the UK v China match last year.

Participants in the European Union Individual Championships, in which both Nigel Short and I are competing in September, will get to see more of Liverpool's classic buildings; the event is being held at the World Museum.

Back to the British Championships. It is hard to pick a winner out of the clump of players topping the field, but there should be a lot of exciting chess to come.



Here is a swift victory for one of the contenders for the women's title.

Yeo, M - Lalic, S
British Championships
Liverpool 2008

11.Bg5-e3

It was better to swap bishops by playing 11.Bg5xe7.

11... Nc6-a5

An awkward move to meet as

White understandably doesn't want to weaken the dark squares with 12.b2-b3.

12.Nc3-b1
13.Qd2-e2
14.Nb1-d2

Na5-c4
Bd7-b5
Nc4xb2

An excellent practical decision. This move must have come as quite a shock: 14...Qd8-d7 was a good alternative but would have been unlikely to force resignation three moves later.

15.Kc1xb2

After 15.Bd3xb5+ a6xb5 16.Qe2xb5+ c7-c6 17.Qb5xb2, the newly opened "a" file allows Susan Lalic to win her opponent's queen with 17...Be7-a3.

15... Nb6-a4+
16.Kb2-b3

Leading with the chin, discretion would have been the better part of valour here; following the correct 16.Kb2-a1 Na4-c3 17.Qe2-e1 c7-c5 18.Nd2-b1 Nc3xd1 19.Qe1xd1 the struggle would have been just beginning.

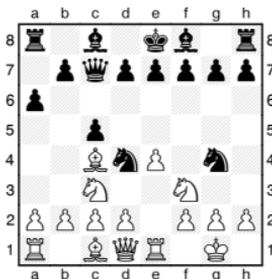
16... c7-c6
17.Bd3xb5

If 17.a2-a3 Bb5-c4+ 18.Bd3xc4 Qd8-b6+ 19.Kb3xa4 Qb6-b2 is one pretty finish.

17... Qd8-a5

This very powerful *zwischenzug* ends the game, as it's mate in four. However, the mundane 17...a6xb5 also puts the White king on life support.

0-1



Some of the games didn't provide great interest for the spectators as the players saved their energy with quick draws, so we should applaud Jeff Horner's brave play in this game, which ultimately founders on Bogdan Lalic's obdurate defence.

Horner, J - Lalic, B
British Championships
Liverpool 2008

8.Bc4xf7+

Jeff rarely passes up the chance to go after his opponent's king. 8.g2-g3 Nd4xf3+ 9.Qd1xf3 Ng4-e5 is a damp squib for White, but 8.e4-e5 is also interesting.

8... Ke8xf7
9.Nc3-d5 Qc7-d6
10.Nf3-g5+ Kf7-g8
11.Qd1xg4 h7-h6
12.Ng5-f3 Nd4xc2
13.Re1-d1

The smoke has cleared and the sacrifice of material is genuine, but the misplaced king and substantial lead in development provide good compensation. Here it was worth considering 13.Re1-e2 Nc2xa1 14.d2-d3, cutting off the knight's escape.

13... Nc2xa1
14.d2-d4 Qd6-c6
15.Bc1-f4 d7-d6

The immediate 15...Na1-c2 might have been better.

16.Qg4-g6 Na1-c2
17.Bf4-g5

It was more precise to play 17.Rd1-c1 c5xd4 18.Bf4-g5.

17... Qc6-d7
18.d4xc5 Qd7-e6
19.Qg6-e8 Kg8-h7
20.Qe8-a4

The queen is chased off but rounds up the errant steed.

20... Qe6-g6
21.Nd5-f4

Running short of time, White slips after 21.c5xd6 e7xd6 22.Bg5-d2 Bc8-g4 23.Nd5-f4 Qg6-f7 24.Qa4xc2. The game is still alive but now too many White pieces are hanging.

21... Qg6-f7
22.c5xd6 e7xd6
23.Qa4xc2 Bc8-g4
24.e4-e5+ Qf7-f5
25.Qc2-b3 Bg4xf3
26.Qb3xf3 h6xg5
27.Qf3xb7 Ra8-d8
0-1

CHESS

August 16th 2008

Michael Adams



Audience get their money's-worth in title showdown

The early stages of the Biel Tournament this year had chess fans reaching for their calculators as they tried to deduce how many points Magnus Carlsen would need to top the live rating list.

Magnus's chance to be top dog disappeared (for now) as he faded in the second half of the tournament. This seemed to leave the field clear for the talented Cuban player Leinier Dominguez, but there was another twist in the tale as a last-round defeat enabled the young Russian Evgeny Alekseev to catch up and ultimately take the title in an exciting play-off.

