

Michael Adams



Live from the battle zone: women at war

The Women's World Championship didn't get off to a very good start. FIDE's penchant for siting major events in "the Foreign Office advises against all but essential travel" locales came a cropper as conflict broke out near the venue in the Russian town of Nalchik, close to the border with Georgia.

With participants understandably unwilling or unable due to visa problems to travel, a number of matches were decided by default, including a couple in the second round of this knock-out. Fortunately things improved and some very exciting and high-quality chess was played at the business end of the event.

Alexandra Kosteniuk went one step better than her previous appearance in the final in 2001 and took the title over Hou Yifan more convincingly than the 2.5-1.5 score line suggests. Here are two of their victories from earlier rounds.

well-advanced rook's pawn, was better.

18.a3-a4 **c7-c5**

Understandably Cramling tries to get some activity before she is suffocated but the opened lines prove more valuable for her opponent.

19.b4xc5 **Rf8-c8**
20.Ra1-b1 **Qe7xc5**

Swapping queens leads to a dismal ending so 20...Kb8-a8 should have been tried, although 21.Rh1-h4 Rc8xc5 22.Rh4-b4 is an excellent response.

21.Qe3xc5 **Rc8xc5**
22.Bd3xa6 **Rc5-c7**
23.Ke1-d2 **Bd7xa4**
24.Rb1-b4 **Ba4-d7**
25.Rh1-b1 **Bd7-c8**
26.Nf3-d4

The pawn has been regained but White's pieces have achieved total dominance.

26... **Rh8-e8**
27.f2-f4 **Re8-e7**
28.Rb4-b6 **h7-h6**
29.g2-g3

There is no need to hurry, Kosteniuk makes a useful preparatory move and opens a new route for the bishop to target the weak e6 pawn.

29... **Re7-e8**
30.Rb6-d6 **Re8-e7**
31.Ba6-f1 **Bc8-d7**

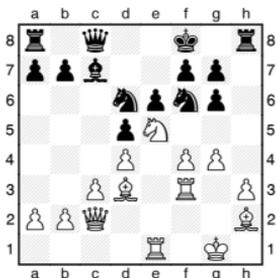
This allows a neat finish; 31...Re7-e8 32.Bf1-h3 Rc7-e7 would have prolonged the misery.

32.Bf1-h3 **Na7-c8**
33.Bh3xe6 **Nc8xd6**
34.e5xd6

The fork regains the material with interest.

34... **Bd7xe6**
35.d6xe7 **Be6-d7**
If 35...Rc7xe7 36.Nd4-c6+ wins a whole rook.

36.Nd4-f5
1-0



Hou Yifan - Mkrтчian, L Women's World Championship Nalchik 2008

Hou Yifan has built up a promising attacking position and finds a clever sacrificial breakthrough.

23.Bd3xg6 **f7xg6**
24.Ne5xg6+ **Kf8-f7**

The king would like to sidle towards the corner but 24...Kf8-g8 25.Ng6-e7+ wins the queen.

25.Ng6xh8+ **Qc8xh8**
Hou Yifan creates new threats on every move and doesn't give her opponent a moment's respite.

26.f4-f5 **Ra8-e8**
White's attack also comes first after 26...e6xf5 27.Bh2xd6 Bc7xd6 28.Qc2xf5 Qh8-h4 29.Qf5xd5+ Kf7-g6 30.Re1-e6, 26...Qh8-h4 was the best practical chance.

27.Bh2xd6 **Bc7xd6**
28.f5xe6+ **Re8xe6**
29.Re1xe6 **Kf7xe6**
30.Qc2-f5+ **Ke6-e7**
31.g4-g5 **Nf6-e8**
32.Qf5-c8

It looks obvious to play 32.Qf5-f7+ but this quiet move is much more deadly.

32... **Qh8-h5**
33.Rf3-e3+ **Ke7-f8**
34.Qc8-f5+ **Qh5-f7**

It was a slightly better hope to run with the king: 34...Kf8-g8 35.Qf5-e6+ Kg8-h7, but White can grab the material and evade the checks after 36.g5-g6+ Kh7-h6 37.Qe6xe8 Qh5-g5+ 38.Kg1-f2 Qg5-f5+ 39.Re3-f3 Qf5-c2+ 40.Qe8-e2.

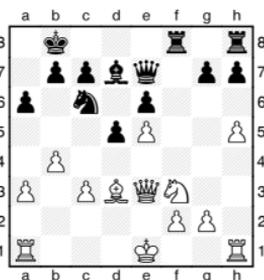
35.Qf5-h7
Hou Yifan plays this stage of the game very well. The queen switches to the other side of the board and now there is no good defence to Qh7-h8+.

35... **Bd6-h2+**
If 35...Qf7-d7 36.g5-g6 closes the net then 36...Ne8-f6 37.Qh7-h8+ Nf6-g8 38.Re3-f3+ cleans up.

36.Kg1-g2 **Ne8-d6**
37.Qh7-h8+ **Qf7-g8**
38.Qh8xg8+
1-0

17... **Nc6-a7**
Too passive: 17...Bd7-e8, keeping an eye on White's

Kosteniuk, A - Cramling, P Women's World Championship Nalchik 2008





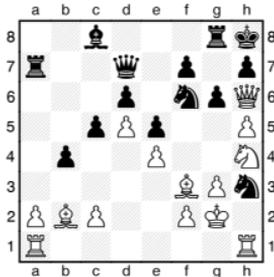
Michael Adams

Monster bishop turns out to be a crowd-pleaser

Recently I bumped into the new British champion, Stuart Conquest, on a flight back to Liverpool, the scene of his success. It is always nice to catch up with my cheerful colleague. He speaks several languages, runs half-marathons, and his cultural interests are myriad.

This is mirrored in his universal approach to the game. He revels in unbalanced positions where he can pit his wits against his adversaries.

Perhaps his most important game during the British Championship was his lengthy rearguard action to secure half a point from a difficult position against Bogdan Lalic. It proved to be a springboard to victory, but is unlikely to enliven your Saturday morning so I will show you a more typical crowd-pleasing game instead:



Conquest, S - Ledger, A British Championships 2008

30.... Nf6-g4

Better options were 30...Qd7-a4, going on the counter-attack, or 30...Qd7-d8 31.Rh1xh3 g6-g5 when the White queen could become short of squares.

31.Bf3xg4 Qd7xg4

32.f2-f3 Qg4-d7

Exchanging queens doesn't ease the dark-square weaknesses 32... Qg4-g5 33.Qh6xg5 Nh3xg5 34.h5xg6 f7xg6 35.f3-f4 opens the long diagonal.

33.Nh4-f5 Qd7-d8

Not 33...g6xf5 34.Qh6-f6+ Rg8-g7 35.h5-h6, 33... Qd7-b5 was the last attempt to randomise the game, but such desperate measures shouldn't succeed.

34.h5xg6 f7xg6
35.Nf5xd6

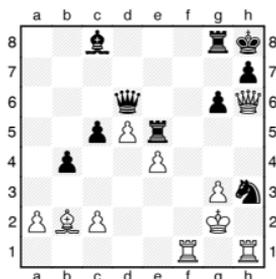
A nice sacrifice opening up the daddy of diagonals towards the Black king.

35... Qd8xd6
36.f3-f4

36.g3-g4 was another promising continuation. There is no escape for the knight as 36...Nh3-f4+ 37.Qh6xf4 exploits the pin, but Ledger could at least close down the bishop with 36...c5-c4 37.Rh1xh3 c4-c3. In the game it becomes a real monster.

36... Ra7-e7
37.f4xe5 Re7xe5
38.Ra1-f1

The raking bishop dominates the board.



