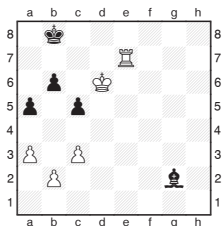


Michael Adams



Fast game's slow progress

The faster formats of the game, rapid and blitz, have not been properly promoted by FIDE. Hopefully the strong field for this year's events, combined with the long-overdue re-establishment of separate rating lists for those disciplines, will improve matters. However, it seemed highly unfair that players who had qualified for the previous edition which never took place did not get invited to participate this time.



A. Grischuk - M. Carlsen
World Rapid Astana 2012

49.b2-b3

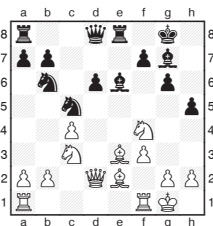
Endgame technique isn't easy at the end of a rapid game. A natural sequence like 49.b2-b4 a5xb4 50.a3xb4 c5xb4 51.c3xb4 is a serious error, as Black holds because there is no way for the White king to approach. However, Grischuk knows his onions and transfers his rook backwards behind the 'b' pawn so he can recapture with this piece.

- 49... **Bg2-h1**
50.Re7-e2 **Kb8-b7**
51.Re2-b2 **Bh1-f3**
52.b3-b4 **c5xb4**
53.a3xb4 **a5xb4**
54.Rb2xb4 **Bf3-e2**
55.c3-c4

Now that there is a decisive

threat of c4-c5, Black's king is smoked out and the win is simple.

- 55... **Kb7-a6**
56.Kd6-c6 **Ka6-a5**
 56...Be2-f3+ 57.Kc6-c7 is no better.
57.Rb4-b5+ **Ka5-a4**
58.Kc6-d5
1-0



V. Ivanchuk - V. Bologan
World Rapid Astana 2012

White has a nice positional edge due to the weak pawn on d6 and Black's slightly awkwardly placed knights. It's impressive to see how Vasily exploits these advantages by steadily improving his own piece placement.

- 16.b2-b3** **Qd8-e7**
17.Rf1-e1 **Ra8-d8**
18.Be2-f1 **Qe7-f6**
 18...Bg7-e5 was worth a try.
19.Ra1-c1

Consistent, but the immediate 19.Nc3-b5 was very good.

- 19... **h5-h4**
20.Nc3-b5 **Nb6-c8**
21.Nb5-c7 **Re8-f8**
22.b3-b4 **Nc5-a6**
23.Nc7-d5 **Qf6-b2**
24.Rc1-c2 **Qb2-a3**
25.Be3-d4

White's forces dominate proceedings while the Black army is in complete disarray.

- 25... **Be6xd5**
26.Bd4xg7 **Kg8xg7**
27.Nf4xd5

There was also a tactical dénouement with 27.Nf4-h5+ g6xh5 28.Qd2-g5+ Kg7-h8 29.Qg5xh5+ Kh8-g7 30.Qh5-g5+ Kg7-h8 31.c4xd5 Qa3xb4 32.Rc2-c4 Qb4xe1 33.Qg5-h6+ Kh8-g8 34.Rc4-g4 mate.

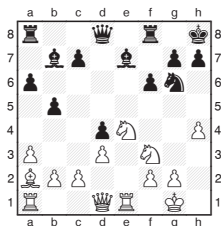
- 27... **f7-f6**
28.Re1-e4 **Rd8-e8**

28...Rf8-h8 29.Qd2-d4 Rd8-f8 30.Rc2-e2 Na6xb4 31.Re4-e7+ crashes through.

- 29.Re4xh4** **g6-g5**
30.Rh4-g4 **Nc8-e7**
31.Rc2-c3 **Qa3-a4**
32.h2-h4

The extra pawn goes to work on the Bologan kingside and the game is soon over.

- 32... **Ne7-g6**
33.h4xg5 **f6-f5**
34.Rg4-d4 **Na6xb4**
35.c4-c5 **d6xc5**
36.Rc3xc5 **a7-a5**
37.Bf1-b5 **Qa4xa2**
38.Qd2xa2 **Nb4xa2**
39.Rc5-c7+
1-0



V. Topalov - S. Karjakin
World Blitz Astana 2012

17.h3-h4

Black is already comfortably placed but this doesn't help.

- 17... **f6-f5**
18.Ne4-g5 **Ng6xh4**
19.Ng5-e6

19.Nf3xh4 Be7xg5 is a clear pawn up, but now White's kingside suffers fatal collateral damage.

- 19... **Nh4xf3+**
20.g2xf3 **Qd8-d6**
21.Ne6xf8 **Ra8xf8**
22.Kg1-f1

22.Re1-e6 Qd6-f4 is no better.

- 22... **Be7-g5**
23.Re1-e6 **Qd6-f4**
24.Qd1-e2 **Bb7xf3**
25.Qe2-e5 **Qf4-h4**
26.Qe5-g3 **Qh4-h1+**

26...Qh4-h5 intending Be5-f4 was even better.

- 27.Qg3-g1** **Qh1-h5**
 White resigned, as 28.Kf1-e1 Rf8-e8 29.c2-c3 Re8xe6+ 30.Ba2xe6 Qh5-h6 31.Be6xf5 Bg5-c1 forces mate.