2007-4

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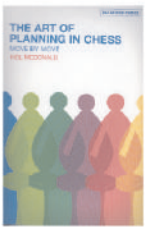

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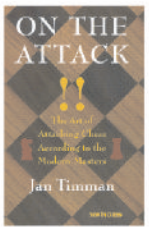

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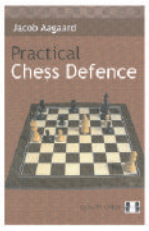

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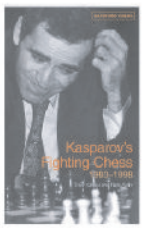

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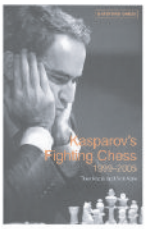

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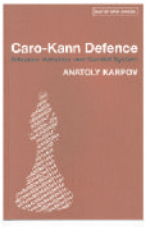

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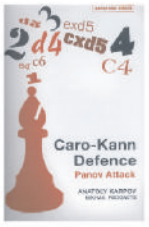

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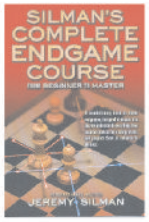

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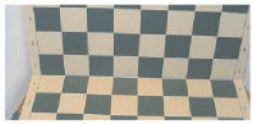
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CHESS CANADA

A satisfied Vishy Anand chatting with his wife Aruna upon sealing the deal in Mexico.
photo: chessbase.com

FEATURE ARTICLE:

ANAND WINS WORLD *CHAMPIONSHIP*

PAGE 10

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CONTENTS

4 In the News
6 Editorial
7 New Kid on the Block
10 In the Arena
19 Kings of Chess: Mikhail Botvinnik
22 Canadian Championship
34 Canadian Events
42 Canadian Women's Championship
44 Scholastic Scene
46 Ratings

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In the News

By Robert Hamilton

Doctor's Prescription for Medicine Hat

If you happen to be in downtown Medicine Hat without a chess set, don't despair. You could get to play a game on the beautiful outdoor set across from the Performing Arts and Heritage Centre. The giant set is the culmination of a big effort by Dr. Bill Taylor, who drew inspiration from one he had seen in Salzburg, Austria.

To make it happen, Taylor found a manufacturer of giant sets in Indonesia and attended an array of meetings with government to secure the location for the permanent board. Of course, you can't just pick the pieces up and put them in a box after playing. Not to worry though, Taylor managed to convince the city to approve a storage-shed-sized chess piece box built onto the outer wall of the public library.

Big moves being played in Medicine Hat

Zugic... heavy under-dog in round one

Zugic vs Adams

Canadian Zonal Champion Igor Zugic didn't catch a break in his Round 1 pairing at the FIDE World Cup Tournament in Khanty-Mansiysk, Russia. England's Michael Adams has spent the past ten years ranked among the world's very elite players and is the toughest opponent faced by a Canadian in world cycle play since Kevin Spraggett played Artur Yusupov in 1988.

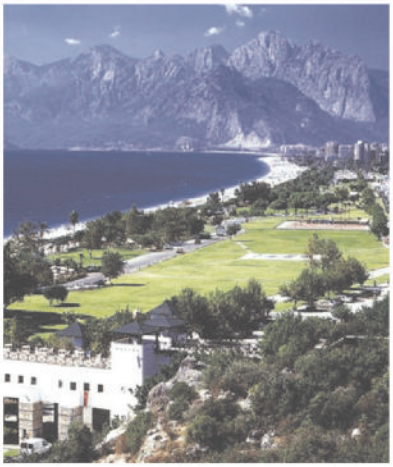
The FIDE World Cup tournament features virtually all of the world's elite players doing battle in knockout style mini-matches. According to FIDE's current plans, the winner of the event will be pitted against 2005/06 FIDE Champion Veselin Topalov to earn the right to play the winner of the upcoming Anand vs Kramnik match for the title of World Champion.

Youth Contingent in Antalya

From November 17-29, Antalya, Turkey, is hosting the 2007 World Youth Chess Championships. Organizers in the seaside city of Antalya have made provisions for hosting as many as 4500 incoming guests for the event. The government of Turkey has become one of the world's most aggressive supporters of chess, and the Turkish Chess Federation is the fastest growing in the world.

In recent years, rapidly advancing chess nations such as India have begun to make giant strides in international events such as the World Youth. Our own Canadian team typically fares quite well, and indeed Canada is again sending a large contingent: twenty-six players, three coaches and accompanying parents. Among the Canadians considered to have a shot at the medals are Christopher Knox in the boys-under-10 division and Kelly Wang in the girls-under-8 division.

Much of the the responsibility for our team falls to CFC Junior Coordinator Patrick McDonald, who for years has worked tirelessly as a valuable CFC volunteer.



Largest World Youth ever set for Antalya

Weekend Warrior

Russian Grandmaster Bator Sambuev arrived in Canada to play in the Canadian Open and never looked back. Based in Toronto, Bator intends to call Canada home, adding to the wave of super-strong players who have recently immigrated to Canada. Since having arrived in Canada, Bator has been very active, playing over fifty games.

This fall he was a real weekend warrior, participating in the Toronto Labour Day, Guelph Chessca Open, Toronto Thanksgiving Open, Kitchener's Oktoberfest event, Ottawa's National Capital Open and the Guelph Pro-Am. Bator won or shared first in four of the six fall events.

Joining Bator as recent arrivals to Canada are talented IMs Leonid Gerzhoy, Alexander Rabinovich, Artem Samsonkin and Anton Kovalyov, who is featured in this month's New Kid on the Block.

Sambuev laying it on the line every second weekend

Bond - off to Siberia to cool off

President Sent to Siberia

When Hal Bond ran for CFC President this summer at the Canadian Open Chess Championship in Ottawa, he probably had no idea things would get quite as busy as they have for him this fall.

In addition to the normal agenda, and special events such as the Anatoly Karpov Chess Academy, an audit of CFC operations highlights the need for serious near-term changes to CFC operations in order to maintain the current level of CFC services.

If the above weren't enough, Hal's been chosen to serve his second consecutive stint as an International Arbiter in the FIDE World Cup Tournament slated for Khanty-Mansiysk. There must be something about the Bond genetic composition that gravitates towards rule enforcement. Hal's cousin Kerry Fraser is a well known veteran NHL referee.

Chess is a Fight

Legendary World Chess Champion Emanuel Lasker once opined, "By some ardent enthusiasts chess has been elevated into a science or an art. It is neither; but its principal characteristic seems to be what human nature most delights in...a fight."

Little did Lasker know how prophetic these words would become with the recent advent of the World Chess Boxing Organization (http://site.wcbo.org). The somewhat complicated rules for chess boxing call for combatants to alternate between "rounds" of boxing and "rounds" of chess.

Chess boxing has been gaining a lot of traction in mainstream media. Former World Heavyweight Champ Lennox Lewis, a reasonable chess player, has endorsed the game, and coverage of chess boxing has appeared in *Playboy* and *Maxim*, and on ESPN.

Zoran Mijantovic vs "Anti Terro" Frank Stoldt

Editorial

Robert Hamilton

What distinguished 2007 from other years in Canadian chess? The answer is easy: the summer of 2007 saw Canada play host to more impressive chess events than any other summer in Canadian history. In this issue, we focus on two of these events: the Canadian Championship and the Canadian Women's Championship.

Another defining characteristic of 2007 was the continued wave of strong immigrants to Canada. Added together, the recent wave of immigrants would match up fairly evenly with the Canadian Olympiad team on five boards. Considering that many of the immigrants are teenagers, this bodes very well for the future of Canadian Chess. Not only are titled players calling Canada home, but very talented youth players have also arrived. Between In The News, New Kid on the Block and The Scholastic Scene we take a look at three of Canada's most recent arrivals.

So impressive has been home grown and imported talent that if Canada were to revert to its old sixteen-player closed event and attract all the top participants active in the past three or four years, nearly half the participants would be Grandmasters, the remainder would be top IMs, and many IMs wouldn't make the cut.

Heading into 2008, Canadian chess also faces challenges. A recent audit of the Chess Federation indicated a large and unsustainable loss for the previous year of operation. The current federation executive is among the best and most active in recent memory and will be counted on to navigate through the choppy waters.

In 2007, Chess Canada underwent many changes. There was a complete overhaul of the magazine's artwork thanks to a generous donation from Bill Peckford of Toronto. The magazine added more colour pages and improved stock. In addition, several of Canada's top players make valuable contributions to each issue, keeping the quality high. I am personally grateful to all of them and to John MacPhail for the invaluable assistance he provides. We look forward to a great 2008.

Yours truly,
Robert Hamilton
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New Kid on the Block

by Robert Hamilton

Fifteen year old Anton Kovalyov may well be the strongest player his age in Canadian history.

The newcomer to Canada arrived in Montreal from Argentina earlier this year and immediately made it clear that he is already one of Canada's top players.

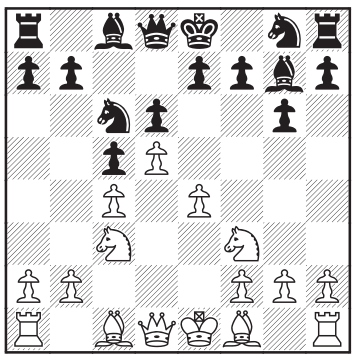
At the Canadian Open in Ottawa, Anton performed at an impressive 2544. Shortly after, he took part in the Quebec Open, where he turned in a 2547 performance. His current CFC rating of 2524 is sixth best in Canada. Among active Canadians, only Kevin Spraggett and Mark Bluvshtein have ratings higher than his 2510 FIDE rating.

Anton is a very well rounded player with a deep positional style which is very evident in the following game. Playing White against legendary South American Grandmaster Miguel Quinteros, Anton demonstrates a level of maturity rarely seen in a player his age. There are numerous points in the game where White could attempt to force play, but instead Anton patiently nurtured his positional advantage until Black's position collapsed.

Name: Anton Kovalyov
Date of birth: 4 March 1992
Home: Montreal
Favourite as White: English
Favourite as Black: Nimzo-/Bogo-Indian
Favourite player: Kasparov
Self-description: Positional
Other activities: Piano

Kovalyov-Quinteros
Pinamar Magistral (5), 2006
[Notes by Robert Hamilton]

1. c4 g6 2. d4 c5 3. ♘f3 ♗g7 4. e4 d6 5. ♘c3 ♘c6 6. d5



A slightly offbeat opening sequence, but one with which Quinteros has a lot of experience. The position has been arrived at by some of the world's best in recent years.

6... ♘a5

A well-known approach. Ivanchuk vs Topalov played to a very strange draw after 6... ♘d4!? 7. ♘d4 cd4 8. ♘b5 ♕b6 9. c5!? dc5 10. ♗f4 ♔f8 11. ♖c1 a6 12. ♗c7 ♕f6 13. ♘a3 b5 14. ♖c5 d3, Frankfurt 2000.

7. ♗e2 ♘f6 8. O–O

Powerful Hungarian Grandmaster Zoltan Ribli defeated Quinteros more than twenty years earlier after 8. a3 b6 9. b4 ♘b7 10. ♗d2 O–O 11. O–O e5 12. e6 ♗e6 13. ♖c1 cb4 14. ab4 a5 when White carried a small edge to victory. Anton's choice of 8. 0–0 allows White more time to capitalize on his space advantage by improving piece placement before opening the position.

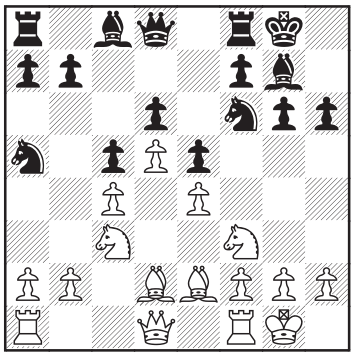
8... O–O 9. ♗g5

White has tried at least a half dozen different moves in this position...most of which lead to a slight natural advantage.

9... h6

It would be an error for Black to allow the constraining ♕d2.

10. ♗d2 e5



Black needs to aggressively contest space or he runs the risk of being dominated. White now has a comfortable version of the King's Indian.

11. g3

A tough decision. White discourages 11... ♘h5 on account of 12. ♘e1. However, g3 slightly softens the pawn structure on the kingside and costs a tempo.

11... ♗h3

Again...a tough decision. Nielsen vs Damljanovic (in the 2004 Spanish Championship) continued 11... ♗d7!? 12. ♘h4 a6 13. ♕c2 ♖b8 14. b3 b5, when Black had enough activity to draw.

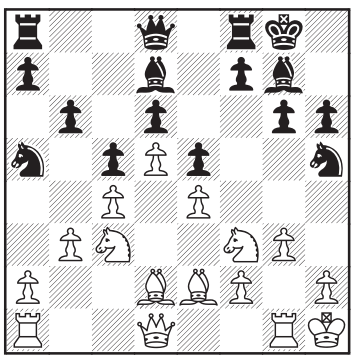
12. ♖e1 ♘h5

A slightly unusual choice, since opening the kingside early is not advisable for Black. The logical alternative was to prepare the ...b5 break.

13. b3 b6 14. ♔h1

The threat is 15. ♘g1.

14... ♗d7 15. ♖g1



White has a slightly unconventional set-up for his king-side pieces. Note that 15. ♖g1 was not played for rapid king-side expansion, but rather to clear e1 for the f3 knight.

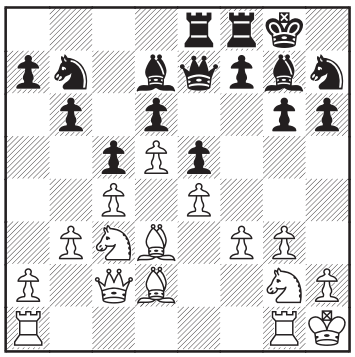
15... ♕e7 16. ♘e1 ♘f6 17. ♘g2

Keeping the knight close to the kingside action. On d3, the knight would be more central, but it would block the light bishop's control over b5, meaning 17.....a6 would come with the immediate threat of queenside expansion. Once Black achieved ...b5, the threat of ...b4 would force White to become reactive, ensuring Black good counterplay.

17... ♘h7 18. f3

Anton could have opted for 18. ♕c1!? since Black no longer has ...♔h7 at this disposal. Then 18... h5 would be a modest structural concession (particularly given that g-pawn recaptures on f5 leave h5 hanging and 18... ♘g5 19. h4 ♘h3 requires a gambler's mentality. Of course, it could be argued that allowing the knight into h3 requires a gambler's mentality...the position would be somewhat messy.)

18... ♘b7 19. ♗d3 ♖ae8 20. ♕c2



In the King's Indian, when Black could be contemplating ...f5, it can be very useful to keep strong pressure along the b1-h7 diagonal. Often after pawns are exchanged on f5 for example, a sudden g4 by White can tip the balance. This is particularly true with a knight stranded on h7.

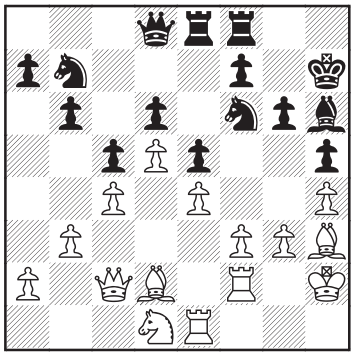
20... ♘g5 21. ♖gf1 ♗h3 22. ♖ae1 ♕d7

Black has done nothing illogical, but White's position has been improving steadily over the past five moves. A drawback of the King's Indian is that White's extra space allows for greater freedom of choices in manoeuvring, and Anton is taking full advantage of that. With 22.. ♕d7, Black is indicating a willingness to part with his light squared bishop in exchange for more freedom. Parting with the light squared bishop is almost always a concession in the King's Indian, as then Black's light squares often become weak if Black tries to initiate standard breaks such as ...f5. Indeed, Black's light squares become glaringly weak in this game...

23. ♖f2 ♗g2

Quinteros decides it's a necessity to part with the valuable bishop. White now has a comfortable advantage.

24. ♔g2 ♘h7 25. ♘d1 h5 26. h4 ♘f6 27. ♔h2 ♔h7 28. ♗f1 ♗h6 29. ♗h3 ♕d8



30. ♗c3!

With a space advantage, it's generally better to avoid exchanges, to maximize the troubles that mutual manoeuvring can cause for the player with less space. Here in particular, swapping dark-squared bishops would give Black continual hope of counterplay on the dark squares.

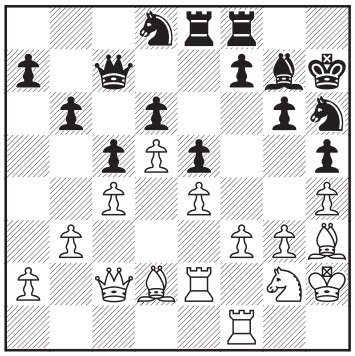
30... ♕e7 31. ♘e3 ♘d8

Black would not benefit from 31... ♗e3?! 32. ♖e3 followed by f4.

32. ♘g2 ♗g7 33. ♕b2

White could play 33. g4, but there is no hurry.