38... Rg8-g7
39.Rh1xh3 Bc8xh3+
40.Qh6xh3 h7-h5
41.Qh3-c8+ Kh8-h7
42.Rf1-f8 Kh7-h6
43.Rf8-h8+ Kh6-g5
44.Rh8-d8 Qd6-e7

44...Qd6-f6 45.Bb2-c1+ would have been an embarrassing end, but Ledger is losing at least a piece in any event and could have resigned. Instead he fights on to the bitter end.

45.d5-d6 Qe7-f7
46.Bb2xe5 Qf7-c4
47.Be5-f4+ Kg5-f6
48.e4-e5+ 1-0

A snappy conclusion to one of Stu's games from the last Olympiad:



Cruz, C - Conquest, S Turin Olympiad 2006

16... Bc5xe3

16...Nd5-c3 was quite tempting, but the bishop sacrifice rips open the position, leaving the White monarch stranded in the centre.

17.f2xe3 Nd5xe3
18.Nd2-f1

White must remove the knight from its powerful post but 18.Ke1-f2 Qe7-f6 19.Kf2xe3 Qf6-d4+ 20.Ke3-f4 e4-e3+ is a bit hazardous.

18... Ne3xg2+
19.Ke1-f2 Bf5-h3
20.Qa2-b2 Ra8-c8

A nice touch. There were lots of good alternatives, such as 20... e4-e3+, but calmly mobilising Black's last piece emphasises White's hopeless lack of coordination.

21.Nf1-g3 e4-e3+
22.Kf2-g1 Ng2-f4
23.a3-a4 Qe7xb4
24.Be2-f1

Taking the queen would have resulted in a pretty finish. 24.Qb2xb4 Nf4xe2+ 25.Ng3xe2 Rd8-d1+ leads to mate next go.

24... Rd8-d1
0-1

Stuart reminded me of the invitation to visit him on his home turf of Rioja to raise a few glasses of the fine local produce to toast his success. Sounds like a good plan.

Michael Adams



No surprises as Svidler streaks ahead in Moscow

The Russian Championship has always been a happy hunting ground for Peter Svidler, who has already hauled in four titles in the strongest national championship of all. So it was no surprise to see him making a very fast start.

After the seventh round the pack has closed in somewhat but, as I write, he is still very well placed to achieve an awesome fifth title.



Recently Peter has started to open with his queen's pawn, despite being a 1.e2-e4 player for most of his life. The switch has been very successful; his natural talent more than compensates for his lack of experience with the typical structures.

Svidler, P - Inarkiev, E Russian Championship Moscow 2008

16... Bb6-f8

16...Bd6-f4, attacking the White rook was a better option here. Now Peter starts a long tactical sequence in which he has out-calculated his opponent.

17.e4-e5 Nf6-g4

17...Bb7xf3 18.Qd1xf3 Nd7xe5 19.Bb2xe5 Re8xe5 20.Qf3-g3 the twin threats of Nf5-h6+ and Qg3xe5 force Black to part with the exchange.

18.Nf5-d6 Bb7xf3

The alternative 18...Bf8xd6 19.e5xd6 leaves White with a very strong passed pawn.

19.Qd1xf3 Ng4xe5

After 19...Nd7xe5 20.Bd3xh7+ Kg8xh7 21.Qf3-h3+ Kh7-g8 22.Nd6xe8 the entangled Black steeds mean that White will win material, but the bishop desperado is equally effective after the pawn is captured by the other knight.

20.Bd3xh7+ Kg8xh7
21.Qf3-f5+ Kh7-g8

21...g7-g6 22.Qf5-h3+ Bf8-h6 23.f2-f4 is deadly.

22.Nd6xe8 Qd8xe8
23.Rc1-e1

The pin down the 'e' file is inescapable.

23... g7-g6
24.Qf5-e4 Bf8-g7
25.f2-f4 Ra8-b8
26.Qe4-d5

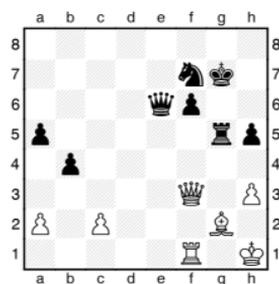
Peter isn't in a hurry to cash in as 26.f4xe5 Qe8-e6 is a useful blockade.

26... Rb8-b6
27.f4xe5 Rb6-e6
28.Re1-d1 Nd7xe5
29.Qd5xc5 Ne5-f3+
30.Rf1xf3 Bg7xb2
31.Qc5-d5 Bb2-f6
32.Rd1-f1 Qe8-e7

Svidler makes the technical task look easy in the following moves, starting by giving his king some room.

33.g2-g3 Kg8-g7
34.Kg1-h1 Re6-d6
35.Qd5-a8 b5-b4
36.Rf3-f4 Bf6-c3
37.Rf4-e4 Qe7-c7
38.Re4-h4 Rd6-d8
39.Qa8xa6 f7-f5
40.Rh4-c4 Qc7-e7
41.Qa6-c6 Kg7-h6
42.Qc6-f3

White has picked off a pawn and is ready to play a2-a4, so Black resigned.



Jakovenko, D - Morozevich, A Russian Championship Moscow 2008

Morozevich converts his extra material in typically flamboyant style. Many players would like to keep their pieces near to their king, but Alexander decides to move them up the board with his monarch keeping stride.

45... Nf7-d6
46.Rf1-d1 Nd6-f5
47.Qf3-b7+ Kg7-h6
48.Rd1-d8 Qe6-e1+
49.Kh1-h2 Qe1-e5+

The checks edge the queen forward.

50.Kh2-g1 Rg5-g7
51.Rd8-h8+ Kh6-g5
52.Qb7-c6

Any exchange of queens such as 52.Qb7-f3 Qe5-e3+ leaves Black with an easy task.

52... Qe5-e1+
53.Kg1-h2 Qe1-e5+
54.Kh2-g1 Nf5-d4
55.Qc6-c4 Kg5-h4

A nice touch. The king is safe here and now the rook breathes fire down the 'g' line.

56.Qc4-d3

The only way to avoid annihilation was 56.Kg1-h1 Qe5-e1+ 57.Qc4-f1, but after the queens come off, mopping up is simple.

56... Nd4-e2+
57.Kg1-f1 Ne2-f4

57...Qe5-a1+ was even better but the knight retreat was also good enough to force resignation.

0-1

Michael Adams



Energetically, my dear Watson

The chess world has been a more boring place since the retirement of William Watson. Not for nothing was his play described by Boris Spassky as that of a "drunken machine-gunner". His style and addiction to time-trouble always delivered excitement for the audience.

Watson forswore professional chess in 1992 in favour of a partnership in the law firm Slaughter and May and recently settled down to married life, but he still retains his love of the game and makes occasional appearances in the London League.

When I contacted him about this column, he regaled me with several new ideas he had come up with in his beloved King's Indian Defence. In the game below, we see Watson employing that opening very effectively. At his best, his games had an irresistible flow that swept his opponents off the board.

In a subsequent game, Kramnik played 10.Bg5-h6, here trying to exchange the influential dark-square bishop, which seems like a good idea.

10... a7-a6
11.f3-f4

White can't resist the temptation to kick the knight, but it was probably wiser to play 11.a2-a4, clamping down on the possibility of b7-b5.

11... Bg7-h6
Watson's idea, after 11...Ne5-g4 12.Bf1-e2 Ng4-f6 13.Ng1-f3 White develops smoothly.

12.Qd2-f2 f7-f5
This brilliant piece sacrifice must have come as an unpleasant surprise, 12...Ne5-g4 13.Qf2-e2 is much less effective.