34.Rc1xc6
35.Qe3-d3

Ra8xa7
b5-b4

Alekseev would have liked to cover the back rank but 35... Ra7-a8 36.Qd3xb5 traps his knight.

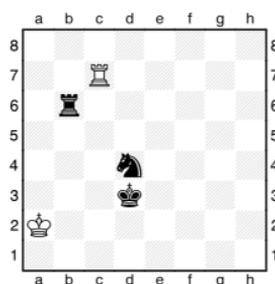
36.Rc6-c8+
37.Qd3-h7
38.Qh7-g8+
39.Rc8-f8+
40.Rf8xf7+

Kg8-f7
f6-f5
Kf7-f6
Rd7-f7
Ra7xf7

Or 40...Qe6xf7 41.Qg8xf7+ Kf6xf7 42.d6-d7 and the 'd' pawn costs a rook.

41.Qg8-d8+
42.d6-d7
43.Qd8-e8
1-0

Kf6-g6
Na4-c5



Onischuk, A - Dominguez Perez, L
Biel 2008

Although rook and bishop versus rook is very difficult to defend with the clock ticking, you rarely see this ending converted at a high level. Black has patiently edged his king into a promising position and reaps the benefit after an unfortunate blunder.

88.Rc7-d7

The position is still drawn after most continuations; perhaps 88.Rc7-c5 was the most accurate.

**88...
89.Ka2-a3**

Kd3-c2

If 89.Rd7-a7 Nd4-b5 closes the net.

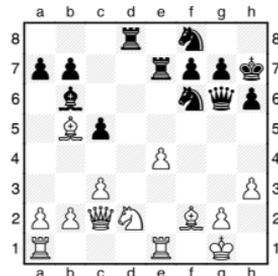
89...

Nd4-c6

Now the White rook can't defend the "a" line.

**90.Ka3-a4
91.Ka4-a3
0-1**

**Rb6-b4+
Rb4-b5**



Biel is one event that instigates a rapid-play tie-break directly after the last round if first prize is shared; value for the audience but tough on the players, as we see in this, the fourth tie-break.

Dominguez Perez, L - Alekseev, E
Biel 2008 Playoff

26...

Nf8-e6

26...Nf8-d7, heading for the e5 square, was an alternative but aggressive play often succeeds in rapid games.

**27.Nd2-f3
28.Nf3-h4
29.Kg1-f1
30.e4-e5+
31.e5xf6
32.Bf2xe1**

**Ne6-f4
Nf4xh3+
Qg6-g4
g7-g6
Re7xe1+
c5-c4**

It looks tempting to open up the bishop but the correct move was 32...Rd8-d6, maintaining very good compensation.

**33.Qc2-e2
34.Nh4-f3
35.Be1-d2
36.Bb5xc4**

**Qg4-f4+
Rd8-d3
Bb6-e3**

An unfortunate way for Dominguez to end his tournament after 36.Bd2xe3 Rd3xe3 37.Qe2xc4 Re3xf3+ (37...Qf4xf6 is the best try but 38.Qc4-d4 simplifies effectively.) 38.g2xf3 Qf4xf3+ 39.Kf1-e1: the checks are harmless.

36...

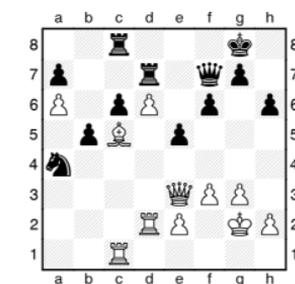
Rd3xd2

This move was overlooked, Black wins material and the game.

**37.g2xh3
38.Kf1xe2
39.Ke2xe3
40.Ke3-f2
41.Ra1-e1
42.Kf2-g3**

**Rd2xe2
Qf4xc4+
Qc4-e6+
Qe6xf6
Qf6-b6+
Qb6xb2**

White resigned a few moves later.



Bacrot, E - Alekseev, E
Biel 2008

32.... Qf7-e6

After a neutral move like 32... Rc8-d8 the position is about equal. This allows a very crafty combination.

33.Bc5xa7 Rc8-a8

Black was relying on this resource but 33...Rd7xd6 was better.

CHESS

August 23rd 2008

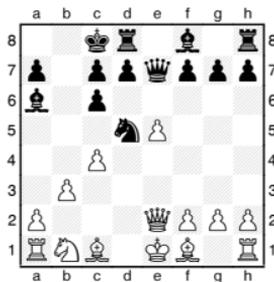
Michael Adams



Weapons-grade tactics win the day at Staunton

Awarding a chess set as the prize for the best game isn't a very original idea but the one offered at the Staunton Memorial, once again sponsored by Jan Mol who remains a very generous supporter of the royal game, was rather unusual.

