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Volume 137



SEPTEMBER  
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GM Bassem Amin, Chess Olympiad 2016

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 Founded 1881

[www.britishchessmagazine.co.uk](http://www.britishchessmagazine.co.uk)

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**Photography**  
 Lennart Ootes, David Llada, [www.kasparov.com](http://www.kasparov.com),  
 Sinquefeld Cup official, Chess Club and  
 Scholastic Center of Saint Louis,  
 Biel International Chess Festival 2017 official,  
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 Grand Chess Tour 2017 official

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ISSN 0007-0440  
 © The British Chess Magazine Limited

Company Limited by Shares  
 Registered in England No 00334968

**Postal correspondence:**  
 Albany House, 14 Shute End  
 Wokingham, Berkshire RG40 1BJ

**Subscription**  
[support@britishchessmagazine.co.uk](mailto:support@britishchessmagazine.co.uk)  
 12 monthly issues  
 UK: £55 | RoW: £85

Printed in the UK: by Lavenham Press Ltd

**Cover photography:**  
 Garry Kasparov,  
 Photo by David Llada

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## GRAND CHESS TOUR: THE SAINT LOUIS RAPID &amp; BLITZ 2017



# VACHIER'S GREATEST TRIUMPH

By GM Aleksandar Colovic

Photo: Sinquefield Cup official / Chess Club and Scholastic Center of Saint Louis

Maxime Vachier-Lagrave won the Sinquefield Cup by sealing his victory with a win over Ian Nepomniachtchi to reach 6 points.

They were not playing only for glory, but also for a prize fund of \$300,000 (£235,000).

The first classical tournament of this year's Grand Chess Tour took place in Saint Louis from 2-11 August.

The main question was whether Magnus Carlsen can finally win a classical tournament. It turned out that he still cannot, making it whole 13 months without a victory in a classical tournament for the

The Sinquefield Cup, named after the main sponsor Rex Sinquefield, is played since 2013. This year the tournament brought together the majority of the top 10 players of the moment and the tournament lived up to the expectations.

World Champion.

**THE SINQUEFIELD CUP,  
NAMED AFTER THE  
MAIN SPONSOR REX  
SINQUEFIELD, BROUGHT  
TOGETHER THE MAJORITY  
OF THE TOP 10 PLAYERS  
OF THE MOMENT**

But the start was promising. Fresh from his rapid and blitz triumphs in Paris and Leuven, his spirit was high and he did start well by beating Karjakin in Round 2.

## ARONIAN DEMONSTRATING GOOD FORM

It quickly emerged who was in good form and who wasn't. One of the former was Levon Aronian and he demonstrated it as early as Round 1 with this excellent win over Nepomniachtchi, who turned out to be in awful shape.

### Levon Aronian - Ian Nepomniachtchi

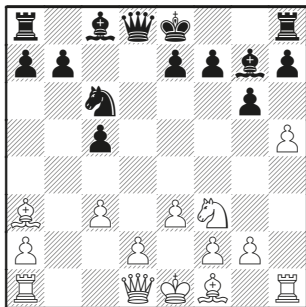
5<sup>th</sup> Sinquefeld Cup 2017 Saint Louis USA (1.3)

1. ♖f3 The move to play in order to avoid the Grunfeld.

1... ♗f6 2.c4 e5 3. ♖c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♗xd5 5.e3 ♗xc3 6.bxc3 6.dxc3! was played in Round 5 by Carlsen against Vachier. In the August issue of BCM I also analysed Radjabov's fine win against Svidler in this line, showing that the endgame is far from harmless for Black.

6...g6 7.h4! A rare move, but a common idea when the knight is absent from f6.

7... ♖g7 8.h5 ♗c6 9. ♖a3



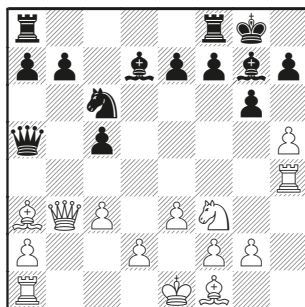
A new move. Previously Nepomniachtchi faced: 9. ♖b1 ♖c7 10.d4 ♖d7 1-0 (66) Svidler,P (2740)-Nepomniachtchi,I (2702) Nizhny Novgorod 2013.

9... ♖a5 10. ♖h4 The core of Aronian's idea and a very pleasing move to make! The most curious thing about it is Nepomniachtchi's

confession that he had prepared it for White!

10... ♖d7 10... ♖xa3? 11. ♖a4 ♖b2 12. ♖b1 traps the queen.

11. ♖b3 0-0?!

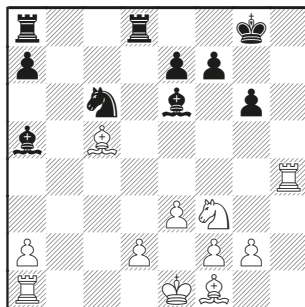


This looks like a typical Grunfeld pawn sacrifice for a lot of activity, but in fact White manages to control the situation.

11... ♖b8 was possible as Black defends the pawn on c5 with tactical means by 12. ♖a4 ♖c7 13. ♖xc5 ♗a5 and White is forced to sacrifice an exchange; 11... ♖c8 indirectly defends the b7-pawn 12. ♖c4 (12. ♖a4?! ♖c7 13. ♖xc5 ♗a5 is the same trick as above.) 12...e6 with a playable position.

12.hxg6 hxg6 13. ♖xb7 ♖fd8 14. ♖a6 ♖xc3 Black was pinning his hopes on this shot, but unfortunately it does not work.

15. ♖xa5 ♖xa5 16. ♖xc5 ♖e6?



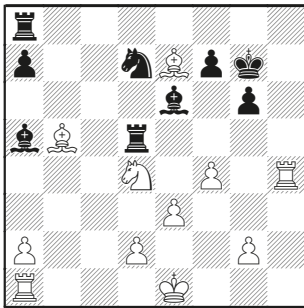
Going for maximum activity Grunfeld-style, but here White is no less active (and is material up).

16...♖ab8 still allowed Black some vague compensation, although White consolidates after 17.♙c4 ♚g7 18.♙b3.

17.♙b5! ♚e5 18.♘d4 Covering the d-file and threatening to take on e7 and e6. Black's position falls apart.

18...♖d5 19.♙xe7 Threatening ♙f6.

19...♚g7 20.f4 ♘d7



21.f5! Aronian is precise. Now the rook defends the ♘d4.

21.♙c6 allows 21...♖xd4! 22.exd4 (22.♙xa8 ♖xd2 23.♚f1 ♙b6 and Black can hope to survive.) 22...♖e8 23.♙d6 ♙d5+ 24.♙e5+ ♖xe5+ 25.fxe5 ♙xc6 and this is not a transformation you go for when having a winning advantage.

21...♙xf5 22.♙c6 White wins a lot of material.

22...♖e5 23.♘xf5+ ♗xf5 24.♙g5 Preventing the check on e3 as both ♖a8 and ♘d7 hang.

24...♚g6 25.♙f4 ♖d8 26.♙xd7 Winning a piece.

26...♖c5 27.♖h6+ ♚g7 28.♖d6 ♙c7 29.♖c6

1-0

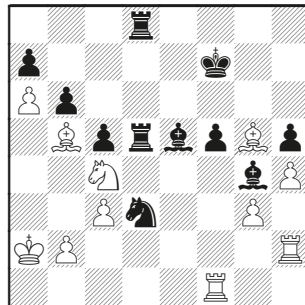
But Aronian was quickly pushed back to 50% when he lost a drawn position against Caruana in the second round. It would take the Armenian three rounds to recover from this loss, when two consecutive wins in Rounds 6 and 7 brought him to shared 1<sup>st</sup>.

## THE DECISIVE GAME OF THE TOURNAMENT

Looking retrospectively, the decisive game for the tournament victory was played in Round 4. With both players on 2/3, Carlsen outplayed Vachier-Lagrave in his trademark style. When the fruit was ripe for the taking, the following happened:

Magu<sup>s</sup> Carlsen - Maxime Vachier-Lagrave

5<sup>th</sup> Sinquefeld Cup 2017 Saint Louis USA (4)



45...♙xg3 Probably the moment that decided the winner of this year's Sinquefeld Cup!

After outplaying Vachier from a harmless endgame, Carlsen now needed to wrap things up. In fact, he did see the winning move, but thought the game move was better... That's what happens when you miss something in your calculations!

46.♗g2? Missing the win. It is notable that in spite of all the previous hard work White only had a single chance to win the game. This just shows how resilient these players are - the maximum they allow is one chance.



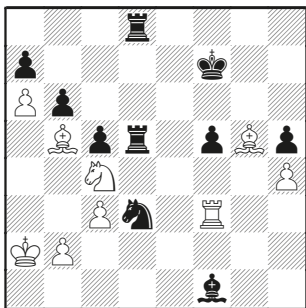
**LOOKING RETROSPECTIVELY, THE DECISIVE GAME FOR THE TOURNAMENT VICTORY WAS PLAYED IN ROUND 4. WITH BOTH PLAYERS ON 2/3, CARLSEN OUTPLAYED VACHIER-LAGRAVE IN HIS TRADEMARK STYLE**

46.♖d2! and Black cannot sustain the pin on the d-file. 46...♗f8 (46...♗g8 47.♟xb6! threatening ♟c4 47...♞c1+ 48.♖xc1 ♖xd2 49.♟c4+ ♞g7 50.♟xd2 axb6 51.♟xg8) 47.♞a3! getting away from possible checks. 47...♞g6 (47...♞f4 48.♟xf4; 47...f4 48.♖xd3 ♖xd3 49.♞e5+) 48.♞e3 ♖d6 49.♟e7 winning material.

**46...♟h3** The only move, but Carlsen follows what he thought was the winning line for him...

47.♖xg3 47.♖xf5+ and now both recaptures lead to a draw 47...♟xf5 (47...♟xf5 48.♖xg3 ♖xg5! 49.♖xg5 ♞f4 is a draw.) 48.♟xd8 ♖xd8 49.♖xg3 ♞f6 with a draw.

47...♟xf1 48.♖f3?

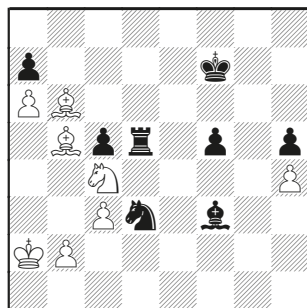


And all of a sudden, this move changes things significantly. Not only that, but now White does not even have a draw! Chess is a cruel game...

48.♟xd8 ♖xd8 49.♖f3 ♟e2 50.♖xf5+ ♞g6 leads to a draw.

**48...♟e2! 49.♟xd8** In fact, Carlsen intended to win here by 49.♖e3 and he completely missed 49...f4! covering the c1-h6 diagonal for the bishop. Its importance can be seen if we continue for one more move. 50.♖xe2 ♞c1+! and Black wins - the ♟g5 does not control the c1-square.

49...♟xf3 50.♟xb6



Carlsen is fighting, but again unluckily for him the position contains a singleway for Black to win and the superb calculator Vachier finds it.

**50...axb6 51.♟c6 ♟e4!** And this is it. It's important to have the bishop defended so that Black can play ...♖d8 on the next move.

**52.a7 ♖d8 53.♞d6+ 53.♟xe4 fxe4 54.♞xb6 e3** and Black queens.

**53...♖xd6 54.♟xe4** This leads to a lost



endgame, but one that requires precision for Black. Even in defeat Carlsen poses maximum problems.

54.a8♖ ♖xc6 and with all Black's pieces safely defended, White's queen does not stand a chance.

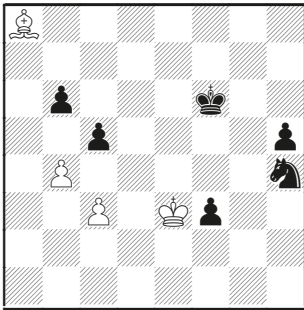
54...♖d8 55.a8♖ ♖xa8+ 56.♙xa8 ♖e5 The endgame is "pure calculation", as Vachier said. And he does that activity pretty well.

57.♙b3 f4 58.♙c2 ♖g7 Black plans to play ...♖g6 and wants to have ...♙h6 at his disposal to defend the h5-pawn.

58...♙f6 59.♙d2 ♙f5 was an alternative way.

59.♙d2 ♖g6 60.♙d3 60.♙f3 ♙h6 was Black's idea.

60...♖xh4 61.♙e4 f3 62.♙e3 ♙f6 63.b4



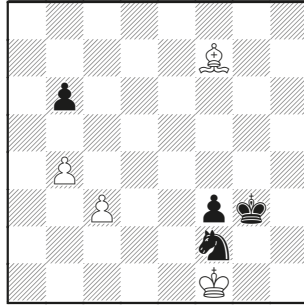
63...c4! Black needs more pawns on the queenside since one of the plans is to abandon the kingside and collect material on the other side. When White picks up the c4-pawn the bishop won't attack the f3-pawn and then the ♖h4 can be re-routed via g6.

63...♙f5 shows that things can become difficult after 64.bxc5 bxc5 65.♙d5 ♙g4 66.♙f2 and the ♖h4 cannot move because the f3-pawn is hanging.

64.♙d5 ♙f5 65.♙xc4 ♙g4 threatening ...♙g3, so White has no time for ♙d5.

66.♙f2 ♖g6! 67.♙e6+ 67.♙d5 ♖e5.

67...♙f4 68.♙f7 ♖e5 69.♙xh5 ♖d3+ 70.♙f1 ♙g3 71.♙f7 ♖f2



71...♖f2 ♖g4-e3 followed by f2. Black will inevitably win the bishop for the f-pawn and his remaining pawn on the queenside will suffice. 72.♙c4 (72.♙e1 ♖e4 73.♙c4 ♙f4 74.♙d3 ♖xc3 75.♙c4 ♙e3 76.♙f1 b5 77.♙e6 ♖e2 78.♙h3 f2 79.♙g2 ♖f4+) 72...♖g4 73.♙e1 ♖h2 74.♙b5 f2+ 75.♙d2 ♙f4 coming back to the queenside.

0-1

## SO'S COLLAPSE

Still, the World Champion showed his strong character and beat Wesley So with Black in the next round.

This loss started a downward spiral for the solid American who started the tournament as world number 2 and finished it as world number 8, losing 18 points in the process. He lost two more games and ended up last together with Nepomniachtchi.

### Wesley So – Magnus Carlsen

5<sup>th</sup> Sinquefeld Cup 2017 Saint Louis USA (5.3)

1.e4 e5 2.♖f3 ♖c6 3.d4 So recently played this against Mamedyarov, so it's surprising that Carlsen was surprised by it!

**3...exd4 4.♘xd4 ♕b4+** This is rarely seen at elite level.

So faced 4...♗f6 against Mamedyarov in Shamkir. He did not manage to achieve much after the opening and his blunder on move 39 ended his unbeaten 67-game streak. 0-1 (39) So,W (2822)-Mamedyarov,S (2772) Shamkir AZE 2017.

**5.c3 ♕e7** This sideline was used by Svidler in 2016.

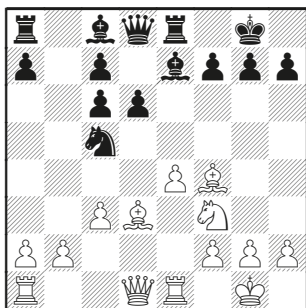
5...♕c5 is the usual choice here, twice used by Kramnik. 6.♕e3 ♕b6 7.♕d3 (7.♗f5 ♕xe3 8.♗xe3 d6 0-1 (65) *Nepomniachtchi,I (2714)-Kramnik,V (2760) Sochi 2014*) 7...♗f6 8.0-0 0-0 0-1 (22) *Vachier Lagrave,M (2719)-Kramnik,V (2784) Tromsø 2013*.

**6.♗xc6 6.g3 ♗f6 7.♕g2 0-0 8.0-0 ♖e8 9.♕e3 d5** and Black was fine in: ½-½ (28) *Nepomniachtchi,I (2740)-Svidler,P (2745) Moscow 2016*; Carlsen himself played 6.♕f4 here 6...♗f6 7.e5 ♗d5 8.♕g3 0-0 9.♗f5 d6 ½-½ (41) *Carlsen,M (2881)-Milos,G (2583) Caxias do Sul 2014*.

**6...bxc6 7.♕d3 d6 8.0-0 ♗f6 9.♖e1** White sets his sight on the e5-push.

**9...0-0 10.♗d2 ♖e8 11.♗f3 ♗d7 12.♕f4** Already threatening to push.

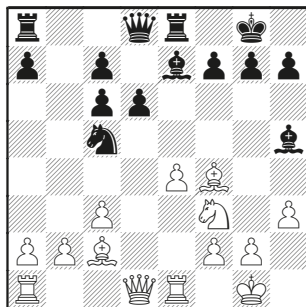
**12...♗c5!?**



It was impossible to prevent e5, so Carlsen goes for activity.

12...♕f6 looks as if Black controls e5, but in fact it allows it to be played with greater effect 13.e5! dxe5 14.♗xe5 ♗xe5 15.♕xe5 ♕xe5 16.♖xe5± ♖xe5? 17.♕xh7+ being the justification; 12...♖b8 13.♖c2 g6 14.♖ad1±.

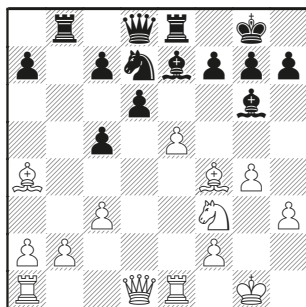
**13.♕c2 ♕g4 14.h3 ♕h5**



**15.♕e3!** Carlsen admitted that he missed this and the next move.

**15...♗d7 16.♕a4! c5 17.g4 ♕g6 18.e5!** After a series of forced moves White has a strong initiative in the centre as Black is awkwardly tied up.

**18...♖b8 19.♕f4?**



Played quickly by So and a big mistake that turns the tables around.

19.b3 was natural. 19...♕e4 (19...♖c8 20.♕xd7 ♖xd7 21.♕xc5 ♖c6 22.exd6 ♕xd6 23.♕xd6 ♖xe1+ 24.♗xe1 cxd6

25.c4 should be a technical win for White.) 20.♙f4 Black is forced to make concessions now. 20...♙xf3 21.♚xf3 dxe5 22.♖ad1 ♙d6 23.♙xd7 ♚xd7 24.♗xe5 ♗xe5 25.♙xe5 ♗e8 26.♚d5 with strong pressure for White.

19...♗xb2 20.exd6 ♙xd6 The only move.

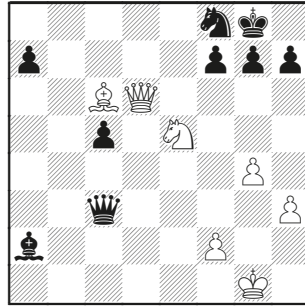
20...cxd6? 21.♙xd6 ♙xd6 22.♚xd6 is bad for Black.

21.♗xe8+ ♚xe8 22.♙xd6 cxd6 23.♚xd6 ♚e2! The only move, but one not too difficult to find. Now White is in danger. His problem is that he has weaknesses everywhere: the king, a2 and c3.

