

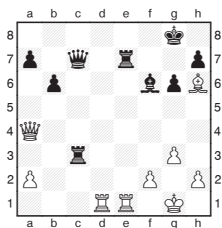
Chess

Michael Adams



Russia's army of players on the march

It's not a big revelation to say that there are a lot of good chess players in Russia. But when you see two 2700+ players competing in a qualifying competition to play in their national championship it does put the situation into perspective.



Belov, V - Maslak, K
Irkutsk 2010

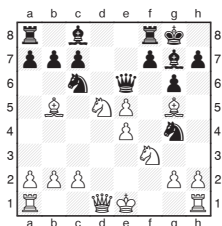
26... Rc3-f3

Black was in bad shape anyway due to his airy king position, but this allows a neat twist on a familiar mating pattern.

27.Qa4-c4+

Now Black resigned as he can't avoid mate without ruinous material loss:

27...Qc7xc4 28.Rd1-d8+
Re7-e8 29.Rd8xe8+ Kg8-f7
30.Re8-f8 mate or
27...Kg8-h8 28.Qc4xc7
Re7xc7 29.Re1-e8 mate.



Obolenskikh, D - Tseshkovsky, V
Irkutsk 2010

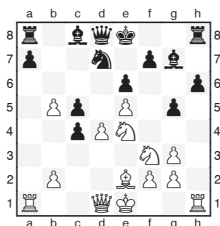
12... Nc6xe5

Black would be well placed after 12...Ng4xe5, but unwisely decided to capture with the other knight.

13.Nf3-d4 Qe6-d6

14.Bg5-e7

Oh dear! The queen is totally out of flight squares. Black resigned shortly afterwards.



Maletin, P - Najer, E
Irkutsk 2010

14... g5-g4

14...0-0 15.d4xc5
Qd8-e7 16.c5-c6 Nd7xe5
17.Qd1-d6 leaves White with an imposing passed pawn lodged in Black's throat. Now White makes an excellent decision to leave his knight to its fate.

15.d4xc5 g4xf3

16.Ne4-d6+ Ke8-f8

17.Be2xf3 Ra8-b8

18.Ra1xa7

The position is transformed with the Black king displaced and all White's pieces active.

18... Nd7xc5

19.0-0

A key feature of the position is White's securely protected monarch compared to Black's, who will remain on the run until the end of his days.

19... Nc5-d3

19...Kf8-g8 20.Bf3-h5 is very unpleasant.

20.Nd6xf7

My computer points out the clever tactical line: 20.Ra7xf7+ Kf8-g8
21.Bf3-h5 Nd3xe5
22.Nd6-e8 Qd8xd1
23.Rf7xg7+ Kg8-f8

24.Rf1xd1, but there are lots of good possibilities.

20... Qd8-d4

21.Ra7-c7 Nd3xe5

21...Qd4-b6 22.Rc7-c6
Qb6xb5 23.Nf7-d6 is also pretty dire.

22.Nf7xh8 Bg7xh8

Black can't swap queens, as after 22...Qd4xd1 23.Rf1xd1 the threat of Rd1-d8 mate doesn't allow him time to capture the knight.

23.Qd1-c2 Ne5xf3+

23...Qd4-d3 24.Rf1-d1 wins the queen.

24.g2xf3 Bc8-b7

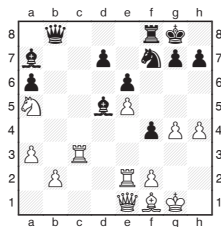
25.Rf1-d1 Qd4-f6

26.Qc2-h7 Bb7-d5

26...Bb7xf3 27.Rd1-d7
Bf3-h5 28.b5-b6 leaves Black hopelessly tied down.

27.Rd1-d4

Black resigned as there isn't a good defence to Rd4-f4.



Smirnov, P - Bocharov, D
Irkutsk 2010

White is nominally material ahead, but the quality of Black's pieces turns this assessment on its head.

32.Bf1-g2 f4-f3

33.Bg2xf3 Nf7xe5

34.Re2xe5

34.Bf3xd5 Ne5xg4 isn't possible, so Black acquires two monster bishops.

34... Bd5xf3

35.Rc3-b3

35.b2-b4 is well met by 35...Rf8-f4.

35... Qb8-d6

36.Rb3-b4 Bf3-a8

The bishop's withdrawal brings the two colleagues alongside throwing fatal fire onto the kingside.

37.Na5-c4 Ba7xf2+

38.Kg1-h2 Qd6-d3

0-1