13.f4xe5 f5xe4
14.Qf2-e2

Black has full compensation as it is very difficult to evacuate the monarch from the centre. The bishop prevents castling long and the rook hampers kingside castling. Still, a better try was 14.Qf2-c2 Nd7xe5 15.Bf1-e2, at least developing some pieces.

14... Nd7xe5



15.h2-h3

Brenninkmeijer was probably intending 15.Nc3xe4, but after the lengthy variation 15...Rf8-f4 16.Bh4-g3 Rf4xe4 17.Qe2xe4 Qd8-a5+ 18.Ke1-f2 Qa5-d2+ 19.Bf1-e2 (19.Ng1-e2 Bh6-e3+ 20.Qe4xe3 Ne5-g4+ also leads to an early bath.) 19...Bc8-f5 20.Ng1-f3 Ne5-g4+ 21.Kf2-f1 Qd2xb2 White can't save all his hanging pieces.

15... Ne5-d3+
16.Ke1-d1 Qd8-b6

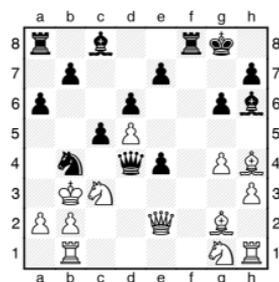
The Benko style 16...b7-b5 also looks interesting, but Watson can't resist the temptation to manoeuvre his queen into the heart of White's position.

17.Ra1-b1 Qb6-b4
18.g2-g4

Another way to grovel on is 18.Kd1-c2 Qb4xc4 19.a2-a3 b7-b5 but with three pawns and a rampant initiative, Black is having all the fun.

18... Qb4xc4
19.Bf1-g2 Qc4-d4
20.Kd1-c2 Nd3-b4+
21.Kc2-b3

The king staggers towards the queenside but safety proves elusive.



21... b7-b5
22.a2-a4

Trying to create a flight square, 22.Rb1-d1 c5-c4+ 23.Kb3xb4 a6-a5+ leads to mate.

22... c5-c4+
23.Kb3-a3 Nb4-d3

The knight returns to his impressive central outpost.

24.Qe2xe4 b5-b4+
25.Ka3-a2 Qd4-c5
26.Ng1-e2

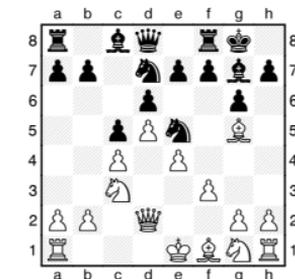
White gives back a piece as after 26.Nc3-e2 b4-b3+ 27.Ka2-a1 Bh6-g7 the King's Indian bishop reigns supreme.

26... b4xc3
27.Ne2xc3

The alternative 27.b2xc3 Bc8-d7 is rather dire. Now the dreaded queen and knight combination brings down the curtain.

27... Qc5-b4
28.Rh1-f1 Rf8xf1
29.Bg2xf1 Qb4-b3+
30.Ka2-a1 Nd3-b4
31.Rb1-d1 Ra8-b8

0-1



Brenninkmeijer, J - Watson, W
Wijk aan Zee 1987

10.Bg5-h4



Michael Adams

Baden beaten by a nose in Euro thriller

The current talking points have been the Euro Team Cup in Greece and the long awaited Kramnik – Anand match. Surprisingly, the latter has been quite one-sided (more on that next week), but the Euro Team Cup went down to the wire as usual.

The participants in Halkidiki experienced a sense of déjà vu as the Athos Palace Hotel was also the host to this event in 2002, when the competition was won by Bosna Sarajevo, aided by an excellent performance by Sergei Movsesian, who was again in great shape. Bosna couldn't repeat their success, but by drawing with Baden-Baden in the last round they denied a team that would probably have been the most deserving winners. Baden won their first five matches with Arkady Naiditsch, featured below, scoring a lot of points, but were finally beaten by a nose on tie-break by the top-seeded Ural Sverdlovskaya team.

Ng4xe3 but Naiditsch gets enough material in return.

- 13... **Bc5-b6**
- 14.**Be3-g1** **Bc8-h3**

If the knight retreats 14...Ne5-c6 15.Be2-d3 traps the queen decisively, so Arkady carries on combining his way out of trouble.

- 15.**Rf1-f2** **Bb6xd4**
- 16.**c3xd4**

Liquidating the position was a more practical option: 16.Qd1xd4 Ne5-g4 17.Qd4xe4 Ng4xf2+ 18.Bg1xf2 d5xe4 19.g2xh3 remains very messy.

- 16... **Ne5-g4**

The cheeky knight can't be captured, as after 17.Be2xg4 Bh3xg4 18.Qd1xg4 Qe4xd4 the rook on a1 is embarrassed.

- 17.**Rf2-f3** **Bh3xg2+**
- 18.**Kh1xg2** **Ne7-f5**
- 19.**Qd1-d2**

White should have retreated the king 19.Kg2-h1 when there is still all to play for. Now the White monarch is enticed up the board where his precarious placement seals Najer's fate.

- 19... **Nf5-h4+**
- 20.**Kg2-g3** **Qe4-g6**
- 21.**Kg3xh4** **Ng4-f6**
- 22.**Rf3-e3**

The initiative continues after 22.Rf3-h3 Nf6-e4 23.Qd2-e3 Qg6-h6+ 24.Be2-h5 g7-g6 25.Kh4-g4 g6xh5+ 26.Kg4-f3 Qh6-g6.

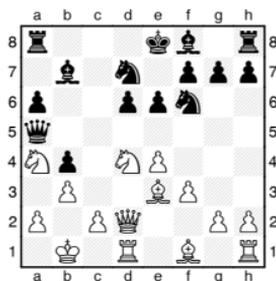
- 22... **Qg6xg1**
- 23.**Be2-f3** **Ra8-e8**
- 24.**Re3-e5** **Nf6-e4**
- 25.**Bf3xe4** **Re8xe5**
- 26.**d4xe5** **d5xe4**
- 27.**a2-a4**

It isn't possible to develop the queenside while keeping the king safe. 27.Qd2-b2 Rf8-d8 28.Nb1-c3 Qg1-e3 29.Ra1-f1 Rd8-d2 is a typical line if the White queen deserts her post.

- 27... **e4-e3**
- 28.**Qd2-e2** **Rf8-e8**

White resigned as his problems remain and Re8-e6 threatens a deadly check on h6.

You know you have a formidable team when Alexander Grischuk is on board four, as was the case for the winners. Here he makes short work of the Najdorf variation.



Grischuk, A - Palac, M
European Club Cup 2008
Halkidiki

- 12... **e6-e5**

Opening up the centre proves highly unwise. 12...Nd7-c5 would be a standard idea.

- 13.**Nd4-f5** **d6-d5**
- 14.**e4xd5** **Bb7xd5**
- 15.**f3-f4** **Bd5-c6**

It may have been better to try to close things down with 15...e5-e4 but 16.g2-g4 maintains the momentum.

- 16.**Nf5-d6+** **Bf8xd6**
- 17.**Qd2xd6** **Bc6xa4**
- 18.**b3xa4** **Qa5xa4**

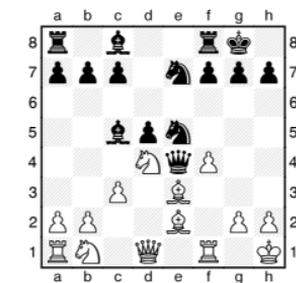
White's pawn structure is a mess, but the major feature of the position is his beautifully positioned queen that prevents Black from castling. Palac had to play 18...Ra8-d8. Now his army is defeated while asleep in their beds.

