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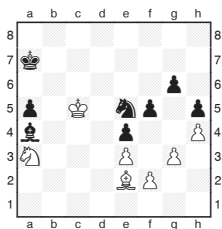


Carlsen the most winning candidate

The FIDE Candidates resulted in Magnus Carlsen qualifying as the challenger to Viswanathan Anand on a tie-break after finishing level with Vladimir Kramnik. The tournament at IET London was certainly exciting to watch, with a lot of fascinating fights due to early draw offers being prohibited.

So it was disappointing to see the tie between the leaders decided by the number of games won. The rapid games tie-breaker used in the World Championship match gives a fairer result, and a massive audience would have eagerly watched the deciding games.

Although Magnus was unusually nervous and lost two of his last three games – both with White – he rose to the occasion in this long endgame grind, which proved the crucial encounter:



T. Radjabov - M. Carlsen
FIDE Candidates London 2013

80.Na3-c4

White should have retreated with 80.Kc5-d4 but defending passively is difficult at such a late stage of the game.

80... Ne5-d3+

81.Kc5-d4

After 81.Be2xd3 e4xd3 82.Kc5-d4 Ba4-b5 83.Nc4-d2 (83.Kd4xd3 a5-a4 84.Kd3-c3 Bb5xc4 85.Kc3xc4 Ka7-b6 86.Kc4-b4 Kb6-c6 87.Kb4xa4 Kc6-d5 88.Ka4-b5 Kd5-e4 89.Kb5-c6 Ke4-f3 Black wins the pawn ending) 83...Ka7-b6 the knight will find it difficult to stop the two passed pawns.

81... Nd3-c1

Taking the pawn 81...Nd3xf2 82.Nc4xa5 Nf2-h1 83.Be2-c4 Ka7-b6 84.Na5-b3 looks more hopeful for White. Instead Magnus finds a clever way to dominate White's remaining pieces.

82.Be2-f1 Ba4-b5

83.Nc4xa5

Desperation but Black is creeping forward after 83.Kd4-c3 Ka7-a6 84.Kc3-d2 Nc1-a2.

83... Bb5xf1

84.Na5-c6+

85.Nc6-e7

86.Ne7xg6

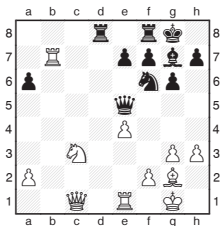
Magnus only has to secure his pawns to collect the point.

87.Ng6-e7 Bf1-h3

88.Ne7-d5+

89.Nd5-f6

O-1



V. Kramnik - T. Radjabov
FIDE Candidates London 2013

Black is solid enough here but Vladimir's knight jumps around to generate some tactical ideas.

25.Nc3-d5 Rf8-e8

25...Nf6xd5 26.e4xd5 Rd8-c8 27.Qc1-d1 wins a pawn.

26.Nd5-b4

The knight drops backwards, eyeing the powerful c6 post.

26... Rd8-d7

27.Nb4-c6

28.Rb7-b6

Lining the rook up with the queen and hitting a pawn.

28... Qe6xa2

In time trouble it looks natural to grab the queenside pawn, but there is a hidden refutation Kramnik had foreseen well in advance. Black should have pinned the knight 28...Rd7-c7 29.e4-e5 Nf6-d7 30.Rb6xa6 Nd7-b8 (if 30...Re8-c8 White wins with 31.Bg2-d5 Qe6xh3 32.e5-e6 Nd7-f6 33.Nc6xe7+ Kg8-h8 (33...Kg8-f8 34.Ne7xc8 Rc7xc1 35.e6-e7+ Kf8-e8 36.Nc8-d6+ Ke8-d7 37.Re1xc1) 34.Qc1xc7 Rc8xc7 35.Ra6-a8+) 31.Ra6-b6 Nb8-d7 maintaining the balance.

29.e4-e5 Nf6-d5

Forced as the knight is movebound after 29...Nf6-h5 30.g3-g4.

30.Rb6-b2 Qa2-a4

30...Qa2-a3 31.Rb2-b8 is decisive.

31.Bg2xd5 Rd7xd5

32.Rb2-b4 Qa4-a2

33.Nc6xe7+ Kg8-h8

The knight can't be captured, as the back rank is fatally exposed: 33...Re8xe7 34.Qc1-c8+ Bg7-f8 35.Rb4-b8.

34.Ne7xd5 Qa2xd5

35.Qc1-c4 Qd5xc4

36.Rb4xc4 Bg7xe5

37.Kg1-f1

Black resigned, as 37...Re8-e6 38.Rc4-e4 wins easily, of course not 37.f2-f4 Be5-d4+.