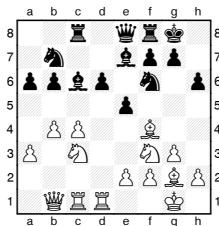


Michael Adams



Hou Yifan on the march

In the early stages of the Women's World Championship match, Hou Yifan has taken a 3-1 lead. Anna Ushenina arrived in China with an impressive analytical team, but has been unable to exploit her promising opening positions against her opponent's savvy middlegame play.



A. Ushenina - Hou Yifan
Women's World
Championship, 2013

20. Bf4-d2

White creates pressure on the light squares after 20.Bf4-e3 b6-b5 21.c4xb5 a6xb5 22.Nf3-h4.

20... b6-b5
21.c4xb5 a6xb5
22.e2-e4 Rc8-a8
23.Nf3-h4

A very aggressive idea. Instead of defending the pawn, Ushenina moves her knight to the ideal square.

23... Ra8xa3
24.Nh4-f5 Bc6-d7
25.Bd2-e3

The alternative 25.Qb1-b2 Ra3-a8 26.Nf5xh6+ g7xh6 27.Bd2xh6 looks quite enticing.

25... Bd7-e6
26.Nf5xe7+
26.Nc3xb5 Qe8xb5
27.Nf5xe7+ is about equal.
26... Qe8xe7
27.Nc3-d5

It was stronger to capture

the pawn when the game would head towards a draw. 27.Nc3xb5 Ra3-b3 28.Qb1-a1 Rb3xb4 29.Nb5xd6 Nf6-g4 (not 29...Nb7xd6 30.Be3-c5) White hopes that the badly-placed knight on b7 will provide compensation, but in such an open position the concept is too speculative.

27... Nf6xd5
28.e4xd5 Be6-g4
Gaining an important tempo.
29.Rd1-d2
29.Rd1-e1 pinning the 'e' pawn would slow down Black's kingside play.

29... f7-f5
30.Rd2-c2 f5-f4
31.Rc2-c7 Qe7-f6
32.Be3-b6 Nb7-d8
33.Qb1-b2 Ra3-d3
34.Qb2-c2
White had to eject the rook with 34.Bg2-e4.

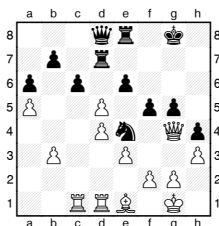
34... Bg4-f5
35.Qc2-a2 Nd8-f7
Hou Yifan decisively reroutes the knight into the attack.

36.Bg2-f1 Nf7-g5
37.Rc7-a7
The light squares are chronically weak after 37.Bf1xd3 Bf5xd3 38.Rc7-c3 Qf6-f5.

37... f4xg3
38.h2xg3 Ng5-f3+
39.Kg1-h1
39.Kg1-g2 Rd3-d2 is no better.

39... Qf6-g6
40.Bf1xd3 Qg6-h5+
41.Kh1-g2 Bf5-h3+
White resigned, as 42.Kg2-h1 Bh3-f1 is mate.

Magnus Carlsen looked in excellent shape in a combative four-player event in St Louis, Missouri:



M. Carlsen - G. Kamsky
Sinquelfield Cup, St Louis,
2013

26. Qg4-f3 c6xd5

It was stronger to avoid opening the 'c' line with 26...Rd7xd5 when White's rooks lack targets.

27.Rc1-c2 Rd7-g7
28.Rd1-c1 Ne4-f6

Going forward with 28...g5-g4 29.h3xg4 f5xg4 30.Qf3-f4 Re8-f8 31.Qf4-e5 Qd8-f6 was a better idea.

29.Qf3-d1 g5-g4
30.f2-f3

A very useful move – opening up White's bishop and dominating Black's knight.

30... g4xh3
31.Be1xh4 Kg8-f7

After the better 31...h3xg2 32.Qd1-e1 keeps the pressure on.

32.Qd1-e1 h3xg2
33.Rc2-c7+ Re8-e7

Following 33...Kf7-g8 34.Rc7xg7+ Kg8xg7 35.Qe1-g3+ Kg7-f7 the subtle 36.Rc1-c2 combining threats along the seventh with the idea of switching to the 'g' file is deadly.

34.Bh4xf6 Kf7xf6
35.Rc7-c8 Qd8-d6

36.Qe1-h4+ Kf6-f7
37.Qh4-h5+ Rg7-g6
38.f3-f4

Securing his own king before the final blow.

38... Qd6-a3
39.Qh5-h8 Rg6-g7

40.Qh8-h5+ Rg7-g6
41.Qh5-h8 Rg6-g7

After a few repetitions, Magnus moves in for the kill.

42.Qh8-f8+ Kf7-g6
43.Kg1xg2 Rg7-f7

There is no way to turn the tables on the White king if 43...Kg6-h7+ 44.Kg2-f3.

44.Qf8-d8 Rf7-h7
45.Rc1-g1

Preparing a fatal discovered check.

45... Qa3-a2+
46.Kg2-f3+ Kg6-f6

47.Qd8-g8 Rh7-h3+
48.Rg1-g3 Rh3xg3+
49.Qg8xg3
1-0