

Michael Adams



No surprises from Kramnik, but blunders in Topalov's game

I shall miss reading David Norwood's weekly view of the chess world. If last week's column escaped you, then you will probably not know that it was his last hurrah for Weekend. Dave is a very good friend of mine from way back, so I was always happy for him to ply me with drinks when he was short of some copy for his Saturday piece – often something of a one-way transaction.

Dave has also been a generous sponsor of the English Olympiad chess teams for some years. Who knows, perhaps now he'll have time to return to some active play. It would be good to see him in the English team as well as sponsoring it ...

Back in 1998, Dave was my team captain at the Elista Chess Olympiad. I remember some minor technical problems at that event, but nothing like the astonishing dispute that blew up over the current Kramnik-Topalov World Championship match.

Having played both players in well over 50 competitive games, I have always found their behaviour at the board to be entirely correct. I can only imagine that Kramnik's bathroom visits were some kind of psychological ploy.

Let's go back to the happier days of the first game of the match.

Kramnik, V - Topalov, V World Championship Elista 2006

1. d2-d4 Ng8-f6 2. c2-c4 e7-e6 3. Ng1-f3 d7-d5 4. g2-g3

The Catalan Opening can't have come as a surprise, as

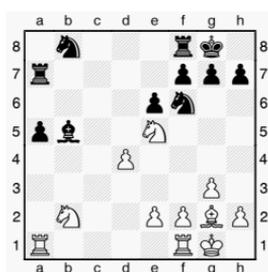
Kramnik used it to defeat Topalov in their last encounter, just over a year ago.

4... d5xc4 5. Bf1-g2 Bf8-b4+ 6. Bc1-d2 a7-a5 7. Qd1-c2 Bb4xd2+ 8. Qc2xd2 c7-c6 9. a2-a4 b7-b5 10. a4xb5 c6xb5 11. Qd2-g5

The point of recapturing on d2 with the queen, as the double attack regains the gambit pawn.

11... 0-0 12. Qg5xb5 Bc8-a6 13. Qb5-a4

The clever line 13. Qb5xa5 Ba6-b7 14. Qa5xd8 Ra8xa1 15. Qd8-b6 Ra1xb1+ 16. Ke1-d2 c4-c3+ 17. Kd2xc3 Nf6-d5+ winning material probably featured in Topalov's pre-game preparation. 13... Qd8-b6 14. 0-0 Qb6xb2 15. Nb1-d2 Ba6-b5 16. Nd2xc4 Bb5xa4 17. Nc4xb2 Ba4-b5 18. Nf3-e5 Ra8-a7

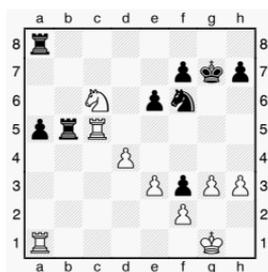


The dust has settled and we have arrived at an interesting endgame. It is hard to say if the passed isolated "a" pawn will be a strength or a weakness.

19. Bg2-f3 Nb8-d7 20. Ne5-c4 Rf8-b8 21. Rf1-b1 g7-g5 22. e2-e3

It is tempting to consolidate the pawn structure with this move but 22. h2-h3 keeping the bishop on the powerful long diagonal may have been better.

22... g5-g4 23. Bf3-d1 Bb5-c6 24. Rb1-c1 Bc6-e4 25. Nb2-a4 Rb8-b4 26. Nc4-d6 Be4-f3 27. Bd1xf3 g4xf3 28. Nd6-c8 Ra7-a8 29. Nc8-e7+ Kg8-g7 30. Ne7-c6 Rb4-b3 31. Na4-c5 Rb3-b5 32. h2-h3 Nd7xc5 33. Rc1xc5



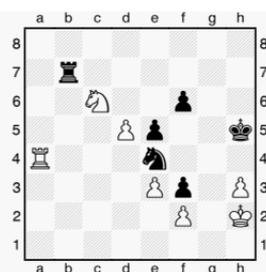
33... Rb5-b2. The alternative 33... Rb5xc5 34. d4xc5 Nf6-e4 35. Ra1xa5 Ra8xa5

36. Nc6xa5 Ne4xc5 would have led to a draw. To avoid this Black is forced to sacrifice a pawn, but there is ample compensation.

34. Rc5-g5+ Kg7-h6 35. Rg5xa5 Ra8xa5 36. Nc6xa5 Nf6-e4 37. Ra1-f1 Ne4-d2 38. Rf1-c1 Nd2-e4 39. Rcl-f1 f7-f6 40. Na5-c6 Ne4-d2 41. Rf1-d1 Nd2-e4 42. Rd1-f1 Kh6-g6 43. Nc6-d8

It looks risky for the well-travelled knight to get so cut off from the rest of White's pieces but there is no way to trap it, while it pressurises the e6 pawn.

43... Rb2-b6 44. Rf1-c1 h7-h5 45. Rcl-a1 h5-h4 46. g3xh4 Kg6-h5 47. Ra1-a2 Kh5xh4 48. Kg1-h2 Kh4-h5 49. Ra2-c2 Kh5-h6 50. Rc2-a2 Kh6-g6 51. Ra2-c2 Kg6-f5 52. Rc2-a2 Rb6-b5 53. Nd8-c6 Rb5-b7 54. Ra2-a5+ Kf5-g6 55. Ra5-a2 Kg6-h5 56. d4-d5 e6-e5 57. Ra2-a4



57... f6-f5. Suddenly the game has swung round after Kramnik's tenacious defence, and Topalov has to play precisely. His move is a losing blunder, correct was the surprising 57... Ne4xf2 58. Kh2-g3 e5-e4 59. Kg3xf2 Rb7-b2+ 60. Kf2-e1 Rb2-b1+ 61. Ke1-f2 Rb1-b2+ with perpetual check. If 62. Kf2-g3 Rb2-g2+ 63. Kg3-f4 f3-f2 64. Ra4-a1 Rg2-g1 even wins for Black.

58. Nc6xe5 Rb7-b2 59. Ne5-d3

This kills off any counterplay, and the extra material decides. 59... Rb2-b7 60. Ra4-d4 Rb7-b6 61. d5-d6 Ne4xd6 62. Kh2-g3 Nd6-e4+ 63. Kg3xf3 Kh5-g5 64. h3-h4+ Kg5-f6 65. Rd4-d5 Ne4-c3 66. Rd5-d8 Rb6-b1 67. Rd8-f8+ Kf6-e6 68. Nd3-f4+ Ke6-e5 69. Rf8-e8+ Ke5-f6 70. Nf4-h5+ Kf6-g6 71. Nh5-g3 Rb1-b2 72. h4-h5+ Kg6-f7 73. Re8-e5 Nc3-d1 74. Ng3-e2 Kf7-f6 75. Re5-d5. After 75... Rb2-b1, a simple way to finish the game is 76. Ne2-d4 winning a third pawn so Topalov resigned. 1-0.

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October 14th 2006

Michael Adams



Kramnick's sportsmanship wins new fans, if not games

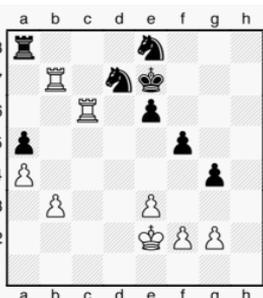
The World Championship match in Elista has seen plenty of manoeuvring on and off the board. A certain amount of psychology and gamesmanship is common in matches of this importance, but the Bulgarian camp has crossed the line into unsporting behaviour with their ludicrous protests. The situation should have been quickly resolved by the match organisers, but bizarre decisions on their part compounded the problems.

Crisis point was reached when Kramnik felt unable to play game five under the changed conditions. However, the status of chess in Russia was highlighted when the FIDE president flew back from a meeting with President Putin to mediate. After frantic negotiations, the match resumed with Kramnik a point down, although I suspect that lawyers will continue the debate after the match has finished. Although he had been unfairly penalised, Kramnik took the brave decision to continue the fight over the board and his dignity and sportsmanship has won him many new supporters.

It seems the considerable tension has affected the quality of the playing level in games eight to 10, but there has been

much bloodshed for the spectators.

Kramnik, V -- Topalov, V Game 8



The material balance of a rook and pawn for two knights normally slightly favours the two pieces, but White should be able to hold on.