24.♚g3 ♗f8 25.♗e1 25.♙b3 allows White to keep the material for the time being 25...c4 26.♗d4 ♚d3 27.♚xd3 ♙xd3 28.♙a4 g5! opening some space 29.a3 ♗e6 30.♗xe6 fxe6 and with the ♗a1 and ♙a4

29.♚e5 a5 and the a-pawn should decide.

29...♚xc3



White could have played on but two pawns down against the World Champion is a bit too much.

0-1

**AFTER LOSING TO CARLSEN IN ROUND 2, THE SOLID AMERICAN WESLEY SO, WHO STARTED THE TOURNAMENT AS WORLD NUMBER 2 - FINISHED IT AS WORLD NUMBER 8, LOSING 18 POINTS IN THE PROCESS**



forced to remain there in order to defend the queenside pawns White is basically playing without pieces.

25...♗b1! Winning the pawn on a2.

26.♗xb1 ♙xb1 The threat is to take on a2 or play ♙e4.

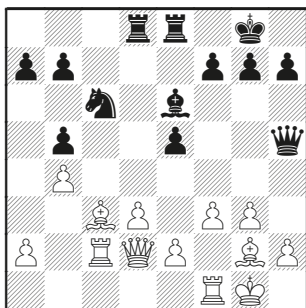
27.♙c6 ♙xa2 28.♚d6 ♚c4 29.♗e5 Losing another pawn.

**ANAND'S EXQUISITE COMBINATION**

The former world champion Vishy Anand had a splendid tournament. All went well for him: he didn't have opening problems and he took all the chances that he could. The combination he played to beat Caruana was exquisite.

**Vishy Anand – Fabiano Caruana**

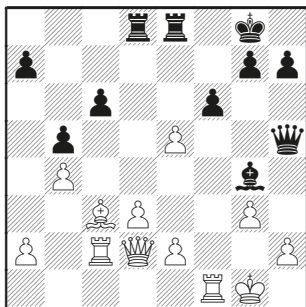
5<sup>th</sup> Sinquefeld Cup 2017 Saint Louis USA (5)



**19.f4** A sharp position with mutual chances. Caruana goes for what seems a promising attack, but he missed a thing or two...

**19...♙g4?** 19...exf4 20.♞xf4 f6 is unclear. White's bishops are compensated by Black's good centralisation and compact position.

**20.♙xc6 bxc6 21.fxe5 f6** This was Caruana's hope. What follows is another reminder of Anand's brilliance.



**22.exf6! ♞xe2 23.f7+ ♔f8 24.♙xg7+! ♔xg7 25.♚c3+ ♞e5** Had Caruana seen Anand's next move he would have played the more resilient 25...♚e5 26.♞xe2 ♚xc3 27.♞e8 ♚d4+ 28.♞f2 ♚xb4 29.f8♚+ ♚xf8 30.♞xf8 ♞xd3 but here White keeps good winning chances after 31.♞g8+ ♔f7 32.♞ef8+ ♔e7 33.♞a8.

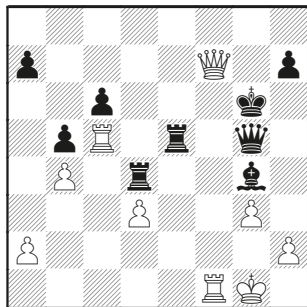
**26.♚d4!!** The move Caruana missed but Anand didn't!

26.h3 was the move Caruana saw, and it should also win for White, but Anand's move is just so much better! 26...♙xh3 27.♞h2 is the idea.

**26...♚g5 26...♞f8 27.♞c5** wins for White.

**27.♞c5** Beautiful geometry and aesthetically very pleasing to the eye!

**27...♞xd4 28.f8♚+ ♔g6 29.♚f7+**



Black gets mated after 29.♚f7+ ♔h6 30.♞f6+ ♚g6 31.♚f8+ ♔h5 32.♞xe5+ ♙f5 33.♞xf5+ ♔g4 34.♞f4+ ♔h3 35.♚c8+ ♞d7 36.♞h4♯

**1-0**

Vishy Anand had a splendid tournament topped with a beautiful combination against Caruana



## THE NOVELTY OF THE TOURNAMENT

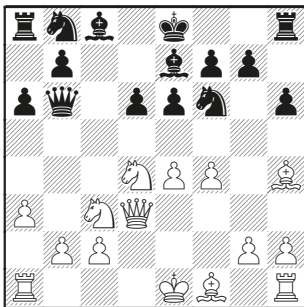
Even though he didn't have a good tournament, finishing on a minus score, the novelty of the tournament was played by Caruana. He introduced a fascinating new move as early as move 10 in one of the most heavily analysed lines in the Najdorf. Unfortunately, he couldn't take the full point due to two factors: first, he was up against the eventual winner and one of the best Najdorf players Vachier-Lagrave and secondly, he still hasn't got rid of his main problem of poor realisation of advantages.

**Fabiano Caruana -  
Maxime Vachier-Lagrave**

5<sup>th</sup> Sinquefeld Cup 2017 Saint Louis USA (6)

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♗c3 a6 6.♙g5 e6 7.f4 h6 8.♙h4 ♖b6 In spite of the trashing by Nakamura in London last year, Vachier remains loyal to his treatment of the Poisoned Pawn.

9.a3 ♙e7 10.♖d3!



An incredible novelty! To produce a novelty on move 10 in the heavily analysed Najdorf is an almost impossible feat nowadays. So far everybody has played 10 ♙f2 automatically.

The aforementioned game went 10.♙f2 ♖c7 11.♖f3 ♘bd7 12.0-0-0 b5 13.g4 ♙b7 14.♙g2 ♖c8 15.♗b1 g5 16.♖h3 ♘c5

17.♖he1 h5 18.♘f5! 1-0 (37) Nakamura,H (2779)-Vachier Lagrave,M (2804) London ENG 2016.

**10...♘bd7?!** Black correctly avoids the complications and plays a solid move. Even with serious preparation those are very dangerous waters to swim in. But White obtains an advantage after the game move so Black should look for improvements in this position.

Here is a short overview of Black's possibilities:

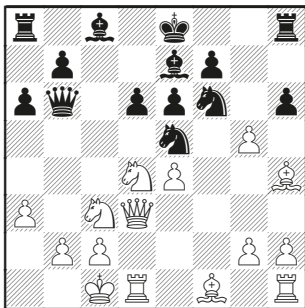
10...d5 11.♙xf6 ♙xf6 12.0-0-0 dxe4 13.♘xe4 ♙e7 14.g4±; 10...♖xb2 is extremely risky after 11.♘b3 ♘xe4 12.♘xe4 ♙xh4+ 13.♗d2! ♘c6 14.♘xd6+ ♗f8 15.♘c4 ♖f6 16.g3 Black loses the ♙h4 but the murky play continues after 16...b5 17.♘d6 e5 18.♘e4 ♖e7 19.gxh4 and this should still favour White.; 10...♙c6 11.♙f2 ♘g4? (11...♖xb2? 12.♘b3; 11...♖c7) 12.♙g1 ♖xb2?! again this is dangerous 13.♘b3 ♙h4+ 14.♗d1□ (14.♗d2? ♘a5! threatening to take on b3 with a check!) 14...♙f2 15.h3 ♘e3+ 16.♗d2 ♙xg1 (16...♘a5 17.♘xa5 ♙xg1 18.♖xg1 ♖xa1 19.♖xe3±) 17.♖xg1 ♘d4 18.♖b1 ♘xf1+ 19.♗e1! ♖xc2 (19...♘xc2+ 20.♗xf1 ♖xa3 21.♖xc2±) 20.♖xd4±; 10...♘xe4 11.♙xe7 ♘xc3 12.♖xc3 ♗xe7 13.0-0-0 ♖d8 (13...♖e8 14.g4; 13...♘c6?! 14.♘xc6+ ♖xc6 15.♖xg7) 14.g4; 10...e5!?! this is an interesting try 11.fxe5 (11.♘b3 exf4 12.♙f2 ♖d8 13.0-0-0 ♘c6; 11.♙xf6 ♙xf6 12.♘d5 ♖xb2) 11...dxe5 12.♙xf6 ♙xf6 13.♘d5 ♖xb2 (13...♖a5+ is a more solid alternative 14.b4 ♖d8 15.♘b3 0-0 16.♖d1 ♙g5 17.♙e2 ♙e6 18.♘c5 b5∞) 14.♘c7+ ♗e7 15.♘b3 ♖d8 16.♖e3 ♖d4∞ with a total mess.

**11.0-0-0 g5** A typical Najdorf move, but in this exact position White is well-prepared to meet it.

11...♖c7?! leads to the Browne System but with a tempo less for Black, hence not a very good option, at least theoretically 12.♖g3 g5 13.fxg5 ♘h5 14.♖e3 ♖c5

White is a tempo up (a3) compared to the usual Browne System line; 11...♘c5 was probably best, even though Black's position is not to be envied after 12.♙e2! threatening e5 12...♘fxe4 13.♘xe4 ♙xh4 14.♘f5! ♘xe4 15.♙xe4 ♙e7 (15...d5 16.♙e5 f6 17.♘g7+ ♔f8 18.♙e2 ♔xg7 19.g3±) 16.♘xe7 ♔xe7 17.♙c4→.

12.fxg5 ♘e5



12...♘g4 13.♙d2 ♙d8 14.♘f3 ♘ge5 15.♙e2± hxg5 16.♙xg5 ♘xf3 17.♙xe7 ♘xd2 18.♙xd8 ♔xd8 19.♔xd2 and White is a clear pawn up.

13.♙d2 ♘h7 13...♘fd7 14.g3.

14.♘f3 14.♙e2 hxg5 15.♙f2± is another good alternative.

14...hxg5 15.♙f2 ♙c7 16.♙e2 with an advantage to White.

½-½

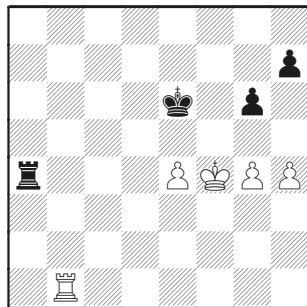
**THE MAIN QUESTION WAS WHETHER MAGNUS CARLSEN CAN FINALLY WIN A CLASSICAL TOURNAMENT. THE ANSWER: HE CAN'T**

## CARLSEN'S TWO MISSES IN A TEXTBOOK ROOK ENDGAME

The game Carlsen-Nakamura saw a very instructive rook endgame. Uncharacteristically, Carlsen missed the win twice.

Magnus Carlsen – Hikaru Nakamura

5<sup>th</sup> Sinquefeld Cup 2017 Saint Louis USA (6)



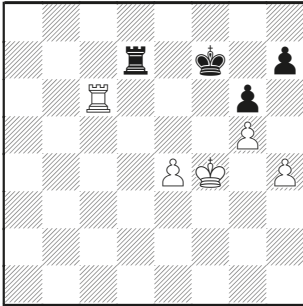
40...♙a7 A position for future books on endgames. Carlsen thought this was winning in more than one way, and he was right, in a way. This is the first moment when he missed a win.

41.♙b6+?! 41.♔g5! was natural and Carlsen considered it, but he committed a mistake we all do way too often - he stopped calculating too soon.

A) 41...♙a4 42.♙b7! h5 43.gxh5 gxh5 44.♔f4 Black's problem is that h5 is an easier target now. 44...♙a1 45.♙b6+ ♔f7 46.♔f5 ♔g7 47.♙g6+ ♔f7 48.♙d6 ♔g1 49.♙d7+ ♔g8 50.♔f6 White varies his threats of advancing the e-pawn and attacking the h5-pawn. 50...♙g4 51.♙d8+ ♔h7 52.e5 ♙g6+ (52...♙xh4 53.e6 ♙f4+ 54.♔e5 and the e-pawn will net the rook.) 53.♔f5 ♙g1 54.e6 ♙f1+ 55.♔e5 ♙e1+ 56.♔f6 ♙f1+ 57.♔e7 ♙e1 58.♙d5 ♔g6 59.♙g5+ ♔h6 60.♔f6 ♙f1+ 61.♙f5 and the pawn queens.

**B)** After 41...♔e5 he felt that Black gets counterplay and started looking in another direction. A rare case where Carlsen's intuition let him down! 42.♔h6! is the more forceful engine recommendation (42.♖f1 cuts off Black's king but allows Black to draw after 42...h5! 43.gxh5 gxh5 44.♔xh5 ♖h7+! 45.♔g5 ♖g7+ 46.♔h6 ♖g4 47.h5 ♔xe4) 42...♔f4 it does appear that Black gets counterplay here, but after the calm 43.♖g1 White will push g5 and the will come with the rook to h8 and collect the pawns. Then the pawn on g6 will decide as White will get the basic Lucena position. 43...♖d7 44.g5 ♖c7 45.e5 ♔xe5 46.♖f1 ♔e6 47.♖f6+ ♔e5 48.♖f8 ♔e6 49.♖h8 ♖c4 50.♖xh7 ♖xh4+ 51.♔xg6.

41...♔f7 42.♖c6 ♖d7 43.g5??



This one lets the win slip. Even from a practical perspective this is a bad move since it blocks the king's access to g5 and h6.

43.h5! still wins for White, but it's far from trivial. 43...gxh5 44.gxh5 ♖d1 45.♔e5 ♖f1 (45...♔g8 46.♖f6! cutting off the king, followed by the push of the e-pawn.) 46.♖c7+ ♔g8 47.♔e6 ♖h1 48.♖c5 ♔g7 49.♖g5+ ♔h6 (49...♔f8 50.♖f5+! ♔e8 51.♔f6 ♔f8 52.e5 ♖h2 53.♔g5+ ♔g7 54.e6 h6+ 55.♔f4 ♖e2 56.♖e5 ♖f2+ 57.♔g4 ♖f8 58.♖e4○ if the rook moves then White's king crosses the f-file 58...♔g8 59.♖f4 ♖a8 60.♖f6 ♖a2 61.♔f5 ♖f2+ 62.♔g6 ♖g2+ 63.♔xh6) 50.♖f5 ♔g7 51.e5 ♖a1 52.♖f7+ ♔h6 (52...♔g8

53.♖d7 with ♔e7, e6 and the pawn will queen 53...h6 54.♔e7 ♔g7 55.♔e8+ ♔g8 56.e6 ♖a2 57.e7 ♖a8+ 58.♖d8 ♖a7 59.♖c8 with ♔d8 to come.) 53.♔f6 ♖f1+ 54.♔e7 ♖a1 55.e6 ♔xh5 56.♖g7! (but not 56.♖xh7+?? ♔g6 with a draw) 56...h6 57.♔f7 ♖f1+ 58.♔e8 ♔h4 59.e7 h5 60.♖g6! preparing to cover the checks with the rook. 60...♔h3 61.♔d7 ♖e1 62.♖e6 ♖d1+ 63.♔c6 ♖c1+ 64.♔d5 ♖c8 65.e8♙ ♖xe8 66.♖xe8 ♔g3 67.♔e4 with an easy win as the king is close. 43.♔g5 ♔g7.

**43...♖a7** Now it is a draw and Nakamura defends well until the end.

½-½

The endgame was an epitome of Nakamura's tournament. He fought hard as usual, but was completely out of form and couldn't do more.

## VACHIER-LAGRAVE'S POSITIONAL MASTERPIECE

The tournament was evenly contested until the last round when Vachier-Lagrave was the only player from the leaders to win his game and this brought him clear first with 6 out of 9.

Except for the games with Carlsen and Caruana, Vachier-Lagrave did not have problems and was always pressing with White, showing his fine preparation. His defence of difficult positions relies heavily on tactics and calculation and at the moment he is probably the best in the world as these aspects of the game. In the last round he showed that he can also create positional masterpieces.

**Maxime Vachier-Lagrave –  
Ian Nepomniachtchi**

5<sup>th</sup> Sinquefeld Cup 2017 Saint Louis USA (9)

1.e4 c5 2.♖f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♖f6 5.♗c3 a6 6.♗e2 Vachier varies from his usual choice of 6 h3 in favour of a more positional option. Honestly, I don't think

he came to this game with the "win at all costs" attitude. Nowadays, people try to avoid risk in last-round games, even if that means not winning the tournament. If the result is good enough they are happy with 2nd or 3rd place. Still, Vachier was flexible enough to adjust and take the chance when an opportunity to safely play for a win was presented.

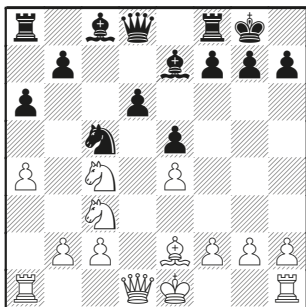
**6...e5 7.♘f3** For a very long time this was a harmless line but lately it received some attention after Carlsen's successful use of it in rapid and blitz.

**7...♙e7** Black follows his game with Carlsen. Surprising really, because he didn't have an improvement and basically ran into Vachier's preparation.

**7...h6** is the alternative and it was considered as the main move against 7. ♘f3. It was played by Vachier himself four days after he lost to Carlsen with the game move. 8. ♘d2 b5 9. ♘f1 ♙b7 10. ♙f3 ♘bd7 11. ♘e3 ♘b6 12.0-0 0-1 (57) Carlsen,M (2832)-Vachier Lagrave,M (2796) Paris FRA 2017.

**8. ♙g5 ♘bd7 9.a4 0-0 9...b6 10. ♘d2 h6 11. ♙xf6 ♘xf6 12. ♘c4 ♙b7 13.a5 b5 14. ♘b6** is the same manoeuvre we will see in the game, 1-0 (39) Carlsen,M (2832)-Vachier Lagrave,M (2796) Paris FRA 2017.

**10. ♘d2 ♘c5 11. ♙xf6 ♙xf6 12. ♘c4 ♙e7**



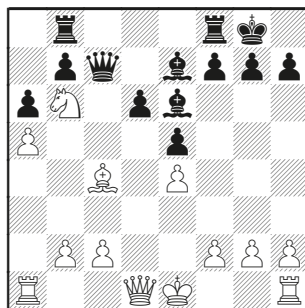
**13.a5!** Here comes the improvement over Carlsen's game.

13.0-0 allows the ♖a8 to come out to the c-file after 13...♙e6 14.a5 ♖c8 15. ♘b6 ♖c6 1-0 (34) Carlsen,M (2832)-Nepomniachtchi,I (2732) Leuven BEL 2017.

**13...♖b8 13...♙e6 14. ♘b6** and the rook stays shut out.

**14. ♘b6 ♘d7 14...♙e6** leads to a similar position after 15.0-0 ♘d7 16. ♘xd7 ♖xd7 17. ♘d5 ♙g5 18. ♖a3±.

**15. ♘cd5 ♘xb6 16. ♘xb6 ♙e6 17. ♙c4 ♖c7?**



After this Black is doomed to passivity until the end of the game.

**17...d5!?** was Black's last chance to change the character of the position. Even psychologically this would have suited Nepomniachtchi because at least he would have obtained some activity. 18. ♘xd5 (*18.exd5?! ♙f5 19.0-0 ♙c5 is good for Black.*; 18. ♙xd5 - a good alternative to 18. ♘d5 - 18...♙b4+ 19.c3 ♙xa5 20. ♘c4 ♙c7 21. ♙xe6 fxe6 22. ♖xd8 ♖fxd8 23. ♙e2± with a good endgame for White.) 18...♖c8 19. ♙b3 ♖c5 20. ♖d2± White keeps things under control, but the pair of bishops are not to be underestimated.