- 19.**Be3-c5** **Nd7xc5**
- 20.**Qd6xc5** **Nf6-d7**
- 21.**Qc5-c7** **Ra8-d8**

After this the pin down, the 'd' line will eventually force Black to cough up a piece. 21...Nd7-f6 22.Qc7xe5+ Ke8-f8 23.Bf1-c4 was the last hope but with the rook on h8 a spectator, Black's future is bleak.

- 22.**Bf1-c4** **0-0**
- 23.**Bc4-b3** **Qa4-b5**
- 24.**f4xe5**

Black resigned as he is move-bound. Another deceptively powerful game from Alexander Grischuk.



Najer, E - Naiditsch, A
European Club Cup 2008
Halkidiki

- 13.**b2-b4**

Najer could trap Black's queen by playing 13.Nb1-d2 Qe4xe3 14.Nd4-c2 Ne5-g4 15.Nc2xe3



Michael Adams

Anand works the Black for Bonn triumph

Viswanathan Anand's 6.5 - 4.5 victory over Vladimir Kramnik in their World Championship match in Bonn was even more convincing than the scoreline suggested. Anand showed his only moment of weakness near the finish line, and Kramnik scored a consolation victory in the penultimate game.

With the benefit of hindsight, it is possible to see why most expert predictions, including my own, proved as reliable as banks' accounting methods. The two pivotal games were three and five, both won by Anand with the Black pieces in a fiendishly complicated line in the Semi-Slav. In general these lines don't lead to the types of position Kramnik would prefer to play against Anand with White; his adversary's homework was the more detailed and he was more at home in the ensuing complexities.

Anand was very practical when he had the first move; he avoided major theoretical debates and his normal 1.e2-e4 almost completely, but looked to set different problems for his opponent to resolve. This proved to be a highly successful match strategy, taking into account the growing depth of opening preparation.

Kramnik, V - Anand, V World Championship Bonn 2008

32.f2-f3

Here Kramnik missed a clever defensive resource. By ignoring the threat to his queen and targeting his opponent's he could have continued to resist with 32.Ra3-d3 Bg4-f5 (32...Qd4-c5+ 33.Rd3-c3 continues the idea.) 33.Kc2-b3 Bf5xd3 34.Bb5xd3 when the loss of the exchange is a small price to pay for his king finding safety.

32...

Bg4-f5+

33.Bb5-d3

A much tougher defence was 33.Kc2-b3; the king can run, but can't hide as after the sample variation 33...Rg1-c1 34.a4-a5 Qd4-d5+ 35.Bb5-c4 Qd5-b7+ 36.Kb3-a4 Rc1-c2 37.Bc4-a6 Qb7xb2, it becomes clear the Black initiative is inextinguishable.

33...

Bf5-h3

Surprisingly, Vishy misses an instant win as 33...Bf5xd3+ 34.Ra3xd3 (34.Qe2xd3 Rg1-g2+ is a decisive switch back.) 34...Qd4-c4+ picks up the queen or gives mate next move: 35.Kc2-d2 Qc4-c1. He probably couldn't believe matters were so simple, but the game move is still good enough to collect the point.

34.a4-a5

There is no way to save the queen, so Kramnik pushes his pawn and prays, but it is not fleet-footed enough to touch down before his king perishes.

34..

Rg1-g2

35.a5-a6

Rg2xe2+

36.Bd3xe2

Bh3-f5+

37.Kc2-b3

Qd4-e3+

38.Kb3-a2

Qe3xe2

39.a6-a7

Qe2-c4+

40.Ka2-a1

Qc4-f1+

41.Ka1-a2

Bf5-b1+

White resigned as 42.Ka2-b3 Qf1xf3+ 43.Kb3-b4 Qf3xf4+ 44.Kb4-b3 Bb1-e4 covers the queening square.

Kramnik, V - Anand, V World Championship Bonn 2008

Another difficult position to play as both sides have their trumps with passed pawns all over the board. Black's well-centralised pieces compensate well for his rather draughty king. One factor that turns out to be important is the vulnerability of White's back rank.

27.Ra1-e1

It was much safer to play 27.Ra1-d1, keeping an eye on the 'd' pawn.

27...

Rc8-c5

28.b2-b4

I would have been very tempted by 28.h2-h4, making luft and controlling the g5 square.

28...

Rc5-c3

29.Nf3xd4

There was still time to bail out with 29.Nf3-d2, although White can't be happy to have invited the rook forward. The miscalculation in the game is surprising for a player of Kramnik's class, but reflects the unpleasant psychological pressure of being on the back foot in a second White game running.

29...

Qf6xd4

30.Re1-d1

It appears that Vladimir is regaining the piece, but there is a particularly vicious sting in the tail.

30...

Nd7-f6

31.Rd1xd4

Nf6xg4

32.Rd4-d7+

Ke7-f6

33.Rd7xb7

If 33.h2-h3 Rc3-c1+ 34.Bb5-f1 Bb7-c8, Vishy will keep the extra bit.

33...

Rc3-c1+

34.Bb5-f1

Ng4-e3

The killer blow Kramnik failed to foresee; once the knight is captured the passed pawn decides.

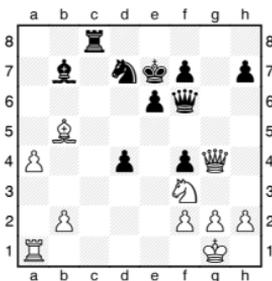
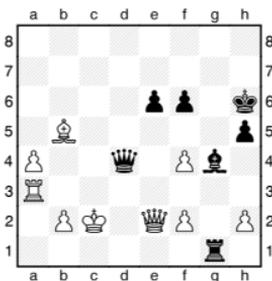
35.f2xe3

35.h2-h3 Rc1xf1+ 36.Kg1-h2 Rf1xf2 is also hopeless.

35...

f4xe3

Kramnik resigned as he has to give up a rook-plus to prevent a coronation.



Michael Adams



Svidler sounds the bugle for pawn storm

In recent times, no one has been able to challenge Vishy Anand's domination of rapid-play chess, as the speedy Indian demonstrated when he once again won the Mainz rapid event this year: his 11th title. The self-confident young American player Hikaru Nakamura, however, has started to show that he might be the man to challenge Anand.

Nakamura built his reputation as the fastest mouse in cyberspace and transferred that to the wooden board by winning the very strong rapid event held in Cap d'Agde.

Here he is in action in a blitz tiebreaker against the French super-talent Maxim Vachier Lagrave.

15. Be3-d2
16. Nc3-d5
17. Qe2xc4

White collects a second pawn and has a good lead in development with Black's pieces still at home and requiring some time to emerge. A very difficult position for Vachier Lagrave to defend at this time control.

17... Ra8-a7

Another idea was 17...Bf8-e7, making room for the monarch to run to f8.

18. Ra1-c1 a6xb5

It doesn't look like a good idea to exchange one of the few members of your army to have left home, but 18...Be6xd5 19. Qc4xd5 Ng8-e7 was possible.

19. Nd5-c7+ Ra7xc7
20. Qc4xc7 Nb8-c6

Black was much better off trying 20...b5-b4, preventing White gaining two connected passers on the queenside.

21. Qc7xd8+ Ke8xd8
22. Bf1xb5 Nc6xe5
23. Bd2-a5+ Kd8-e7
24. Rc1-c8 f7-f5

This loses at once. 24...f7-f6 would keep practical chances at this speed, although White should be winning.

