



GRIVAS CHESS
INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY

by Grivas Efstratios

Monthly Newsletter

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Grivas Chess International Academy

NEWSLETTER 21 SEPTEMBER 2026



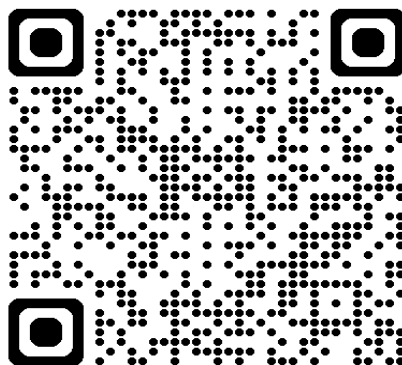
Symbols

+	check	=	equal position
++	double check	oo	unclear position
#	checkmate	oo/=	with compensation
!!	brilliant move	=+	Black is slightly better
!	good move	-/+	Black has a large advantage
!?	interesting move	-+	Black is winning
?!	dubious move	1-0	the game ends in a win for White
?	bad move	½-½	the game ends in a draw
??	blunder	0-1	the game ends in a win for Black
+ -	White is winning	(D)	see next diagram
+/-	White has a large advantage	○	White to play
+=	White is slightly better	●	Black to play

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GM Efstratios Grivas Join in Linktree



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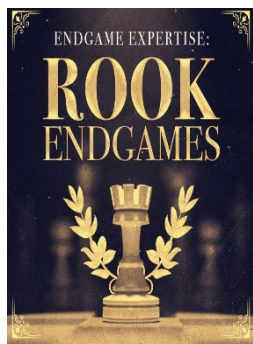
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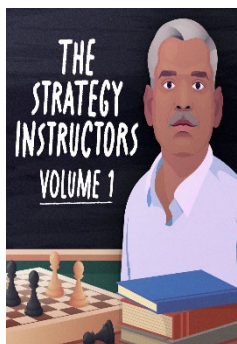
Advertise your company,
club, future events, or anything
else, in the pages of the
GCIA Monthly Newsletter

Contact Efstratios Grivas
(by Email or WhatsApp)
for discussions and offers.

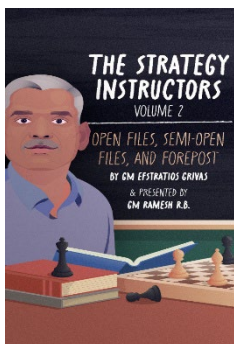
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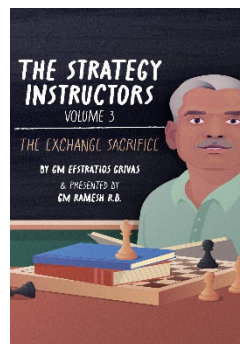
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Ivan Sokolov
Rook Endgames



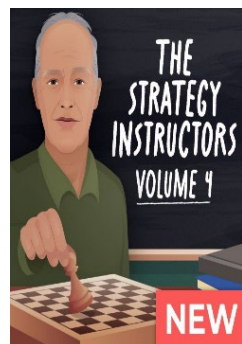
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Ramesh RB
Majority - Minority



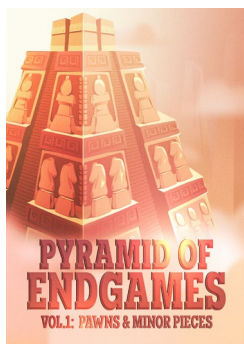
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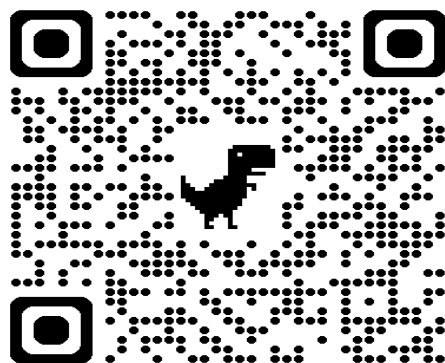
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Exchange Sacrifice



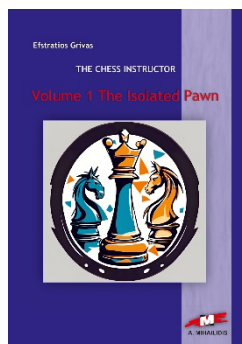
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The Isolated Pawn



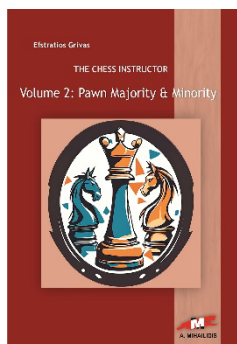
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Antoaneta Stefanova
Pyramid of
Endgames V1



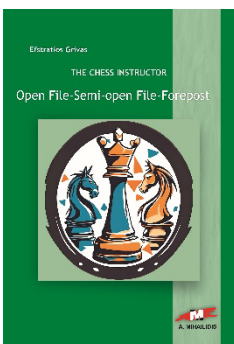
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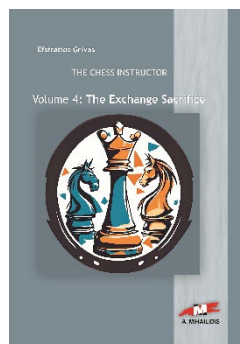
Efstratios Grivas
The Isolated Pawn



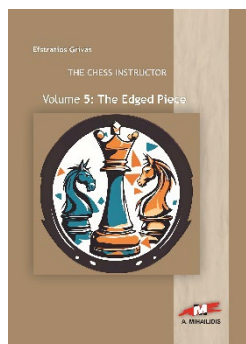
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Majority - Minority



Efstratios Grivas
Open Files



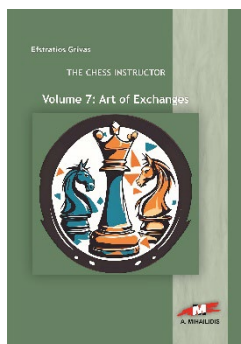
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Exchange Sacrifice



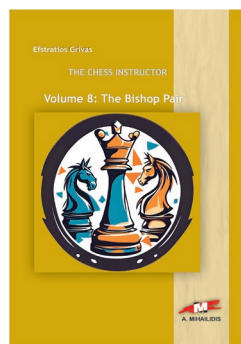
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The Edged Piece



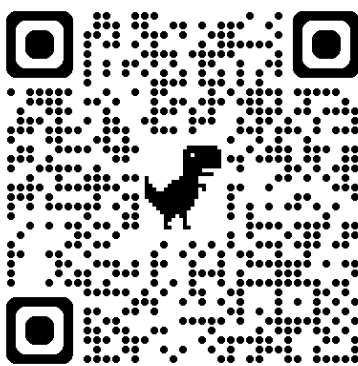
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The Weak Square



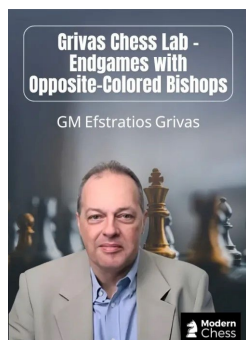
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Art of Exchanges



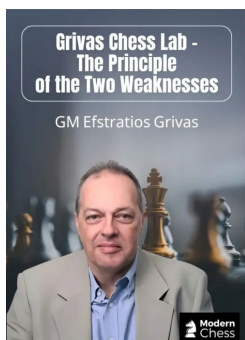
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The Bishop Pair



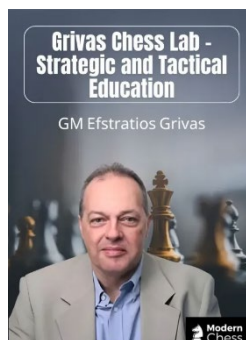
Modern Chess Courses by Efstratios Grivas



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**Opposite-coloured
Bishops**



Efstratios Grivas
**Principle of the
Two Weaknesses**



Efstratios Grivas
**Strategical and
Tactical Education**



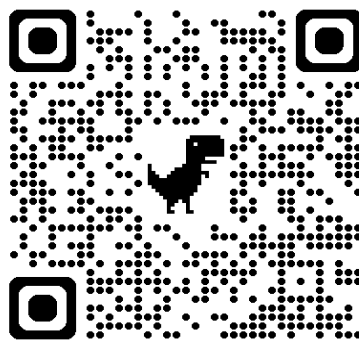
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**Armed Against the
Slav Defence**



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Art of Exchanges V1



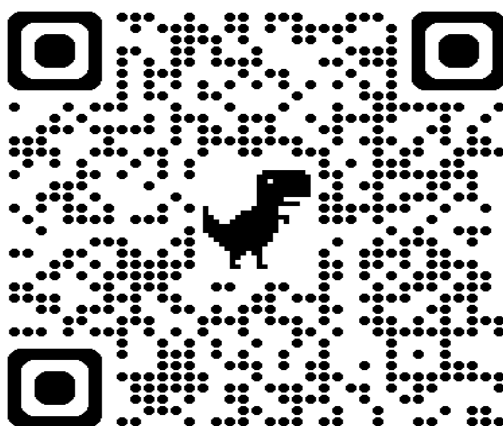
Efstratios Grivas
Art of Exchanges V2



Klidarithmos Courses by Efstratios Grivas



Efstratios Grivas
I Tehniki tis
Telias Aminas



MATRIZ DE LOS 22 CAMPEONES MUNDIALES DE AJEDREZ (1886-2024)							
1. WILHELM STEINITZ Austria/EE.UU. 1886-1894 Primer campeón oficial	2. EMANUEL LASKER Alemania 1894-1921 Reinado más largo	3. JOSÉ RAÚL CAPABLANCA Cuba 1921-1927 "El Mozart del ajedrez"	4. ALEXANDER ALEKHINE Rusia/Francia 1927-35/37-46 Murió siendo campeón	5. MAX EUWE Países Bajos 1935-1937 Derrotó a Alekhine	6. MIKHAIL BOTVINNIK URSS 1948-57/58-60/61-63 Padre escuela soviética	7. VASILY SMYSLOV URSS 1957-1958 Maestro de finales	
8. MIKHAIL TAL URSS 1960-1961 "El Mago de Riga"	9. TIGRAN PETROSIAN URSS 1963-1969 Rey profilaxis/defensa	10. BORIS SPASSKY URSS 1969-1972 Estilo universal	11. BOBBY FISCHER EE.UU. 1972-1975 Match del Siglo	12. ANATOLY KARPOV URSS/Rusia 1975-1985 Campeón por incomparecencia	13. GARRY KASPAROV URSS/Rusia 1985-2000 "Ogro de Bakú"	14. ALEXANDER KHALIFMAN Rusia 1999-2000 Campeón FIDE	
15. RUSLAN PONOMAREV Ucrania 2002-2004 Campeón FIDE más joven (18 años)	16. RUSTAM KASIMDZHANOV Uzbekistán 2004-2005 Campeón FIDE	17. VESELIN TOPALOV Bulgaria 2005-2006 Campeón FIDE	18. VLADIMIR KRAMNIK Rusia 2000-2007 Unificó títulos en 2006	19. VISWANATHAN ANAND India 2007-2013 "El Tigre de Madrás"	20. MAGNUS CARLSEN Noruega 2013-2023 Dominio absoluto	21. DING LIREN China 2023-2024 Primer campeón de China	22. GUKESH DOMMARAJU India 2024-Actual Campeón más joven historia

Nota: Incluye campeones Clásicos y campeones FIDE únicos del periodo de cisma (1993-2006).

Join the Grivas Chess International Academy World Federation (FIDE) Approved Academy

Looking for Something Good?

Do you like what you have read in this Newsletter? Do you want more material like the above?

Are you tired of getting training and not improving? Are you tired of working endless hours and not improving?

Do you believe in quality work assisted by an expert? Then join the Grivas CIA!

What Will we do?

- Analyse yourself and identify your strong and weak points: This should be done as follows:

First you will have a deep look at your last 40 games (20 with white and 20 with the black pieces - no quick draws) and you will fill-up some special tables that I will send you.

This will help us to see how you understand your openings, your middlegame and your endgame. Then you will send me these (light-analysed) 40 games in a Chessbase file and the tables that you have already filled-up. I will look at them also and correct your tables.

Finally, as a conclusion, I will send you back your analysed games and my detailed opinion about your strong (in order to improve them) and weak points (in order to minimise them) on your play.

This will take about two months (time mostly depending on you).

- Build an Opening Repertoire: With the help of the previous work, we can build-up a full opening repertoire with both white and black pieces.

This repertoire will be your base for the next 2-3 years at least. I will not only fill-up a repertoire table but I will send you files on your openings and we will discuss your questions and things that you might do not understand.

I will also give you my opinion in certain literature that can help you.

- Understand Middlegame Technique: I will provide you with lot of middlegame material.

For each subject, after we work on it together, you will read the relative material and you will analyse 3-4 of your own games (if not exist then a choice by you) with this certain subject (positional or tactical).

I will check your analyses and I will provide you my opinion and how it can work better.

- Understand Endgame Technique: I will provide you with lot of endgame material.

For each subject, after we work on it together, you will read the relative material and you will analyse 3-4 of your own games (if not exist then a choice by you) with this certain endgame subject.

I will check your analyses and I will provide you my opinion and how it can work better.

- Understand Tactics: You will work on special files that I will provide you, for sharpening your tactical skills.

- Understand Planning: You will work on special files that I will provide you, for sharpening your planning skills.

- General Tips: I will provide you with general tips on how you should prepare and play in tournaments.

As the new year is coming soon and I have still 2-3 open spots for Chess Students, I am calling you to check my CV and message me privately, if you interested to be part of my Training Program, which has produced over 20 GMs, as well, as a high number of other titled players (IMs, WGMs, FMs, and Masters). Internet Individual Lessons or Groups of two to ten persons maximum.

All the best
GM Efstratios Grivas

European Chess Union Elections 2026

GM Zurab Azmaiparashvili (Georgia) has been re-elected as ECU President after a highly competitive election and with ambitious projects to be delivered through 2030.



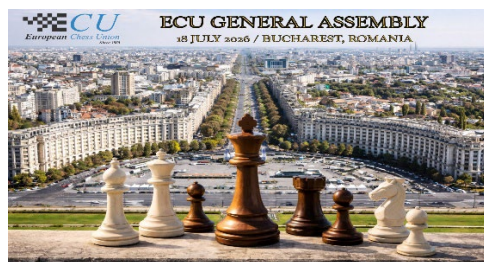
I am truly happy to have been part of promoting this campaign. Get ready - great things are coming, and even better events are ahead for European chess!

Full Voting Breakdown (53 votes):

Ticket Zurab Azmaiparashvili: 35 votes.

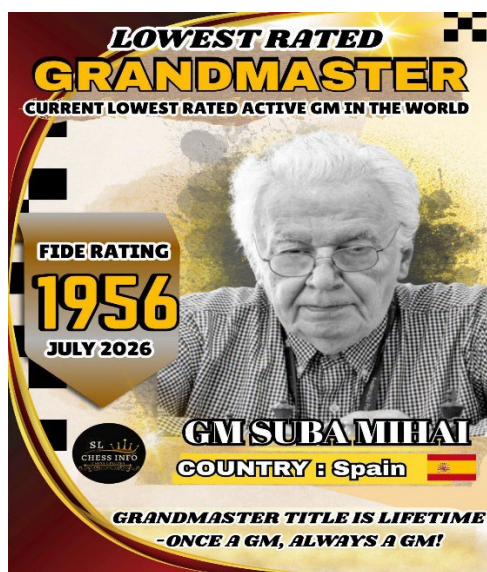
Ticket Lukasz Turlej: 11 votes.

Ticket Bachar Kouatly: 7 votes.



The Grandmaster Title GM Mihai Suba

Mihai Suba (1 June 1947 - 26 October 2025), has been the lowest rated GM in the world, for a short period of course.



He achieved the highest rating in his career on July 1, 1986, with a rating of 2580 points, he was then 20th-21st (together with Yasser Seirawan) on the FIDE world list, at the same time occupying 1st place among Romanian chess players.

He also wrote some famous and good books.

The Grandmaster (GM) title is the highest lifetime title given by the International Chess Federation (FIDE).

Players earn it by reaching a FIDE rating of 2500 and scoring three GM norms in official events. Once earned, the title stays with the player forever.

Title Rules:

Rating Goal: Must reach a FIDE rating of 2500.

Norms Needed: Must win three GM norms in tough global tournaments.

Lifetime Status: The title is permanent and never goes away.

FIDE Elections 2026

Turlov-Anand campaign pledges to move chess forward.

Fintech entrepreneur and chess sponsor Timur Turlov has announced his candidacy for President of the International Chess Federation (FIDE), standing together with five-time World Champion Vishwanathan Anand as his candidate for Deputy President.



With millions of new players globally and the rise of online platforms, chess in schools and community programmes, the game is entering one of the most exciting periods in its history.

This presents FIDE with an opportunity to transform the global chess momentum into sustainable, long-term development that benefits Member Federations and the global Chess Community.



Timur Turlov

In his roles as Founder and CEO of Freedom Holding Corp., President of the Kazakhstan Chess Federation, President of the International School Chess Federation and the Chairman of the Chess Association of Turkic-Speaking Countries - T.Turlov has led institutional modernisation, expanded chess in education, attracted long-term investment and built international partnerships.

Under the motto ‘Moving Chess Forward. Together’, the Turlov/Anand ticket is focused on five key pillars:

- Build a strong, global institution that is united, independent, transparent and respected around the world.
- Develop digital infrastructure that helps Member Federations organise and manage their work more effectively, improve communication and have greater access to services and resources.
- Strengthen FIDE’s finances, enabling it to invest more in development programmes, competitions, education and support for Member Federations.
- Empower all Member Federations by ensuring an equal voice and equal access to FIDE’s opportunities and resources, regardless of size, geographical location or capacity.
- Raise the standards for the organisation and conduct of all chess events run by FIDE, provide larger prize funds and more opportunities for players to take part in competitions and have access to educational materials and coaching.

The campaign is built around the principle that strong Member Federations are the foundation of a strong FIDE, with every proposal designed to provide greater support, better services and more opportunities for federations around the world.

‘Strong Member Federations are the foundation of a strong FIDE’, T.Turlov said. ‘Chess is growing faster than ever before. This growth requires a strong, well organised, sustainable, transparent and forward-looking organisation providing real value to Member Federations and the Chess Community. With

my experience in business, governance, education and international cooperation, I believe can help shape the next stage of FIDE's development’.



Five-time World Champion Viswanathan Anand, who is the candidate for the role of Deputy President, brings extensive experience in chess both on and off the chessboard.

‘Timur’s experience in leading a publicly listed international company, his commitment to technology and innovation, and his long-standing support for chess make him well positioned to lead FIDE through its next stage of development’, V.Anand said.

‘Through his leadership, I believe FIDE can become even more digital, financially resilient and inclusive, while ensuring every region of the world has a stronger voice in shaping the future of our game’.

Over the coming weeks, the campaign will present a comprehensive programme covering digital transformation, chess in education, financial sustainability, competition standards, development initiatives and governance.

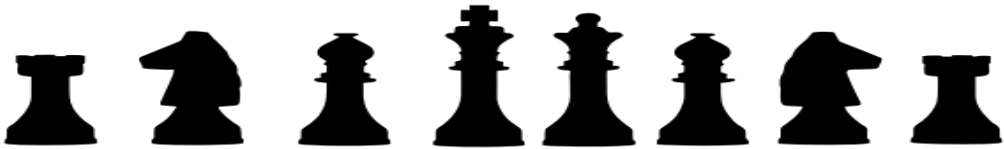
The campaign will also engage in dialogue with Member Federations to ensure their priorities and expectations help shape the future direction of FIDE.

More information is available at: www.turlovforchess.com.

Media enquiries: info@turlovforchess.com.

THREE PRESIDENTIAL TICKETS SUBMITTED

		
JAN HENRIC BUETTNER	WADIM ROSENSTEIN	TIMUR TURLOV



FIDE Elections 2026

The Vision Behind WR Chess

WR Chess is built on a shared spirit of elevating chess - using the game not only for elite competition but as a social instrument to foster education, community, and personal growth.

Under the leadership of Wadim Rosenstein, WR Chess has united a network of world-class players, coaches, and emerging talents, all driven by a common purpose: to expand the chess community, ignite passion for the game, and give the next generation the opportunity to grow through competition and training.



Chess as a Force for Social Good

Central to WR Chess's mission is the belief that chess teaches team spirit, fair play, and mutual respect.

Whether through international tournaments or youth development programs, WR Chess is committed to making chess a force for social good, driven by a unified spirit of collaboration and excellence.

Transforming Team Chess

W.Rosenstein also brought FIDE the concept of a team world championship where club players compete alongside super-grandmasters.

The result: the FIDE World Rapid and Blitz Team Championship, one of the most richly endowed team competitions in chess, drawing the world's elite to the board.

WR Chess Around the World

In 2026, WR Chess expanded its international footprint across multiple continents. Rapid and blitz competitions have run in Manila, Tokyo, Bangkok, and Hong Kong.

The women's tour has reached Africa and Europe. In Lima, the World Chess Marathon brings together players across all levels for four days of continuous play.

Miami hosts a USA vs. Uzbekistan showdown in July. The season culminates in November with the Stuttgart Grand Final - the capstone of the women's tour circuit.



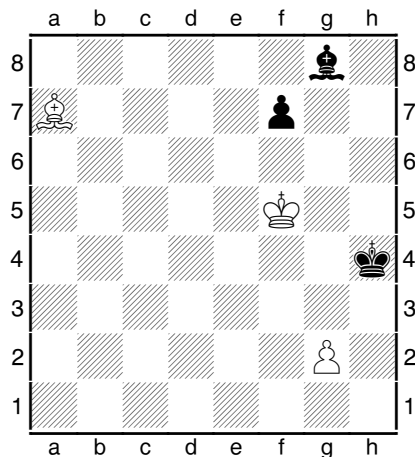


The Endgame Section Play it Rightly!

Concept

Knowing how to deal with endings is an important part of making the job rightly!

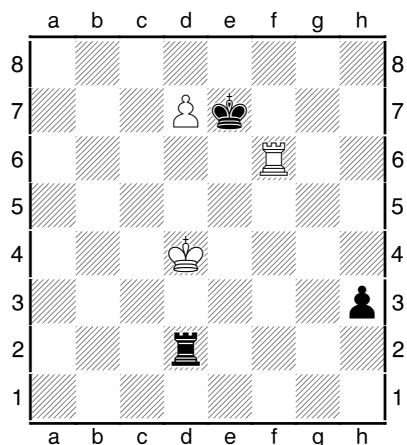
Example 1 ○



A beautiful study, based on a famous similar one of V.Smyslov. It looks like an easy draw, but there is hidden pretty idea...

1.Bf2+! Kh5 2.g4+ Kh6 3.Kf6! Kh7
3...Bh7 4.Be3 #.
4.g5 Kh8 5.Bd4 Kh7 6.Bb2 Kh8 7.g6! fxg6
8.Kxg6 #
1-0

□ Fellowes Billy
■ Hebden Mark
C45 Coventry 2026 ○



And White wrongly resigned, as he could still hold the draw: 56.Ke5! (56.Ke3? Kxf6 57.Kxd2 Ke7 -+) 56...Re2+ 57.Kd4 Kxd7 58.Rh6 h2 59.Kd3 =.

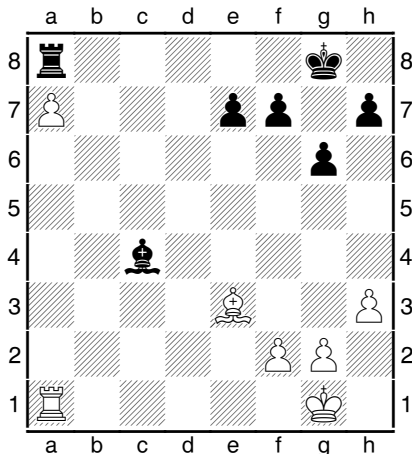
0-1

□ **Grischuk Alexander**

■ **Carlsen Magnus**

B06 Doha 2025

1.e4 g6 2.d4 d6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.Be3 a6 5.Nf3 b5 6.Bd3 Nd7 7.0-0 c5 8.dxc5 Nxc5 9.e5 Nxd3 10.Qxd3 Bf5 11.Qe2 dxe5 12.Rfd1 Qc8 13.Nd5 Qb7 14.a4 b4 15.Nb6 Rb8 16.Qc4 Nf6 17.Nxe5 0-0 18.a5 Be6 19.Qxb4 Nd5 20.Nxd5 Qxb4 21.Nxb4 Rxb4 22.Nd3 Rb5 23.c3 Bb3 24.Rd2 Rd8 25.Nb4 Rxd2 26.Bxd2 Be4 27.Be3 Be5 28.h3 Bd6 29.Nxa6 Rxb2 30.Nb4 Bxb4 31.cxb4 Rxb4 32.a6 Rb8 33.a7 Ra8 (D)

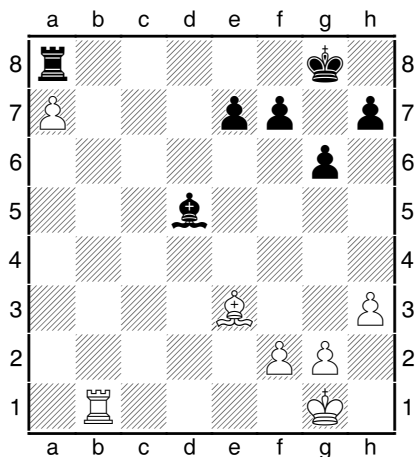


Black seems to hold his own in this opposite-coloured ending, but the passed white a-pawn is extremely strong. White must combine its power with some other pluses, following the 'Principle of the Two Weaknesses'.

34.Rb1?!

Not the most accurate, as 34.Rc1! Bd5 35.Rc5! e6 (35...Ba2 36.Rb5 Kg7 37.Bd4+ Kh6 38.Rb7 +-) 36.Bh6 Be4 37.Rc7 Bd5 38.g4 f6 39.Bg7 f5 40.g5 Bf3 41.Kh2 f4 42.Be5 Rd8 43.Rg7+ Kf8 44.Rxh7 +-, would have 'simply' cash the full point. The variations look complicated but the principle ideas are not that difficult. White had just to 'feel' the harmony...

34...Bd5 (D)



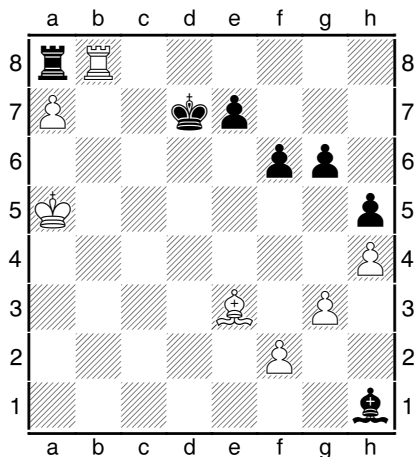
35.Rb8+?

White goes astray! He could still prevail by 35.Rb5 e6 36.Rc5 Kg7 37.Bd4+ Kh6 38.Rc7 .f5 39.Kh2 g5 40.Be5 Rd8 41.f3 Kg6 42.Rg7+ Kh6 43.Rf7 f4 44.h4 +-.

35...Kg7 36.g3?

White should have tried 36.Rb5 e6 37.Bd4+ f6 38.h4 +/-.

36...Kf6 37.h4 Ke6 38.Kf1 f6 39.Ke2 Kd7 40.Kd3 h5 41.Kc3 Bc6 42.Kb4 Bh1 43.Ka5 (D)



43...Bc6?

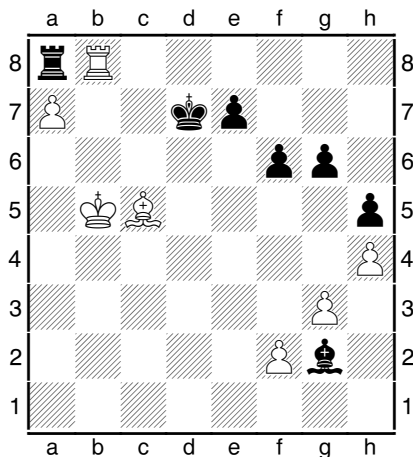
43...Kc7 44.Bb6+ Kd7 45.Ka6 Bg2 46.Bd4 +/-.

44.Kb6 Bf3 45.Bc5 Bg2?!

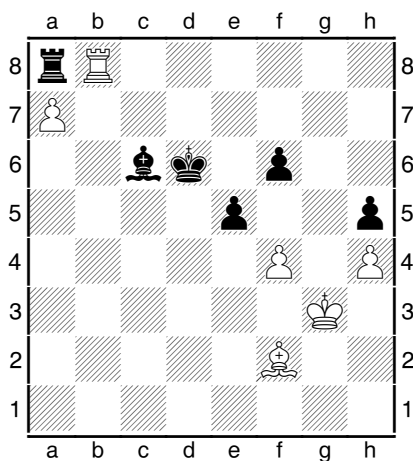
45...e5 46.Rb7+ Ke6 47.Kc7 Kf5 48.Rb8 g5 49.Kd7 Bd5 50.Kd6 Bh1 51.Rb3 Bg2 52.Ra3 Bb7 53.Kd7 Bd5 54.Bd6 +-.

46.Kb5? (D)

46.Rb7+ Ke6 47.Rxe7+ Kf5 48.Re3 +/-.



46...Kc7! 47.Bb6+ Kd7 48.Kc5 Bf3 49.Kd4 Bc6 50.Ke3 Kd6 51.f3 Bd5 52.g4 Kd7 53.Kf4 e5+ 54.Ke3 Ke6 55.Bc5 Bc6 56.Bb6 Bd5 57.Kf2 Bc6 58.Kg3 Bd5 59.Bc5 Bc6 60.Bf2 Kd6 61.Bb6 Ke6 62.Bc5 Kd5 63.Bf2 Kd6 64.gxh5 gxh5 65.f4 (D)



65...Ke6!

65...exf4+? 66.Kxf4 Ke6 67.Rb6 Kd5 68.Ra6 Kd6 69.Kf5 +/-.

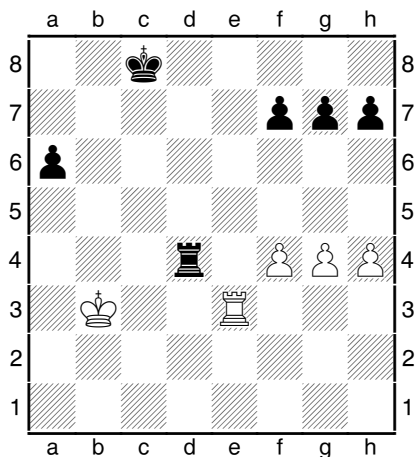
66.Bb6 Kf5 67.fxe5 fxe5 68.Bc5 Bd5 69.Bb6 Bc6 70.Bf2 Bd5 71.Bg1 Bc6 72.Bf2 Bd5

And there is nothing to play for, anymore.
½-½

□ Pranesh Munirethinam

■ Firouzja Alireza

B33 Chennai 2026 ○

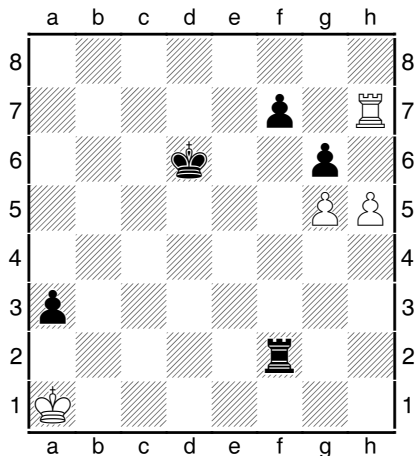


The ending should be lost for White, not only for his pawn deficit, but his king bad placement as well. In similar cases, the weaker side should take more risks, as there is nothing to 'lose'!

49.Re8+

49.Rf3 +/-, is indicated, but in the long run it wouldn't help. So, White 'gambles'...