37. ♖f2-f3

It was better to avoid committing the kingside pawns and re-deploy the rook with: 37. ♖c6-c1 ♞e8-d6 38. ♖b7-c7 and if 38... ♞a8-b8 39. ♖c1-h1

37... ♞g4-g3

Although this pawn looks a bit vulnerable, it is very difficult for Kramnik to capture it without compromising his coordination or structure.

38. ♖c6-c1 ♞e8-f8

39. ♖f3-f4

The temptation to go pawn hunting proves too much, but this concedes both the d5 and e4 squares as excellent outposts for the Black steeds.

39... ♞e7-d6

40. ♖e2-f3 ♞f6-d5

41. ♖f3xg3

It was essential to prevent the next move by 41. ♖b7-b5, now the Black knights run riot.

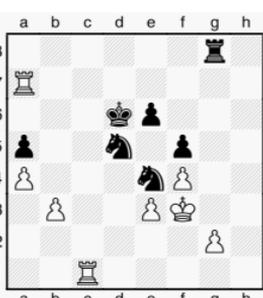
41... ♞d7-c5

42. ♖b7-g7 ♞a8-b8

43. ♖g7-a7 ♞b8-g8+

44. ♖g3-f3 ♞c5-e4

All the Black pieces coordinate perfectly and it is impossible to organise a decent defence.

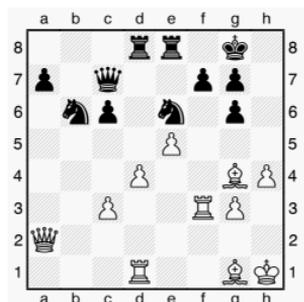


- 45. ♖a7-a6+ ♞d6-e7
- 46. ♖a6xa5 ♞g8-g3+
- 47. ♖f3-e2 ♞g3xe3+
- 48. ♖e2-f1 ♞e3xb3
- 49. ♖a5-a7+ ♖e7-f6
- 50. ♖a7-a8 ♞d5xf4
- 51. ♖c1-a1 ♞b3-b2
- 52. ♖a4-a5 ♞b2-f2+

It's mate in four, for example 53. ♖f1-g1 ♞f2xg2+ 54. ♖g1-f1 ♞g2-f2+ 55. ♖f1-g1 ♞f4-e2+ 56. ♖g1-h1 ♞e4-g3 mate 0-1.

Things did not improve for Kramnik in the next game.

Topalov, V -- Kramnik, V Game 9



White has a big advantage due to his strong mobile pawn centre and bishop pair. Still it is surprising how quickly Topalov destroys the Black position.

35... ♞e6-f8

Kramnik had to try and distract White from doubling rooks on the "f" file by playing 35... ♞c6-c5 36. ♖d4-d5 ♞e6-f8 37. ♖d5-d6 ♞c7-b7.

36. ♖d1-f1 ♞e8-e7

37. ♖g1-e3 ♞f8-h7

preventing the threat of ♖e3-g5, but allowing the even more deadly

38. ♖f3xf7 ♞b6-d5

If 38... ♞e7xf7 39. ♖f1xf7 ♞c7xf7 40. ♖g4-e6 is a fatal pin.

39. ♖f7-f3

Even more crushing was ♖g4-e6, but a pawn down with a wreck of a position, Kramnik decided to call it a day anyway. 1-0.

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October 21st 2006

Michael Adams



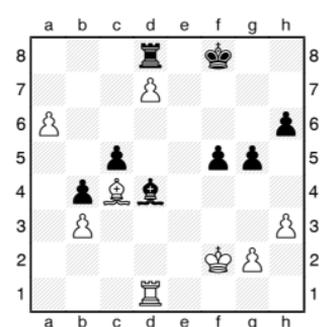
Double crown for beleaguered Unified Champ Kramnik

The Kramnik-Topalov world championship, held last week, became the first ever to be decided by rapid tie-breaks. Perhaps not the most desirable way to come up with a winner, but it had more chess content than some of the playoffs FIDE have tried in the past which have included the spin of a roulette wheel.

The four games were played with very short breaks in between, and this certainly made for gripping viewing on the internet, where the online audience was so large that the official server crashed on several occasions, unwittingly adding to the drama.

The first game ended in a fighting draw. We pick up the action during game two.

Kramnik, V – Topalov, V



After 41. ♖f2-e2 ♜d8xd7 Black should be able to hold on but Kramnik cleverly exploited his passed pawns by

41. ♜d1xd4 ♙c5xd4
42. ♖a6-a7 ♙f8-e7

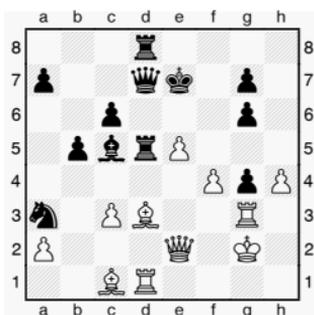
42... ♜d8-a8 43. ♙c4-d5 doesn't help.

44. ♙c4-d5 ♙e7xd7
44. ♖a7-a8Q ♜d8xa8
45. ♙d5xa8

The extra piece enables White to mop up the Black pawns. 1-0.

The third game was the most complicated of the whole day, with Topalov demonstrating his attacking prowess to level the score.

Topalov, V – Kramnik, V



Black's king position is a little shaky, and his knight on a3 has been caught offside, but the pin down the "d" line limits White's mobility. Topalov decides to solve the problem sacrificially.

35. ♖f4-f5 ♙g6xf5
36. ♙c1-g5+ ♙e7-e8
37. ♖e5-e6 ♙d7-d6

It was better to play 37... ♙d7-c7 avoiding the game continuation.

38. ♙d3xf5

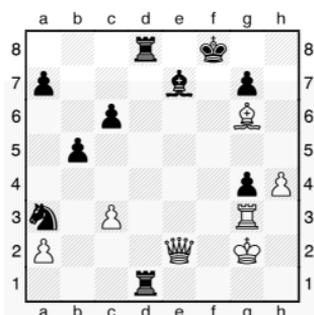
White declines to win an exchange and instead gives up a rook.

38. ... ♜d5xd1
39. ♙f5-g6+ ♙e8-f8
40. ♖e6-e7+

The point Black has to give up his queen.

40. ... ♙d6xe7
41. ♙g5xe7+ ♙c5xe7

Black has material parity but not enough defenders for his king.



42. ♙g6-d3 ♜d1-a1
43. ♙e2-b2 ♜a1-d1

44. ♙b2-e2

Topalov repeats moves to gain some time on the clock.

44. ... ♜d1-a1
45. ♙e2xg4 ♜a1xa2+
46. ♙g2-h3 ♙e7-f6
47. ♙g4-e6

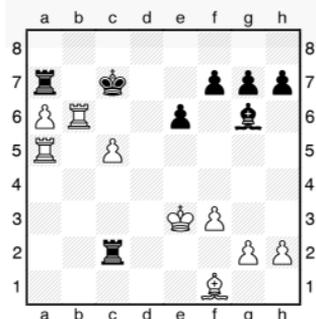
The crafty 47. ♙g4-b4+ c6-c5 48. ♙b4xc5+ ♙f8-g8 49. ♙d3-f5 wins material but the direct approach is a more stylish way to conclude the game.

47. ... ♜a2-d2
48. ♙d3-g6 ♜d2-d7
49. ♙g3-f3 ♙b5-b4
50. ♖h4-h5

After 50... ♙b4xc3 51. ♖h5-h6 ♙c4-c3 52. ♖h6-h7 there is a pretty finish as White promotes to a queen and gives mate next move. 1-0.

Given the immense tension of the occasion, the overall standard of play in the rapid games was very good, but in the final game Topalov cracked.

Kramnik, V – Topalov, V



Black is facing an uphill struggle to make a draw but he could have fought on with 44... ♙e6-e5, limiting the scope of the White king. Then it is not easy to force the passed pawns home, instead he made the horrible blunder:

44. ... ♜c2xc5
45. ♙b6-b7+

After 45... ♜a7xb7 46. ♜a5xc5+ ♙c7-b6 47. ♖a6xb7 White stays a rook ahead. 1-0.