25. Ba5-b4+ d7-d6
26. Rc8xf8 Ke7xf8

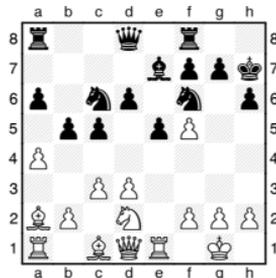
Shell-shocked Black doesn't even collect a pawn for the doomed knight with 26...Ne5xf3+.

27. Bb4xd6+ Kf8-f7
28. Bd6xe5

and the two-pawn advantage was decisive. White won on move 41.

A couple of weeks ago, I mentioned that Peter Svidler was well-placed in the Russian championship. He promptly lost his next game in 19 moves, but he is made of steely stuff and won a crucial last-round game with Black to get into a three-way playoff. In the last rapid-play game, Peter again had to win to take the title.

Bd5-e6
Qa5-d8



Svidler, P - Jakovenko, D
Russian Championship Play-off Moscow 2008

16.g2-g4

16.Nd2-e4 didn't look bad but Peter sounds the bugle for a kingside pawn storm.

16... Kh7-g8
17.h2-h4 Nf6-h7
18.Ba2-d5 Ra8-c8
19.a4xb5 a6xb5
20.Qd1-f3 Nc6-b8
21.g4-g5 h6xg5
22.Nd2-e4 Nb8-d7

Grabbing the second pawn has the advantage of preventing Peter accessing the 'h' file but 22...g5xh4 23.Kg1-h1 Nb8-d7 24.Re1-g1 looks very dangerous.

23.h4xg5 Nh7xg5
24.Bc1xg5 Be7xg5
25.Ra1-a6

The attack has a natural flow as the rook swings into the action.

25... Qd8-e7
26.Ra6-a7 Rf8-d8
27.Qf3-h5 Bg5-h6
28.Kg1-h1 Kg8-h8
29.Re1-g1 Nd7-f6

Black was virtually movebound but this leads to a quick death.

30.Ne4xf6 Qe7xa7

30...Qe7xf6 31.Ra7xf7 wins the queen.

31.Nf6-g4 Kh8-h7
32.Ng4xh6 g7xh6
33.f5-f6 Rd8-g8
34.Bd5-e4+ Rg8-g6
35.Rg1xg6

and Black resigned as 35...f7xg6 36.Qh5xg6+ Kh7-h8 37.Qg6xh6+ Kh8-g8 38.Be4-d5+ is lethal.



Nakamura, H - Vachier Lagrave, M
Cap d'Agde 2008

The players are contesting a razor-sharp variation of the Benko gambit. Now Nakamura makes a very interesting piece sacrifice.

12.Nf4xd5 Bb7xd5
13.Bc1-e3 Qc5-b4
14.a2-a3 Qb4-a5

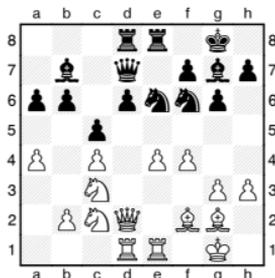
Michael Adams



Shake-up to spur the fighting spirit

The 4NCL has looked across the Channel for the inspiration to restructure itself around a revamped 16-team first division. Using a format similar to the French league, the top two divisions are split into two pools of eight for the first part of the season, with the top four from each pool going on to contest the title and the remaining eight deciding the relegation issues.

With four teams moving between the divisions each year and the removal of the fourth division in favour of an expanded third division, a greater dynamism has been achieved, allowing ambitious teams to reach the higher echelon in much quicker time. Along with the increased competition due to the strength of the newly merged Wood Green Hilsmark Kingfisher team and debutantes Pride And Prejudice, this welcome change should make it a greater challenge for Guildford A&DC to retain their title.



White has a solid grip on the position, but is enticed into a combination that is met with a treacherous tactic that allows Black's pieces to get into the vicinity of White's king. White's large, but awkwardly placed army, impedes the monarch's flight and

Gawain has no trouble collecting the full point.

Krensing, J - Jones, G
4NCL Sunningdale 2008

19.e4-e5

White thinks he sees an opportunity to win material, but he would have been better off consolidating with 19.Kg1-h2.

19... **Bb7xg2**
20.e5xf6

The point of the combination, with both the black bishops hanging, but Gawain has prepared a sparkling riposte.

20... **Ne6-g5**

This unexpected move changes the game, as the knight's leap clears the way for the Black queen to penetrate to the heart of White's position. A very imaginative concept.

21.f4xg5

Now Black's light-squared bishop survives to wreak havoc, but there was no choice as 21.Kg1xg2 Qd7xh3+ 22.Kg2-g1 Ng5-f3 mate would be an embarrassing end.

21... **Qd7xh3**
22.Bf2-e3

A difficult choice. Krensing hopes the rook on e1 will aid the defence, but I think it was better to give the king more flight-squares by exchanging first: 22.Re1xe8+ Rd8xe8 23.Bf2-e3.

22... **Qh3-h1+**
23.Kg1-f2 **Qh1-h2**
24.Re1-e2

This seems as good a way as any to meet the nasty discovered check that is upcoming.

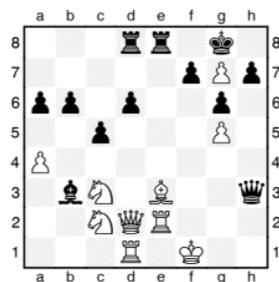
24... **Bg2-d5+**
25.Kf2-e1 **Qh2-h1+**
26.Ke1-f2 **Qh1-f3+**
27.Kf2-e1 **Bd5xc4**

Gawain isn't interested in the perpetual-check, and is now threatening to bring the 'd' pawn into the assault.

28.b2-b3

Seeing that 28.f6xg7 d6-d5 looks ominous, White tries a bit of a desperate distraction.

28... **Qf3xg3+**
29.Ke1-f1 **Bc4xb3**
30.f6xg7 **Qg3-h3+**



31.Kf1-f2

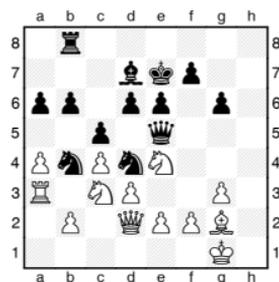
Keeping the king on the back rank with 31.Kf1-g1 Bb3xc2 32.Qd2xc2 Re8xe3 33.Nc3-d5, gave better fighting chances.

31... **Bb3xc2**
32.Qd2xc2 **Re8xe3**
33.Nc3-d5

Of course not 33.Re2xe3 Qh3-h2+ winning the queen, but 33.Nc3-e4 would have been a little tougher.

33... **Qh3-f3+**
34.Kf2-e1 **Qf3-h1+**

White resigned as 35.Ke1-f2 Re3-f3 is mate and 35.Ke1-d2 Re3xe2+ 36.Kd2xe2 Rd8-e8+ snares the knight, leaving Black several pawns up.



Cox, J - Hanley, C
4NCL Sunningdale 2008

In this game, White thought he faced trouble down the 'h' line and hurried to exchange queens...

22.Qd2-g5+ **Qe5xg5**
23.Ne4xg5 **Nb4-c2**
24.Ra3-a2 **Nd4-b3**

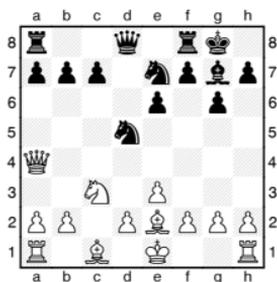
...only to find that his rook is completely trapped and can only await its demise following Nb3-c1. So White resigned.