**18. ♖d3 ♙d8 19.c3 ♖c6?!** This allows White to achieve the last favourable exchange. Now the light-squared bishops



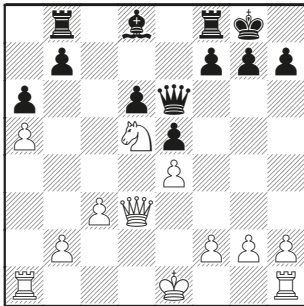


are exchanged but Black's pawn stays on f7, thus giving White eternal control over d5.

19...♖e7 20.♘d5 ♖g5 (20...♙xd5 21.♙xd5 is hopeless for Black. The difference in activity of the opposite-coloured bishops is quite apparent.) 21.0-0 ♔h8 22.b4 is still difficult for Black, but at least he keeps some control over d5.

20.♙d5! ♖e8 21.♙xe6 The pawn on d6 hangs so Black must recapture with the queen.

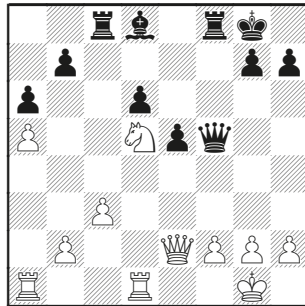
21...♖xe6 22.♘d5



A textbook position. Vachier's treatment will undoubtedly enter the future books on chess strategy and realisation of an advantage.

22...f5 The only way to obtain counterplay.

23.0-0 ♖c8 24.♖fd1 fx4 25.♖xe4 ♖f5 26.♖e2!



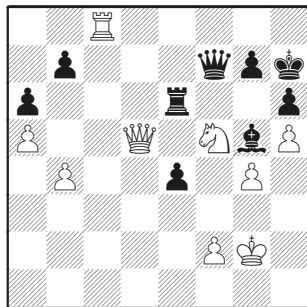
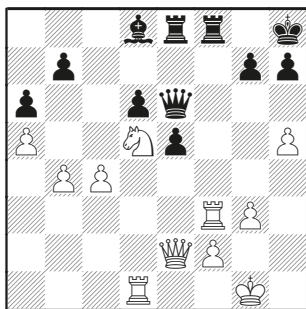
An instructive moment. White correctly avoids the exchange of queens.

In the endgame after 26.♖xf5 ♖xf5 27.g3 the absence of queens allows Black to get the king to e6 and this makes his defence easier. 27...♔f7 28.♘e3 ♖f6 29.♖d3 ♔e6 30.♖ad1 ♙e7 and Black has definitely improved his position.

26...♔h8 27.c4 ♙h4 28.g3 ♙g5 29.♖a3 ♖ce8 30.h4 ♙d8 31.b4 White advances on the queenside where he will prepare c5 or b5.

31...♖g6 32.h5 ♖f5 33.♘e3 ♖e6 34.♖ad3

♙e7 35.♘d5 ♚d8 36.♖f3!



Another instructive moment concerning the exchanges of pieces. Exchanging one pair of rooks is in White's favour because Black's remaining rook cannot both defend the weaknesses and look for activity.

36...♖xf3 37.♗xf3 ♔g8 38.♙g2 e4 Black cannot stand being passive any more, at the same time preventing White's plan to put a knight on e4, a rook on d5 and a queen on d5.

For example: 38...♖f8 39.♗e2 ♗f7 40.♘c3 ♗e6 41.♘e4 ♙e7 42.♖d5 ♖d8 43.♗d3 ♔h8 44.c5.

39.♗e2 ♗e5 40.♘e3 ♙g5 40...♗e6 was more resilient, but White should still win after 41.h6! gxf6 (41...♗xf6? 42.♘f5; 41...g6 42.♗d2 ♙e7 43.♗d4 ♙f8 44.♘d5 threatening ♘f6.) 42.♖d5 ♙e7 43.♘f5 ♙f8 44.♗d1 ♗f6 45.♘e3 with ideas like ♖f5-f4, ♘d5 or ♗d5.

41.♖d5! ♗f6 42.♘f5 ♙e6 43.c5! Opening the position so that White's superior forces can penetrate Black's position.

43...dxc5 44.♗c4 ♗f7 45.♖xc5 h6 45...♖c6 46.♖xc6 bxc6 47.♗xe4 is technically winning for White.

46.♖c8+ ♔h7 47.g4 The human move.

47.♗d5 is the engine's suggestion and Vachier actually arrives at this set-up a couple of moves later.

47...♙e7 48.♗d4 ♖e6 49.♗d5

Here we have it. Black is in zugzwang.

49...g6 49...♙e7 50.♘d4 ♖f6 51.♗xe4+; 49...♙f6 50.♘d6 ♗e7 51.♗f5+.

50.hxg6+ ♔xg6 51.♖f8 ♗xf8 52.♗xe6+ An amazing performance by Vachier in a last-round game with so much at stake.

1-0

## THE SINQUEFIELD CUP GAVE THE PLAYERS SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT - WHETHER TO CONTINUE WHAT THEY WERE DOING OR CHANGE AND ADJUST

Sinquefield Cup		
Year	City	Winner
1 2013	St. Louis	Magnus Carlsen (Norway)
2 2014	St. Louis	Fabiano Caruana (Italy)
3 2015	St. Louis	Levon Aronian (Armenia)
4 2016	St. Louis	Wesley So (United States)
5 2017	St. Louis	Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (France)



Champion Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (right) with Dr. Jeanne and Rex Sinquefield along with the \$75,000 first prize cheque

own last-round heroics remained somewhat in the shadow. He outplayed and beat Aronian in a complex game to share second place with Anand and spoil Aronian's good tournament. Carlsen's play was much better than in Norway and he seems to be on a good path towards regaining his previous authority. With the World Cup around the corner,

where everybody except Topalov will play, the Sinquefeld Cup gave the players something to think about - whether to continue what they were doing or change and adjust in view of the exposed shortcomings. September is approaching fast and it will be hot in Tbilisi.

### Final standings

		FIDE	Pts.	n	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	TB	Perf
1	<b>Vachier-Lagrave,Maxime</b>	2789	6.5	9	*	1	½	½	½	½	½	½	1	1	3.00	2810
2	<b>Carlsen,M</b>	2822	5.5	9	0	*	½	1	1	½	½	½	1	½	3.00	2763
3	<b>Anand,V</b>	2783	5.5	9	½	½	*	½	½	½	1	½	½	1	2.00	2715
4	<b>Aronian,L</b>	2799	5.0	9	½	0	½	*	½	½	0	1	1	1	3.00	2682
5	<b>Karjakin,S</b>	2773	5.0	9	½	0	½	½	*	1	½	½	1	½	2.00	2685
6	<b>Svidler,P</b>	2751	4.5	9	½	½	½	½	0	*	1	½	½	½	1.00	2705
7	<b>Caruana,F</b>	2807	4.0	9	½	½	0	1	½	0	*	½	½	½	1.00	2685
8	<b>Nakamura,H</b>	2792	3.5	9	½	½	½	0	½	½	½	*	½	0	0.00	2592
9	<b>So,W</b>	2810	3.0	9	0	0	½	0	0	½	½	½	*	1	1.00	2435
10	<b>Nepomniachtchi,Ian</b>	2751	3.0	9	0	½	0	0	½	½	½	1	0	*	1.00	2311



By GM Aleksandar Colovic

Photos: Lennart Ootes / Grand Chess Tour 2017 official / Spectrum Studios

## GARRY KASPAROV: "IT IS NOT ABOUT W AT THE END OF THE DAY IT IS ABOUT WI

The rapid (14-16 August) and blitz (17-18 August) that followed the Sinquefeld Cup were probably the most anticipated events of the whole Grand Chess Tour. After 12 years Garry Kasparov came back from retirement to play an official event.

One of the greatest players in chess history, Kasparov dominated the chess world for two decades. He retired in 2005 after winning the 14-game Linares tournament in Spain, saying he had no more goals in professional chess. Kasparov, who defended his title against Karpov three times, will also be remembered for one of his few losses - against the IBM

computer Deep Blue in 1997, which marked the turning-point in the battle of man vs the machine. The chess player turned politician has briefly returned to professional chess at Saint Louis as if to tease us.

Just so that you have the general information: the event was won by Levon Aronian, who played the most consistent chess throughout the 5 days. Second and third were shared by Karjakin, who had an unimaginable 8/9 on the first day of the blitz, and Nakamura, the usual suspect when it comes to faster time controls.

## COMEBACK FROM RETIREMENT AFTER 12 YEARS



## INNING OR LOSING, BUT OF COURSE INNING OR LOSING."

And now I will focus on the man who made the difference. I remember the first time I saw Kasparov live. It was in 1989 in Belgrade (then Yugoslavia), during the Investbanka tournament where he scored 9.5/11 and was in a league of his own. I can still see him marching upstage and down- exactly 13 steps in each direction! I saw him again in person in Linares in 2002, his concentration and determination in the decisive game against Ponomarev in the penultimate round proving crucial in his win of the game and the tournament. In 2004 in Cesme I experienced his

piercing look during his game with Sax as I was walking by...

The Garry Kasparov of 2017 was different. He still tried to do things the usual way, but it wasn't working... To see his hands shake in horrific time-trouble was a shocking sight for somebody who has seen him in total control. He was excellently prepared, that all worked as usual, but there was no flow in his games. He would play well and then blunder or lose control. He tried to be solid but couldn't keep the tension...

## Fabiano Caruana – Garry Kasparov

St. Louis Rapid &amp; Blitz GCT (9.1)



**21...♖d3** The position is completely equal. But play continues and it is notable to see how Caruana starts to create small problems.

**22.e5** Shutting off the bishop. Kasparov does not feel comfortable with it so he tries to liberate it.

**22...♗d7 23.h3 ♖e6 23...♖c8** is an option, as Black's centralised pieces compensate for the passive ♕g7.

**24.♖d2 ♖xd2** Abandoning the open file to play ...f6, but now it is White who has the centralised heavy pieces.

**24...♖bd8 25.♖xd3 ♖xd3 26.♗e4 ♖d8 27.♕b4** with the threat of invading on c6. These are all minor annoyances, but especially in rapid they tend to accumulate and soon enough the player starts to feel that he is worse.

**25.♗xd2 f6 26.exf6 ♕xf6 26...exf6** was possible, but Kasparov wants to have the bishop active immediately.

**27.b4** Cementing the ♕c5. Imperceptibly Caruana has made progress - Black has an extra pawn island, the ♕c5 is very strong and a6 is fixed. But the position is still equal and Kasparov should not have problems here, unless he creates them himself.

**27...♖e8** An awkward move.



**27...♗e4 28.♖d1 ♕f7** keeping the pieces centralised.

**28.♖f1** This and the next two moves are very important. They don't threaten anything, but they do improve White's position. A world-class player of the 21st century like Caruana easily keeps the tension and plays moves that improve his position.

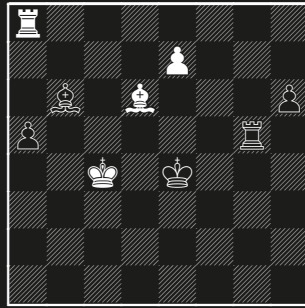
**28...♕f7 29.♖f3 h5 30.a3** Getting the pawn away from the a2-g8 diagonal.

**30...♗c4 31.♗d7** An annoying move. It does not threaten anything, but it looks uncomfortable for Black. It feels as if Black is defending and is worse, even if the position is objectively "dead equal" (0.00) according to the engine.

**31...a5?!**



**I REMEMBER THE FIRST TIME I SAW KASPAROV LIVE. IT WAS IN 1989 IN BELGRADE (THEN YUGOSLAVIA), DURING THE INVESTBANKA TOURNAMENT WHERE HE SCORED 9.5/11 AND WAS IN A LEAGUE OF HIS OWN**



A nervous move, trying to get rid of the weakness on a6, but allowing an even more uncomfortable transposition where Black needs to solve slightly more difficult problems.

31...♖e6 32.♞d3 ♜xd7 33.♞xd7 ♜c8 34.♞a7 ♜c6 with ♘e6 to come and Black is safe.

**32.f5! g5 33.♖e6+ ♜xe6 34.fxe6+ ♘xe6 35.bxa5 ♞a8?** Panic. This condemns the rook to eternal passivity.

35...♞c8 36.♙b6 ♜c4! with the idea of ♜a4 and Black has nothing to worry about.

**36.♙b6!** Now things are really difficult for Black and he is probably lost, especially bearing in mind that he was also low on time. His main problem is that the pawn on b5 falls, so Kasparov sends the king to destroy White's a3-pawn, but then his kingside pawns are an easy prey.

36...♙d5 37.♞f5+ ♙c4 38.♞c5+ ♙b3 39.♞xb5+ ♙xa3 40.♙f2 ♙a4 41.♞f5 ♙b3 42.♙e3 ♙c4 43.♙e4 White's plan is to play ♙c5 and then enter with the king.

43...g4 43...h4 44.♞c5+ ♙b4 45.♙d5.

44.♞xh5 gxh3 45.gxh3 Now the h-pawn decides.

45...♙c3 46.♞c5+ ♙b3 47.h4 ♙b4 48.♞g5 ♙c4 49.h5 ♙d6 50.h6

An impressive Karpovian victory for Caruana. And if you look at the starting position it is really difficult to imagine a player of Kasparov's stature losing it.

**KASPAROV: THE GAME WHICH WILL HAUNT ME FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE**

Kasparov suffered from the usual problems after a long break from chess. Lack of practice usually means loss of the playing rhythm and this is revealed in the brain's inability to stay fully functional for the whole duration of the game.

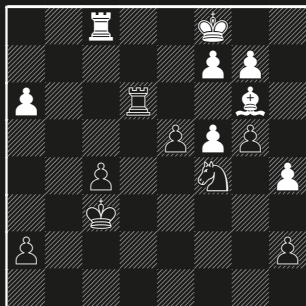
Game after game Kasparov would play well and then a short-circuit would happen and

**KASPAROV, WHO DEFENDED HIS TITLE AGAINST KARPOV THREE TIMES, WILL ALSO BE REMEMBERED FOR ONE OF HIS FEW LOSSES - AGAINST THE IBM COMPUTER DEEP BLUE IN 1997, WHICH MARKED THE TURNING-POINT IN THE BATTLE OF MAN VS THE MACHINE**

his level would drop dramatically. His clock management was another corroboration of the stalling brain. It needed time to get going and then time would run out. The most painful moment was his game against Navara in the rapid...

### Garry Kasparov – David Navara

St. Louis Rapid & Blitz GCT (7.1)



White has total control and is only a question of when he will win.

**28...a5 29.♖a6 ♜b8 30.♖xa5 ♜b1 31.c5**  
Everything wins, really.

31.♖a8+ ♖e7 32.♔d4 ♜f1 33.♘d5+ ♔d7  
34.♖a7+ ♖e8 35.♔c5 is a nice way to move everybody forward together.

**31...♖e1 32.♖a8+ ♖e7 33.♖a7+ ♖e8**  
**34.♘d3?**



A move that is difficult to explain. Removing the knight from the marvellous

position on f4 can only be understood if White had calculated a win, which he obviously hadn't. With little time Kasparov was playing more on feeling, but even his intuition let him down under the stressful conditions. Objectively the move wins, but makes the situation more "dynamic" in a sense that White needs to calculate a win rather than win "by hand."

34.e6! Both defends the pawn and keeps the Black king tied to the defence of f7. The engine gives +10 here.

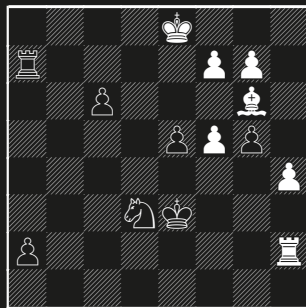
**34...♖c3 35.♔d2?** 35.c6! was a straightforward win that wasn't that difficult to calculate. 35...f4 36.♖a8+ ♖e7 37.c7 ♔xd3 (37...♔f5 38.c8♖ with a piece up when the passed a-pawn will decide things quickly.) 38.♖e8+ ♖xe8 39.c8♖+ is an easy technical win.

**35...♖h3?** Navara errs too.

35...f4! 36.♘xf4 ♜xe5 37.c6 ♔f5 and even if this is still winning, it is not the transformation White was looking for.

**36.c6** Now again it should have been easy for White.

**36...♖xh2+ 37.♔e3?**



White's position is so clearly winning that even after this inexplicable move he should still win. But to make a move like this... It is impossible to explain the blackouts





the brain suffers when under extreme conditions.

37.♔c3 Preventing the rook from coming to c2. The win is only a few moves away and it consists of natural moves. 37...f4 38.♖a8+ ♕e7 39.c7 ♕f5 40.♗xf4 Perhaps missed by Kasparov, the check on d5 defends the c7-pawn indirectly. 40...♖c2+ 41.♔d4 h3 42.♗d5+ ♕e6 43.♖e8+ ♔d7 44.♖d8+ ♕e6 45.♖d6# would have been a satisfying finish.

37...♖c2 38.e6?? Finally throwing away the win, which was no longer trivial as it required the calculation of disjointed lines.

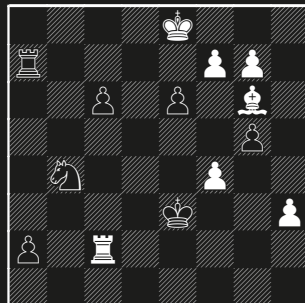
38.♗b4 was the winning move. 38...♖c4 39.♖a8+ ♕e7 40.c7 f4+ (40...♔d7 41.♗d5 threatening c8♖ and ♗b6, winning the rook.) 41.♔f2 ♕f5 42.♗d5+ ♕e6 43.c8♖+ ♖xc8 44.♖xc8 ♔xd5 45.♖e8 h3 46.a4 and White should still win, but the game would go on.

38...h3 Black has counterplay now.

39.♗b4? Still playing for a win, but this endangers only White. Of course, it was impossible under those conditions of having seconds left to objectively evaluate the position and take the draw.

39.♖a8+ ♕e7 40.♗f4 ♖xc6 41.♖a7+ is a perpetual check.

39...f4+





**HIS CLOCK MANAGEMENT WAS ANOTHER CORROBORATION OF THE STALLING BRAIN... GAME AFTER GAME KASPAROV WOULD PLAY WELL AND THEN A SHORT CIRCUIT WOULD HAPPEN AND HIS LEVEL WOULD DROP DRAMATICALLY**

39...h2! 40.♖a8+ ♕e7 41.♖h8 ♖c4 42.♗d5+ ♕xe6 43.♗f4+ ♕e5 44.♗d3+ ♕d6 45.♖xh2 ♖xc6 and White is worse here.

40.♕d4 h2 41.♖a8+ ♕e7 42.♖h8 ♖d2+? Giving White another chance, but one that is impossible to take with very little time left.

42...♖c1 keeps the c-pawn under control and should draw 43.♗d5+ ♕xe6 44.♗xf4+ ♕d6 45.♖xh2 ♖xc6.

