

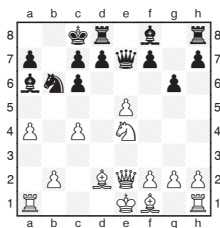
**Michael Adams**



## Russia's rising star

With the official FIDE time control of 90 minutes plus 30 seconds a move for the first 40 moves, it's common for players to increase their time on the clock during the first few theoretical moves. Finishing the game with more time than when you started, however, is a bit special.

With a mixture of his naturally speedy play and some very detailed opening preparation, the highly talented Ian Nepomniachtchi concluded a great game against my teammate at the European Team Cup with 91 minutes remaining. I watched this with a mixture of shock and awe.



**I. Nepomniachtchi - E. Bacrot**  
European Club Cup Eilat 2012

### 13.Qe2-f3

A tricky new move. The stem game in this super-sharp variation between Shirov and Kramnik continued 13.Qe2-e3 Qe7xe5 14.Bd2-c3 Bf8-b4 15.Bc3xb4 Rh8-e8 with great complications.

**13... Rd8-e8**  
13...Nb6xc4 14.Ra1-c1 Qe7xe5 is also complex.

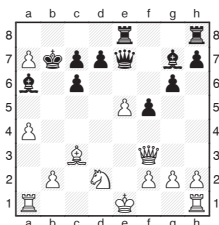
**14.Bd2-c3 f7-f5**

14...Bf8-g7 15.c4-c5 Ba6xf1 16.c5xb6 Bf1-c4 17.b6xa7 Kc8-b7 18.0-0-0 Kb7-a8 was another possibility.

### 15.Ne4-d2 Bf8-g7

It looks better to play 15...Bf8-h6 16.b2-b3 Bh6-g7 as the weakened dark squares appear to improve Black's chances.

**16.c4-c5 Ba6xf1**  
**17.c5xb6 Bf1-a6**  
**18.b6xa7 Kc8-b7**



### 19.0-0-0 Bg7xe5

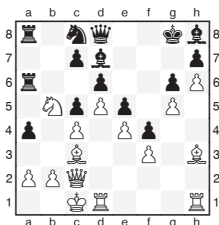
With little time left, Etienne errs. 19...Qe7-e6 was a bit better - this opens the floodgates for White's pieces.

### 20.Rh1-e1 Qe7-f6

The only move was 20...d7-d6, but chances of survival are slim after 21.Nd2-b3, now Black is caught in a fatal pin.

**21.Re1xe5 Re8xe5**  
**22.Qf3-f4 Rh8-e8**  
**23.Qf4-b4+ Kb7xa7**  
**24.f2-f4 Qf6-d6**

Black resigned, as 25.Qb4xd6 c7xd6 26.f4xe5 d6xe5 27.Nd2-f3 mops up easily.



**A. Korobov - I. Smirin**  
European Club Cup Eilat 2012

**29... Bd7xb5**

Smirin's King's Indian has gone horribly wrong with his bishop entombed in the corner, so he understandably didn't feel like playing 29...Bd7xb5 30.Rh1xb3 Nc8-a7 31.Nb5xa7 Ra6xa7 32.Rd1-g1 and waiting for White to try and arrange a breakthrough.

**30.c4xb5 Ra6-b6**  
**31.Bh3-e6+ Kg8-f8**  
**32.Rh1-h4**

32.Rd1-g1 preparing Rh1-h4 with the same ideas as the game was also interesting.

### 32... Kf8-e7

Black had to grab the pawn and hope for the best: 32...Qd8xg5 33.Rh4-g4 Qg5-f6 (33...Qg5-e7 34.Rg4xf4+ e5xf4 35.Bc3xh8 and 33...Qg5xh6 34.Qc2-g2 are too dangerous) 34.Qc2-g2 Kf8-e8 35.Bc3-e1 Nc8-e7 36.Qg2-h3 Ra8-d8 although, things don't look good.

### 33.Rh4xf4 e5xf4

**34.Bc3-g7**  
It's not easy to see moves like this in advance: the opposition of bishops can condition a player to expect a capture, but the quiet insertion of the bishop after the sacrifice - opening the way for White's queen - completely paralyzes Black's disorganised army.

### 34...Nc8-a7

The best practical try. 34...Ke7-e8 35.Bg7xh8 Qd8xg5 36.Qc2-c3 and 34...Bh8xg7 35.h6xg7 are even worse.

**35.Qc2-c3 Qd8-f8**  
**36.Bg7xf8+ Ra8xf8**  
**37.Qc3-a5 Bh8xb2+**  
37...Na7xb5 38.Qa5xa4 Rf8-b8 would have fought on for a bit.

**38.Kc1-c2 Rf8-a8**  
**39.Qa5xa4 Bb2-e5**  
**40.Rd1-b1**  
**1-0**