The pieces were constructed of US Air Force weapons-grade aluminium. Perhaps this, or the historic surroundings of Simpson's-in-the-Strand inspired the players as there were many attractive encounters. I enjoyed my game from the first round where my opponent's king and my knight worked overtime.



Smeets, J - Adams, M
Staunton Memorial 2008

10.Bc1-b2 **Qe7-g5**
11.Qe2-f3

Adventurous stuff, after 11.Nb1-d2 Bf8-b4 12.a2-a3 Nd5-f4 13.Qe2-e3 Nf4xg2+ 14.Bf1xg2 Qg5xg2 15.0-0-0 Bb4xd2+ 16.Qe3xd2 Qg2-f3 Black is marginally better but White has completed development.

11... **Bf8-b4+**
12.Ke1-d1 **Nd5-f4**

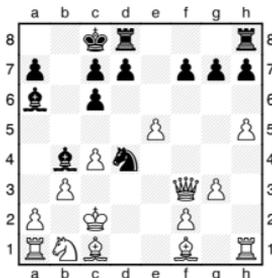
More ambitious than 12... Nd5-b6, this had to be precisely calculated.

13.h2-h4 **Qg5-h6**
14.g2-g3
If 14.Bb2-c1 d7-d6 saves the day.

14... **Nf4-e6**
15.Bb2-c1 **Qh6-g6**
16.h4-h5 **Qg6-c2+**

This unusual way of exchanging queens had to be seen several moves before as 16...Ne6-d4 17.h5xg6 Nd4xf3 18.g6xh7 is good for White.

17.Kd1xc2 **Ne6-d4+**



18.Kc2-d3
The computer, which can always be relied upon to ruin your favourite games, points out that after 18.Kc2-b2 Nd4xf3 19.Bf1-e2 things are not so clear as the pawn cannot be captured because 19...Nf3xe5 20.f2-f4 traps the elusive knight. In the game it continues to dodge its pursuers.

18... **Nd4xf3**
19.Kd3-e4 **Nf3xe5**
Another good possibility was 19...c6-c5 as 20.Ke4xf3 Ba6-b7+ wins the exchange.

20.h5-h6
Smeets should have bailed out with 20.Ke4xe5 Bb4-e7 21.Nb1-c3 Be7-f6+ 22.Ke5-f4 Bf6xc3. From now on his monarch is fighting a lone battle.

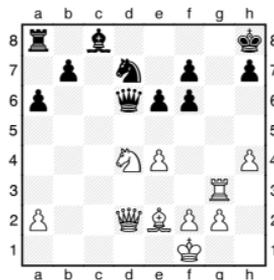
20... **Ne5-g4**
21.h6xg7 **Rh8-g8**
22.Ke4-f5 **Rg8xg7**
23.f2-f3 **Ng4-f2**
Forcing White to develop at least one of his pieces!

24.Rh1-h2 **Bb4-c5**
25.Bc1-h6 **Rg7-g6**

26.Nb1-d2 **Bc5-d4**
27.Bh6-g5 **Rd8-e8**
28.Rh2xf2

I was hoping to contrive a beautiful mate after 28.f3-f4 Kc8-b8, planning Ba6-c8 and d7-d5, but it was not to be.

28... **Re8-e5+**
0-1



This encounter secured the weaponry for the friendly Dutchman due to an impressive mixture of good homework and some inspired sacrificial ideas.

Werle, J - Wells, P
Staunton Memorial 2008

We join the game as Pete Wells produces the first new move: an indication of the increasing role that opening theory is taking in modern chess. Jan had looked even further and had prepared up to his 23rd move at home.

20... **b7-b6**
21.Be2-h5 **Bc8-b7**
If 21...Qd6-f8 22.Nd4-c6 curtails development.

22.Bh5xf7 **Ra8-f8**
23.e4-e5 **Nd7xe5**
Perhaps 23...Qd6xe5 24.Bf7-g6 Bb7-e4 would have enabled Black to cling on.

24.Bf7xe6 **f6-f5**
25.Rg3-g7
A dazzling blow made even more surprising as the rook is not effecting a capture on g7. The cheeky fellow can't be taken as 25...Kh8xg7 26.Nd4xf5+ wins the queen.

25... **Bb7-e4**
26.Qd2-h6 **f5-f4**
27.Qh6-f6
Another unacceptable sacrifice decides the game as 27...Rf8xf6 28.Rg7-g8 is mate.