33... ♗h8 34. ♖fe2 ♘g8 35. ♕c2 ♘h6 36. ♗d2 ♗g7 37. ♖f1 ♕c7



Guess White's next move.

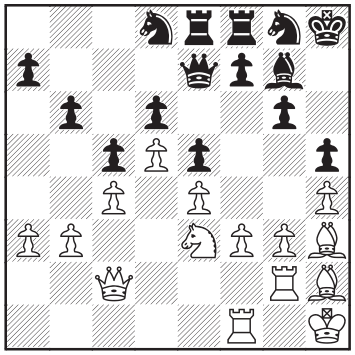
38. ♔h1!?

Mysterious? We can see from this move that Anton is really enjoying himself! The point isn't so much the particular idea of supporting a possible f3–f4 break by posting the bishop on h2. It's just to let Black worry about how to respond to different piece setups by White. A war of nerves.

38... ♕e7 39. ♗c1 ♕c7 40. ♗g5 ♘g8 41. ♗e3 ♗h6 42. ♗g1 ♕e7 43. ♗h2 ♗g7 44. ♘e3

Though 44. g4 would be fine, Anton prefers to maximize the torture for Black.

44... ♘h6 45. a3 ♔h8 46. ♖g2 ♘g8

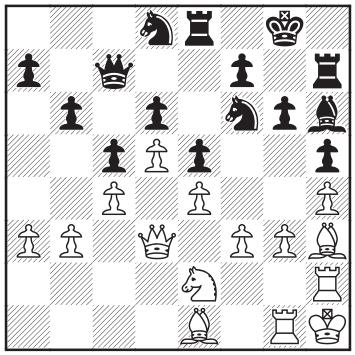


47. ♗g1

The bishop comes back. Quinteros has been careful to avert any disaster, but it hasn't done him much good.

47... ♘f6 48. ♗f2 ♗h6 49. ♕d3 ♖g8 50. ♘d1 ♖g7 51. ♖fg1 ♖h7 52. ♘c3 ♔g8 53. ♘e2 ♕c7 54. ♗e1 ♔h8 55. ♖h2 ♔g8

Black continues to defend patiently, keeping his pieces about as well placed as possible, and certainly avoiding any serious errors.



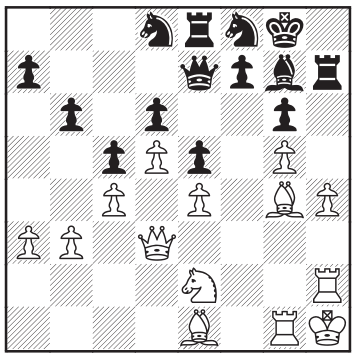
56. g4!

As contrasted with b3–b4 and f3–f4, Anton makes the break that gives the least freedom to his opponent. And his timing is very nice, giving Black an awkward choice regarding the bishop on h6. Should it go on a risky-looking foray? Or is it better to retreat the bishop and perhaps get an even more cramped position?

56... ♗g7

Perhaps a little too complacent. It looks better to take the opportunity for 56... hg4!? 57. fg4 ♗f4 58. ♖f2 g5.

57. ♘c1 hg4 58. fg4 ♕e7 59. ♘e2 ♘d7 60. g5 ♘f8 61. ♗g4

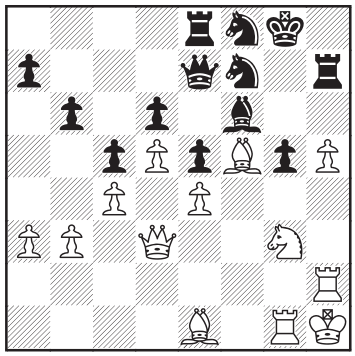


Not only is Anton's space advantage slightly increasing, but lines are opening toward the black king.

61... f6 62. gf6 ♗f6 63. h5 g5

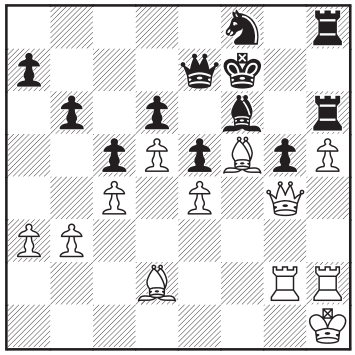
There might be a little more hope in the strange 63... ♘f7!? with the idea 64. ♗f5?! ♘g5! with some chance of survival.

64. ♘g3 ♘f7 65. ♗f5



Now Black is definitely lost.

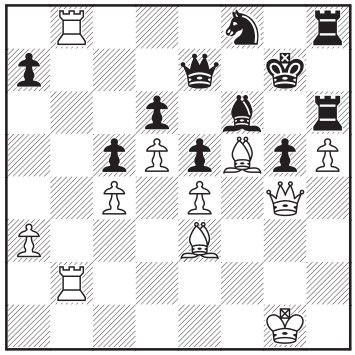
65... ♖h8 66. ♗d2 ♘h6 67. ♕e2 ♕d8 68. ♖gg2 ♖e7 69. ♗g4 ♖g7 70. ♘f5 ♖gh7 71. ♘h6 ♖h6 72. ♗f5 ♔f7 73. ♕g4 ♕e7



74. b4

The thematic pursuit of White's space advantage: the opening of a second front spells doom for Black.

74... ♖g8 75. bc5 bc5 76. ♗e3 ♖g7 77. ♖b2 ♔g8 78. ♖b8 ♔h8 79. ♗e6 ♖gh7 80. ♔g1 ♔g7 81. ♗f5 ♖h8 82. ♖hb2



Black resigns. A strategic masterpiece by Anton.

1–0

In the Arena - Anand Wins World Championship

by IM Jean Hébert

Eight of today's very best grandmasters gathered in Mexico City from September 12 to 30 to dispute the World Championship title and a 1.3 million dollar purse.

This was only the third time in chess history that this title (awarded by FIDE, the world chess federation) would be decided by a tournament rather than a match between the champion and a challenger. In 1948, two years after the death of champion Alexander Alekhine, five players (Botvinnik, Smyslov, Reshevsky, Keres and Euwe) played a quadruple round robin to determine the new champion. Just two years ago (San Luis 2005), as a first step toward reunification of the world title, FIDE held a World Championship tournament. Its brilliant winner, Veselin Topalov, then went on to meet Vladimir Kramnik in a bitterly fought 12-game match. Kramnik emerged the victor, to become the sole World Champion. As described in the previous issue of this magazine, a strange clause excluded the loser from Mexico, hence Topalov's absence.

At the starting gate in Mexico, there was a clear favourite: Viswanathan Anand of India, the number one ranked player. The gap in the ratings (2792 for Anand vs 2769 for Kramnik and Topalov) indicates greater consistency and excellent recent results. At this level a 23-point gap is very significant, considering how difficult it is to gain each one of these points.

The other main contender, Kramnik, had the burden of proving himself as a worthy champion in a tournament format, in which he is clearly not at his best. His strengths are definitely more effective in matches, where his solidity and patience can wear out any opponent, however brilliant.

The other contestants were all dangerous opponents capable of taking a high place. But it seems to me that, deep down in their hearts, none of them could truly believe that they have what it takes to become world champion, with the possible exception of Levon Aronian. The 25-year-old Armenian GM has made tremendous progress in the last couple of years to reach the top five, and had every reason to believe that he could still move higher. The others are either too peaceful (Leko, Svidler and Gelfand) too young (Grischuk) or too wild (Morozevich) to avoid heartbreaking losses or gain enough wins to become the top gun.

"Really, this tournament went like a dream."
—Anand

The first half

Two years ago in San Luis, Topalov in incredible form made mincemeat of the field in the first half, beating everybody but Anand to gain an already almost decisive two-point lead (6.5/7, two points ahead of Svidler). This year's championship would be, as expected, much closer. But already in Round 2 there was a strong hint of things to come: playing Black against Aronian, Anand uncorked a well-conceived opening novelty and proceeding to score a sound victory (see below). In retrospect this was quite significant, as White only lost twice in the whole event (!), both times at the Armenian's expense. This is in contrast with San Luis, where Topalov alone won four games as Black!

Anand takes the lead in Round 5 with a fine win over Svidler's Marshall Gambit (quite a feat to win as White against this line these days!). He is briefly joined by a steady and surprising Gelfand, who wins twice in successive rounds (5 and 6) against Aronian and Morozevich. However this tie does not last, as Anand moves to +3 in Round 7 with another fine win, over Grischuk, that is worth careful study (see below).

The second half

Leading by half a point, Anand continues his faultless journey. He is never in serious trouble but, when he does have to defend, he does so in convincing fashion (as in his Round 3 game vs Kramnik). He shows a side of his play that makes him a truly universal player, capable of gaining points and half points in every which way possible.

Anand's lead grows to a full point in Round 9, when his closest pursuer Gelfand gets ground down in an interesting rook ending by Grischuk (see below). In the same round, Kramnik sees almost all hopes for first place vanish when he is brought to zero by Morozevich's imaginative play.

Anand proceeds to erase any remaining doubts by inflicting defeat on Morozevich in Round 11. Impressive indeed, because the Indian took some risks when many players would have been satisfied to share the point and maintain a sound lead. It leaves a sweet taste in this chess fan's mouth to see a champion distinguishing himself not only with his good moves but also with his fighting spirit and unwillingness to let promising positions turn into draws without a fight.

Meanwhile, Kramnik saves his tournament in the last few rounds with impressive wins against Leko (Round 12) and Aronian (Round 14), thus securing a share of second place with the event's most surprising performer, Gelfand. Anand had a last scare in the penultimate round when Grischuk pushed him close to the abyss in a difficult rook ending. In the end the draw is achieved by just one tempo, when Grischuk's rook and king are unable to stop Anand's only remaining pawn.

The veteran Gelfand had the tournament of his career, and few people could have predicted such a high and well-deserved second place. Among the other players was Peter Leko, whose play was typically cautious and rather boring, with a 50% score. After his excellent tie for second place in San Luis, more was expected from Svidler, who scored his only win in the last round. Though Morozevich landed low in the crosstable, he certainly deserves some kind of honourable mention, as his always enterprising play did produce more than his share of interesting chess! Any top level tournament needs players like that. Arguably, Aronian's relative failure could be considered the tournament's disappointment. But he and Grischuk, the two youngest participants, can look forward to future championships. But then even younger players may make their lives difficult, most probably a certain Magnus Carlsen…

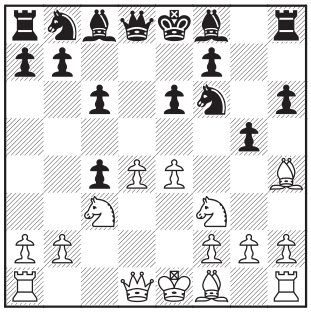
1. Viswanathan Anand	IND	2792	XX	==	==	==	1=	=1	1=	1=	9.0
2. Vladimir Kramnik	RUS	2769	==	XX	==	=1	==	10	=1	==	8.0
3. Boris Gelfand	ISR	2733	==	==	XX	==	==	1=	11	=0	8.0
4. Peter Leko	HUN	2751	==	=0	==	XX	==	=1	0=	=1	7.0
5. Peter Svidler	RUS	2735	0=	==	==	==	XX	0=	==	=1	6.5
6. Alexander Morozevich	RUS	2758	=0	01	0=	=0	1=	XX	==	01	6.0
7. Levon Aronian	ARM	2750	0=	=0	00	1=	==	==	XX	=1	6.0
8. Alexander Grischuk	RUS	2726	0=	==	=1	=0	=0	10	=0	XX	5.5

So Anand is World Champion for the second time (he was FIDE champion in 2000-2002), but this time his title is indisputable. Until Kramnik perhaps succeeds in reclaiming it by exercising his FIDE-given right to a revenge match, the anointed World Champion is also the number one rated player. And he is unanimously liked both by his peers and by the chess public.

Until and after the pending Anand-Kramnik match, the debate will continue over what is the better way to determine the world champion: matches or tournaments? Personally, even if I see strong arguments for both sides, I favour the match...but this is a topic for another article. One thing seems certain. The next cycle, under the current erratic FIDE leadership, will again mix a variety of formats (tournaments, matches, knockouts) into a volatile compound that few people can grasp.

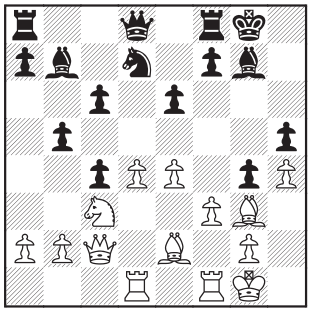
Aronian-Anand [D43]
World Championship (2), 2007
[Notes by Jean Hébert]

1. d4 ♘f6 2. c4 e6 3. ♘f3 d5 4. ♘c3 c6 5. ♗g5 h6 6. ♗h4 dc4 7. e4 g5



This is now a major topic of discussion in the Semi−Slav. For decades it was 7... b5 8. e5 g5 9. ♘g5 hg5 10. ♗g5.

8. ♗g3 b5 9. ♘e5 h5 10. h4 g4 11. ♗e2 ♗b7 12. O−O ♘bd7 13. ♕c2 ♘e5 14. ♗e5 ♗g7 15. ♖ad1 O−O 16. ♗g3 ♘d7 17. f3



17... c5!

A novelty. The right kind of novelty at the right moment! Aronian is now on his own to face difficult problems in a position that the world's number one player has analyzed deeply. In several previous games, Black played 17... ♕b6 (in preparation for ...c5 or ...e5), leading to hair−raising complications for which Aronian was certainly well prepared, probably with some new move further down the line. Anand shows that ...c5 can be played right away

18. dc5

The immediate point of Black's new move is best seen in the variation 18. ♘b5 cd4 19. ♘d4 ♕b6 20. ♗f2 g3! 21. ♗e3 ♕d8! 22. ♗g5?! (Even after 22. ♖fe1 ♕h4 23. ♘e6 fe6 24. ♖d7 ♗h6! 25. ♕c3 ♗e4, Black is close to winning: 26. ♔f1 ♕h1 27. ♗g1 ♗d3! 28. ♖d3 cd3 29. ♕d3 ♖f6.) 22... ♗d4 23. ♖d4 ♕b6 24. ♗e3 e5 −+ and Black wins material.

18... ♕e7!

On e7 the queen watches h4. Losing the exchange after 19. ♗d6 is no concern considering White's dark square problems.

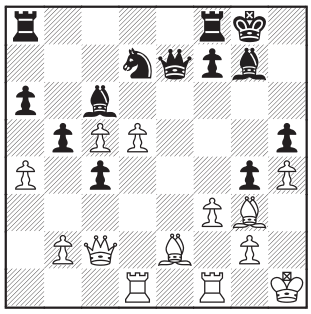
19. ♔h1?!

Facing unforeseen complications in the opening, Aronian has a slight hesitation that is possibly the beginning of the forthcoming problems. Better seems to be 19. ♗d6!? ♕h4 20. fg4! hg4 21. ♖f4! leading to a sharp position that needs and may very well get further testing.

19... a6 20. a4 ♗c6 21. ♘d5!?

Or 21. fg4 hg4 22. ♗g4 ♘c5 and Black has a serious queen side initiative, b5−b4 being a serious threat. Aronian's idea is quite plausible since Black can hardly keep the extra piece.

21... ed5 22. ed5



22... ♗e5!

A strong positional move. After the forced reply, White's light square bishop is solidly contained by the black pawns at c4 and g4.

23. f4 ♗g7 24. dc6

Compare 24. ♖fe1!? ♘c5 (or 24... ♕f6 25. dc6 ♘c5 26. ♖d5 ♕c6 27. ♖h5 ♘e4 28. ♔h2 ~) 25. ♗c4 ♕a7 26. ♗a2 ♗d7 27. ♗f2 ♖fc8 28. b4 ♘d3!! 29. ♕c8 ♖c8 30. ♗a7 ♘e1 31. ♖e1 ba4 32. ♖e7 (32. ♗c5 a5 33. ♗d6 ab4 34. ♗b4 ♗f6 35. g3 ♗c3 36. ♗c3 ♖c3 −+) 32... ♖c2 33. ♖d7 ♖a2 −+.

24... ♘c5 25. ♖d5

The alternative 25. ♖fe1 ♘e4 26. ♔h2 ♘g3 27. ♔g3 ♗f6 (or 27... ♕b4) clearly leaves Black with a big edge.

Aronian was ill during the event and didn't challenge for first as some expected.
photo: www.chessbase.com

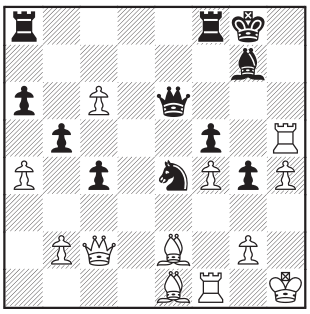
25... ♘e4 26. ♗e1 ♕e6!

Exquisite precision! It prevents White from breaking up Black's king side as in the line 26... f5?! 27. ♔h2 (otherwise ...g4−g3 would be a problem) 27... ♖ad8 28. ab5! ♖d5 29. ♗c4 with a totally unclear position.

