

GREEK CHESS FEDERATION

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After a long and tough battle that lasted 93 moves, Romanian GM Mircea Parligras succeeded in beating Tamas Gelashvili and thus remain in sole first place of the "Acropolis 2008" international tournament after today's 7th round matches. The other overnight leader, Ilia Smirin, was content with a draw against 6-time Greek champion Hristos Banikas and is now half a point behind, alone in second place.

The next six games all ended in a draw, but most only after hard fight. Among them the games of the three leading women (Danielian, Dzagnidze, Maric) as well as those of Natalia Zhukova and Anna Rudolf, a little further down the list. All of them were facing grandmasters. GMs Svetushkin and Kotanjian, who had been left behind in the standings, scored important victories, as did the brothers Thanos and Dimitris Mastrovasilis. Some upsets also occurred, most notably the pretty win of Kostas Klokas against the Indian IM Saravanan and that of youngster Paminos Kourousis against Russian WIM Anna Burtasova.

A queen sacrifice is a rare occurrence in competitive chess, which is why we reported the one executed by Antonis Pavlidis yesterday. It is therefore truly remarkable that the exact same player made one more such sacrifice, on the very next day! And it wasn't the only one - 12-year-old Daniel Fernandez from Singapore sacrificed his queen as well, delivering mate on the board to Kostas Kokolias! Other spectacular games were Papadopoulou-Panagiotopoulos and Kourousis-Burtasova, both ending with a win for the players with white.

With three rounds remaining, it is clear that Parligras' pursuers must make winning efforts in tomorrow's 7th round in order to catch up with him. Parligras plays white against Salgado Lopez, Smirin faces Romanishin, while the other leading matchups are Zubarev-Banikas, Danielian-Maric and Dzagnidze-Svetushkin. Of special interest are the games Kotanjian-Rudolf and Tirard-Sandalakis, as the two players with black are on course for title norms, after their successful results so far in the tournament.

"Acropolis 2008" is organized by the Greek Chess Federation and the Prefecture of Athens, which actively supports the event for the second consecutive year. The Hellenic Post Bank is the sponsor of the tournament.

The event is held at President Hotel (43 Kifissias Avenue, "Europa" Hall) and will last until August 17th. Starting time everyday is 17.00' (14.00' at 17/8). Admittance for spectators is free. The event is covered by the GCF website (www.chessfed.gr/acropolis2008) with results, standings, games, photos as well as live transmission of the most important games of each round.