Michael Adams

Birthday win for Howell boosts England

The English chess team received a welcome infusion of new blood in the Dresden Olympiad with both David Howell and Gawain Jones playing in the event for the first time. Liverpool Victoria generously sponsored the team.

These factors, along with the excellent form of Nigel Short, meant that England's performance was the best of recent years. We played on the top boards and took on chess superpowers such as Russia, China and Azerbaijan, in sharp contrast to the much weaker opposition we have faced in recent events.



Schandorff, L - Howell, D Dresden Olympiad 2008

David Howell has had an excellent debut for the team. Here is his first win for England on his 18th birthday, which was the start of an impressive run of four victories.

12.d2-d4

Schandorff has spent a lot of time in the opening to acquire the bishop pair and had to avoid opening the position before catching up in development, hence 12.0-0 was indicated.

12...

c7-c5

13.Nc3xd5

Ne7xd5

14.d4xc5

Even now 14.0-0 was a better hope, despite the loss of a pawn after 14...c5xd4 15.e3xd4 Nd5-b6. Now David unleashes a monster move, wrecking White's game. Perhaps it was missed, as only a few moves ago White's steed was occupying this square.

14...

Nd5-c3

15.Qa4-b4

Naturally the knight can't be captured 15.b2xc3 Bg7xc3+ 16.Ke1-f1 Bc3xa1, but 15.Qa4-c2 Nc3xe2 16.Qc2xe2, retaining castling rights, gave better practical chances.

15...

Nc3xe2

16.Ke1xe2

Qd8-g5

17.g2-g3

There isn't a convenient way to defend the 'g' pawn, if 17.Qb4xb7 Qg5-g4+ is a very awkward check to meet.

17...

Ra8-c8

18.Bc1-d2

Rc8xc5

19.Qb4xb7

It's no longer possible to give good advice; after 19.h2-h4 Qg5-d5 20.Ra1-c1 Rc5-b5 21.Qb4-c4 Qd5xc4+ 22.Rc1xc4 Rb5xb2 White is a pawn down with a bad position.

19...

Qg5-g4+

20.Qb7-f3

Qg4-c4+

21.Ke2-e1

Bg7xb2

The pawn is regained and the massive difference in mobility between the respective armies swiftly decides matters.

22.Ra1-d1

Rf8-d8

23.Qf3-e2

Qc4xe2+

24.Ke1xe2

Rc5-c2

White resigns as 25.Ke2-e1 Rd8xd2 26.Rd1xd2 Bb2-c3 is a fatal pin.

Nigel was in great shape during the event, scoring a lot of points including several invaluable victories with the black pieces. Here he defeats a very strong Azeri super grandmaster in short order.



Mamedyarov, S - Short, N Dresden Olympiad 2008

The position looks quite balanced, but opposite-coloured bishops often give a big advantage to the attacking side and here Nigel's very influential dark-squared bishop proves hard to contain.

19...

a7-a5

The pawns are advanced to create weaknesses on the queenside.

20.Qd3-e4

If 20.Rh1-d1 b6-b5 carries on the infantry march.

20...

Qb7-c7

21.Nf3-d4

a5-a4

Neatly exploiting the tactical point that the pawn can't be captured due to mate on the first rank.

22.a2-a3

b6-b5

23.f2-f4

b5-b4

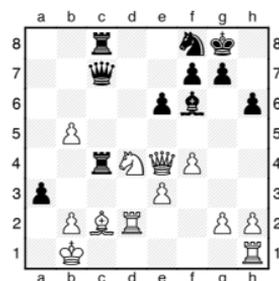
Only a few moves away from the starting diagram and suddenly Black is breaking through and there is nothing that can be done.

24.a3xb4

Rc5-c4

25.b4-b5

a4-a3



The second pawn sacrifice caused White to resign. This feels premature, but his position is hopeless as the following variations show.

Capturing doesn't help as 26.b2xa3 Qc7-a5 27.Rh1-d1 Qa5xa3 leaves the denuded monarch helpless. The pawn can't be ignored, as 26.Rh1-d1 a3xb2 27.Qe4-d3 Qc7-a5 28.Kb1xb2 Rc4-c3 breaks through.

The most critical line 26.Qe4-d3 a3xb2 27.Kb1xb2 Qc7-a5 28.Rh1-a1 Bf6xd4+ 29.e3xd4 Rc4-b4+ 30.Bc2-b3 Rb4xb3+ leaves White forced to part with one of his rooks.

Michael Adams



Jovanka deals a death blow to a champion

The Chess Olympiad continues to attract many competitors. There were 145 open teams in Dresden and 100 participating in the women's section. Even allowing for idiosyncrasies such as the host nation Germany wangling three teams, it was an impressive turnout.

The English women's team's final result, like the men's, was undermined by a poor finish. Dagne Ciuksyte was their top scorer with 7.5/10 on board two, but the most striking individual game was this stylish victory for top-board Jovanka Houska against former world champion Antoaneta Stefanova.

Qf6-g6 31.Qd5xb7+ Ke7-f8 32.Rd1xd6 is rather nice when the defenders are severely overloaded) 29.Rc3-d3 (Not 29.Rc3-f3 Bd6-c5 and Black escapes the worst) and the pin down the 'd' line is of a permanent nature.

28... Ra8-b8

Stefanova should have seized the opportunity to get her king to safety by jettisoning a pawn with 28...Rh8-d8 29.Qd5xb7+ Ke7-f8.

29.Rd1-d3 g6-g5
30.Rd3-f3 Qf6-g6
31.Rc1-c7+

There were other good possibilities, but this well-calculated sacrifice is very impressive.

31... Bd6xc7
32.Qd5-d7+ Ke7-f8
33.Bg4-e6

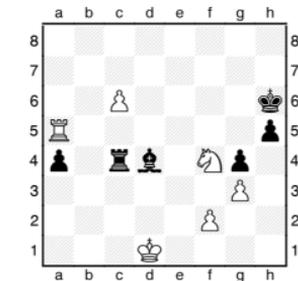
The crucial in-between move, wrecking Black's game, that had to be seen in advance simply recapturing the bishop 33.Qd7xc7 Rb8-e8 is unclear.

33... f7-f6
Forced, but now the light-squares are chronically weak.

34.Qd7xc7 Rb8-a8

The more natural 34...Rb8-e8 35.Qc7-d6+ Re8-e7 36.Rf3-c3, loses the queen at once, but now the Black pieces can only look on as the death blow is dealt along the seventh rank.

35.Rf3-d3 Qg6-e8
36.Qc7xb7 Ra8-b8
37.Qb7xa7 Rh8-h7
38.Rd3-d7 Rb8-c8
39.Rd7-f7+ 1-0



Kamsky, G - Svidler, P
Dresden Olympiad 2008

In Dresden, the overall winners of the main section were Armenia; another great achievement for this small but proud chess

nation. Their boards two and three, Akopian and Sargissian, were in especially good form. I was going to show one of their games when I stumbled across an amazingly beautiful finish to the top-board game from the USA v Russia match. It is very rare to see the conclusion to an actual game that could be mistaken for a composed study.

55.c6-c7 Rc4xc7

If Black pushes his pawn instead of capturing White's, aiming to distract the White rook, there is a stunning interference 55...a4-a3 56.Ra5xh5+ (moving the king onto a square where it is vulnerable to fork as well as picking up a pawn) 56...Kh6-g7 57.Rh5-c5 a3-a2 (If 57...Rc4xc5 58.Nf4-e6+ Kg7-f6 59.Ne6xc5 White's pawn is unstoppable, while the knight makes it back in time to cover the queening square) 58.Rc5xc4 a2-a1Q+ 59.Kd1-e2 Qa1-a2+ 60.Ke2-d3 and there is no way to prevent Gata making a new queen with a decisive material advantage.