27. ♖h5

Now 27. ab5 is easily taken care of with 27... ♕d5 28. ♗c4 ♕d4 29. b6 g3 −+ threatening ...♕f6×h4.

27... f5 −+



The rook is hopelessly trapped on h5 and Black dominates the whole board. Anand's execution is flawless.

28. ♔h2 ♖ac8 29. ♗b4 ♖fe8 30. ab5 ab5 31. ♖e1 ♕f7

Time to cash in.

32. ♖g5 ♘g5 33. fg5 ♖c6 34. ♗f1 ♖e1 35. ♗e1 ♖e6 36. ♗c3 ♕c7 37. g3 ♖e3 38. ♕g2 ♗c3 39. bc3 f4 40. ♕a8 ♔g7 41. ♕a6 fg3

White does not wait for 42. ♔g1 ♕f7.

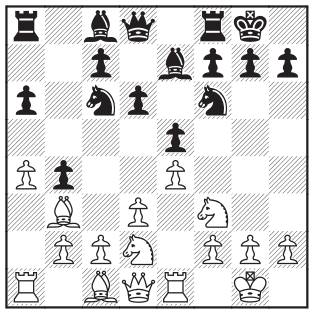
0−1

Anand-Grischuk [C88]
World Championship (7), 2007
[Notes by Jean Hébert]

1. e4 e5 2. ♘f3 ♘c6 3. ♗b5 a6 4. ♗a4 ♘f6 5. O−O ♗e7 6. ♖e1 b5 7. ♗b3 O−O 8. a4

Who could have foreseen ten years ago that 8. c3 would go out of fashion in favour of 'anti−Marshall' systems (8. a4 and 8. d3)?

8... b4 9. d3 d6 10. ♘bd2



This is already a minor variation. Usually White prevents ...♘a5 and prepares to probe Black's queen side with 10. a5.

10... ♘a5 11. ♗a2 c5

Here 11... ♗e6 12. ♗e6 fe6 13. c3 bc3 14. bc3 ♖b8 seems quieter and more reliable. But Grischuk is willing to enter the complications and fight it out.

12. c3 ♘c6 13. d4

Incredibly, this seems to be a new position. Comparing with classical Lopez positions, we find that White has managed to maintain his light square bishop on the active a2−g8 diagonal, instead of having to retreat it to c2.

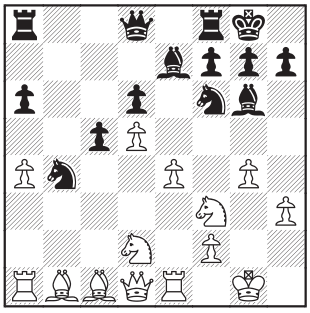
13... bc3 14. bc3 ed4

An important decision. Grischuk's choice is dynamic, creating an asymmetrical pawn formation. Black could also keep his e5 pawn with 14... cd4 15. cd4 ♗g4 (or 15... ♖b8 to prevent ♗b2).

15. cd4 ♘b4 16. ♗b1 ♗g4 17. h3 ♗h5 18. g4 ♗g6

On g6 the bishop consolidates Black's king position against White's central advantage and aggressive intentions.

19. d5



There was no point in keeping the central tension. Now White hopes to make use of an excellent ♘/c4 and pressure on d6.

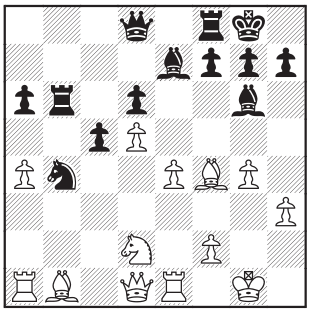
19... ♘d7 20. ♘c4 ♖b8 21. ♗f4

Anand probably rejected the positionally desirable 21. a5 because of 21... ♗f6 22. ♖a3 ♘d5 with unwanted complications.

21... ♘b6 22. ♘b6

But not 22. ♘e3 ♗f6 23. ♖a3 ♗b2! since another knight is coming to c4 anyway.

22... ♖b6 23. ♘d2



23... ♗g5

Getting rid of his bad bishop. However, after 23... ♗f6!? 24. ♖a3 ♗d4 the 'bad' bishop would become very active: 25. ♘f3?! ♘d5!

24. ♗g5 ♕g5 25. ♘c4 ♖bb8 26. ♕d2!

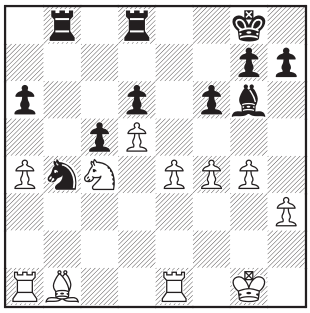
The exchange of queens solves White's potential problem on the dark squares and leaves Black with a solid but rather passive position. Certainly not 26. ♘d6?? ♕e5.

26... ♕d2

Hardly forced, but White's space advantage points towards exchanges to relieve the pressure.

27. ♘d2 f6 28. ♘c4 ♖fd8 29. f4

Grischuk, who has been playing more poker than chess, performed very credibly.
credit: www.chessbase.com

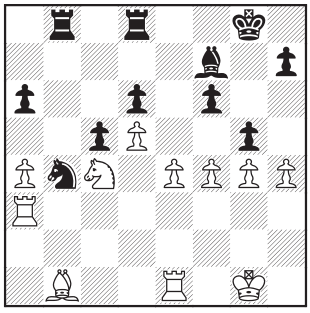


White enjoys space and pawn mobility in the centre and the king side. This gives him the initiative since Black can only defend.

29... ♗f7 30. ♖a3 g5

Hoping to immobilize White's pawn majority.

31. h4!



Most dynamic and precise. According to Black's answer, White will swing the a3 rook to either f3 or h3. Less accurate would be 31. ♖f3 ♔g7 32. h4 gh4!?

31... gf4 32. ♖f3 ♗e8

The alternative 32... ♗g6?! would be re−

futed by 33. h5! (not 33. ♖f4 ♘d5 34. ed5 ♖b1 35. ♖b1 ♗b1 36. ♖f6 ♗e4 and Black has good chances to save the game) 33... ♗e8 34. ♖f4 giving White an extra tempo over the game.

33. ♖f4 ♔g7 34. h5!

Making sure that f6 will be captured in favourable conditions. Simplistic moves must be avoided: 34. ♖ef1? ♗a4 35. ♖f6 ♗b5 and Black wins.

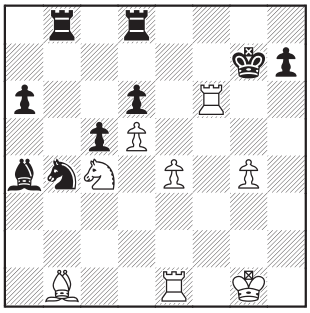
34... ♗a4

Or 34... h6 35. ♖ef1 ±.

35. h6 ♔h6

Or 35... ♔f7 36. g5 ♔g6 37. gf6 (37. ♖f6 ♔g5 38. ♖ef1 ♖g8) 37... ♔h6 (37... ♔f7 38. e5) 38. ♔f2 +− and wins. Nobody wants to see his king like this.

36. ♖f6 ♔g7



Or 36... ♔g5 37. ♖f5 ♔h6 38. g5 ♔g7 39. ♖f6 and White is up a tempo on the game.

37. g5!

Patience is required; d6 is doomed anyway. It certainly must have been very tempting to go immediately for the connected passers in the centre by 37. ♖d6!? but after 37... ♗b5 38. ♖d8 ♖d8 39. ♖c1 (39. ♘e3 ♔f6 is not clear at all) 39... ♗c4 40. ♖c4 ♖c8 41. d6 ♔f6 White has nothing better than 42. d7 ♖d8 43. ♖c5 ♖d7 and the reduced material offers limited winning chances.

37... ♖f8

Or 37... ♗e8 38. ♘d6 ♗g6 39. ♘f5 ♗f5 40. ef5 ♖d5 41. ♖e7 ♔g8 42. ♗e4 ♖d1 43. ♔f2 ♘d5 44. ♗d5 ♖d5 45. ♖ff7 ±.

38. ♖d6 ♗c2

Here 38... ♗b5 looks like a better try, but White's advantage is indisputable.

39. ♘e5

Also 39. ♗c2 ♘c2 40. ♖f1 ♖f1 41. ♔f1 ♖b4 42. ♘d2 ♖b2 43. ♔e2 seems sufficient.

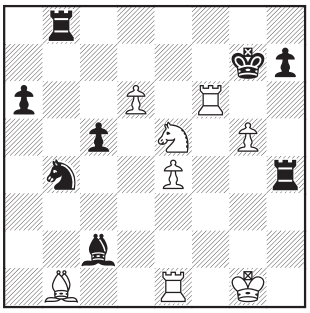
39... ♖f4

Of course Black is positionally lost and must seek tricks.

40. ♖f6 ♖h4

Fritz finds the remarkable 40... ♘d5!? but 41. ed5 ♖e4 42. ♖e4 ♖b1 43. ♔f2 ♗e4 44. d6 ♖b8 45. ♔e3 ♗d5 46. d7 ♖d8 47. ♖a6 wins anyway.

41. d6

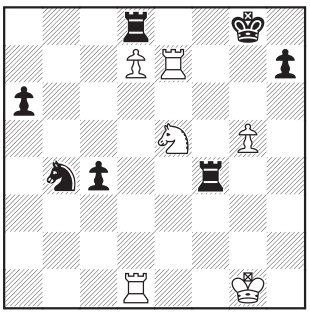


Perhaps 41. ♖f7 ♔g8 42. ♖a7 may have been somewhat simpler, but Anand's way also seems to work.

41... ♗b1 42. ♖b1 ♖e4 43. ♖f7 ♔g8 44. ♖e7! ♖d8 45. ♖d1 c4

Or 45... ♖d4 46. ♖d4 cd4 47. d7 ♔f8 48. ♖h7 ♔g8 49. g6.

46. d7 ♖f4



47. ♖f1!

This is the simple, human way. Fritz also finds the pretty 47. g6! hg6 48. ♖d6 ♘d3 49. ♖g6 ♔f8 50. ♖e8 ♖e8 51. ♖g8 ♔g8 52. de8=Q.

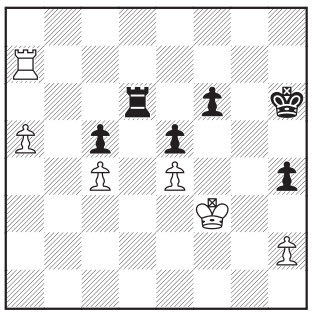
47... ♖ff8 48. ♖f8 ♔f8 49. ♖h7 c3 50. ♘g6

The more I analyzed this game, the more I was impressed by Anand's subtle and forceful play.

1−0

Grischuk-Gelfand [E20]
World Championship (9), 2007

[Notes by Jean Hébert]



White to play and win

White's more active rook and king along with the extra pawn give him a winning advantage. However, he must not let the black king become active.

53. a6?

The correct way was 53. ♔g4! ♔g6 54. a6 (not 54. ♔h4? ♖d4 55. ♔g3 ♖e4 and Black is better!) 54... ♖d2 55. ♖a8 ♖g2 56. ♔f3 ♖a2 57. a7 ♔h7 58. ♔g4 +− and White wins without any problem by picking up some pawns while both king and black rook are tied up.

53... h3?

Missing a golden opportunity to save the game: 53... ♔g5! 54. ♖g7 (54. ♖a8 ♖d3 55. ♔e2 ♖a3 56. a7 ♔f4; 54. ♔e3 ♔g4) 54... ♔h6 55. a7 ♖a6 =.

54. ♔g4

Now the game returns to its 'normal' course.

54... ♖d3 55. ♖a8 ♔g7 56. ♔f5 ♖d6 57. ♖a7! ♔h6

Or 57... ♔f8 58. ♔g6.

58. ♖f7 ♖d2 59. a7 ♖f2 60. ♔e6 ♖a2 61. ♔f6 1−0

Morozevich-Kramnik [E61]
World Championship (9), 2007

[Notes by Jean Hébert]

1. c4 c5 2. ♘c3 g6 3. e3!

According to my database, Kramnik had never faced this position before! This is much to the advantage of Morozevich, who is used to playing strange positions from early in the game.

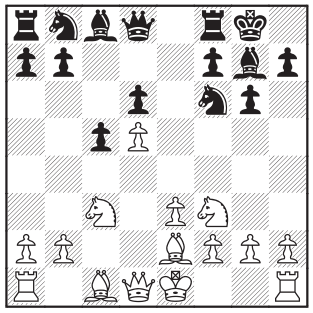
3... ♗g7

An alternative is 3... ♘f6 4. d4 cd4 5. ed4 d5.

4. d4 ♘f6 5. d5!

Here 5. ♘f3 cd4 6. ed4 d5 would not be much of a problem for Kramnik, but the Benoni type position after 5. d5 is much more demanding.

5... O−O 6. ♘f3 e6 7. ♗e2 ed5 8. cd5 d6

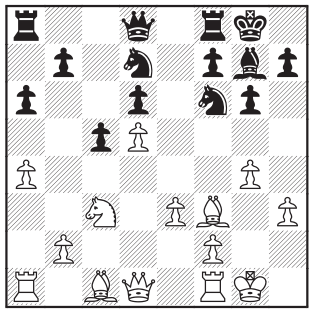


Kramnik is no Benoni expert (even though he employed it in his match vs Leko in a must−win situation), and he probably considers the White setup with e3 instead of e4 as rather harmless. But, as we shall see, there are also advantages in having the e−pawn on e3.

9. O−O ♗g4

A good practical decision in the Modern Benoni. Black is willing to surrender the bishop pair to solve his development problems. However, here without a pawn on e4, White has a little more scope to use the light squares.

10. h3 ♗f3 11. ♗f3 ♘bd7 12. a4 a6 13. g4!?



This sharp advance gives the game its distinct character. With g4−g5 White intends to gain space while pushing the knight to a rather passive square. The prosaic 13. e4 would bring up a 'normal' Modern Benoni setup.

13... c4?!

In itself a typical Benoni move, but 13... h6 first seems more cautious. Not only does it prevent g4−g5, it also gives an option (h7) to the f6 knight.

14. ♗e2 ♖c8 15. g5 ♘e8 16. f4!

To maintain a pawn on g5 White must be ready to meet ...f7−f6.

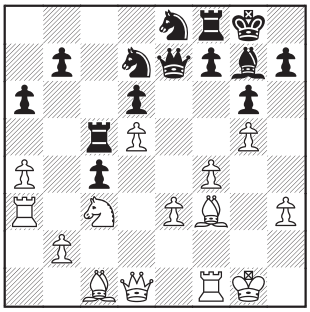
16... ♕e7

It is already quite clear that finding a decent plan is no easy task for Black. The knight on e8 is particularly awkward. Black's difficulties would not be resolved by 16... f6 17. h4.

17. ♖a3 ♖c5

This manoeuvre does not make a good impression. But what else is there? Violent attempts to break the bind on the king side and reclaim the f6 square for Black's pieces do not seem promising: 17... f6 18. h4 fg5 19. hg5 h6 20. ♗g4 hg5 21. ♗e6 ♔h7 22. ♘e4 and White is winning.

18. ♗f3



See how White can now use the e4 square: ♘e4 is a possibility in many lines.

18... ♖a5

With the idea of ...b5 but just about any decent White move prevents it. The immediate 18... b5?! would allow 19. ab5 ab5 20. ♖a7.

19. ♗d2

Also possible was 19. b4 b3 20. ♕b3 ♖c5 21. ♘e2 ±.

19... ♘c5 20. ♕e2!

fan favourite Morozevich beat Kramnik convincingly
photo: www.chessbase.com

Morozevich does well in avoiding a line such as 20. ♗e2 ♗c3! 21. ♗c3 (21. bc3 b5) 21... ♕e3 22. ♔h2 ♖a4 23. ♗d4 ♖a3 24. ♗e3 ♖e3 giving an irrational position in which Black gets excellent play.

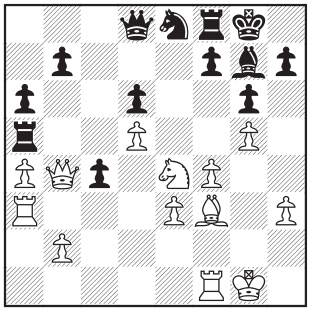
20... ♘b3

Also, 20... ♗c3 21. ♖c3! (weaker is 21. ♗c3 ♖a4 22. ♖a4 ♘a4 23. ♗d4! b5 and White has good compensation for the pawn but maybe not more) 21... ♖a4 22. ♖c4 ♖c4 23. ♕c4 leaves White on top. The fact that the ♘/c5 cannot be maintained on its outpost is a serious problem.

