

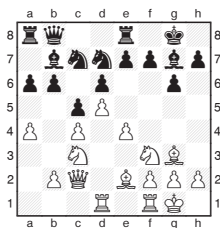
Michael Adams



Jones set for World Cup Knockouts

Gawain Jones set a great pace at the European Individual Championship, and despite stumbling towards the end, secured one of the qualifying places for next year's World Cup.

The senseless dress code and unnecessarily tough default and anti-draw rules detracted from an impressive event, but the games remained a pleasure to watch.



I. Sokolov - V. Nevednichy
Plovdiv 2012

Black is passively placed and lacks space, so Ivan advances to apply pressure on the kingside.

15.h2-h4 b6-b5
Black understandably gives up a pawn for some activity.

16.a4xb5 a6xb5
17.c4xb5 Qb8-a7
18.h4-h5 Qa7-a5
19.Rf1-e1 Qa5-b4
20.h5xg6 h7xg6
21.Be2-f1

Preparing the key thrust e4-e5 that often causes Benoni structures to creak.

21... Nd7-b6
22.e4-e5 Nc7xd5
23.Nc3-e4

Avoiding exchanges and increasing the pressure.

23... d6xe5
24.Nf3xe5 c5-c4
25.Ne4-g5 Re8-f8

The relatively best 25...Bg7xe5 26.Bg3xe5 Nd5-f6 27.Ng5-e6 still looks very shaky.

26.Ne5xf7 Rf8xf7
27.Qc2xg6

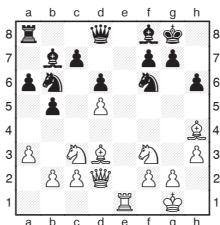
With the pawn cover eroded, Black's king won't last long.

27... Rf7-f6
28.Qg6-h7+ Kg8-f8
29.Bg3-e5 Bb7-c8

Or 29...Nb6-d7 30.Ng5-e6+ Rf6xe6 31.Be5xg7+.

30.Be5xf6 e7xf6
30...Nd5xf6 31.Qh7-g6 fatally closes the net.

31.Qh7-g6
1-0



S. Zhigalko - N. Guliyev
Plovdiv 2012

Zhigalko rightly chooses to transfer his knight to a fine post rather than defending his queen's pawn.

18.Nf3-d4 Nb6xd5
19.Nc3xd5 Bb7xd5
20.Qd2-f4 c7-c5

The array of firepower facing Black is rather ominous, but 20...Kg8-h8, intending to meet 21.Qf4-f5 Qd8-d7, might have been tenable.

21.Nd4-f5 g7-g5
21...Kg8-h8 22.Nf5xh6 c5-c4 23.Bd3-f5 also isn't very healthy.

22.Bh4xg5 h6xg5
23.Qf4xg5+ Kg8-h8
24.Re1-e8

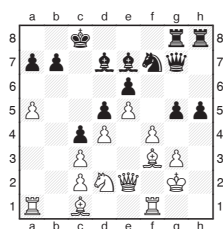
This excellent rook move dismantles Black's defences. 24.Qg5-h4+ Nf6-h7 25.Nf5-e7 f7-f5 26.Bd3xf5 Bd5-g8 is less conclusive.

24... Nf6xe8
The other capture also

leads to mate: 24...Qd8xe8 25.Qg5xf6+ Kh8-g8 26.Qf6-g5+ Kg8-h8 27.Qg5-h5+ Kh8-g8 28.Nf5-e7+ Bf8xe7 29.Qh5-h7+ Kg8-f8 30.Qh7-h8 mate.

25.Qg5-h5+ Kh8-g8
26.Nf5-e7+

Black resigned, as 26...Bf8xe7 27.Qh5-h7+ Kg8-f8 28.Qh7-h8 is mate.



V. Bologan - M. Mchedlishvili
Plovdiv 2012

With Black's play well-advanced on the kingside, Bologan gives up a piece to open lines on the other wing.

27.Nd2xc4 g5-g4

Black would have been better to ignore the offer and focus on his own play with 27...g5xf4 28.Bc1xf4 Be7-g5.

28.Bf3xd5 e6xd5
29.Nc4-b6+ a7xb6
30.a5xb6 Kc8-d8

Black's king makes a run for it, but gets hunted down. 30...Kc8-b8 31.e5-e6 Bd7xe6 32.Qe2xe6 Qg7-f6 33.Qe6xd5 is less clear.

31.Ra1-a8+ Bd7-c8
32.Qe2-b5 Nf7-d6
33.Qb5xd5 Qg7-f7
34.Qd5-c5 Be7-f8
35.f4-f5

35.e5xd6 is good enough, but Viktor secures the point in style by simply swarming his pawns forward.

35... Qf7-d7
36.e5-e6 Qd7-c6+
37.Qc5xc6 b7xc6
38.f5-f6 Rh8-h7
39.f6-f7 Rg8-g6
40.Bc1-a3 Rg6xe6
41.Ba3xd6

Black resigned, as 41...Re6xd6 42.b6-b7 wins.