56.Ra5xh5+ Kh6-g7
57.Nf4-e6 Kg7-g6
58.Rh5-d5 a4-a3

Peter can't defend all his pieces so he pushes his pawn, after 58...Rc7-a7 59.Ne6xd4 a4-a3 60.Nd4-c2 a3-a2 61.Nc2-a1 again, the knight is in the right place at the right time.

59.Rd5xd4 Rc7-a7
60.Rd4xg4+ Kg6-f5

Attacking both pieces as 60...Kg6-f6 61.Ne6-c5 a3-a2 62.Nc5-b3 is decisive.

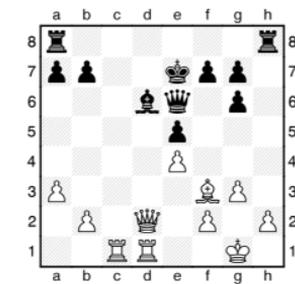
61.Rg4-g7 Ra7-a4

After 61...Ra7xg7 62.Ne6xg7+ Kf5-g6 63.Kd1-c2 the knight is out of range but the White monarch covers the passer with a simple win. Now with the rook moving to a safe square with gain of tempo, the knight hops over to finish the game.

62.Ne6-c5 a3-a2
63.Nc5-b3 Ra4-b4
64.Rg7-a7

Converting the rook and pawn ending is no problem.

64... Rb4xb3
65.Ra7xa2 Kf5-g4
66.Ra2-a4+ Kg4-f3
67.Ra4-f4+ Kf3-g2
68.Kd1-e2 1-0



Houska, J - Stefanova, A
Women's Olympiad Dresden 2008

27.Bf3-g4

Jovanka starts hassling her opponent's awkwardly placed forces.

27... Qe6-f6

28.Qd2-d5

Not bad, but swinging the rook onto the third rank was even stronger, 28.Rc1-c3 Rh8-d8 (The variation 28...g6-g5 29.Qd2-d5 Rh8-d8 30.Rc3-f3

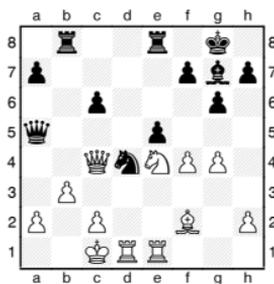
Michael Adams



Three of the best from the late, great Bob Wade

Bob Wade OBE sadly passed away on November 29. He was an ever-present figure on the chess scene for the entirety of my career and for many years before that. As well as his influence as a coach and a player, Bob was a mine of information, having a huge collection of books, bulletins and other chess-related information.

He shared this with anyone who was interested, often cooking them lunch as well. Just about every British player was helped in this way and many others, including Bobby Fischer. He was a friend to all players, from the lowest to the highest, and will be sorely missed.



Olafsson, F - Wade, R **Reykjavik 1964**

23.f4xe5

It was safer to defend the pawn with 23.a2-a4 but this initiates an interesting tactical sequence.

23... **Nd4-f3**
24.Rd1-d7 **Nf3xe5**

It seems that 24...Re8-f8 was more accurate, giving extra protection to f7. Variations such as 25.Re1-d1 (or 25.e5-e6 Nf3xe1 26.e6xf7+ Kg8-h8 27.Rd7xa7 Qa5-e5) 25...Nf3xe5

26.Qc4-c5 Rb8-b5 27.Qc5xa7 Ne5xd7 should be good for Black, but this is very hard stuff to work out over the board. The knight capture played is more natural.

25.Ne4-f6+

Olafsson also negotiates the tactics adeptly, clearing the knight out of the way of his king's rook.

25... **Kg8-h8**

The horse can't be captured as, after 25...Bg7xf6 26.Re1xe5, White gets the upper hand.

26.Re1xe5

27.Nf6xe8

28.Kc1-d2

29.g4-g5

Actually there was no need to fear a bishop check after 29.Qc4xf7 Bg7-h6+ 30.Bf2-e3 Bh6xe3+ 31.Kd2-e2 White even wins so Black should settle for perpetual with 29...Qa1-c3+ 30.Kd2-d1 Qc3-a1+.

29... **Qa1xa2**

30.Bf2-d4

This is a serious error; capturing on f7 was still all right.

30.Qc4xf7 Qa2-a5+ 31.Kd2-d1

Qa5-a1+ 32.Kd1-d2 would

again be a draw.

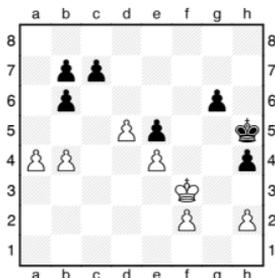
30... **Qa2-a5+**

31.Kd2-c1

The game would have continued following 31.b3-b4 Qa5xg5+ 32.Kd2-c3 Qg5-e3+ 33.Kc3-b2 Bg7xd4+ 34.Rd7xd4 but the result is not really in doubt.

31... **Re8-e1+**

White resigns as it's mate next go after 32.Kc1-b2 Qa5-a1.



Wade, R - Korchnoi, V **Buenos Aires 1960**

Bob's biggest scalp was against the legendary Viktor Korchnoi, who got careless in a deceptive

king and pawn ending.

36... **Kh5-g5**

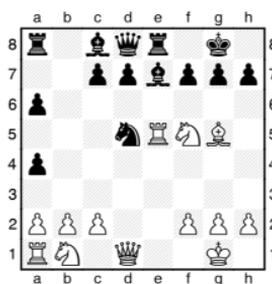
If Korchnoi had spotted White's idea he would have given up a pawn with 36...b6-b5 37.a4xb5 b7-b6 when neither side can make progress. Now Wade sets up a clever breakthrough.

37.b4-b5 **Kg5-h5**

The king must move away as 37...Kg5-f6 38.Kf3-g4 g6-g5 39.Kg4-h5 allows the White monarch to stroll in.

38.a4-a5

Black resigns as after 38...b6xa5 39.b5-b6 c7xb6 40.d5-d6 the decoy run by the queenside pawns allows their comrade to touch down.



Wade, R - Schmid, L **Bamberg 1950**

It looks as though the tactics hold together for Black due to White's back-rank vulnerability, but Bob finds a powerful rejoinder.

13.Nf5xg7 **Kg8xg7**

14.Qd1xd5 **c7-c6**

Black had to play 14...Bc8-b7 15.Qd5xb7 Be7xg5 reducing the number of attackers.

15.Qd5-d4 **f7-f6**

16.Re5-e3 **c6-c5**

16...d7-d5 17.Nb1-c3 doesn't look very cheering but now White wins by force, with another piece giving itself up to draw out the black monarch.

17.Bg5-h6+ **Kg7xh6**

Ignoring the bishop is no better: 17...Kg7-h8 8.Qd4-d5 Ra8-b8 19.Qd5-f7.

18.Qd4-g4 **f6-f5**

19.Re3-h3+ **Be7-h4**

20.Rh3xh4+ **Qd8xh4**

21.Qg4xh4+ **Kh6-g6**

22.Nb1-c3

1-0

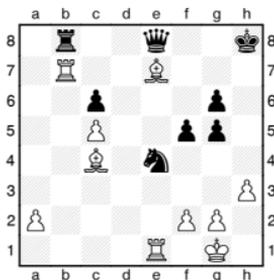
Michael Adams



Take your seats for the Christmas quiz

It's that special time of the year when you can once again test your chess trivia knowledge. How well do you know your Kasparov from your Karpov, your Keene from your Stean? Shake up your brain cells with these teasers. The answers, as usual, will appear next week. Good luck and a very happy Christmas!