This crowned a tremendous achievement for Kramnik, to triumph after the trauma of being defaulted in game five. It is hard to imagine a more unpleasant situation to encounter, as effectively, he had to win the match twice. He thoroughly deserves the title of Unified Champion. Well played Vlad.

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October 28th 2006

Michael Adams

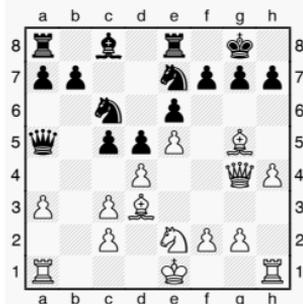


Russia prevails over cash-strapped western teams

An event that might be considered the champions league of chess, The European Club Cup, was held in Feugen, Austria over the same period as the Kramnik-Topalov match. It is not easy for a team to secure the investment that enables them to challenge for first place in this event. Lack of sponsorship meant previous recent winners did not join the fray. These included the NAO team from Paris and the Bosna club from Sarajevo – both of whom I have played in the past.

With many of the top Western European teams sadly absent, it was no surprise to see teams from the Russian Federation dominating and taking the first three places. Here are two attacking games from the event. We start with a crunching miniature from a member of the winning team Tomsk, the amiable Moldovan Victor Bologan.

Bologan, V — Vaganian, R



Vaganian is a great expert on the French defence, with a lifetime of experience on the

Black side, but here his king is looking a bit lonely. But isn't the White d pawn en prise?

- 11 ... ♖c6xd4
12. ♖h1-h3

Bologan simply ignores his opponent and brings another piece into the attack.

- 12 ... ♜d4xe2

It was wiser to play 12 ... ♜d4-f5 trying to keep more defenders on the kingside.

13. ♔e1xe2 ♜e7-g6
14. ♖h4-h5

Another sacrifice gives Black no respite.

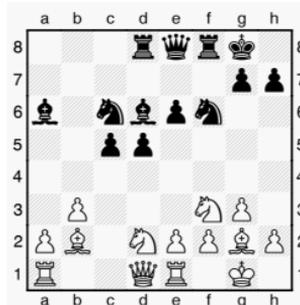
- 14 ... ♜g6xe5
15. ♚g4-g3 ♜e5xd3
16. ♙g5-f6 ♜d3-f4+

Unsuccessfully trying to distract the queen. If 16 ... ♜g7-g6 17.h5xg6 f7xg6 18. ♜h3xh7 crashes through.

17. ♙e2-d2 ♜f4-g6
18. ♖h5xg6 ♜f7xg6
19. ♜h3xh7

Vaganian resigned, a possible finish was 19 ... ♜g8xh7 20. ♜a1-h1+ ♜h7-g8 21. ♚g3xg6 ♜e8-e7 22. ♙f6xg7 ♜e7xg7 23. ♚g6-e8 mate.

Georgiev, K — Nisipeanu, L



Nisipeanu has essayed the Blumenfeld counter gambit. This is an ambitious choice which has worked out well, as he has achieved a promising position with a strong central pawn mass and good development compensating for the pawn. Now he decides to focus on the White king.

- 14 ... ♜f6-g4
15. ♖h2-h3 ♜g4xf2
16. ♙g1xf2 ♜c6-d4

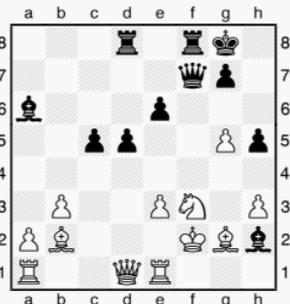
Black is a whole piece down with no immediate breakthrough, but the continuing initiative is very difficult to contain.

17. ♖g3-g4 ♜h7-h5

A calm move undermining the White pawn structure and emphasizing there is no need to hurry.

18. ♖g4-g5 ♜e8-f7

19. ♖e2-e3 ♜d4xf3
20. ♖d2xf3 ♜d6-h2



Sneakily planning to infiltrate with his queen.

21. ♙g2-f1

The crafty 21. ♜e1-h1 was a better idea intending 21 ... ♜f7-c7 22. ♜h1xh2 ♜c7xh2 23. ♙b2-f6. It is best answered by 21 ... ♜d5-d4 with mind bending complications.

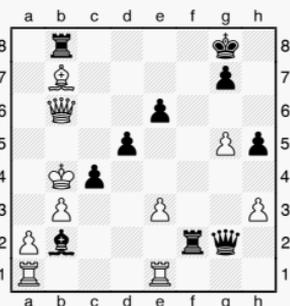
- 21 ... ♜f7-c7

The bishop doesn't matter as this move sends the White king off on his travels.

22. ♙f1xa6 ♜c7-g3+
23. ♙f2-e2 ♜g3-g2+
24. ♙e2-d3 ♜c5-c4+
25. ♙d3-c3 ♜f8xf3
26. ♜d1-d4 ♜f3-f2
27. ♜d4-b6

If 27. ♙b2-a3 ♜d8-b8 28. ♜a1-c1 ♜f2xa2 leads to mate, so the White king keeps on running.

- 27 ... ♜h2-e5+
28. ♙c3-b4 ♜d8-b8
29. ♙a6-b7 ♜e5xb2



White has managed to avoid getting mated but his coordination is completely shot, and with material equality restored, Nisipeanu soon wraps up the game.

30. ♜b6xe6+

If 30. ♜a1-d1 ♜f2-f7 is fatal.

- 30 ... ♜g8-h8
31. ♙b4-c5 ♜b2xa1
32. ♙b7xd5 ♜g2xg5
33. ♜e1xa1 ♜c4-c3
34. ♖h3-h4 ♜g5xh4
35. ♖e3-e4 ♜c3-c2
36. ♜a1-c1 ♜h4-g5
37. ♜e6-h3 ♜g5xc1

0-1.

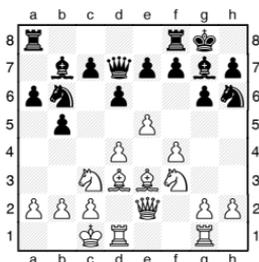
Michael Adams



Dominguez holds his nerve to beat Ivanchuk at Barcelona

I first encountered the young Cuban player Lenier Dominguez when we were participating in the world championships in Libya in 2004. Wearing what most assumed was his lucky outfit he progressed well in the competition before losing in the quarterfinal to Radjabov. His choice of clothing, it turned out, had in fact been down to the airline having lost his luggage. Unfortunately its eventual arrival coincided with his elimination from the tournament.

At the Magistral tournament in Barcelona, Dominguez met the favourite Vassily Ivanchuk in a game that decided the tournament. The Cuban needed a draw to secure victory and impressively held his nerve, ending the tournament with 8.0 points from nine games.



Dominguez, - Ivanchuk, V
Barcelona

Ivanchuk has selected a Pirc/Modern set up from his extensive repertoire. This has succeeded in achieving an unbalanced position, but Dominguez now takes aggressive measures to exploit his strong central control.

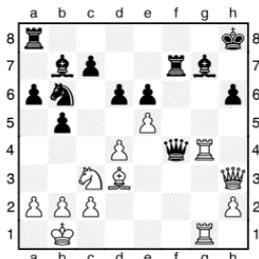
- 12.g2-g4 Nh6xg4
13.Nf3-g5 Ng4xe3
14.Qe2xe3

The pawn sacrifice has eliminated a defender, and opened lines for the White pieces

- 14... e7-e6
15.Qe3-h3 h7-h6
16.Ng5xf7

Another brave decision which required careful calculation.

- 16... Qd7xf7
17.Rg1xg6 Qf7xf4+
18.Kc1-b1 Rf8-f7
19.Rd1-g1 Kg8-h8
20.Rg6-g4



- 20... Qf4-d2

The queen must maintain contact with the h6 pawn.

- 21.Qh3-h5 Ra8-f8
22.a2-a3

22.Qh5-g6 looks tempting but after 22...Rf7-f1+ White can't avoid a back rank mate.

However there was a better way to implement the same idea with the switch back 22.Rg1-d1 which would have enabled Dominguez to toast his success a lot earlier.

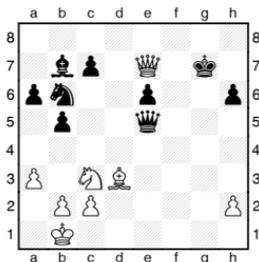
- 22... Rf7-e7

23.Rg4xg7
Now if 23.Qh5-g6 Rf8-f5 hangs on.