1-0

CHESS

August 30th 2008

Michael Adams



Howell beaten by massed ranks of Indian army

It has been an action-packed summer at home with the British Championships, the Staunton Memorial and the Jessie Gilbert Memorial, but David Howell, one of our most promising young players, has been busy abroad. He had a real rollercoaster ride in the World Junior Championships in Gaziantep, Turkey. Solidly placed after seven rounds, he had a marathon mind-bender against Li Chao, eventually going down in 137 moves.

We pick up his next game from the following day.

win with 32.a2-a4 Kg7-f8 (or 32...Kg7-f6 33.Qc8-c3+ Kf6-e7 34.a4-a5 Bb6xf2 35.Qc3-b4+ Ke7-e6 36.Qb4-c4+ Ke6xd7 37.Qc4-d3+ Kd7-c7 38.Qd3-c2+ finally collecting the bishop) 33.a4-a5 Bb6xa5 34.Qc8-c5+.

32... Kg7-f6
33.Qc8-c3+ Kf6-e6
34.Qc3-e1+ Ke6xd7

Now Black has chances to resist but David showed strength of character to finally notch up the point in a queen-against-rook ending on move 127.

After these two epics, David kept up the pace and was in with a chance of emulating our last winner, Tony Miles, with a good result in the last round. But things went wrong, allowing his Indian opponent, Abhijeet Gupta to take the title.



Howell, D - Gupta, A World Juniors Gaziantep 2008

13.g2-g4

It's rather risky to open up White's king when behind in development. 13.Ne4-g3 was more thematic after 13...Bh5xf3 14.Qd1xf3 f7-f5 (14...Nc6-d4 15.c3xd4 Qd7xb5 16.Ng3-f5 looks dangerous for Black) White is a little better.

13... Bh5-g6
14.Nf3-h4 Bd6-e7

A strong move forcing White to commit his knight.

15.Nh4xg6 h7xg6
16.Ne4-g3 Be7-d6

The bishop returns, but now the possibility of f7-f5 is a constant menace.

17.h3-h4 a7-a6

Gupta is patient; the immediate

17...f7-f5 18.g4xf5 g6xf5 19.Qd1-h5 is less effective.

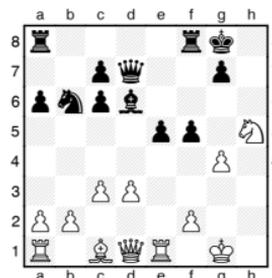
18.Bb5xc6 b7xc6
19.h4-h5

It was better to play 19.Qd1-f3 f7-f5 20.g4xf5 g6xf5 21.Bc1-g5 completing development.

19... g6xh5
20.Ng3xh5

Black is in good shape now, but 20.g4xh5 followed by Qd1-f3 was much better. Now Black's attack plays itself.

20... f7-f5



21.Nh5-g3

Howell gives up a pawn, hoping to use the e4 square to consolidate his position, but his forces are heavily outnumbered as Gupta's entire army comes to the party.

21... f5xg4
22.Re1-e4 Rf8-f3
23.Qd1-b3+ Nb6-d5
24.Qb3-c4 Ra8-f8
25.Re4xg4

If 25.Bc1-e3, Qd7-f7 also crashes through.

25... Rf3-f4

There is an embarrassment of riches: 25...Bd6-c5 was also rather tempting.

26.Bc1xf4 e5xf4
27.Rg4-g5 f4xg3
28.f2xg3 Qd7-e7

Black cleans up before the queen's rook can enter the fray.

29.Qc4-g4 Nd5-e3
30.Qg4-h5 Qe7-f6
31.Kg1-h1 Ne3-f1
32.Qh5-g4 Qf6-h6+
0-1

Howell, D - Popov, I World Juniors Gaziantep 2008

31.Qb7-c8

The simplest was 31.Qb7-c7 Bc5-b6 32.Qc7-e5+ Kg7-f8 33.Qe5-d6+ Kf8-g7 34.a2-a4, keeping the Black king out of the action.

31... Bc5-b6
32.b2-b4

David could still win simply with 32.Qc8-c6, sidelining the Black monarch again. There was also a more flashy way to

CHESS

September 6th 2008

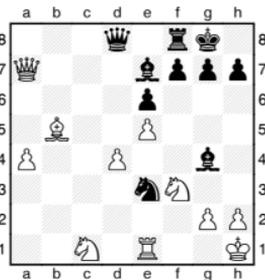
Michael Adams



Kamsky misses a showy sacrifice but wins through

Vassily Ivanchuk continued his impressive form by winning the Tal Memorial in Moscow. Vladimir Kramnik was also in action and made a solid plus-one score in what will probably be his last event prior to the World Championship match with Vishy Anand.

Here are two fascinating snapshots from the event. In the first, Gata Kamsky had a chance to make an amazing sacrifice when his small remaining army would have routed White's superior forces as he would have been unable to find a safe place for his nomadic king.