21. ♘e4! ♘d2

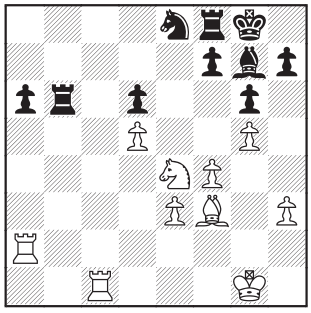
The alternative 21... ♖d5 22. ♕c4! ♖d2 (22... ♘d2 23. ♕d5 ♘f1 24. ♔f1 ♕c7 25. ♖b3 is also good for White) 23. ♖b3 d5 24. ♕c5 ♕c5 25. ♘c5 is much better for White.

22. ♕d2 ♕d8 23. ♕b4 ±



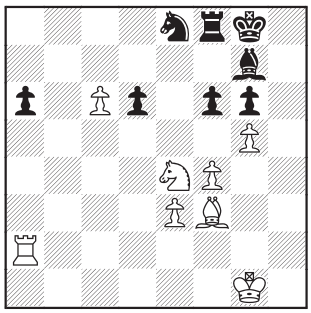
White's many targets (b7, c4, d6), the poor ♖/a5 and the poor ♘/e8 leave no doubt about who is in charge.

23... b5 24. ab5 ♖b5 25. ♕c4 ♕b6 26. ♕c6! ♗b2 27. ♕b6 ♖b6 28. ♖a2 ♗g7 29. ♖c1



Black's main problem (♘/e8) is more acute than ever. Black now attempts to liquidate as many pawns as possible, but White's superior piece activity does not give him any serious drawing chances.

29... h6 30. h4 hg5 31. hg5 f6 32. ♖c6 ♖c6 33. dc6



33... fg5

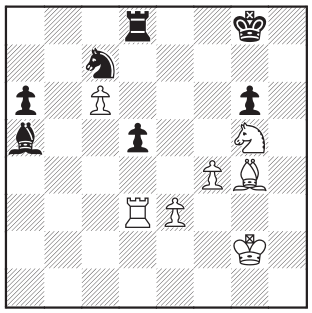
Much more interesting was 33... f5!? since after 34. ♘d6 ♘d6 35. ♗d5 ♘f7 36. ♖a6 ♔h7 37. c7 Black can still put up resistance with 37... ♘g5! 38. ♖a8 ♘e6! 39. c8=Q ♖c8 40. ♖c8 ♘f8 and, although this does not really look like a fortress, there may be surprising resources left for Black.

34. ♘g5 ♘c7 35. ♖d2 ♖d8 36. ♗g4

Also 36. ♗d5 ♘d5 37. ♖d5 ♗f8 38. ♖a5 ♖a8 39. ♘e4 ♗e7 40. ♘c3 ♗d8 41. ♖a2 ♔f7 42. ♘d5 ♔e6 43. e4 looks convincing.

36... ♗c3 37. ♖d3 ♗a5 38. ♔g2 d5

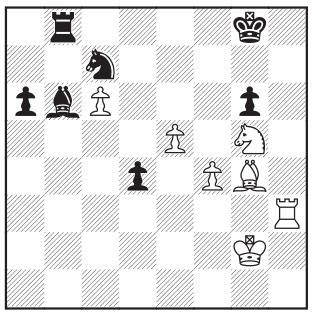
Kramnik due another crack at the title in a match with Anand
photo: www.chessbase.com



39. e4

This illustrates the last advantage of e2–e3 over e2–e4: on e3 the pawn always threatens to move to e4...

39... d4 40. e5 ♗b6 41. ♖b3 ♖b8 42. ♖h3



Idea: ♗e2–c4. Now that Black has regrouped to neutralize the passed c–pawn, his king side falls apart.

42... ♗a5 43. ♖h6 ♖b2 44. ♔g3 ♗e1 45. ♔f3 d3 46. ♖g6 ♔f8 47. ♖d6 d2 48. ♔e4

Impressive play by Morozevich vs the now former World Champion.

1–0

Kramnik-Leko [E05]
World Championship (12), 2007

[Notes by Jean Hébert]

1. d4 ♘f6 2. c4 e6 3. g3 d5 4. ♗g2

The Catalan is one of Kramnik's bread and butter openings.

4... ♗e7 5. ♘f3 O–O 6. O–O dc4 7. ♕c2 a6 8. ♕c4 b5 9. ♕c2 ♗b7 10. ♗d2

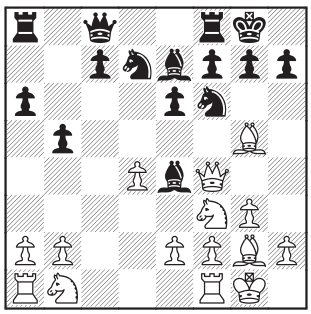
Preparing to go to a5 in several lines. The other main moves are posting this bishop on f4 or g5.

10... ♗e4

Or 10... ♖a7 11. ♖c1 ♗e4 12. ♕b3 ♘bd7 13. ♗a5 ♕a8 14. ♘c3 ♗c6 15. a3 ♗d6 16. ♗b4 ♕b7 and even though Black has not achieved c7–c5, his position is fine and he went on to gradually outplay his opponent and win in Nielsen–Leko, Dortmund 2005.

11. ♕c1 ♕c8 12. ♗g5 ♘bd7 13. ♕f4

This appears to be a novelty.



By immediately clearing c1 for a rook White makes ...c5 harder to achieve.

Some previous games went 13. ♘bd2 ♗b7 14. ♘b3 and the thematic break 14... c5 has proved to be playable: 15. ♗f6 ♗f6 (15... gf6!?) 16. ♘c5 ♘c5 17. dc5 ♗e7 18. b4 ♗f6 19. ♖b1 ♗e4 20. ♖b3 a5 21. a3 ♗d5 22. ♘d2 ♗b3 23. ♗a8 ♕a8 24. ♘b3 ab4 25. ab4 ♕e4 26. ♕e1 ♖d8 with full compensation (much greater piece activity) for the pawn.

13... ♗b7 14. ♖c1 ♗d6

Or 14... c5 15. dc5 ♘d5 16. ♕d2 ♗c5 17. b4 ♘b4 18. ♗e7 ♗e7 19. ♖c8 ♗c8 20. ♘d4 ± and Black is materially OK but White has the initiative.

15. ♕h4 h6 16. ♗f6 ♘f6 17. ♘bd2

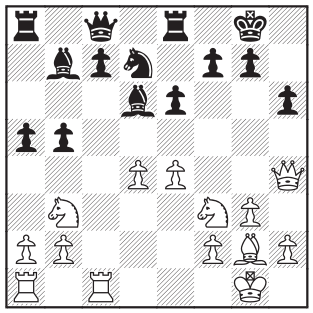
Now that ...c5 is more or less out of the question, Black has problems to find a plan, while his opponent is threatening to increase his space advantage with e2–e4. This is unpleasant when added to the backward c–pawn long–term weakness.

17... ♖e8 18. e4 ♘d7

Or 18... e5 19. de5 ♗e5 20. ♘e5 ♖e5 21. ♕f4 ♖e7 22. ♖c2 ♕d7 23. ♖ac1 ♖c8 24. b4.

19. ♘b3 a5

Black avoids 19... e5 20. ♘a5.



White (Kramnik) to play

20. ♘c5?!

The simpler 20. a4 b4 21. ♖c2 ± appears to yield White a long lasting plus all over the board at little risk.

The move played, on the other hand, leads to an interesting positional exchange sac...that Kramnik may or may not have foreseen. Remember that he not long ago missed a mate in one against Deep Fritz!

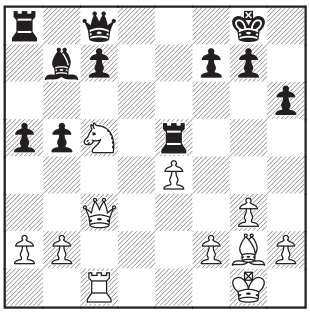
20... ♗e7 21. ♕f4 e5?!

Leko goes for the exchange. But sounder was 21... ♘c5 22. dc5 e5! 23. ♘e5 ♗f6! and Black might even be somewhat better: 24. c6 ♗e5 25. cb7 ♕b7 26. ♕d2 a4 27. ♖ab1 ♕b6.

22. ♘e5 ♘e5 23. de5 ♗g5 24. ♕f3 ♗c1 25. ♖c1

Of course White has good compensation for the exchange, if only for the powerful knight.

25... ♖e5 26. ♕c3



26... f6?

An awful move that decisively weakens the light squares. Instead, 26... ♖e7 appears playable, giving back the exchange for a decent endgame: 27. ♘b7 ♕b7 28. e5 ♕a7 29. ♗a8 ♕a8 30. ♕c5 ♕e8 31. f4 ♖d7 and White's slightly exposed king should be full compensation for White's space advantage.

27. ♕b3 ♔h8

More accurate may be 27... ♔h7 to avoid a check by ♕f8, but after 28. ♕f7 ♗c6 29. ♘d3 ♗e8 (29... ♖e6 30. ♗h3 ♗d7 31. ♗f5 ♔h8 32. ♘f4 wins) 30. ♕f8 ♖g5 31. h4 ♖g4 Black's prospects remain grim. For example, 32. ♗f3 ♗h5 33. ♕c8 ♖c8 34. ♔g2 ♖d8 35. ♘c5 ♖d2 36. ♘e6 ±.

28. ♕f7

Or 28. ♕b5 ♖a7.

28... ♗c6 29. ♘d3 +–

Now it's all over.

29... ♖e6 30. ♘f4!

Avoiding the tempting 30. ♗h3?! ♗d7 31. ♘c5 ♖e7 32. ♕e7 ♗h3 33. ♘d3 ♕d8! with good counterplay for Black.

30... ♖d6 31. ♘g6 ♔h7 32. e5 fe5 33. ♗c6 ♖f6

Equally hopeless is 33... ♖g6 34. ♗e4 ♖a6 35. ♖c7 ♕g8 36. ♕d7.

34. ♕d5 ♕f5 35. ♗a8 ♕f2 36. ♔h1 ♕b2 37. ♕c5 ♔g6 38. ♗e4 ♔h5 39. ♖b1

The continuation might be 39. ♖b1 ♕d4 40. ♕d4 ed4 41. ♖b5.

1–0

Leko no longer seems a threat to win the championship
photo: www.chessbase.com

Svidler-Grischuk [B90]
World Championship (14), 2007

[Notes by Jean Hébert]

1. e4 c5 2. ♘f3 d6 3. d4 cd4 4. ♘d4 ♘f6 5. ♘c3 a6 6. ♗e3

This positional move followed by f3, ♕d2 and 0–0–0 has become the most popular weapon against the Najdorf at the highest level. But I am not so sure the average player or even the average master should follow such a fashion. The really aggressive lines starting with 6. ♗g5 will bring in more points, in my opinion.

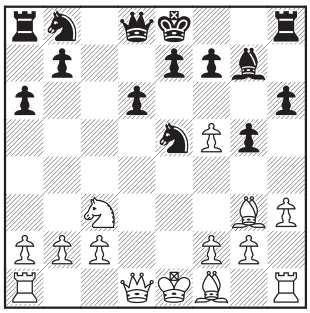
6... ♘g4

Here 6... e6 and 6... e5 are the most common replies, but ...♘g4 comes immediately after and has brought Black excellent results in recent years.

7. ♗g5 h6 8. ♗h4 g5

Black follows a strategy aimed at gaining a strong command of the dark squares.

9. ♗g3 ♗g7 10. h3 ♘e5 11. ♘f5 ♗f5 12. ef5



12... ♘bc6

A couple of alternatives: 12... ♘bd7 13. ♘d5 ♘b6 14. c3 ♘d5 15. ♕d5 ♕d7 16. O−O−O ♖c8 17. ♗e2 ♕c6 18. ♕c6 ♖c6 19. h4 b5 20. a3 ♘c4 ± 1/2−1/2(33) Smeets−Sakaev, Warsaw 2005; 12... ♕a5 13. ♕d5 ♘bc6 14. ♕a5 ♘a5 15. ♘d5 ♖c8 16. O−O−O ♘d7 17. h4 ♘c6 18. c3 ± 1−0(53) Smirin−Sakaev, Togliatti 2003.

13. ♘d5 e6 14. fe6 fe6 15. ♘e3

Not 15. ♕h5? ♘f7 16. ♘c3 ♗c3 17. bc3 ♕f6 ∓.

15... ♕a5

Kasimjanov−Anand, San Luis 2005, proceeded 15... O−O 16. ♗e2 ♕e7 17. O−O ♖ad8 18. ♗h5 ♔h8 19. ♖e1 d5 20. a4 ♘c4? (20... ♘d7!? 21. ♘d5? ♕c5 22. ♘e3 ♘f6 23. ♕e2 ♘d4) 21. ♘c4 dc4 22. ♕g4 ♕b4 23. ♕e6 ♖d2 24. ♖ad1 ♘d4 (24... ♖c2 25. ♗f3! ♖d2 26. ♗c6 bc6 27. ♗d6 ♖d6 28. ♖d6 ♕b2 29. ♖f1 ±) 25. ♕e4 ±.

16. c3 ♘f3

Another top−level game: 16... d5 17. ♗e2 O−O 18. O−O ♖ad8 19. ♕b3 b5 20. ♖ad1 ♕b6 21. ♖fe1 ♕c5 22. ♕c2 ± 1−0(45) Anand−Gelfand, Haifa 2000.

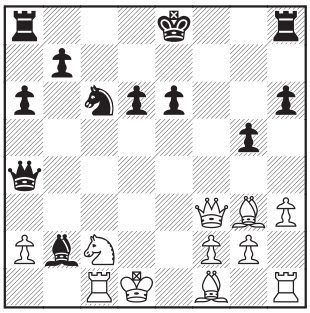
17. ♕f3 ♗c3 18. ♔d1 ♕a4

If 18... ♗b2 then 19. ♕e4!! (19. ♖b1 allows perpetual check: 19... ♕a4 20. ♔d2 ♕b4 21. ♔d1 ♕a4 =) 19... ♗a1 20. ♕e6 ♘e7 21. ♗d6 ♕a4 22. ♘c2 ♕d7 23. ♕d7 ♔d7 24. ♗e7 ♔e7 25. ♘a1 ±.

19. ♘c2

Probably weaker, though also complicated, is 19. ♔c1 ♗b2 20. ♔b2 ♕b4 21. ♔c1 ♘d4 22. ♕h5.

19... ♗b2 20. ♖c1!



An interesting novelty, intending to keep queens on the board. Facing Topalov in San Luis 2005, Svidler had played 20. ♕b3 ♕b3 21. ab3 ♗a1 22. ♘a1 with an unbalanced position that Black managed to convert into a win. Svidler's new move seems to deny Black such opportunities.

20... ♗c1?!

This capture should have been delayed. A better test of Svidler's novelty would seem to be 20... ♔e7!? with a possible continuation being 21. ♗d3 ♕a2 22. ♖e1 ♗c1 23. ♔c1 ♖ac8.

21. ♕f6!

An important in−between move that puts the white queen in aggression mode. After 21. ♔c1, Black has a pleasant choice between 21... O−O−O and 21... ♕c2 22. ♔c2 ♘d4 23. ♔d2 ♘f3 24. gf3 e5.

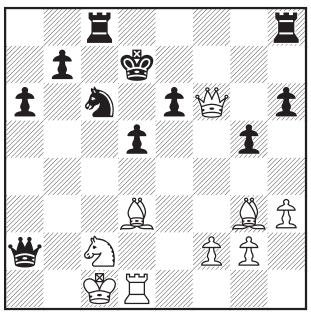
21... ♔d7 22. ♔c1 ♕a2 23. ♗d3!

Better than 23. ♗e2 ♖ac8 24. ♖d1 d5 25. ♕g7 ♘e7.

23... ♖ac8

Is it already too late to find some improvement for Black? Afterwards, things seem to be quite forced. Note, though, that 23... ♘e7 24. ♖d1 ♖hc8 (24... d5 25. ♖e1 +−) 25. ♗d6! is also curtains in rather brilliant fashion: 25... ♘d5 26. ♕e5 ♖c6 27. ♗f8! ♖ac8 28. ♕g7 ♔d8 29. ♗c4!! followed by ♖d5.

24. ♖d1! d5



25. ♗f5!

A brilliant move that gives the engines a lot of trouble. Their choices ♔d2 or ♖d2 are probably also good to keep the advantage, but Svidler's choice is much sharper.

25... ♖he8

The only defence.

26. ♕f7 ♔d8 27. ♖e1!

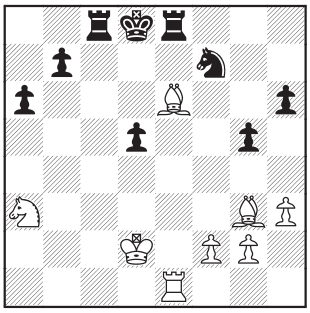
Svidler couldn't find top form in Mexico.
photo: www.chessbase.com

Svidler's play in this game is simply marvellous. Too bad he 'kept' it until the very last round.

27... ♕a3

Or 27... ♘b4 28. ♕f6 ♖e7 29. ♕f8 ♔d7 30. ♗e6 ♖e6 31. ♕f7 ♔d8 32. ♕g8 ♔d7 33. ♕e6 ♔d8 34. ♕e7.