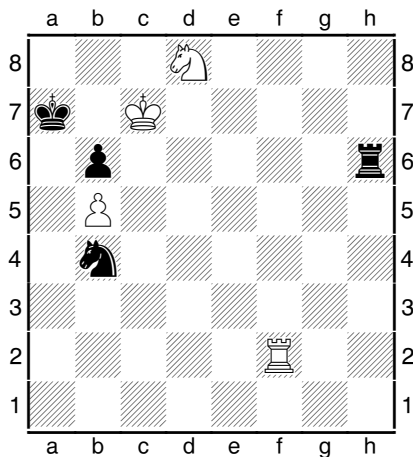
49...Kd7 50.Rg8 g6 51.Rg7 Rxf4 52.Rxh7 Ke6 53.g5 a5 54.Ka3 a4 55.Kb2 Rf3 56.Ka2 Rf2+ 57.Ka3 Rf4 58.Kb2! Ke5 59.Ka3 Kd6 60.Kb2 Rf3 61.Ka2 a3 62.Ka1 Rf2 63.h5 (D)



63...gxh5 64.Rxh5 Rg2 65.Rh7 Ke7 66.Rh5 Kf8 67.Rh3 Rxd5 68.Rxa3 Rb5 69.Ra6 Kg7 70.Ka2 f5 71.Ka3 f4 72.Ka4 Rf5 73.Kb3 f3 74.Ra1 f2 75.Rf1 Kg6 76.Kc3 Kg5 77.Kd3 Kg4 78.Ke2 Kg3 79.Ra1 Kg2

0-1

□ So Wesley
 ■ Deac Bogdan-Daniel
 D36 Bucharest 2026 ○

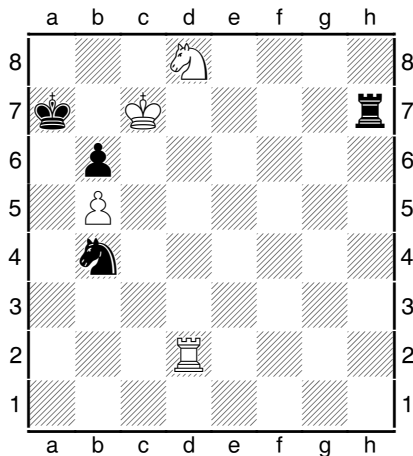


A light initiative weighs heavily. This is the main guideline in the endgame of rook and knight against rook and knight:

75.Rd2!

The coming black knight on d5 must be stopped this way. 75.Nc6+? Nxc6 76.bxc6 Rh7+ 77.Kd6 Rh6+ 78.Kd7 Rh7+ 79.Ke6 Kb8 =, or 75.Rf7? Nd5+ 76.Kc8+ Ka8 77.Nc6 Rh8+ 78.Kd7 Rh7 79.Rxh7 Nf6+ =, or 75.Rf5? Rh7+ 76.Kc8 Rh4 77.Rf7+ Ka8 78.Nc6 Nxc6 79.bxc6 Rh8+ 80.Kc7 Ka7 =.

75...Rh7+ (D)



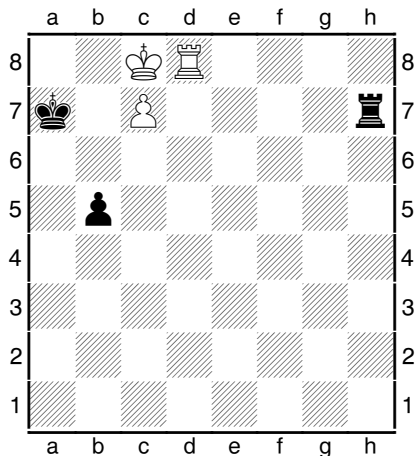
76.Kc8 Rh5

76...Rh8 77.Rd4 Nc6 78.Rd7+ Ka8 79.bxc6 +-,

77.Rd7+ Ka8 78.Ne6 Rh8+

78...Na6, is met by 79.bxa6 Rh6 80.Nd8 b5 81.Rc7 Rxa6 82.Nc6 b4 83.Kd7 b3 84.Rc8+ Kb7 85.Rb8 #.

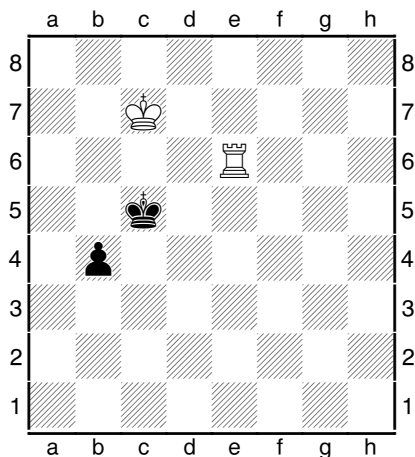
79.Nd8 Rh5 80.Nc6 Nxc6 81.bxc6 b5 82.c7 Ka7 83.Rd8 Rh7 (D)



84.Re8?

Now Black can escape. 84.Rd6?, is also wrong due to 84...b4 85.Kd8 Rh8+ 86.Kd7 Kb7 =. But 84.Rd5, wins: 84...Kb6 (84...Rh8+ 85.Kd7 Kb6 86.c8Q Rxc8 87.Kxc8 Ka5 [87...Kc6 88.Rh5 +-] 88.Kb7 Ka4 89.Kb6 b4 90.Kc5 b3 91.Kc4 b2 92.Rb5 Ka3 93.Kc3 +-) 85.Rd6+ Kc5 86.Rd7 Rh8+ 87.Rd8 Rh7 88.Kb8 Rxc7 89.Kxc7 b4 90.Rb8 Kc4 91.Kb6 b3 92.Ka5 Kc3 93.Ka4 b2 94.Ka3 +-,

84...Kb6! 85.Re6+ Kc5 86.Kd8 Rxc7! 87.Kxc7 b4 (D)



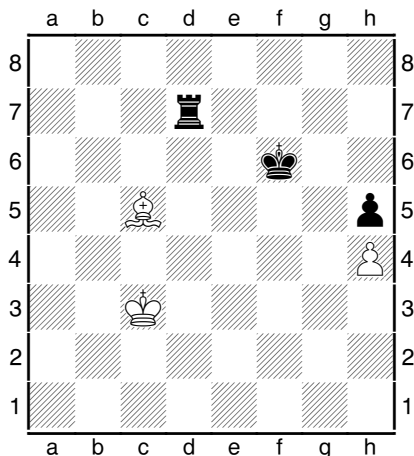
Bodycheck!

88.Kb7 b3 89.Ka6 Kb4 90.Re2 Kc3
91.Re3+ Kc2 92.Rxb3 Kxb3
½-½

□ Praggananandhaa Rameshbabu

■ Firouzja Alireza

B23 Zagreb 2026 ●

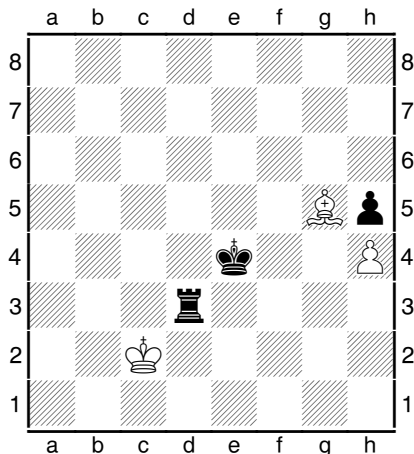


A notorious ending, where Black can win only with great accuracy!

53...Kf5?

Throwing the win away, which could be achieved by 53...Rc7! 54.Kd4 Kf5 -+.

54.Be3 Ke4 55.Bg5 Rd5 56.Kc2 Ke5
57.Kc3 Ke6 58.Be3 Kf6 59.Bg5+ Kg6
60.Be3 Kf5 61.Bg5 Ke4 62.Kc2! Rd3 (D)



63.Bf6?

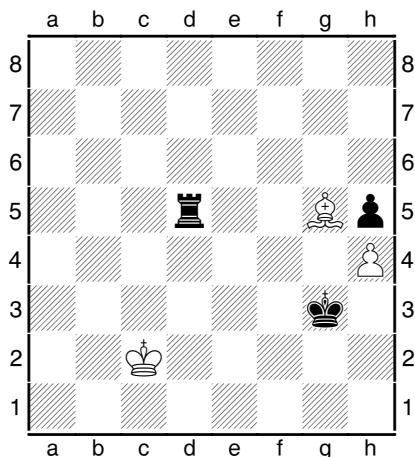
Losing! White had to play something like 63.Bc1 =.

63...Ke3 64.Be7 Kd4?

Black, in his turn, missed the decisive 64...Ke2 65.Bg5 Rf3 -+.

65.Bf6+ Kc4 66.Bg5 Rd4 67.Bf6 Rd5
68.Bg5 Kc5 69.Kc3 Kd6 70.Bf4+ Ke6
71.Be3! Kf5 72.Bg5 Kg4 73.Kc2 Kf3
74.Kc3 Kg3 75.Kc2? (D)

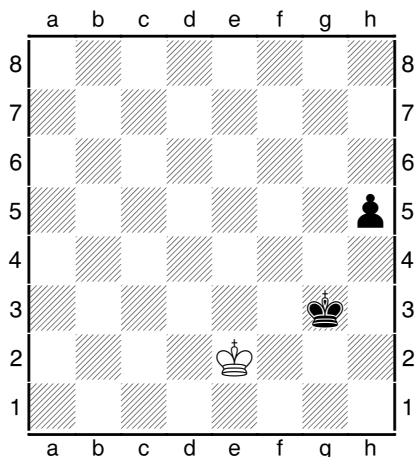
75.Kc4! Rd6 76.Kc3 =, would preserve the balance.



75...Rd4 76.Kc3 Rxd4!

This is the way to win the ending' returning the exchange back at the right moment!

77.Bxd4+ Kxd4 78.Kd2 Kg3 79.Ke2 (D)



79...Kg2

0-1



The Tactics Corner

Interesting Cases

Concept

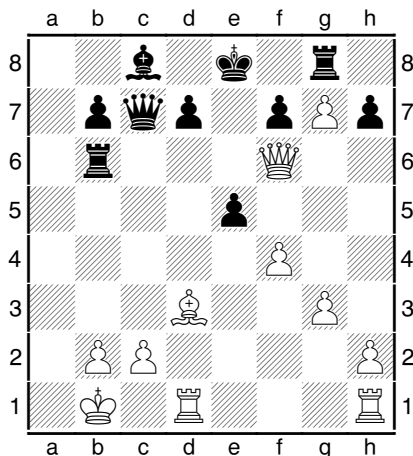
Training in tactical concepts demands pre-knowledge and 'fantasy' mixed!

□ Fischer Robert James

■ Tal Mihail

B47 Bled 1961

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 e6
5.Nc3 Qc7 6.g3 Nf6 7.Ndb5 Qb8 8.Bf4 Ne5
9.Be2 Bc5 10.Bxe5 Qxe5 11.f4 Qb8 12.e5 a6
13.exf6 axb5 14.fgx7 Rg8 15.Ne4 Be7
16.Qd4 Ra4 17.Nf6+ Bxf6 18.Qxf6 Qc7
19.0-0-0 Rxa2 20.Kb1 Ra6 21.Bxb5 Rb6
22.Bd3 e5 (D)



The black king has remained in the centre, and that's not good news!

23.fxe5! Rxf6 24.exf6 Qc5 25.Bxh7 Qg5
26.Bxg8 Qxf6 27.Rhf1 Qxg7 28.Bxf7+ Kd8
29.Be6 Qh6 30.Bxd7 Bxd7 31.Rf7 Qxh2
32.Rdxd7+ Ke8 33.Rde7+ Kd8 34.Rd7+
Kc8 35.Rc7+ Kd8 36.Rfd7+ Ke8 37.Rd1 b5
38.Rb7 Qh5 39.g4 Qh3 40.g5 Qf3 41.Re1+
Kf8 42.Rxb5 Kg7 43.Rb6 Qg3 44.Rd1 Qc7
45.Rdd6 Qc8 46.b3 Kh7 47.Ra6
1-0

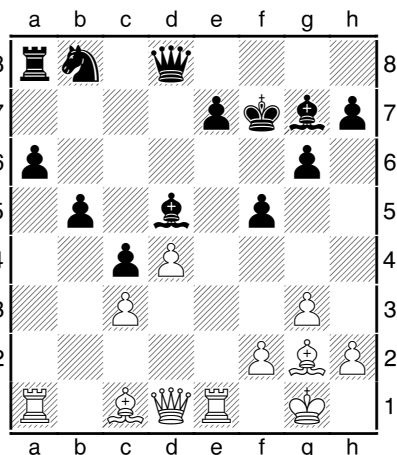
□ Lesiege Alexandre

■ Kozul Zdenko

D78 Toronto 1990

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nf3 Bg7 4.g3 d5 5.Bg2

dx4 6.0-0 c6 7.Nc3 0-0 8.e4 b5 9.Re1 a6
10.e5 Nd5 11.a4 Nxc3 12.bxc3 Be6 13.axb5
cxb5 14.Ng5 Bd5 15.e6 f5 16.Nf7 Rxf7
17.exf7+ Kxf7 (D)



Something looks wrong with Black's position and White is in hurry to take advantage of it!

18.Rxe7+! Kxe7 19.Bg5+ Bf6 20.Qe2+ Kf8
21.Bh6+ Bg7 22.Qe5 Bxh6 23.Bxd5 Bd2
24.Bxa8 Bxc3 25.Rd1 Nd7 26.Qh8+ Ke7
27.Qxh7+ Kd6 28.Qxg6+ Qf6 29.Qg8 Qe6
30.Qg5 Kc7 31.Qf4+ Kb6 32.Qf3 Bb2
33.Bd5 Qd6 34.Re1 Qb4 35.Re6+ Ka5
36.Qf4 Nb6 37.Bf3 Qc3 38.d5 Qc1+
39.Qxc1 Bxc1 40.d6 b4 41.Re5+ Ka4 42.d7
Nxd7 43.Bc6+ Kb3 44.Bxd7 c3 45.Bxf5
Bd2 46.Ra5 c2 47.Bxc2+ Kxc2 48.Rxa6 b3
49.Rb6 Ba5 50.Rb5 b2 51.f4 Kc3 52.Rxb2
Kxb2 53.Kf2 Kc3 54.Ke3 Kc4 55.Ke4 Kc5
56.Ke5 Kc6 57.Ke6 Kc7 58.f5 Kd8 59.Kf7
Bc7 60.g4 Bf4 61.h4
1-0

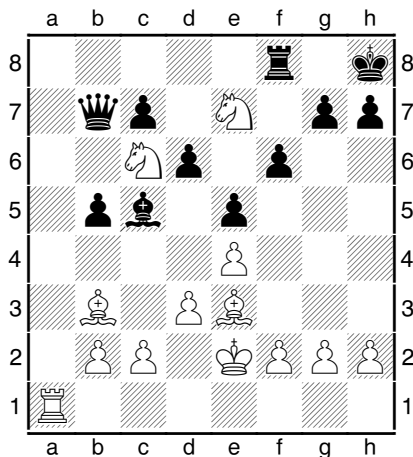
□ Levenfish Grigory

■ Flamberg Alexander Dawidowicz

C77 Vilnius 1912

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.Qe2
b5 6.Bb3 Bc5 7.a4 Rb8 8.axb5 axb5 9.Nc3
0-0 10.d3 d6 11.Bg5 Bg4 12.Nd5 Nd4
13.Nxd4 Bxe2 14.Bxf6 Ra8 15.Kxe2 Qb8

16.Nc6 Qb7 17.Nde7+ Kh8 18.Bg5 Rxa1
19.Rxa1 f6 20.Be3 (D)



White's material will tell anyway, but some good tactics can make the job easier...

20...Bxe3

Or 20...Ra8 21.Bd5 Rxa1 22.Nd8 Qa7 23.Nf7 #.

21.fxe3 g6 22.Bd5 Qb6 23.b4 f5 24.g3 f4
25.gxf4 exf4 26.d4 fxe3 27.Kxe3 Kg7
28.Be6 Re8 29.Bd7 Rxe7 30.Nxe7 c5
31.Nc6 cxd4+ 32.Nxd4 Kh6 33.Bxb5 Qd8
34.Be2 d5 35.b5 Qe7 36.Bf3 Qc5 37.Rd1
dxe4 38.Bxe4 Kg5 39.Rb1 Qa3+ 40.Kd2
Qd6 41.Kd3 Qb6 42.c4 Kg4 43.Nc6 Kf4
44.Rf1+ Kg4 45.Rf3 Qc5 46.h3+ Kh4
47.Bd5 g5 48.Ne5 Qg1 49.Nd7 Qa7 50.Rf7
h5 51.b6 Qa3+ 52.Ke4 Qxh3 53.b7 Qg2+
54.Ke5 Qg3+ 55.Kf6

And Black decided to throw the towel in, as there are no saving resources...

1-0

The Greek player Dimitris Papantoniou was born in Nafplio in 1911. He studied Law and acted as a lawyer between 1935 and 1940.

He later became a prosecutor, worked in several towns including Thessaloniki (he got involved in the case of the murder of MP Lambrakis), before returning to Athens in 1965.

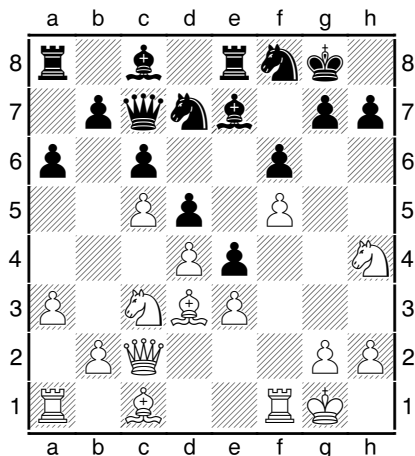
He won the 1st (unofficial) Greek Championship in 1934 and was 2nd in 1947 and 1948. D. Papantoniou died suddenly in 1968, after a bite from a wasp.

□ Papantoniou Dimitris

■ Koutilin M.

D37 Athens 1935

1.d4 d5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.c4 e6 4.Nc3 Nbd7 5.e3
Be7 6.a3 0-0 7.Qc2 a6 8.Bd3 Re8 9.0-0 c6
10.Ne5 Nf8 11.c5 N6d7 12.f4 f6 13.Nf3 Qc7
14.f5 e5 15.Nh4 e4 (D)



Now, some nice tactical play begins!

16.Nxe4! dxe4 17.Bc4+ Kh8 18.Qxe4?

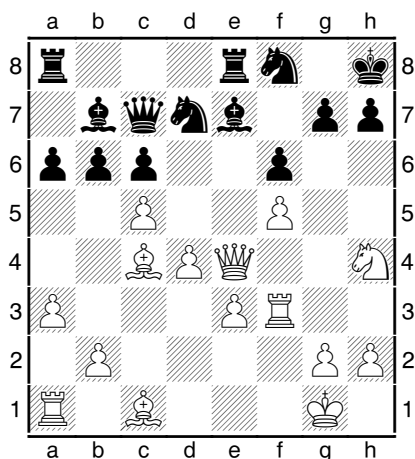
18.Ba2! Nb8 19.Qc4 Nfd7 20.Qf7 Qd8
21.Ng6+! hxg6 22.Rf4 g5 23.Qh5 #.

18...b6?

18...Nxc5 19.dxc5 Qe5 20.Qxe5 fxe5 21.g3 +/-.

19.Rf3 Bb7? (D)

19...Nxc5 20.dxc5 b5 21.Ba2 +/-.



20.Qe6!

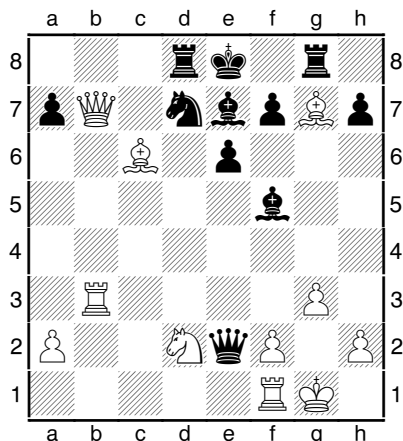
A great tactical shot and Black resigned, as the end is near: 20...Nxe6 (20...Qxh2+

21.Kxh2 Bd6+ 22.Qxd6 +-) 21.Ng6+ hxg6
22.Rh3+ Kg8 23.Bxe6+ Kf8 24.Rh8 #.
1-0

□ Ponomarev Sergei Nikolaevich

■ Demitov A.

Sverdlovsk 1976 ○



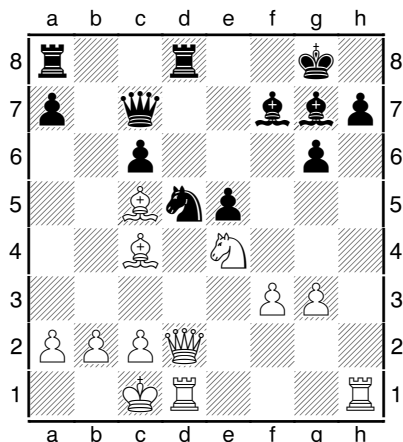
1.Qxd7+! Rxd7 2.Rb8+ Bd8 3.Bf6 Kf8
4.Bxd7
1-0

□ Ohanyan Emin

■ Gukesh Dommaraju

B76 Internet 2023

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6
5.Nc3 g6 6.Be3 Bg7 7.f3 0-0 8.Qd2 Nc6 9.0-0
d5 10.exd5 Nxd5 11.Nxc6 bxc6 12.Bd4
e5 13.Bc5 Be6 14.Ne4 Qc7 15.h4 Rfd8
16.h5 Nf4 17.Bd6 Qb6 18.hxg6 fxg6 19.g3
Nd5 20.Bc4 Bf7 21.Bc5 Qc7 (D)



22.Rxh7! Kxh7 23.Rh1+ Kg8 24.Qh2 Ne7
25.Qh7+?

25.Nf6+! Kf8 (25...Bxf6 26.Qh7+ Kf8
27.Qxf7 #) 26.Qh8+! Bxh8 27.Rxh8+ Kg7
28.Rh7+ Kxf6 (28...Kf8 29.Rxf7 #) 29.Rxf7+
Kg5 30.Be3+ Kh5 31.Rh7 #.

25...Kf8 26.Bxf7 Kxf7 27.Ng5+ Kf6
28.Ne4+ Kf7 29.Ng5+ Kf6 30.Ne4+ Ke6?
30...Kf7 =.

31.Qxg7 Rf8 32.Bxe7 Qxe7 33.Qxg6+ Kd7
34.Rd1+?

Although White missed the lethal 34.Rh7 +-,
he won on the 116th move.

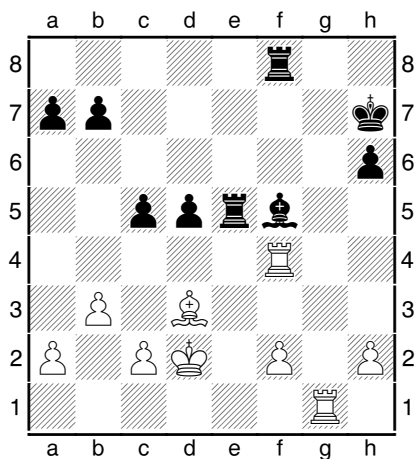
1-0

□ Myagmarsuren Lhamsuren

■ Bisguier Arthur Bernard

C47 Tallinn 1971

1.e4 Nc6 2.Nc3 e5 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.d4 Bb4
5.Nxe5 Qe7 6.Qd3 Nxe5 7.dxe5 Qxe5 8.Bd2
0-0 9.0-0 Bxc3 10.Bxc3 Qf4+ 11.Rd2
Qxe4 12.Bxf6 Qxd3 13.Rxd3 gxf6 14.Rf3
d6 15.Rxf6 Bd7 16.Bd3 Rae8 17.Rh6 f5
18.Kd2 Kg7 19.Rh4 Re5 20.g4 h6 21.gxf5
Bxf5 22.Rg1+ Kh7 23.Rf4 c5 24.b3 d5 (D)



25.Re1! Rxe1 26.Rxf5!

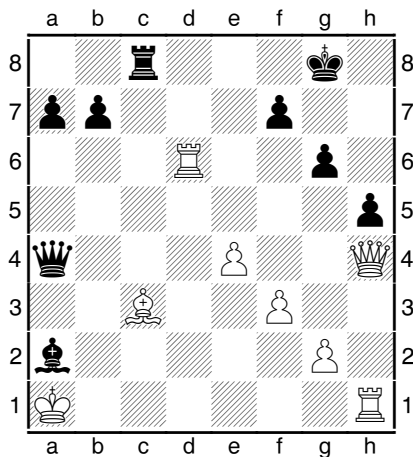
1-0



□ Makov

■ Vashenin

Novosibirsk 1976 ○



1.Qd8+! Kh7

1...Rxd8 2.Rxd8+ Kh7 3.Rh8 #.

2.Rxh5+ gxh5 3.Rh6+ Kxh6 4.Qf6+ Kh7

5.Qg7 #

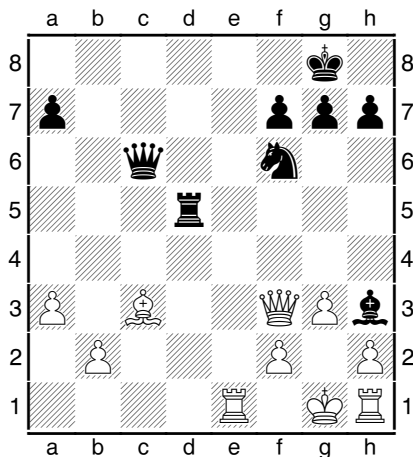
1-0

□ Wexler Bernardo

■ Bazan Osvaldo

A23 Mar del Plata 1960 ○

1.c4 Nf6 2.g3 e5 3.Bg2 c6 4.Nc3 d5 5.cxd5
cxd5 6.Qb3 e4 7.d3 exd3 8.Nxd5 Nxd5
9.Bxd5 Bb4+ 10.Kf1 dxe2+ 11.Nxe2 0-0
12.Be3 Bh3+ 13.Kg1 Qe7 14.a3 Bd6
15.Bxb7 Nd7 16.Bxa8 Rxa8 17.Qd5 Rd8
18.Qh5 Bc5 19.Nd4 Bxd4 20.Bxd4 Qe6
21.Bc3 Nf6 22.Qf3 Rd5 23.Re1 Qc6 (D)



24.Bxf6?

24.g4! Bxg4 25.Qf4 h6 26.h4 oo.

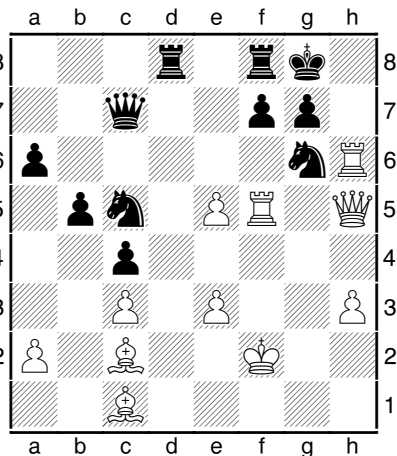
24...gxf6 25.g4 Rd1!

0-1

□ Tsudinowsky

■ Muravjov

Soviet Union 1990 ○



1.Rh8+! Nxh8 2.Qh7+! Kxh7 3.Rh5+ Kg8

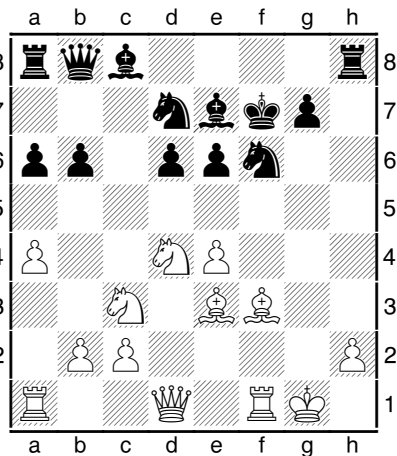
4.Bh7 #

1-0

□ Pflughaupt

■ Galander

Muenster 1954 ○



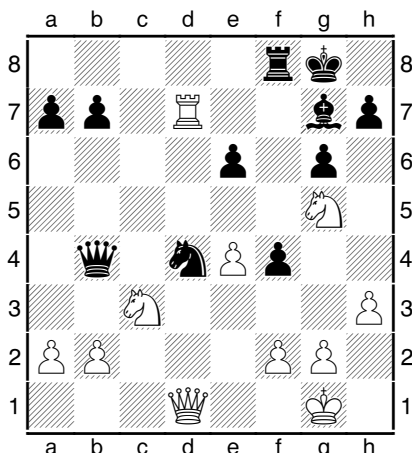
1.Nxe6 Kxe6 2.Qd5+! Nxd5 3.Bg4+ Ke5

4.Rf5+ Ke6 5.exd5 #

1-0

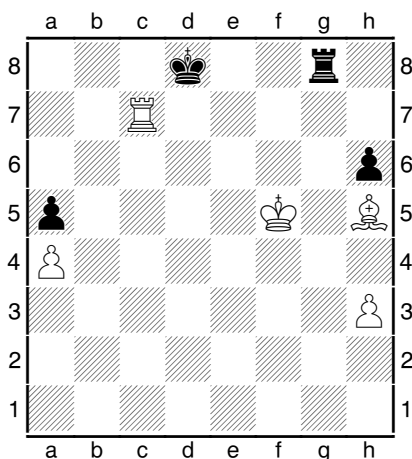
□ Luther Thomas
 ■ Gauglitz Gernot
 B07 Zittau 1989

1.e4 c5 2.c3 d6 3.d4 Nf6 4.Bd3 cxd4 5.cxd4
 g6 6.Nf3 Bg7 7.Nc3 0-0 8.h3 Nc6 9.0-0 e5
 10.dxe5 dxe5 11.Be3 Re8 12.Bc4 Be6
 13.Bxe6 fxe6 14.Qb3 Qe7 15.Rfd1 Nh5
 16.Rd2 Rad8 17.Rad1 Rxd2 18.Rxd2 Nf4
 19.Qd1 Rf8 20.Rd7 Qb4 21.Ng5 Nd4
 22.Bxf4 exf4 (D)



23.Rxg7+! Kxg7 24.Qxd4+ Qxd4 25.Nxe6+
 Kf6 26.Nxd4 Rd8 27.Nf3 Kg7 28.Kf1 Rd6
 29.Ke2 Rb6 30.b3 Rd6 31.Nd5 Rc6 32.Nd4
 Ra6 33.a4 g5 34.Kd3 Rg6 35.e5 g4 36.Nxf4
 1-0

Example 2 ○



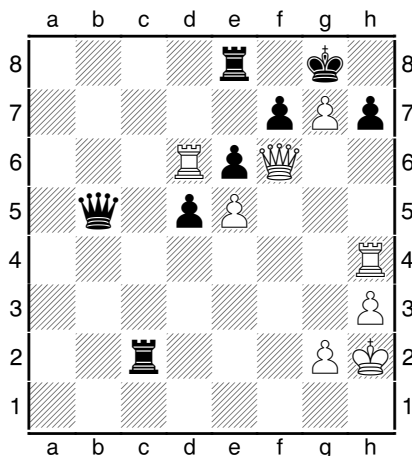
It looks like Black is OK, as he has created a
 double threat on the c7-rook and the h5-

bishop (...Rg5+).

1.Rc4! Rg5+ 2.Ke6 Rxh5 3.h4 Ke8 4.Rc8 #
 1-0

□ Wasiluk Mateusz
 ■ Portelli Matthew
 C11 Katowice 2026

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.e5 Nfd7 5.f4 c5
 6.Nf3 Nc6 7.Be3 cxd4 8.Nxd4 Qb6 9.Qd2
 Qxb2 10.Rb1 Qa3 11.Bb5 Nxd4 12.Bxd4 a6
 13.Bxd7+ Bxd7 14.Rb3 Qe7 15.Rxb7 Qd8
 16.0-0 Qc8 17.Rfb1 Bc5 18.f5 Bb5 19.Nxb5
 axb5 20.R7xb5 Bxd4+ 21.Qxd4 0-0 22.Rc5
 Qa6 23.f6 Qxa2 24.Rf1 Ra4 25.Qe3 Qb2
 26.fxg7 Rfa8 27.h3 Qb7 28.Qf2 Re4 29.Qf6
 Rea4 30.Kh2 R4a7 31.Rc3 Qb2 32.Rc6 Re8
 33.Rf3 Qb8 34.Rf4 Rc7 35.Rd6 Qb5
 36.Rh4 Rxc2 (D)



37.Rd7! Rf2

37...Rxg2+ 38.Kxg2 Qe2+ 39.Qf2 +-, or
 37...Qxd7 38.Qh6 +-,

38.Qxf2 Qxd7 39.Qc2! f5

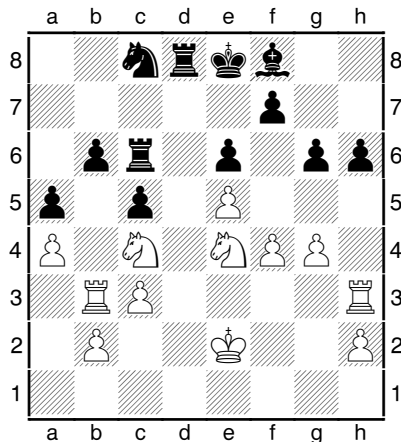
39...Kxg7 40.Qxh7+ Kf8 41.Qh8+ Ke7
 42.Qf6+ Kf8 43.Rh8 #.