Morozevich, A - Kamsky, G
Tal Memorial Moscow 2008

27... **Ne3-f5**
was the move Gata chose and he later won the game. However, he missed a much more incisive continuation as this analysis shows:

27... **Ne3xg2**
28.Kh1xg2 **Bg4xf3+**
29.Kg2xf3 **Qd8-d5+**
30.Kf3-g3

Heading for the centre with 30.Kf3-e2 Qd5-g2+ 31.Ke2-d3 Be7-g5 32.Nc1-b3 Rf8-c8

33.Nb3-c5 Qg2-d2+ is also not good, and 30.Kf3-f4 is met in similar fashion to the main line 30...Be7-g5+ 31.Kf4xg5 Qd5-f3 32.Kg5-h4 f7-f6.

30... **Be7-h4+**
31.Kg3xh4 **Qd5-g2**
Black seems to have run out of material to finish the job, but the monarch is so awkwardly placed, his few remaining forces are sufficient.

32.Re1-e2 **g7-g5+**
33.Kh4-h5 **Qg2-h3+**
34.Kh5xg5 **f7-f6+**
35.e5xf6

The king can run, but can't hide after 35.Kg5-f4 f6xe5+ 36.Kf4xe5 Qh3-f5+ 37.Ke5-d6 Qf5-d5+ 38.Kd6-c7 Rf8-f7+ 39.Kc7-b6 Qd5xd4+.

35... **Qh3-f5+**
36.Kg5-h4 **Qf5xf6+**
37.Kh4-h3 **Qf6-f3+**
38.Kh3-h4 **Rf8-f4+**
39.Kh4-g5 **Rf4-g4+**
and it's mate next go.

In these days of heavy opening theory, it is refreshing to see Morozevich stirring up trouble with an early novelty. Ponomariov's plausible response quickly leads to disaster.



Morozevich, A - Ponomariov, R
Tal Memorial Moscow 2008

7.c5-c6 **d7xc6**
In the following blitz tournament, Leko played the more natural 7...b7xc6 in response to Morozevich's clever new idea, throwing a spanner into Black's development plans.

8.a2-a3 **Bb4xc3+**
Pono must have been reluctant to part with the influential bishop. Perhaps 8...Bb4-e7 9.e2-e4 e6-e5, giving up a pawn to free his game, was worth a try.

9.Qc2xc3 **Na6-c5**
10.Bc1-e3 **Nc5-e4**
11.Qc3-e5

Black's knights are in a tangle; their scope is quite limited when they defend each other.

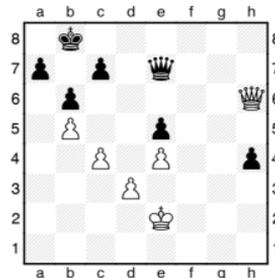
11... **b7-b5**
11...c6-c5 would have given better hope for the steeds.

12.g2-g4
Surprisingly, there is no good way to meet the threat of g4-g5 winning a piece and the game.

12... **c6-c5**
13.g4-g5 **Qd8-a5+**
14.b2-b4 **c5xb4**
15.g5xf6 **Bc8-b7**
16.Be3-d2 **Rf8-c8**
17.Bd2xb4 **Qa5-b6**
18.c4-c5 **Qb6-d8**
19.Rh1-g1 **g7-g6**
20.Ra1-d1

and Ponomariov resigned 18 moves later.

Ivanchuk swept the board, in the blitz, as well as the main event, so perhaps it is harsh to include a defeat here. But if the evergreen Ukrainian, who is playing his best chess at the age of 39, can blunder like this, there is hope for us all.



Svidler, P - Ivanchuk, V
Tal Memorial Blitz Moscow 2008

Ivanchuk has very little chance to convert his extra pawn, but the finish is fairly amazing.

43... **a7-a6**
44.b5xa6 **Kb8-a7**

It was not too late to save half a point with 44...Qe7-d8.

45.Qh6-c6
and Ivanchuk resigned as the only way to prevent Qc6-b7 mate is 45...Ka7xa6 46.Qc6-a8 mate.

Michael Adams



When to let a pawn be put to the sword

The majority of the review copies that drop through my letterbox are opening manuals, so it was a pleasant change to receive *Pawn Sacrifice!* by Timothy Taylor.

Not being familiar with the author, I turned to the sleeve notes. This is not always enlightening, but in this case it revealed that Mr Taylor has written two non-chess novels and also directed a film entitled *Wicked Pursuits*, which he also wrote and produced. It is described as "Racial politics and lurid thrills" in which a character is killed with a Civil War sword, so he seems the perfect man to write a book about sacrifices.