1 How did Topalov polish off Kramnik in this game from the Amber Rapidplay this year?



**Kramnik, V - Topalov, V
Amber Rapid Nice 2008**

2 What modern technological curse struck both Peter Wells and Nigel Short during games this year?

3 Which of these Grand Masters has run with the bulls in Pamplona?

- a Stuart Conquest
- b Ray Keene
- c Alexander Khalifman
- d Alexei Shirov

4 Jan Mol has been a generous sponsor of the Staunton Memorial tournament over the

past three years. In which other sport is he heavily involved?

5 In the television drama *The West Wing*, President Bartlet, played by Martin Sheen, takes on two of his top advisers at chess.

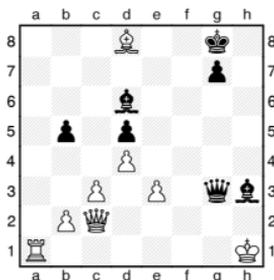
a Which fictional opening did he employ against Sam Seaborn, played by Rob Lowe?

b Which real opening did he play against Toby Ziegler played by Richard Schiff?

6 Who holds the record for the longest unbeaten streak in the British Championships, and how many games did it comprise?

7 Which insurance company sponsored the English Olympiad team in Dresden in November of this year?

8 How did Aronian conclude this excellent game in the Marshall attack against Anand in Morelia this year?



**Anand, V - Aronian, L
Morelia 2008**

9 What drama enlivened the Short-Cheparinov game from Wijk aan Zee in January?

10 Which legendary chess player sadly passed away in January 2008?

11 What accident befell super-prodigy Magnus Carlsen at Biel this year during one of his games?

12 Which spectator-friendly innovations were used at both Sofia and Bilbao tournaments this year? (Hint: in some ways, this caused the players to resemble goldfish)

13 Who said: "Chess is a form of acting," in an interview this

year? It showed a side to his personality of which I was completely unaware.

14 Which former Women's World Champion appeared in the Channel 5 series *My Brilliant Brain*?

15 Which former panellist on *Dragons' Den* has represented both Bermuda and Monaco at chess Olympiads?

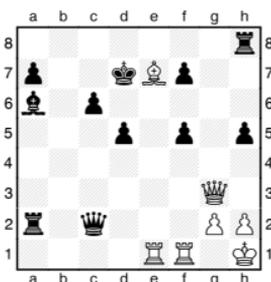
16 Which of the following is the president of Kilkenny Chess Club?

- a Ex-World Champion Garry Kasparov
- b Actor Pierce Brosnan
- c Ex-World Champion Boris Spassky
- d Supermodel Carmen Kass
- e GM Joel Benjamin.

17 Who won the Commonwealth Chess Championships held in Nagpur this year, and how many times has he won the title?

18 What was the venue of the excellently organised EU Championships in Liverpool this year, and what was unusual about the route the players had to take to reach the tournament venue?

19 How was this game from Liverpool concluded?



**Abergel, T - White, M
Liverpool 2008**

20 Match these four retired players to their new occupations:

- a Matthew Sadler
- b William Watson
- c Julian Hodgson
- d Michael Stean
- i Accountant
- ii Chess teacher
- iii Lawyer
- iv IT specialist

Michael Adams



Christmas quiz: the answers

So how did you fare with last week's questions? Are you a patzer or a World Champion? Here are the answers that have been nagging at you for the past week. Happy New Year!



**Kramnik, V - Topalov, V
Amber Rapid Nice 2008**

1 After 33.Re1xe4 Kramnik resigned as 33...f5xe4 34.Be7-f6 is mate or 33...Rb8xb7 34.Be7-f6+ wins the house.

2 Peter Wells and Nigel Short both forfeited when their mobile phones rang during games this year. This proved more costly for Wells as he was cursed by the "Nokia Gambit" at a more critical point in his tournament.

3 New British Champion Stuart Conquest ran with the bulls in Pamplona and emerged unscathed. Some years ago Alexander Khalifman took on a bull calf on a free day in Linares.

4 In addition to generously sponsoring the Staunton Memorial tournament in London, Jan Mol is also part owner of the Force India Formula 1 team.

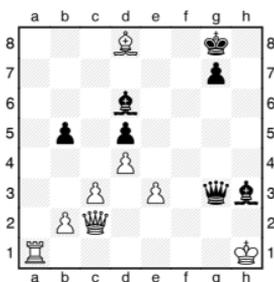
5 In the TV drama *The West Wing*, President Bartlett plays chess with two of his top advisors.

6 In the first game against Sam Seaborn, Bartlett exclaims: "Aha! The Fibonacci Opening!" There is no such thing; the Fibonacci sequence is something to do with mathematics – so they tell me.

7 In the second game against Toby Zeigler, Bartlett exclaims: "Aha, the Evans Gambit" after Zeigler has played 1.e4. They did go on to play the Evans Gambit – such psychic powers could often be of use in tournaments.

8 Raymond Keene holds the record for the longest unbroken streak of no losses in the British Championship with 48 games.

9 Liverpool Victoria provided sponsorship to the English team in Dresden earlier this year.



**Anand, V - Aronian, L
Morelia 2008**

8 In this game in Morelia, after 34...Bh3-f5 Anand resigned as if the bishop is captured 35.Qc2xf5 Qg3-h2 is mate.

9 Ivan Cheparinov refused to shake hands with Nigel Short prior to their game in Wijk aan Zee at the beginning of the year. Initially, he was defaulted for this, but after an appeal the game was replayed and Short scored a popular victory.

10 The chess world was saddened when the legendary former World Champion Bobby Fischer died in January.

11 Magnus Carlsen, engrossed in his game, fell off the stage at the Biel event. He picked himself up off the floor and drew his game.

12 The players were enclosed in a soundproof "glass cage" in the Sofia and Bilbao tournaments for the first time this year. This enabled spectators to talk freely among themselves.

13 It was Vishy Anand who said: "Chess is a form of acting."

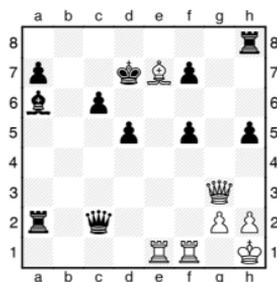
14 Susan Polgar starred in the interesting Channel 5 documentary *My Brilliant Brain*.

15 Richard Farleigh, formerly of *Dragon's Den*, has played board one for both Bermuda and Monaco.

16 Boris Spassky is president of the Kilkenny Chess Club. Supermodel Carmen Kass is president of the Estonian Chess Federation. Joel Benjamin is married to Debbie Quinn, one of Ireland's top women players. Pierce Brosnan doesn't have any association with Kilkenny chess to the best of my knowledge – but I am sure he would be welcome to drop in any time.

17 Nigel Short won the commonwealth chess championship this year for the third time.

18 The World Museum in Liverpool was an excellent venue for the EU Championships. The players had to walk through the bug house exhibition to get to the playing hall. Were they trying to tell us something?



**Abergel, T - White, M
Liverpool 2008**

19 After 25.Rf1-f2 Black resigned as after 25...Qc2xf2 26.Qg3-d6+ Kd7-c8 27.Qd6xc6+ the point is revealed. The Black queen has been deflected from the defence of this pawn, meaning it is mate next go after 27...Kc8-b8 28.Be7-d6.

20 Since their respective retirements, the following players have taken up new professions:

- a Matthew Sadler: IT specialist
- b William Watson: lawyer
- c Julian Hodgson: chess teacher
- d Michael Stean: accountant