40.exf6 Qd6+ 41.g3 Kf7 42.Qxh7 Rg8
 43.Qxg8+! Kxg8 44.Rh8+ Kf7 45.g8Q+
 1-0

□ Fischer Robert James
 ■ Durao Joaquim Manuel
 A04 Havana 1966

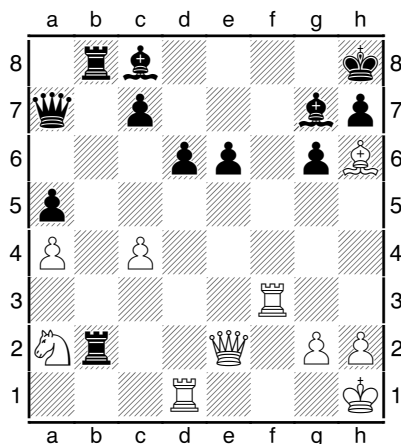
1.e4 e6 2.d3 c5 3.Nf3 Nc6 4.g3 g6 5.Bg2 Bg7
 6.0-0 Nge7 7.c3 0-0 8.d4 d6 9.dxc5 dxc5
 10.Qe2 b6 11.e5 a5 12.Re1 Ba6 13.Qe4 Ra7
 14.Nbd2 Bd3 15.Qh4 Nd5 16.Qxd8 Rxd8

17.a4 Rad7 18.Bf1 Bxf1 19.Kxf1 Nde7
20.Nc4 Nc8 21.Bg5 N6e7 22.Nfd2 h6
23.Bxe7 Rxe7 24.Ra3 Rc7 25.Rb3 Rc6
26.Ne4 Bf8 27.Ke2 Be7 28.f4 Kf8 29.g4 Ke8
30.Rf1 Rd5 31.Rf3 Rd8 32.Rh3 Bf8 (D)



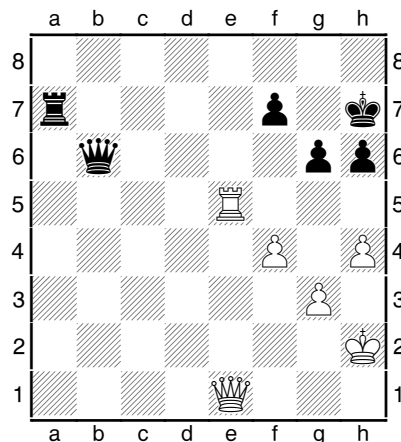
33.Nxa5! Rc7
33...bxa5 34.Nf6+ Ke7 35.Rb7+ +-.
34.Nc4 Ra7 35.Nxb6 Nxb6 36.Rxb6 Rda8
37.Nf6+ Kd8 38.Rc6 Rc7 39.Rd3+ Kc8 40.
Rxc7+ Kxc7 41.Rd7+ Kc6 42.Rxf7 c4 43.
Nd7 Bc5 44.Nxc5 Kxc5 45.Rc7+ Kd5 46.b4!
46...Rxa4 (46...cxb3 47.Kd3 +-) 47.Rc5+
Ke4 48.Rxc4+ Kd5 49.Kd3 +-.
1-0

Example 3 ○



1.Qe5! dxe5
1...Bxe5 2.Rf8 #.
2.Rd8+ Bf8 3.Rxf8 #
1-0

Example 4 ●



1...Ra2+ 2.Re2
2.Kh3 Qb2 3.Qg1 h5 -+.
2...Qe3!

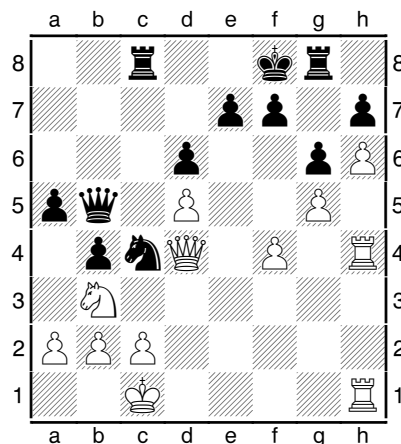
0-1

□ Poetsch Leonore

■ Koenze Heike

B94 Willingen 2019

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6
5.Nc3 a6 6.Bg5 Nbd7 7.Bc4 Qc7 8.Bb3 g6
9.Qd2 Bg7 10.0-0 b5 11.f3 Bb7 12.Bh6 0-
0 13.h4 b4 14.Nd5 Nxd5 15.Bxd5 Bxd5
16.exd5 Rfc8 17.Bxg7 Kxg7 18.h5 Rh8
19.h6+ Kf8 20.g4 Ne5 21.g5 Qa5 22.Nb3
Qb5 23.f4 Nc4 24.Qd4 Rg8 25.Rh4 Rc8
26.Rdh1 a5 (D)



27.Qg7+! Rxg7 28.hxg7+ Ke8
28...Kxg7 29.Rxh7+ Kg8 30.Rh8+ Kg7
31.R1h7 #.
29.g8Q+ Kd7 30.Qxf7 Nxb2 31.Qe6+ 1-0

The Initiative Corner

King in the Centre

Concept

Getting the initiative and converting it into material gains, is not an easy task. Everything is slowly built on the way, by mainly:

- Knowing your openings.
- Understand middlegame concepts.
- Understand pawn structures.
- Mobilise your pieces to the outmost.
- Calculate precisely.
- Deliver the final blow.

Yes, all these looks like a lot, but a strategical game like chess cannot take a different way!

There are plenty of games in the chess literature, so plenty of material to examine and learn.

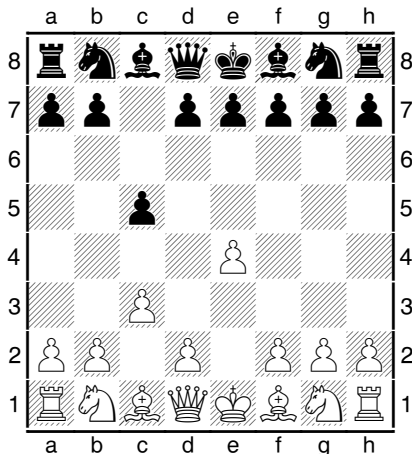
Let's see a nice and typical example:

□ Vaibhav Suri

■ Iniyan Panneerseluam

B22 Melaka 2024

1.e4 c5 2.c3 (D)

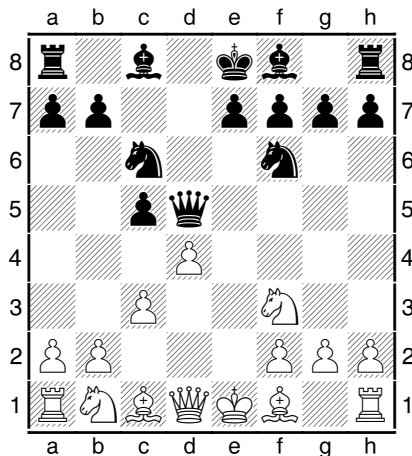


The famous 'Alapin-Sveshnikov Variation' in the 'Sicilian Defence'. A practical way to solve the opening preparation, without being lost in countless labyrinths.

2...d5

The other main line is 2...Nf6.

3.exd5 Qxd5 4.d4 Nc6 5.Nf3 Nf6 (D)



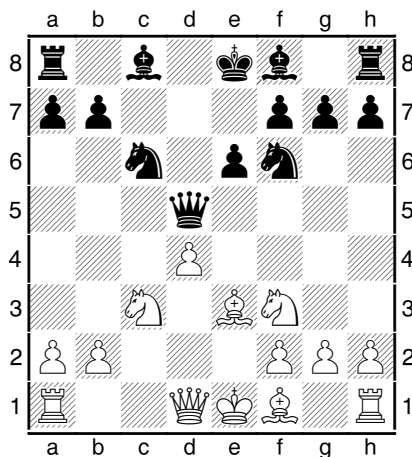
6.Be3

6.dxc5 Qxd1 + 7.Kxd1 Bf5 8.Be3 Nd5 9.Kc1! e5 10.b4 += Hovhannisyan,R-Zwirs,N Hoogeveen 2022, could have been chosen.

6...cxd4

6...Bg4 7.Be2 e6 8.dxc5 Qxd1 + 9.Bxd1 Nd5 10.Ba4 Nxe3 11.fxe3 Bxf3 12.gxf3 Bxc5 13.Bxc6+ bxc6 14.Ke2 0-0-0 15.Nd2 Kanyamarala,T-Bazakutsa,S London 2025, with a tiny plus, is another interesting line to follow.

7.cxd4 e6 8.Nc3 (D)

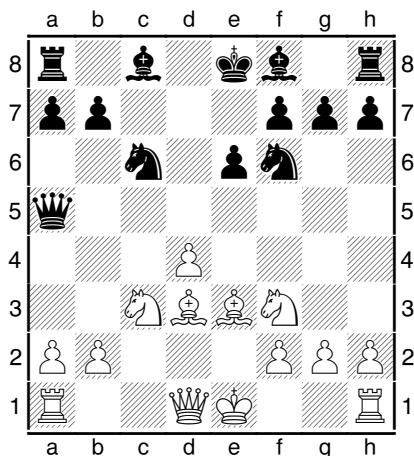


8...Qa5

8...Qd6, is the most played option, when we get a typical isolated pawn middlegame: 9.a3 Be7 10.Bd3 0-0 11.0-0 b6 12.Qe2 Bb7 13.Rad1 += Nisipeanu,L-Chuchelov,V Germany 2003.

9.Bd3?! (D)

White seems like he hasn't done his homework properly! The simple prophylactic move 9.a3!, was most accurate, which is preparing the bishop development to c4 or d3 and ensuring that Black's queen doesn't feel comfortable on the 5th rank: 9...Bd6 (9...Be7 10.Bd3 0-0 11.0-0 += Bortnyk,O-Aveskulov,V Internet 2024) 10.Bd3 0-0 11.0-0 += Manca,F-Atabayev,M Beijing 2008, followed by Re1 and h3. The position seems to be a typical isolated pawn, objectively close to equal but playable.



Even in such an early phase, accuracy is quite important and Black shouldn't replay by the automatic pilot, but he should know what to do!

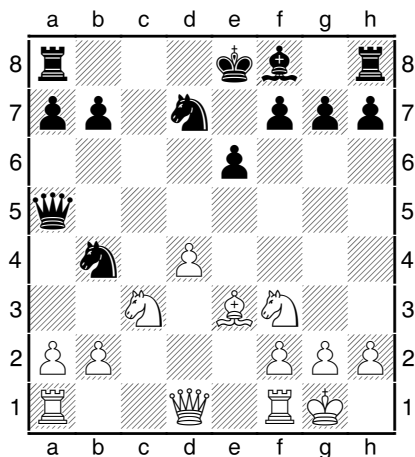
9...Nb4!

Black thought for a while before making this move. He typically wins an important tempo (to regroup the knight to d5) with this move, if White doesn't go for a concrete response here.

10.Bb5+

Maybe a better try is 10.Bc4 Be7 (10...Bd6! 11.0-0 0-0 12.Re1 Nbd5 oo, seems like Black gets a typical and solid version of isolated pawn) 11.0-0 0-0 12.Ne5! += Kolcak,M-Mokos,J Slovakia 1996.

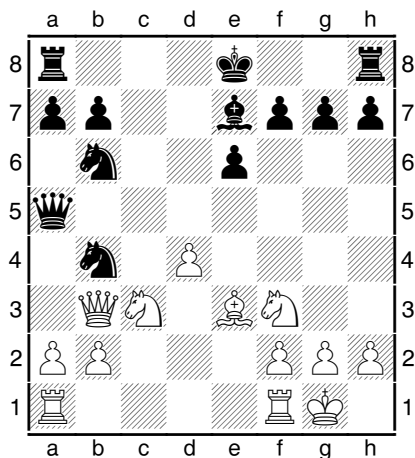
10...Bd7 11.Bxd7+ Nxd7 12.0-0 (D)



This should be the best continuation, as White keeps some short term initiative due to the Qb3 threat while being slightly ahead in development.

12...Nd5

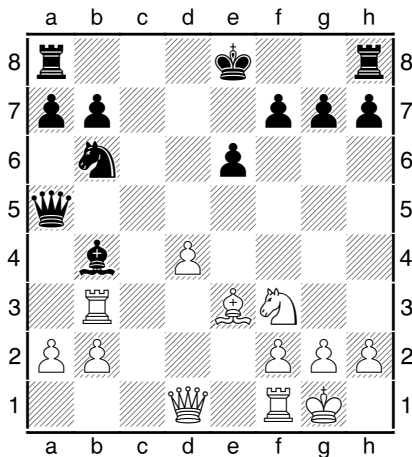
12...Nb6? 13.Ne5 +/-, is bad, as White develops his queen on f3, but Black should have opted for 12...Be7!, is best, when Black could have ignored all threats with Qb3 and simply gone ahead with usual development: 13.Qb3 (13.a3 Nd5 14.b4 Nxc3 15.bxa5 Nxd1 16.Rfxd1 Bd6 =, looks completely fine for Black) 13...Nb6 (D)



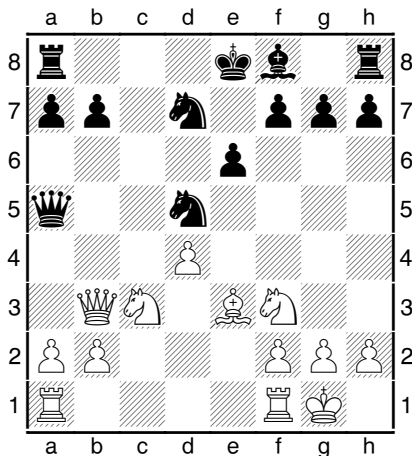
14.Bd2 (14.a3 N4d5 15.Bd2 0-0 =, ignoring White's threats, as the later has no useful discovered attack on a5 queen and Black consolidates next move) 14...Qa6 15.Ne4 oo Pribyl,J-Vokoun,J Marianske Lazne 2006.

13.Qb3 (D)

13.Rc1, was the other alternative, which should be considered. Black could go on with 13...N7f6! (13...Nxc3? 14.Rxc3 Bb4 15.Rb3 Nb6 (D)



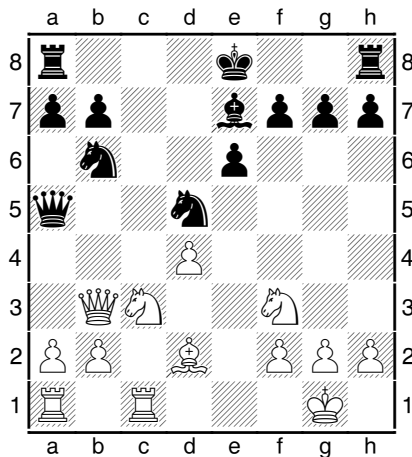
16.Ne5 +/-, when Black's kingside will fall apart quickly: 16...0-0 17.Bh6! +/- ; 13...Be7 14.Nxd5 Qxd5 15.Ne5! and Black's position feels a little uncomfortable) 14.Qb3 Qb4! (the point) 15.Qc2 Bd6 16.Bd2 Nxc3 17.bxc3 Qc4 oo. Nothing is gained by 13.Bd2 N7f6 (13...Be7 14.Qb3 N7b6 oo) 14.Qb3 Qa6 15.Rfe1 Be7 16.Bg5 oo Spiesberger,G-Laco,G Trieste 2011.



13...Nxe3?

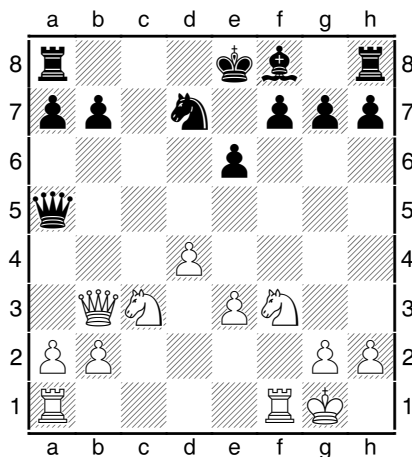
Wrong direction. This trade opens the f-file for the white f1 rook, builds White's centre and gives many extra tempos. Black misread the position and underestimated White's initiative. He could opt for 13...N7b6! 14.Bd2

(14.Rac1 Qb4! 15.Qc2 Be7 =) 14...Be7, when White has no relevant discovered attack and Black should simply go ahead with development: 15.Rfc1 (D)



15...Qa6! (15...0-0?! 16.Nxd5 Qxd5 17.Rc7 +=) 16.Ne4 Nd7! (16...0-0?! 17.Nc5 Bxc5 18.dxc5 Nd7 19.a4 +=) 17.Nc3 N7b6 = and Black is finally ready to castle.

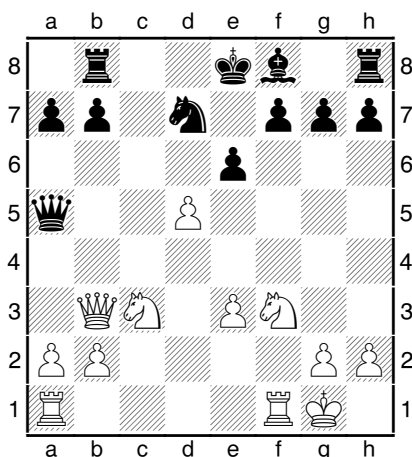
14.fxe3 (D)



14...Rb8?

A second slip in a row. Black had to opt for 14...Bb4, prioritise development as now there is a real risk of his king getting stuck in the centre: 15.Ng5 0-0 (15...Qxg5?! 16.Qxb4 +/-), giving material but consolidating the position: 16.Nxe6 fxe6 17.Qxe6+ Kh8 18.Qxd7 Bxc3 19.bxc3 Qxc3 20.Rfe1 +/=, when Black still has much to play for, here.

15.d5! (D)



A typical break in the centre, opening the position, when Black collapses on his own... The still centralised king is a major failure for Black, so White tries the best way of handling it, by opening files and diagonals.

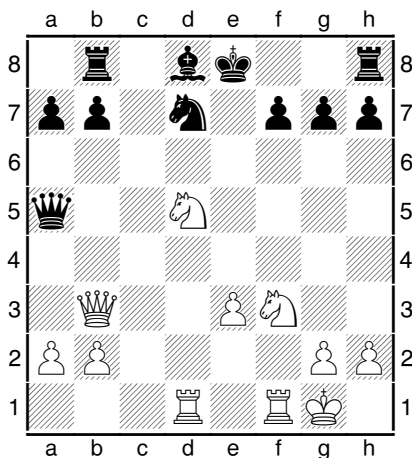
15...exd5

There is hardly any good alternative: 15...Nc5 16.Qc4! +-, or 15...Qb6 16.Qa4! +- (ideally White would prefer to avoid a queens' trade by 16.dxe6 fxe6 17.Qxb6 Nxb6 18.Ng5 +/-), or, finally, 15...e5 16.d6! +-.

16.Rad1

All pieces must participate in the offence!

16...Be7 17.Nxd5 Bd8 (D)



Black is ready to castle, minimising White's initiative.

18.Qc2!

A subtle tactic here makes the obvious castle not work for Black - the white queen is

transferred to the new battlefield; the kingside!

18...0-0

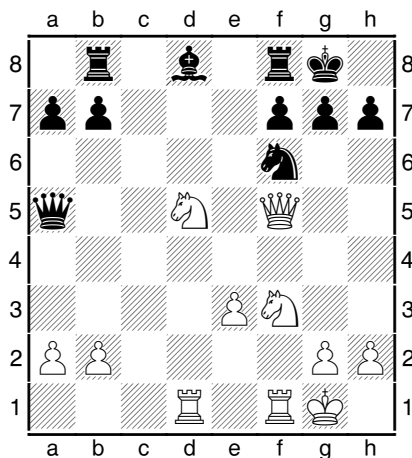
18...Qa6 19.Nc7+ Bxc7 20.Qxc7 Rd8 21.Ne5! +-,

19.Qf5!

And Black's knight is doomed - his position collapses...

19...Nf6 (D)

The alternative 19...Nc5 20.b4! +-, or 19...Nb6 20.Ne7+ Bxc7 21.Qxa5 +-, or, finally, 19...Qa4 20.Nc3 +-, couldn't save Black.



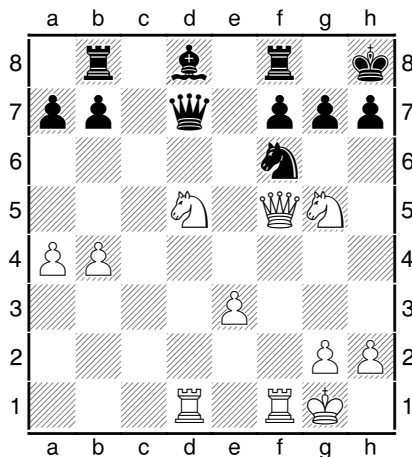
20.Ng5!

The mating attack cannot be annihilated.

20...Kh8 21.b4!

21.Nxf6? Qxf5 22.Rxf5 Bxf6 oo, was a criminal decision!

21...Qb5 22.a4 Qd7 (D)



23.Qb1!

A subtle retreat and a picturesque finish! Black resigned, due to 23...Qg4 24.Nxf6, with mate on h7.

1-0

The next example is played with the 'Sicilian Defence - Alapin-Sveshnikov Variation' as well, and the opening theory presented is huge.

Keep in mind that the 'Alapin-Sveshnikov Variation' is a popular anti-Sicilian opening against the 'Sicilian Defence', beginning with the moves 1.e4 c5 2.c3.

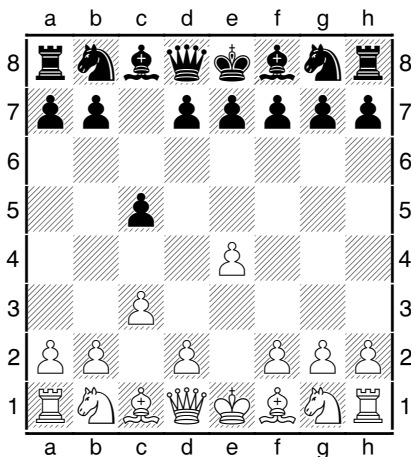
Named after Russian master Semyon Alapin, White's core idea is to support a prompt d4 pawn push, aiming to build and maintain an ideal central pawn grip.

□ **Muzychuk Mariya**

■ **Dzagnidze Nana**

B22 Riga 2021

1.e4 c5 2.c3 (D)

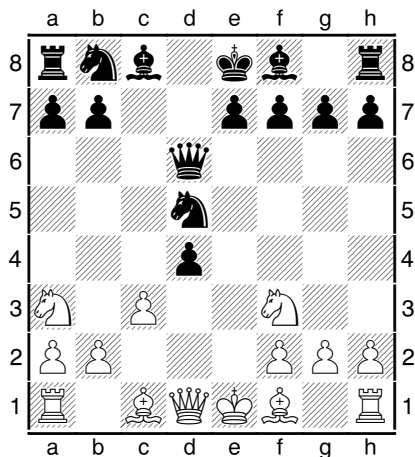


The main starting point of the variation, a simple one indeed! M.Muzychuk has played her fair share of 'Open Sicilians' set-ups, starting with 2.Nf3 and then 3.d4. Lately she has been experimenting a bit with other systems, so the basis of her preparation for this game was almost certainly the encounter Kosteniuk,A-Dzagnidze,N Kazan 2019, mentioned below.

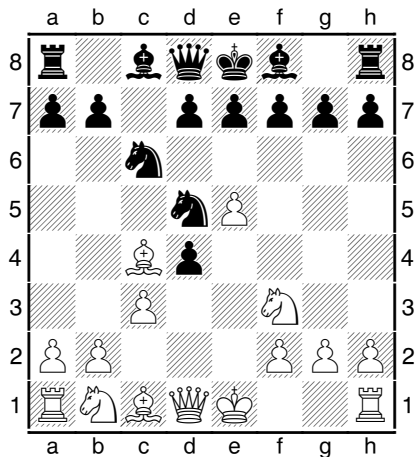
2...d5

The other main alternative 2...Nf6, was also featured in M.Muzychuk's practice: 3.e5 Nd5

4.d4 (4.Nf3 d6 5.exd6 Qxd6 6.d4 cxd4 7.Na3 (D)



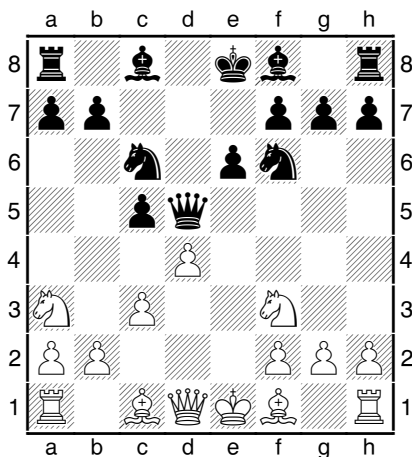
7...a6 (7...dxc3? 8.Nb5 Qe6+ 9.Be2 +/- ; 7...Bg4 8.Be2 e6 9.Nb5 Qb6 10.Qxd4 Qxd4 11.Nfxd4 Bxe2 12.Kxe2 += Galperin,P-Janik,I Krakow 2018) 8.Nc4 Qd8 9.Nxd4 g6 10.Be2 Bg7 11.Bf3 +=) 4...cxd4 5.Nf3 Nc6 (5...d6 6.cxd4 Nc6 7.Bc4 Nb6 8.Bb5 dxe5 9.Nxe5 Bd7 10.Nxd7 Qxd7 11.Nc3 e6 [11...Rd8 12.Be3 e6 13.0-0 Be7 14.Qg4 0-0 15.Rad1 oo] 12.0-0 Be7 13.Qg4 0-0 14.Rd1 Rfd8 oo) 6.Bc4 (D)



6...Nb6 (6...e6 7.cxd4 d6 8.0-0 Be7 9.Qe2 +=) 7.Bb3 d6 8.exd6 Qxd6 9.0-0 Be6! oo.

3.exd5 Qxd5 4.d4 Nf6

The text should be considered as the main core continuation of this variation, although possible as well is 4...e6 5.Nf3 Nf6 6.Na3 Nc6 (D)

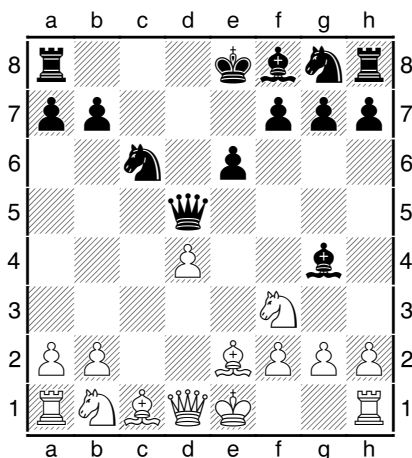


7.Be3 (7.Nb5 Qd8 8.dxc5 Bxc5 9.Qxd8+ Kxd8 10.Bf4 Ne4 =, causes Black no problems) 7...cxd4 (7...Ng4 8.Bg5 Bd7 9.h3 Nf6 oo Mammadov,Z-Zubritskiy,A Pardubice 2013)



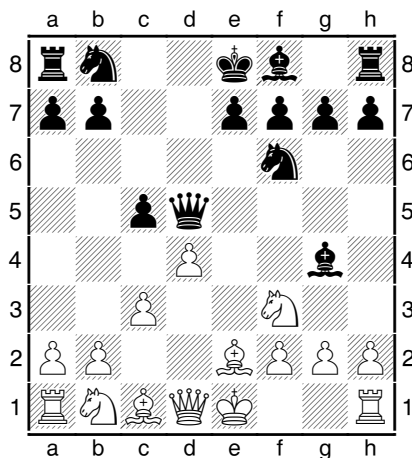
Seymon Alapin

8.Nb5 Qd8 9.Nbxd4 +=, or 4...Nc6 5.Nf3 Bg4 6.Be2 cxd4 7.cxd4 e6 (D)



Which is different from the game move-order and allows White to play the dangerous pawn sacrifice with 8.Nc3 Qa5 9.h3 Bh5 10.d5! exd5 11.Nd4 Bxe2 12.Qxe2+ Be7 13.Nxc6 bxc6 14.0-0 Kf8 15.Re1 +=.

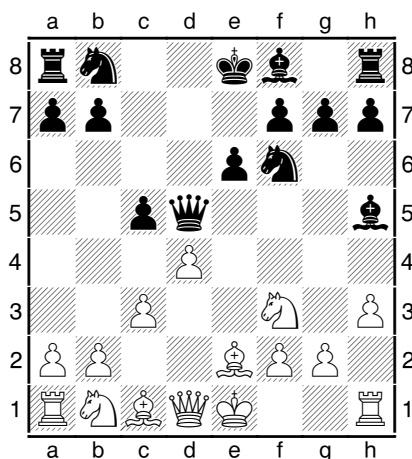
5.Nf3 Bg4 6.Be2 (D)



6...e6

6...cxd4 7.cxd4 e6 8.Nc3 Qa5 9.0-0 Nc6, is a safer way to reach the lines from the following note, while avoiding the variation from the game itself.

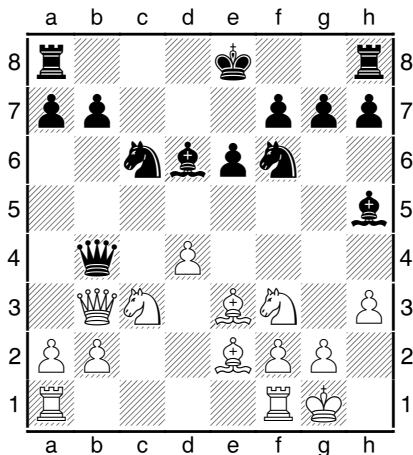
7.h3 Bh5 (D)



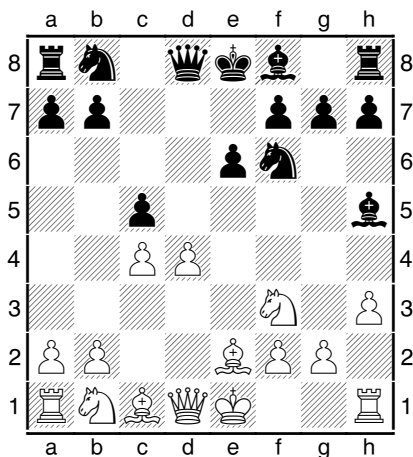
8.c4

The most enterprising continuation, leading to complex tactical positions. The more standard alternatives are rather soft and don't promise White anything tangible: 8.Be3 cxd4 9.cxd4 Nc6 10.Nc3 Qa5 (10...Qd6 11.0-0 Be7 12.Qb3 0-0 13.Rfd1 Rfd8 14.a3 Rac8

15.Rac1 Qb8 16.d5 exd5 17.Nxd5 Nxd5
18.Rxd5 Rxd5 19.Qxd5 Bg6 20.b4 Bf6
21.Qb3 a6 22.b5 axb5 23.Qxb5 h6 =
Stevic,H-Frois,A Pula 1997) 11.0-0 Bd6!?
(White scores better after 11...Be7 12.Qb3
Qb4 13.Qxb4 Bxb4 14.g4 Bg6 15.Ne5,
although even here 15...Bxc3 16.bxc3 Nd5
17.Nxc6 Nxe3 18.fxe3 bxc6 19.Bf3 Kd7 =,
holds the balance) 12.Qb3 Qb4 (D)

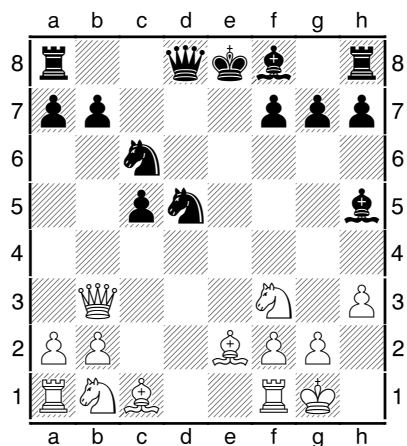


13.Qxb4 (13.Nb5 Bb8 14.g4 Bg6 15.Ne5
Nd5 16.Bf3 oo Shaked,T-Miles,A Groningen
1996) 13...Nxb4 14.Nb5 Ke7 15.Nxd6 Kxd6
16.a3 Nbd5 (16...Nc2 17.Bf4+ Ke7 18.Rac1
Rac8 19.Be5 Rhd8 20.Rfd1 a6 21.Kh2 +=
Dobrei,G-Schoen,W Email 2005) 17.g4 Bg6
18.Ne5 oo.
8...Qd7 (D)
8...Qd8 (D)

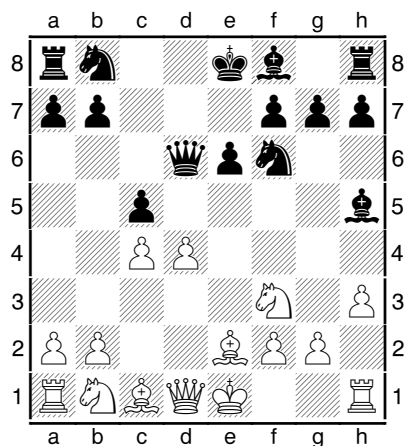


Is the most popular response: 9.d5 (too soft is

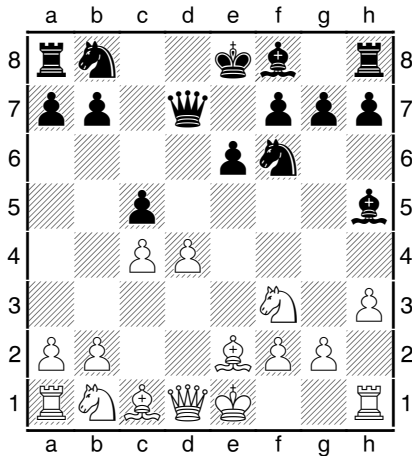
9.Nc3 cxd4 10.Nxd4 Bxe2 11.Qa4+ Nbd7
12.Ndxe2 Be7 oo Rozentalis,E-Kramnik,V
Germany 1995, or 9.Qb3?! cxd4 10.Qxb7
Nbd7 11.Nxd4 Rb8 +=) 9...exd5 10.cxd5
Nxd5 (10...Bd6 11.Nh4! Bg6 12.Nc3 += ;
10...Qxd5 11.Qa4+ Nc6 12.Nc3 Qd7 13.0-0
Be7 [13...Bd6? 14.Rd1 Qe7 15.Bg5 0-0
16.Qh4 +/- Kosteniuk,A-Senft,S Internet
2022] 14.Rd1 Qc8 15.g4 Bg6 16.Ne5 0-0 oo)
11.0-0 Nc6 12.Qb3 (D)



Black must tread with extra care, so, it seems
he can still hold the balance with 12...Qd7!
(12...Nb6?! 13.Rd1 Qc7 14.Nc3 Be7 15.Nb5
+/- Sveshnikov,E-Aghayev,M Presolana
2018) 13.Nc3 (13.Rd1 0-0-0 14.Nc3,
transposes) 13...0-0-0 14.Rd1 Nxc3! 15.bxc3
Qe6 16.Rxd8+ Nxd8 17.Bc4 Qd7 18.Bf4
Bxf3 19.gxf3 Qf5 20.Bg3 h5 21.Rd1 +=. The
other move Black has tried is the unnatural
8...Qd6?! (D)



But it also exposes the queen and White gets a pull with the yet untested, but standard 9.d5! exd5 10.Nc3 d4 11.Nb5 Qb6 12.Bf4 Na6 13.Qa4 Nd7 14.0-0 +/-.