- 23... Re7xg7
24.Rg1xg7 Rf8-f1+

The rook desperado is the only way to struggle on.

- 25.Bd3xf1 Kh8xg7
26.Bf1-d3 Qd2-g5
27.Qh5-e8 d6xe5
28.d4xe5 Qg5xe5
29.Qe8-e7+ Kg7-g8
30.Qe7-e8+ Kg8-g7
31.Qe8-e7+



Dominguez resists the temptation to settle for the draw. This and subsequent repetitions of moves were to gain time on the clock as there was a 30 second increment per move

- 31... Kg7-g8
32.Bd3-h7+ Kg8-h8
33.Bh7-g6 Qe5-g7
34.Qe7-d8+ Qg7-g8
35.Qd8-f6+ Qg8-g7
36.Qf6-d8+ Qg7-g8
37.Qd8xc7 Nb6-d5

If 37...Qg8xg6 38.Qc7xb7 the queenside pawns drop off.

Although material is equal the difference in safety of the two king positions is decisive.

- 38.Qc7-e5+ Qg8-g7
39.Qe5-b8+ Qg7-g8
40.Qb8-e5+ Qg8-g7
41.Qe5xe6 Qg7-f6
42.Qe6xf6+ Nd5xf6

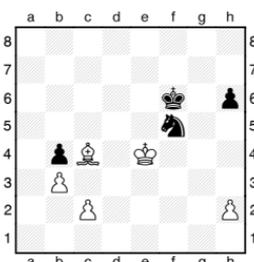
Ivanchuk is happy to exchange queens but White's technique is good enough to convert the extra pawn.

- 43.Bg6-f5 Kh8-g7
44.Kb1-c1 Nf6-e8
45.Nc3-e4 Bb7xe4
46.Bf5xe4

The exchange also gives White the advantage of the superior minor piece.

- 46... Ne8-d6
47.Be4-d3 a6-a5
48.Kc1-d2 Kg7-f6
49.Kd2-e3 Kf6-e5
50.Ke3-f3 b5-b4
51.a3xb4 a5xb4
52.Kf3-g4 Ke5-f6
53.Kg4-f4 Kf6-e6
54.b2-b3 Ke6-f6
55.Bd3-c4 Nd6-f5
56.Kf4-e4

By skilful probing the white king has gradually edged forward and is ready to target the pawn on b4. Ivanchuk tries to distract White by advancing his other pawn but then this drops off instead.



- 56... h6-h5
57.Bc4-e2 h5-h4
58.Be2-g4 Nf5-d6+
59.Ke4-f4 Nd6-b7
60.Bg4-f5 Nb7-c5
61.Kf4-g4 h4-h3
62.Bf5-h7 Nc5-e6
63.Bh7-d3

All tricks are exhausted and the rest is easy.

- 63... Kf6-e5
64.Kg4xh3 Ne6-f4+
65.Kh3-g4 Nf4xd3
66.c2xd3 Ke5-d4
67.h2-h4 Kd4-c3
68.h4-h5 Kc3xb3
69.h5-h6

1-0

CHESS

November 11th 2006

Michael Adams



Blood is shed at a strong Staunton Memorial

When I first moved to London, I thought the only chess legend in the proximity of my flat in Kensal Green was Julian Hodgson, who lived a couple of streets away. In fact a similar distance in the other direction, in Kensal Green Cemetery, lies the grave of Howard Staunton one of Britain's greatest-ever players and designer of the worldwide favourite Staunton pieces.

The Staunton Society, formed in his honour in 1993 by Ray Keene and Barry Martin, brought his resting place back from obscurity and raised the funds to provide a handsome new headstone for his grave.

As well as paying tribute to a great player from the past, The Staunton Society has inspired the players of the present by instigating a Staunton Memorial Tournament which is now in its fourth year. This year's event was the strongest to be held in London for many years, thanks largely to the generous sponsorship of Jan Mol, a Dutch entrepreneur. Jan proved a very attentive sponsor and host, both while spectating and when making sure the players' glasses were topped up with Champagne after the games. He was one of very few die-hards

remaining at the end of my game against David Howell after almost seven hours of play.

The tournament itself was a bloodthirsty affair with over 70 per cent of the games being decisive. Here is one of overall winner and Dutch No 1 Ivan Sokolov's many victories.

Lanchava, T -- Sokolov, I 4th Staunton Memorial

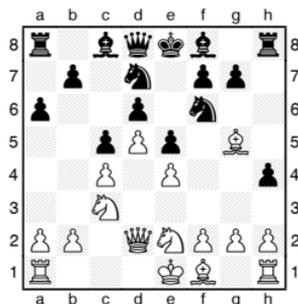
- | | |
|------------|---------|
| 1. ♖ d2-d4 | ♜ g8-f6 |
| 2. ♖ c2-c4 | ♜ c7-c5 |
| 3. ♖ d4-d5 | ♜ e7-e5 |
| 4. ♘ b1-c3 | ♜ d7-d6 |
| 5. ♜ e2-e4 | ♜ b8-d7 |
| 6. ♘ g1-e2 | ♜ h7-h5 |

The Czech Benoni has enjoyed a resurgence in popularity recently due to the new plan of gaining space on the kingside, here it is given extra bite due to the awkwardly placed knight on e2. It would have been better to play 6. ♘ g1-f3 or 6. ♘ f1-d3.

7. ♙ c1-g5

Later on Lanchava must have regretted not blocking the pawn's advance with 7.h2-h4.

- | | |
|------------|---------|
| 7. ... | ♜ h5-h4 |
| 8. ♚ d1-d2 | ♜ a7-a6 |



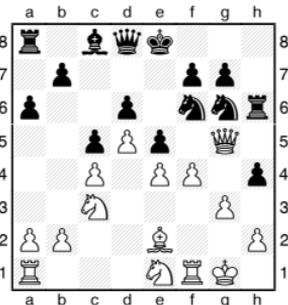
9. ♘ e2-g1

A sure sign that things have not gone to plan, but it is not easy to complete development.

- | | |
|-------------|---------|
| 9. ... | ♜ f8-e7 |
| 10. ♘ g1-f3 | ♜ d7-f8 |
| 11. ♙ f1-e2 | ♜ f8-g6 |
| 12. 0-0 | ♜ f6-h5 |

The knights are poised to land on f4 so White decides to prevent this. The drawback is that with the black rook perfectly placed on h8 there is a ready made attack.

- | | |
|-------------|---------|
| 13. ♖ g2-g3 | ♜ e7xg5 |
| 14. ♚ d2xg5 | ♜ h5-f6 |
| 15. ♘ f3-e1 | ♜ h8-h6 |
| 16. ♖ f2-f4 | |



White was facing an unpleasant defensive task with little in the way of counterplay but this move is the equivalent of trying to put out a fire by pouring petrol on it. Wiser was 16. ♘ f1-d3.

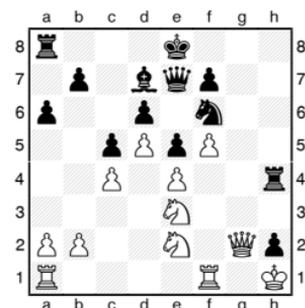
- | | |
|-------------|---------|
| 16. ... | ♜ h4xg3 |
| 17. ♖ f4-f5 | |

If 17. ♖ h2xg3 ♘ g6xf4 wins material

- | | |
|-------------|----------|
| 17. ... | ♜ g6-f4 |
| 18. ♚ g5xg7 | ♜ g3xh2+ |
| 19. ♙ g1-h1 | ♜ h6-h7 |
| 20. ♚ g7-g5 | ♜ d8-e7 |

There is no immediate way to finish off the attack as the extra pawn on h2 provides some temporary cover for the White king, so Sokolov calmly completes development.

- | | |
|-------------|---------|
| 21. ♘ e1-g2 | ♜ f4xe2 |
| 22. ♘ c3xe2 | ♜ c8-d7 |
| 23. ♘ g2-e3 | ♜ h7-h5 |
| 24. ♚ g5-g2 | ♜ h5-h4 |



25. ♚ g2-g5

The last chance to cling on was 25. ♘ e2-c3 0-0-0 26. ♚ f1-f3, now the e pawn drops off and the White position collapses.