Although nothing quite so dramatic happens in this book, Taylor emphasises the practical advantages of aggressive sacrificial play, often attributing defender's errors to "sacrificial shock".

Most of the games are either by the author himself or by Mikhail Tal or Tigran Petrosian and they are a nicely selected mix. Petrosian is not often associated with attacking play but his frequent appearances in this book show that all World Champions have to have universal skills.

Bobotsov, M - Petrosian, T
Lugano Olympiad 1968

33... g6-g5
With Black's pieces so well placed, opening some lines puts the White king in great peril.

34.Qf3xh5 f6-f5
35.Rd1-e1

Aiming for counterplay with 35.b2-b4 g5-g4 36.h3xg4 f5xg4 37.b4-b5 g4-g3 is too slow but 35.Qh5-e2 g5-g4 36.g2-g3 trying to consolidate the kingside was a better try.

35... g5-g4
36.h3xg4 f5xg4
37.f2-f3

Aiming to give the queen some more room, ironically this leads to her demise.

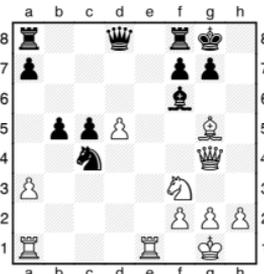
37... g4xf3
38.Nh2xf3
If 38.Qh5xf3 Re8-f8 39.Qf3-e2 Rf8-f2 is one good continuation.

38... Rg7-h7
39.Qh5-e5 Qe6-c8
40.Qe5-f4 Re8-f8
41.Qf4-e5 Rf8-f5

The lady is out of bounds so Bobotsov resigned.

Attacking Manual 1 by Jacob Aagaard is more of a heavyweight book on a similar theme aiming to help the reader identify attacking opportunities.

Aagaard is a very industrious analyst, and there are a lot of detailed variations in the examples given, most of which come from recent games. The fragment below is one of the simpler ones in the book. I found the way that White's queen's rook enters the fray rather novel.



Goldin, A - Efimov, I
Kislovodsk 1982

23.a3-a4
Destabilising the black queenside just in time.

23... Nc4-d6
The positionally desirable 23...a7-a6 is a no-go, as after 24.a4xb5 the recapture is impossible due to Black's overworked queen.

24.a4xb5 Nd6xb5
25.Ra1-a6
An impressive leap forward down the newly opened file.

25... Bf6xg5
26.Nf3xg5 Qd8xd5
Efimov had to try 26...Rf8-e8 but understandably overlooked White's next move swinging the rook into the attack.

27.Ra6-h6 Qd5-d3
Of course not 27...g7xh6 28.Ng5-e6+, and 27...Rf8-e8 28.Rh6-h8+ Kg8xh8 29.Qg4-h5+ Kh8-g8 30.Qh5-h7+ shows White's threat.

28.Ng5-h7
In a precise piece of analysis, Aagaard shows that 28.Ng5-e4 f7-f5 29.Qg4-h5 g7xh6 30.Qh5-g6+ Kg8-h8 31.Qg6xh6+ Kh8-g8 32.Qh6-g6+ Kg8-h8 33.Ne4-g5 Qd3-d7 34.Qg6-h5+ Kh8-g8 35.Re1-e6 was the most efficient way to win.

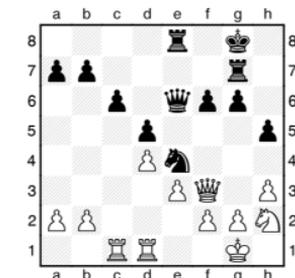
28... f7-f5
Now Black could have prolonged resistance by giving up his queen: 28...Qd3xh7 29.Rh6xh7 Kg8xh7 30.Qg4-h5+ Kh7-g8 31.Qh5xc5 leads to a technically winning position.

29.Qg4-g6
Again the author mentions the hyper-accurate continuation 29.Qg4-h5 g7xh6 30.Qh5-g6+ Kg8-h8 31.Qg6xh6 Kh8-g8 32.Qh6-g6+ Kg8-h8 33.Nh7-g5 transposing to the line above.

29... Qd3-d2
This allows a swift end, so we should be glad Black didn't grovel on with 29...Qd3-d6 30.Nh7xf8 Qd6xg6 31.Rh6xg6 Kg8xf8.

30.Qg6-e6+ Rf8-f7
31.Qe6-e8+ Rf7-f8
32.Nh7-f6+

Black resigned as 32...g7xf6 33.Qe8-g6 is mate.



Michael Adams



A hi-tech stalemate in the laptop of the gods

A laptop is an indispensable aid to a modern chess player, so before heading off to back-to-back events beginning with some games in the Spanish League, I phoned for some technical advice to try to update my computer's internal clock. It didn't seem to know which day it was, although it was otherwise working fine.