28. ♘a3 ♘e5 29. ♔d2 ♘f7 30. ♗e6 +−



30... ♖c6?!

Also inadequate was 30... ♖e7 31. ♗c8 ♖e1 32. ♗b7 ♖e7 33. ♗a8.

31. ♗f7 ♖e1 32. ♔e1 b5 33. ♔d2 b4 34. ♘c2 b3 35. ♘d4 ♖b6 36. ♔c1 a5 37. ♗d5 a4 38. ♗e5 b2 39. ♔b1 a3 40. ♗a2 ♖b7 41. ♗d6 ♖d7 42. ♘b5 1−0

The Kings of Chess

by Larry Parr

Mikhail Moiseyevich Botvinnik

b. 1911 - d. 1995

World champion: 1948 to 1957

Mikhail "Iron Mike" Botvinnik

Botvinnik won The Hague-Moscow world championship tournament to fill the title vacancy left by the death of Alexander Alekhine in 1946. His three-point margin of victory over a field with Vasily Smyslov, Samuel Reshevsky, Paul Keres and Max Euwe showed that Soviet chess leaders had chosen the right man back in the 1930s to bring the world title to the U.S.S.R. Both his chess and personal styles have been likened to *Star Trek*'s Mr. Spock, who would have approved of Botvinnik's statement that chess is the art that complements the science of logic.

Although Botvinnik received unheard of competitive favours from the Soviet hierarchy (competitions were arranged to rectify less than spectacular earlier performances) and may have been the beneficiary of thrown games by Keres in the 1948 title tournament, this dour and loyal "New Soviet Man" combined an impressive talent with a revolutionary training regime of theoretical, physical and psychological preparation to produce the best tournament record of the 1940s. He was not a dominant world champion in the mould of a Bobby Fischer or an Alexander Alekhine, scoring only +36 -39 =82 in his seven title matches. Moreover, in 1955 he lost a short match to Reshevsky, -1 =3, whom Fischer once called the world's best player from 1946 to 1956. Still, Botvinnik's self-description as *primus inter pares* is a reasonable estimation of his status while champion.

Levenfish vs Botvinnik
1937 Soviet Championship

By his own stratospheric standards, Botvinnik did not view himself as a chess genius. And true enough, unlike Paul Morphy and Jose Capablanca, he did not emerge as a chessboard Pallas Athene fully armed from the head of the chess goddess Caissa. He first had to serve an apprenticeship in numerous Soviet competitions. In 1927 he came fifth in his first attempt at the Soviet Championship, which he would eventually win seven times. After several setbacks, he won his first important event in 1930, taking first in the Leningrad Masters. By winning the Soviet title in 1931 and 1933, as well as sharing first prize in two strong master events in Leningrad in 1932 and 1933, Botvinnik became the Soviet chosen one.

A match was arranged with Salo Flohr in 1933, which ended in a draw, +2 -2 =8. Botvinnik became famous overnight, and Nikolai Krylenko, Soviet chess boss who was executed by Stalin in 1938, wrote, "The Flohr-Botvinnik match … has shown that in our standard of play we have caught up with bourgeois Europe."

In truth, not yet. Botvinnik was the only Soviet master of the mid-1930s who could compete reliably against the best in the West, and his first international outing at Hastings 1934-35 found him a mere fifth equal among 10 competitors. Krylenko then organized Moscow 1935 in which Botvinnik finished first equal with Flohr ahead of Emanuel Lasker and Capablanca; and Moscow 1936, a strong double round robin won by Capablanca, a point ahead of Botvinnik, who was in turn 2½ points clear of Flohr in third. At Nottingham 1936, Botvinnik finished joint first with Capablanca, ahead of everyone of stature (Alekhine, Euwe, Lasker, Reshevsky, Reuben Fine et al.).

The issue within the Soviet Union was who would be the anointed, financially backed challenger to the amateur Euwe or the ageing Alekhine, one of whom would obviously emerge as champion from their rematch in late 1937. When Grigory Levenfish won the 1937 Soviet Championship, which came after a good 6th-7th place finish at Moscow 1935, Botvinnik demanded a match to settle the question of Soviet top dog. Levenfish (b. 1889) was from the pre-Revolutionary generation and had competed at the great Carlsbad 1911 tournament, where he finished 14th-16th. Botvinnik was an enormous favourite, but the match was drawn, +5 -5 =3. In the 1940 Soviet Championship, Botvinnik finished 5th-6th, scoring only 50 percent (+3 - 3 =3) against the top half of the crosstable. Botvinnik then prevailed upon Soviet chess leaders to organize an "absolute championship" of the USSR in 1941, which he won by 2½ points over a captive Keres, whose country had been annexed by the Soviets. "It is clear," wrote Botvinnik afterwards, "who should play Alekhine."

Clear? Botvinnik's international record included not a single undivided first prize. Further, Keres and Fine had

finished joint first, a point ahead of Botvinnik in third, at AVRO 1938, an unofficial qualifier to play Alekhine for the title. The story goes that Keres bought his life following World War II, after again falling into Soviet hands, by agreeing to relinquish to Botvinnik his claim for playing a match with Alekhine.

The 1940s was the Botvinnik Decade: seven first prizes in seven tournaments (1941 Leningrad-Moscow USSR "absolute championship"; Sverdlovsk 1943; USSR Championship 1944; USSR Championship 1945; Groningen 1946; Moscow 1947; and The Hague-Moscow 1948).

From 1951 to 1963 Botvinnik played seven title matches, winning twice, drawing twice and losing thrice. He did not win an undivided first prize in a major international tournament during his title years, his best result being equal first with Smyslov at Moscow 1956.

Botvinnik held the world title from 1948 through 1957 without winning a championship match. His victories over Smyslov and Mikhail Tal were in revenge matches, which also means that he never won a match while defending his title. Yet his name unquestionably adorns the era from 1948 to 1963, partly the result of rules favoring the sitting champion and partly because of his enormous contributions to the art of chess. His *One Hundred Selected Games, 1926-194*6 edified two generations of chess players, both East and West; and his articles on chess preparation detailed the hard work necessary to attain excellence. He scored nearly 70 percent in his overall career total of +610 -139 =453 (a total of 1,202 games).

"Iron Mike" continued to compete in tournaments during the post-championship years, scoring his best result at Wijk aan Zee 1969 with a shared first. At Palma de Mallorca 1967 and Monte Carlo 1968, he finished just behind Bent Larsen. Clearly no longer able to squelch the best in the West, Botvinnik retired from competitive chess in 1970. He spent time on programming computers to play chess (in the 1980s these efforts were swamped by the computer revolution in the West) and established the world's most famous chess school. His most successful students were Garry Kasparov and Anatoly Karpov.

There is an outsized grandeur about Botvinnik's 50 years in chess. His imposing figure of severe mien—the chess worker who came to every match with a thermos bottle and a dark suit—combines with an oeuvre of heavy-duty chess masterpieces to create an heroic vision of power unleashed. The Botvinnik of, say, 1955 would not have been out of place in a socialist realist painting of steelworkers or in Ostrovsky's novel How the Steel Was Tempered.

Botvinnik's chess style reflected the man. "Iron Mike" loved iron logic. He divided the chess world into "research players" such as himself and lesser purely practical players, talented though they might be. Rather than puttering around trying to find one-shot TNs, Botvinnik devised opening systems that could sustain a career. He mastered the Rubinstein Variation of the Nimzo-Indian Defense and

Reshevsky vs Botvinnik
United States vs Soviet Union, Moscow, 1955

the Winawer French as no one else has. He also produced major theoretical work in the Anti-Meran Gambit, English Opening and Gruenfeld Defense. His goal was to elaborate entire playing systems from the opening through to the endgame, typically featuring a blocked centre leading to a complicated struggle with plenty of flank manoeuvring.

One of Botvinnik's outstanding attributes was his ability to teach chess well, and indeed no modern player's classical chess education is complete without having read some of Botvinnik's great works such as his *One Hundred Selected Games*. For players trying to develop a better positional understanding of chess, the book is a gem.

Selecting a single game that is reflective of Botvinnik's play is no small task. In this month's article we present a couple of famous Botvinnik wins without notes and showcase his whitewashing of super solid GM Lajos Portisch.

Botvinnik-Smyslov [E45]
World Championship (2), 1954

1. d4 ♘f6 2. c4 e6 3. ♘c3 ♗b4 4. e3 b6 5. ♘e2 ♗a6 6. a3 ♗e7 7. ♘f4 d5 8. cd5 ♗f1 9. ♔f1 ed5 10. g4 c6 11. g5 ♘fd7 12. h4 ♗d6 13. e4 de4 14. ♘e4 ♗f4 15. ♗f4 O–O 16. h5 ♖e8 17. ♘d6 ♖e6 18. d5 ♖d6 19. ♗d6 ♕g5 20. ♕f3 ♕d5 21. ♕d5 cd5 22. ♖c1 ♘a6 23. b4 h6 24. ♖h3 ♔h7 25. ♖d3 ♘f6 26. b5 ♘c5 27. ♗c5 bc5 28. ♖c5 ♖b8 29. a4 ♖b7 30. ♖dc3 1–0

Botvinnik-Tal [E24]
World Championship (7), 1961

1. c4 ♘f6 2. ♘c3 e6 3. d4 ♗b4 4. a3 ♗c3 5. bc3 b6 6. f3 ♗a6 7. e4 d5 8. cd5 ♗f1 9. ♔f1 ed5 10. ♗g5 h6 11. ♕a4 c6 12. ♗h4 de4 13. ♖e1 g5 14. ♗f2 ♕e7 15.

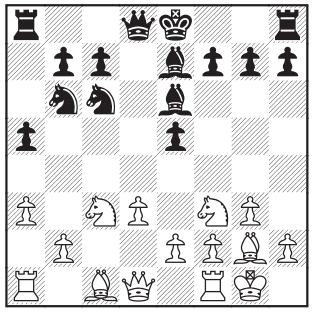
Botvinnik's Results in World Championship Matches

1951	Bronstein	+5	-5	=14	Drawn
1954	Smyslov	+7	-7	=10	Drawn
1957	Smyslov	+3	-6	=13	Lost
1958	Smyslov	+7	-5	=11	Won
1960	Tal	+2	-6	=13	Lost
1961	Tal	+10	-5	=6	Won
1963	Petrosian	+2	-5	=15	Lost

♘e2 b5 16. ♕c2 ♕a3 17. h4 gh4 18. ♗h4 ♘bd7 19. ♘g3 O−O−O 20. ♘e4 ♖he8 21. ♔f2 ♘e4 22. fe4 f6 23. ♖a1 ♕e7 24. ♖a7 ♕e4 25. ♕e4 ♖e4 26. ♖a8 ♘b8 27. ♗g3 ♔b7 28. ♖ha1 ♖c8 29. ♖8a7 ♔b6 30. ♗b8 b4 31. ♗d6 bc3 32. ♗c5 ♔b5 33. ♖1a4 1−0

Botvinnik-Portisch [A29]
Monte Carlo, 1968
[Notes by Robert Hamilton]

1. c4 e5 2. ♘c3 ♘f6 3. g3 d5 4. cd5 ♘d5 5. ♗g2 ♗e6 6. ♘f3 ♘c6 7. O−O ♘b6 8. d3 ♗e7 9. a3 a5



This move weakens Black's queenside and has given way to the far more popular 9... O−O.

10. ♗e3 O−O 11. ♘a4!

The simplest way to turn up the heat on the queenside is to remove the knight and expose b7.

11... ♘a4

The alternative 11... ♘d5 cedes control over c5 after 12. ♗c5. Also, the complications after 11... e4 are known to favour White after 12. ♘e1.

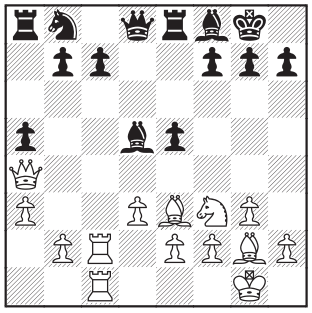
12. ♕a4 ♗d5

Black immediately contests the long diagonal. White's advantage lies in the fact that he is immediately able to activate his rooks along the semi−open c−file while Black has no equally attractive plan.

13. ♖fc1 ♖e8 14. ♖c2 ♗f8

If 14... ♖b8, attempting to break out with b5 at some point, White's position would be more comfortable to play than Black's after 15. ♕b5!

15. ♖ac1 ♘b8?



White to play and win

Black should probably have tried the less ambitious 15... ♕d7, after which White maintains his natural advantage. Portisch wanted to achieve ...c6 acting against the doubled white rooks, and reckoned that capturing on c7 would result in the white rook being trapped after ...♗c6.

16. ♖c7!

Botvinnik alertly sees that his c7 rook has an escape square after ...♗c6.

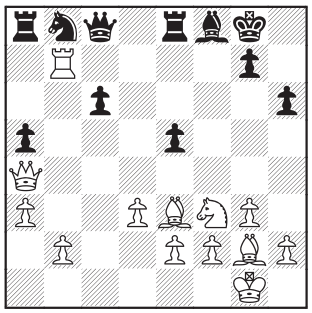
16... ♗c6 17. ♖1c6! bc6

On 17... ♘c6, 18. ♖f7! ♔f7 19. ♕c4 is equally embarrassing.

18. ♖f7! h6

A desperate attempt to slow White down by keeping the knight from g5, but the damage has been done on the light squares. Black cannot capture the rook: 18... ♔f7 19. ♕c4 and now blocking with the rook fails due to ♘g5, and stepping to the dark squares drops the queen to ♗g5. Then 19... ♔g6 20. ♕e4 ♔f7 21. ♘g5 ♔e7 22. ♕e5 is lights out.

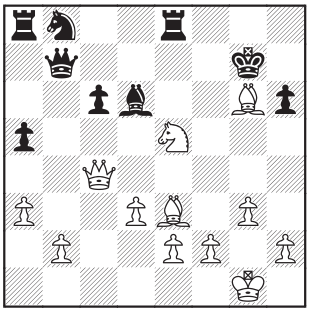
19. ♖b7 ♕c8



20. ♕c4 ♔h8 21. ♘h4! ♕b7 22. ♘g6 ♔h7 23. ♗e4!

Black is completely busted.

23... ♗d6 24. ♘e5 g6 25. ♗g6 ♔g7



26. ♗h6

Leading to the win of Black's queen. A great miniature by Botvinnik.

1−0

Recommended Reading

Victor Baturinsky (compiler), *Shakhmatnoe Tvorchestvo Botvinnika* (The Chess Creativity of Botvinnik), three volumes published in Moscow by the Physical Culture and Sport Press from 1965−68, containing 700 games, the definitive work on Botvinnik's career;

Mikhail Botvinnik, *One Hundred Selected Games, 1926-1946* (Dover, 1981), a classic of objective chess, if not political, analysis;

Mikhail Botvinnik, *Achieving the Aim* (Pergamon, 1981), an interesting biography that is not always morally pretty reading;

Mikhail Botvinnik, *Half a Century of Chess* (Cadogan, 1996);

Mikhail Botvinnik, *Selected Games 1967-70* (Pergamon, 1981);

Bernard Cafferty, *Botvinnik's Best Games, 1947-1970* (Batsford, 1973).

Garry Kasparov, *My Great Predecessors*, Volume *2*.

Canadian Championship

by Robert Hamilton

Toronto's Nikolay Noritsyn Becomes Youngest Canadian Champion Ever

The City of Kitchener again played host to the Kitchener Chess Festival, which this year included the Canadian Championship. In addition to the main event, and the Canadian Women's Championship (see page 42), there were additional tournaments and all kinds of chess themed activities concentrated in the core of downtown Kitchener.

With 2007 being an off-zonal year, the Championship did not nominate a Canadian who would advance in the World Championship cycle. However, changes to FIDE regulations have made it so that, even in an off-zonal year, IM and FM titles can be earned in a Canadian Championship. In total, thirty of Canada's elite players took part in this year's championship, which was a one section swiss event.

From the outset, the event appeared to be a battle between youth and experience. Nikolay Noritsyn, Thomas Roussel Roozmon and Artem Samsonkin ranked highest among the youth contingent, while Jean Hébert, Robert Hamilton and Ron Livshits represented the old guard. In the end, the battle between youth and veterans couldn't have been closer.

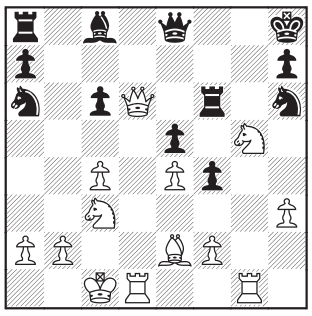
When the dust settled, sixteen-year-old Nikolay Noritsyn of Toronto had won the tie-breaks by a hair to become the youngest Canadian Champion ever, breaking the old record set more than a half century earlier by legendary Winnipeg star Abe Yanofsky.

Round 1

Two of the favourites, Jean Hébert and Thomas Roussel−Roozmon, were held to draws in Round 1. Against Ottawa master Sebastian Predescu, Hébert made a spectacular queen sacrifice which offered some very interesting attacking chances, but Predescu found correct moves and the game wound up drawn.

