

**Michael Adams**

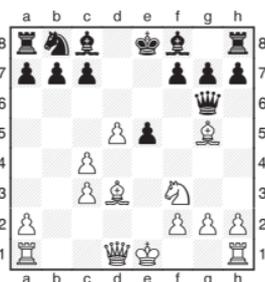


## Christmas Day upset for London

The FIDE World Cities Championship is a bit of a misnomer. Intended to be held every two years, it consists of teams assembled along national lines, as at the Olympiad, with no links required to the city represented.

The London team were beneficiaries of a dubious decision to promote the modestly-rated host team to the top seeding bracket, but after this eased qualification from their group they were eliminated by Athens on Christmas Day in the first knockout round.

Not the most enjoyable holiday season, but a good opportunity for the younger players to build their international team experience.



**S. Williams - A. Faisal**  
World Cities Team Al-Ain 2012

**11... Bc8-f5**  
If 11...e5-e4 one interesting option is 12.Bd3xe4 (12.0-0 is also possible) 12...Qg6xe4+ 13.Ke1-d2 Qe4xc4 14.Rh1-e1+.

**12.Qd1-a4+ Nb8-d7**  
**13.0-0 Bf8-d6**  
Not 13...Bf5xd3 14.Nf3xe5 Qg6-f5 15.Ne5xd7.

**14.Nf3-h4**  
The other continuation of the attack with 14.Bd3xf5 Qg6xf5 15.c4-c5 Bd6xc5 16.Nf3xe5 f7-f6 17.g2-g4 Bc5xf2+ 18.Rf1xf2 Qf5xe5 19.Bg5-f4 looks stronger when Black's king remains stuck in the middle.

**14... Qg6xg5**  
**15.Nh4xf5 Ke8-d8**  
Although castling is impossible, if Black can secure his king and plant a knight on the excellent outpost c5, he will be doing well even if it costs a pawn or two so 15...Ra8-d8 looks logical.

**16.Ra1-b1 Nd7-c5**  
**17.Nf5xd6 c7xd6**  
**18.Qa4-a5+ Kd8-c8**  
The king should be shuffling in the other direction 18...Kd8-e8 19.Rb1xb7 Qg5-d8 20.Qa5-b5+ Ke8-f8 21.Rf1-b1 g7-g6 evacuates the danger zone.

**19.Rb1-b5 Qg5-e7**  
**20.Bd3-f5+ Kc8-b8**  
**21.Rf1-b1 g7-g6**  
**22.Rb5xc5**  
Seizing the opportunity to remove the powerful horse, and after the subsequent pawn sacrifice, opening up a devastating diagonal for the bishop.

**22... d6xc5**  
**23.d5-d6 Qe7-d8**  
23...Qe7xd6 24.Bf5-e4 b7-b6 25.Qa5-a6 Qd6-c7 26.a2-a4 is also bad, but the game move loses at once.

**24.Qa5-a6 b7-b6**  
**25.Bf5-e4 Qd8-d7**  
**26.Rb1xb6+ 1-0**



**N. Short - Salem A.R. Saleh**  
World Cities Team Al-Ain 2012

**18.Ke1-f1**  
A crafty reorganisation, nudging the king to a safer spot, and getting ready to redirect the queen to h4.

**18... Bd5-f7**  
With his ragged pawn structure it's not easy for Black to generate play. 18...Nb6-d7 looks better.

**19.Qd2-e1 Bf7-e8**  
**20.Qe1-h4 Rf8-f6**  
**21.b2-b4**  
Another nice touch, playing on all sectors of the board. Now Black is running very low on both moves and safe squares for his pieces.

**21... Qd6-e5**  
21...Nb6-d7 22.Nc3-a4 continues clamping down on c5.

**22.Be3-c5 Rf6-d6**  
**23.f3-f4**  
It would be very premature to grab the rook immediately.

**23... Qe5-f6**  
**24.Qh4-h7+ Kg8-f8**  
**25.Qh7-h3 Kf8-g8**  
**26.e2-e4**



**26... Nb6-d7**  
26...Rd6xd3 27.Qh3-h7+ Kg8-f8 28.e4-e5 leaves the queen seriously embarrassed.

**27.e4-e5 Nd7xe5**  
**28.f4xe5 Qf6xe5**  
**29.Bc5xd6 Rd8xd6**  
**30.Nc3-e2**  
With little to show for the absent rook, Black resigned.