43.♕c5 ♖e4 44.c7 ♖b7 45.♕b6 45.a3!! Who on earth would play a move like this, the only one that wins?? The point is to have the ♗b4 defended in various lines (which are totally crazy): 45...fxe6 (45...f3 46.♕b6 f2 47.♕xb7 f1 ♖b5+ 49.♕a7 ♖a5+ 50.♗a6) 46.♕b6 ♖c8 (46...h1 ♖ 47.♖xh1 ♖c8 48.♗c6+ ♕d6 49.♖h8 ♖b2+ 50.♗b4) 47.♗c6+ ♕f7 48.♖xc8 h1 ♖ 49.♗e5+ ♕e7 50.♖e8+ ♕d6 51.♗c4+ ♕d5 52.c8 ♖.

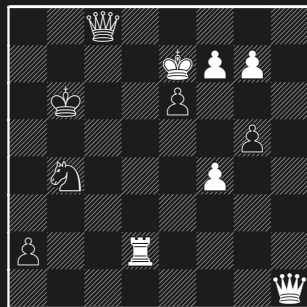
45...♖c8 46.♖xc8 46.a3 was still the star move, even though here it is less strong 46...♖d6+ 47.♕c5 fxe6 48.♖xh2 ♖d1 and Black should hold.

46...h1 ♖



47.♖e8+ 47.♗c6+ ♖xc6+ ♖ 48.♕xc6 ♖c2+ 49.♕b7 ♖b2+ is a perpetual.

47...♕xe8 48.c8 ♖+ ♕e7



49. ♖c6+?? And here we witness Kasparov blundering a 2-move tactic. What a nightmare.

49. ♖c7+ ♜xe6 50. ♖c8+ ♜d7 51. ♖e8+ is a perpetual.

49... ♖xc6+! 50. ♖xc6 ♜d6

0-1

In his own words, this game will haunt him for the rest of his life. It is indeed perplexing for a person who could see everything that was happening on the board to miss the simplest things.

### A GOOD HUMAN MOVE WHICH THE ENGINE DOESN'T LIKE

In view of all of the above, it came as no surprise that Kasparov's best day was the last one. He finally had enough practice under his belt and started to play faster and with more confidence. After the 1-move blunder in the first round of the last day against Karjakin he didn't lose a single game and finished the day with 5.5/9, beating Nakamura, Caruana and Dominguez.

His last win, against Dominguez, featured his beloved Najdorf and added to his number of instructive wins in the opening. It is probably the last Najdorf he will ever play.

Leinier Dominguez Perez-Garry Kasparov

St. Louis Rapid & Blitz GCT (26.1)

1.e4 c5 2. ♖f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4. ♖xd4 ♖f6 5. ♖c3 a6 6.h3 e6 7.g4 h6 The previous day against Navara the game continued 7... ♖fd7 8. ♖e3 b5 9.a3 ♖b7 10.g5 ♖b6 11.h4 ♖8d7 12. ♖d2 ♖c8 with a typical Najdorf middlegame: ½-½ (32) Navara,D (2737)-Kasparov,G (2812) 2017.

### KASPAROV'S OLD HABIT OF TRYING TO FIND THE BEST MOVE GOT THE BETTER OF HIM. HE WAS WORKING HARD OVER THE BOARD, BURNING TIME, LOOKING FOR THE BEST MOVE. AND OFTEN IT WASN'T THERE

8. ♖g2 g5 One of the most reliable systems against White's 6 h3. It was popular 8-9 years ago but now it will probably get more attention.

9. ♖e3 ♖bd7 10. ♖e2 ♖e5 11.0-0-0 ♖fd7 12.h4 12.f4 is the more popular move.

12... ♖g8 13.hxg5 hxg5 14. ♖b1 b5 In this structure White runs the risk of ending up in a strategically lost position in view of his weak dark squares. This means that he needs to do something dynamic fast, before Black establishes firm control. Whether this is possible, however, is a different question.

15.a3 ♖b7 16. ♖c1 Liberating the third rank for the rook.

16... ♖c8 17. ♖h3 17. ♖a2!? ♖c7 18. ♖b4 ♖c4 with the same idea of entering an endgame as in the game. 19. ♖e1 ♖e7 20. ♖h3 ♖c7 with unclear play.

17... ♖g6 18. ♖h1 ♖de5



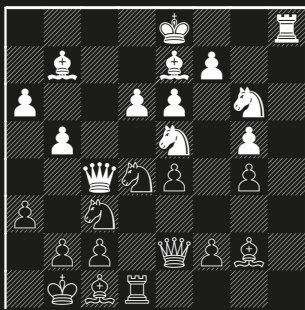
Black has very easy and comfortable play as all his pieces have good squares to go to.

19. ♖g3 19. ♗f3!? it made sense to exchange at least one of the annoying knights.

19... ♗e7 20. ♗a2 Slowly White is drifting into the strategically hopeless position, but it is difficult to suggest something constructive.

20. ♖f1 ♖h8 21. ♗e2 ♗f6 and Black is taking over, slowly but surely.

20... ♖h8 21. ♖c3 ♖xc3 22. ♗xc3 ♖c7 23. ♗g2 ♖c4!



The engine does not like this, but it is a good human move. The endgame is winning for Black, so quite a surprise that Dominguez entered it.

23... ♖h2; 23... ♗f4.

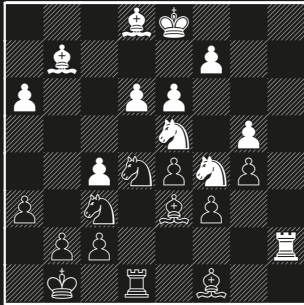
24. ♖xc4? After this we can enjoy Kasparov's good technique. At the end he finally got the brain-hand coordination going.

24. ♖e3□.

24... ♖xc4 24... ♗xc4 was an alternative, but Kasparov plays for total domination.

25. f3 ♖h2 26. ♗f1 ♗f4 27. ♗e3 ♗d8





In true classical style, first improving the position to the maximum and then changing the structure.

27...d5 was possible.

28.♖d2?! 28.♗de2 was more resilient, but not easy to calculate as it leaves too many things en prise. 28...♗xe2! the simpler solution. (28...♗g2 29.♔g1 ♗xf3! 30.♔h2 ♗e3 31.♖c1 ♗xh2 32.♔h3 ♗hxg4) 29.♔xe2 ♔a5 30.♖e1 ♖h3.

28...♖xd2 29.♔xd2 ♔b6 30.♔xf4  
Otherwise f3 falls

30...gxf4 31.♗ce2 d5!



Finally the d5-break. The game follows the classical Najdorf narrative of a better endgame won after the d5-break.

32.exd5 ♔xd5 White's position falls apart.

33.♔g2 ♗xg4 34.♗xf4 ♗e3 35.♗de2  
35.c3 ♔b7.

35...♗xg2 36.♗xg2 ♔xf3 And the rest is easy.

37.♗ef4 ♔e7 38.♔c1 e5 39.♗h4 ♔e3+  
40.♔b1 ♔xf4 41.♗xf3 ♔e6 42.b3 e4  
43.♗d4+ ♔d5 44.c3 ♔e5 45.bxc4+ ♔xc4  
46.♗f5 ♔xc3 47.♔c1 ♔d3 48.♔d1 e3

0-1

In Kasparov's time you were supposed to find the best move on the board. It was believed that such a move always existed and the task of the player was to find it. He worked tirelessly at the board and more often than not he managed to find that one move.

They often say that the emergence of engines changed chess. One of the most important changes was that very often there would be more than one "best" move in the position. The engines showed that several moves can be equally good. This revelation changed the perception of chess - if more than one move is "the best" then it is more important to be practical and play one of those "best moves" and not try to find "the one", simply because it doesn't exist.

I am not sure Kasparov has fully grasped this new truth. Even if he has, the old habit of trying to find the best move got the better of him. He was working hard over the board, burning time, looking for the best move. And often it wasn't there. Kasparov returned only to retire again. His presence was what made this probably the most memorable event in years. I for one barely noticed the other games, I was glued to Kasparov's.

Chess needs characters like Kasparov, but I am afraid this is the last time we will have seen him in competitive chess. As he has said himself: "It is not about winning or losing, but of course at the end of the day it is about winning or losing."



**EVERYONE  
CAME TO  
SEE HIM:  
THE CROWD  
WAS GLUED  
TO GARRY**

Saint Louis Blitz 2017 Saint Louis (USA), 13-19 viii 2017				cat. XXI (2773)	
1.	Karjakin, Sergey	RUS	2773	13.5	2966
2.	Aronian, Levon	ARM	2799	12.5	2911
3.	Nakamura, Hikaru	USA	2792	10.5	2828
4.	Nepomniachtchi, Ian	RUS	2751	10.0	2818
5.	Kasparov, Garry	RUS	2812	9.0	2768
6.	Le, Quang Liem	VIE	2739	8.5	2756
7.	Dominguez Perez, Leinier	CUB	2739	7.5	2720
8.	Anand, Viswanathan	IND	2783	7.0	2692
9.	Navara, David	CZE	2737	6.0	2652
10.	Caruana, Fabiano	USA	2807	5.5	2628



Saint Louis Rapid 2017 Saint Louis (USA), 13-19 viii 2017

cat. XXI (2773)

				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			
1	<b>Aronian, Levon</b>	g	ARM	2799	*	½	1	0	1	0	1	½	1	1	6	2895
2	<b>Nakamura, Hikaru</b>	g	USA	2792	½	*	½	1	½	0	½	½	1	1	5½	2851
3	<b>Caruana, Fabiano</b>	g	USA	2807	0	½	*	½	1	0	1	1	½	1	5½	2849
4	<b>Nepomniachtchi, Ian</b>	g	RUS	2751	1	0	½	*	½	½	½	1	½	½	5	2818
5	<b>Dominguez Perez, Leinier</b>	g	CUB	2739	0	½	0	½	*	1	½	½	½	1	4½	2777
6	<b>Le, Quang Liem</b>	g	VIE	2739	1	1	1	½	0	*	0	0	½	0	4	2734
7	<b>Karjakin, Sergey</b>	g	RUS	2773	0	½	0	½	½	1	*	½	1	0	4	2730
8	<b>Kasparov, Garry</b>	g	RUS	2812	½	½	0	0	½	1	½	*	½	0	3½	2688
9	<b>Anand, Viswanathan</b>	g	IND	2783	0	0	½	½	½	½	0	½	*	1	3½	2692
10	<b>Navara, David</b>	g	CZE	2737	0	0	0	½	0	1	1	1	0	*	3½	2697



Hou Yifan, photo by David Llada

# A STUNNING AND HISTORIC VICTORY

By GM Aleksandar Colovic

Photo: Davida Lladu / Biel International Chess Festival 2017 official

The traditional Biel round-robin took place from 24<sup>th</sup> July to 2<sup>nd</sup> August and was an exciting blend of proven and upcoming talent. The tournament will be remembered for Hou Yifan's confident victory, becoming the first woman to win the top prize in the Biel Chess Festival's 50-year history.

Former elite players Morozevich, Leko and Ponomarev were joined by the legendary Vaganian. There were also players who are at the top of their game: Navara, Bacrot, Harikrishna and - the only female player to take part - Hou Yifan. Local talent was represented by Studer and Georgiadis.

Such a mix of players always yields uncompromising fights and unpredictable outcomes. Just imagine: if Georgiadis beat Hou Yifan in the last round he would have won the tournament! Instead, Yifan beat Nico Georgiadis, completing a three-game

winning streak and claiming sole first place with 6.5/9 and a 2810 performance rating.

A wonderful achievement by Hou Yifan, coming close to her shared first in Gibraltar in 2012 (when she beat Almasi, Judit Polgar, Le Quang Liem and Shirov). She shows that her level is steadily rising following her invitations to top events.

This is a great achievement for female chess as well. Hou Yifan seems to be slowly advancing on the path of repeating the spectacular successes of Judit Polgar. Should she succeed, this will likely breathe in some fresh air into chess and probably contribute to a rebirth of media interest in the game!

The tone of her victory was set in Round 1 when she overturned a dangerous-looking position against Morozevich.



## THE TOURNAMENT WILL BE REMEMBERED FOR HOU YIFAN'S CONFIDENT VICTORY, BECOMING THE FIRST WOMAN TO WIN THE TOP PRIZE IN THE BIEL CHESS FESTIVAL'S 50-YEAR HISTORY

Alexander Morozevich – Hou Yifan

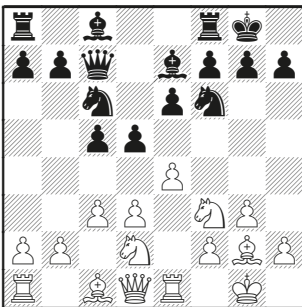
50<sup>th</sup> Biel GM 2017 Biel SUI (1.4)

1.♘f3 Morozevich doesn't play much nowadays so in the first round he goes for a slow build-up.

1...♗f6 2.g3 d5 3.♙g2 e6 4.0-0 ♕e7 5.d3 0-0 6.♗bd2 c5 Aronian's idea of 6...♗c6!? with the aim to push ...e5 deserves attention.

7.e4 The King's Indian Attack has gained popularity recently as it fits into the modern approach to the opening. White isn't fighting for an advantage, he is trying to get a game. And the straightforward plan of the KIA is especially attractive because White can play his moves almost automatically.

7...♗c6 8.♖e1 ♖c7 9.c3!?



An intriguing move by Morozevich. What did he have in mind if Black continued with 9...b5?

9.e5 ♗d7 10.♖e2 is also possible, when Black can continue with 10...b5.

9...b6 A concession by Black, who will have to waste a tempo later on if she wants to advance with ...b5.

9...b5 was critical. Let's see now how (and if!) White can take advantage of not having played e5.

A) 10.a4 is the other alternative 10...b4 (10...bxa4 11.♖xa4 ♕d7) 11.exd5 exd5 (11...♗xd5 12.c4 transposes to 10.ed ♗d5 11 a4 b4 12 c4) 12.♗b3 with a slightly more comfortable position for White. Black's queenside pawns feel over-extended.

B) 10.exd5

B1) 10...♗xd5 11.a4! fixing c5 11...b4 12.c4 (12.♖c2, with the idea of using c4 for the knight, is also possible) 12...♗f6 13.♗b3 and White is slightly better here. He has play against the c5-pawn and after ♕f4 (or ♕e3) and d4 he will have good play on the queenside.

B2) 10...exd5 11.♗b3 (11.d4 is an alternative. After 11...cxd4 12.♗xd4 ♗xd4 13.cxd4 the b5-pawn would rather be on b6 or b7, even though Black should be OK here.) 11...♖b6 12.♕e3 with some pressure against c5. To conclude, Black could play 9...b5, but White maintained certain chances of taking some advantage of the position of the b5-pawn.

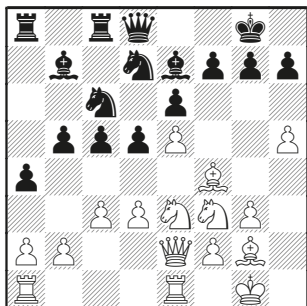
10.e5 Now that Black's queenside play takes longer to get going White closes the centre and reverts to the usual KIA manoeuvres.

10...♗d7 11.♖e2 a5 12.♗f1 a4 13.♕f4 ♕b7 14.h4 ♖fc8 Liberating d8 for the queen, but it is obvious that Black is well behind in organising counterplay.

15.♗e3 Threatening the typical ♗d5.

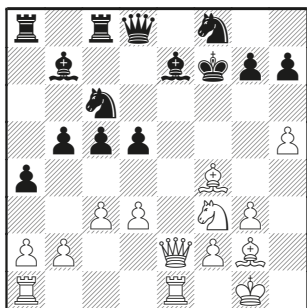
15...♖d8 16.h5 b5 Finally, but White is prepared for a blow.

16...h6 was possible. It is often the best way to stop White's attack. 17.♖g4 ♕f8 defending h6 just in case and Black can continue with her queenside play.



17.♗xd5! exd5 18.e6 ♖f8 18...fxe6 was also possible, but it looks dangerous for Black 19.♞xe6+ ♖h8 20.h6 gxh6 21.♙xh6 (21.♞xd5 ♕f6 22.♞f7 ♖cb8! with the idea ♕d5) 21...♞a6! 22.♙h3 allows a pretty line (22.♞xd5 ♕f8 23.♙xf8 ♖xf8 24.♞xc5 ♖a7 25.♞b4 is a big mess) 22...♗d4 23.♙g7+! ♖xg7 24.♞xe7+ ♞xe7 25.♞xe7+ ♖f8 26.♞xd7 ♖xf3+ 27.♖g2 ♞e8 28.♞xb7 ♞f6 with compensation for the material 29.♞xb5 ♖e1+ 30.♖g1 ♖f3+ 31.♖g2 with repetition.

19.exf7+ ♖xf7



20.h6?! This worked after 18...fe6, but now allows Black to consolidate.

20.d4! playing positionally with only a pawn for a piece is difficult for anybody.

20...♖g8 21.dxc5 ♕xc5 22.♞xb5 and White's compensation is not the attack any more, it is Black's disorganised army and the pawns he is collecting on the way.

20...♕f6 21.♗h2 Threatening ♗g4 and ♞h5.

21.♙h3 ♖g8.

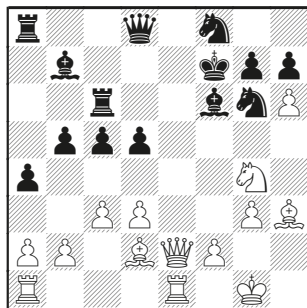
21...♖e7 A natural move, bringing more pieces around the king.

But 21...♖g8! was much better: 22.♗g4 (22.♞h5 ♖e7 23.♗g4 ♞a6 and Black covers everything.) 22...♖h8 23.hxg7+ (23.♗xf6 gxf6! and now the pawn on f6 covers the sensitive dark squares.) 23...♙xg7 24.♗h6 ♞f6 25.♞h5 ♗g6 26.♙g5 ♞f8 27.♙xd5 ♗d8 and Black has successfully absorbed White's pressure.

22.♙h3? This allows the rook to enter the game via the 6th rank and it basically loses time for White.

22.hxg7 ♖xg7 (22...♙xg7 23.♙g5 ♞c7 is an alternative for Black) 23.♗g4 ♖eg6 24.♙h6+ ♖g8 25.f4 with a very complex position that is difficult to play for both sides.

22...♞c6 23.♗g4 ♖eg6 24.♙d2



Retreating when one is a piece down is almost always a sign that things have gone wrong.



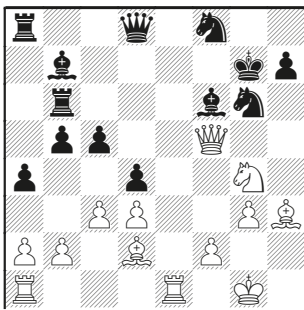
Back among the elite: Alexander Morozevich, photo by David Llada

24.hxg7 was the last chance, but Black is much better after both recaptures. 24...♙xg7 (24...♖xg7 25.♙h6+ ♖h8 26.♗xf6 ♜xf6) 25.♗h6+ ♙xh6 26.♙xh6 ♖g8.

24...d4! Now Black will pose threats along the long diagonal.

25.hxg7 ♖xg7 26.♜f3 26.♗xf6 ♜xf6 27.♜h5 ♞c7 and White has nothing.

26...♞b6 27.♜f5



27...♜d5! Practically ending the game after the inevitable exchange of queens.