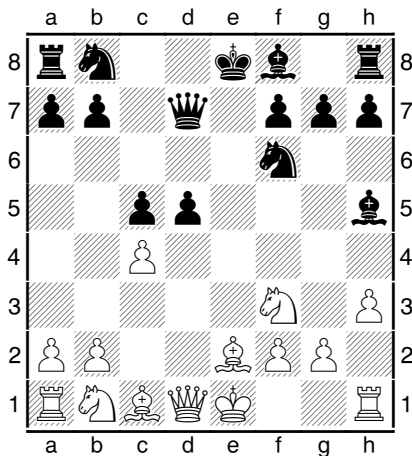


9.d5!

Once again this pawn sacrifice. White relies on her piece coordination, as not much is gained by 9.Be3 cxd4 10.Qxd4 Nc6 11.Qxd7+ Nxd7 =, or 9.g4 Bg6 10.d5, which gives Black the extra option 10...Bd6! 11.Nc3 0-0 oo Stripunsky,A-Christiansen,L Saint Louis 2010.

9...exd5 (D)

9...Bd6?! 10.Nc3 0-0?! 11.Bg5 +/- Scheerer,C-Bohnsack,R Holstein 2001.

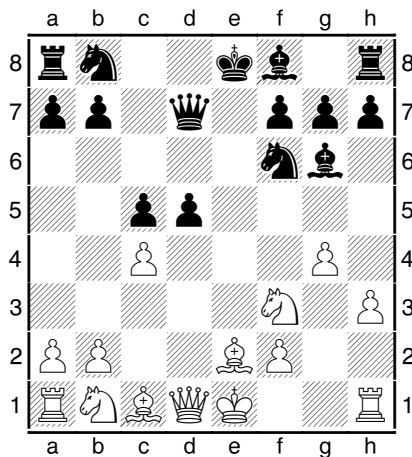


10.g4

Accurate and not 10.cxd5?! Nxd5! (10...Bd6? 11.Nh4! Bg6 12.Nc3 [12.Nxg6 hxg6 13.Nc3 a6 14.0-0 += Kosteniuk,A-Dzagnidze,N

Kazan 2019] 12...0-0 13.0-0 +=) 11.g4 Bg6 12.Ne5 Qe6 13.0-0! Nc6! oo.

10...Bg6 (D)

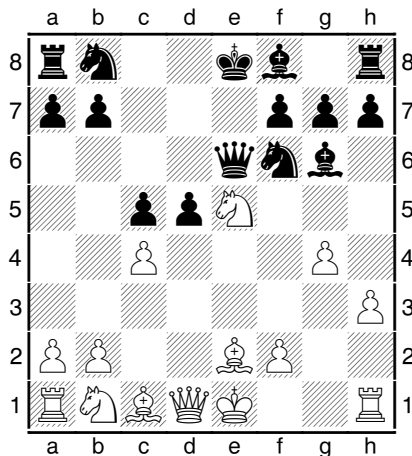


11.Ne5

The alternative 11.g5 Ne4 12.Ne5 Qf5 13.f4 Ng3 14.Bd3 Qc8 15.Bxg6 hxg6 16.Qxd5! (16.Rg1 Nf5 [16...Rxh3!? 17.Qxd5 Qe6 18.Qxb7 Bd6! 19.Nd2! Bxe5 20.fxe5 Qg4 21.Rxg3 Rxg3 22.Kf2 Qh4 23.Qc8+ =] 17.Qxd5 Qc7 18.Qe4 Be7 19.Nc3 oo Shlyakhtenko,R-Matros,A Charlotte 2021) 16...Qc7 17.Rg1 Nf5, transposes to the game.

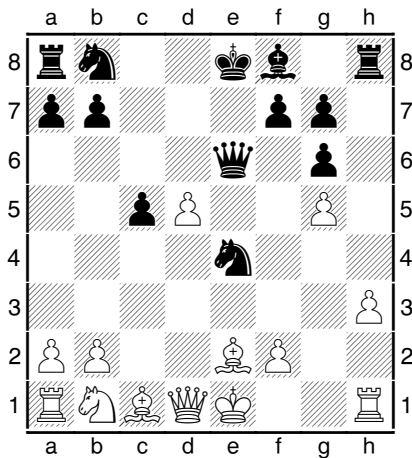
11...Qe7 (D)

11...Qe6 (D)

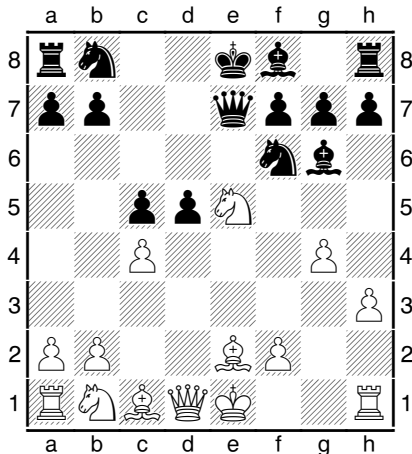


Might be a better alternative: 12.Nxg6 (12.f4?! Bd6! 13.Nxg6 hxg6 14.g5 Ne4 +=) 12...hxg6 13.g5 Ne4 (13...Nc6? 14.gxf6 d4 15.Kf1 gxf6 16.Bg4 f5 17.Bf3 0-0-0 18.Na3! [18.Bd5? Rxd5! 19.cxd5 Qxd5 20.f3 Ne5 -/+

Gaujens,A-Nicholls,M Email 2000] 18...Be7 19.Qb3 +/- 14.cxd5! (D) (14.Qxd5?! Qxd5 15.cxd5 Nd7 16.0-0 0-0-0 17.Kg2 Be7 18.f4 Nd6 oo)



14...Qe5! (14...Qf5? 15.Be3 Nd6 16.Nc3 [16.Bg4 +-] 16...Rhx3 17.Qa4+ Kd8 18.Rhx3 Qxh3 19.0-0-0 +- Rozentalis,E-Loginov,V Manila 1992) 15.Kf1! (15.Qb3?! [Lanin,B-Manukyan,A Email 2001] 15...Nd7 oo) 15...Nd7 16.Kg2 +=. The other way is by 11...Qd8? 12.g5! Nfd7 13.Nxg6 hxg6 14.cxd5 Bd6 15.Nc3 Na6 16.Be3 Nb6 17.Qd2 Nc7 18.0-0-0 +/-.



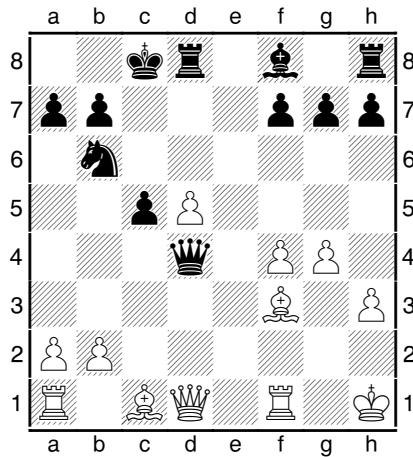
12.f4!

Retains the tension, as Black has problems with development. Nothing is gained by 12.Nxg6 hxg6 13.g5 Ne4 14.cxd5 Nd7 oo.

12...Be4?!

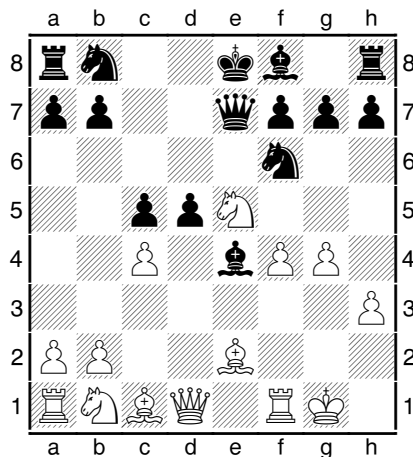
The bishop will be exposed even here.

12...Nfd7!, should be a better try: 13.Nxd7 Be4 14.0-0 Nxd7 15.cxd5 0-0-0 16.Nc3 Nb6 17.Nxe4 Qxe4 18.Bf3 Qd4+ 19.Kh1 (D)



19...Bd6! (19...Kb8 20.Qe2 Bd6 21.Be3 Qf6 22.Qc2 Qh6 23.Bg2 Nxd5 24.Bxc5 Bxc5 25.Qxc5 Qd6 26.Qd4 Nf6 27.Qc3 += Nicholson,M-Krueger,H Email 2007) 20.Qxd4 cxd4 21.Rd1 +=. Black's king might run into problems after 12...Bxb1 13.Rxb1 Nc6 14.Nxc6 bxc6 15.0-0 oo/=.

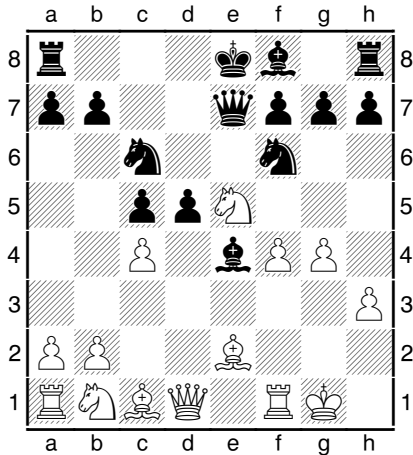
13.0-0 (D)



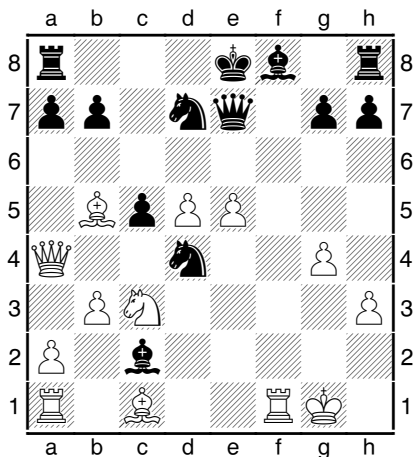
13...h5?

A near blunder! Black shouldn't opt as well for 13...Nbd7? 14.Nc3! 0-0-0 (14...Nxe5? 15.fxe5 Qxe5 16.Qa4+ Kd8 [16...Nd7 17.Bf4 Qd4+ 18.Rf2 +-] 17.Bf4 Qe8 18.Qxe8+ Kxe8 19.Rae1 Kd8 20.g5 Nd7 21.Nxe4 dxe4 22.Bg4 +-) 15.g5 Nb6 16.Re1 dxc4 17.Bg4+ Kc7 18.Bd2 h5 19.Bf3 Bxf3 20.Qxf3 Rxd2

21.gxf6 gxf6 22.Nxc4 Qxe1+ 23.Rxe1 Nxc4
24.Nd5+ Kd8 25.Kh1 Rh6 26.Rd1 1-0,
Pranjic,M-Kazoks,A Email 2008. Black's
position is already suspect, but 13...Nc6 (D)

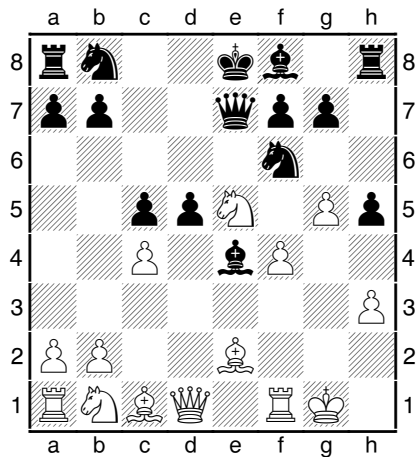


Seems to be a better try: 14.Nc3 (14.Nxc6
bxc6 15.g5 Qe6 16.Kh2 Nd7 17.Nc3 f5
18.cxd5 cxd5 19.Nxe4 fxe4 20.Qa4 +/-)
14...Nd4 15.Qa4+ Nd7 16.cxd5 Bc2 17.b3 f6
18.Bb5 (18.Nxd7 Qxd7 19.Bb5 Nxb5
20.Nxb5 Kd8 21.Qc4 h5! +=) 18...fxe5
19.fxe5 (D)



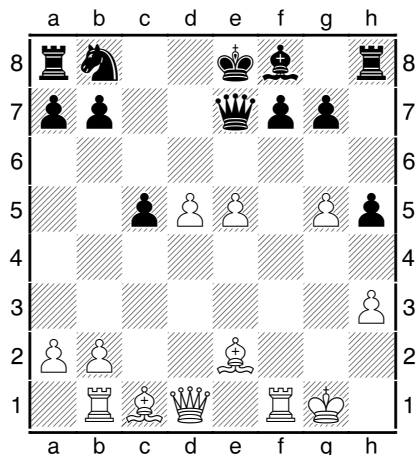
Where now Black has to find some accurate
moves to defend: 19...Kd8! (19...0-0-0
20.Bxd7+ Qxd7 21.Qxa7 +/-) 20.Bxd7 Qxd7
21.Bg5+ Ke8 22.Qxd7+ Kxd7 23.e6+ Ke8
24.e7 Ne2+ 25.Nxe2 Bxe7 26.Bxe7 Kxe7
27.Rac1 Bg6 28.Rxc5 Rac8 +=, with a pawn
down but holdable chances.

14.g5 (D)



14...Qe6

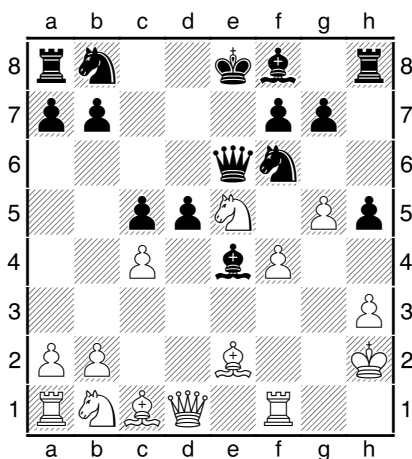
The queen could (and probably should!) have
been here already 3 moves ago... However,
14...Nfd7, already doesn't help much: 15.Nc3
(15.cxd5 Bxb1 [15...Nxe5 16.Nc3,
transposes] 16.Rxb1 Nxe5 17.fxe5 (D)



17...Nd7 [17...Qxe5 18.Bf4 Qd4+ 19.Qxd4
cxd4 20.Bb5+ +=] 18.e6 fxe6 19.Bxh5+ Kd8
20.dxe6 Qxe6 21.Bg4 +/-) 15...Nxe5 16.cxd5
(16.fxe5 Qxe5 17.Bf4 +/-) 16...Ned7 17.Re1
f5 18.gxf6 Nxf6 19.Bf3 +/-.

15.Kh2! (D)

The most convincing follow-up. A great,
calm and decisive move, which is typical of
the great players! When you are about to grab
the full-point, you might forget about
prophylaxis... 15.gxf6 Qxh3 16.Kf2 +/-,
might also leads to an advantage, but why risk
a king walk?

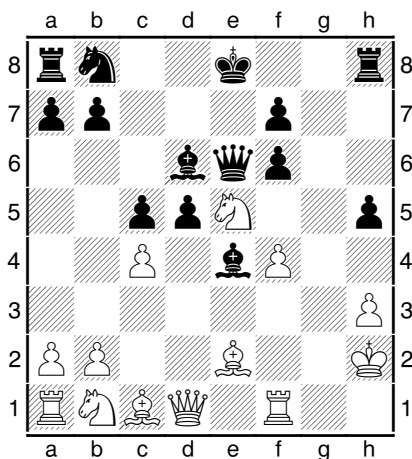


15...Bd6

15...Ng4+ 16.Nxg4 hxc4 17.Bxc4 f5 (17...Bf5 18.Re1 Bxc4 19.Rxc6+ Bxe6 20.cxd5 Bxh3 21.Qe2+ Kd7 22.Kg1 +-) 18.gxf6 Qxf6 19.Nc3 +-, or 15...d4 16.gxf6 gxf6 17.Nd2 Bf5 18.Nd3 +-, shouldn't be a problem for White.

16.gxf6 gxf6 (D)

16...d4, gives White a pleasant choice: 17.fxg7 +-, as well as 17.Nd2 and 17.Bf3, should suffice to win.



17.cxd5 Bxd5 18.Nc3! fxe5 19.Qxd5

Black has only two pawns for the piece, moreover he can't avoid a queen swap - the game is practically decided, although it went on for another 30 moves.

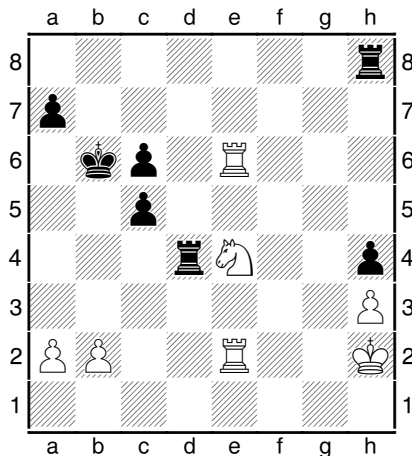
19...Nc6 20.Qxe6+ fxc6 21.Bb5

21.Ne4! +-, is more convincing.

21...0-0-0 22.Bxc6 bxc6 23.Ne4 Bb8 24.fxe5

Bxe5+

24...Rhf8 25.Bg5 Bxe5+ 26.Kh1 Rxf1+ 27.Rxf1 Rd3 28.Rf8+ (28.Kg2 +-) 28...Kc7 29.Rf7+ Kb6 30.Rb7+! Kxb7 31.Nxc5+ +-. 25.Bf4 Bxf4+ 26.Rxf4 Rd4 27.Re1 Kc7 28.Re2 Kb6 29.Rf6 h4 30.Rxe6 (D)



As another pawn drops, the rest doesn't require more comment.

30...Rf8 31.Re5 c4 32.Nc3 Rf3 33.R5e3 Rff4 34.Kg2 a5 35.Rf3 Rxf3 36.Kxf3 Kc5 37.Ne4+ Kb4 38.Re3 Rd8 39.Ke2 Rg8 40.Kd2 Rg2+ 41.Re2 Rg1 42.Kc2 Rh1 43.Re3 Rh2+ 44.Nd2 a4 45.a3+ Kb5 46.Kc3 Rh1 47.Nf3 Rc1+ 48.Kd2 Rb1 49.Kc2

1-0

FAMOUS CHESS GAMBITS — THE NAMES AND THEIR CREATORS —	
GAMBIT NAME	CREATED BY
King's Gambit	No Single Creator
Queen's Gambit	No Single Creator
Evans Gambit	Captain William Davies Evans
Smith–Morra Gambit	Pierre Morra & Ken Smith
Benko Gambit	Pal Benko
Budapest Gambit	Popular in Budapest, Hungary
Blackmar–Diemer Gambit	Armand Blackmar & Emil Josef Diemer
Marshall Gambit	Frank James Marshall
Danish Gambit	Popular in Denmark
From Gambit	Martin Severin From
Cochrane Gambit	John Cochrane
Halloween Gambit	No Single Creator
Jerome Gambit	Alonzo Jerome
Muzio Gambit	Giulio Cesare Polerio (Muzio)
Staunton Gambit	Howard Staunton
Elephant Gambit	No Single Creator

The Art Corner

Chess Paintings

Concept

‘The Devil's Checkmate’ (properly titled *Die Schachspieler*, or *The Chess Players*) is an 1831 oil painting by German artist Friedrich Moritz August Retzsch.

It depicts a young man clutching his head in despair while playing chess against the Devil for his soul, with a silent angel looking on.



The Painting and the Legend

- **The Apparent Defeat:** For over a century, viewers assumed the young man was utterly beaten and checkmated because he looks devastated and cornered.

- **The Paul Morphy Myth:** A famous 19th-century legend claims that the American chess genius Paul Morphy viewed the painting and realised the game wasn't lost - stating that the king still had one hidden move left to turn the tide.

- **The Reality:** Modern chess analysis shows the board setup in the painting is vague, lacks standard piece placement, and doesn't represent a legitimate solvable position, making the inspiring ‘saving move’ more folklore than factual analysis.



GM Efstratios Grivas
World Renowned Chess Coach

Efstratios Grivas to Coach Sri Lanka Chess Team for the Samarkand Olympiad 2026

World renowned chess coach, Grand Master **Efstratios Grivas** will be coaching the Sri Lankan team for the upcoming Chess Olympiad in Samarkand, Uzbekistan.



-  Former Secretary of the **FIDE Training Commission**
-  Represented Greece in **8 Olympiads** and several national teams
-  Coached the Sri Lankan team for the 2014 Olympiad in Tromso, Norway, guiding them to a **Category Gold Medal**
-  Author of almost **140 chess books**
-  Main lecturer in nearly **100 FIDE Trainers' seminars**
-  Brings not only a wealth of knowledge, but a **long-standing relationship** with Sri Lankan chess

“Sri Lanka is privileged to obtain the services of a coach of Grivas’ calibre and is confident that he will bring out the best in the players representing the country at the Olympiad.”

— **Malinda Seneviratne**
President, Chess Federation of Sri Lanka

“I happened to be the Manager cum Coach of the Sri Lankan team at the Tromso Olympiad and saw first hand how he prepared players for each round. His extensive knowledge and coaching skills were highly appreciated by the team. They benefited enormously.”

We warmly welcome GM Efstratios Grivas and wish the Sri Lankan team every success at the Samarkand Olympiad 2026!



CHESS FEDERATION OF SRI LANKA

RUSSIA TO MISS THE 2026 CHESS OLYMPIAD

Russia's national team has been excluded from the 2026 Chess Olympiad following the suspension of the Russian Chess Federation by FIDE.

📍 46th Chess Olympiad
Tashkent, Uzbekistan
2026



The suspension follows a Court of Arbitration for Sport ruling related to chess activities in occupied Ukrainian territories.



The Technique Corner

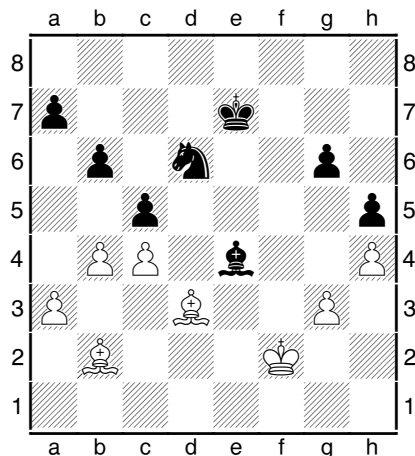
The Bishop Pair

□ Carlsen Magnus

■ So Wesley

A14 Zagreb 2025

1.Nf3 d5 2.c4 e6 3.g3 Nf6 4.Bg2 Be7 5.0-0 0-0 6.b3 c5 7.cxd5 Nxd5 8.Nc3 Nc6 9.Bb2 Nxc3 10.dxc3 Qc7 11.Qc2 b6 12.Rad1 Bb7 13.Bc1 Rad8 14.Bf4 Qc8 15.Ng5 Bxg5 16.Bxg5 f6 17.Bf4 Rxd1 18.Rxd1 Rd8 19.h4 e5 20.Bc1 Rxd1+ 21.Qxd1 Qd8 22.Qd3 Qxd3 23.exd3 Nd8 24.f3 h5 25.Kf2 Kf7 26.Bh3 Ne6 27.f4 Nc7 28.fxe5 fxe5 29.Bb2 Nb5 30.a3 g6 31.Bd7 Nd6 32.c4 Kf6 33.b4 Ke7 34.Ba4 e4 35.Bc2 exd3 36.Bxd3 Be4 (D)



White has the preferable position, as his bishop pair can be proven strong in this ending (open centre & pawns on both sides). Well, it seems that Black can defend, but in my opinion only if opposite to M.Carlsen, a chess engine handles the black pieces...

37.Bf1

The first step is to preserve the bishop pair.

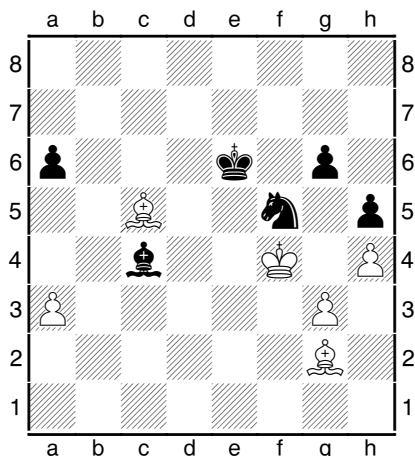
37...Bf5 38.bxc5 bxc5 39.Bc1!

As Black will attack the c4-pawn twice, White should also target the c5-pawn.

39...Be6 40.Be3 Bxc4 41.Bg2!

No need to exchange the bishops; the c5-pawn is going nowhere.

41...a6 42.Bxc5 Ke6 43.Ke3 Nf5+ 44.Kf4 (D)



White made some progress, as the centre now is completely open, offering to the white king entrances on both sides of the board.

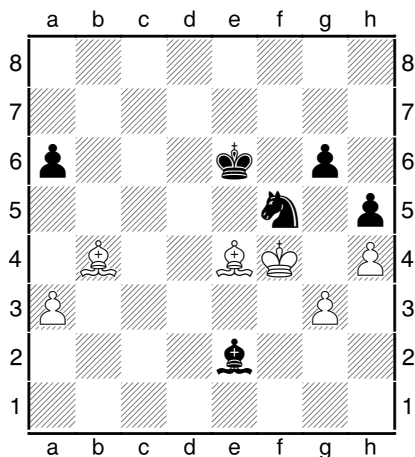
44...Bd3?

The black a-pawn is better standing on a4, where it could be protected more efficiently. For this, good was 44...a5! 45.Bc6 Bb3 46.Be8 Ng7! 47.Bb5 +=, but not 47.Bxg6? Kf6 48.Be4 Ne6+.

45.Bb4!

Stopping the black a-pawn!

45...Bb5 46.Be4 Be2 47.Bc2 Bc4 48.Be4 Be2 (D)



Black doesn't have a good way to stop the

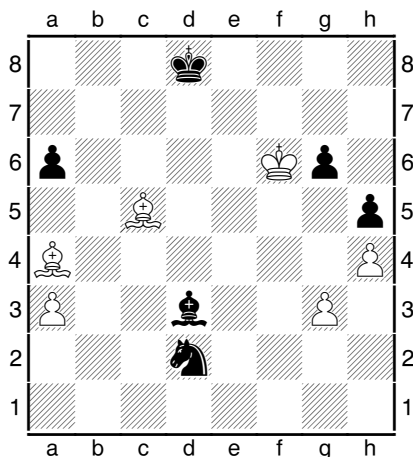
invasion of the white king in either side...

49.Bb1 Bc4 50.Bc2 Be2 51.Bb3+ Kf6
52.Bc3+ Ke7 53.Be5

The white bishop pair dominates.

53...Bd3 54.Kg5 Ne3 55.Bf6+ Kf8 56.Bd4
Nc4 57.Kf6! Ke8

Or 57...Kg8 58.a4 +-.
58.Bc5 Nd2 59.Ba4+ Kd8 (D)



60.Ke5?!

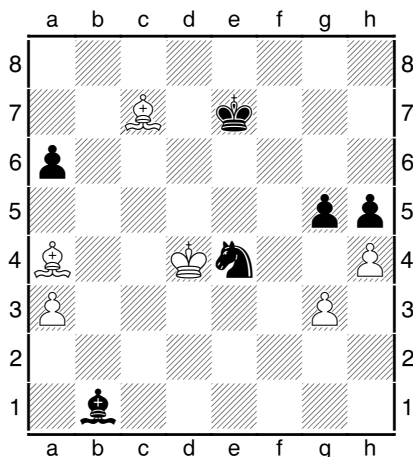
60.Be7+ Kc8 61.Bd6 Ne4+ 62.Ke7 +-, would
be the end.

60...Ne4 61.Bb6+ Ke7 62.Kd4!

The white king can also enter the queenside!

62...Bb1 63.Bc7 g5 (D)

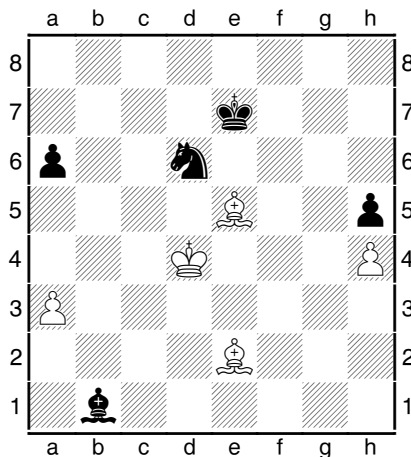
Black tries to exchange pawns, as the passive
63...Nd6, would lose to 64.Bb8 Nf5+ 65.Kc5
+-.
64.Bd1! gxf4 65.gxf4 Nf6 66.Be2 Ne8
67.Be5!



64.Bd1! gxf4 65.gxf4 Nf6 66.Be2 Ne8
67.Be5!

Game over - the black knight is dominated...

67...Nd6 (D)



One of the powers of the bishop pair, is that
their owner can exchange at a certain moment
one of them, gaining other important
advantages.

68.Bxd6+! Kxd6 69.Bxa6

White won a pawn finally and h5 is still a
juicy target!