- | | |
|--------------|---------|
| 25. ... | ♜ f6xe4 |
| 26. ♚ g5-g8+ | ♜ e7-f8 |
| 27. ♚ g8-g2 | 0-0-0 |
| 28. ♚ f1-f3 | ♜ f8-h8 |
| 29. ♘ e2-g3 | ♜ d8-g8 |
| 30. ♚ a1-e1 | ♜ h4-h3 |
| 31. ♘ e3-f1 | ♜ d7xf5 |

0-1.

The Staunton Society's annual fundraising dinner is on Friday, November 17 at Simpson's-in-the-Strand in London. Details at: www.howardstaunton.com.

CHESS

November 18th 2006

Michael Adams



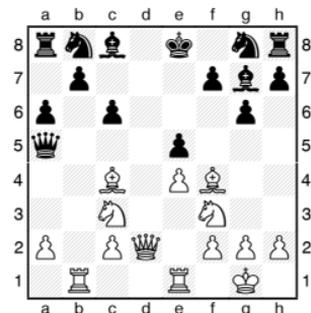
Remembering one of the all-time great chess players

Mikhail Tal was one of the most popular World Champions ever, and the strong Tal Memorial being held in Moscow brought back pleasant memories. Tal produced many sparkling, attacking games and always maintained a great level of sportsmanship and fun away from the board.

When I had the good fortune to play a couple of tournaments with him it was already towards the end of his career and his health was not the best. Nonetheless, Tal's love of chess shone through as he would play countless blitz games in the press room after his tournament game was over, juggling the pieces with his ever present drink and cigarette.

After he had a few drinks there was no noticeable deterioration in his level of play, but he would start humming to himself. Mikhail's blitz play was second to none, and he won the World Blitz Championship in 1988 ahead of top players like Kasparov and Karpov. I don't know if he was humming that day.

Here we see him in action a few years earlier in a game that would guarantee his progress in the World Championship cycle.



Tal, M — Tringov, G Amsterdam Interzonal (23), 1964

When playing against an attacking genius neither neglecting development nor leaving your king in the centre is advised. Doing both is suicidal, but to be fair, playing black against Tal in round 23 was a big ask.

13. ♖d2-d6 ♔a5xc3

If 13... ♜e5xf4 14. ♘c3-d5 is decisive.

14. ♜e1-d1 ♞b8-d7

With all the White pieces involved in the attack there is no chance to defend 14... ♜c8-d7 15. ♜b1xb7 is equally deadly.

15. ♜c4xf7+ ♔e8xf7

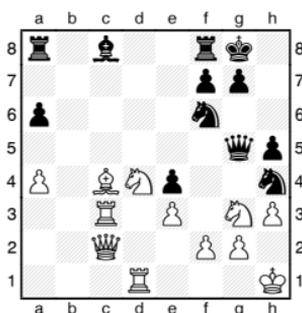
16. ♘f3-g5+ ♔f7-e8

17. ♜d6-e6+

It is mate in 2 against any defence e.g 17... ♘g8-e7 18. ♜e6-f7+ ♔e8-d8 19. ♘g5-e6 mate.

Perhaps Tal might have enjoyed this game from the first round of the memorial event between two very inventive players.

Aronian, L — Morozevich, A Tal Memorial, Moscow 2006



Morozevich takes the opportunity to open up the White king position.

23... ♘h4xg2

24. ♔h1xg2 ♜h5-h4

25. ♜c4xf7+

Aronian fights back, drawing out the Black king as 25... ♜f8xf7 is impossible due to 26. ♜c3xc8+.

25... ♔g8xf7

26. ♜c3-c5

The Black queen is short of squares but there is another resource available.

26... ♜c8xh3+

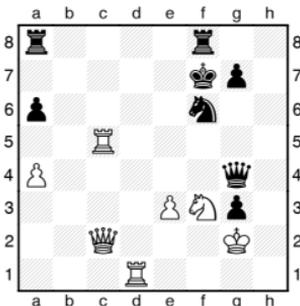
27. ♔g2xh3 ♜g5-g4+

28. ♔h3-g2 ♜h4xg3

Surprisingly, this is a fatal mistake. Black should have played 28... Ra8-c8

exchanging the active rook. The pinned knight on g3 isn't going anywhere. Now Aronian gives his opponent no respite.

29. ♖f2-f3 ♜e4xf3+
30. ♘f4xf3



Threatening a nasty fork on e5. 30... ♜f7-g8

The Black king runs for cover but there is no safe hiding place.

31. ♜c2-a2+ ♔g8-h8

32. ♜c5-c4 ♜g4-f5

33. ♜c4-f4

The decisive finesse, forcing the Black queen to a bad square, the immediate 33. ♜c4-h4+ ♞f6-h7 allows Morozevich a crucial tempo due to the attack on the White knight.

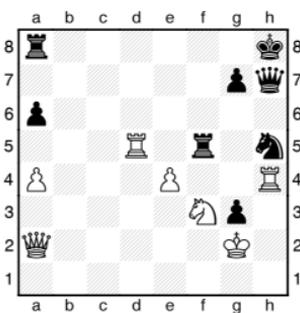
33... ♜f5-h7

34. ♜f4-h4 ♞f6-h5

35. ♜d1-d5 ♜f8-f5

Defending the knight with 35... ♜g7-g6 allows a decisive sacrifice, 36. ♜h4xh5 ♜g6xh5 37. ♜a2-b2+.

36. ♖e3-e4



36... ♞h5-f4+

There is no way to avoid losing a piece as 36... ♜f5xd5 37. ♜a2xd5 is a deadly fork.

37. ♔g2xg3 ♜f5-h5

38. ♜h4xf4 ♜h5-h3+

39. ♔g3-g4

Unusually the king is safer further up the board as if 39... ♜h3-h1 40. ♜a2-g2 covers everything.

39... ♜a8-e8

40. ♜d5-f5 ♜e8-g8

41. ♜a2xg8+

A neat way to finish the game.

41... ♜h7xg8

42. ♜f5-f8

1-0.

CHESS

November 25th 2006

Michael Adams



Survival was Kasim's goal In this Corsica Masters semi

The Corsica Masters, the most prestigious of the trilogy of events put together by cheerful and energetic local organiser Leo Battista, is always very enjoyable for both players and spectators. This year's edition of the knockout event built to an exciting climax with a heavy weight match up in which Rustam Kasimdzhanov defeated Vishwanathan Anand.

Kasim is no slouch at faster time limits and has had success in previous knockout events, as many will remember from his victory in the 2004 world championships in Libya where he decided most of his matches during the rapid tie break games. Overcoming the super speedy Anand, who is the strongest rapid player in the world and has the impressive record of a straight run of five tournament victories and now two second places in the last seven years, will make his tournament success even sweeter.

Total accuracy can never be expected at this pace, but Kasim is excellent at setting problems for his opponents with his tricky style and by hanging tough when he runs into difficulties. Here he shows his strong nerves in a crucial game from his semi-final match up with the top rated Frenchman Etienne Bacrot. Kasimdzhanov had blundered horribly in a winning position in the first game and he now needed to recover his composure quickly and win the return to stay alive in the competition.

Kasimdzhanov, R-Bacrot, E Corsica Masters KO Bastia

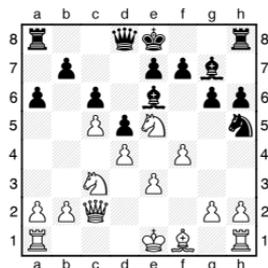
- | | |
|----------|--------|
| 1.d2-d4 | d7-d5 |
| 2.c2-c4 | c7-c6 |
| 3.Ng1-f3 | Ng8-f6 |
| 4.Nb1-c3 | a7-a6 |
| 5.c4-c5 | Nb8-d7 |
| 6.Bc1-f4 | Nf6-h5 |
| 7.Bf4-g5 | h7-h6 |
| 8.Bg5-d2 | Nh5-f6 |

The players are contesting a fashionable line of the Slav defence, White has a pleasant space advantage on the queenside but Black creates problems by harassing the bishop, aiming to prevent its development outside the pawn chain.

