

Michael Adams



Carlsen's key moment

In retrospect, the pivotal moment in the World Championship match was game five. Up to then, the players had looked well matched, but after the Norwegian completed a typically classy squeeze, it was all one-way traffic.

Magnus Carlsen's success in endgames is based on incredibly consistent, precise play and pouncing on errors. When you play this skilfully, danger remains for your opponent even with very few pieces left, as was shown in the next game.

Viswanathan Anand confirmed in the post-match press conference that he was aware that holding a position such as the one below was essential for his hopes but, like many others, he was unable to resist the relentless pressure in practice.



M. Carlsen - V. Anand
World Championship
Chennai 2013

Black is not in bad shape at all. Although he has more pawn islands, his active pieces keep the balance.

32.Kd2-c3 **Rb5-c5+**
33.Kc3-b2

Magnus manoeuvres until he can get the vulnerable pawns in his sights. He plans

to transfer his bishop to c4.

33... **Rh8-d8**
34.Rf1-f2 **Rd8-d4**
34...g5-g4 was another reasonable option.

35.Rf6-h6 **Bh5-d1**
36.Bc2-b1
Black's bishop remains awkwardly placed, having moved from one edge of the board to the other, so Magnus declines the exchange.

36... **Rc5-b5**
37.Kb2-c3
The king gains time by attacking the rook and now White's rook will cover the 'b' pawn.

37... **c6-c5**
38.Rf2-b2 **e6-e5**
39.Rh6-g6
Now all of the Black pawns are potential targets.

39... **a5-a4**
The alternative 39...g5-g4 40.Bb1-d3 Rb5xb3+ 41.Rb2xb3 Bd1xb3 42.Rg6xg4 h4-h3 43.g2xh3 Bb3-e6 should also hold. Now White starts picking up pawns.

40.Rg6xg5
White also keeps some pressure with 40.b3xa4 Rb5xb2 41.Kc3xb2 Bd1xa4 42.Rg6xg5.

40... **Rb5xb3+**
41.Rb2xb3 **Bd1xb3**
42.Rg5xe5+ **Ke7-d6**
43.Re5-h5 **Rd4-d1**
44.e4-e5+ **Kd6-d5**
45.Bb1-h7



45... **Rd1-c1+**
A key moment. Anand could have forced a draw here

with 45...Rd1-a1 46.Bh7-g8+ Kd5-c6 47.Bg8xb3 Ra1xa3 48.Rh5xh4 Ra3xb3+ 49.Kc3-c2 Rb3-b4 50.Rh4xb4 c5xb4 51.h2-h4 Kc6-d5, but this precise line requires calm nerves and cool calculation. It seems to me that 45...Rd1-e1 should also hold 46.Bh7-g8+ Kd5-c6 47.Rh5-h6+ Kc6-c7 48.Bg8xb3 Re1-e3+ 49.Kc3-d2 a4xb3 is a key resource. Black's cause is not hopeless after this slip, but now extreme accuracy is required.

46.Kc3-b2 **Rc1-g1**
47.Bh7-g8+ **Kd5-c6**
48.Rh5-h6+ **Kc6-d7**
White should win after 48...Kc6-b5 49.Bg8xb3 a4xb3 50.Kb2xb3 c5-c4+ 51.Kb3-c3 Rg1-a1 52.e5-e6 Ra1xa3+ 53.Kc3-d4.

49.Bg8xb3 **a4xb3**
50.Kb2xb3 **Rg1xg2**
51.Rh6xh4 **Kd7-e6**
There was a final hidden chance to pull off a miracle save after 51...Rg2-e2 52.Kb3-c4 Re2xe5 53.a3-a4 Kd7-c6 54.Rh4-h6+ Kc6-b7 55.a4-a5 Re5-e4+ 56.Kc4xc5 Re4-e5+ 57.Kc5-b4 Re5-e2. The awkward placement of White's pieces, and lack of hiding places for his king mean that there is no win available despite the extra pawns.

52.a3-a4 **Ke6xe5**
Reducing the arrears to one pawn, but the passer on the queenside now gets too advanced for Black to hold.

53.a4-a5 **Ke5-d6**
54.Rh4-h7 **Kd6-d5**
Black also can't prevent one of the pawns promoting after 54...Kd6-c6 55.a5-a6 Kc6-b6 56.a6-a7 Rg2-g8 57.h2-h4.

55.a5-a6 **c5-c4+**
56.Kb3-c3 **Rg2-a2**
57.a6-a7 **Kd5-c5**
58.h2-h4
1-0