69...Bg6 70.a4 Kc6 71.a5 Bf5 72.Be2 Bc8

After 72...Bg6 73.a6 Kb6 74.Ke5, Black is
easily losing, as the rook pawn is not quite
friendly to bishops for a defence: 74...Be8
75.Kf6 Ka7 76.Kg5 Kb6 77.Bxh5 Bb5
78.Bg4 Kxa6 79.h5 Kb6 80.h6 Bd3 81.Bf5 +-.
73.Ke5 Kc5 74.Bxh5 Ba6 75.Bf3

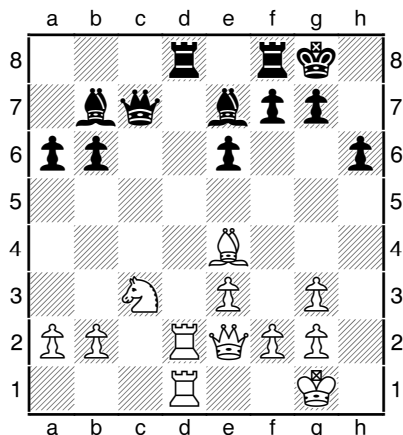
And as the white h4-pawn is moving ahead,
Black resigned.
1-0



□ Adly Ahmed
 ■ Kramnik Vladimir

D58 Baku 2016

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 d5 3.c4 e6 4.Nc3 Nbd7 5.Bg5
 h6 6.Bh4 Be7 7.e3 0-0 8.Bd3 c5 9.0-0 b6
 10.Qe2 Bb7 11.Rad1 Ne4 12.Bg3 Nxb3
 13.hxb3 cxd4 14.Nxd4 Nf6 15.cxd5 Nxd5
 16.Ndb5 Nxc3 17.Nxc3 Qc7 18.Be4 a6
 19.Rd2 Rad8 20.Rfd1 (D)



The position seems to be quite drawish, as many exchanges (rooks and lightsquared bishops) will take place soon.

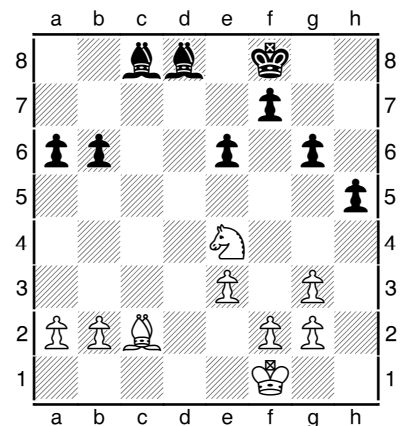
20...Bc8!

A strange but great move by V.Kramnik! Black preserves his bishop pair, hoping to exploit it in the endgame.

21.Rxd8 Rxd8 22.Rxd8+ Bxd8 23.Qc2 Kf8

The endgame is approaching, so Black begins to centralise his king.

24.Kf1 h5 25.Bd3 g6 26.Ne4 Qxc2 27.Bxc2 (D)

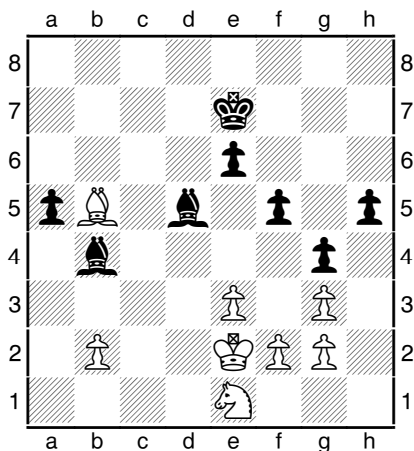


Black succeeded in his plan; to get a pure endgame with the bishop pair, where he holds a significant advantage.

27...Ke7 28.Nd2 Bc7 29.Ke2 b5 30.a4 bxa4 31.Bxa4 Bb7 32.Nf3 a5 33.Bb5 f5 34.Kd2 Bd6 35.Kd1 Bd5

The bishop pair stands proudly in the centre and White can hardly move...

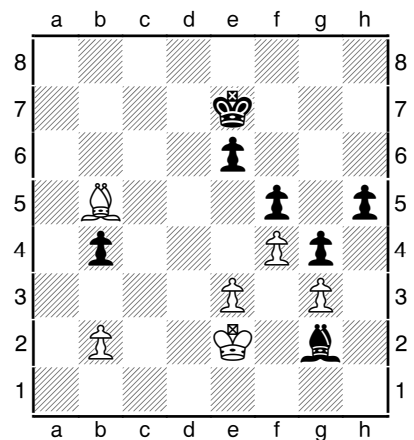
36.Nh4g5 37.Nf3 g4 38.Ne1 Bb4 39.Ke2 (D)



39...Kf6?

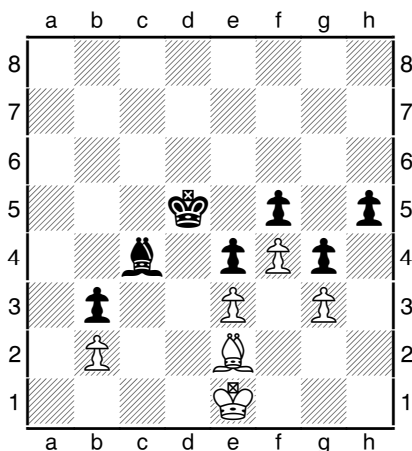
It was time to give-up one of the bishops, gaining a winning position: 39...Bxe1! 40.Kxe1 Bxg2 41.Kd2 e5. A sample variation could go as 42.Kc3 Kf6 43.b4 axb4+ 44.Kxb4 Kg5 45.Bd7 f4 46.exf4+ exf4 47.Kc3 h4 48.gxh4+ Kxh4 49.Kd3 Bf1+ 50.Ke4 g3 51.fxg3+ Kxg3 -. The boundaries between preserving and giving-up the bishop pair are quite difficult to be drawn...

40.f4! Ke7 41.Nd3 Bxg2 42.Nxb4 axb4 (D)



Black won a pawn finally, but here White has some good blockade and in the end he escaped with draw after 85 moves!

43.Kd2 Bb7 44.Ba4 Kd6 45.Bb3 Bd5 46.Ba4 Bc4 47.Bc2 Kd5 48.Bb1 Bb5 49.Bc2 Bd7 50.Kd3 Bb5+ 51.Kd2 Ba6 52.Bb1 b3 53.Ke1 Bc8 54.Bd3 Bb7 55.Bf1 Kc5 56.Bd3 Bc6 57.Bf1 Bb5 58.Bg2 Kd6 59.Bb7 Bd3 60.Kd2 Bc4 61.Ke1 e5 62.Kd2 Kc7 63.Bg2 e4 64.Ke1 Kd6 65.Bf1 Bd3 66.Be2 Ke6 67.Bd1 Bc4 68.Be2 Bd3 69.Bd1 Bc4 70.Be2 Kd5 (D)



71.Bxc4+ Kxc4 72.Ke2 Kd5 73.Kf1 Kc5 74.Ke1 Kd5 75.Kf1 Kd6 76.Kf2 Ke6 77.Kf1 h4 78.gxh4 Kd5 79.Kf2 Ke6 80.Kg2 Kf7 81.Kf2 Kg6 82.Kg2 Kh6 83.Kh2 Kh5 84.Kg3 Kg6 85.Kg2 Kh6

1/2-1/2

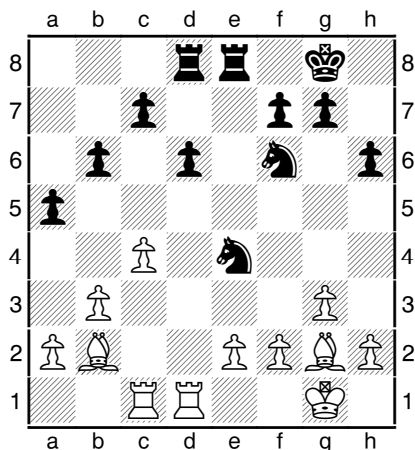


□ Kramnik Vladimir

■ Ulybin Mikhail

E11 Afytos 1992

1.d4 e6 2.c4 Nf6 3.Nf3 Bb4+ 4.Bd2 Qe7 5.g3 Nc6 6.Nc3 0-0 7.Bg2 Bxc3 8.Bxc3 Ne4 9.Rc1 d6 10.d5 Nd8 11.dxe6 Nxe6 12.Bb4 Bd7 13.Ne5 N6c5 14.Nxd7 Nxd7 15.0-0 a5 16.Ba3 Rfe8 17.b3 b6 18.Bb2 Rad8 19.Qd4 Qf6 20.Qxf6 Ndx6 21.Rfd1 h6 (D)



This is a quite pleasant position for White. The possession of the bishop pair against the knight pair in a not fully blocked position is an ideal weapon to cash points. At least this is what the statistics say!

22.e3 Nd7 23.Kf1 Re7 24.Ke2 Rde8 25.g4!

After the centralisation of his king, White proceeds with the 'restriction method'. This is best done by the advance of both his kingside and queenside pawns.

25...Re6 26.h4 R6e7 27.Bf3 Ndc5 28.Rd5 Na6

Or 28...f6 29.Bg2! Nd7 30.a3 +/-.

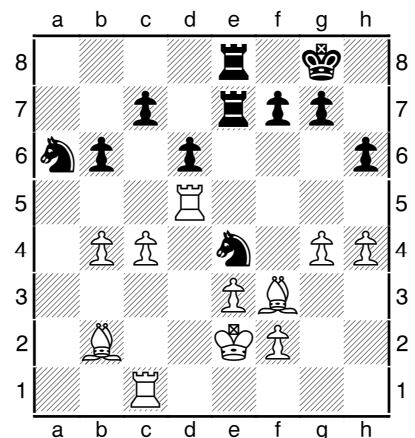
29.a3!

29.Rh5, gives Black an unexpected tactical chance: 29...Nb4 30.a3 Ng3+! oo.

29...Nac5

After 29...Nec5 30.g5! Nxb3 31.Rg1, White's attack is quite strong.

30.b4 axb4 31.axb4 Na6 (D)



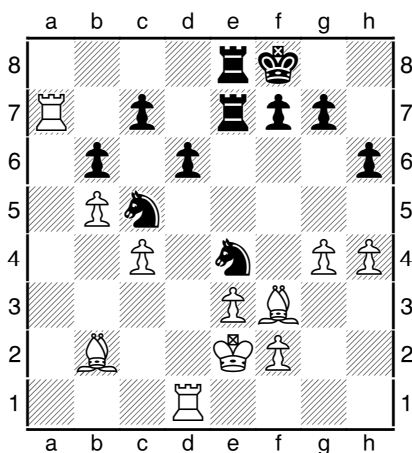
32.b5!

Also possible was 32.Ba3 +/-, but White wants to take advantage of the a-file. The c5 outpost is irrelevant as nearly all Black's pieces are passive.

32...Nac5 33.Ra1 Nf6 34.Rdd1!

It would be a bad idea to surrender the bishop pair: 34.Bxf6 gxf6 35.Ra7 Kg7 and Black might hold.

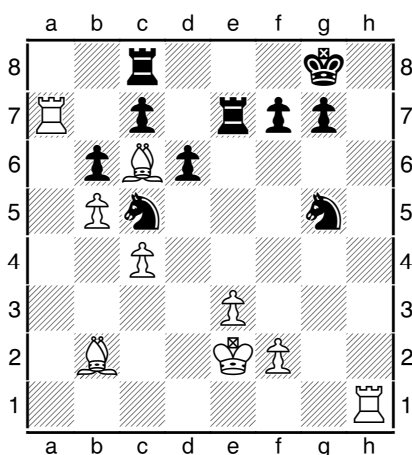
34...Nfe4 35.Ra7 Kf8 (D)



36.g5!

An active solution! But also, the solid 36.Kf1, would do the job: 36...Kg8 37.Kg2 Kf8 38.Be2 Kg8 39.Bf1 (39.f3? Nc3!) 39...Kf8 40.f3 Nf6 41.e4 +/-.

36...hgx5 37.hxg5 Nxg5 38.Bc6 Rc8 39.Rh1 Kg8 (D)



40.Raa1!

A fine retreat, preparing the rooks' doubling

on the h-file. Black can do little to avoid defeat...

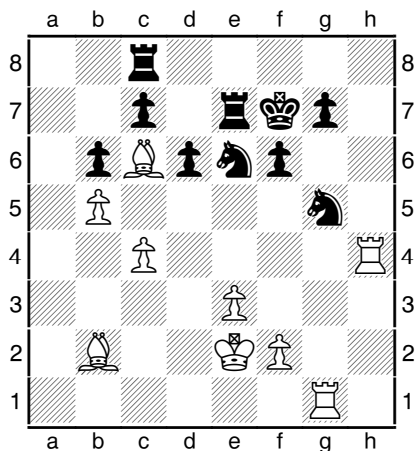
40...Nce6

After 40...f6, White wins by 41.Bd5+ Nf7 42.Rag1 Kf8 43.Rh7 +.

41.Rh4 f6

Or 41...Nh7 42.Rah1 Nef8 43.Be4 g6 44.Bd5 Rd8 45.f4 +.

42.Rg1 Kf7 (D)



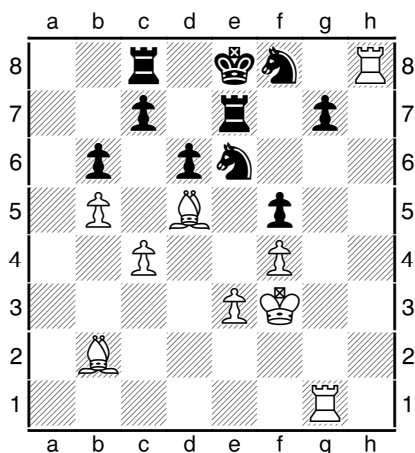
43.Bd5

Avoiding a little trick: 43.f4?! Nh3!. But now the bishop pair is fully dominating.

43...Ke8 44.Rh8+ Nf8 45.f4 Nge6 46.Kf3

46.Bxe6 Rxe6 47.Rxg7 +, also wins, but White is in no hurry!

46...f5 (D)



47.Rg6! Nc5 48.Bxg7 Rf7 49.Bxf8

49...Rxf8 50.Rxf8+ Kxf8 51.Rg8+ +.

1-0

Recent Scientific Research on Chess Skill and its Development - By Robert Howard

Chess skill is changing - but are players really getting stronger? Dr. Robert Howard looks at what decades of rating data and recent research reveal about Elo inflation, learning curves, the rise of computers, the age at which players peak and the role of natural talent. His findings challenge some familiar assumptions about chess expertise.

In tennis, cricket, etc., at least 80% of a player's skill is purely mechanical ... And in chess ... [even though] intelligence and the ability to reason play much bigger parts than in other games - it is still quite large - Cecil Purdy.

The process of rating players can be compared to the measurement of the position of a cork bobbing up and down on the surface of agitated water with a yard stick tied to a rope which is swaying in the wind - Arpad Elo.

... and held by a trembling hand - Elmer Sangalang.

A skill is a coordination of perception and action, a link honed by practice. Most human activities involve skill learning and/or use and an active sub-field of psychology has researched the topic since the 19th Century.

Applications include improving training methods, reducing skill performance errors, and designing easy- to- learn- and- use machines.

This field traditionally has tapped some scientific research on chess skill, such as that in De Groot's 1965 book *Thought and Choice in Chess*. Scientific research on skills now draws from a plethora of new data from chess and other games, enabled by sophisticated computer analysis techniques and enhanced computer processing power.

Psychologists are busily mining the vast archival chess data troves from FIDE and national ratings systems, from game databases such as ChessBase, and from millions of games on online playing sites.

Other fields increasingly tap these data sources; labour economics, computer

science, sports science, education and even sociology.

This article briefly surveys some interesting recent and not- so- recent research findings.

The Nature of Chess Skill

Chess-playing at elite level is a hyper-complex skill, with many automated and conscious components and reliance on continual knowledge updating.

As the Purdy quote above suggests, chess-playing partly rests on automatic pattern recognition.

The unconscious mind stores thousands of patterns acquired from playing games and from study, such as smothered mate combinations, outside passed pawn positions, and back-rank mates.

These stored patterns enable play mainly on automatic pilot. In one minute games, conscious thought mostly is too slow to rely on and the unconscious mind rapidly generates moves and variations. Indeed, such automatic patterns even may interfere with conscious thought.

One study instructed skilled players to find the quickest win in various positions. One position had a five move smothered mate, a pattern so salient that it hindered their finding a simpler three move mate.

But slow games also require conscious planning, strategy and tactics, and mental simulations of variations.

Measuring Chess Skill

The Elo rating system dates from the 1950s, when physicist Arpad Elo improved the United States Chess Federation (USCF) system devised by Kenneth Harkness.

The USCF published its first Elo national rating list in 1960 and FIDE implemented the system in 1970.

Elo ratings are much of the spice of organised chess but are a very broad gauge measure of skill, relying just on relative opponent strengths and game results.

They also can be gamed. A striking example comes from 1997, when unknown player Claude F. Bloodgood unexpectedly took the number two spot on the USCF rating list with a 2789 rating.

Who was he? He was a former tournament director and actually was in prison. He had organized many events with a very small pool of lowly-rated prisoners and quickly accumulated hundreds of extra rating points.

A writer who looked at his games estimated that his real strength was no more than 2300 on a good day with a fair following wind.

Over the last few decades, researchers have been using new methods of gauging skill level, such as comparing all of a player's game moves against computer-generated ones and using machine-learning techniques.

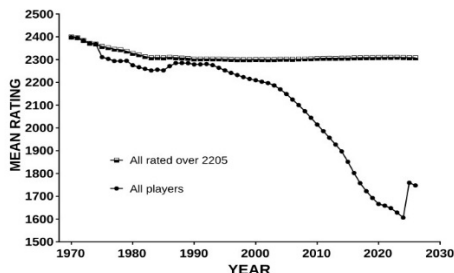
Research on FIDE Rating Inflation

FIDE periodically adjusts Elo rating algorithms and the criteria to enter the list. Males once needed a minimum 2205 rating and females needed 1800 but from 1993 the thresholds progressively dropped to a very modest 1000, and in 2024 rose to 1400. FIDE also sometimes adjusts the system by awarding free points to various players; 100 points to almost all females in 1987 and varying numbers to players rated under 2000 in 2024.

One perennial concern is rating inflation and deflation. Figure 1 shows the mean rating of all players on the first FIDE list each year from 1970 to 2026.

The mean rating decreased precipitously with the rating floor drops but that of all male and female players rated at least 2205, the initial male threshold, stayed roughly constant since the early 1980s.

Figure 1



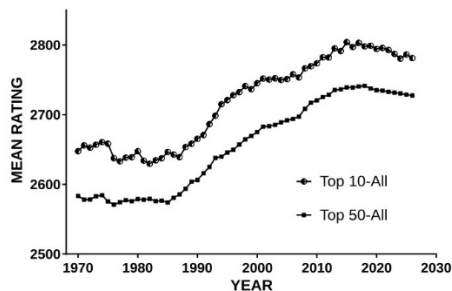
The inflation numbers at the top seem stark. In the early 1970s, only Robert Fischer and Anatoly Karpov even cracked 2700 and in some 1970s lists no player even reached 2700.

But the July 2026 list has 35 players rated over 2700. Garry Kasparov was the first to breach 2800, in January 1990, and by July 2026, 15 players had exceeded 2800 in at least one list.

Figure 2 illustrates the rise, with the mean rating of the top ten and top 50 players on the first list each year until 2026.

Inflation began in the late 1980s, steadily rose, but levelled off in the last few decades.

Figure 2



The rise has various explanations, one being the statistical impact of a vast influx of new players. The first FIDE list had just 555 players and the July 2026 list has around 560,000.

But researchers using move-by-move computer analysis of games and machine-learning analysis suggest that there has been no real inflation.

A 2700 player today is equivalent to a 2700 player in 1971. Top players really just got stronger, perhaps partly due to the myriad ways in which computers have enhanced skill and have speeded up expertise development.

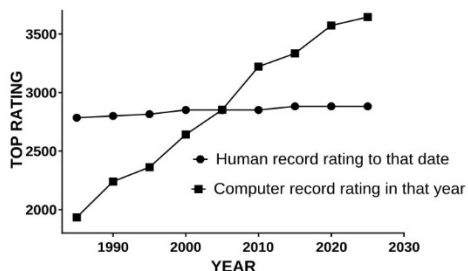
But we may be near the limits of the very best human player. Magnus Carlsen's peak standard rating of 2882 has stood since May 2014, while computers get ever stronger.

Figure 3 shows the highest human rating to date in five year intervals, starting with Fischer's peak of 2785 set in July 1972, then Garry Kasparov's various peaks up to his top of 2851 in January 1999, and Carlsen's 2882.

The top computer rating estimates are from the Swedish Computer Chess Association, with Stockfish heading in 2025.

The best computers equalled the very best human decades ago and now are widely seen as in a completely different league.

Figure 3



Learning Curves

Researchers study skill learning curves to examine individual differences in learning rates, to monitor training regimes, and for clues about underlying learning processes.

Individual chess players may use one to assess their own progress. Such curves, regardless of the actual skill, typically show a similar pattern; early rapid improvement with practice which progressively diminishes and then plateaus.

People have an intuitive idea that this is so but are hazy about curve starting and end points and improvement rates.

Figure 4 shows a chess skill learning curve with Elo ratings over numbers of FIDE-rated games. It is based on the mean rating of 223 eventual Grandmasters who entered the FIDE rating list in July 1985 or later, when FIDE first gives game counts, aged 12 years old or less.

All had played at least 1200 rated games. The initial improvement rate is great, but it levels off and eventually plateaus. Figure 5 shows the same pattern at different rating levels for IM and WGM holders, also playing at least 1200 games, and who had not graduated to a higher title by July 2025.

The curves plateau but what is their fate after much time and an astonishingly large games count?

Figure 6 presents individual curves for two extremely active players. One is the late

Russian Grandmaster Igor Naumkin, the record-holder for number of FIDE-rated games played since July 1985 with an astronomical 5,316 count.

Both curves ascend to a plateau, fluctuate within a range for many games, and then steadily decline, possibly due to aging and/or declining motivation.

Figure 4

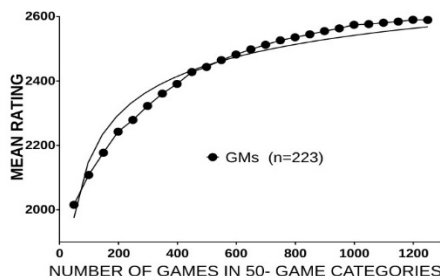


Figure 5

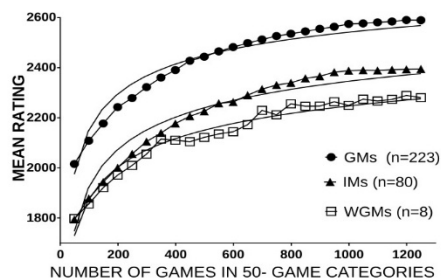
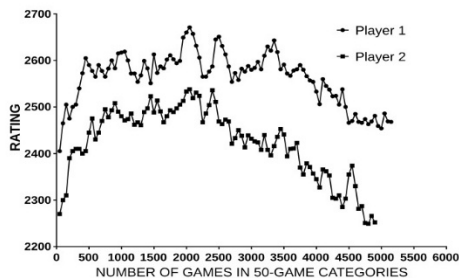


Figure 6



Titles

The Grandmaster title dates back to 1838, when a respondent to the British newspaper Bell's Life referred to 'our past grand master Lewis'.

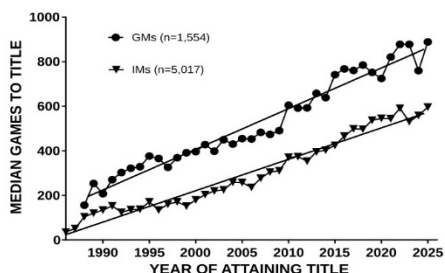
Its award was informal until FIDE made it and two other titles official in 1950 and later added five more monikers. Gino Di Felice estimated that FIDE awarded over 18,000

titles from 1950 to the end of 2016. My own count up to July 2025 is 31,730 titles, bestowed upon 24,639 players.

The age records for youngest title-holders have been getting astoundingly young but the trend for number of games needed for the two most prestigious titles has steadily risen.

Figure 7 presents the median number of games needed to win the IM and GM titles, showing a steady rise.

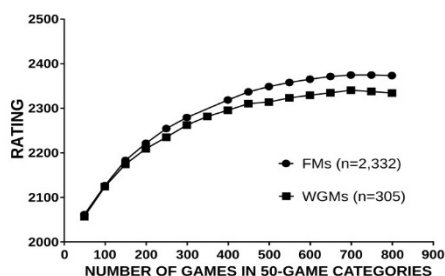
Figure 7



Some consider the highest female-only title of WGM to be about equivalent to an IM title but rating data suggest that it is closer to an FM title.

Figure 8 shows mean ratings of all WGM and male FM title holders who had not graduated to a higher title by July 2025 and who had played at least 750 games from July 1985 to July 2025. The curves overlap for many games and then slightly diverge.

Figure 8



Sex Differences at the Top

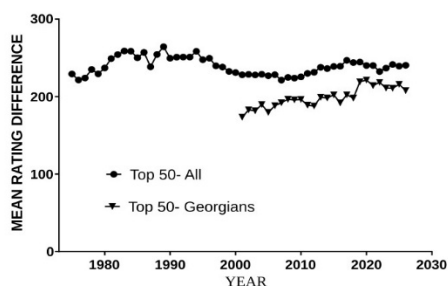
Chess organisers continually try to recruit more female players but perhaps tacitly admit that males on average have more natural talent for and interest in the game.

FIDE still maintains female-only titles and events, with more lax award criteria than for the open titles.

In 2014, I updated a study looking at the sex rating difference at the top since 1975. The study looked at the difference between the mean ratings of the top 50 males and top 50 females on the first list each year, which averaged about a hefty 250 points.

Figure 9 updates it to January 2026 and again shows no convergence. There were predictions that the sexes ultimately would converge at the top but the difference seems intractable.

Figure 9



One popular explanation is such social factors as an unwelcoming male-dominated environment for females and 'erroneous' views that females have less talent for chess that discourage female participation.

Another explanation is many fewer females playing. The Caucasus nation of Georgia traditionally strongly encourages females to play and has produced several female world champions.

In 2026, its female participation rate was about 25% versus the overall FIDE average of 11%.

Figure 9 presents the mean sex rating difference for Georgians from the first year that it had 50 females. The difference is a bit lower than for all players but still is large and rises slightly.

Peak Skill Performance Age

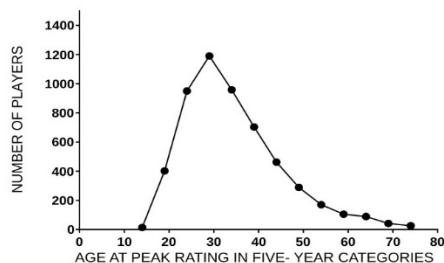
Arpad Elo estimated the peak age for chess skill to be around 35 years old but studies using computer move-by-move analysis suggests that it is down to around age 30 nowadays.

Figure 10 gives a distribution of peak rating age for players who had played at least 800 FIDE-rated games, in five year categories.

Again, the peak seems on average to be around age 30.

Figure 10

(n=5,399)



Natural Talent for Chess?

Natural talent is any aspect of genetic endowment that enables faster skill learning and a higher ultimate performance level.

There was a debate over whether talent even exists or is unimportant, that practice alone is key.

Journalist Malcolm Gladwell coined the ubiquitous 10,000 hours meme, that 10,000 hours of practice is necessary and sufficient for almost anyone to become an expert in any domain.

Some believe that the famous Polgar Sisters case showed that practice alone is key to developing chess skill. However, when examined closely, the case actually shows the importance of natural talent.

Most players are firm believers in natural talent for chess skill, and it probably consists of many ability and propensity factors; IQ, spatial ability, excellent memory, determination, and a strong will to win.

My analysis of ratings data using a statistical technique called factor analysis suggests that a player needs much natural talent to become a GM or WGM, but perhaps much less to reach IM level.

Possibly it mostly is enough to cram the unconscious mind with patterns and strategies to reach IM level, but that question needs more research.

Published in Chessbase.com & from the book **CHess SKILL: Elements, measurement, records, trends, learning curves, scientific research and computer enhancement**, by Robert Howard and published in 2026 by Diamond Island Books.

Electronic and paperback editions are available on Amazon.com.



Robert Howard holds a PhD in psychology from the University of Queensland in Australia and has research interests in human intelligence, learning and memory, and in the development of expertise.

He has carried out many research studies examining expertise in general, using chess data. Until recently, he taught at the University of New South Wales in Sydney.

He has authored six books, the latest being **Chess Skill**, published by Diamond Island Books.

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The Science Corner

Perception in Chess

Perception

William Chase and Herbert Simon tested chess players' memories of positions of games versus random positions.

In all game positions, performance on this test declined as the player's chess rating declined.

At random positions, all levels of players did approximately the same, while more recent research conclusion is that chess masters do slightly better with random positions than weaker players as well.

However, this suggests that the higher-ranked players are able to use some form of chunking that allows them to rapidly encode macro features of the positions.

For instance, even a mediocre player would be able to encode the six pieces comprising a castled king and rook, fianchettoed bishop and three surrounding pawns as a set, while a beginner would be forced to remember these separately.

Criticism

Alexandre Linhares and Anna Elizabeth T. A. Freitas in their 2010 paper, abstract:

Pattern recognition lies at the heart of the cognitive science endeavor. In this paper, we provide some criticism of this notion, using studies of chess as an example.

The game of chess is, as significant evidence shows, a game of abstractions: pressures; force; open files and ranks; time; tightness of defence; old strategies rapidly adapted to new situations.

These ideas do not arise on current computational models, which apply brute force by rote-memorisation.

In this paper we assess the computational models of CHREST and CHUMP, and argue that chess chunks must contain semantic information.

This argument leads to a new and constricting claim, as we propose that key conclusions of Chase and Simon's (1973) influential study stemmed from a non-

sequitur. In the concluding section, we propose a shift in philosophy, from 'pattern recognition' to a framework of 'experience recognition'.

Defence

Counter critique by Peter Lane and Fernand Gobet in 2011, abstract:

Linhares and Freitas (2010; LF) argue that experts use analogical or semantic similarity, similarities that are not available from direct surface representations.

LF make their case using a critique of Chase and Simon (1973b) and the presentation of a few chess positions and examples from other domains.

Their conclusion is that models such as CHREST (Gobet et al., 2001) and theories such as the chunking theory (Chase & Simon, 1973b) and the template theory are inadequate for dealing with these issues.

They propose an alternative paradigm, which they call 'experience recognition'.

Although we find this issue an interesting one, the separation between pattern recognition and problem solving is a lot more complex than LF portray.

We instead suggest that a 'revolution' in our to date successful modeling is not necessary. Especially in the chess domain, LF's examples do not make the point they claim.

Furthermore, their criticisms of CS are incorrect, and they have failed to mention a large number of experimental results that have supported the hypothesis of location-specific encodings.

Although we agree that experts use semantic information and similarities, these ideas already possess analogues in CHREST, which can form the basis of further evolution of the theory.

Neil Charness in 2012, Abstract

Although Linhares and Freitas (2010) have failed to characterise earlier experimental work in chess skill accuracy, their conceptual

approach of 'experience-recognition'-driven problem solving points to the need to incorporate analogical reasoning mechanisms into explanations of how chess players choose the best move in chess.

The Lane and Gobet (2011) commentary and the cognitive simulation models that they espouse consist of plausible mechanisms to support choosing a good move, but need a additional development to incorporate abstract /semantic information.

One possible avenue for future exploration will be to produce hybrid models that use both 'piece-on-square' chunk and template representations and abstract high-level representations to guide search in chess.



William G. (Bill) Chase, (July 23, 1940 - December 16, 1983) was an American psychologist and professor at Carnegie Mellon University, who gained recognition for his experiments demonstrating that good memory is an acquired skill. He researched with Herbert Simon on Perception and Skill in Chess, and co-authored three publications on that topic in 1973. William G. Chase died in December 1983 while jogging, aged 43.

Questioning

Alexandre Linhares et al. in 2012, abstract:
We question Chase and Simon's (1973) study concerning the content of the chess chunks, and we conduct a new variation of the classic chess reconstruction experiments, analysing 25 types of possible reconstruction errors of Grandmasters, masters, and beginners.

The differences between the errors conducted in poor, intermediate, and strategically perfect reconstructions provide insights concerning the encoding of experts.

The results obtained shed clear light into the debate concerning the importance of abstract thought (i.e., forward search) vs. perpetual process (i.e., pattern recognition).

We claim that a clear solution to this debate is ultimately unfeasible, as our experiments demonstrate high entanglement of perception and reasoning.

Our results provide additional evidence that analogy is central to strategic thought in chess.

Quotes

Herbert Simon: to his research, Bill brought powerful experimental skills, ingenuity in experimental design and analysis, a strong sense for theoretical relevance and implications of experimental findings, and a generosity of spirit that made working with him immensely pleasurable and rewarding.

Hans Berliner in A Life's Appraisal:

While a graduate student at CMU, I had ample opportunity of interact with Herb and Bill Chase who was a Post-Doc and later a professor in the Psychology Department there.

It was there that I got involved in the Human Perception of chess which built on the work of the Russians in the 1930s and of De Groot in the 1940s.

I was very impressed by the machinery thta clearly existed in the human head and made it possible to remember positions almost perfectly even after having seen them for only 2 seconds.