- | | |
|-----------|--------|
| 9. B2-f4 | Nf6-h5 |
| 10.Bf4-e5 | Nd7xe5 |
| 11.Nf3xe5 | g7-g6 |

Black has acquired the bishop pair, but White's clever manoeuvring with the bishop has forced the concession 7...h7-h6 which has weakened the Black kingside and made it very difficult to expel the knight from its excellent post on e5.

- | | |
|-----------|--------|
| 12.Qd1-c2 | Bc8-e6 |
| 13.e2-e3 | Bf8-g7 |
| 14.f2-f4 | |

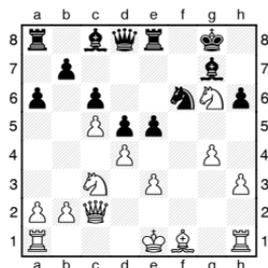


14... 0-0
Much better to retreat the knight immediately by 14...Nh5-f6, now White gets the momentum to build a powerful attack.

- | | |
|----------|--------|
| 15.g2-g4 | Nh5-f6 |
| 16.f4-f5 | Be6-c8 |

Understandably Bacrot doesn't fancy 16...g6xf5 17.g4xf5 Be6-c8 18.Rh1-g1 when there is a howling gale down the g line. Still he can't have been happy to lose an important pawn in front of his king.

- | | |
|-----------|--------|
| 17.f5xg6 | f7xg6 |
| 18.Ne5xg6 | Rf8-e8 |
| 19.h2-h3 | e7-e5 |



Black fights back by blasting open the centre trying to open lines for his rook and bishop.

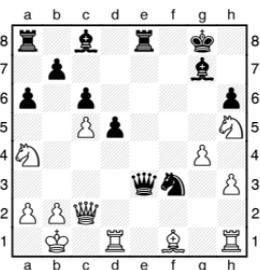
- 20.d4xe5

If 20.Ng6xe5 Nf6-d7 gives some counterplay, but it was safer just to play 20.0-0-0 keeping control.

- | | |
|-----------|--------|
| 20... | Nf6-d7 |
| 21.0-0-0 | Nd7xe5 |
| 22.Ng6-f4 | |

Objectively it was better to simplify with 22.Ng6xe5 Re8xe5 23.e3-e4, keeping the extra pawn, but Kasim knows the value of the initiative in rapid chess and instead aims to post his knight on h5 menacing the Black king.

- | | |
|-----------|---------|
| 22... | Qd8-e7 |
| 23.Nc3-a4 | Ne5-f3 |
| 24.Nf4-h5 | Qe7xe3+ |
| 25.Kc1-b1 | |



- 25... Nf3-d4

Bacrot cracks under the pressure with this fatal error, correct was 25...Bc8-e6, when Black is right back in the game as after 26.Qc2-g6 Qe3-e4+ saves the day.

26.Qc2-g6 Qe3-e4+
Forced as after 26...Re8-e7 27.Bf1-d3 the attack is decisive.

- | | |
|-----------|--------|
| 27.Qg6xe4 | Re8xe4 |
| 28.Na4-c3 | |

Now we see the crucial difference as the knight hangs after 28...Re4-e7 29.Nh5xg7, Bacrot gives up the exchange instead but his position quickly falls apart.

- | | |
|------------|--------|
| 28... | Bg7-h8 |
| 29.Nc3xe4 | d5xe4 |
| 30.Bf1-c4+ | Kg8-f8 |
| 31.Rh1-e1 | Nd4-e6 |
| 32.Re1xe4 | Ne6xc5 |
| 33.Rd1-d8 | |
| mate | |

Michael Adams



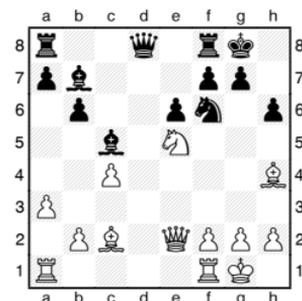
Two sparkling games pop out of the European club melting pot

The combination of a footballer called Bosman, whose court case had the unexpected side effect of changing nationality restrictions in chess as well as football, and the introduction of many budget airlines around Europe, has increased the number of foreign players in many of the national chess leagues. The strongest and most cosmopolitan of these is in Germany where I was a member of the now defunct Luebeck team, who infamously won the Bundesliga on three consecutive occasions without any German players in their line-up.

The landscape in team chess changes frequently, as it is difficult to maintain commercial sponsorship and rather expensive for individuals who are generous enough to back teams personally. Last year I played for the championship winning teams from Britain, Holland and France, all of whom have since lost their major funding. In our 4 Nations Chess League, the overall strength is lower than last year, but as the rules allow for the possibility of wild card players, there may be some surprises to come.

In a recent download of top games from around the world on the popular TWIC website, there were games from the leagues in Britain, Germany, The Netherlands, Belgium and Norway and it was no problem to find two sparklers. In the first the leading Danish Grandmaster Peter Heine-Nielsen does the

business for Germany's top-ranked Baden-Baden team.



Nielsen, P - Bindrich, F Bundesliga 2006-7

16... ♜g7-g5

Black decides to break the unpleasant pin on his knight but this creates holes on the kingside.

17. ♙h4-g3 ♜d8-e7

18. ♚g1-h1 ♜a8-d8

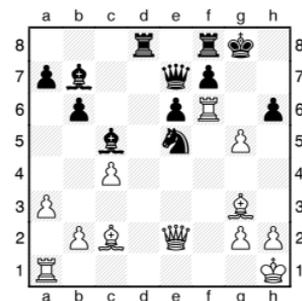
19. ♖f2-f4

Nielsen opens more lines and chips away at the pawn cover.

19... ♞f6-d7

20. ♖f4xg5 ♞d7xe5

21. ♜f1-f6



A very imaginative move which leads to an attractive conclusion, but sadly the routine 21. ♙g3xe5 ♜e7xg5 22. ♙e5-f4 ♜g5-g7 23. ♜a1-d1 was stronger.

21... ♞e5-g6

Bringing the knight towards the lonely king seems natural, but the computer points out the cold-blooded 21... ♞e5xc4 threatening 22... ♜d8-d2 when the game should probably end in a draw. After 22. ♜f6xh6 (22. ♜e2-h5 ♜d8-d2 23. ♙c2-h7+ ♚g8-h8 when Black's attack is first.) 22... ♜e7xg5 23. ♜h6-h5 ♜g5-g7 24. ♙c2-h7+ ♜g7xh7 25. ♜h5xh7 ♜d8-d2 26. ♜e2-g4+ ♙g8xh7 White should settle for perpetual check.

22. ♙c2xg6 ♙c5-d4

Black was relying on this resource but Nielsen has another ace up his sleeve.

23. ♙g6-h7+ ♜g8xh7

24. ♜f6xh6+ ♜h7-g8

25. ♙g3-e5 ♙b7xg2+

A desperate attempt to deflect the queen as after 25... ♙d4xe5 26. ♜e2xe5 there is no defence.

26. ♜e2xg2 ♙d4xe5

27. ♜g2-e4

The queen decisively rejoins the attack to end the game.

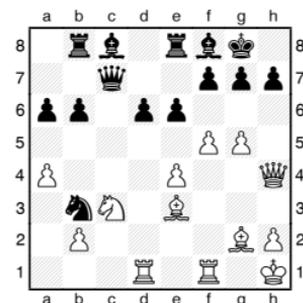
27... ♙f7-f5

28. ♙g5xf6 ♙e5xf6

29. ♜a1-g1+

Black resigned. A possible finish was 29... ♙f6-g5 30. ♜g1xg5+ ♜e7xg5 31. ♜e4-h7 checkmate.

Now we move across the border to the Netherlands for some more inspired attacking play.



Nijboer, F - Hoffmann, M Netherlands Team Championship 2006-7

As we join the game, Black has an extra pawn but most of his pieces are huddled on the back rank. Storm clouds are gathering on the kingside.

22... ♙e6xf5

23. ♞c3-d5 ♜c7-c4

The cross pin looks like a good idea but 23... ♜c7-c2 was the only way to hang on.

24. ♜f1-f4 ♙c8-b7

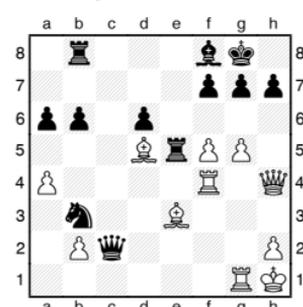
Grabbing another pawn by 24... ♙f5xe4 leads to an overwhelming attack down the g line by 25. ♞d5-f6+ ♙g7xf6 26. ♙g5xf6 ♜g8-h8 27. ♜d1-g1.