Following what the technician described as "an unfortunate, outcome of a valid troubleshooting procedure", it shuddered, squealed and quit altogether. Unfortunate indeed, as it now needed a new motherboard. This made for a rather rushed final evening as I scurried about updating my spare laptop. Time well spent it was not, as on arrival, the AC adapter for the spare, insulted by a power surge, also gave up the ghost. Two computers down in less than 24 hours.

Watching your team mates can also be frustrating as in this game in which Akopian, representing my team, appears to drop a crucial half-point before his opponent returns the favour.

**Cifuentes Parada, R - Akopian, V
Spanish Team 2008**

80... Nd4-b5

Black should win after checking his queen to a place of safety with 80...Qe7-c5+ 81.Kc8-d7 Qc5-a7+ 82.Kd7-e8 Qa7-f7+ 83.Ke8-d8 Nd4-b5. This gives White a hidden chance which he gleefully seizes with a surprising queen sacrifice that slingshots his pawn forward.

81.Qh1-h7+ Kg7xh7
82.f5-f6+ Kh7-h6
83.f6xe7 Nb5-d6+
84.Kc8-d7

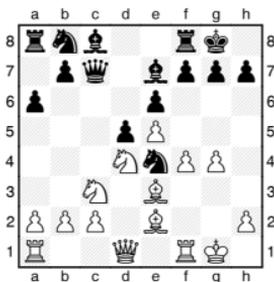
A horrible slip when the draw was at hand after 84.Kc8-c7 as 84...Nd6xe4 85.e7-e8Q b2-b1Q 86.Qe8-h8+ Kh6-g6 87.Qh8-g8+ Kg6-f6 88.Qg8-f8+ Kf6-e6 89.Qf8-g8+ Ke6-e7 90.Qg8-g7+ is perpetual check. Another king move 84.Kc8-d8 was also good enough for half a point.

84... Nd6xe4
85.Kd7-e6

Now White can't make a queen immediately due to the fork 85.e7-e8Q Ne4-f6+. He fights on a bit longer but the extra piece is decisive.

85... b2-b1Q
86.e7-e8Q Qb1-b6+
87.Ke6xe5 Qb6-b2+
88.Ke5-e6 Qb2-f6+
89.Ke6-d5 Ne4-f2
90.Qe8-c8 Nf2-d3
91.Kd5-e4 Nd3-f4
92.Qc8-f5 Qf6xf5+
93.Ke4xf5 Nf4-g2
0-1

Here is a swashbuckling attack from the other group:



**Ganguly, S - Hernandez, H
Spanish Team 2008**

12.g4-g5

In the past White has had success with 12.Be2-d3 but Ganguly calmly takes space on the kingside instead.

12... Ne4xc3
13.b2xc3 Qc7xc3
14.Rf1-f3

One idea is that the rook can harass the black queen along the open third rank.

14... Rf8-d8
15.Be3-f2 Qc3-c7
16.Be2-d3

The heavy guns line up on the unguarded kingside.

16... g7-g6

Forced as 16...Nb8-c6 17.Bd3xh7+ Kg8xh7 18.Rf3-h3+ Kh7-g8 19.Qd1-h5 crashes through immediately.

17.Rf3-h3 Nb8-d7

I don't see an immediate breakthrough after 17...Nb8-c6. The move played interrupts the bishop's defence of e6, which allows Ganguly to make a beautiful breakthrough.

18.Nd4xe6 f7xe6
19.Rh3xh7 Nd7-f8

Taking the rook loses prosaically after 19...Kg8xh7 20.Qd1-h5+ Kh7-g8 21.Qh5xg6+ Kg8-f8 22.Qg6-h6+ but the knight retreat seems to hold the position together.

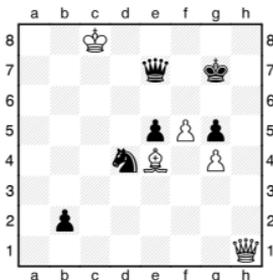
20.Rh7-h6 Kg8-g7
21.Qd1-g4

The simple transfer of the queen into the attack finishes Black off, as Hernandez can't get his defenders there fast enough.

21... Be7-c5
22.Qg4-h4 Bc5xf2+
23.Kg1xf2 b7-b5
24.Rh6-h8 Qc7-c5+
25.Kf2-f3 Kg7-f7

This attempt at flight is short-lived but 25...Ra8-a7 26.Qh4-h6+ Kg7-f7 27.Bd3xg6+ Nf8xg6 28.Qh6-h7mate is no solution.