What was even more interesting, was that errors in reconstructing the position had a definite pattern to them.

For instance, a Bishop may be misplaced in the reconstruction, but it would still be on the critical diagonal, and thus retain its function on that diagonal whatever the function was.

This insight has been incredibly important in my career, and is seen clearly in the program CAPS, in my book 'The System', and in other writings presently under way.

Recent Tournaments

Grand Chess Tour - Sinquefield Cup 2026

The Event

The Saint Louis Club brought ten Grandmasters to the Saint Louis Chess Club from 10 to 20 August for the fourth leg of the 2026 Grand Chess Tour.

Fabiano Caruana, Vincent Keymer and Wesley So were the leading tour contenders in a field that also includes World Championship challenger Javokhir Sindarov and Praggnanandhaa Rameshbabu.

The Grand Chess Tour staged its eleventh edition this year. The circuit comprises two classical tournaments, three rapid and blitz events and the knockout-format GCT Finals.

Full tour participants are scheduled to contest both classical legs and two of the three faster events, with wildcards completing the individual lineups.

The four highest-placed regulars in the overall standings qualified for the finals.

Grand Chess Tour 2026 * Saint Louis - United States of America * 10-20.08.2026 * Cat. 20 (2748)													
N	Player	Data	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	P
1	So W.	USA 2765		=	=	=	=	=	=	1	=	1	5½
2	Praggnanandhaa R.	IND 2750	=		0	1	=	=	1	=	=	1	5½
3	Keymer V.	GER 2767	=	1		0	0	=	=	1	1	=	5
4	Sindarov J.	UZB 2777	=	0	1		=	=	=	=	=	1	5
5	Aronian L.	USA 2721	=	=	1	=		=	=	0	=	=	4½
6	Sevian S.	USA 2701	=	=	=	=	=		0	=	1	=	4½
7	Vachier Lagrave M.	FRA 2713	=	0	=	=	=	1		=	=	=	4½
8	Caruana F.	USA 2792	0	=	0	=	1	=	=		=	1	4½
9	Giri A.	NED 2764	=	=	0	=	=	0	=	=		1	4
10	Van Foreest J.	NED 2728	0	0	=	0	=	=	=	0	0		2



J.Sindarov & F.Caruana

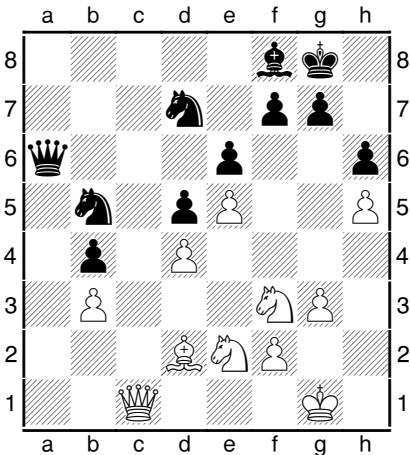
□ Keymer Vincent

■ Praggnanandhaa Rameshbabu

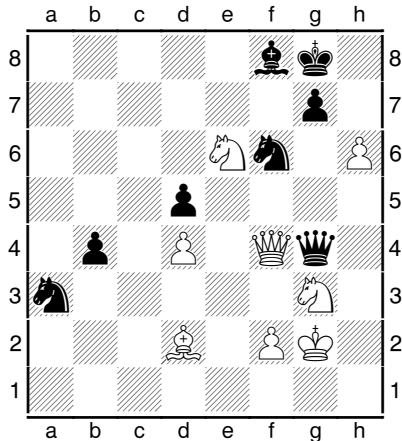
E07 Saint Louis 2026

1.c4 e6 2.g3 d5 3.Bg2 Nf6 4.Nf3 Be7 5.0-0 6.d4 Nbd7 7.Qd3 a5 8.Nc3 c6 9.b3 b6 10.e4 a4 11.e5 Ne8 12.Be3 Nc7 13.h4 Ba6 14.Rfd1 axb3 15.axb3 b5 16.cxd5 b4

17.Qc2 cxd5 18.Ne2 Re8 19.Nf4 Nb5 20.Ng5 Nf8 21.Bf1 Na3 22.Qd2 Bxf1 23.Rxf1 Nb5 24.Ne2 Ra3 25.Rab1 Qa8 26.Rfc1 Ra2 27.Rb2 Rxb2 28.Qxb2 Rc8 29.Nf3 Nd7 30.Bg5 Bf8 31.Bd2 Rxc1+ 32.Qxc1 Qa6 33.h5 h6 (D)



34.g4 Nb8 35.g5 Qc6 36.Qd1 hgx5 37.Nxg5 Na3?
 37...Be7! 38.Kg2 Bxg5 39.Bxg5 Na3 oo.
 38.Ng3 Nd7 39.Qg4 Qc2 40.Qf4 f6 41.exf6
 Nxf6 42.Nxe6 Qxb3 43.h6! Qd1+ 44.Kg2
 Qg4 (D)



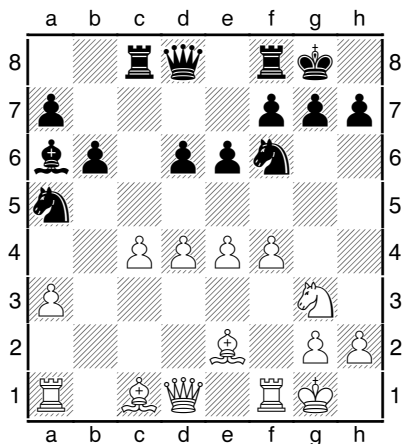
45.h7+! Kh8 46.Qxg4 Nxg4 47.Nxf8 b3
 48.Bc1 Nc4 49.Nf5 Nf6 50.Ne7 Nxh7
 51.Nfg6 #
 1-0

□ Caruana Fabiano

■ So Wesley

E24 Saint Louis 2026

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.a3 Bxc3+
 5.bxc3 c5 6.f3 Nc6 7.e4 d6 8.Ne2 0-0 9.Ng3
 b6 10.Be2 Ba6 11.0-0 Rc8 12.f4 cxd4
 13.cxd4 Na5 (D)



White is losing a pawn, but he built an attack.

14.f5 h6!

14...Bxc4 15.Bg5 oo/=.

15.e5?!

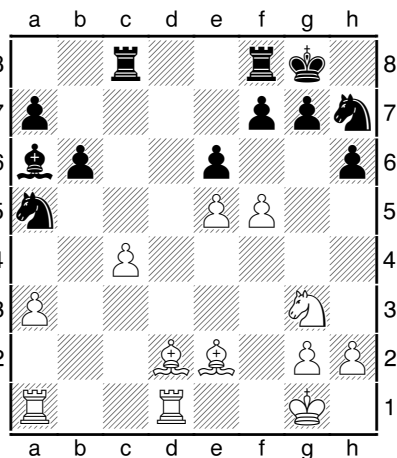
15.Rf4, seems more dangerous: 15...Bxc4

16.Bxc4 Nxc4 17.Rh4 Nh7 18.Rh3 oo/=.

15...dxe5 16.dxe5 Qxd1 17.Rxd1 Nh7

18.Bd2?! (D)

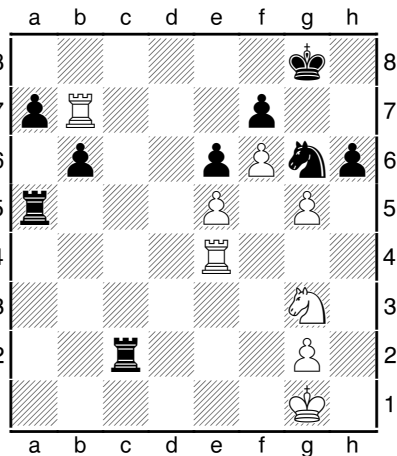
18.f6 g5 19.a4 Rfd8 20.Ba3 oo/=, would be a better try.



18...Nb3! 19.Rab1 Nxd2 20.Rxd2 Bxc4
 21.Bxc4 Rxc4 22.Rd7 Ra4! 23.Rb4?

23.fxe6 fxe6 24.Rc1 Ng5 25.Rcc7 Rf7
 26.Nh5 Rh4 -/+.

23...Rxa3 24.Rg4 Ra1+ 25.Kf2 Ra5! 26.f6
 g5 27.Re4 Rc8 28.h4 Nf8 29.Rb7 Ng6
 30.hxg5 Rc2+ 31.Kg1 (D)



31...Raa2! 32.Rb8+ Kh7 33.Rb7 hxg5

34.Rxf7+ Kh6 35.Nf1 Rxg2+ 36.Kh1 Rgf2

37.Kg1 Nh4!

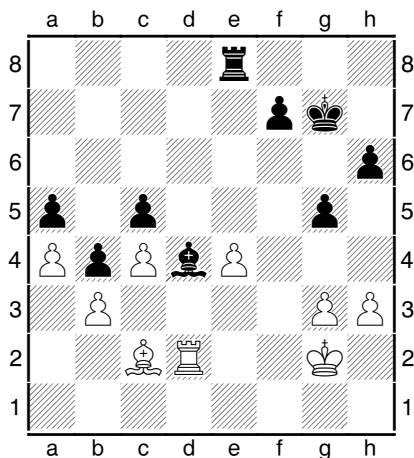
0-1

□ Keymer Vincent

■ Sindarov Javokhir

A57 Saint Louis 2026

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 b5 4.Nf3 b4 5.g3 g6
6.b3 Bg7 7.Bb2 0-0 8.Bg2 a5 9.0-0 d6
10.Nbd2 Ra6 11.a4 Re8 12.Ng5 h6 13.Nh3
e6 14.dxe6 Bxe6 15.Nf4 Bf5 16.Ra2 Nbd7
17.Re1 g5 18.Nd3 Bg6 19.Ba1 Ra7 20.Nf1
Be4 21.f3 Bxd3 22.Qxd3 Ne5 23.Bxe5 dxe5
24.Qxd8 Rxd8 25.Ne3 e4 26.fxe4 Nxe4
27.Bxe4 Bd4 28.Kg2 Bxe3 29.Rf1 Re7
30.Bd3 Kg7 31.Rf5 Bd4 32.Rd2 Rde8 33.e4
Re5 34.Rxe5 Bxe5 35.Bc2 Bd4 36.h3 (D)



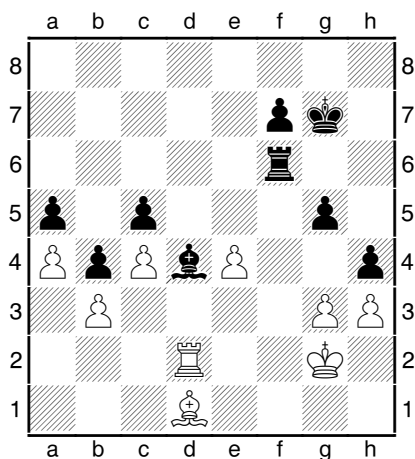
This opposite-coloured bishop ending seems quite drawish, but the extra rook for each side favours Black. White has weak pawns on b3 and g3 and the black king will try to penetrate, even by exchanging the rooks! The main problem of White is the passivity of his pieces, without any chances for counterplay...

36...Re6! 37.Rd1 Rf6 38.Rd2!

White defends quite well. The 'natural' 38.Rf1?, would lose to 38...Rxf1 39.Kxf1 Kf6 40.Ke2 Ke5 41.Bd3 f6, when the black king will penetrate to the queenside or the kingside, winning decisive material: 42.Bc2 Bg1 43.Kd3 Bh2 44.g4 Kf4 -+.

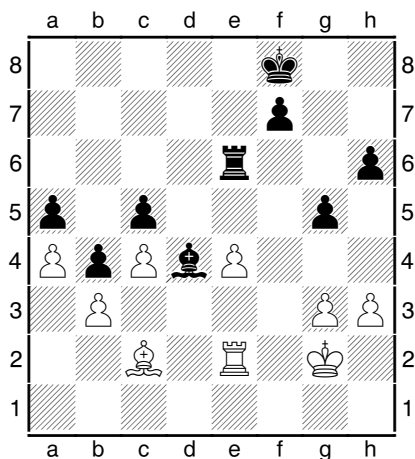
38...Kf8?

The text seems to be quite slow and gives White the time to re-organise his position. Black could opt for the direct 38...h5!, trying to create safe squares for his rook on the f-file: 39.Bd1! (39.Re2? g4 40.hxg4 hxg4 41.e5 Rf3-+) 39...h4 (D)



40.g4 (40.gxh4 gxh4 41.Bh5 Kh6! [41...Rf4? 42.Re2 Kf6 43.e5+ Bxe5 44.Bxf7 Rd4! 45.Bd5 Rd3 46.Rf2+ =] 42.Bf3 Kg5 -/+) 40...Rd6 41.Bc2 Re6 42.Re2 Kf6 -/+.

39.Re2 Re6 (D)



40.Re1

White should think of giving-up his weak e-pawn by 40.e5! Bxe5 41.Bf5 Re7 42.Kf3 Kg7 43.g4 Kf6 =+.

40...Ke7?!

40...Bc3 41.Re2 Re5 =+, seems accurate.

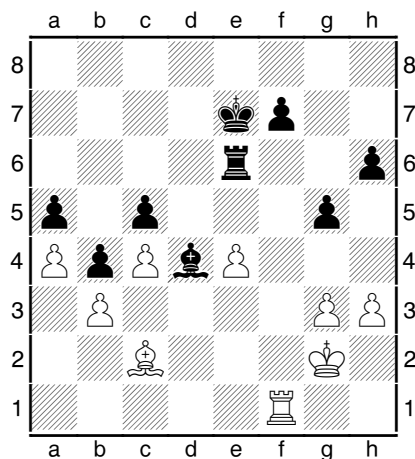
41.Rf1?

Again, sacrificing the pawn by 41.e5!, was White's only chance. After 41...Bxe5 42.Bf5 Bc3 43.Bxe6 Bxe1 44.Bd5 Kf6 45.Kf3 Ke5 46.Bxf7 Kd4 47.Ke2 Bxg3 48.Kd2 Bf4+ 49.Kc2 =, White holds!

41...Be5! 42.Rd1 Bd4

42...Rf6 43.Rd2 Bd4 =+, could be tried.

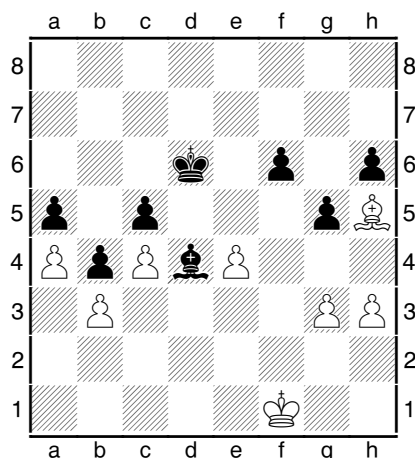
43.Rf1 (D)



43...Rf6! 44.Bd1!

44.Rxf6?, would lose to 44...Kxf6 45.Kf3 Ke5 -, as in the above mentioned variations.

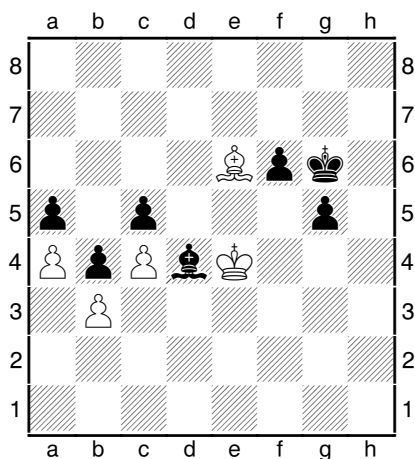
44...Rxf1 45.Kxf1 Kd6 46.Bh5 f6 (D)



In general, this plain opposite-coloured bishop ending shouldn't be that 'difficult' for White to hold. But the truth is that White should be 'creative'...

47.h4?

The text is losing, but the defence was already difficult. White had to find 47.Ke2 Ke5 48.Bg6 Bc3 49.Bh5! (49.Bf5? Kd4 -+) 49...Kxe4 50.Bf3+ Kd4 51.g4! (51.Bh5? f5 52.Bf3 Bb2 53.Kd2 Ba1 54.Bh5 Ke4 55.Ke2 Be5 56.g4 f4 -+) 51...Ba1 52.Kd2 Ke5 53.Ke3 Bd4+ 54.Ke2 Kf4 55.Bc6 Kg3 56.Bd7! Kxh3 57.Kf3 Kh4 58.Bf5 h5 59.gxh5 Kxh5 60.Be6 Kg6 61.Ke4! = (D)



The typical strength of the opposite-coloured bishops ending; even two extra pawns cannot help...

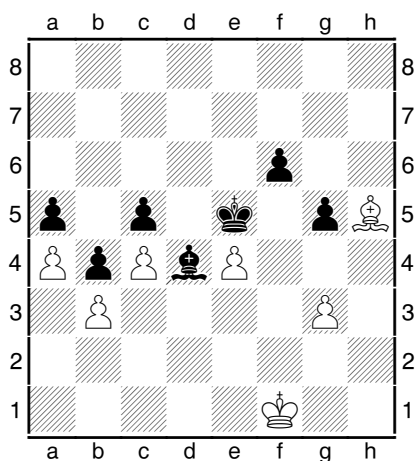
47...Ke5!

Now Black is winning, as his king would penetrate in either side.

48.hxg5

48.Bf3, couldn't save White after 48...gxh4 49.gxh4 (49.Kg2 Be3! 50.Kh3 hxg3 51.Kxg3 Kd4 -+) 49...Be3! 50.Ke2 Kd4 -+.

48...hxg5 (D)



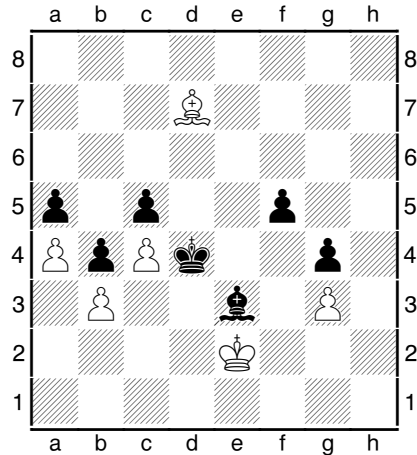
49.Ke2

Or 49.Bf3 Be3 50.Ke2 Kd4 -+.

49...Kxe4 50.Bf3+ Kf5 51.Kd3 g4! 52.Bb7 Ke5 53.Ke2 f5 54.Bc6 Bg1 55.Kf1 Be3 56.Ke2 Kd4

Game over, as Black has an extra pawn and his king penetrates into the queenside as well, targeting the b3-pawn.

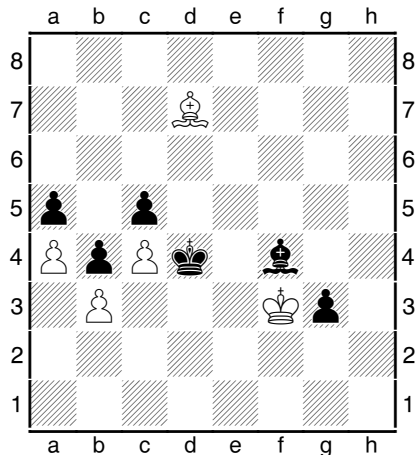
57.Bd7 (D)



57...f4

57...Bh6 58.Bxf5 Kc3 -+, was an alternative win.

58.gxf4 g3 59.Kf3 Bxf4! (D)



And White resigned, as the b3-pawn cannot be defended...

0-1

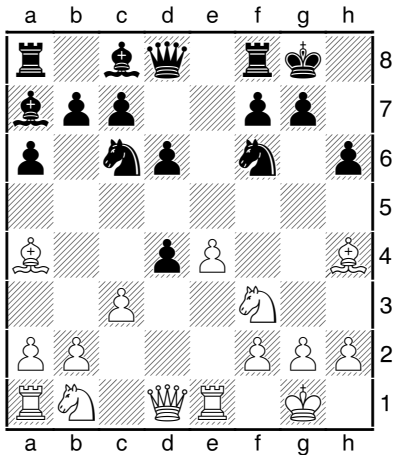
1 st Position Play-off					
N	Player	1	2	3	R
1	So,W	=	=	=	1
2	Praggnan R.	=	=	=	0

□ Vachier Lagrave Maxime

■ Praggnanandhaa Rameshbabu

C78 Saint Louis 2026

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 Bc5 6.c3 0-0 7.d4 Ba7 8.Bg5 h6 9.Bh4 exd4 10.Re1 d6 (D)

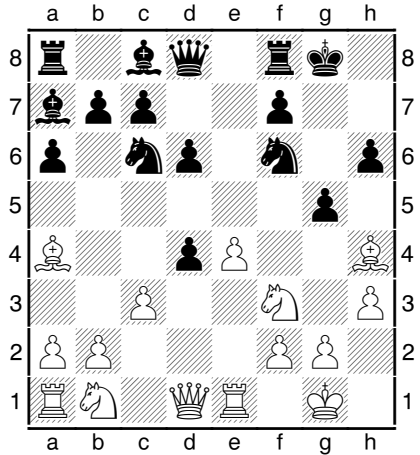


11.h3?

Too slow. White could go for 11.Bxc6 bxc6 12.Nxd4 Bd7 13.Nd2 Re8 14.f4 += Popovic,D-Sarenac,I Vrnjacka Banja 2022.

11...g5 (D)

Pragg could have gone for the more cautious 11...dxc3! 12.Nxc3 Ne5 13.Bg3 Qe7 =+. The text is a novelty to 11...b5?! 12.Bb3 += Goryachkina,A-Lagno,K Kolkata 2024. In turn, Pragg goes for another trying move, inviting a piece sacrifice. The Indian GM also spent 17 minutes before pushing his g-pawn.



12.Bxc6 bxc6 13.Nxg5!

A more or less forced piece sacrifice, as 13.Bg3 Re8 =+, would be fine for Black.

13...hxcg5 14.Bxg5 Kg7 15.cxd4?

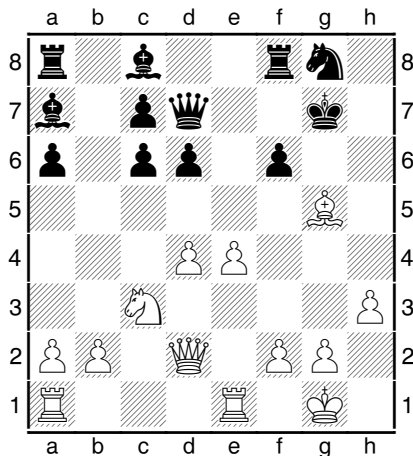
MVL chooses the wrong move after spending 24 minutes. Correct was 15.Qf3! Re8 16.Nd2, when Black is forced to play

16...Re5 17.Qg3 Be6 18.Bf4+ Kf8 19.Bxe5 dxe5 20.Qxe5 +=.

15...Qd7!

Un-pinning the knight.

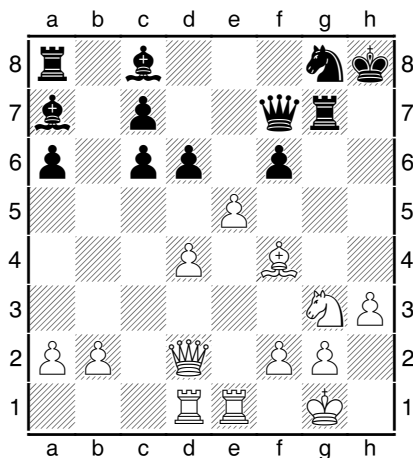
16.Qd2 Ng8 17.Nc3 f6! (D)



Black has dealt with his opponent's attacking threats, and is now for choice.

18.Bf4 Kh8 19.Rad1 Rf7 20.Ne2 Rg7 21.Ng3 Qf7 22.e5? (D)

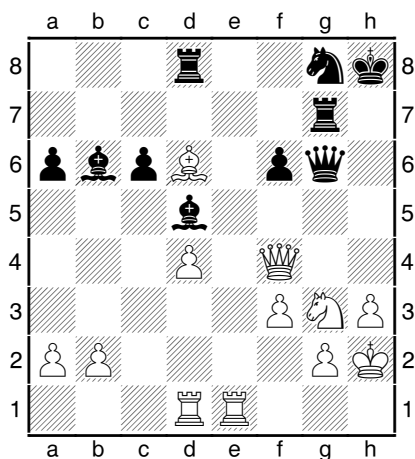
White was already in trouble, but after this inaccurate pawn push, Black's advantage grows considerably. Better is 22.Qc3 Rb8 23.a3 Ne7 -/+, but Black is also clearly better here.



22...Be6! 23.exd6 cxd6 24.Bxd6 Rd8 25.Qf4 Bd5

All Black's pieces are active and one of them is extra!

26.f3 Qg6 27.Kh2 Bb6 (D)



White resigned. Pragg, who has an extra piece, is threatening to capture on d6 and play ...Bc7, or to play ...Bc7, if White moves the bishop now.

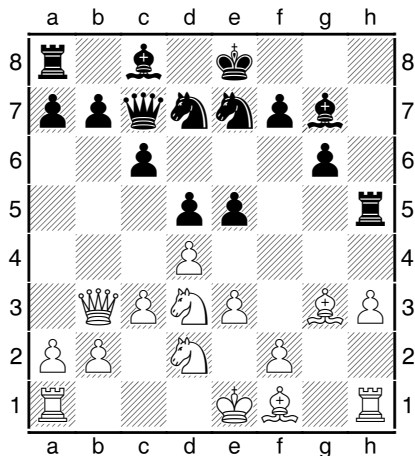
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□ **Keymer Vincent**

■ **Caruana Fabiano**

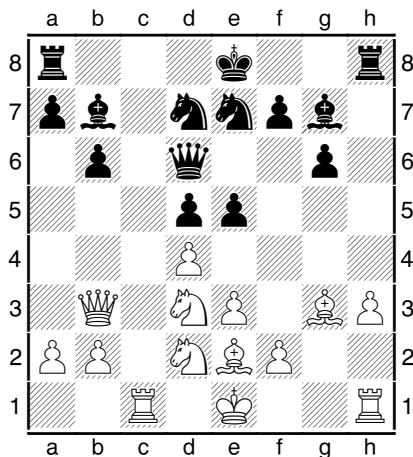
D02 Saint Louis 2026

1.d4 d5 2.c3 e6 3.Nf3 Bf5 4.Qb3 Qc7 5.Nh4 Bg4 6.h3 Be6 7.g4 g6 8.Ng2 Bg7 9.Nf4 Bc8 10.Nd3 Nd7 11.Bf4 e5 12.Bg3 h5 13.gxh5 Rxh5 14.e3 Ne7 15.Nd2 (D)



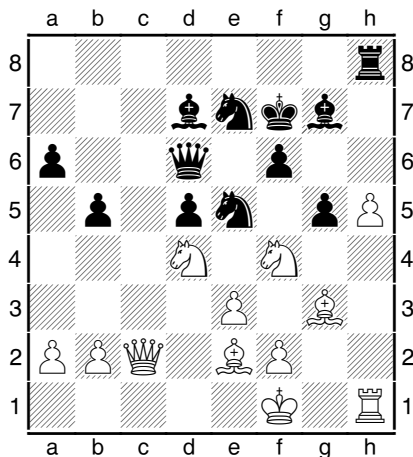
Both kings are in the centre, and Black can no longer castle short. After just 15 moves, V.Keymer has 44 minutes remaining to F.Caruana's 33. Players are out of deeply explored territory, making for an interesting battle.

15...b6 16.c4 Bb7 17.cxd5 cxd5 18.Be2 Rh8
19.Rc1 Qd6 (D)



White is for choice. V.Keymer handled well the unorthodox position that appeared on the board. Moreover, F.Caruaa had 11 minutes for 21 moves at this point.

20.dxe5 Nxe5 21.Nf3 f6 22.Nd4 Rc8
23.Rxc8+ Bxc8 24.Nb5 Qd7 25.Nf4 a6
26.Nd4 Qd6 27.h4 b5 28.Qc2 Bd7 29.Kf1
Kf7 30.h5 g5 (D)



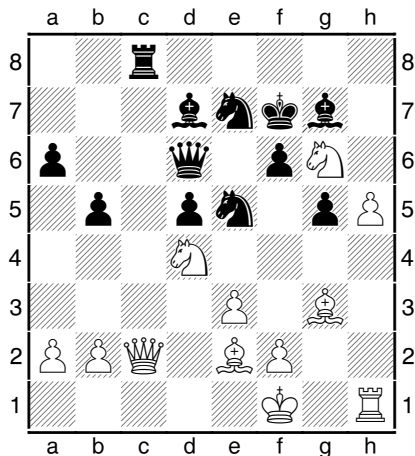
31.Ng6?!

Inaccurate. White is still better, though. Engines prefer 31.Nd3 Rc8 32.Qb1 Ng8 33.b4 +/-, where White continues to up the positional pressure.

31...Rc8?! (D)

Engines do not approve the text, though it is surely a natural human move. Furthermore, the alternative line shown by the computer

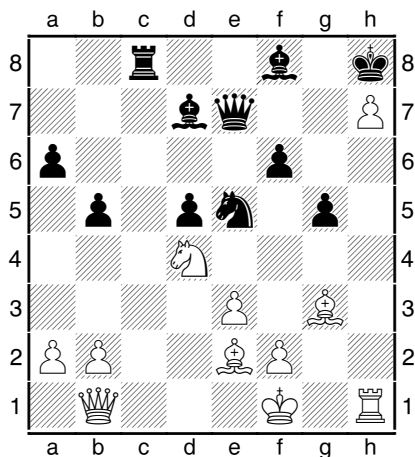
leaves Black defending passively. Objectively stronger is 31...N7xg6 32.hxg6+ Kg8 33.Rxh8+ Kxh8 34.Bd3 +/- and though White's pawn on g6 looks annoying, it is not trivial to find a winning plan for him.



32.Qb1! Kg8 33.Nxe7+ Qxe7 34.h6! Bf8
35.h7+?

Too hasty. White loses a big portion of his advantage. V.Keymer had 7 minutes to F.Caruaa's 30 seconds - perhaps the German GM should have spent a bit more time before making his decision. Very strong is 35.f4 Nc4 36.Qg6+ Kh8 37.fxg5 Be8 (in case of 37...fxg5, White has 38.Bxc4 dxc4 39.Nf3 +/-) 38.Qxf6+ Qxf6+ 39.gxf6 Nxe3+ 40.Kf2 Nc4 41.Bg4 +-, with a clearly winning position for White.

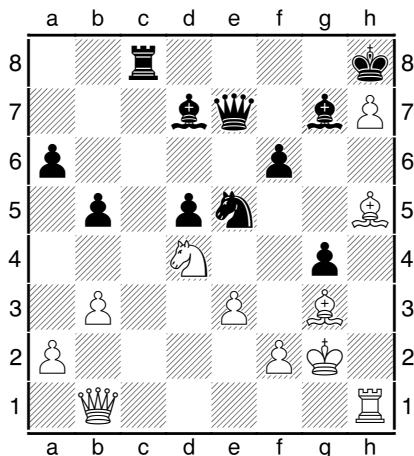
35...Kh8 (D)



36.Kg2 Bg7 37.Nf5 Qe6 38.Nd4 Qf7 39.Bh5

Qe7 40.b3 g4? (D)

After surviving a tough middlegame and partially consolidating his position, F.Caruana falters in the last move before reaching the time control. Correct is 40...Rf8 41.Nf5 Qe6 42.Nxg7 Kxg7 43.f4 gxf4 44.exf4 Nf7 45.Bf2 +/=.



41.Nf5! Bxf5 42.Qxf5 Qb7 43.Bxe5?

V.Keymer decides to simplify the position. 43.Bxg4, is stronger: 43...d4+ 44.e4 Nxg4 45.Qxg4 Re8 46.f3 +/- . Of course, humans prefer not to allow Black to get a passer on the d-file so easily.

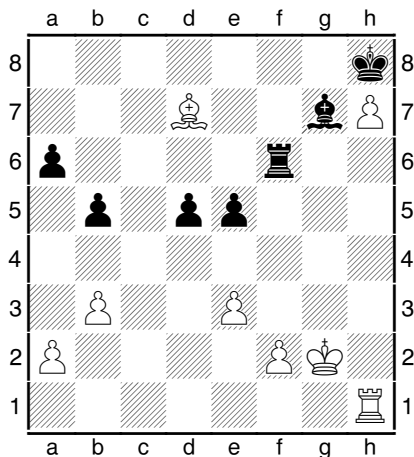
43...fxe5?

43...d4+ 44.e4 fxe5 45.Qxg4 d3 46.Bg6 +/=, should have been played.

44.Bxg4?

44.Bg6! +/-.