25. ♖e4xf5 ♜c4-c2

26. ♜d1-g1 ♙b7xd5

It's necessary to remove the knight, eg, 26... ♜c2-d3 27. ♞d5-f6+ ♙g7xf6 28. ♙g5xf6, but unfortunately it only invites the bishop to take its place.

27. ♙g2xd5 ♜e8-e5



28. ♜h4xh7+

A brutal finish. Now Black resigned as it is forced mate 28... ♜g8xh7 29. ♙g5-g6+ ♜h7-g8 30. ♙d5xf7+ ♜g8-h8 31. ♜f4-h4.

CHESS

December 9th 2006

Michael Adams

Mark Hebden triumphs at Kilkenny's annual congress

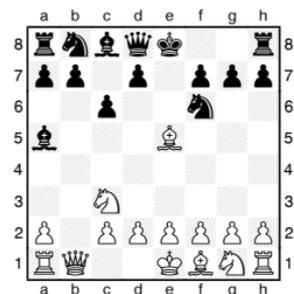
There is no better way for a chess lover to spend a weekend than at the annual Kilkenny Chess Congress. Their chess club came to prominence when they lured former World Champion Boris Spassky to Kilkenny for a visit and a simul. He is still very proud of having been appointed Honorary President during his stay. Kilkenny now direct much of their organisational efforts to their annual tournament where six rounds of chess and many hours of the *crac* are packed into the period from Friday evening until Sunday.

Many of the players like to stay on and participate in the blitz tournament that takes place later that night, no doubt attracted in part by the free bar that runs throughout the evening's festivities. Jack Lowry, the World's Greatest Host and organiser of the event, and his partner in crime Maurice Buckley oversaw the usual controlled chaos.

Jack's only mistake was to invite Mark Hebden, this year's overall winner, who defeated me on Sunday morning *en route* to winning the event. Mark was a popular and deserved winner who could often be found propping up the bar between games unless driven outside

into the rain and sleet by the Irish anti-smoking laws.

In the first round the other grandmaster taking part, the adopted Irishman Alex Baburin, got the opportunity to employ an unusual tactical trick.



De Kruif, K - Baburin, A Kilkenny Masters

White has made an unconventional start to the game, but by now must have been regretting his ingenuity. Now he tried to provide some retreat squares for the exposed bishop.

6. ♖c3-d1 ♜a5xd2+

A clever way to exploit the vulnerable nature of White's only developed piece.

7. ♕e1xd2 ♞d8-a5+
8. ♜e5-c3 ♜f6-e4+
9. ♕d2-d3

The king must move up the board to avoid returning the material.

9... ♞a5-d5+
10. ♕d3-e3

After 10. ♜c3-d4 ♜c6-c5 regains the booty with interest.

10... 0-0
11. ♞b1-b3

Another try was 11. ♜f2-f3 but ♜e4xc3 12. ♜d1xc3 ♜f8-e8+ 13. ♜c3-e4 f7-f5 still leaves Black a pawn up.

11... ♜e4xc3
12. ♞b3xd5

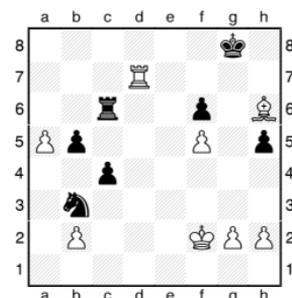
White wisely exchanges queens preferring a lost ending to a quick execution such as 12. ♜d1xc3 ♜f8-e8+ 13. ♕e3-f4 ♜g7-g5+ 14. ♕f4-g3 ♜d5-d6+ 15. ♕g3-h3 ♜d6-h6+ 16. ♕h3-g3 ♜h6-h4+ 17. ♕g3-f3 ♜h4-f4 mate.

12... ♜c3xd5+

And the extra pawn proved decisive as Black won 35 moves later.

Too early the next

morning I had an interesting encounter with a frequent member of the Irish Olympiad team, Mark Heidenfeld



Adams, M - Heidenfeld, M Kilkenny Masters

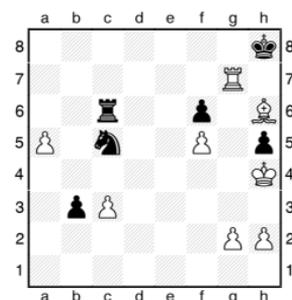
My opponent had been defending an inferior ending resolutely for some time and now decide to switch to active play with 35... ♜b3-c5 instead of continuing to hang on passively after the simple recapture 35... ♜b3xa5.

36. ♜d7-g7+

I optimistically imagined advancing my king to create a mating net, but either 36. ♜d7-d5 or 36. ♜d7-a7 would have been better.

36... ♜g8-h8
37. ♕f2-g3 ♜b5-b4
38. ♕g3-h4 ♜c4-c3
39. ♜b2xc3 ♜b4-b3

I hadn't foreseen this sneaky sidestep early enough.



40. ♕h4xh5

I recovered from the shock to find the best move setting up a perpetual if 40. ♜g7-e7 ♜b3-b2 41. ♜e7-e1 ♜c5-d3, the "b" pawn will cost a rook.

40... ♜3-b2
41. ♕h5-g6 ♜b2-b1Q
42. ♜g7-h7+ ♜h8-g8
43. ♜h7-g7+ ♜g8-h8

Of course not: 43... ♜g8-f8 44. ♜g7-b7+ winning the queen.

44. ♜g7-h7+ Draw Agreed

CHESS

December 16th 2006

Michael Adams



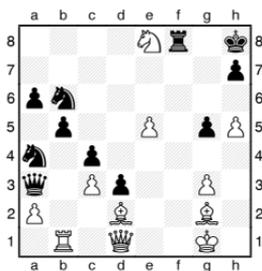
Ivanchuk displays his brilliant style in the Capablanca

A few weeks ago we saw how Vassily Ivanchuk was denied victory at a tournament in Barcelona due to a last round defeat by the Cuban Lenier Dominguez.

He was quick to take revenge by winning the recent Capablanca memorial event in Havana. Although both his games against Dominguez were drawn, his 4.5 out of 6 score against three Cuban players was the basis of his tournament victory.

With Ivanchuk you should always expect the unexpected both on and off the board. When at the top of his game Chukky leaves his colleagues awestruck with his brilliance, but then between games he is capable of reducing them to hysterics: a few years ago, when he was awarded with a giant presentation-size winner's cheque, he brought the house down as he unsuccessfully attempted to fold it up to put it into his pocket.

Here he is playing the Grand Old Man of Cuban chess Jesus Nogueiras.



Nogueiras, J – Ivanchuk, V Havana 2006

As we join the game, the board is in complete chaos. Black has achieved a dominating position on the queenside, but his king position is riddled with holes and defenders are thin on the ground.

30 ... ♖a4xc3

Most players would have settled for 30 ... ♜f8xe8 which would leave Black a pawn up, but Ivanchuk might have been worried by 31. ♖d1-f3 when the white queen joins in the attack.

31. ♖d1-g4

After 31. ♖d2xc3 ♖a3xc3 the extra piece is unimportant compared to the extended pawn chain, particularly as the dark squared bishop is crucial for White's attacking chances.

31 ... ♜f8xe8

32. ♖g4xg5

Jesus gets confused by the complications, much better was 32. ♖b1-f1 ♖a3-c5+ 33. ♖g1-h2 with a very unclear position, now Chukky seizes the chance to exchange queens.

32 ...

33. ♖g5xe7

34. ♖g1-h2

35. ♖d2-g5

The dust has settled and Black has a number of ways to convert the extra material, Ivanchuk finds the most beautiful.

35 ...

36. ♖b1-f1

37. ♖g2-c6

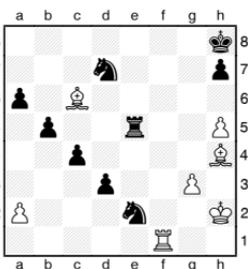
38. ♖g5-h4

35 ... ♜e7-e8

36. ♖b6-d7

37. ♖e8xe5

38. ♖g5-h4



Now Ivanchuk sacrifices all his remaining pieces to shepherd the passed pawns home.

