

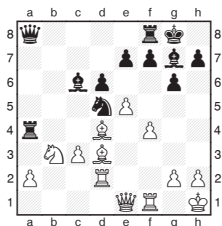
Michael Adams



Short road to global renown

One of the pros and cons of being a professional chess player is the large amount of travel entailed. Some, like Nigel Short, really embrace this aspect of the job, and his first visit to Cuba to participate in the strong Capablanca Memorial event brought his countries visited tally up to an impressive 92. A number he will no doubt add to while hitting the campaign trail for Anatoly Karpov's bid to become FIDE president.

Here are a high and a low from the event won by fellow globetrotter Vasily Ivanchuk.



Short, N - Nepomniachtchi, I
Capablanca Memorial
Havana 2010

22.e5xd6

Opening the game proves premature, 22.c3-c4 forcing Black's knight away from its strong central post was better.

22... e7xd6
23.Bd4xg7 Rf8-e8

When calculating, it's easy to give too much attention to recaptures and Short probably anticipated 23...Kg8xg7, underrating how dangerous this move is.

24.Qe1-a1 Nd5-e3

Black has no intention of simply taking the bishop and sets his sights on White's king instead, but 24...Nd5xf4 was also worth considering.

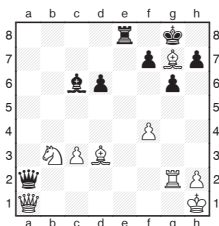
25.Rf1-g1

The nerveless computer suggests White was still all right after the calm retreat 25.Bg7-d4 Bc6xg2+ 26.Kh1-g1 Bg2xf1 27.Bd3xf1.

25... Ne3xg2
26.Rg1xg2 Ra4xa2

A killer blow: White's substantial but scattered army can't prevent catastrophe on the back rank.

27.Rd2xa2 Qa8xa2

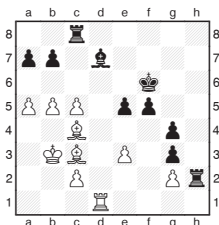


28.Bd3-f1

As 28.Qa1xa2 Re8-e1+ leads to mate, there is no way to hang on.

28... Bc6xg2+

White resigned, as 29.Bf1xg2 Qa2xa1+ 30.Nb3xa1 Re8-e1+ 31.Bg2-f1 allows Black a tempting array of pieces to capture.



Bruzon Batista, L - Short, N
Capablanca Memorial
Havana 2010

37... Bd7xb5

Both sides have powerful pawn majorities on opposite sides of the board and as 37...Bd7-e6 38.Rd1-d6 Rc8-e8 39.c5-c6 enables White to get good play, Short gives up his bishop to take the power out of White's group of foot soldiers.

38.Bc4xb5 Rc8xc5
39.Bb5-f1 Rh2-h1
40.Bf1-e2 Rh1xd1
41.Be2xd1 Kf6-g5

Now that the rooks have been exchanged, the black swarm gets ready to edge forward. Although the White bishops are powerful enough to delay the pawns' progress, in the long term they have to bow to the inevitable.

42.Bd1-e2 f5-f4

43.a5-a6

If 43.e3xf4+ e5xf4 44.Bc3-d2 Kg5-f5 45.Be2-d3+ Kf5-e5 46.Bd2-c3+ Ke5-d5 Black's king slides out of checking range.

43... b7xa6
44.Bc3-b4 Rc5-c7
45.e3xf4+ e5xf4
46.c2-c4 f4-f3
47.Be2-f1 Kg5-f5

Accurate little moves like this ease the technical task. Nudging his king into the centre seems odd until you see lines like: 47...Rc7-b7 48.Kb3-a4 Rb7-d7 49.c4-c5 Rd7-d1 50.c5-c6 Rd1xf1 51.Bb4-d2+ Kg5-g6 52.c6-c7 with a draw.

48.c4-c5

Instead 48.Bb4-d6 Rc7-d7 49.c4-c5 looks like a better try but Black picks off a bishop after 49...Kf5-e4 50.Bd6xg3 Rd7-d1 51.Bf1xa6 (or 51.g2xf3+ Ke4xf3) 51...f3xg2 52.Ba6-b7+ Ke4-f5 53.Bb7xg2 Rd1-d3+.

48... a6-a5
49.Bb4-a3 Kf5-e4
0-1