44...Rf8 45.Qd7 Qxd7 46.Bxd7 Rf6 (D)

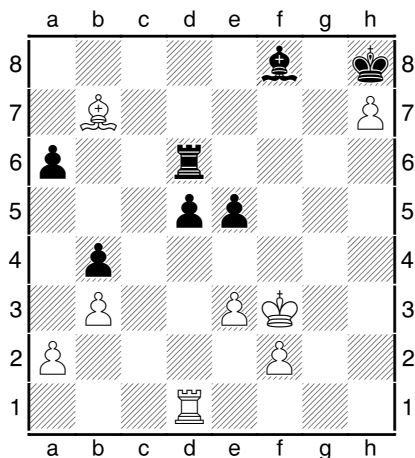


For a second day in a row, V.Keymer reaches a position with rooks and bishops of opposite colours - he also has an extra pawn. Engines consider this position to be close to completely equal, but F.Caruana had been defending a tough position for a while now, while being down on the clock permanently.

47.Bc8 b4?

A crucial mistake. Better is to immediately create counterplay with 47...d4! 48.exd4 exd4 49.Rh3 Bh6 50.Rd3 Kxh7 51.Rxd4 and Black has good drawing chances here.

48.Bb7 Rd6 49.Kf3 Bf8 50.Rh5 Bg7 51.Rh1 Bf8 52.Rd1 (D)



52...Kxh7?

52...d4 53.exd4 Rxd4 54.Re1 +/-, looks like a better try.

53.Bxd5 Rf6+ 54.Ke2 Kg7 55.Rc1 Bd6 56.Rc8!

The white rook infiltrates Black's position. It is all about getting the initiative in these set-ups - V.Keymer is winning.

56...Rh6 57.Rg8+ Kf6 58.Ra8 Rg6 59.Rxa6

White is two pawns up now. V.Keymer continued to patiently make progress until getting the full point.

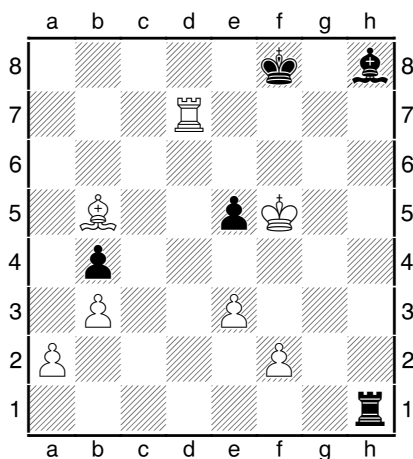
59...Ke7 60.Ra7+ Kd8

Also losing was 60...Kf6 61.Kd3 Rg7 62.Ra6 Rd7 63.Ke4 +/-.

61.Kd3 Rg1 62.Be6 Ke8 63.Ke4 Rf1 64.Rd7

64.Rf7 Re1 65.Rd7 Be7 66.Rd2 +/-.

64...Bf8 65.Rd2 Bg7 66.Kf5 Bh8 67.Bc4 Rh1 68.Bb5+ Kf8 69.Rd8+ Ke7 70.Rd7+ Kf8 (D)



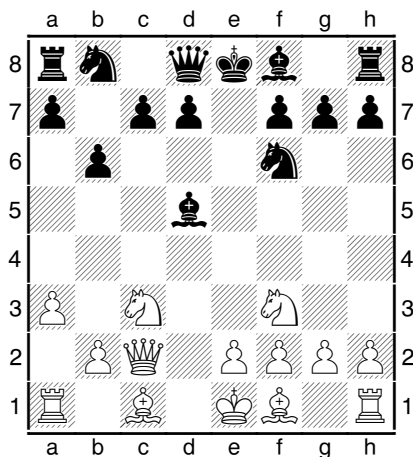
71.Bc4 Rh2 72.f3 Rh5+ 73.Kg4 Rh2
74.Rf7+ Ke8 75.Rb7 e4 76.Kg3
1-0

□ Sindarov Javokhir

■ Van Foreest Jorden

E12 Saint Louis 2026

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 b6 4.a3 Ba6 5.Qc2
Bb7 6.d5 exd5 7.cxd5 Bxd5 8.Nc3 (D)



8...Be6?

An early novelty to 8...Bxf3! 9.gxf3 Nc6
10.e3 oo Wagner,D-Schulze,L Munich 2025.
9.e4 Be7 10.Bf4 0-0 11.Rd1 c5 12.Be2 Nc6
13.h3 Qc8 14.Nd5?!

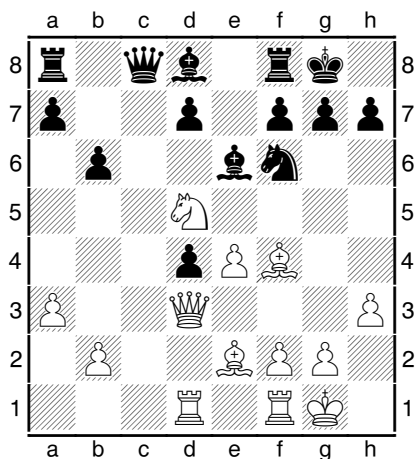
14.0-0 +=.

14...Bd8?

14...Bxd5! 15.exd5 Nd4 16.Nxd4 cxd4
17.Qxc8 Raxc8 18.d6 Bd8 oo.

15.0-0 Nd4 16.Nxd4 cxd4 17.Qd3?! (D)

17.Nxf6+! Bxf6 18.Qd2 +=.



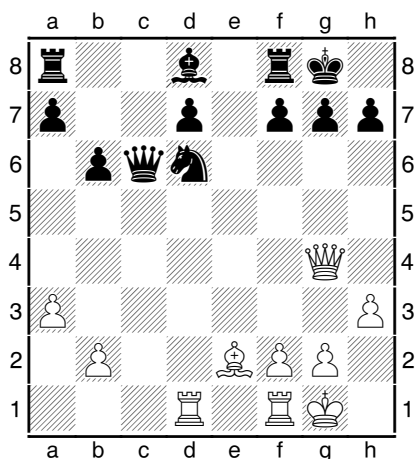
17...Bxd5?

The crucial mistake. An in-form J.Van
Foreest surely would have found the correct
17...Nxd5 18.exd5 Bxd5 19.Qxd4 Bb7
(19...Bc6? 20.Be5 +/-) 20.Be5 Qc5 21.Qxc5
(not 21.Bxg7?, due to 21...Qg5! 22.g3 Qxg7
-+) 21...bxc5 22.Rxd7 Bc6 23.Rd2, with a
tiny advantage for White. Black should be
able to defend this position.

18.exd5 Nxd5 19.Bg3! Ne7 20.Bd6! Qc6

20...Re8, fails to 21.Qe4 Qc6 22.Rxd4 Bc7
23.Bxe7 Qxe4 24.Rxe4 d5 25.Re3 Bf4 and
now 26.Bh4 Bxe3 27.fxe3 Rxe3 28.Bf3 +/-,
when White will win with the bishop pair vs.
the rook.

21.Qxd4 Nf5 22.Qg4 Nxd6 (D)



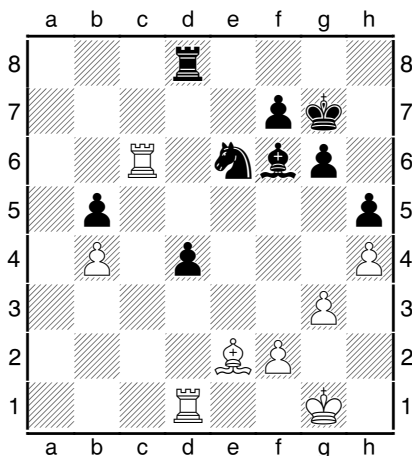
23.Bf3!

The point!

23...Qc7 24.Bxa8 Bf6 25.Qf4 Nb5 26.Qxc7 Nxc7 27.Bf3

White emerges with an extra exchange in a rather straightforward position. J.Sindarov had no trouble converting his advantage into what was his second consecutive victory in Saint Louis.

27...Rd8 28.Rd2 d5 29.Rfd1 d4 30.Rc2 Ne6 31.b4 g6 32.g3 h5 33.h4 Kg7 34.Be2 a5 35.Rc6 axb4 36.axb4 b5 (D)



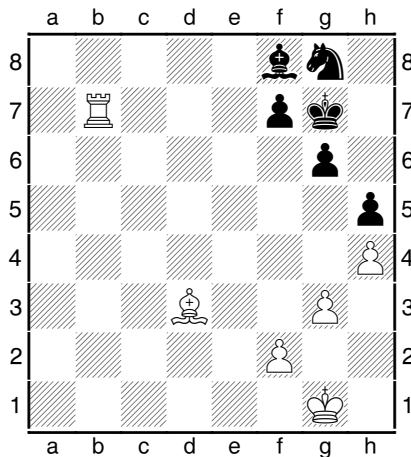
37.Rb6 Nc7 38.Rb7 Nd5 39.Rc1 Be7 39...Nc3 40.Bd3 +-.

40.Bxb5 Bxb4 41.Bc4 Bf8

41...Bc3 42.Rc2 Kf6 43.Re2 +-.

42.Re1 d3 43.Rd1 Ne7 44.Rxd3 Rxd3

45.Bxd3 Ng8 (D)



An easy, theoretical won ending.

46.Bc4 Nh6 47.Kg2 Bc5 48.f3 Kf8 49.Kh3

Be7 50.g4! hxg4+ 51.fxg4 g5 52.Rb5 gxh4

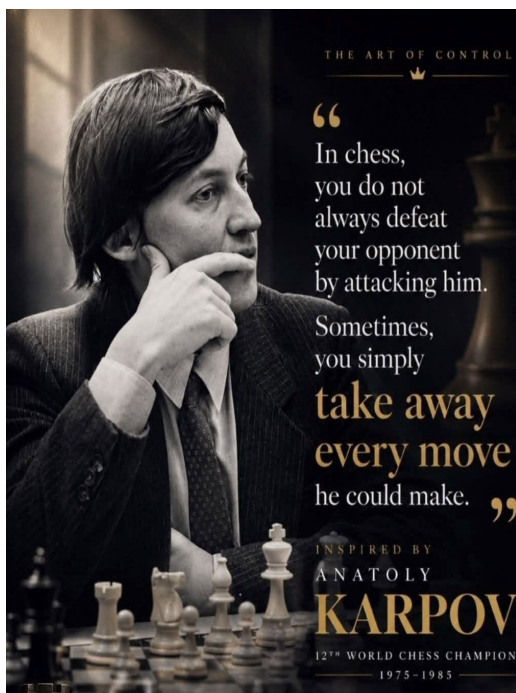
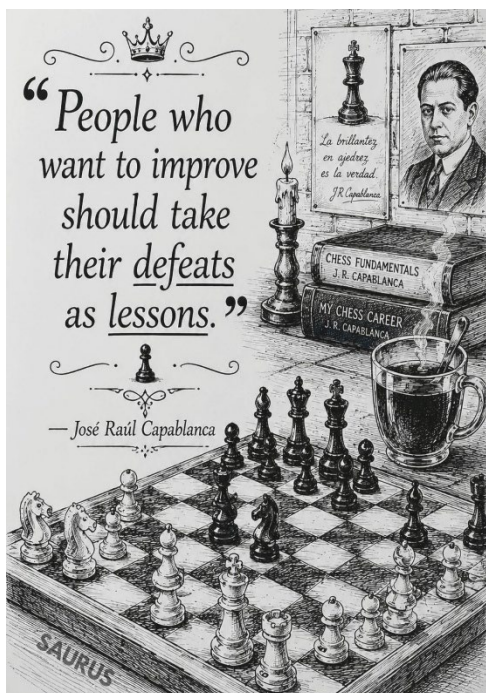
53.g5 Ng8 54.Rf5 f6 55.Ra5

55.Bxg8 Kxg8 56.gxf6 Bf8 57.f7+ Kg7

58.Kxh4 +-.

55...Kg7 56.Ra7

1-0



My Students Corner

Vasiliki-Viktoria Talaverou

The Events

This was a hot summer for my 15-years-old Greek student V.V.Talaverou. Firstly she won the Greek Championship for Women U20, with the excellent score of 6/7 (+5 =2 -0). And this was quite a result, as nearly all her opponents were at the ages of 19/20-years-old!

□ Kalliora Despoina

■ Talaverou Vasiliki-Viktoria

D35 Athens 2026

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.cxd5 exd5

5.Bg5 Be7 6.e3 c6 7.Bd3 Bg4?! 8.Nge2

8.Qb3 Qb6 9.Qc2 Nbd7 10.h3 Be6 (10...Bh5

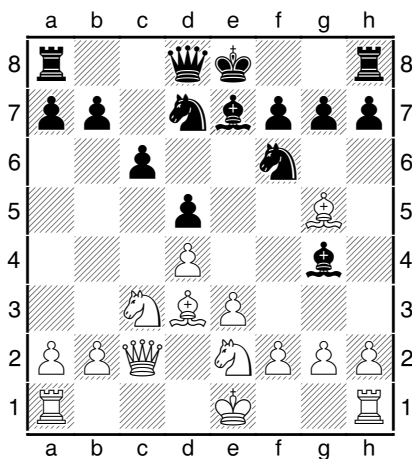
11.f4 +/-) 11.Nge2 +/-.

8...Nbd7 9.Qc2 (D)

9.f3 Bh5 10.Qb3 (10.Nf4 Bg6 11.Nxg6 hxg6

12.Qc2 oo) 10...Qb6 11.Qc2 Bg6 12.0-0-0

+=.



9...0-0?!

9...Bxe2 10.Nxe2 h6 11.Bh4 Nh5 12.Bxe7 Qxe7 13.0-0 +=.

10.0-0?

10.f3 Bh5 11.Nf4 Bg6 12.Nxg6 hxg6 13.h4 +/-.

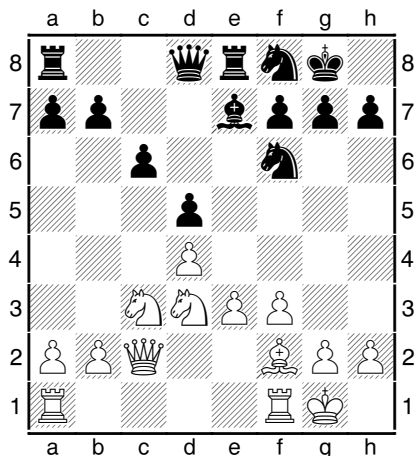
10...Re8?!

10...Bxe2! 11.Nxe2 g6 12.b4 +=.

11.f3?!

11.Ng3 Nf8 12.h3 Be6 13.Rae1 +=.

11...Bh5 12.Bh4 Nf8 13.Bf2 Bg6 14.Nf4 Bxd3 15.Nxd3 (D)



15...Ng6?!

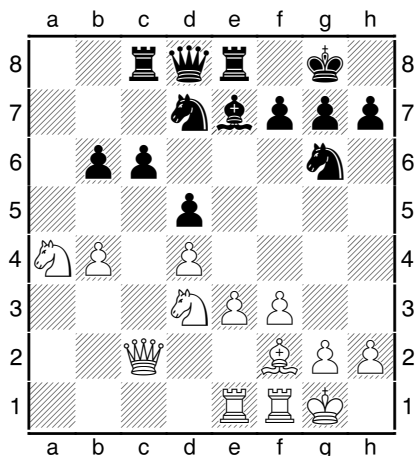
15...Rc8 16.Rae1 Ne6 oo ; 15...Ne6 16.Rae1 Rc8 oo.

16.Rae1 Rc8 17.b4 a5 18.a3 axb4 9.axb4 Nd7 20.Na4?!

20.e4 dxe4 21.fxe4 Nf6 22.h3 +=.

20...b6?! (D)

20...b5! 21.Nac5 Nb6 =+.

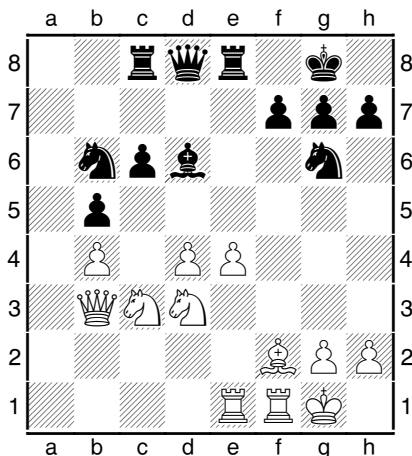


21.Qb3?!

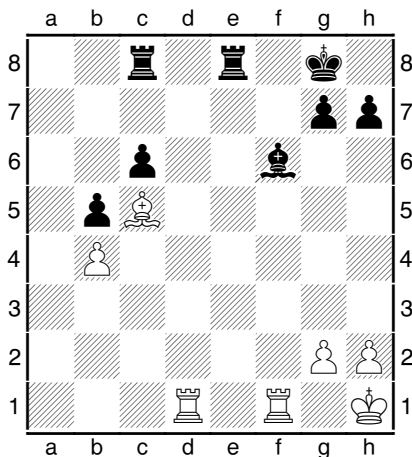
21.Nc3 b5 (21...Bd6 22.b5 +=) 22.e4 Nb6 23.e5 oo.

21...Bd6?

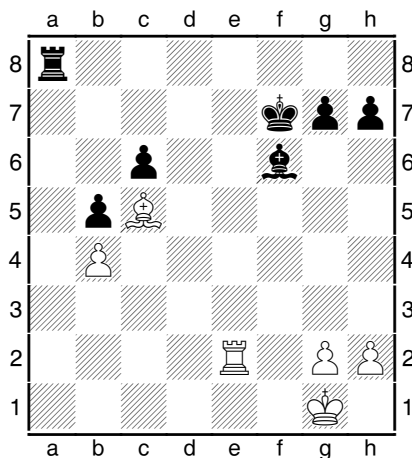
21...b5 22.Nac5 Nxc5 23.Nxc5 Bxc5 =+.
22.e4?!
 22.b5! +=.
22...b5 23.Nc3 dxe4?!
 23...Nf4! 24.Nxf4 Bxf4 25.exd5 Rxe1
 26.Rxe1 Bd2 27.Ra1 Bxc3 28.Qxc3 cxd5 oo.
24.fxe4 Nb6 (D)



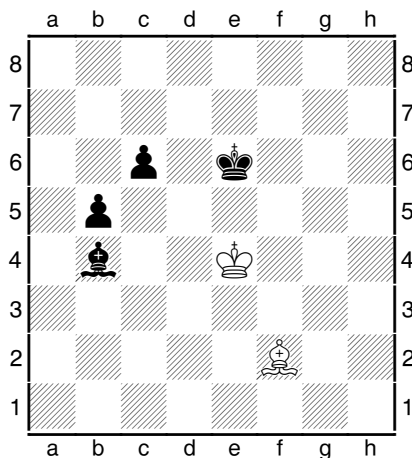
25.e5! Be7 26.Rd1 Nc4 27.Nb2?! Nxb2
28.Qxb2 Nf4! 29.Be3?
 29.d5 Nxd5 30.Qb3 =.
29...Nd5 30.Nxd5 Qxd5 31.Qc3 Bd8
 31...Ra8 32.Rc1 Ra6 =+.
32.Ra1 f6! 33.Kh1?
 33.Rad1 Re6 =+.
33...fxe5 34.dxe5 Bc7! 35.Rad1 Qxe5
36.Qxe5?
 36.Qb3+ Qe6 37.Qxe6+ Rxe6 38.Bc5 -/+.
36...Bxe5 37.Bc5 Bf6 (D)
 37...Red8 -/+.



38.Rfe1?
 38.Rd2 -/+.
38...Rxe1+ 39.Rxe1 Kf7?
 39...Ra8! 40.Kg1 Ra1 -+.
40.Kg1 Ra8 41.Re2 (D)



41...Ra1+?!
 41...Re8 42.Rd2 Rd8 43.Re2 Bd4+ -+.
42.Kf2 Rd1 43.Re4 Rd5 44.Kf3?!
 44.g4 -/+.
44...Rf5+ 45.Kg3 Re5! 46.Rxe5 Bxe5+
47.Kf3 Ke6 48.Ke4 Bxh2 49.Bd4 g6 50.g4
h5 51.gxh5 gxh5 52.Bf2 Bd6 53.Be1 h4
54.Bxh4 Bxb4 55.Bf2 (D)



55...Kd6 56.Bd4 c5 57.Bg7 Be1 58.Bf8+
Kc6 59.Be7 b4 60.Kd3 Kb5 61.Kc2 c4
62.Bf6 b3+ 63.Kd1 c3 64.Kc1 Bd2+ 65.Kd1
b2 66.Kc2 Ka4 67.Be7 b1Q+! 68.Kxb1 Kb3
69.Ka1 c2 70.Ba3 Bc3+
0-1

Furthermore, she participated in the 19th Paleochora Open in Creta, finishing at the 4th position out of 150 players (B Group) with 7/9 (+6 =2 -1).

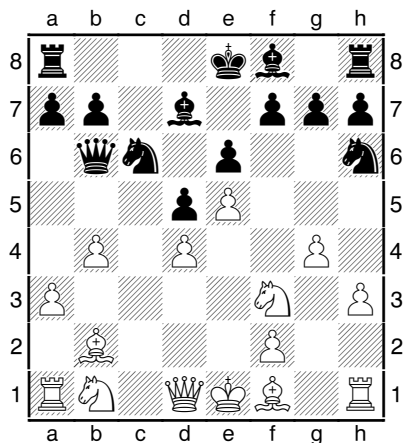
□ Talaverou Vasiliki-Viktoria

■ Baklan Kira

C02 Paleochora 2026

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 Nc6 5.Nf3 Qb6 6.a3 Nge7 7.b4 cxd4 8.cxd4 Nf5 9.-Bb2 Bd7 10.g4 Nh6 11.h3 (D)

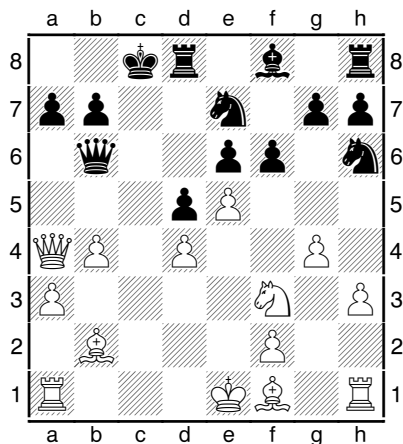
11.Rg1! f6 12.exf6 gxf6 13.Nc3 Nf7 14.Na4 Qc7 15.Nc5 Bd6 16.Rc1 Bf4 17.Rc2 a6 18.Bd3 += Grischuk,A-Haasler,A Mainz 2005.



11...0-0-0?

11...Rc8 12.Nc3 Na5 13.Na4 Qc6 14.Nc5 Nc4 15.Bc1 Ng8 16.Bd3 b6 17.Nxd7 Qxd7 18.0-0 += Quesada Perez,Y-Cordova,E Internet 2020.

12.Nc3 Ne7 13.Na4 Bxa4 14.Qxa4 f6 (D)

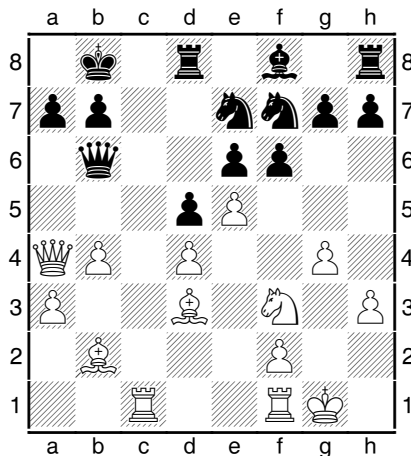


15.Rc1+

15.Bd3 Kb8 16.Kf1 Ng6 17.Bxg6 hxg6 18.Kg2 +/-.

15...Kb8 16.Bd3 Nf7 17.0-0? (D)

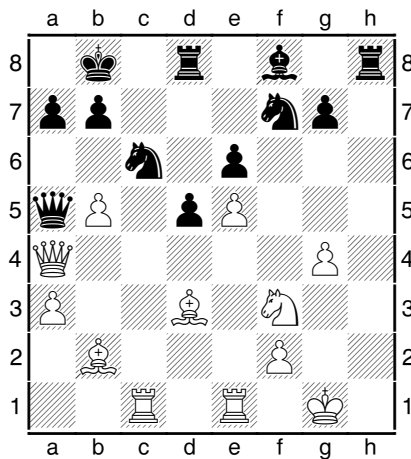
17.b5 Rc8 18.Kf1 Rxc1+ 19.Bxc1 +/-.



17...h5! 18.Rfe1 hxg4 19.hxg4 fxe5?

19...f5! 20.gxf5 Rh5! 21.Qa5! Nxf5 22.Qxb6 axb6 23.Kg2 Be7 24.Rh1 Rdh8 25.Rxh5 Rxh5 26.Bb5 +=.

20.dxe5 Nc6 21.b5! Qa5 (D)



22.Qf4! Nxe5 23.Nxe5 Nxe5 24.Bxe5+ Ka8 25.Bc7 Bd6 26.Bxd6 Rc8 27.Rxc8+ Rxc8 28.Rc1 Rh8 29.Bc7 Qxa3 30.Bf1 Qe7 31.Bd6 Qh4 32.Bg2 g5 33.Bf8 a6 34.Rc8+ Ka7 35.Bc5+ b6 36.Qc7 #

1-0

And her new August rating flew from 1778 to 1914! Congrats Vasiliki!

My Students Corner

Reem Sherman

The Events

My Israeli student Reem Sherman (21-years-old) had two bad nightmares playing in India, but this was a good lesson for him!

With his new low 2300 rating the FM played in the Arad Open (Romania), where he performed a good unbeaten 6/9 (+3 =6 -0), also scoring his 3rd and final IM-norm.

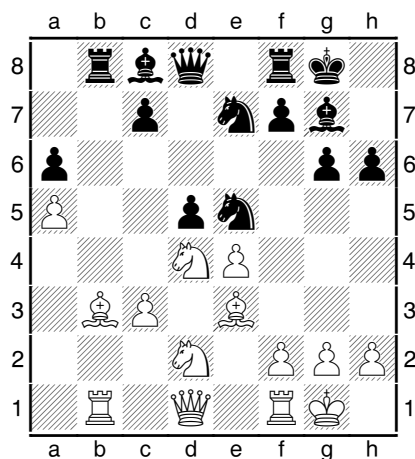
He also gained 45.2 rating points!

□ Sabarez Iulian

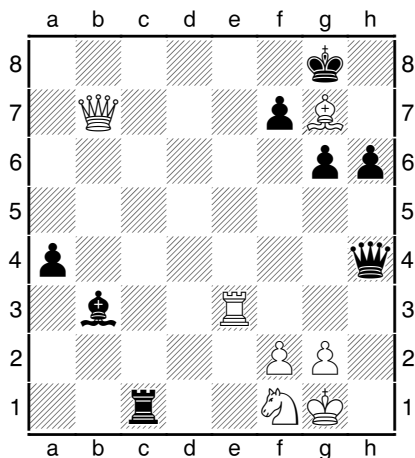
■ Sherman Reem

C60 Arad 2026

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 g6 4.0-0 Bg7 5.c3 a6 6.Ba4 b5 7.Bb3 Nge7 8.a4 b4 9.a5 0-0 10.d3 d5 11.Be3 Rb8 12.Nbd2 h6 13.d4? bxc3 14.bxc3 exd4 15.Nxd4 Ne5 16.Rb1 (D)



16...c5! 17.N4f3 Nxf3+ 18.Qxf3 c4 19.Bc2 Rxb1 20.Rxb1 Qxa5 21.exd5 Nxd5 22.Nxc4 Qxc3 23.Qxd5 Qxc2 24.Rc1 Qa2 25.Qd6 Be6 26.Nd2 a5 27.Ne4 Qd5 28.Qf4 Bf5 29.Ng3 Rc8 30.Re1 Bc2 31.h4 a4 32.Bc1 Qd4! 33.Qf3 Qxh4 34.Qb7 Qc4 35.Ba3 Qc6 36.Qa7 Qc3 37.Re3 Qa1+ 38.Kh2 Qd4 39.Qb7 Qc4 40.Bb2 Bb3 41.Bxg7 Qh4+ 42.Kg1 Rc1+ 43.Nf1 (D)



43...Rxf1+! 44.Kxf1 Qh1+ 45.Ke2 Qd1 # 0-1

In his second in a row event, he missed the GM-norm by ½ a point, but he still won it, gaining 62.5 rating points (and his 4th IM-Norm of course!)

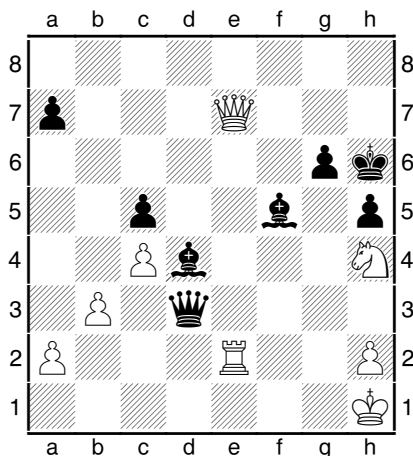
Hotel Stockholm North 2026 * Stockholm - Sweden * 11-16.08.2026 * Cat. 6 (2385)													
N	Player	Data	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	P
1	Sherman R.	ISR 2300		1	1	=	=	=	=	1	1	=	6½
2	Kvaloy A.B.	NOR 2498	0		1	=	1	=	1	1	=	1	6½
3	Banerjee S.	ENG 2357	0	0		1	1	1	=	1	=	=	5½
4	Blomqvist E.	SWE 2485	=	=	0		=	1	1	1	1	0	5½
5	Bilych O.	UKR 2429	=	0	0	=		=	=	1	1	=	4½
6	Semcesen D.	SWE 2422	=	=	0	0	=		=	1	=	=	4
7	Apaar S.	IND 2396	=	0	=	0	=	=		0	=	1	3½
8	Fiskaaen M.H.	NOR 2365	0	0	0	0	0	0	1		1	1	3
9	Cederstam C.	SWE 2371	0	=	=	0	0	=	=	0		1	3
10	Vincenti L.	ITA 2222	=	0	=	1	=	=	0	0	0		3

□ Fiskaaen Martin Holten

■ Sherman Reem

B23 Stockholm 2026

1.e4 c5 2.Nc3 Nc6 3.Bb5 e6 4.Bxc6 bxc6
5.f4 d5 6.d3 Nf6 7.e5 Nd7 8.Nf3 g6 9.0-0
Bg7 10.Qe2 0-0 11.Bd2 Ba6 12.Kh1 f6
13.Rf1 fxe5 14.fxe5 Qc7 15.g3 Rf5 16.Bf4
Raf8 17.Nd1 Qd8 18.Ne3 Rxf4 19.gxf4
Rxf4 20.Rf1 Qb8 21.c4 Nxe5 22.Nxe5 Qxe5
23.Rxf4 Qxf4 24.Rf1 Qe5 25.Qf2 h5 26.b3
Qd4 27.Qf7+ Kh7 28.Qxe6 Qxd3 29.Rd1
Qe2 30.Rg1 Qd3 31.Qxc6 Bc8 32.Ng2 Bf5
33.Qxd5 Bd4 34.Re1 Kh6 35.Qf7 Bf2
36.Qf8+ Kg5 37.Qe7+ Kh6 38.Re2 Bd4
39.Nh4 (D)



39...Bg4! 40.Re1 Bf3+ 41.Ng2 Qf5 42.Qh4?
42.Rf1! g5 oo/=.
42...g5! 43.Qg3 h4 44.Re6+ Kh5! 45.Qe1
Bxg2+ 46.Kxg2 Qg4+ 47.Kh1 Qf3 #
0-1

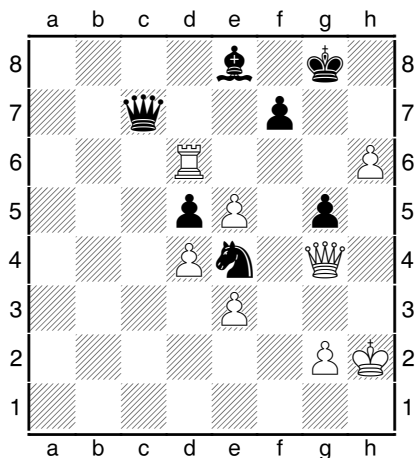
□ Banerjee Supratit

■ Sherman Reem

C19 Stockholm 2026

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e5 c5 5.a3
Bxc3+ 6.bxc3 Ne7 7.a4 Qa5 8.Bd2 Nbc6
9.Nf3 Bd7 10.Qc1 Qc7 11.Qa3 b6 12.Bb5
Na5 13.Bd3 Nc4 14.Qa2 Nxd2 15.Kxd2
Nc6 16.Rhe1 0-0 17.Re3 Rac8 18.Qb2 Na5
19.h4 Rfd8 20.h5 Bc6 21.h6 g6 22.Ke1 Nc4
23.Qc1 Qe7 24.Re2 Na5 25.Re3 Qf8 26.Ng5
Be8 27.Rf3 Qe7 28.Qf4 cxd4 29.cxd4 Nc4
30.Kf1 Rc7 31.Kg1 Ra8 32.c3 Rac8 33.Kh2
Na5 34.Ba6 Rxc3 35.Bxc8 Rxc8 36.Rc1 Nc4
37.Qg3 a6 38.Kh3 Rc7 39.Rcc3 b5 40.axb5

axb5 41.Rf6 b4 42.Rcf3 Qf8 43.Qh4 Nd2
44.Rd3 Rc3 45.Re3 Rxe3+ 46.fxe3 b3
47.Kh2 b2 48.Nxe6 b1Q 49.Nxf8 Ne4
50.Nxg6 hxg6 51.Rf4 g5 52.Qg4 Qb6
53.Rf6 Qc7 54.Rd6 (D)



54...f5! 55.Qxf5 Nxd6 56.Qe6+ Bf7 57.Qf6
Ne8 58.Qxg5+ Kh7 59.Kg3 Qc6 60.Qf5+
Qg6+ 61.Kf4 Kxh6 62.g4 Kg7 63.e4 Qh6+
64.g5 Qh4+ 65.Ke3 Qe1+ 66.Kf4 Qf2+
67.Kg4 Qxd4 68.Kf4 Qf2+ 69.Kg4 Qg2+
70.Kf4 d4 71.e6 Qh2+
0-1



So, September will find him as an IM, with a rating of 2408!