Hébert-Predescu [E92]
Canadian Closed (1), 2007

1. ♘f3 ♘f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♘c3 ♗g7 4. e4 d6 5. d4 O−O 6. ♗e2 e5 7. ♗e3 ♘a6 8. d5 ♘g4 9. ♗g5 f6 10. ♗h4 ♕e8 11. h3 ♘h6 12. g4 f5 13. gf5 gf5 14. ♖g1 ♔h8 15. ♕d2 f4 16. O−O−O ♗f6 17. ♗f6 ♖f6 18. ♘g5 c6 19. dc6 bc6 20. ♕d6!?



20... ♖d6 21. ♖d6 ♔g7 22. c5 ♘c5 23. ♘e6 ♔h8 24. ♘c5 ♘f7 25. ♗h5 ♗h3 26. ♖f6 ♕e7 27. ♖f7 ♕c5 28. ♖gg7 ♕f2 29. ♖h7 ♔g8 30. ♖fg7 ♔f8 31. ♖g5 ♕e3 32. ♔c2 ♕f2 33. ♔c1 ♕e3 34. ♔c2 ♕f2 35. ♔b1 ♕e1 36. ♔c2 1/2−1/2

As Black against talented Toronto FM Shiyam Thavandiran, Roussell−Roozmon arrived at an advantageous ending, but then let Thavandiran out with a draw.

Round 2

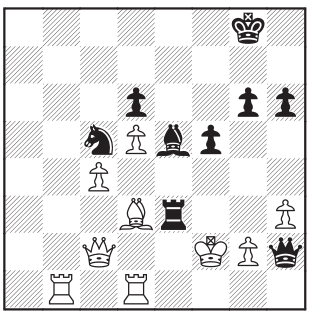
By Round 2 the pairings were very tough. Talented Christian Stevens had a peaceful draw with Noritsyn. Samsonkin won over veteran Milicevic. Hamilton scored a nice victory over La−fong Hua with Black. Livshits made short work of Bailey. Against Hébert, Jung put up a tough fight, but landed in a lost knight ending. Playing White against Predescu, Roussell−Roozmon held the advantage most of the way, but failed to find 32. c5 or 35. ♖b8, either of which would have led to a big advantage, and Predescu would up with a mating attack. A great start for Predescu, but a painful situation for Roussell−Roozmon, who now sat with just a half point from two games.

Roussel−Roozmon - Predescu [E70]
Canadian Closed (2), 2007

1. d4 ♘f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♘c3 ♗g7 4. e4 d6 5. ♗d3 O−O 6. ♘ge2 c5 7. d5 e6 8. h3 ed5 9. ed5 ♘a6 10. O−O ♘c7 11. ♗g5 h6 12. ♗h4 ♖b8 13. f4 ♗d7 14. a4 a6 15. ♘e4 ♗f5 16. ♘2c3 ♗e4 17. ♘e4 ♘ce8 18. ♕c2 ♕d7 19. ♘c3 ♘c7 20. a5 b5 21. b6 ♖b6 22. ♘a4 ♖bb8 23. ♖ab1 ♖fe8 24. ♗e1 ♖e3 25. ♘c3 ♘h5 26. ♘e2 f5 27. ♗d2 ♖e7 28. b4 ♖be8 29. ♖fe1 cb4 30. ♗b4 a5 31. ♗a5 ♘a6 32. ♔h2 ♘c5 33. ♗d2 ♖e3 34. ♗e3 ♖e3 35. ♖ed1 ♕e7 36. ♘g1 ♕h4 37. ♘e2 ♘f4 38. ♘f4 ♕f4 39. ♔g1 ♗d4 40. ♔h1 ♗e5 41. ♔g1 ♕h2 42. ♔f2

Canadian Championship 2007

1.	Artem Samsonkin	2404	W6	W28	W9	L3	D5	W7	W2	D4	D8	6.5
2.	Ron Livshits	2406	W26	W10	D4	W21	D3	D5	L1	W13	W9	6.5
3.	Nikokay Noritsyn	2492	W11	D5	W8	W1	D2	D4	W9	D6	D7	6.5
4.	Jean Hébert	2407	D13	W24	D2	D5	W14	D3	W8	D1	W6	6.5
5.	Christian Stevens	2345	W18	D3	W27	D4	D1	D2	D13	D7	W16	6.0
6.	Michael Barron	2323	L1	D17	W24	D22	W28	W10	W21	D3	L4	5.5
7.	Shiyam Thavandiran	2378	D29	W22	L21	W30	W12	L1	W18	D5	D3	5.5
8.	Raja Panjwani	2340	W23	D21	L3	W27	W15	D13	L4	W19	D1	5.5
9.	Robert Hamilton	2391	W16	W15	L1	D12	D21	W14	L3	W10	L2	5.0
10.	Doug Bailey	2329	W19	L2	L14	W25	W11	L6	W15	L9	W13	5.0
11.	Josh Guo	2219	L3	D18	W17	D28	L10	D22	W23	D14	W19	5.0
12.	Goran Mikanovic	2350	W20	D27	D13	D9	L7	D15	D19	D17	W18	5.0
13.	Sebastian Predescu	2325	D4	W29	D12	D15	W22	D8	D5	L2	L10	4.5
14.	Eddie Urquhart	2280	L21	W23	W10	W29	L4	L9	D22	D11	D17	4.5
15.	Lefong Hua	2347	W30	L9	W26	D13	L8	D12	L10	D18	W21	4.5
16.	Eric Hansen	2231	L9	L26	D20	L23	W24	W30	W27	W21	L5	4.5
17.	Liam Henry	2321	L28	D6	L11	W24	L18	W25	W26	D12	D14	4.5
18.	Karoly Szalay	2055	L5	D11	L29	W20	W17	W28	L7	D15	L12	4.0
19.	Kevin Chung	2225	L10	W20	L22	W26	W30	D21	D12	L8	L11	4.0
20.	Daniel Kazmaier	2214	L12	L19	D16	L18	D25	L23	W0	W27	W24	4.0
21.	Jura Ochkoos	2387	W14	D8	W7	L2	D9	D19	L6	L16	L15	3.5
22.	Kevin Gentes	2282	D24	L7	W19	D6	L13	D11	D14	D26	L25	3.5
23.	Avinaash Sundar	2086	L8	L14	L25	W16	D27	W20	L11	L24	W26	3.5
24.	Hans Jung	2254	D22	L4	L6	L17	L16	W0	W25	W23	L20	3.5
25.	Alvah Mayo	2128	L27	L30	W23	L10	D20	L17	L24	W0	W22	3.5
26.	Marius Zubac	2264	L2	W16	L15	L19	D0	W27	L17	D22	L23	3.0
27.	Aquino Inigo	2057	W25	D12	L5	L8	D23	L26	L16	L20	W0	3.0
28.	Goran Milicevic	2386	W17	L1	D30	D11	L6	L18	L0	L0	L0	2.0
29.	Thomas Roussel-Roozmon	2494	D7	L13	W18	L14	L0	L0	L0	L0	L0	1.5
30.	Lloyd Mai	2272	L15	W25	D28	L7	L19	L16	L0	L0	L0	1.5



Black to play and mate in 5

42... ♖f3 43. ♔e1 ♕g1 44. ♔e2 ♕e3# 0–1

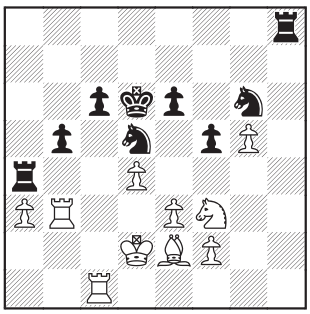
Round 3

On Board 1, Hamilton obtained nice pressure early against Samsonkin, but erringly chose to attack instead of nurturing his space advantage, and wound up losing. Noritsyn kept moving forward with a nice victory over Panjwani, as did Christian Stevens, who won with Black. The clash between two top veterans, Jean Hebért and Ron Livshits, was a bizarre tipsy turvy affair that shows what kind of moves can get overlooked at the fast sudden death time control. Hébert obtained a comfortable position from the opening and was nurturing an advantage all the way, but overlooked 36. ♖c6! which would have been lights out. The move was again possible on move 38. Not to be outdone, Livshits missed 45... ♘f4!, which would have given Black good chances.

Hébert-Livshits
Canadian Closed (3), 2007

1. ♘f3 ♘f6 2. d4 d5 3. c4 c6 4. e3 a6 5. ♗d3 ♗g4 6. h3 ♗h5 7. ♘bd2 ♘bd7 8. ♕b3 dc4 9. ♕c4 e6 10. b4 b5 11. ♕b3

♘d5 12. a3 a5 13. ba5 ♕a5 14. O−O ♗d6 15. ♗b2 ♕a4 16. ♕a4 ♖a4 17. ♖fc1 ♘e7 18. ♘e4 ♗b8 19. ♗c3 ♗f3 20. gf3 ♘b6 21. ♗b4 ♘bd5 22. ♗c5 ♘g6 23. ♖ab1 ♖a8 24. f4 ♘ge7 25. ♔f1 h6 26. h4 f5 27. ♘d2 g5 28. hg5 hg5 29. fg5 ♔d7 30. ♘f3 ♘g6 31. ♔e1 ♗d6 32. ♖b3 ♖h3 33. ♗e2 ♖a4 34. ♗d6 ♔d6 35. ♔d2 ♖h8



Now 36. ♖c6 wins on the spot.

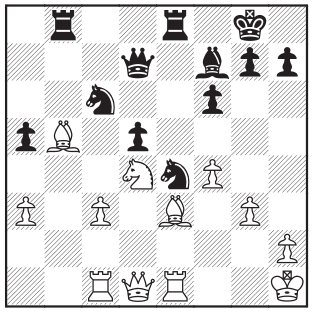
36. ♘e5 ♘e5 37. de5 ♔d7 38. ♖g1 ♖ha8 39. g6 ♔e7 40. e4 fe4 41. g7 ♖g8 42. ♖h3 e3 43. fe3 ♖a3 44. ♗h5 ♖a2 45. ♔d3 ♖f2 46. ♔e4 b4 47. ♖a1 ♘c3 48. ♔d3 ♖a2 49. ♖a2 ♘a2 50. ♔c4 ♖g7 51. ♔b3 ♘c1 52. ♔c2 ♖g1 53. ♗d1 ♘d3 54. ♖h7 ♔d8 55. ♔d3 ♖d1 56. ♔c4 ♖d5 57. ♔b4 ♖e5 58. ♔c4 ♖e3 59. ♔c5 ♖d3 60. ♔c6 ♔e8 61. ♔c5 ♔f8 62. ♔c4 ♖d1 63. ♔c3 ♔g8 64. ♖e7 ♖d6 65. ♔c4 ♔f8 66. ♖h7 ♔e8 67. ♔c5 ♖d5 1/2−1/2

Round 4

On the top board, facing Noritsyn's Sicilian, Samsonkin played 2. c3 and reached a totally even position, but then messed up and wound up losing. Round 4 spelled doom for Thomas Rous−sell−Roozmon. In every game he had achieved advantage only to go astray, and the same thing happened as Black against Eddie Urquhart. With only 1.5/4 Thomas withdrew...a disappointing event for one of Canada's strongest and most talented players. Jean Hébert held a very messy game as Black against Christian Stevens, and Robert Hamilton couldn't quite gener−ate enough action with Black in an Old In−dian against Goran Mikanovic. Meanwhile, in a faceoff between two of Canada's most talented young players, Shiyam Thavandiran uncorked a dazzling attack to score the full point.

Mai-Thavandiran
Canadian Closed (4), 2007

1. e4 e6 2. d3 d5 3. ♘d2 c5 4. g3 ♗d6 5. ♗g2 ♘e7 6. f4 O−O 7. ♘gf3 f6 8. O−O ♘bc6 9. c3 ♖b8 10. a3 b5 11. ed5 ed5 12. b4 a5 13. bc5 ♗c5 14. ♔h1 ♘f5 15. ♘b3 ♗a7 16. d4 ♗e6 17. ♖e1 ♗f7 18. ♘c5 ♘d6 19. ♗e3 ♗c5 20. dc5 ♘e4 21. ♖c1 ♖e8 22. ♘d4 ♕d7 23. ♗f1 ♘e7 24. c6 ♘c6 25. ♗b5



Black to play and win

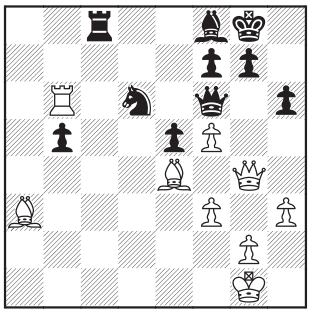
25... ♖b5 26. ♘b5 ♘g3 27. ♔g2 ♗h5 28. ♕b3 ♘e4 29. h3 a4 30. ♕a4 ♘e7 31. ♕b3 ♘f5 32. ♗f2 ♗f3 33. ♔h2 ♘f2 34. ♖e8 ♕e8 35. ♕c2 ♕e3 36. ♕f5 ♘g4 0−1

Round 5

The most normal game of Round 5 was a 35−move draw between Stevens and Samsonkin. Thavandiran beat Mikanovic convincingly with the White side of the Sicilian. Most of the oth−er games were bizarre or had strange things happen in them. As White against Urquhart, Hébert overlooked a shot and flirted with disaster, though he finally did win. Hamilton fell for a trap and was com−pletely busted against Ochkoos, but he tricked Ochkoos into an ending where be−ing up two pawns wasn't enough to win. Noritsyn obtained a comfortable edge against Livshits but then with 32. b4?! al−lowed more counterplay than was neces−sary, and was lucky that Livshits missed the crushing 37...Ne4.

Noritsyn-Livshits
Canadian Closed (5), 2007

1. e4 e5 2. ♘f3 ♘c6 3. ♗b5 a6 4. ♗a4 ♘f6 5. d3 b5 6. ♗b3 ♗e7 7. O−O d6 8. c3 O−O 9. ♘bd2 h6 10. ♖e1 ♖e8 11. ♘f1 ♗f8 12. ♘g3 ♘a5 13. ♗c2 c5 14. h3 ♘c6 15. d4 ♕c7 16. dc5 dc5 17. ♘h2 ♘e7 18. ♕f3 ♘g6 19. ♘f5 ♕c6 20. ♘g4 ♗f5 21. ♘f6 ♕f6 22. ef5 ♘e7 23. ♗e3 ♖ac8 24. ♗e4 ♖c7 25. a4 ♘c8 26. ab5 ab5 27. ♖ed1 ♖d8 28. ♖d8 ♕d8 29. ♖a8 ♕e7 30. ♖b8 ♘d6 31. ♕g4 ♕f6 32. b4 cb4 33. cb4 ♖c4 34. f3 ♖b4 35. ♗c5 ♖c4 36. ♗a3 ♖c8 37. ♖b6



Now 37... ♘e4 wins for Black.

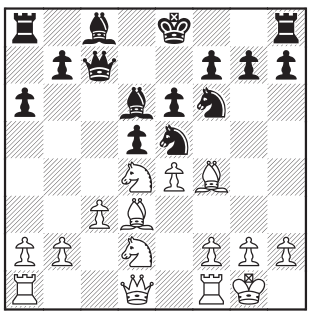
37... ♕d8 38. ♖d6 ♗d6 39. f6 ♗f8 40. ♔h2 ♖c4 41. ♗e7 1/2−1/2

Round 6

Livshits vs Stevens was drawn quickly. Noritsyn defended well as Black against Hébert to draw in 33 moves. In his favourite French Defence, Thavandir−an did a good job defending against Sam−sonkin's Advance Variation, but suddenly committed suicide by playing to get active in a very defensible position in−stead of doing nothing. Facing Ur−quhart's Sicilian, Hamilton avoided theory by played passively as White, but managed to introduce tactics into the pos−ition and obtained a big edge. However, Urquhart just kept finding moves, and the two played about 40 moves at the sudden death thirty second increment. Eventu−ally Hamilton liquidated to a winning knight ending.

Hamilton-Urquhart
Canadian Closed (6), 2007

1. e4 c5 2. ♘f3 e6 3. d4 cd4 4. ♘d4 ♘c6 5. ♗e3 ♘f6 6. ♘d2 ♕c7 7. c3 d5 8. ♗d3 a6 9. O−O ♘e5 10. ♗f4 ♗d6



Now things get messy.