28.♙h6+ ♖f7 29.♜d5+ ♙xd5 30.♗xf6 ♜xf6 White is simply a piece down.

31.cxd4 ♗h4 32.gxh4 ♜xh6 33.♞e5 ♞d8 34.♞f5+ 34.dxc5 ♞xh4.

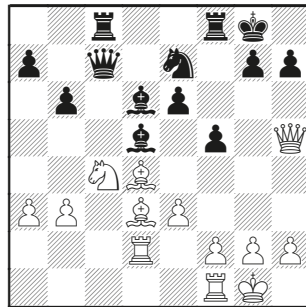
34...♞f6 35.dxc5 ♗g6 36.c6 ♙xc6 37.♞c1 ♞dd6

0-1

Tactical alertness is one of Hou Yifan's main characteristics. In the following game she out-calculated the veteran, who tried to confuse her with vague threats.

### Rafael Vaganian – Hou Yifan

50<sup>th</sup> Biel GM 2017 Biel SUI (8.3)



18...♗g6 19.♗xd6?! Obviously missing Black's 20th move.

19.♞c2 kept the balance.

19...♜xd6 20.b4? From here there is no going back.

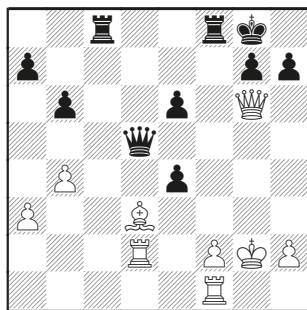
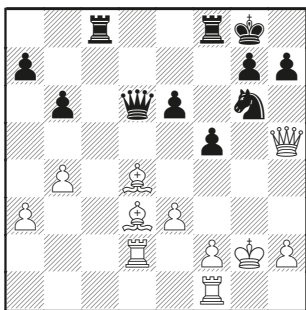
20.♙a6 was the lesser evil: 20...♞b8 threatening ...b5, trapping the bishop, 21.♜e2 ♜xa3 22.♙c4 with some compensation for the pawn.

20...♙xg2! 21.♖xg2

**A WONDERFUL  
ACHIEVEMENT BY HOU  
YIFAN, COMING CLOSE  
TO HER SHARED FIRST IN  
GIBRALTAR IN 2012**



**HOU YIFAN SEEMS TO BE SLOWLY ADVANCING ON THE PATH OF REPEATING THE SPECTACULAR SUCCESSES OF JUDIT POLGAR. SHOULD SHE SUCCEED, THIS WILL LIKELY BREATHE IN SOME FRESH AIR INTO CHESS AND PROBABLY CONTRIBUTE TO A REBIRTH OF MEDIA INTEREST IN THE GAME**



21...♖xd4! Probably missed by Vaganian.

22.♖xg6 Trying to muddy the waters but Hou is precise.

22.exd4 ♘f4+ 23.♔f3 ♘xh5 with a technically winning position for Black.

22...♖d5+ 23.e4 fxe4

24.♖xe4 Hoping to annoy Black's king, but White lacks pieces to make it successful.

24.♙a6 hxg6 25.♗d5 exd5 26.♙xc8 ♖xc8 27.♗d1 ♗d8 28.f3 exf3+ 29.♔xf3 ♔f7 is winning for Black.

24...♖g5+ 25.♔h1 ♖xd2 26.♖xh7+ ♔f7 27.♖g6+ ♔e7 28.♖xg7+ ♗f7 29.♖d4

**♖f4** Forcing the exchange with an easily winning position.

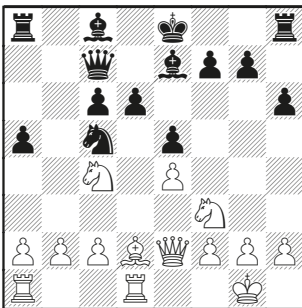
**30. ♖xf4 ♜xf4 31. f3 ♖d4 32. ♙e4 ♖d2**  
**33. ♜g1 ♜c3**

**0-1**

The last round was decisive. Before the final round Pentala Hariskrishna and Hou Yifan led the field by half a point. Many outcomes were possible (Bacrot and Harikrishna were also in contention) and Hou Yifan's approach to such a situation was exemplary. Against Switzerland's brightest talent Nico Georgiadis, on an undefeated 5 out of 8 (!), she kept things steady and controlled. Nico's nerves let him down and he committed an uncharacteristic positional mistake. The rest was a demonstration of Hou Yifan's technique and the final score of 6.5/9 brought her clear first.

### Hou Yifan - Nico Georgiadis

50<sup>th</sup> Biel GM 2017 Biel SUI (9.3)

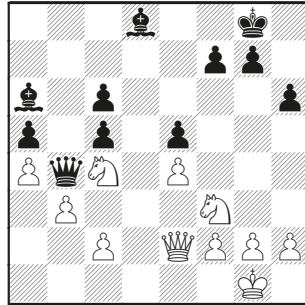


**15. ♙e3** Black is doing quite all right, but now he commits a serious positional mistake.

**15... ♙a6? 15... ♗e6.**

**16. ♙xc5! dxc5 17. ♖d2** I wonder what Nico missed here as it is quite apparent that White can build up here ad infinitum. As in the worst Vachier Lagrave's nightmare, "knights are good, bishops are bad!"

**17... 0-0 18. ♖ad1 ♖fd8 19. ♖xd8+ ♖xd8**  
**20. ♖xd8+ ♙xd8 21. a4 ♖b8 22. b3 ♖b4**



Trying to activate the dark-squared bishop by sacrificing a pawn, but that is short-lived.

**22... ♙c7** kept the material balance for the time being, but after **23. ♖d3 ♖c8 24. ♗fd2 ♖e6 25. g3** Black is in for a long suffering.

**23. ♗fxe5 ♙f6 24. ♗f3 ♙d4 25. ♖d3 ♖f8**  
**26. ♖f1** Covering e1 so now White wants to take on d4.

**26... ♙xc4** Throwing in the towel.

**26... ♖c3 27. ♖xc3 ♙xc3 28. ♖e2:** with a5 hopelessly weak Black is just lost here.

**27. ♖xc4 ♖xc4+ 28. bxc4 ♙b2 29. ♗d2**  
**29. ♗d2 ♙c3 30. ♗b3 ♙b4 31. ♖e2** with ♖d3 and c3 to come and White will win another pawn.

**1-0**

A solid performance on home turf:  
 Nico Georgiadis





The winner, Hou Yifan (in the middle), accompanied by the silver medallist Etienne Bacrot (left) and the winner of the bronze Pentala Harikrishna

The tournament demonstrated that Hou Yifan is already better than former stars Leko, Ponomariov and Morozevich. She is at least on par with Harikrishna and Bacrot, but has more potential than them. Entering the top 10, or qualifying for the Candidates

tournament like Judit Polgar did in 2005 is incomparably more difficult nowadays (Hou Yifan needs more than 100 rating points to enter the top 10) but that must be the goal for the former prodigy. What else can she aim for?

Final Standings   Biel International Chess Festival														
		FIDE	Score	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Perf
1	<b>Hou Yifan</b>	2666	6.5	*	1	0	½	½	1	1	1	1	½	2810
2	<b>Bacrot, Etienne</b>	2715	6	0	*	1	½	½	½	1	½	1	1	2763
3	<b>Harikrishna, Pentala</b>	2737	5.5	1	0	*	1	½	½	½	½	½	1	2715
4	<b>Ponomariov, Ruslan</b>	2699	5	½	½	0	*	1	½	0	1	½	1	2682
5	<b>Leko, Peter</b>	2678	5	½	½	½	0	*	½	1	0	1	1	2685
6	<b>Georgiadis, Nico</b>	2496	5	0	½	½	½	½	*	½	½	1	1	2705
7	<b>Morozevich, Alexander</b>	275	5	0	0	½	1	0	½	*	1	1	1	2685
8	<b>Navara, David</b>	2737	4	0	½	½	0	1	½	0	*	1		2592
9	<b>Vaganian, Rafael</b>	2562	2	0	0	½	½	0	0	0	0	*	1	2435
10	<b>Studer, Noel</b>	2493	1	½	0	0	0	0	0	0	½	0	*	2311

BRITISH CHESS CHAMPIONSHIPS (28<sup>TH</sup> JULY – 6<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST)  
**GAWAIN JONES**  
IS THE NEW CHAMPION



Gawain Jones, photo by David Llada

By IM Shaun Taulbut

Photo: David Llada / BCC2017 official / Phil Makepeace - ECF

The 2017 British Chess Championships took place in Llandudno, Wales, from 28 July until 6 August. The new British Chess Champion is Gawain Jones who beat Luke McShane in the final of the play-off. IM Jovanka Houska is once again the British Women's Champion.

The event was sponsored by Capital Developments Waterloo Ltd. The Championship

was a nine-round tournament and the sponsorship and increased prizes led to the presence of a number of strong grandmasters in the field. The format was changed from the traditional 11 rounds, which increased the probability of a tie and a play-off. Was the change worthwhile? I think in terms of the competition and excitement it proved a success.

The top three by rating, David Howell, Gawain Jones and Luke McShane, tied for first place with IM Craig Hanley, all on 7/9. GM John Emms and IMs Ameet Ghasi and Richard Palliser were next on 6.5/9.



Here are some of the games from the Championship and the play-off, starting with a good win by David Howell.

### Chris Ward – David Howell

104<sup>th</sup> ch-GBR 2017 Llandudno WLS (4.1)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♙b4 4.♘f3 b6  
5.♙g5 h6 6.♙h4 g5 7.♙g3 ♗e4 Black takes control of the e4 square but has weakened his kingside, a dynamic struggle with chances for both sides.

8.♖c2 f5 9.e3 ♙b7 10.♙d3 ♙xc3+  
11.bxc3 d6 The struggle revolves around the light squares in the centre, with White aiming to break open the Black kingside.

12.d5 White breaks through in the centre, opening d4 for his knight, and this is the best try before Black can grip on the light squares.

12...♗a6 13.♗d4 Also playable was 13.♙xe4 fxe4 14.♖xe4 ♖f6 15.0-0 0-0 with a slight edge for White.

13...♗ac5 14.♗xe6 ♗xe6 15.dxe6 ♖f6 Now Black has a slight edge because of the weak White c-pawns.

16.f3 ♗xg3 17.hxg3 0-0 18.e7 ♖f7 Black must retain the h-pawn so has to defend before he can capture the White e-pawn.

19.Kf2 ♖e8 20.♙h5 ♖xe7 21.♖ah1 ♖e6 Threatening e3 allows Black to regroup.

22.♖d2 ♖f6 Black has defended h6 and holds the advantage because the White weakness on c4 is more of a liability than the Black pawn on h6.

23.♙e2 ♖f8 Black removes his king to the queenside where it will be safer: a sound plan preventing White from undertaking any active plan.

24.♖d4 ♖e8 25.♙d1 ♖d8 26.♙b3 c5 Fixing the weak White pawn on c4 and

preventing White from playing c5.

27.♖d2 ♖c7 28.♙d1 ♙c6 The black bishop comes into action and has a number of good squares.

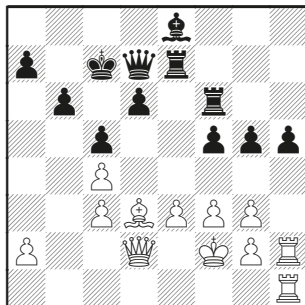
29.♙e2 ♙a4 White is hampered because of the black control of d1 and has to wait.

30.♙f1 ♙e8 Black chooses to evict the white rook on h5 and free up his own rooks for action.

31.♖5h2 h5 Freeing up the rook from the defence of h6 and leaving the White rooks rather offside.

32.♙e2 ♖d7 Black eyes a4 for his queen but also has another subtle and unexpected plan in mind.

33.♙d3



**THE FORMAT WAS CHANGED FROM THE TRADITIONAL 11 ROUNDS, WHICH INCREASED THE PROBABILITY OF A TIE AND A PLAY-OFF. WAS THE CHANGE WORTHWHILE? I THINK IN TERMS OF THE COMPETITION AND EXCITEMENT IT PROVED A SUCCESS**



**33...d5** A surprise: Black suddenly opens up the position, aiming down the d-file, and allows White to undouble his c-pawns.

**34.♖d1 ♗d6 35.cxd5 ♗xd5 36.c4 ♗d6** Logical, but playable was **36...♗de5 37.♖c1 ♖a4** with strong play.

**37.♗hh1 ♖e6** White is tied to the defence of e3 and under pressure on the d-file.

**38.♖e2** After **38.e4 fxe4 39.fxe4 ♖f6+** **40.♔g1 ♗ed7** wins.

**38...♗a4** The switch back of the bishop is decisive.

**39.♖c1** After **39.♗d2 ♗ed7 40.♖c1 ♖e5 41.f4 ♖f6 42.fxg5 ♖xg5 43.♖c3 ♗c6** leaves White with few moves.

**39...♗ed7** White resigned now but could struggle on with **40.♖c3**, when **40...♖f6** should win in a few moves because of the possibility of **...♖d8** with more pieces on the d-file.

0-1

## HOW THE NEW CHAMPION PLAYED

Gawain Jones played very solidly in the Championship. He was agile, confident and persistent and he demonstrated these qualities throughout the tournament, including this win.

**Richard Palliser – Gawain Jones**

104<sup>th</sup> ch-GBR 2017 Llandudno WLS (3.2)

**1.e4 e5 2.♗f3 ♗c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 d6**  
The Steinitz Deferred.

**5.c3** The main alternative is **5.♗xc6+ bxc6 6.d4** with pressure against the Black centre, but Black has the two bishops in compensation.

**5...♗d7 6.0-0 g6 7.d4 ♗g7** White has

a choice of lines here but Black has no weaknesses.

**8.♗g5** Also possible is the advance **8.d5 ♗ce7 9.♗xd7+ ♖xd7 10.c4 h6 11.♗c3 f5** or **8.♖e1 b5 9.♗c2 ♗f6** or the immediate capture, **8.dxe5 ♗xe5 9.♗xe5 dxe5 10.f4 (10.♗e3)**. White has a slight edge in these lines but no more.

**8...f6 9.♗e3 ♗h6** Black is able to develop his knight to this useful square.

**10.dxe5** Perhaps better were **10.h3** or **10.♗a3**.

**10...dxe5 11.♖d5 11.c4 0-0 12.♗c3** with a slight edge for White; the white queen takes up an advanced position but Black is able to defend satisfactorily.

**11...♖e7 12.♗a3** Playable is **12.♗c5 ♖f7** with a slight edge for White.

**12...0-0-0 13.♖d2** Best is **13.♗c5 ♖f7 14.♗b3** forcing an exchange of queens.

**13...♗g4** Black gains the initiative now because White must spend another move with his queen to get play.

**14.♖e2 14.♖ad1 ♗e6 15.♖e2** may transpose to the game.

**14...♗xe3 15.♖xe3 f5** Black expands in order to open up the game for his bishops.

**16.exf5 gxf5** The hanging pawns can either be a strength or weakness but it is difficult for White here.

**17.♖ad1**

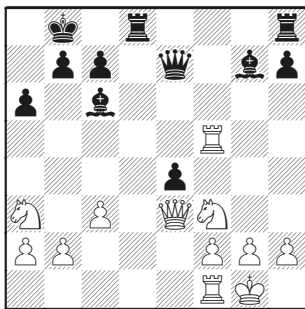
**17.♗xc6 ♗xc6 18.♖a7 ♗xf3 19.gxf3 c6** defends well.

**17...♔b8** An important safety move stopping the queen invasion on a7.

**18.♖d5** After **18.♖g5 b5 19.♗b3 ♗f6**

20. ♖h5 e4 is very good for Black.

18...e4 19. ♖xc6 ♖xc6 20. ♖xf5



White has won a pawn because of the pin but now Black is able to further his attack.

20...♖d3 21. ♖g5 White escapes with his pawn but his pieces are rather awkwardly placed.

21...♖d7 22. ♖d4 Choosing to return the pawn rather than retreat with 22. ♖e1 ♖d1 23. ♖c4.

22...♖xd4 23. cxd4 ♖xd4 Material equality has been restored but Black has the more active pieces.

24. ♖c5 After 24. ♖c2 ♖d1 25. ♖e3 ♖xf1+ 26. ♖xf1 ♖d1 27. ♖c5 ♖b1 28. ♖c1 ♖xa2, Black wins a pawn.

24...e3 Black opens up the position for the bishop on c6 against the White king.

25. ♖xe3 Not 25. fxe3 ♖g4, winning immediately.

25...♖g8 26.g3 ♖d1 26...♖h3 is very good; After 27. ♖xc6 ♖h4 28. ♖fc1 bxc6 29. ♖c4 ♖xh2+ 30. ♖f1 ♖h1+ 31. ♖e2 ♖xc4 32. ♖xc4 ♖d5 33. b3 ♖d8 with a winning advantage for Black.

27.f3 Best is 27. ♖e2 ♖d2 28. ♖h5; now Black finishes quickly.

27...♖e8 28. ♖e5 ♖xf1+ 29. ♖xf1 ♖d1+ 30. ♖g2 ♖xe5 31. ♖xe5 ♖xf3+ 32. ♖h3 ♖d7+ 33. ♖h4 ♖g4#

0-1

## THE BEST GAME OF THE TOURNAMENT

John Emms won the best game prize for his win against Jonathan Hawkins.

**Jonathan Hawkins - John Emms**

104<sup>th</sup> ch-GBR 2017 Llandudno WLS (7.2)

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 e6 3. ♖c3 ♖b4 The solid Nimzo-Indian has proved its worth over the last century.

4.Qc2 0-0 5. ♖f3 d6 6.a3 ♖xc3+ 7. ♖xc3 White has the two bishops but Black has control of the central light squares.

7...b6 8.g3 ♖b7 9. ♖g2 ♖bd7 10.0-0 a5 11.b3 ♖e4 The bishop is well placed here and Black prevents it being blocked in with d5.

12. ♖b2 ♖b8 13. ♖h3 White wishes to keep the bishops on rather than move his knight and allow an exchange.

13... c6 14. ♖h4 d5 15.f3 ♖g6 16. ♖xg6 hxg6 White has the bishop pair but Black has a solid structure.

17. ♖fe1 b5 Black expands on the queenside to gain a foothold for his knights.

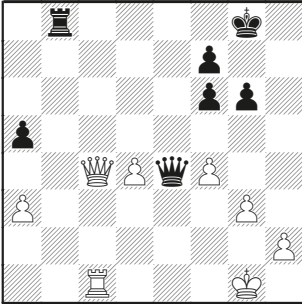
18.e4 bxc4 19.bxc4 ♖b6 Aiming at c4.

20.cxd5 cxd5 21. ♖c1 ♖c8 22. ♖d3 ♖a7 23. ♖g5 ♖c6 24. ♖ac1 ♖xc1 25. ♖xc1 ♖c4 A strong square for the knight signals that Black has equality.

26. ♖g2 ♖b8 27. ♖xf6 gxf6 28.exd5 exd5

29.f4 White aims to put pressure on d5, with a small combination in mind.

29...♖d7 30.♙xd5 ♜xd5 31.♞xc4 ♞e4



White has won a pawn but has a weak kingside which gives Black strong play, the immediate threat is to invade with the rook on b2. The Black kingside provides good protection for the black king so it is difficult for White now.