I would like also to mention my student Zoi Veselow (born 2014) with a FIDE rating around 1764.

She competed in the British Championship U12 (Blitz), scoring 4½/7, gaining overall the 10th position and the 1st in the Girls section!

Recent Tournaments

Cairns Cup 2026

The Event

One of the world's strongest women's super-tournaments returned to Saint Louis this summer as the 2026 Cairns Cup welcomed ten of the world's top women chess players to compete for a \$250,000 prize fund - one of the largest in women's chess.

The tournament took place on 10-20 August at the recently expanded Saint Louis Chess Club (STLCC), where it was run alongside the prestigious Sinquefeld Cup, creating one of the world's premier showcases of elite chess.

Like the Sinquefeld Cup, the Cairns Cup featured a ten-player, nine-round classical round-robin format, widely regarded as one of the most demanding tests in professional chess.

The sixth edition of the tournament continues Saint Louis' tradition of hosting the world's elite players while advancing opportunities for women in the game.

Named in honour of STLCC co-founder Dr. Jeanne Cairns Sinquefeld, the Cairns Cup reflects the STLCC's commitment to growing women's chess and inspiring the next generation of champions.

Furthering that mission, Dr. Jeanne Cairns Sinquefeld established the Cairns Chess Queens Award in 2024, a first-of-its-kind initiative offering a \$100,000 award to any eligible U.S. woman who earns the Grandmaster (GM) title during the program's five-year period ending July 4,

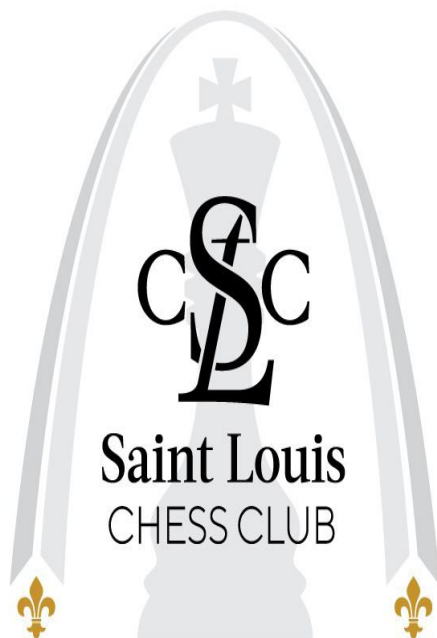
'It is an honour to once again welcome some of the world's top women players to Saint Louis', said Dr. Jeanne Cairns Sinquefeld, co-founder of the STLCC.

'Through events like the Cairns Cup, we aim to create greater opportunities for women in chess and inspire the next generation to compete, achieve and lead in this timeless game'.

Nine years ago the World vs. USA youth matches took place in the same Club. Nice memories as I was the Captain of the World!



The Saint Louis Chess Club



The Saint Louis Chess Club is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organisation that is committed to making chess an important part of our community. In addition to providing a forum for the community to play tournaments and casual games, the club also offers chess improvement classes, beginner lessons and special lectures.

Recognising the cognitive and behavioural benefits of chess, the Saint Louis Chess Club is committed to supporting those chess programs that already exist in area schools while encouraging the development of new in-school and after-school programs.

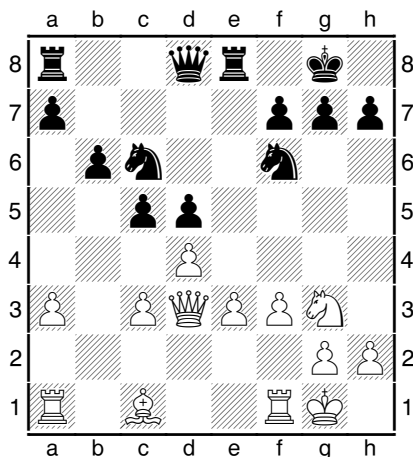
Cairns Cup 2026 * Saint Louis - United States of America * 10-20.08.2026 * Cat. 10 (2492)													
N	Player	Data	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	P
1	Tan Z.	CHN 2520		=	1	1	0	=	1	1	=	1	6½
2	Lee A.	USA 2430	=		=	=	0	=	1	1	1	1	6
3	Assaubayeva B.	KAZ 2538	0	=		=	1	=	=	=	1	=	5
4	Yip C.	USA 2459	0	=	=		1	=	=	=	1	=	5
5	Tsolakidou S.	GRE 2433	1	1	0	0		=	=	=	=	=	4½
6	Muzychuk A.	UKR 2529	=	=	=	=	=		=	=	=	=	4½
7	Divya D.	IND 2490	0	0	=	=	=	=		=	1	1	4½
8	Koneru H.	IND 2524	0	0	=	=	=	=	=		=	=	3½
9	Kosteniuk A.	SWZ 2504	=	0	0	0	=	=	0	=		1	3
10	Vaishali R.	IND 2489	0	0	=	=	=	=	0	=	0		2½

□ Koneru Humpy

■ Lee Alice

E49 Saint Louis 2026

1.c4 e6 2.Nc3 d5 3.d4 Bb4 4.a3 Bxc3+
5.bxc3 Nf6 6.cxd5 exd5 7.e3 0-0 8.Bd3 c5
9.Ne2 b6 10.0-0 Ba6 11.f3 Re8 12.Ng3 Bxd3
13.Qxd3 Nc6 (D)



A.Lee was extremely well prepared, as she also said in the interview after the game. Up to this point H.Koneru had also been playing quickly. But while A.Lee was still above her initial time, H.Koneru now began to use a great deal of time - something that would come back to haunt her...

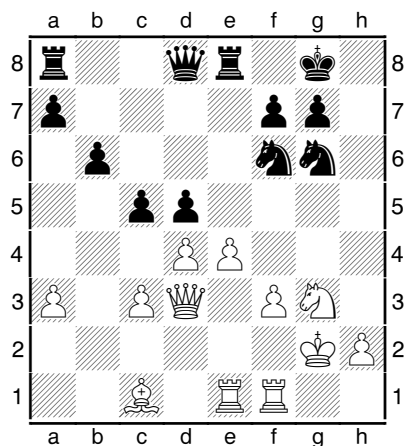
14.Bb2 h5

A quite typical way to harass the white centre, by restricting the knight on g3.

15.Rae1 h4 16.Nf5 h3 17.Ng3

Inferior is 17.Rf2?! Ne7 18.Ng3 Ng6 19.gxh3 Qd7 =+ Sarana,A-Le,Q Hong Kong 2026.

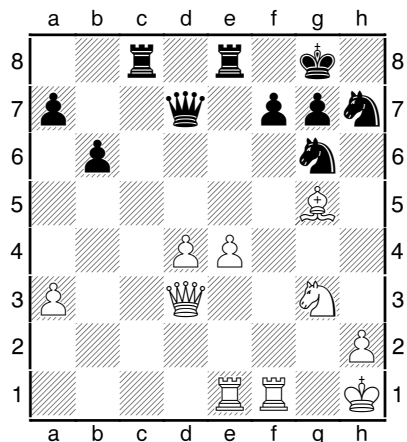
17...Ne7 18.e4 hxg2 19.Kxg2 Ng6 20.Bc1 (D)



20...cxd4

A.Lee thought for ten minutes here for the first time. Even after the move, however, she still had 1 hour 22 minutes on the clock, while her opponent had only 44 minutes left.

21.cxd4 Rc8 22.Kh1 dxe4 23.fxe4 Qd7 24.Bg5 Nh7 (D)

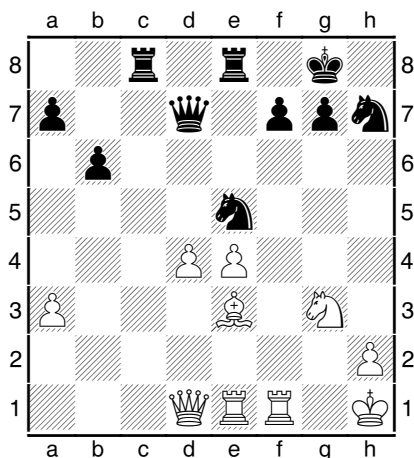


White has a strong centre and attacking chances, so she would be for a pick.

25.Be3!

In fact, this is the first new move in this popular 'Nimzoindian Defence' line. The position is tiny better for White, but Black has 32 minutes more on the clock. 25.Bd2, was the previous move: 25...Ne5 26.Qe3 Nc4 27.Qf2 Rc6 28.Nf5 oo Sudqvist,C-Deskin,G ICCF 2024.

25...Ne5 26.Qd1 (D)



26...Nc4?

This is the first inaccurate move of the game: A.Lee plays too carelessly. The knight should go to g6 and help secure the king position. H.Koneru makes good use of the mistake:

27.Bf4 Nf6

27...Rc6!, is the engine's recommendation. The rook defends, but can also attack the white king's position.

28.d5?

28.Qf3, looks dangerous: 28...Qg4 (28...Qxd4? 29.Nf5 Qc5 30.Nxg7! Kxg7 31.Bh6+ Kh7 32.Qxf6 +-) 29.Qg2 Nxa3 30.Be5 Rc2 31.Qg1! +/-.

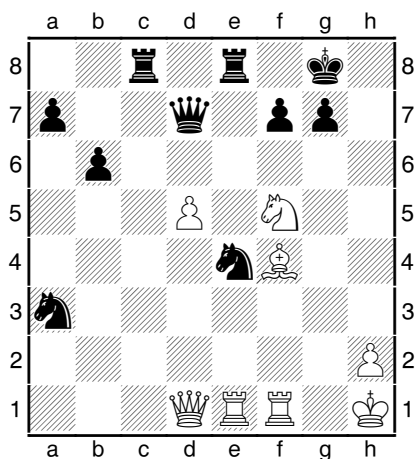
28...Nxa3?

The knight has gone astray. Black should have opted for 28...Ne5 29.Bg5 Qh3 30.Bxf6 Ng4 31.Qd2 Nxf6 32.e5 +=.

29.Nf5

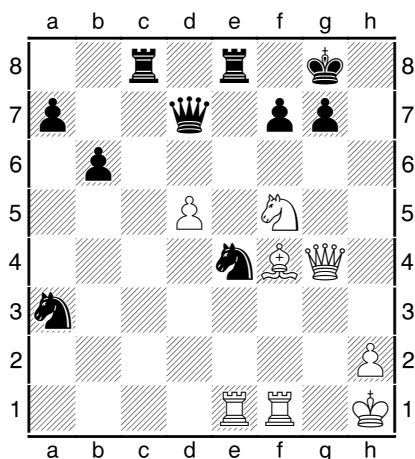
Perhaps Bc1, Nh5, or Rg1 would have been slightly better. But this move is also very strong and looks the most natural by the way...

29...Nxe4 (D)



30.Qg4? (D)

With only 3 minutes left on the clock, the Indian turns a winning position into a losing one. 30.Nxg7! is the only winning move, and 30...Nf2+, is the best, though insufficient, defence: (30...Kxg7 31.Rg1+ Kf8 [31...Kh7 32.Qh5 # ; 31...Ng5 32.Rxg5+ Kf8 33.Reg1 Ke7 34.Re5+ Kd8 35.Rxe8+ Qxe8 36.Bg5+ Kc7 37.d6+ Kb7 38.d7 +- ; 31...Kf6 32.Qd4+ Kf5 33.Ref1 Qb5 34.Bh6+ Qxf1 35.Rxf1+ Kg6 36.Qg7+ Kh5 37.Rf5+ Kh4 38.Bg5+ Nxg5 39.Qxg5+ Kh3 40.Rf3 #] 32.Bh6+ Ke7 33.Rxe4+ Kd8 34.Rxe8+ Qxe8 35.Bg5+ Kc7 36.d6+ Kb7 37.d7 +-) 31.Rxf2 Rxe1+ 32.Qxe1 Qxd5+ 33.Kg1 Kxg7 34.Rg2+ and the black king is quickly mated.



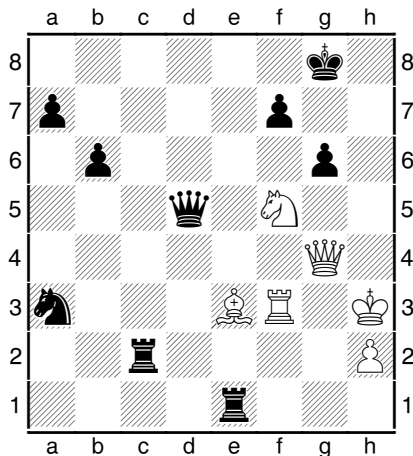
30...Nf2+!

Once again the only move, but this time also the winning move. A.Lee now accurately

exploits H.Koneru's missed winning chance:
31.Rxf2 Qxd5+ 32.Rf3 Rxe1+ 33.Kg2 Rc2+ 34.Kh3 g6!

And do not forget to deal with White's mating threat along the way!

35.Be3 (D)



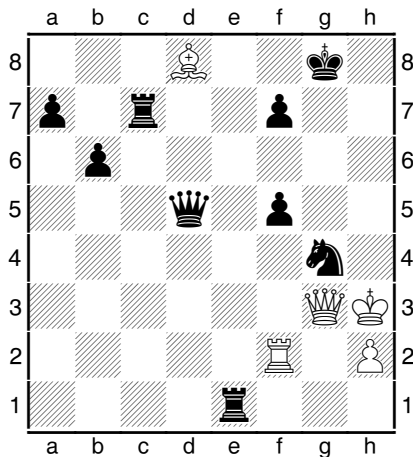
35...Rc7!

Otherwise Ne7+ comes with an unpleasant surprise.

36.Qg3 Nc4! 37.Bg5

37.Qxc7? Qxf3+ 38.Ng3 Nxe3 -+.

37...Ne5 38.Rf2 gxf5 39.Bd8+ Ng4 (D)



And finally, White resigned, losing easily. The Indian GM had seen enough and did not wait for, for example: 40.Bxc7 (40.Qxc7 Nxf2+ 41.Kh4 Qe4+ 42.Kg3 [42.Kh5 Qg4+ 43.Kh6 Qg6 #] 42...Nh1+ 43.Kh3 Qg4 #) 40...Re3 -+.

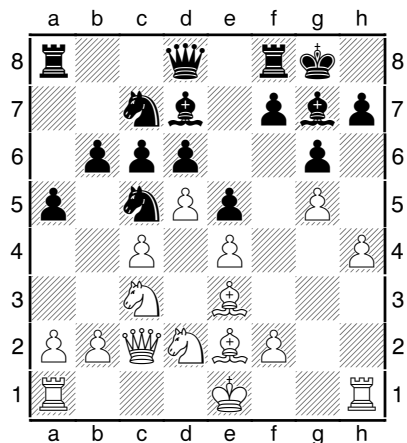
0-1

□ **Tan Zhongyi**

■ **Assaubayeva Bibisara**

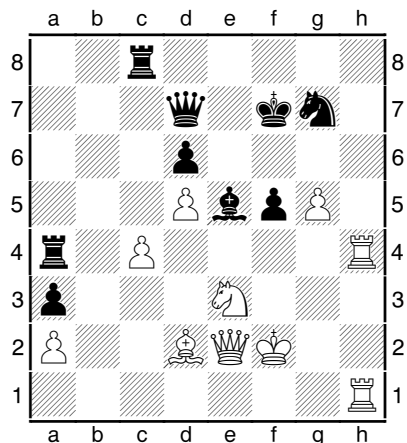
E93 Saint Louis 2026

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Be2 0-0 6.Be3 Na6 7.h3 e5 8.d5 Nc5 9.Qc2 a5 10.Nf3 b6 11.g4 Bd7 12.Nd2 c6 13.g5 Ne8 14.h4 Nc7 (D)



15.Nb3 cxd5 16.cxd5 a4 17.Nxc5 bxc5 18.f3 18.h5 Rb8 19.Rb1 +/-.

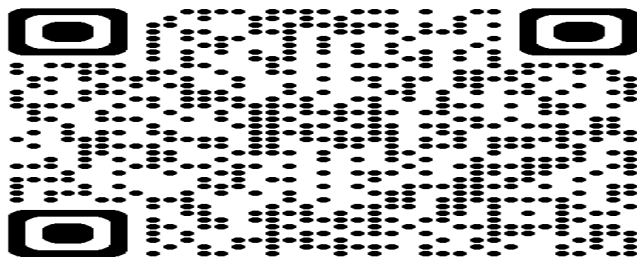
18...Qb8 19.h5 Rc8 20.hxg6 hxg6 21.Kf2! Bb5 22.Rh4 Bxe2 23.Qxe2 a3 24.b3 Qb4 25.Rc1 Ne8 26.Nd1! f5 27.Bd2 Qb6 28.exf5 gxf5 29.f4 c4+ 30.Be3 Qb7 31.bxc4 Ra4 32.Bd2 Qd7 33.Ne3 exf4 34.Rxf4 Be5 35.Rh4 Ng7 36.Rch1 Kf7 (D)



37.g6+! Kxg6 38.Rh7 Rg8 39.Qf3 Kf7 40.Nxf5 Ke8 41.Nxg7+ Bxg7 42.Bg5 Qa7+ 43.Kg2 Qf7 44.Re1+ Kf8 45.Qg4 Qxd5+ 46.Re4! Qxg5 47.Qxg5 Be5 48.Rh8!

1-0

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Thursday 01	18:00 - 19:00	Middlegame	The Bishop Pair
	19:15 - 20:15	Endgame	Knight Endgames
Thursday 08	18:00 - 19:00	Planning	King Prophylaxis
	19:15 - 20:15	Tactics	Back-rank Mate
Thursday 15	18:00 - 19:00	Endgame	Bishop Endgames
	19:15 - 20:15	Middlegame	The Exchange Sacrifice
Thursday 22	18:00 - 19:00	Tactics	Blocking the f6-square
	19:15 - 20:15	Strategy	Centralised Safe King

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My Students Corner

Analysed Games

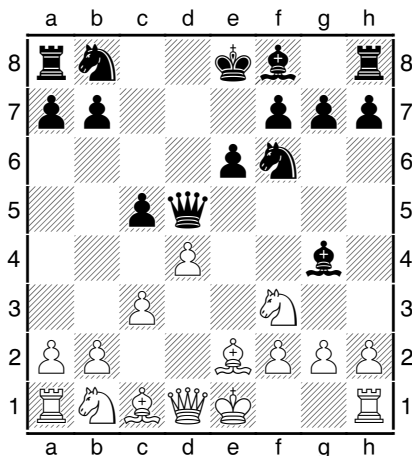
□ Bortnyk Olexandr

■ Motylev Alexander

B22 Internet 2020

Dimitrios Stathos

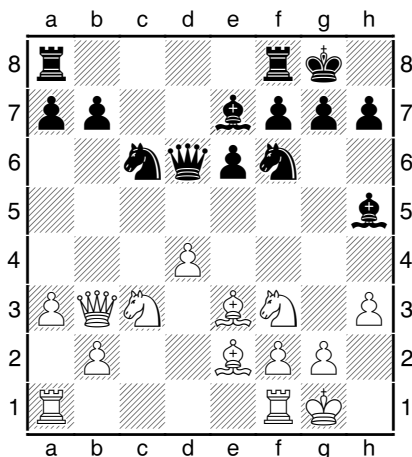
1.e4 c5 2.c3 d5 3.exd5 Qxd5 4.d4 Nf6 5.Nf3
Bg4 6.Be2 e6 (D)



7.Be3

A line where White has to live with an isolated pawn. Another wild possibility is by 7.h3 Bh5 8.c4.

7...cxd4 8.cxd4 Nc6 9.Nc3 Qd6 10.h3 Bh5
11.0-0 Be7 12.a3 0-0 13.Qb3

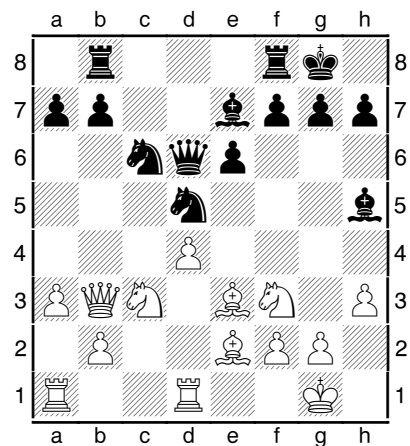


13...Rab8?!

Passive... Possible is 13...a6 14.Rfd1 Rfd8

15.Rac1 h6 oo 16.g4?! Bg6 17.Ne5 Nxe5
18.dxe5 Qxe5 =+ Kaidanov,G-
Areshchenko,A Tromsøe 2013, or 13...Bxf3
14.Bxf3 Nxd4 15.Bxd4 Qxd4 16.Qxb7 Bc5
17.Qa6 Rad8 18.Na4 Be7 19.Rac1 Qf4
20.Rc4 Qb8 21.Rfc1 =.

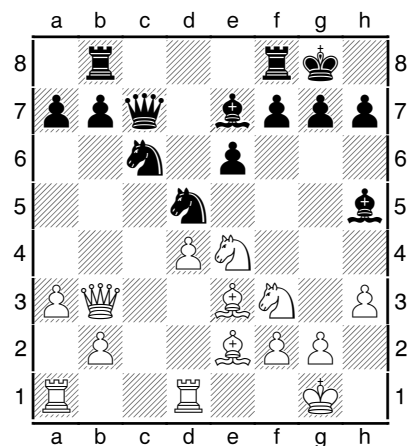
14.Rfd1 Nd5 (D)



15.Ne4?

White tries to reposition the knight to a better position in the centre of the board with sights on the d6-square or to attack the undefended black bishop. Exchanging with 15.Nxd5 exd5 16.Rac1 += Jergler,K-Lechermann,M Germany 2016, looks fine for him.

15...Qc7 (D)

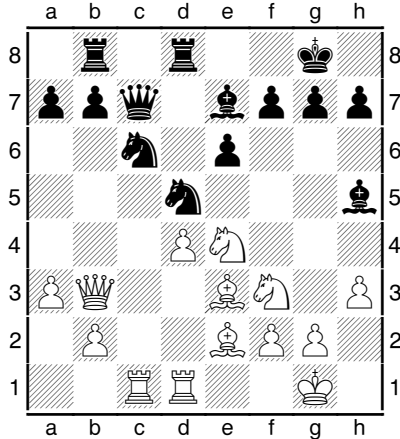


16.Rac1

The rook gets to the open file and centre, for better attacking possibilities, while the c6-knight is pinned.

16...Rfd8 (D)

16...Nf4?!, fails to impress after 17.Bxf4 Qxf4 18.Ng3 Bxf3 19.Qxf3 Bg5 20.Rc5 Rfd8 21.d5 Qxf3 22.Bxf3 Be7 23.Rcc1 exd5 24.Rxd5 Bf6 = Hoare,A-Cosman,A Durban 2014.



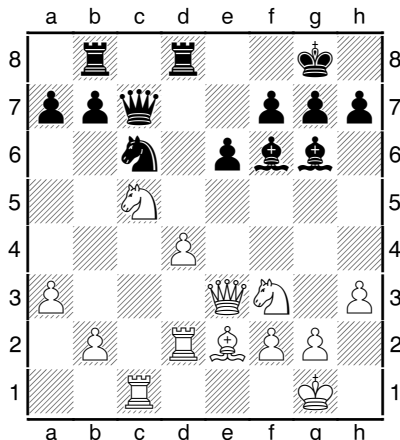
17.Rd2?!

A novelty to 17.Ng3! Nxe3 18.Qxe3 Bxf3 19.Bxf3 Qb6 20.d5! (time to use the isolated pawn to strike and open the centre) 20...Qxe3 21.fxe3 exd5 22.Rxd5 Bf6 = Voigt,R-Boensch,U Germany 2005. Possible is 17.Nc3 Nxe3 18.fxe3 Rbc8 oo.

17...Bg6

17...f5!, was strong: 18.Nc5 Na5 19.Qc2 Rbc8 20.b4 f4! 21.bxa5 Qxa5 =+.

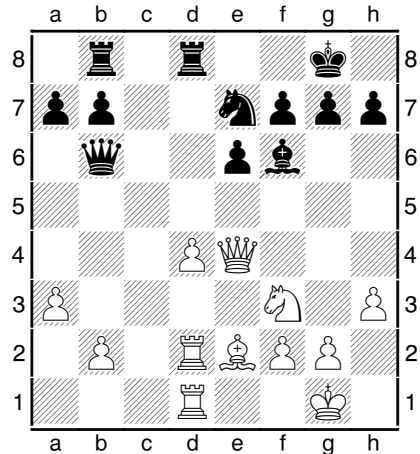
18.Nc5 Nxe3 19.Qxe3 Bf6 (D)



20.Ne4

20.g4, could have been played: 20...h6 21.h4 Qd6 22.h5 Bh7 23.Rcd1 b6 24.Ne4 Bxe4 25.Qxe4 Ne7 26.Bd3 oo.

20...Bxe4 21.Qxe4 Qb6 22.Rcd1 Ne7 (D)



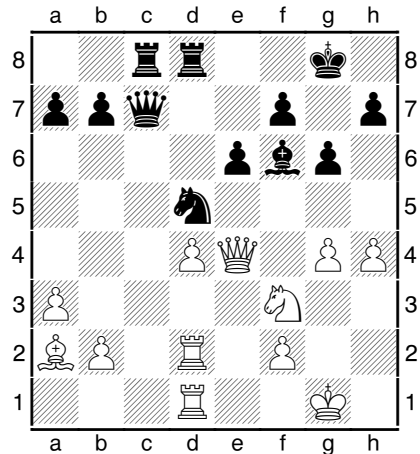
23.Bc4

White could again think of the typical 23.g4 g6 24.h4 Qc6 25.Bd3 Bg7 26.g5 Rbc8 27.Qg4 Qc7 28.h5 gxh5 29.Qxh5 Ng6 30.Qh3 a5 (30...Nf4? 31.Qxh7+ +/-) 31.Kf1 oo, or the 23.g3 h5 24.Ne5 g6 25.Nc4 oo.

23...Rbc8 24.Ba2 Nd5 25.g4! g6 26.h4

This pawn storm help on the attack on the enemy king.

26...Qc7 (D)



27.h5

Opening-up lines to attack the king.

27...Bg7 28.g5 Ne7?!

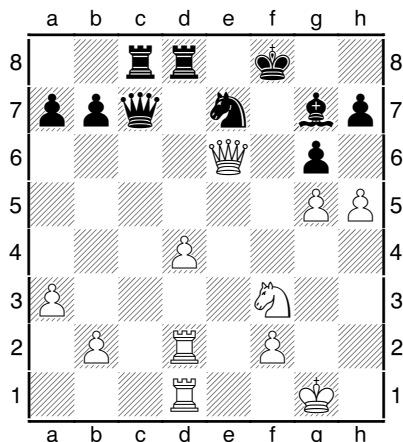
Black had to opt for 28...gxh5! 29.Bb1 Qf4!

30.Qxh7+ Kf8 31.Qxh5 Ke7 32.Qh3! Rh8
33.Qg3 Bh6! Oo/=, when 34.Qxf4?, fails to
34...Nxf4 35.gxh6 Rcg8+ 36.Kf1 Rxh6 -/+.

29.Bxe6?

A bishop sacrifice to open diagonals to attack the king. But better was 29.h6! Bh8 30.Kg2 Kf8 31.d5! +=.

29...fxe6 30.Qxe6+ Kf8 (D)



31.h6?

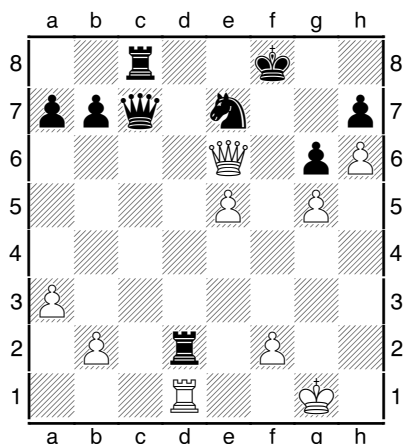
31.Ne5, was the only way, when Black can defend with 31...Nc6 32.hxg6 Nxe5 33.dxe5 Rxd2 34.Rxd2 hxg6 35.Rd7 Qc1+ 36.Kg2 (36.Kh2? Qf4+ -+) 36...Qxg5+ 37.Kf3 Qf5+ 38.Qxf5+ gxf5 39.Rxb7 Bxe5 40.Rxa7 oo/=.

31...Bh8 32.Ne5 Bxe5?

Returning the favour. Good enough was 32...Nc6! 33.Kg2 Qe7 -+.

33.dxe5 Rxd2? (D)

Quickly played. Black could draw by 33...Ke8! 34.Qf6 Ng8 35.Qe6+ Ne7 =.



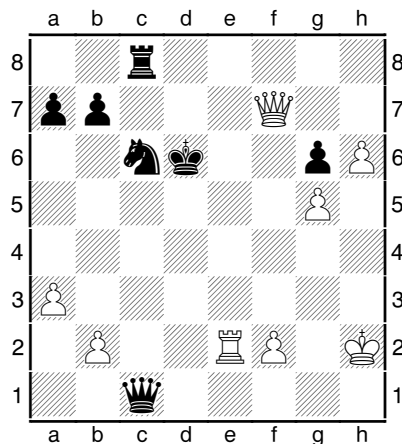
34.Qf6+! Ke8 35.Qh8+ Kf7

35...Kd7, loses to 36.Rxd2+ Kc6 37.Rc2+ +-.

36.e6+! Kxe6 37.Qf6+ Kd7 38.Rxd2+ Ke8

39.Qh8+ Kf7 40.Qxh7+ Ke6 41.Re2+ Kd6

42.Qf7! Qc1+ 43.Kh2 Nc6 (D)



44.Qf6+?

A time trouble blunder. 44.b4! +-, was curtains.

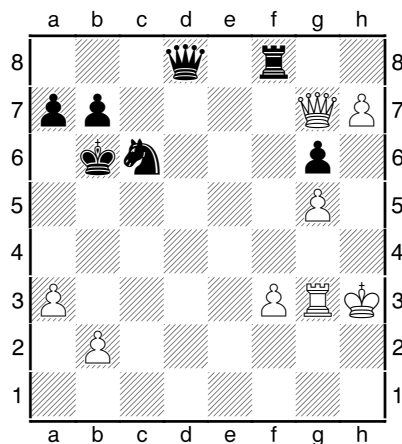
44...Kc7 45.h7 Qd1! 46.Qg7+ Kb6 47.Re3

Qd6+ 48.Kg1 Qd1+ 49.Kh2 Qd6+ 50.Rg3

Rf8 51.Kg1 Qd1+ 52.Kg2 Qd5+

52...Rxf2+ 53.Kxf2 Qd2+ =, was good as well.

53.f3 Qd2+ 54.Kh3 Qd8 (D)



55.Rg4

And Black lost on time. 55...Rxf3+! 56.Rg3 Qc8+ 57.Kg2 Qf8! 58.Qxf8 Rxf8 59.Rf3 Rh8 60.Rf7 Nd8 61.Rg7 =, or 55.Qxg6 Qd7+ 56.Kh2 Qd2+ =, were near to a draw.

1-0