11. ♗b5 ab5 12. ♘b5 ♕b8 13. ♘d6 ♕d6 14. ♘c4 ♕e7 15. ♘b6 ♖a6 16. ♘c8 ♕c7 17. ed5 ♘fd7 18. ♖e1 f6 19. de6 ♘f8 20. ♕d4 ♕c8 21. ♗e5 fe5 22. ♕e5 ♖g8 23. e7 ♘e6 24. ♖ad1 ♔e7 25. ♕g5 ♔f7 26. ♕f5 ♔e7 27. ♕h7 ♖d6 28. ♕h4 ♔d7 29. ♕e4 ♖e8 30. ♖d6 ♔d6 31. ♕e5 ♔d7 32. ♖d1 ♔e7 33. h4 ♕c5 34. ♕e4 ♕c6 35. ♕g6 ♔f8 36. ♖d3 ♖e7 37. h5 ♖f7 38. h6 gh6 39. ♕h6 ♔e7 40. ♕h4 ♔f8 41. ♖e3 ♕d5 42. c4 ♕f5 43. ♖e1 ♖g7 44. ♕h8 ♔f7 45. ♕b8 ♔f6 46. g3 ♕c5 47. b3 ♕c7 48. ♕h8 ♕f7 49. ♕h4 ♔g6 50. ♖e5 ♕d7 51. ♖d5 ♕c6 52. ♕h5 ♔f6 53. ♕h6 ♖g6 54. ♕h4 ♔g7 55. ♖h5 ♘f8 56. ♕d4 ♕f6 57. ♕e4 ♕f7 58. ♖f5 ♖f6 59. ♕g4 ♘g6 60. ♕d4 ♕e7 61. ♖f3 ♕e1 62. ♔g2 ♕e5 63. ♕d7 ♕e7 64. ♕e7 ♘e7 65. ♖f6 ♔f6 66. ♔f3 ♔e5 67. ♔e3 ♘c6 68. g4 ♘b4 69. f4 ♔e6 70. a4 ♘c6 71. ♔d3 ♔d6 72. ♔c3 ♘d8 73. b4 ♘e6 74. f5 ♘g5 75. a5 ♘f7 76. b5 ♔c5 77. f6 ♘g5 78. ♔d3 ♘f7 79. ♔e3 ♘e5 80. ♔f4 ♘f7 81. g5 1−0

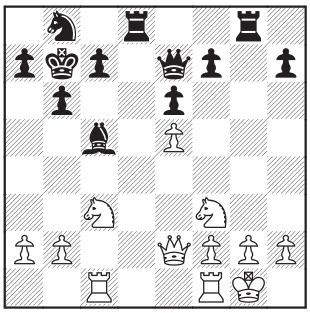
Round 7

As Black against Noritsyn, Hamilton played the opening wrongly and never recovered. Playing White against Samsonkin, Livshits made a few too many loosening moves, and Samsonkin scored the full point. Hébert turned in a fine positional game with the Black pieces to score the full point against Panjwani.

Christian Stevens is capable of playing far more strongly than his rating might suggest. In Round 7 he completely outplayed Predescu, but failed to cash in: 11. d5 would have caused trouble, as would have 17. ♘e4. Even in the final position, Stevens had a very comfortable edge and could have made Predescu work much harder for a draw.

Stevens-Predescu
Canadian Closed (7), 2007

1. d4 ♘f6 2. ♗g5 d5 3. ♗f6 gf6 4. c4 dc4 5. e3 e6 6. ♗c4 b6 7. ♘c3 ♗b7 8. ♘f3 ♖g8 9. O−O ♗d6 10. e4 ♘d7 11. ♕e2 ♕e7 12. ♗a6 O−O−O 13. ♖ac1 ♘b8 14. ♗b7 ♔b7 15. e5 fe5 16. de5 ♗c5



Now 17. ♘e4! would be hard to meet.

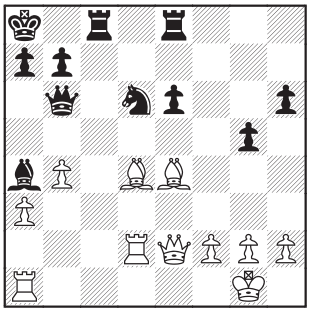
17. ♕e4 c6 18. a3 ♕f8 19. b4 ♕g7 20. g3 ♗e7 21. ♖fd1 1/2−1/2

Round 8

As Black, Noritsyn obtained an advantage against Barron but failed to convert it. Livshits played a very nice game against Predescu to score the full point with the Black side of the Sicilian. Thavandiran vs Stevens was a very spirited draw in a Sicilian. As White, Hamilton thwarted Bailey's kingside attack and scored the full point. Samsonkin vs Hébert was a complicated French Advance. Hébert equalized in the opening but then made some slight inaccuracies. After that, Samsonkin held a comfortable edge, but instead of pressing he offered a draw, which Hébert gladly accepted.

Samsonkin-Hébert
Canadian Closed (8), 2007

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. e5 c5 4. c3 ♘c6 5. ♘f3 ♗d7 6. a3 f6 7. ♗d3 fe5 8. de5 ♕c7 9. ♕e2 O−O−O 10. O−O h6 11. c4 ♘ge7 12. ♘c3 dc4 13. ♗c4 ♘f5 14. ♘b5 ♕b6 15. ♘d6 ♗d6 16. ed6 ♖he8 17. b4 ♘cd4 18. ♘d4 cd4 19. ♗f4 ♔b8 20. ♗e5 ♔a8 21. ♖fd1 ♖c8 22. ♗d3 ♗a4 23. ♖d2 g5 24. ♗e4 ♘d6 25. ♗d4



Hébert gladly accepts the draw here.

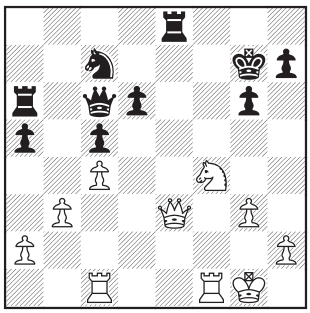
1/2−1/2

Round 9

Heading into the last round, either Noritsyn or Samsonkin could have won the tournament outright with a win. The Panjwani—Samsonkin game never got very exciting, and was soon drawn. Noritsyn, on the other hand, was totally winning against Thavandiran for a long time. Along the way he missed a few very strong continuations, and that game was also drawn. Against Livshits, as Black, Hamilton suffered for a long time from his opening disadvantage. After a stubborn defence, he finally equalized, only to go astray, allowing Livshits a winning continuation. Jean Hébert made short work of Michael Barron's Dutch Defence. Barron had pretty much equalized, but then played somewhat carelessly, and Hébert found a powerful winning sacrifice.

Hébert-Barron
Canadian Closed (9), 2007

1. d4 f5 2. g3 ♘f6 3. ♗g2 g6 4. c4 ♗g7 5. ♘c3 d6 6. ♘f3 O−O 7. O−O ♕e8 8. d5 a5 9. ♘d4 ♘a6 10. b3 ♗d7 11. ♗b2 c6 12. ♖c1 ♘c7 13. dc6 bc6 14. ♕d2 ♖a6 15. e4 fe4 16. ♘e4 ♘e4 17. ♗e4 c5 18. ♘e2 ♗c6 19. ♗g7 ♔g7 20. ♕e3 e5 21. ♗c6 ♕c6 22. f4 ef4 23. ♘f4 ♖e8



White to play and win

24. ♘h5 gh5 25. ♕g5 ♔h8 26. ♖f7 ♘e6 27. ♕f6 ♔g8 28. ♖f1 ♕e4 29. ♖g7 ♘g7 30. ♕f7 1−0

And so four players—Noritsyn, Samsonkin, Livshits and Hébert—all tied first, and the title was to be decided by Playoff matches.

Tie Breaks

The tie−break formula for the tournament consisted of two game mini−matches played first at an active time control and if still tied at an increasingly faster time control.

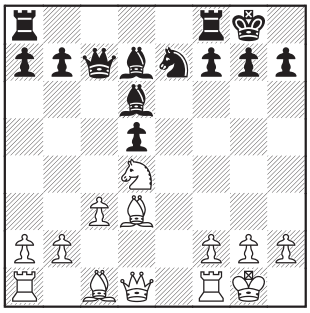
The pairings for Round One of the tie−breaks were Samsonkin vs Livshits and Hébert vs Noritsyn. Samsonkin vs Livshits was decided fairly quickly in Samsonkin's favour. But the Hébert vs Noritsyn tie break was well worth the price of admission. Match after match, the players kept splitting 1−1. At many points it appeared Hébert was on the verge of victory, and Noritsyn would barely survive again. Finally, after hours of play, Noritsyn emerged victorious.

After that, the Samsonkin vs Noritsyn match was anticlimactic, being decided much more quickly in Noritsyn's favour. With his impressive victory in Kitchener, Noritsyn both became the youngest champion in Canada's history and confirmed his IM title.

Showcase Games

Barron-Samsonkin [C09]
Canadian Closed (1), 2007
[Notes by John MacPhail]

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. ♘d2 c5 4. ed5 ed5 5. ♘gf3 ♘c6 6. ♗b5 cd4 7. ♘d4 ♗d7 8. ♘2f3 ♗d6 9. O−O ♘ge7 10. c3 O−O 11. ♗d3 ♘d4 12. ♘d4 ♕c7



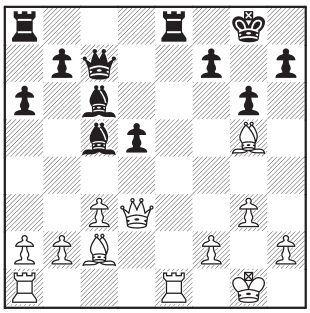
13. g3?!

Hardly a serious mistake, but why create a weakness? Probably better is the more natural 13. ♕h5 g6 14. ♕h6.

13... a6 14. ♗c2

This is a bit awkward. White seems to retain a nice edge with a natural move like 14. ♗e3.

14... ♖fe8 15. ♕d3 g6 16. ♗g5 ♘c6 17. ♘c6 ♗c6 18. ♖fe1 ♗c5



Black has just about equalized.

19. ♗e3?

Handing Black the initiative, which turns out to be surprisingly dangerous. Better is 19. ♗b3.

19... ♗e3 20. ♖e3 ♖e3 21. ♕e3

Or 21. fe3 ♕b6 22. ♗b3 ♖e8 23. ♖e1 ♖e4 and Black is just slightly better.

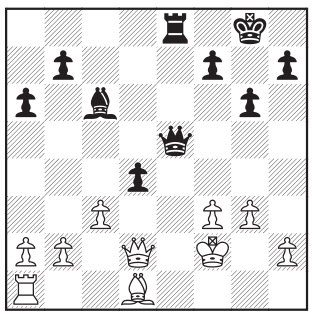
21... ♖e8 22. ♕d2 ♕e5 23. ♗b3 ♕e4 24. ♗c2 ♕f3

An interesting alternative is 24... ♕e2 25. ♕e2 ♖e2 as it is not so easy for White to neutralize the black rook: 26. ♖c1 ♔g7 27. ♔f1 ((or 27. a4 ♖d2 28. ♔f1 d4)) 27... ♗b5 28. ♔g2 ♔f6 29. ♔f3 ♖e5 with a continuing initiative.

25. ♗d1 ♕f5 26. f3!

Not 26. ♗c2? ♕h3 27. ♖e1 ♖e1 28. ♕e1 d4 and White's troubles are serious.

26... ♕e5 27. ♔f2 d4



28. cd4

White can play 28. ♕d4!? ♕e1 29. ♔g2 which seems to be tenable. For example: 29... ♗f3 30. ♔f3 ♕h1 31. ♔f4 ♖e6 32. ♗b3 g5 33. ♔g5 ♖g6 34. ♔f5 ♕a1 35. ♕d8 ♔g7 36. ♕d4 f6 37. ♕d7 ♔h6 38. ♕d2 with a draw, as Black can only get into trouble by 38... ♖g5? 39. ♔f6 ♕f1 40. ♔e7 ♔g6 41. ♗c2 .

28... ♖d8 29. ♕e3

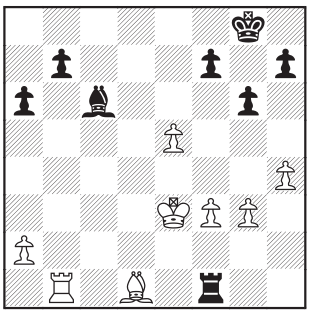
29. ♗e2!?

Seventeen-year-old Samsonkin ties first in his first Closed.
photo: monroi.com

29... ♕f6 30. ♕e5??

This leads to losing a pawn without compensation. After the natural 30. ♗e2 ♖d4 31. ♕c3 it should not be too hard to neutralize Black's slight initiative.

30... ♕e5 31. de5 ♖d2 32. ♔e3 ♖b2 33. h4 ♖g2 34. ♔f4 ♖g1 35. ♖b1 ♖f1 36. ♔e3



36... ♗f3

Since White can't defend the pawn, an interesting alternative is 36... ♔g7!?

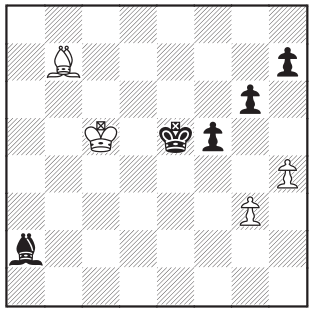
37. ♗c2 ♖b1 38. ♗b1 ♗c6 39. ♔d4 ♔f8 40. ♔c5?

Probably better, though not offering any real hope, is swapping a pawn with 40. h5 ♔e7 41. hg6 Either recapture should win for Black.

40... ♔e7 41. ♗d3 ♔e6 42. ♗a6 ♔e5

Black also should be able to win by going into a queen and pawn ending: 42... ba6 43. ♔c6 ♔e5 44. ♔b6 f5 45. ♔a6 ♔e4 46. ♔b6 ♔f3 47. a4 ♔g3 48. a5 f4 49. a6 f3 50. a7 f2 51. a8=Q f1=Q etc.

43. ♔b6 ♗d5 44. ♗b7 ♗a2 45. ♔c5 f5



With his king cut off, White has no real hope of survival. The game continues as yet another display of Artem's fine technique.

46. ♗f3 f4 47. gf4 ♔f4 48. ♗d1 ♔g3 49. h5 g5 50. h6 ♔f4 51. ♗c2 ♗g8 52. ♔d6 g4 53. ♔e7 g3 54. ♔f8 g2 55. ♔g8 g1=Q 56. ♔h7 ♔g5 57. ♔g7 ♕a7 0−1

Hua-Hamilton [D27]
Canadian Closed (2), 2007

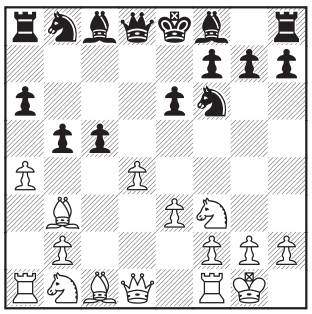
[Notes by Robert Hamilton]

Queen's Gambit Accepted

1. d4 d5 2. c4 dc4

Oddly enough, the Queen's Gambit Accepted has never really found its way into the opening repertoire of top Canadian players and is therefore rarely seen in the Canadian Championship.

3. ♘f3 ♘f6 4. e3 e6 5. ♗c4 a6 6. ♗b3 c5 7. O−O b5 8. a4



All main theory. After 8... b4, White has been experimenting with the aggressive 9. e4!? after which Black must play very carefully to avoid being wiped out in the opening.

8... c4

A rarely played continuation. White is known to be able to obtain a nagging edge.

9. ♗c2 ♗b7 10. ab5

The old 10. ♕e2 has been known to offer White good pressure for a long time.

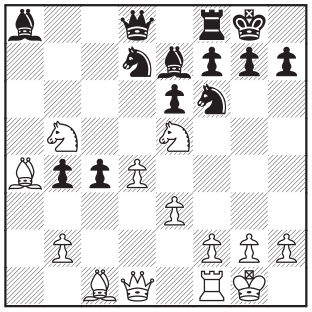
10... ab5 11. ♖a8 ♗a8 12. ♘c3 b4

Practically forced. Attempts to guard the b−pawn are too passive.

13. ♗a4

The only move which poses any challenges to Black's position.

13... ♘bd7 14. ♘b5 ♗e7 15. ♘e5 O−O



This appears to be a novelty. Previously, 2006 Indian Champion Ganguly had played 15....Qc8 and lost. It's not at all clear that guarding the c4 pawn is necessary.

16. ♘c4

The only move that doesn't lead to an immediate advantage for Black due to the awkward placement of the knight on b5.

16... ♘b6! 17. ♘e5

Another forced move. After 17. ♘b6 ♕b6 White's position is very difficult.

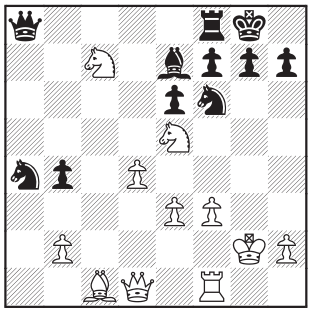
17... ♗g2!

The point of not defending c4 on move 15. Black uses this combination to expose White's king and regain the pawn.

18. ♔g2 ♕a8 19. f3 ♘a4

Not 19... ♕a4? 20. ♕a4 ♘a4 21. ♘c6, which is much better for White.

20. ♘c7



White forces a sequence which leads to an advantage for Black. Unfortunately for White, alternatives such as 20. e4 offered Black good long range prospects due to the exposed white king.