32.♞c3 ♞d5 33.♞c4 ♞e4 34.♞c3 a4 A key move: Black establishes an outpost for his rook on b3.

35.♞e1 ♞d5 36.♞f1 ♞b3 Now the Black rook is active.

37.♞c5 ♞e4 38.d5 ♞d3 39.d6 ♞d2 40.♞f2 ♞d1+ 41.♞f1 ♞d2

Black gains time by repeating moves; also possible was the immediate 41...♞d3 42.♞f2 ♙g7.

42.♞f2 ♞d1+ 43.♞f1 ♞d3 44.♞f2 ♙g7 The key move. Black puts his king on a safe square and leaves White with no useful moves.

45.♞f1 ♞d2 46.♞f2 ♞d1+ 47.♞f1 ♞d5 48.♞c3 ♞xd6 Black captures the passed pawn and White still faces the same problems on the kingside.

49.♞e1 ♞d5 50.♞b4 ♞c6 51.♞e4 ♞c5+ 52.♞e3 ♞c2 53.♞e2 ♞d1+ 54.♙f2 ♞c6 55.♞e1 ♞c2+ 56.♞e2 ♞c4 57.♞e7 ♞d3

Also good was 57...♞h1 58.♙g2 ♞c1

59.♙h3 ♞f1+ 60.♙g4 ♞d1 61.♙h3 ♞d5.

58.♞b4 ♞c6 59.♞e3 ♞b3 60.♞e7

60.♞xb3 ♞c2+ 61.♙f1 axb3 62.♞a4 ♞d3+ 63.♙g2 b2 wins.

60...♞h1 61.h4 ♞b1 62.♞e1 ♞h2+ 63.♙f3 ♞b3+ 64.♞e3 ♞c2

64...♞g1 65.g4 ♞f1+ 66.♙g3 ♞b2 is also very good.

65.♞d6 ♞c1 66.♞d3 ♞d2

0-1

## THE PLAY-OFFS

In the play-offs Gawain Jones defeated Craig Hanley and Luke McShane defeated David Howell, including the following win.

**Luke McShane - David Howell**

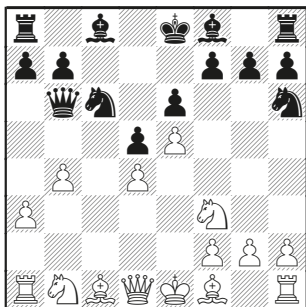
[104<sup>th</sup> ch-GBR TB 2017 Llandudno WLS \(1.2\)](#)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 ♞b6 5.♙f3 ♙c6 6.a3 White prepares b4 to gain space on the queenside.

6...♙h6 7.b4 cxd4 8.cxd4



GM David Howell

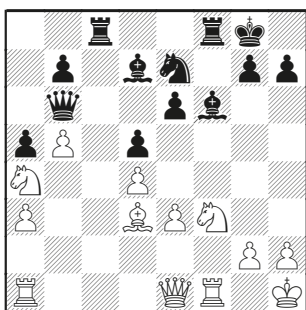


8...♞f5 9.♞e3 White voluntarily surrenders the bishop pair to solidify his centre; this is better than ♞b2 when White is rather tied to the defence of d4.

9...♞d7 10.♞d3 ♞c8 11.0-0 ♞xe3 12.fxe3 White has compensation down the open f-file in exchange for the bishop pair.

12...♞e7 13.♞e1 f6 14.exf6 ♞xf6 15.♖h1 15.♞c3 ♞e7 16.♞c1, with an edge for White, is probably slightly better.

15...a5 16.b5 ♞e7 17.♞c3 0-0 18.♞a4



18...♞d6 18...♞c7 and if 19.b6 ♞d6 20.♞c5 ♞xc5 21.dxc5 ♞xc5 Black has good compensation for the exchange.

19.♞xa5 ♞f5 After 19...♞a8 20.♞b6 is very good.

20.♞b6 Taking advantage of the black queen to reposition the white queen.

20...♞e7 21.♞xf5 exf5 22.♞c5 The strong knight wins the game for White.

22...♞e8 23.a4 White aims to push his a-pawn through.

23...♞f7 After 23...♞xe3 24.♞xb7 ♞xc5 25.♞ae1 ♞c3 26.dxc5 ♞xc5 27.♞c1 ♞d6 28.a5 with a winning advantage for White.

24.a5 ♞xe3 25.♞xb7 g5 25...♞b8 26.a6 ♞e2 27.a7 ♞xb7 28.♞xb7 ♞xb7 29.a8♞ is winning.

26.♞d6 g4 27.♞ae1 ♞h6 28.♞xc8 gxf3 29.♞xe8+ ♞g7 30.gxf3 ♞f4 31.♞d6 ♞xd4 32.♞g3+ ♞h6 33.♞d6 ♞d2

1-0

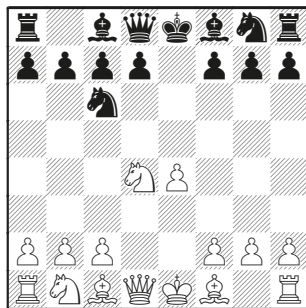
## THE DECISIVE DUEL

So the play-off final was between Gawain Jones and Luke McShane and the first decisive game was a sharp struggle.

### Gawain Jones - Luke McShane

[104th ch-GBR TB 2017 Llandudno WLS \(2.1\)](#)

1.e4 e5 2.♞f3 ♞c6 3.d4 exd4 4.♞xd4



4...♞c5 5.♞xc6 ♞f6 6.♞f3 White offers the exchange of queens; if Black captures then, although White has doubled pawns, his centre is strengthened.

6...dxc6 7.♞c3 ♞e7 Black chooses to keep the queens on at the cost of a tempo.

8.♞d3 ♞f6 9.♞e3 ♞g4 A double-edged move. Black gains more control of the dark



Luke McShane vs Roger Coathup

squares at the expense of moving a piece twice and losing time. 9...♙e6 10.0-0 0-0-0 is only marginally better for White.

10.♙xc5 ♖xc5 11.♖g3 ♙e6 12.f4 White plays energetically, not fearing play on the dark squares and threatening f5; 12.♙e2 was slower.

12...0-0-0 12...h5 13.h3 h4 14.♖f3 ♗f6 15.f5 ♙d7 16.0-0-0 ♖e5 looks to be the best try for Black.

13.f5 White rightly decides to press on and take the piece and weather the storm.

13...♙xf5 14.exf5 ♗e3 14...♖he8+ 15.♗d2 ♖xf5 16.♖hf1 ♖g5+ 17.♖f4 defends adequately.

15.♗d2 ♗c4+ After 15...♗xf5 16.♖h3 ♗b8 17.♖af1 ♗d6 18.♗c1 consolidates White's position.

16.♗c1 ♗xb2 17.♗xb2 ♖b4+ 18.Kc1 ♖xc3 19.♖b1 White has a piece for two pawns but also a threat.

19...♖d4 20.♖xb7 White has ♙a6+ if the rook is captured.

20...♖a1+ 21.♖b1 ♖xa2 22.f6 Threatening ♙f5+.

22...g6 23.♖h3+ ♖d7 24.♖e1 ♖hd8 25.♖e4 c5 26.♙b5 c6 27.♙xc6 ♗c7 28.♙xd7 ♖xd7 29.♖b7+ ♗xb7 30.♖xd7+ ♗b6 31.♖a4

1-0

The second game was drawn, so Gawain Jones became the 2017 British Champion.

## GAWAIN JONES BEAT LUKE MCSHANE IN THE FINAL OF THE PLAYOFF. IM JOVANKA HOUSKA IS ONCE AGAIN THE BRITISH WOMEN'S CHAMPION

### 104<sup>th</sup> British Championships

1<sup>st</sup>: GM Gawain CB Jones (4NCL Guildford)

2<sup>nd</sup>= GM Luke J McShane, GM David WL Howell (4NCL Cheddleton), IM Craig A Hanley 7

5<sup>th</sup>: GM John M Emms (Wood Green), IM Ameet K Ghazi (4NCL Grantham Sharks), IM Richard Jd Palliser (4NCL White Rose) 6½

### Women's Prize:

1<sup>st</sup>: IM Jovanka Houska 5½

2<sup>nd</sup>= WGM Katarzyna Toma (West Is Best), WFM Sarah N Longson 5

SOUTH WALES OPEN (8<sup>TH</sup> JULY – 14<sup>TH</sup> JULY)

# BULGARIANS DOMINATE IN CARDIFF

By IM Shaun Taulbut

Photo: South Wales International Open official

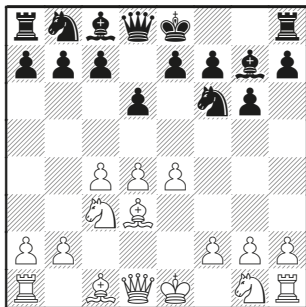
The 2017 South Wales International Open in Cardiff was won by Bulgarian GM Boris Chatalbashev with 8.5/10, ahead of his compatriot GM Marian Petrov with 7.5/10.

The third and the fourth place were shared by GM Peter Wells and FM Dave Ledger with 7/10. Here is one of the crucial games:

## Boris Chatalbashev – Dave Ledger

14<sup>th</sup> South Wales Int 2017 Cardiff WLS (4.4)

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 ♘g7 4.e4 d6  
5.♙d3

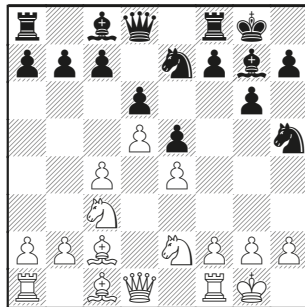


An unusual variant; White prepares to bring his king knight to e2 and play f3 to restrict Black on the kingside.

5...0-0 6.♗ge2 ♗c6 6...e5 is the alternative when White will often play 7.d5.

7.0-0 ♗h5 After 7...e5 8.d5 ♗b4 9.♙b1 a5 10.f3 with an edge for White because of the extra space.

8.♙c2 e5 9.d5 ♗e7



10.♖h1 This move is not often seen but is useful.

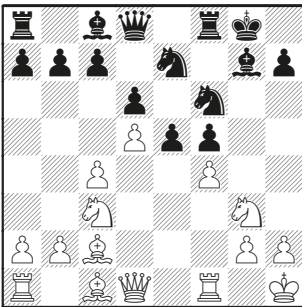
10...f5 11.exf5 gxf5 The alternative is 11...♙xf5 when after 12.♙xf5 ♗xf5 (12...gxf5 when White has a slight advantage) 13.g4 wins material because of the preparatory 10.♖h1.

12.♗g3 ♗f6 12...♗f4 13.♙xf4 exf4 14.♗h5 ♙e5 15.g3 fxg3 16.fxg3 White has a positional advantage because of pressure against the black pawn on f5.

13.f4



The atmosphere in Cardiff was relaxed and friendly



White blocks Black's kingside pawn advance; the alternative is 13.♙g5 h6 14.♙xf6 ♙xf6 15.♘h5 when White has a slight plus.

**13...♗g4** 13...e4 is best, closing the position; White has the edge because he can use the d4 square but Black has chances.

**14.h3 exf4 15.♗h5** After 15.♙xf4 ♗g6 is good enough for Black.

**15...♗e3** The piece sacrifice 15...♗g6 16.♗xg7 ♗xg7 17.hxg4 ♖h4+ 18.♗g1 fxg4 19.♙xg6 is winning for White eg. if 19...g3 (best is 19...hxg6 20.♖xf4

♙xf4 21.♙xf4 g3 22.♖d4+ ♗g8 23.♗e2 ♖h2+ 24.♗f1 ♙g4 25.♖e4 ♖h1+ 26.♗g1 and White defends successfully) 20.♖h5 wins. Now White obtains a positional bind.

**16.♙xe3 fxe3 17.♗xg7 ♗xg7 18.♖d4+ ♗g8 19.♖ae1** White brings all of his pieces into play and Black has difficulty developing his queenside.

**19...♗g6 20.♖xe3 a6** Also unattractive was 20...♙d7 21.c5 and then if 21.. ♖f6 22.♖xf6 ♙xf6 23.cxd6 wins material because of 23...cxd6 24.♗e4.

**21.c5 ♙d7 21...f4 22.♖ef3 dxc5 23.♖xc5 ♙f5 24.♗e4** is probably the best chance for Black; now White is much better.

**22.c6** Black resigned now as the pawn cannot be taken after 22...bxc6 23 bxc6 because of ♖c4+ winning the bishop; if the bishop goes back to c8, White takes on b7 and then after the recapture the f5 pawn falls with devastating effect.

# Openings for Amateurs

by Pete Tamburro, ptamburro@aol.com

# NEW PATHS IN THE XD4 SICILIAN



Source: Shutterstock

In 1973, British Chess Magazine had a two-part article by William Hartston in his “Contemporary Opening Strategy” column entitled “Everybody’s Doing It”. He took note of the sudden interest in 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4. Vasiukov and Chekover had been early proponents of the line, and, by 1973, quite a few people were avoiding Najdorfs, Dragons and all sorts of Black e5 Sicilian variants with this line. Tal crushing Byrne at the Biel Interzonal in 1976 kept interest up, and in 1994 Judit Polgar demolished Shirov at Las Palmas with the Polgar sisters’ plan of ♗d3 and ♘d4, which you will see below.

amateurs, literally from around the world, who had listened to my ICC lectures and used it against stronger players and won. I devoted 11 pages in my book *Openings for Amateurs* on it where I still supported the opening, but had a concern pointed out in the notes to move six.

At the World Open in Philadelphia, 2016 World Junior Champion Jeffrey Xiong (16) played a line I had not seen for White. A database check showed that it really began to emerge around 2012-13. It’s a whole new realm to explore, and this game is filled with ideas that need much deeper investigation.

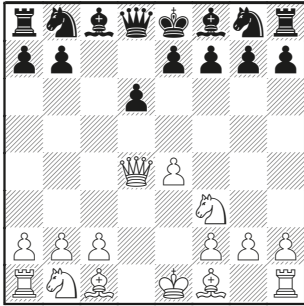
The most mail I ever got was from Enjoy!



## Jeffrey Xiong – Rolando Nolte

World Open Philadelphia, 01.07.2017

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♖xd4



4...♗c6 Because of the initial success of ♖xd4 many players started opting for 4...a6 Whereupon White could reply with what I recommended in my book: 5.♕g5 (*I also mentioned and recommended 5.c4*) 5...♗c6 6.♖d2 when an immediate ♗f6 brings about an immediate ♕xf6, creating a very awkward pawn structure. I put two illustrative games on how to deal with that structure to make Black's life miserable. If Black hits with an immediate h6, then White retreats to e3 when he can possibly use h6 as a target when Black castles over there.

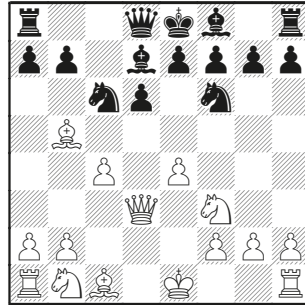
5.♕b5 ♕d7 6.♖d3 Normal has been 6.♕xc6.

A) If 6...bxc6 then 7.c4 (7.0-0; 7.♖d3 are all good choices. It would be worth some study to determine your favourite.);

B) 6...♕xc6 The original Polgar-popularised idea with ♖d3 and ♗d4 was 7.♗c3 ♗f6 8.♕g5 e6 9.0-0 ♕e7 10.♖d3 (*Vasiukov*

*pioneered 10.♖he1*) 10...0-0 (*In my book I pointed out as better the challenging 10...♖a5 (preventing ♗d4)*) 11.♗b1 0-0 12.h4 h6 13.♕d2 ♖a6!) 11.♗d4 with the attacking concept of f4 and f5, hitting e6, where e5 is not really a good option for Black.

6...♗f6 7.c4



This game captured my eye because Xiong is merging two normally separate ideas - the c4 approach and the ♖d3 and ♗d4 method. It has the advantage of keeping the game complicated, with White maintaining a space advantage, and avoids that 10...♖a5 in the previous note.

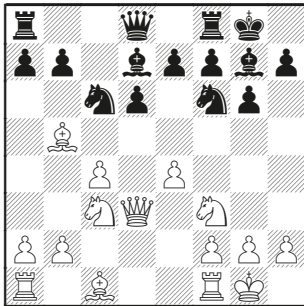
7...g6 This begs the question for a cramped Black: why not seek exchanges to ease to pressure with 7...♗e5 8.♗xe5 (*Or White can try to complicate things with 8.♕xd7+ ♗fxd7 9.♗xe5 ♗xe5 10.♖b3 ♖c8 11.♕e3 ♗xc4 12.0-0 ♗xe3 13.fxe3 f6 14.♖xb7 ♖d7 15.♖b3 e6 16.♗c3 ♕e7 17.e5!? fxe5 18.♖d1 g6 19.♖f3 ♖f8 20.♖h3 ♕d8 21.♗e4 and Black can mount a successful, albeit nervous, defence.*) 8...dxe5.

A) 9.♗c3 ♕xb5 10.♖xd8+ ♖xd8 11.cxb5 e6 12.♕e3 ♕b4 13.f3 ♗d7 14.♖c1 ♗c5 15.♗e2 ♗d3 16.♖c2 ♗f4+ (16...♗xb2 17.♗b1!) 17.♕xf4 exf4 18.♗a4 b6 19.b3 h5 20.♗b2 h4=;

**AT THE WORLD OPEN IN PHILADELPHIA, 2016 WORLD JUNIOR CHAMPION JEFFREY XIONG PLAYED A LINE I HAD NOT SEEN FOR WHITE. A DATABASE CHECK SHOWED THAT IT REALLY BEGAN TO EMERGE AROUND 2012-13. IT'S A WHOLE NEW REALM TO EXPLORE**

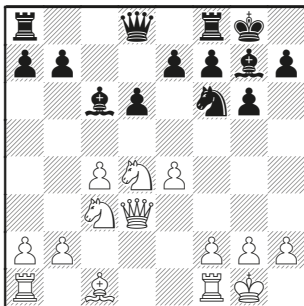
B) 9.  $\text{♙xd7} + \text{♜xd7}$  10.  $\text{♜xd7} + \text{♞xd7}$  11.  $\text{♙e3}$   
e6 12.  $\text{♞e2}$   $\text{♞c8}$  13.  $\text{♞d2}$  f5 14. f3  $\text{♙e7} =$ .

8.  $\text{♞c3}$   $\text{♙g7}$  9.0-0 0-0



Black has chosen a reasonable defensive posture. Our modern love affair with fianchetto setups has made g6 the most popular line against White's setup. To put the king bishop on the long diagonal against the c4 idea contemplates both action along the a1-h8 diagonal and eventual attacks against c4 with  $\text{♞c8}$ , b5, and  $\text{♞a5}$  and maybe even  $\text{♙e6}$ . It all depends on what happens from here. White is counting on his firm grip on d5, which is not to be underestimated. This position seems to be a second cousin to the Maroczy Bind, which may have appealed to Xiong.

10.  $\text{♙xc6}$   $\text{♙xc6}$  11.  $\text{♞d4}$



Here we are: the  $\text{♜d3}$  and  $\text{♞d4}$  setup with c4 to discourage counterplay. White will also have that f4-f5 idea to consider. For now White will finish his development and keep pressure on the centre.



