

Michael Adams



Armageddon produces a damp squib

The annual Aeroflot event changed pace to a swifter time limit featuring rapid and blitz instead of classical games. An Armageddon game where White receives extra time, but must win, was used to decide the final. It came to a typically unsatisfactory conclusion, as Sergey Karjakin flagged Alexander Grischuk in a lost position, although he had been winning for much of the game.

Curiously the same two players had contested another controversial tournament-deciding Armageddon game also in Moscow at the end of last year. Hopefully organisers will eventually cotton on to the fact that sudden-death blitz with draws replayed is fairer to the players and provides more entertainment for substantial on-line audiences.

A more convincing win by Karjakin from earlier in the event, where he exploits the greater pawn cover in front of his king:



S.Karjakin - D.Frolyanov
Aeroflot Rapid, Moscow, 2013

22.f2-f4 **f7-f5**
If 22...e5xf4 23.Qe2-e4

is rather awkward.

23.f4xe5 **f5xg4**
24.Rh1-f1 **Rf8xf1**
25.Re1xf1 **Kg8-h8**

Not 25...Rd8-f8 26.Bd3xh7+. 25...Bd4-b6 26.Qe2-e4 Rd8xd3 was the only way to fight on a bit longer.

26.Qe2-e4 **Be6-g8**
The kingside is secured, but the loose bishop on d4 proves decisive.

27.Bd2-g5 **g4-g3**
27...Rd8-d7 28.Rf1-f8 is catastrophic.

28.h5-h6
A good decision, opening up the king before cashing material gains.

28... **g3-g2**
29.Qe4xg2 **Bd4xe5**
30.Bg5xd8 **Qc7xd8**
31.Qg2-e4 **Be5-f6**

31...Qd8-d6 was a little better, but this has the advantage of allowing a pretty finish.

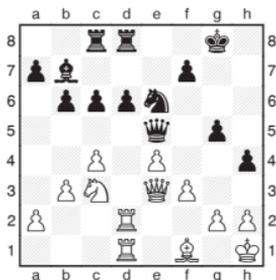


32.h6xg7+ **Bf6xg7**
33.Rf1-h1 **h7-h6**
34.Rh1xh6+

Very neat. The bishop on g8 enables White to deal the death blow on the dark squares.

34... **Bg7xh6**
35.Qe4-e5+
Black resigned, as 35...Bh6-g7 36.Qe5-h2+.

We finish with an impressively far-sighted combination by Gawain Jones:



B. Kvisvik - G. Jones
Reykjavik, 2013

29.b3-b4
White's lack of dark-square control on the kingside doesn't look too serious, but the alert 29.Kh1-g1 was called for. Now Gawain blows open the position with great effect.

29... **d6-d5**
30.c4xd5 **c6xd5**
31.Nc3xd5 **Bb7xd5**
32.Rd2xd5 **Rd8xd5**
33.Rd1xd5 **Qe5-a1**

White's back rank is under serious pressure.
34.Kh1-g1 **Rc8-c1**
All Black's pieces dominate their counterparts and it's only a matter of time before something gives.



35.Qe3-f2
35.Qe3-d3 Ne6-f4
36.Rd5xg5+ Kg8-h7
37.Qd3-b5 Qa1-d4+
38.Kg1-h1 Nf4-g6 leaves White powerless to prevent Qd4-f2.

35... **Ne6-f4**
36.Rd5-d8+
36.Rd5xg5+ Kg8-h8
37.Rg5-d5 (37.Rg5-f5 Nf4-d3 38.Qf2-e2 Qa1-d4+ wins) 37...Nf4xd5 38.e4xd5 Rc1-d1 isn't much better.

36... **Kg8-h7**
37.Rd8-d7 **Rc1-e1**
38.Rd7-d2
38.Rd7xf7+ Kh7-g6
39.Rf7xf4 g5xf4 leaves White hard pressed to prevent the strong plan of Qa1-c1 followed by Qc1-e3.

38... **Qa1-c1**
Winning a piece by force.
39.h2-h3
39.Rd2-c2 Re1xf1+ comes to the same.

39... **Re1xf1+**
40.Qf2xf1 **Qc1xd2**
0-1