26.Bd3xg6+ Kf7-e7
27.Rh8-h7+
1-0





Michael Adams

Olympians can't stop title going Dutch

David Robertson was once again the driving force behind an excellent event in his adopted city of Liverpool. This time the industrious professor also found time to play in the EU Championship, and won one of the rating performance prizes.

Many top names were in action in the European Capital of Culture 2008, including all of this year's English Olympiad side. The home players had decent results but none could keep up with the tournament winner, the engaging young Dutchman Jan Werle.

Ng4-e5 the passed 'd' pawn is very dangerous. The game move is also too optimistic; Laznicka should have defended with the careful 23.Rb1-e1, preventing the crafty clearance effected in the game.

23... d4-d3
24.e2xd3 e4-e3

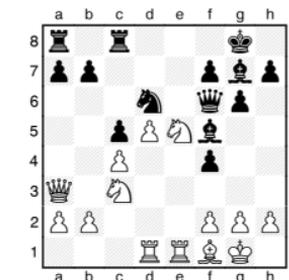
The pawn sacrifice has paved the way for this move and sidelined White's queen; there is already no good defence.

25.Rc2-c8
White could have clung on for a bit with 25.Bg2-f1 e3xf2+ 26.Kg1-h1 Rd8-e8 27.Qa3-c3 although, it is only a matter of time before Black lands a fatal blow.

25... Rd8xc8
There is a choice of wins after 25...e3xf2+ 26.Kg1-f1. Black has the neat 26...Ng4-e3+ 27.Kf1xf2 Ne3-g4+ when the enforced capture of the black pawn enables the queen to finish the job.

26.Rc1xc8+ Kg8-h7
27.Rc8-e8
Throwing in a check doesn't work as 27.Bg2-e4+ Rb4xe4 covers the queen.

27... e3xf2+
28.Kg1-f1 Qe7-c5
0-1



Gordon, S - Bacrot, E
EU Championship Liverpool 2008

20... g6-g5
Black's bishop is clearly the most influential piece on the board; Etienne Bacrot starts to exploit his other advantage of an extra pawn on the kingside.

21.Nc3-a4
Decentralising the knight can't be right; perhaps 21.Re1-e2 g5-

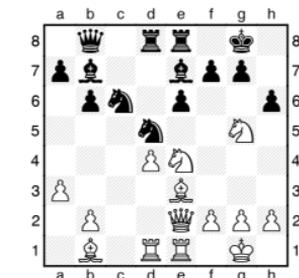
g4 22.Nc3-b5 was worth a try.

21... Rc8-e8
22.Ne5-f3
If 22.Ne5-d3 b7-b6 tidies up the Black position.

22... g5-g4
23.Re1xe8+ Ra8xe8
24.Nf3-e1 Nd6-e4
25.Ne1-d3
25.Na4xc5 Ne4xf2 26.Kg1xf2 Qf6-d4+ is an idea that crops up again later.

25... g4-g3
26.Na4xc5 g3xf2+
26...Qf6-h4 was even more deadly, but Etienne prefers a more aesthetic finish.

27.Nd3xf2 Ne4xf2
28.Kg1xf2 Bf5-g4
White resigned as 29.Rd1-d2 Qf6-d4+ is decisive.



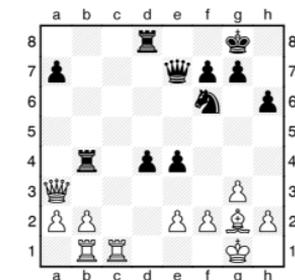
I did David Howell a slight disservice a few weeks ago, as I was unaware that he had rejected a draw offer in the final-round game from the World Junior featured in this column, but in general this more aggressive attitude has paid big dividends with his play.

Howell, D - Ringoir, T
EU Championship Liverpool 2008

18.Ng5xf7
An interesting sacrifice. 18.Qe2-h5 also looks very dangerous for Black.

18... Kg8xf7
19.Qe2-h5+ g7-g6
Black panics and loses immediately. After 19...Kf7-f8 20.Be3xh6 Nd5-f4 White would have a lot more work to do.

20.Ne4-d6+
Black resigned as 20...Be7xd6 21.Qh5xg6+ Kf7-f8 22.Be3xh6+ Kf8-e7 23.Qg6-g7 is mate.



Laznicka, V - Werle, J
EU Championship Liverpool 2008

22.Rc1-c2
It was better to aim for exchanges with 22.Rc1-c4 although, after 22...a7-a5, Black's large space advantage gives him a very pleasant game.

22... Nf6-g4
23.Rb1-c1
It looks tempting to move the knight from its threatening post but after 23.h2-h3 d4-d3 24.e2xd3 e4xd3 25.Rc2-d2