Jeffery Xiong at the Tata Steel Chess Tournament 2017, Wijk aan Zee, photo by David Llada

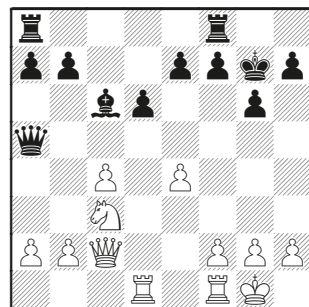
11...  $\text{♞d7}$  A routine and correct idea in Dragon lines. It opens the bishop diagonal and gives the knight two squares in the centre to choose from.

12.  $\text{♙e3}$   $\text{♞c5}$  Also playable was 12...  $\text{♞e5}$   
13.  $\text{♜e2}$   $\text{♙d7}$  14. h3 (*14.f4 ♙g4!*) 14...a6  
15. f4  $\text{♞c6}$ .

13.  $\text{♜c2}$   $\text{♞e6}$  Trying very hard to exchange to ease the bind.

14.  $\text{♞ad1}$   $\text{♞xd4}$  An anti-Maroczy idea would have been 14...  $\text{♜a5}$  15.  $\text{♜d2}$   $\text{♞fc8}$   
16. f4  $\text{♞xd4}$  17.  $\text{♙xd4}$  b5.

15.  $\text{♙xd4}$   $\text{♜a5}$  16.  $\text{♙xg7}$   $\text{♞xg7}$



Without making an outright mistake, Black

has given White not only the bind, but a good knight vs. a bad bishop. If you are White, you just know your horse is jumping to d5 where, if Black takes it, it opens the e-file and a new target on e7. This is what actually transpires.

**17.b3 ♖ac8 18. ♗b2** OK, you put your rook opposite my queen. I will put my queen opposite your king.

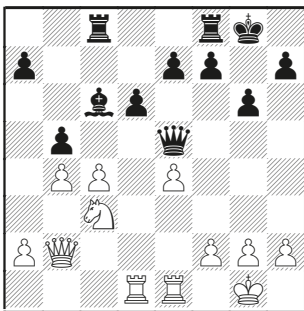
**18... ♘g8** For club players, this is often the hard part. What plan should occur to you here?

Your opening theme was to gain space and control and probably occupy d5. What then? Well, you are not done gaining space. You should have three objectives at this point: discourage counterplay, gain more space and look for transitions into greater advantages.

**19.b4?!** Even great players can get a little anxious. Why not do the “prevent counterplay” thing first with 19.a4 to prevent b5. Then you can play b4, depending on Black’s response.

**19... ♗e5 20. ♖fe1** If 20.f4 appealed to you, it appealed to your annotator as well.

**20...b5!**

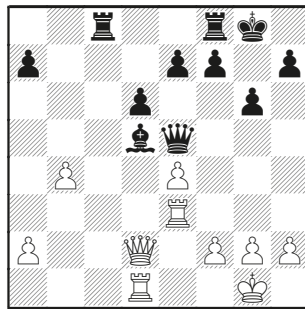


Yes! Of course! Black tries to wrest the initiative from White with a typical Sicilian b5 thrust.

**21.cxb5 ♗xb5 22. ♖e3 ♗c4** Make no mistake about it. Black has equalised with a nicely posted bishop and a rook overseeing the c-file, not to mention the annoying black queen that should have been chased earlier.

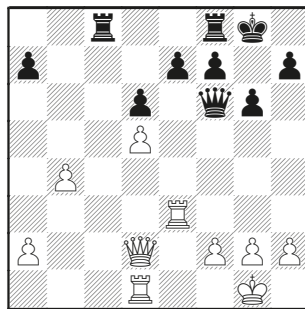
**23. ♗d2 ♗e6 24. ♘d5** Again, Black has played very well, but what we mentioned earlier as inevitable has come to pass. Now f4 and f5 are threatened. Black succumbs to this possible pressure and exchanges.

**24... ♗xd5**



The apparently much feared-possibility other than exchanging would have required patient defence: 24... ♖fe8 25.f4 ♗h5 26.f5 ♗xd5 27. ♗xd5 ♘g7 28. ♖f1 f6.

**25.exd5 ♗f6**



As much as my chess engine tells me this position is approximately equal, in practical play it is not. There are two reasons. White’s

## TWO LESSONS FROM THIS GAME:

- **HOW TO PLAN YOUR WIN**
- **WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU ALLOW YOUR OPPONENT COUNTERPLAY**

plan from here is to keep the pressure on the e7-pawn that has now been uncovered from the exchange and to advance the queenside pawn majority. Passed pawns must be pushed! OK, in this case potential passed pawns must be pushed! Black is strictly on defence here. It is not equal.

**26.♖f3 ♖e5 27.h3 ♖c7 28.♖e1** The harassment of the queen is purposeful as the rooks assume excellent squares, and the defender has to expend a lot of time worrying about which square to put the lady on.

**28...♗g7** The queen is safe with her king inside the castle, but there are troubles brewing outside the walls as the queenside peasants are getting restless.

**29.a4 ♖fc8 30.b5 h6** White's plan is improving White's winning chances.

**31.♖e4?** Why White didn't continue with the obvious 31.a5 is a mystery to your annotator.

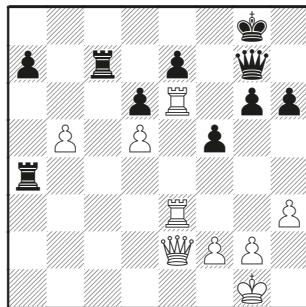
**31...♖c2!** You have to admire Black's talent for finding counterplay.

**32.♗f4** Discouraging ♖a8 or ♖b2.

**32...♖8c7 33.♖fe3 f5!** Another heroic counter-thrust! How many players would allow that hole on e6?

**34.♖e6 ♖2c4 35.♗f3 ♖xa4** White pays the price for his 31st move, but tripling on a file can't be ignored.

**36.♗e2**



**36...f4??** We don't know the time constraints here, but Black had a truly cold-blooded defence that would have saved the game: 36...♗a1+ 37.♖h2 ♖c1 38.♖xg6+ ♖f8 39.♖xe7 ♖h1+ 40.♖g3 ♖xh3+ (40...f4+ 41.♖g4 f3+ 42.♖xf3 ♖xh3+ 43.gxh3 ♖h1+ 44.♖g3 ♖g1+) 41.gxh3 ♖g1+ 42.♖f3 ♖xg6 43.♖e6 ♖a3+ 44.♖e3 f4 45.♖xf4 ♖a4+ 46.♖f3 ♖h4.

**37.♖3e4?** 37.♖xe7! ♗a1+ 38.♖h2 fxe3 39.♖xc7 ♗e5+ 40.g3 exf2 41.♗xe5 dxe5 42.♖g2 ♖f8 43.♖xf2 with a tough rook and pawn ending with White better placed.

**37...♖xe4??** Must be time pressure.

37...♖a1+ 38.♖h2 ♗f7 39.♗d2 g5 40.♖e1 ♖xe1 41.♗xe1 ♗h7= and White's bind is enough to compensate for the pawn down.

**38.♗xe4 ♖h7 39.♗xf4** White now has his winning bind back. Black can only rearrange deckchairs on the Titanic.

**39...♖c5 40.♗e4 ♖c7 41.g4!** Black can't really go anywhere, so White brings up more troops. There is no possible threat to the king's position. This is the transition we were talking about. A new element is added: creating a passed pawn on the kingside, which brings about a quick end to the struggle.

**41...♗f7 42.h4 ♖g7 43.♗e3 ♖f8 44.♗xh6+ ♖e8 45.♗xg6 ♖c5 46.h5 ♖xb5 47.h6** Black can resign here. Momentum often compels us all to play on as we contemplate what the heck just happened.

47... ♖xg6 48. ♖xg6 ♖f7 49. ♖g7+ ♖f8  
 50. f4 a5 51. g5 a4 52. g6 ♖b8 53. ♖f7+ ♖g8  
 54. ♖xe7

1-0

Jeffrey Xiong has given us something to think about in the ♖xd4 Sicilian. He has also given us both positive lessons about how to plan your win and lessons on what happens when you allow your opponent counterplay. At amateur levels, the reasons for the latter are quite commonly:

- underestimating your opponent's desire not to lose;
- being so wrapped up in your plan you forget the other chap might have an idea or two;

c. zoning in on just one part of the board - there are always 64 squares on the board.

Keep an eye on them all!

## CORRECTION

In Pete Tamburro's previous article (BCM, August 2017) a picture of Emanuel Lasker was wrongly included instead of one of Edward Lasker.

We would like to apologise to the readers and the author for this error.

## BCM BOOK REVIEW

# HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR GAME THROUGH PRACTICAL EXERCISES

We have received a batch of books of outstanding quality from *New in Chess*. Online there is a growing trend for publishers to provide sample pages of new books in PDF format to enable prospective buyers to form an accurate judgement of the content. Here we follow something like the same policy...

**Viktor Moskalenko** is one of the most effective chess instructors around today. Not only has he coached Masters and Grandmasters, including the world class Ukrainian star Vassily Ivanchuk, he has also taught hundreds of classes for amateurs. Moreover, his best-selling books have inspired thousands of ambitious club players all over the world.

A former Ukrainian champion, **Moskalenko** is both an International Grandmaster and a FIDE Senior Trainer and has won many tournaments in Spain, where he now lives.

He is the author of *The Fabulous Budapest Gambit* (2007), *Revolutionize Your Chess* (2009), *The Wonderful Winawer* (2010), *The Perfect Pirc-Modern* (2013), *The Diamond Dutch* (2014) and *The Even More Flexible French* (2015).

*Training with Moska* is based on the best educational material Moskalenko has collected over three decades of working with amateurs. The book discusses an extraordinarily wide variety of topics illustrated by means of over 500 instructive positions tailored to meet the needs of players of different strengths.

If you have an Elo rating between 1400 and 2100, this book will help you make a big step forward.

With his famous light touch and humour Moskalenko explains the themes and concepts of his training material. Then he

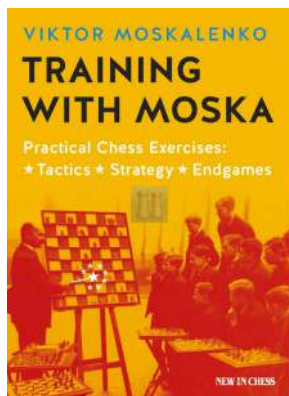
presents a multitude of typical examples and exercises and rounds off with exams to test your understanding

All this is as if you are personally attending one of his classes. You find your imagination and visualisation improving, you learn to recognize the intentions and schemes of your opponent, you make the right choices before embarking on the calculation of possible lines of play, and much more.

Then, like thousands before you, you appreciate the fact that training with Moska is not only very beneficial, it is a lot of fun as well!

The book is organised under training sessions, each dedicated to a specific chess theme. And every page packs a punch - or rather a combination of punches! - thanks to the Moska's characteristically dynamic delivery.

Here is a taste of what you can expect from this lively work



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## CHESS STRATEGY – CHAPTER 12

### **Training:** **Placement of Pieces and Pawns**

‘Help your pieces and they will help you’ - Paul Morphy.

The value of an individual piece or pawn may vary, depending on its placement on the board. This concept is closely related to the properties of pieces, pawns and squares (see also my book *Revolutionize Your Chess*, Chapters 2 and 3).

Piece activity means that your pieces are placed on good squares. Throughout the game, we have to keep considering maneuvers that serve to improve our pieces. Advanced pawns conquer space on the board and can be used as attacking pieces, enabling breaks. King position: exposure of the king during the opening and the middlegame is just as important a factor as is its power in the endgame.

### **Keep in Mind**

- The **PLACEMENT OF PIECES AND PAWNS** affects factors like space advantage and the initiative, and weaknesses on either side.
- The defending player should try to exchange or attack his opponent's active pieces, while the attacking player should avoid exchanges.
- Important resources are zugzwang and opposition - no active moves for the enemy! (see also Part 3, **ENDGAME**) - and also prophylactic moves.

#### Directions

- 1) Suspicious Openings
- 2) Coordination
- 3) Maneuvers and plans

- 4) Positional blocking
- 5) Unblocking / breaks
- 6) Prophylaxis

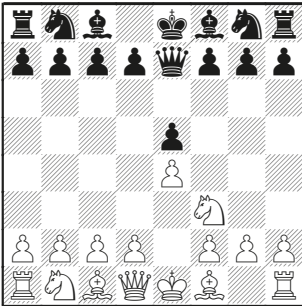
## 1) Suspicious Openings

Viktor Moskalenko –  
Jose Maria Lerch Gallemi

Catalonian team tournament 2010

**1.e4!** Normally, I do not start with the king pawn, but in the preparation phase of this game I saw that my opponent had played a rare defence several times.

**1...e5 2.♘f3 ♔e7?!** A quite provocative idea: Black ignores his development and tries to block the position. However, after some brief strategic consideration, I figured out a most effective set-up for the white pieces.

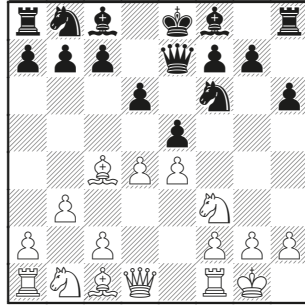


**3.d4 d6** Opening the game is too risky: 3...exd4?! 4.♙d3 and 5.0-0!

**4.♙c4 h6** Defending against the ♘g5 jump.

**5.0-0 ♘f6 6.b3!**

**TRAINING WITH MOSKA  
IS BASED ON THE BEST  
EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL  
MOSKALENKO HAS  
COLLECTED OVER THREE  
DECADES OF WORKING  
WITH AMATEURS**



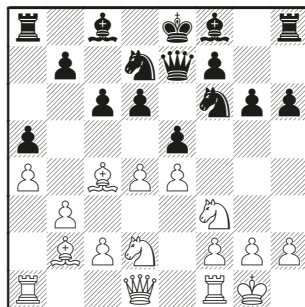
**PLAN:** The first key idea: the bishop can be activated via the diagonals a3-f8 or b2-h8, harassing the black defences.

**6...c6 7.♙b2 ♘bd7 8.♘bd2!** Another important point: as we will see further on, the knight is much more flexibly placed on d2 than on its usual square, c3.

**8...g6** Obviously, Black intends to complete his development by way of a fianchetto.

**9.a4 9.dxe5!** would have been the most precise move order, opening the a3-f8 diagonal.

**9...a5?** Too slow; now White's advantage in development is decisive.



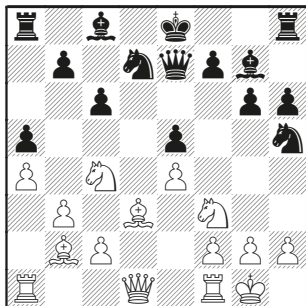
**EXERCISE:** How should White continue?

**10.dxe5 dxe5 10...♘xe5** does not change much: 11.♘xe5 dxe5 12.f4!?! with the initiative.

**11.♙d3!** Freeing the c4-square for his knight.

11...♙g7 12.♘c4 White's minor pieces dominate the game. Black has to spend another tempo to defend the e5-pawn.

12...♘h5

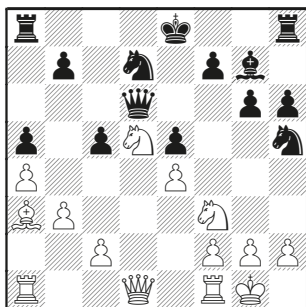


13.♙a3! Now is a good time. Black's pieces can only watch the positional punishment, without actually being able to participate in the battle.

13...c5 14.♗e3 ♘df6 15.♙b5+! A little dynamics.

15...♙d7 16.♙xd7+ ♘xd7 16...♙xd7 17.♗c4.

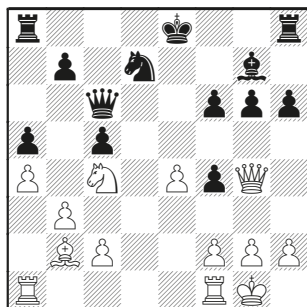
17.♗d5 ♙d6



EXERCISE: How should White continue?  
PLAN: To the c4-square!

18.♗d2! ♗f4 19.♗c4 ♙c6 20.♙b2! Again, the bishop explores the b2-h8 diagonal.

20...f6 21.♗xf4 exf4 22.♙g4!



As almost always in chess, the major pieces decide the game.

22...♗e5 23.♙xe5! fxe5 24.♖ad1! 0-0 25.♗d6 ♙xe4 26.♗xg6 And my opponent resigned, because of 26...♗f7 27.♗d6.

### SUMMARY:

In the opening, after placing his queen on the wrong square e7, Black suffers from problems with his development (the ♙f8 and ♗e8 don't have a way out). Then, all White has to do to win is apply an adequate strategic plan, putting his minor pieces in active positions. In this case, the key moves in the opening are b2-b3, activating the c1-bishop, and, of course, the maneuver ♗bd2!.

Well, this is just one lesson out of hundreds in the book. So, to conclude, we might say that if the late Mark Dvoretsky was the main man to approach for grandmaster style training, then Moska is the guy to help club level players raise their standard of play!

## MOSKA IS THE GUY TO HELP CLUB LEVEL PLAYERS RAISE THEIR STANDARD OF PLAY



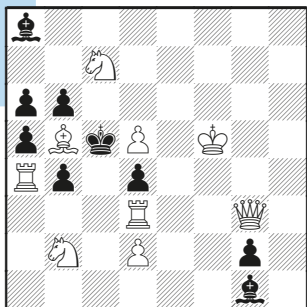
# PROBLEM WORLD

by Christopher Jones

cjajones1@yahoo.co.uk

Grandmaster of Chess Composition

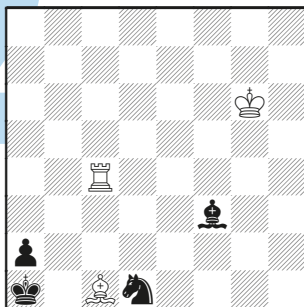
Solutions are given on page 574



David Shire (Canterbury)

Mate in 2 - 2 solutions

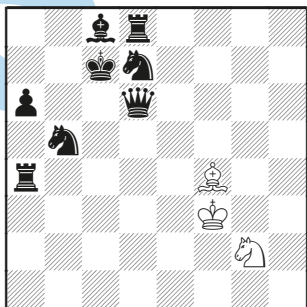
**ORIGINAL**



Paul Michelet (London)

Mate in 14

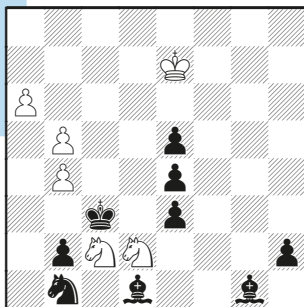
**ORIGINAL**



Sebastien Luce (France)

Helpmate in 3 - 2 solutions

**ORIGINAL**



Christer Jonsson (Sweden)

Helpmate in 3 - 3 solutions

**ORIGINAL**

# QUOTES AND QUERIES

## LECTURES FROM THE PAST: A TRAP, A SACRIFICE AND THE SCOTCH GAME

By Alan Smith

**6100** The following game is the earliest example of a trap in the Dutch Defence.

**O.C.MULLER - T.C. GIBBONS**

City of London CC Handicap 1893

1.d4 f5 2.♖f3 ♗f6 3.e3 3.g3 is stronger, but not all 1.d4 players like to fianchetto their king's bishop.

