

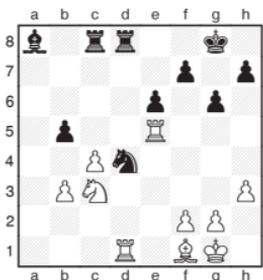
Michael Adams



Cool Hand Luke rides to victory

Luke McShane collected the rather radical bonus prize of a horse for his victory in the third Remco Heite. As it might have been tricky to fit in his hand luggage, and in accordance with tradition, he then donated the steed to a local charity for handicapped children.

We pick up his crucial last-round game after the time control, holding a slight edge, but Van Wely's position is solid enough.



Van Wely, L - McShane, L
Wolvega 2010

41.Rd1-b1

White can't play 41.Nc3xb5 due to 41...Nd4-f3+

41... b5xc4
42.b3xc4 Kg8-g7
43.Re5-a5 Ba8-c6

The position looks fairly harmless, but Black's pieces are very well placed and the c4 pawn remains a weakness.

44.Ra5-a7 g6-g5

McShane begins his plan of expanding on the kingside.

45.Nc3-b5 Nd4-f5

46.Bf1-e2 Kg7-g6

47.Ra7-a3

It was better to play 47.Rb1-b2 keeping his second rank covered.

47... Rd8-d2

48.Be2-f1 Rc8-d8

Black has clearly improved his pieces over the last few moves, intensifying the pressure.

49.Ra3-a6 Nf5-e7

50.g2-g3

It might have been better to sit tight with 50.Ra6-a7.

50... h7-h5



51.Bf1-g2

Exchanging bishops is desirable, but it leaves the c4 pawn without protection. By now both players were probably feeling the strain of the swift time control.

51... Bc6xg2

52.Kg1xg2 Rd2-c2

52...Ne7-f5 was more efficient.

53.Nb5-d6 Ne7-c8

53...Ne7-f5 was still better.

54.Nd6xc8

Now the hidden tactical resource 54.c4-c5 Nc8xd6 (54...Rc2xc5 55.Nd6-b7) 55.c5xd6 Rc2-d2 56.Rb1-b6 saves the day.

54... Rd8xc8

55.Rb1-b7

The ending after 55.Ra6-b6 Rc8xc4 56.Rb6-b2 Rc2xb2 57.Rb1xb2 h5-h4 is very bad, but Van Wely's attempts to get active backfire.

55... Rc8-c5

56.Rb7-b5 Rc5xc4

57.Ra6-a5 f7-f6

58.Rb5-b6 Rc4-e4

59.Ra5-a1 Re4-e2

60.Ra1-f1 e6-e5

61.Rb6-b1

61.Rb6-b3 e5-e4 62.Kg2-g1 was the last chance.

61... e5-e4

62.Rb1-e1 e4-e3

63.Re1xe2

63.Kg2-f3 Re2xe1

64.Rf1xe1 e3xf2 wins easily

63... Rc2xe2

64.g3-g4

The alternative 64.Kg2-f3 Re2xf2+ 65.Rf1xf2 e3xf2 66.Kf3xf2 f6-f5 67.Kf2-f3 Kg6-f6 68.h3-h4 g5xh4 69.g3xh4 Kf6-e5 leads to a winning ending.

64... h5xg4

Strangely this natural recapture is a mistake. McShane should have played 64...f6-f5 65.g4xf5+ Kg6xf5 66.Kg2-g3 Re2xf2 67.Rf1xf2+ e3xf2 68.Kg3xf2 Kf5-f4 69.Kf2-g2 Kf4-e3 70.Kg2-g3 h5-h4+ 71.Kg3-g4 Ke3-f2 72.Kg4xg5 Kf2-g3 winning easily.

65.h3xg4 f6-f5

66.Kg2-f3

All looks lost here but my computer suggests a miracle save: 66.g4xf5+ Kg6xf5 67.Kg2-g3 leads to a drawn position.

Initially I thought this was a sign my machine was on the blink, but the assessment seems to be correct: 67...Re2xf2 (67...e3xf2 68.Kg3-f3 Re2-a2 69.Kf3-g2 blockades the pawns.) 68.Rf1-a1 and White is able to prevent a pawn promoting with a cascade of checks: 68...Rf2-c2 69.Kg3-f3 e3-e2 70.Ra1-a5+ Kf5-g6 71.Ra5-a6+ Kg6-h5 72.Ra6-e6, or 68...Kf5-e4 69.Ra1-a4+.

66... Re2xf2+

Now all is well again.

67.Rf1xf2 e3xf2

68.g4xf5+ Kg6xf5

69.Kf3xf2 Kf5-f4

White resigned as the king shepherds the pawn home.