38 ...

39. ♖c6xd7

40. ♖d7-g4

41. ♖g3xh4

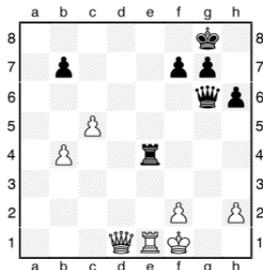
42. ♖g4xe2

If now 42 ... ♜d3xe2 43. ♖f1-f

g1 White is winning as his king is in time to collect all the ♜-lacked pawns but Ivanchuk ignored the bishop with

42 ... ♜d3-d2

leading to a decisive material advantage. White resigned.



Bareev, E – Ivanchuk, V Havana 2006

Now Bareev could have steered the game to a drawn queen ending with 29. ♖e1xe4 ♖g6xe4 30. ♖d1-d2, but after the careless:

29. ♖d1-b1

Ivanchuk started a powerful attack with his meagre forces.

29 ... ♖g6-a6+

30. ♖f1-g2

Perhaps Bareev had intended 30. ♖4-b5 but 30 ... ♜e4xe1+ 31. ♖f1xe1 ♖a6-e6+ 32. ♖e1-f1 ♖e6-c4+ leaves Black a pawn up.

30 ... ♜e4-g4+

31. ♖g2-h3

Unfortunately the king must move to this hazardous spot.

31 ... ♜g4-g6

32. ♖b1-f5

The only way to tiptoe through the minefield was 32. ♖e1-e8+ ♖g8-h7 33. ♖b1-f5 when the pin on the black rook prevents immediate disaster. Now the Black threats multiply too quickly.

32 ...

33. ♖e1-e4

34. ♖f5-f3

35. ♖h3-h4

36. ♖f3-e3

If 36. ♖e4-e5 ♖d7-d8+ 37. ♖h4-h3 g7-g5 wins the queen.

36 ...

37. ♖e4-e8+

38. ♖e3-e4

and Bareev resigned before 39. ♖h4-h5 ♖f5-g6+ 40. ♖e4xg6+ ♖f7xg6 checkmate.

CHESS

December 23rd 2006

Michael
Adams



A quiz that will really test your knowledge of this year's action

This is the first time I have written a column over Christmas, but I am afraid there is no escape from the annual quiz. Most of the questions relate to events of the last year but you may have to make some educated guesses.

As some of the questions are a bit tricky, I suggest you pour yourself a stiff drink before beginning. I will publish the answers next week.

1. Which English Grand Master is also a dancing instructor?

- a. Daniel King
- b. Chris Ward
- c. Jonathan Speelman
- d. John Emms
- e. Danny Gormally

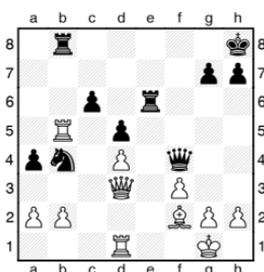
2. Where did Judit Polgar finish at the Essent Tournament in Hoogeveen, the first major event that she played after giving birth to her daughter Hanna?

3. An email from which Top 10 player was read out on *Test Match Special*. What was the subject?

4. Which player, according to his wife, is a keen wind surfer?

- a. Visy Anand
- b. Peter Leko
- c. Peter Svidler

5. How did the young Norwegian star Magnus Carlsen (White to play) conclude this rapid game against Laurent Fressinet at Cap d'Adge?



6. Who said "Chess is my life"?

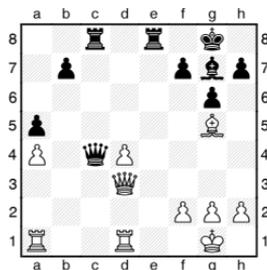
7. Who said "Chess is most certainly not my life"?

8. Which English chess player failed to convince the panel that he was a football manager on Channel 4's *Faking It*?

9. What was the highest ELO rating achieved this year by an active player?

10. Where was this year's Linares tournament held? (Clue: it isn't as obvious as it seems)

11. What is Peter Svidler's (Black to play) best move here in his game against Levon Aronian in the Tal Memorial?



12. What was the basis of Veselin Topalov's protest during his match against Kramnik?

13. Which women's chess player finished as runner up in the Australian version of *Strictly Come Dancing*?

14. Match the following football supporters to their teams:

- a. Michael Adams
- b. Julian Hodgson
- c. Malcolm Pein

- i. Chelsea
- ii. Liverpool
- iii. Tottenham

15. Who is the president of the Commonwealth Chess Association?

16. Which charismatic American Grand Master helped to break up the much publicised fracas at the Bermuda Party at the Turin Olympiad this year?

17. Which event was held alongside the NATO Chess Championships this year?

18. Which player won the Chess 960 World Championship match in Mainz this year?

- a. Peter Svidler
- b. Levon Aronian
- c. Bobby Fishcher
- d. Peter Leko

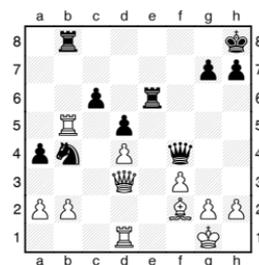
Good luck and Merry Christmas to you all!



How did you get on in the fiendishly tricky Christmas quiz?

I hope last week's Christmas quiz has kept you entertained over the holidays. As promised, here are the answers:

1. Although Jon Speelman has lit up the dance floor on television in the past, the correct answer was Chris Ward, who is a dance instructor.
2. In the Essent Tournament in Hoogetveen, her first major competition after giving birth to her daughter Hanna, Judit Polgar tied for first place with Shakhriyar Mamedyarov.
3. Keen cricket fan Peter Svidler had an email read out on *Test Match Special* regarding James Anderson's bowling.
4. According to Aruna Anand, Vishy is a keen windsurfer! I have yet to see him in action.
5. In Magnus Carlsen's game against Laurent Fressinet at Cap d'Agde, the young Norwegian played the brilliant 27.Qd3-f5 which could not be captured due to the back rank mate. As he was losing a ton of material, Fressinet resigned.



6. Victor Korchnoi said "Chess is my life". An extremely accurate quote.

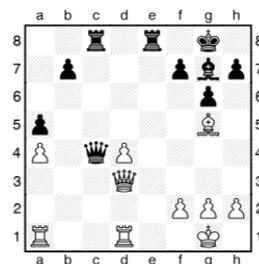
7. Tony Miles is quoted as saying "Chess is most certainly not my life". This is slightly less accurate than the one above.

8. Max Devereaux was seen *Faking It* as a football manager on the Channel 4 show. Unfortunately he was unable to convince any of the panel of experts.

9. Topalov's peak rating was an impressive 2813, although it is now a bit lower after his match against Kramnik.

10. The Linares tournament was split between two venues this year. The first half was played in Morelia in Mexico and the second half in Linares.

11. In the game Aronian v Svidler from the Tal Memorial, Peter Svidler played the powerful 24... Re8-e1+ distracting the rook from the defence of the White Queen and forcing immediate resignation.



12. Topalov's bizarre protest in his match against Kramnik centred around the number of visits that Kramnik made to the lavatory area during play.

13. WIM Arianne Caoili narrowly lost out in the final of the Australian version of *Strictly Come Dancing*. With a bit of tuition from Chris Ward she might have done even better!

14. Matching the football supporters to their teams gives: Michael Adams – Tottenham
Julian Hodgson – Chelsea
Malcolm Pein – Liverpool

15. Nigel Short is the President of the Commonwealth Chess Association. Sadly, he was the only part of the Bessel Kok team to emerge triumphant from the elections in Turin.

16. Yasser Seirawan bravely interceded in the fracas at the Turin Olympiad Bermuda party, and quickly brought peace to proceedings. If only his efforts to sort out the World Championship cycle had been so successful.

17. The NATO Chess Championships were held alongside the Staunton Memorial Tournament this year. This had fringe benefits for the players such as being piped into the opening ceremony.

18. Levon Aronian narrowly beat Peter Svidler in the Chess 960 World Championship match in Mainz this year. The 960 is another name for Fischer Random chess and refers to the number of different starting positions available.

Many congratulations if you got them all correct, if not blame the quizmaster! Happy and successful New Year to all!