3...e6 4.♗d3 b6 5.0-0 5.c4 is safer.

5...♗b7 6.c4 ♗d6 Three years earlier the same players discussed this line 6...♗e7 7.♗c3 0-0 8.b3 d6 9.♗b2 ♗e4 10.♖c2 ♗xc3 11.♗xc3 ♗d7 12.d5 and Muller went on to win. If 6...♗d6 looks a bit crude it has been played by Alekhine and Yusupov.

7.♗e5? White intends to follow up with f4 shutting the bishop out of play. Unfortunately there is a tactical flaw. 7.♗c3 is better but white still came under pressure after 7...0-0 8.Qc2 ♗b4 9.♗d2 ♗e4 Ekenberg -Alekhine Orebro 1935.

7...♗xe5! 8.dxe5 ♗g4 White is losing a key pawn.

9.f4?? A real howler. 9.e4 keeps white's losses to a pawn, but even so black won quickly after 9...♖h4 10.h3 ♗xe5 11.exf5 0-0 V.Kahn - R.Blanco Buenos Aires Olympiad 1939.

9...♖h4! 10.h3 ♖g3 11.♖xg4 White could resign. 11.♖f3 is no better 11...♖h2+! 12.♗f1 ♖h1+ 13.♗e2 ♖xg2+.

11...fxg4 12.♖f2 gxh3 13.♗c3 ♗xg2 0-1

London Evening News and Post 25th February 1893

**6101** Here is a striking queen sacrifice, an early example of the skill of Milan Vidmar.

**A. LINDBERG - M. VIDMAR**

Correspondence 1904

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♗c3 ♗f6 4.e5 ♗fd7 5.f4 Pioneered by Steinitz in the 1880's.

5...c5 6.dxc5 This is rarely played nowadays 6.♗f3 ♗c6 7.♗e3 is usual.

6...♗c6 A finesse forgotten by Steffen Pedersen in his book *Main Line French* 3.♗c3 he only gives 6...♗c5 but then forgets to analyse the critical 7.♖g4.

7.a3 ♗xc5 8.♗f3 White should play 8.♖g4

8...0-0 9 ♗b5 Fighting to gain control of d4, but conceding the light squares in the process.

9...f6 10.♗xc6 bxc6 11.♗d4 Now black cannot defend both e6 and c6. but defence is furthest from his mind.

11...♗xe5! A thematic piece sacrifice.

12.fxe5 fxe5 13.♖f3 13.♗xc6? loses to 13...♙h4+ 14.g3 ♕f2+ 15.♗f1 ♙h3+ 16.♗e2 ♕a6+

13...e4 14.♕g5 Trying to complicate.

14...exf3!! Black has a strong attack even without his queen.

15.♕xd8 fvg2 16.♗d2 16.♖g1 ♕xg1 17.♗e2 ♕e3 is even worse.

16...♖f2+ 17.♗e2 gxh1=♙ 18.♙xh1 ♕a6 19.♖e1 19.♕h4 may seem more active but black is still on top after 19...♖xe2+ 20.♗c3 d4+ 21.♗b3 ♖b8+.

19...♖xd8 Black has more than enough for his queen.

20.h4 ♖df8 21.♙h3 ♖8f5 22.♙g3 e5 23.♙c3 ♕c4 24.♗d1 ♖5f3 25.♙xe5 ♖e3 26.♙b8+ ♖f8 27.♙h2 ♖fe8 28.b4 ♕xe2+ 29.♗d2 ♕d4 30.♖g1 ♕e3+ 31.♗c1 ♕f1!  
0-1

*De Telegraaf* 5th November 1904

**6102** The Blumenfeld attack in the Scotch Game is a logical attempt to leave the tramlines of chess opening theory. Here is the stem game.

## B. BLUMENFELD - W. COHN

Berlin Ch 1904

1.e4 e5 2.♖f3 ♗c6 3.d4 exd4 4.♗xd4 ♕c5 5.♕e3 ♙f6 6.♗b5 This is the move black thought he had prevented.

6...♕xe3 7.fxe3 White has allowed his pawn structure to be compromised ,but in return he gets pressure on c7. There is also the added bonus of a half open f file.

7...♙h4+ 8.g3 ♙d8 Black's reluctance to enter the sharp lines arising after 8...♙xe4 is understandable.

9.♙g4 ♗f8 10.♙f4 d6 11.♕c4 White

tried to improve with 11.♗1c3 in the game O.Bernstein - R.Swidorski Ostend 1907 and won in 26 moves.

11...♗e5 12.0-0 ♗h6 13.♕b3 ♕h3 14.♗1c3!?

14...♕xf1 15.♖xf1 a6 16.♗d4 ♙f6 17.♗d5 ♙xf4 18.♖xf4 ♗c6 Avoiding 18...c6 19.♗e6+ ♗g8?? 20.♗e7♯, returning the exchange with 19...♗e8 is plausible.

19.♗de6+ ♗g8 20.♗exc7 ♖c8 21.♗e6! ♖e8 Black could accept the sacrifice, but the position after 21...fxe6 22.♗e7+ ♗xe7 23.♕xe6+ ♗f7 is not clear.

22.♗g5 ♖e5 23.h4 ♗f8 24.♗b6 ♖e7 25.♗c8 ♖d7 26.♕e6 ♖c7 27.♗d6 ♗e7 28.♗xf7 ♗xf7 29.♖xf7 ♗d6 30.♕b3 ♗e5 31.♖c7 ♗xc7 32.♗e6+ ♗d6 33.♗xg7 White has four scattered pawns for the exchange, black's rook proves to be little better than white's bishop.

33...♗g4 34.♗f5+ ♗e5 35.♕d5 ♖b8 36.♗d4 ♗xe3 It is just a doubled pawn.

37.♗f3+ ♗d6 38.♕b3 ♗g4 39.♗g5 h6 40.♗f7+ ♗e7 41.e5 ♖f8 42.e6 h5 43.♗g2 ♖g8 44.♗g5 ♖f8 If black chases after the b pawn then he stands to lose his h pawn.

45.♗f7 ♖g8 46.♗f3 ♗h2+ 47.♗g2 ♗g4 48.♗f3 ♗h2+ 49.♗f2 ♗g4+ 50.♗e2 ♖g6 51.♗g5 ♖f6 52.♗e4 ♖f5 53.♗c3 ♗f6 54.♗e3 ♗d6 55.♗e2 ♗g4+ 56.♗d4 ♖f3 57.♗f4 ♗f6 58.♗e2 ♖f2 59.♗d3 ♖f3+ 60.♗d4 ♖f2 61.♗f4 ♖f3 62.c4 b6 63.♕d1 ♖g3 64.b4 ♖g1 65.c5+ bxc5 66.bxc5+ ♗e7 67.♕e2 a5 68.♗e5 ♗g4+ 69.♕xg4! hxg4 70.♗d5+ ♗d8 70...♗e8 is no better.

71.♗d6 ♖d1 72.c6 ♖xd5+ 73.♗xd5 g2 74.♗d6 g2 75.c7+ ♗c8 76.e7

1-0

Black queens first but both white pawns promote with check.

*De Telegraaf* 23rd April 1904

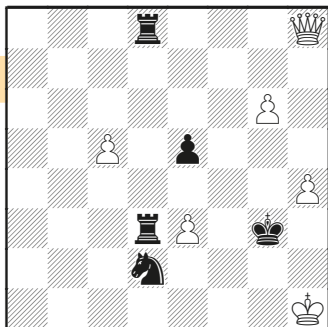
# Endgame Studies

The answers are given on page 575

by Ian Watson

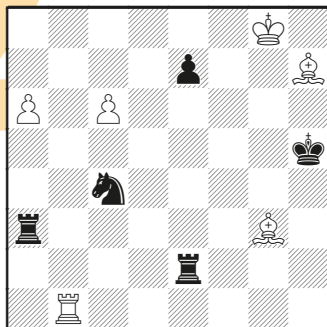
ian@irwatson.demon.co.uk

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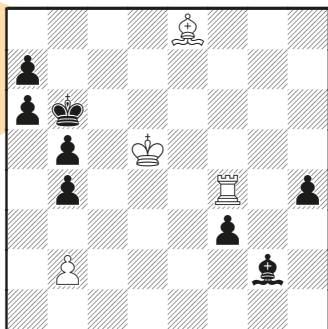
**D. Keith & M. Minski**  
*WCSC 2017*  
**WIN**

2



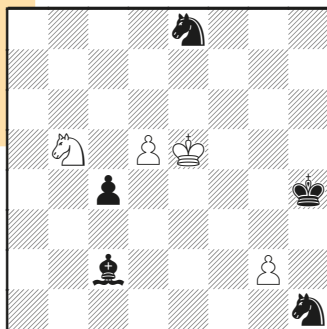
**G. Sobrecases**  
*WCSC 2017*  
**WIN**

3



**A. Branton**  
*BCM 1950*  
**DRAW**

4



**J. Selman & J. Marwitz**  
*Olympic Ty 1976*  
**DRAW**

# Beat The World Champ!

Can you be a better study solver than the World Chess Solving Champion? He is Kacper Piorun from Poland, and he won the 2017 Championship held in August in Dresden. The event includes many types of chess problems, and Piorun solved almost all of them correctly, but on the endgame studies he, unusually for him, dropped some points. So your task is to try to outscore him on those...

There were three studies in the Championship and those are our first three studies here. The fourth study is from a warm-up event, held the day before the Championship itself began. There are five points available for each study, and Piorun scored 1, 5, 1, 5 on these four. (He usually scores 5, 5, 5, 5, by the way.)

You will need to set up the positions on a board. In solving events, you are given a chess set and you can move the pieces to try and help you solve. You solve against the clock, so give yourself an average of 30 minutes for each one. You write down your solutions and they are marked by the competition's controller. Points are awarded according to how much of the composer's solution you find, with five points available for each study if you find it all. In the answers, I will show you where these points are awarded. You need to find the composer's main line; you can also write down sidelines if you are not sure what the main line is, but only the main line moves earn points. So look for the most artistic, elegant line.

Or... you could just play through the solutions... who wants to be a World Champion anyway?



[WWW.PURLINGLONDON.COM](http://WWW.PURLINGLONDON.COM)

# SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS

(See page 569)

## Unusual: 2 solutions in a 2-mover...

There are two different ways to force mate next move in David's interesting 2-mover, each of them a worthwhile problem in its own right.

First, consider 1. ♖xb4!. This threatens 1. ♖c4, and the defences 1... ♗xb4, 1... axb4, 1... axb5 and 1... ♙xd5 are met respectively by 2. ♗d6, 2. ♗a4, 2. ♖xb5 and 2. ♗xa6. Then consider 1. ♖xd4!. Now it is this rook that threatens mate at c4, and we have four defences that are directly equivalent to those in the first solution, but all now met by a different mating move - 1... ♗xd4/ ♙xd4/ axb5/ ♙xd5 2. ♗c3/ ♗d3/ ♗e6/ ♖xd5.

Such *changed mates* are a cornerstone of enjoyable 2-movers. Note too the composer's technical skill in binding together the two solutions by providing that in the 1<sup>st</sup> solution the ♖d3 plays a role (guarding b3) and in the 2<sup>nd</sup> solution the ♖a4 pins the black pawn after 1... ♗xd4. It would have been possible to show this play in a more conventional way with one try and one key by sliding everything one file right and adding b♖a8 (for 1. ♖xc4 ♖a4!), but David prefers not to add to the heaviness of the construction in this way.

## A staircase manoeuvre

At first sight it appears easy to achieve mate in Paul's 14-mover. But after 1. ♙a3! Black has 1... ♙e4+! and if 2. ♖xe4, then 2... ♗b1 and we have lost control of the position. So instead we want to move the white king, but not to f7 (... ♙d5+!). As becomes clear a little later, we need to keep the a1-h8 diagonal clear and so the only move that works is 2. ♗g5!. Black's best now is 2... ♗b2 (moves by the bishop shorten the

solution) and there follows 3. ♖c1+ ♙b1 and now 4. ♙f8!. This enables White to close in on the black king by a systematic manoeuvre. While Black moves his knight back and forth from b2 and back to b2 White plays 5. ♗g7+, 6. ♗f6, 7. ♗e6+, 8. ♗e5, 9. ♗d5+, 10. ♗d4, 11. ♗c4+, 12. ♗c3, 13. ♗b3+ and finally after 13... ♗b2/ ♗c3 14. ♙xb2/ ♙xc3#.

## New pins for old

We welcome Sebastien (a chess-playing IM) to the column. Despite his playing credentials Sebastien spreads his wings wide in his composing, sometimes more so than in this orthodox helpmate. (Yes, there are wider composing horizons than those seen in this column! - if you would like to get a sense of the mix of traditional and less traditional problems that are around you could look at the British Chess Problem Society website - <[www.theproblemist.org](http://www.theproblemist.org)>).

In Sebastien's 3-move helpmate we can't exploit the present pinning of the black queen since ... ♗d5 and ... ♗e6 simply do not cover all the flight squares. But if the black king would scurry to the edge of the board... This will involve the black queen initially being unpinned but then submitting to a new pin, and this time the white knight will be able to inflict two nicely-matched mates - (Black playing first) 1. ♖e8 ♗g5 2. ♗e7 ♗f4 3. ♗d8 ♗e6 and 1. ♗b6 ♙d2 2. ♗b4 ♗e3 3. ♗a5 ♗c4.

## Is the Queen always the most powerful piece?

In our last problem you probably discerned that the purpose of the a6 pawn must be to promote, and you probably looked for ways in which a queen at

a8 could finish Black off. In fact, in Christer's artfully-constructed helpmate there are no such ways. Instead, we have each of the possible minor promotions. Indeed, the apparent powerfulness of the two white knights is also misleading as in each solution one of them must be captured in order for the black king to get to where it has to go.

The solutions run: 1.♖xd2 a7 2.♔c4 a8♖ 3.♕d5 ♖b6; 1.exd2 a7 2.♖b3 a8♕ 3.♕a2 ♕d5; and 1.♕xc2 a7 2.♕d4 a8♗ 3.♕d5 ♗d8. The repetition of the move 2.a7 might be considered a minor (unavoidable) flaw, but the recurrence of 3.♕d5 is good, because it is a nice point that the king has to get to d5 via two different squares.

## ENDGAME STUDIES

(See page 572)

The moves in **bold** are what you had to write. You get each point if you have written everything up to there correctly.

### Keith & Minski

1.g7 (1 point) ♖g8 2.♗xg8 ♖c3 3.♗c4 (+1.5 points = 2.5) ♖xc4 4.g8♗+ ♖g4 5.♗g5 (+1.5=4) ♖f3 6.♗xg4+ (+1=5) and play could continue 6...♗xg4 7.c6 ♖xh4 8.c7 ♖f5 9.c8♗ wins.

There are various sidelines (which of course you did not need to write): 1.♗xe5+? ♖f2 2.♗h2+ ♖xe3; 1...♖xh8 2.gxh8♗ ♖f3 3.♗g8+ ♖f2 4.♗a2+ ♖xe3 5.♗a7 ♗d1+ 6. ♖g2 ♖g1+ 7.♖h3 ♖h1+ 8.♖g4; 2...♖xe3 3.♗b3 ♖xb3 4.g8♗+; 2...♖a3 3.♗a2 ♖xa2 4.g8♗+; 2...♖c4 3.♗d5 ♖xd5 4.g8♗+; and 5.♗e6? ♖xh4+ 6.♖g1 ♖f3+ 7.♖f1 ♖h2 8.♗g6+ ♖h3 9.c6 ♗d2.

### Sobrecases

1.♕g6+ (1 point) ♖xg6 2.c7 ♖d6 3.♕d6 ♖c3 4.a7 ♖a2 5.♕a3 (+2 points = 3) ♖axa3 6.♖b6+ (+1=4) ♖f5 7.♖b3 (+1=5) ♖xc7 8.♖xa3 ♖c8+ 9.♖f7 e5 10.a8♗ ♖xa8 11.♖xa8 e4 12.♖e8 ♖f4 13.♖e6 e3 14.♖d5 wins.

1.♖b5+? e5; 1.♖h1+? ♖g4 2.c7 ♖b6 3.♖b1 ♖c8 4.♖b8 ♖xg3 5.♖xc8 ♖a2;

1.♕f4? e5; 6.♖b3? ♖xc7; 6...e6 7.♖xe6+ ♖g5 8.♖e3 ♖xe3 9.c8♗ ♖xa7 10.♗c5+; and 7...♖axb3 8.a8♗ ♖xc7 9.♗a5+.

### Branton

1.♖f6+ ♖a5 2.♖c5 (1 point) h3 3.♕h5 (+1 point = 2) h2 4.♖xf3 (+1=3) h1♗ 5.♖a3+ (+1=4) bxa3 6.b4+ ♖a4 7.♕d1+ (+1=5) ♗xd1 stalemate.

1...♖c7 2.♖c5 h3 3.♕c6 h2 4.♖f7+ draws. 3.♕c6? h2 4.♕b7 ♖a4 5.♕d5 a5 6.♖xf3 ♕xf3 7.♕xf3 ♖b3.

### Selman & Marwitz

1.d6 ♕f5 2.♖xf5 ♖xd6+ 3.♖xd6 (2 points) c3 4.♖g6 (+1 point = 3) ♖g3 5.♖b5 (+1=4) c2 6.♖d4 c1♗ 7.♖f3+ ♖g4 8.♖e5+ (+1=5) ♖h4 9.♖f3+ draws.

4.♖f6? ♖g3; 4...c2 5.♖f5+ ♖g4 6.♖e3+; and 5.♖c4? c2 6.♖e5 ♖e2 7.♖d3 ♖f4+ 8.♖xf4 c1♗ 9.g3+ ♖g4 or in this line 6.♖d2 ♖g4 7.♖b3 ♖f4 8.♖f6 ♖e4 9.♖g5 ♖e2.

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## WHAT READERS SAY

I love everything about it. The articles, the strategic lessons, the tournament insights are all thrilling. Can't wait for the next issue!

*Angel Holguin, Texas*

A very nicely produced magazine; good heavy glossy pages, nice photos, and game scores are easily followed. Good coverage of both the men and women events.

*Glenn Tripp, Michigan*

Excellent production; color photographs, tournament news/updates, game annotations/analysis, endgames, studies, etc. Very in depth...

*Manuel Infante, Oklahoma*

I ordered the premier issue and eagerly awaited its arrival. I was expecting quite a lot from it, but I still was completely blown away by how good it really was.

*Chris Wainscott, Wisconsin*

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The quarterly ACM looks to be the most ambitious new U.S. chess publication since the demise of GM Yasser Seirawan's late, lamented *Inside Chess* in 2000.

*The Washington Times*

The large, beautifully produced magazine not only brings a slew of articles on events with deeply commented games, but comes also with columns by names such as Baadur Jobava and Vassily Ivanchuk.

*ChessBase*

The magazine looks nice, and more importantly, is packed with content; there is very little filler, nor are the pages littered with ads.

*ChessMind*

Read more at [www.acmchess.com](http://www.acmchess.com)