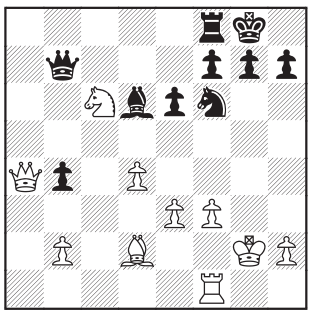
20... ♕a5 21. ♘c6 ♕c7 22. ♕a4

The alternative 22. ♘e7 ♕e7 23. ♕a4 ♖b8 is very comfortable for Black.

22... ♗d6 23. ♗d2

Again, forced. White could not capture the b−pawn with 23. ♘b4 on account of 23... ♕c4 24. ♗d2 ♘d5! exposing the weakness on e3.

23... ♕b7!



A dangerous move that temporarily sacrifices a pawn for a strong initiative. Now White cannot play 24. ♗b4? because there is no adequate defence to 24... ♖a8.

24. ♘b4

Very risky. The main alternative was 24. ♖a1!? ♖c8 25. ♘b4, when Black can either play to draw with the spectacular ...♘e4 or keep the position alive with ...h6, where there is good compensation for the pawn. If instead White played 25. ♗b4 h6 26. ♗d6 ♕b2 27. ♔h3 ♖c6 28. ♕c6 ♕a1 29. ♕c8 ♔h7 30. ♕c2, the position would be balanced.

24... ♖b8

Here 24... ♘g4 is an amusing attempt to exploit the overworked bishop, but appears risky after 25. e4! The idea of ...♖b8 is to push the knight away so that the black queen has a transfer route to the weak king−side via d5.

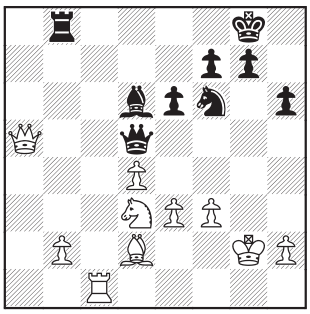
25. ♖c1! h6 26. ♘d3

The alternative 26. ♖c4 ♘d5 27. ♘d5 ♕d5 offers Black good pressure.

26... ♕d5

Black is finally poised to take advantage of the weakened kingside.

27. ♕a5?!



Now White gets into trouble quickly. Better was 27. ♕a6, but after 27... ♔h7! White would still be under considerable pressure.

27... ♖b5! 28. ♕d8

This check helps Black, as the queen will have to struggle to get back to defend the kingside. But 28. ♕a6 ♕h5! intending to meet 29. ♕d6 with 29... ♕g6 is very difficult for White to hold.

28... ♔h7

Now White is in big trouble, but both players had run low of time and were using the sudden death thirty second increment. Under such circumstances, if you have the advantage it's wise to choose smaller, but clear advantages over more complicated alternatives.

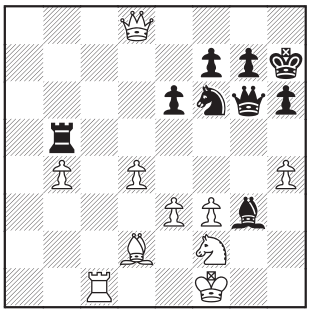
29. h4

A real concession, but White didn't like the idea of Black's queen arriving on g5.

29... ♕f5! 30. ♘f2 ♕g6 31. ♔f1 ♗g3

Also 31... ♕g3 was very strong. Once Black regains the pawn, White will have no compensation for his weak king.

32. b4



Trying desperately to keep the black rook out of play.

32... ♕f5 33. ♕a8 ♖d5! 34. f4

White's king would be very exposed after 34. ♔e2 ♗f2 35. ♔f2 ♘e4 36. ♔e2 ♘d2 37. ♔d2 ♕f3.

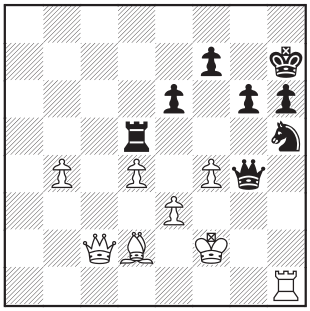
34... ♗h4

Black now simply collects a pawn and leaves White with all his problems. There was a good alternative: 34... ♘e4 wins quickly after 35. ♘e4 ♕e4 36. ♔e2 ♕g2 37. ♔d1 ♕f3 38. ♔c2 ♖c5.

35. ♕a2 ♗f2 36. ♔f2 ♕g4

Played with the idea of ....♖h5−h2. Winning quickly was 36... ♘e4 37. ♔e2 ♕g6, as White cannot defend against all the threats.

37. ♕c2 g6 38. ♖h1 ♘h5

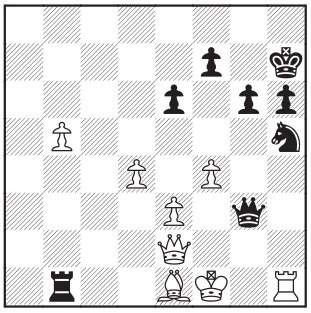


When I looked ahead to this position, I imagined White was completely lost. Indeed, White remains in big trouble, but Black still has to find moves.

39. ♕d1 ♕g3 40. ♔f1 ♖d8!

Oddly enough, Black's imposing queen has no squares, and White was threatening ♕e2 followed by ♗e1. Now the rook heads for a1, when White must sacrifice another pawn to free his position.

41. ♕e2 ♖a8 42. ♗e1 ♖a1 43. b5 ♖b1

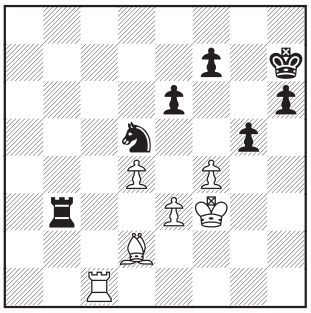


Here 43... ♘f6 headed for e4 or d5 also poses problems that White cannot stop.

44. b6 ♘f6 45. b7 ♕g4

Simplest. The ending is just winning for Black.

46. ♕g4 ♘g4 47. ♔e2 ♖b7 48. ♗c3 ♘f6 49. ♔f3 ♖b3 50. ♖c1 ♘d5 51. ♗d2 g5!



The rest is very easy.

52. fg5 hg5 53. ♔e2 ♔g6 54. ♖g1 f6 55. e4 ♘c3 56. ♔d3 ♘b1

The rook ending wins easily, since Black gets connected passed pawns.

57. ♔c2 ♘d2 58. ♔d2 f5 59. ef5 ef5 60. ♔e2 f4 61. d5 ♖e3

Winning White's last pawn.

0−1

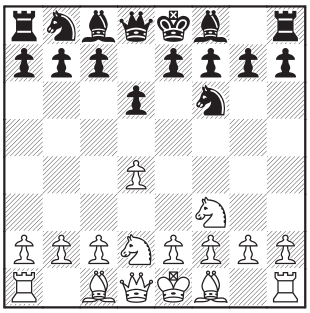
Noritsyn-Panjwani [A46]
Canadian Closed (3), 2007
[Notes by Nikolay Noritsyn]

This game was important for me because I needed the feeling that I can play well and be able to win—the feeling I lost after the last few rounds of the Canadian Open.

1. ♘f3 ♘f6 2. d4 d6

Black is obviously showing his intentions to play the King's Indian. More flexible is 2... g6 as, for example, Black can then answer 3. ♘bd2 with 3... d5!? and after 4. c4 it is a kind of Gruenfeld with ♘bd2 instead of ♘c3, which has its strengths and weaknesses.

3. ♘bd2!?



My "Anti−King's Indian" variation. I invented this a long time ago and, thinking about my first move, I had a wonderful idea to play it.

3... ♘bd7

Black has no real choice but to play a Pirc or Philidor Defence.

4. e4 e5 5. c3!

Using the advantage of the knight on d2: White is able to defend his centre with c3.

5... c6

In my opinion, Black's plan to play ...d5 and try to equalize is not the best he has. Instead, 5... g6 would allow Black to defer, until finishing his development, the decision to go for ...d5!? or else ...exd4 and ...c5, transposing to a Benoni structure.

6. ♗d3 ♕c7 7. O−O ♗e7

Here 7... g6 should have been played, if this was Black's plan. In the game, Black loses time getting the bishop to g7.

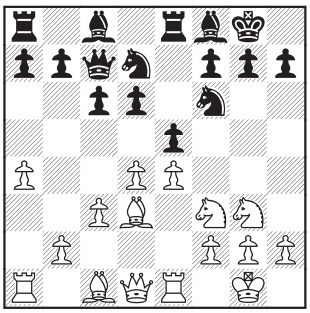
8. ♖e1 O−O 9. ♘f1

White chooses the usual 'Spanish' setup for his knights.

9... ♖e8 10. ♘g3

Here 10. ♘e3!? is an interesting alternative.

10... ♗f8 11. a4



11... g6?!

As stated before, if Black wanted to fianchetto his bishop, he should have done so before playing ...♗e7. A usual move in this structure is 11... b6 which not only gives the ♗/c8 a square on b7: White does not get the chance to gain space on the queen−side with 12. a5 because of the strong reply 12... b5! On the other hand, 11... a5?! is not very good because it weakens many squares.

12. a5

Of course. White uses his chance to grab space on the queen−side.

12... ♗g7 13. h3

White has not yet decided on a plan, and makes a useful move.

13... h6

Here 13... d5?! is not good: 14. ed5 cd5 15. ♘e5 ♘e5 16. ♗f4 ♘fd7 17. de5 ♘e5 18. ♗b5 with a comfortable advantage.

14. b4?!

Premature, leaving c3 undefended. Black uses his chance and equalizes. During the game I thought that Black wanted to try the plan ...g5, ...Nf8−g6−f4 and attack on the king−side. I am not sure it is a very good plan now: 14. ♗e3 g5 15. de5! de5?! (15... ♘e5 16. ♘e5 de5 17. ♗c4 ±) 16. ♕b3 ♘f8 17. ♗c4 and if 17... ♘g6 18. ♗b6 ♕e7 19. ♘f5 ±.

14... d5!

A strong breakthrough. Black's pieces get air.

15. de5

Noritsyn joins the prestigious list of Canadian Champions
photo: monroi.com

An alternative is 15. ed5!? cd5 16. de5 ♘e5 17. ♘e5 ♖e5 18. ♘e2 ♖e8 19. ♗f4 ♕d8 20. ♕c2 ♗d7 21. ♘d4 ♖c8 =. Black is okay because he has play against the c3 pawn.

15... ♘e5 16. ♗f4

White would be happy if he could play 16. ♘e5 ♕e5 17. f4 but the c3 pawn is undefended: 17... ♕c3 ∓.

16... ♘f3 17. ♕f3 ♕e7

The move I missed when playing my 14th move. Black is not scared of 18. exd5 because he has 18 ... ♕e1! getting two rooks for his queen. After 17... cd8 there are many ways White gets an advantage. For example: 18. ♖ad1 ♗e6 (18... g5!? 19. ♗e3 g4 20. ♕f4 gh3 21. ♗d4 hg2 22. e5 ±) 19. c4 ±.

18. ♖e2

The alternative 18. ♖e3 has its weaknesses: 18... ♕d8! makes the rook on e3 look funny.

18... de4 19. ♘e4 ♘e4 20. ♗e4 ♕f6?!

Black had an easy way to achieve equality: 20... ♗f5! 21. ♖ae1 ♗e4 22. ♖e4 ♕d7 and now White does not have anything better then 23. ♗e5 ♗e5 24. ♖e5 ♖e5 25. ♖e5 ♖e8 26. ♕e4 ♖e5 27. ♕e5 with only a symbolic advantage for White.

21. ♗d2!

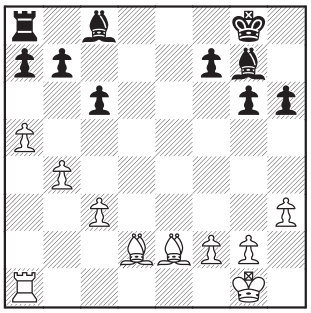
An interesting alternative was 21. ♗h6!? ♕f3 22. ♗f3 ♖e2 23. ♗g7 with a double−

edged position. In the game, White offers to trade queens to go into an endgame which looks completely equal. But is it equal?

21... ♕f3

Now 21... ♗f5 is not as good as before: 22. ♗f5 ♖e2 23. ♕e2 ♕f5 24. ♕e7 ± with some pressure.

22. ♗f3 ♖e2 23. ♗e2



White has a slight advantage in this endgame—more space on the queen–side and a potential to expand there.

23... ♗e6

Here 23... a6?! is not good because of 24. ♗c4! getting control of the e6 square. For example, 24... ♗f5 25. g4 ♗e6 26. ♗e6 fe6 27. ♔f1 ♔f7 28. ♔e2 ±.

24. a6! b6 25. ♖c1

White wants to push his pawns even further—the plan is c4 and b5.

25... ♖d8 26. ♗e3 b5?

Probably the losing move. It is not easy for White to improve if Black continues to wait. For example: 26... ♔f8 27. c4!? g5 28. ♗f3 ♖c8 29. c5!? b5 30. ♖d1 ♔e7 31. ♗d4 ♗d4 32. ♖d4 ♗d5! 33. ♗d5 cd5 34. ♖d5 ♖c6 equalizing.

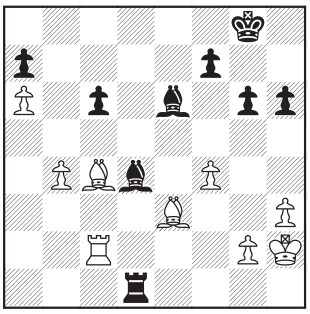
27. c4! bc4 28. ♗c4 ♗b2

Of course, I had to foresee this move.

29. ♖c2 ♖d1 30. ♔h2 ♗e5 31. f4

Not 31. g3? ♗f5 and Black is okay.

31... ♗d4



Or 31... ♗f5 32. fe5 ♗c2 33. ♗a7 ♗e4 34. ♗e3 h5 35. a7 ♖a1 36. ♗c5 g5 37. e6 +–.

32. ♗e2!

Having only a few minutes on the clock, I chose this move intuitively, and according to my analysis, I was probably right. After 32. ♗d4 ♖d4 33. ♗e6 fe6 34. ♖c6 ♖b4 35. ♔g3 ♔f7 36. ♖c7 ♔f6 37. ♖a7 ♖a4 38. ♖a8 (38. h4 e5! =) 38... g5! 39. fg5 hg5 40. a7 (40. ♔f3 e5 41. ♔e3!? ♔f5! 42. a7 [42. ♔d3 ♖a3 43. ♔c4 ♔e4 =] 42... ♖a3 43. ♔e2 ♔e4 =) 40... ♔g7 41. ♔f3 e5! It seems the rook endgame is a draw: Trading the g–pawns achieves nothing (theoretical draw), and if White tries 42. ♔e3 ♔h7 43. ♔d3 ♔g7 44. ♔c3 Black plays 44... e4! 45. ♔b3 ♖a6 46. ♔c2 ♖a2 47. ♔d1 e3 =.

32... ♗b3

Probably this was Black's hope when he played 26. ...b5. I saw a little further and evaluated the position as won for White.

33. ♗d4!

Not 33. ♗d1 ♗c2! 34. ♗d4 ♗d1 35. ♗a7 and Black is just on time: 35... ♗e2 =.

33... ♗c2

Or 33... ♖d4 34. ♖c6 ♖b4 35. ♖c7 ♖f4 36. ♖a7 and White should win.

34. ♗a7 ♖d8

Allows White to win in a nice way. A better try is 34... ♖a1 35. ♗d4 ♖a4 36. a7 ♗e4 37. ♔g1 ♖a2 38. ♗c5 ♗d5 39. g4 ♔g7 and White slowly improves his position: 40. ♗d3! ♔g8 (40... g5 41. ♗b1 ♖a4 42. fg5 hg5 43. ♗f5 +– going to c8) 41. ♗b1 ♖a4 42. ♔f2 ♔g7 43. ♔e3 +–.

35. ♗c5!

Of course, 35. ♗b6 also wins. Now

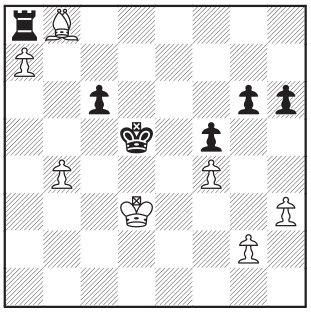
35... ♗d3

looks like a saving move, but Black is just one move too slow. Of course, this is too deep for the computer, which says dead equal here.

36. ♗d3 ♖d3 37. a7 ♖d8 38. ♗d6!

Forcing the rook into the corner.

38... ♖a8 39. ♗b8 f5 40. ♔g3 ♔f7 41. ♔f3 ♔e6 42. ♔e3 ♔d5 43. ♔d3



Zugzwang.

43... c5 44. b5! g5 45. g3 gf4 46. gf4 c4 47. ♔c3 ♔c5 48. b6 ♔b6 49. ♔c4 ♔c6 50. ♔d4 ♔d7

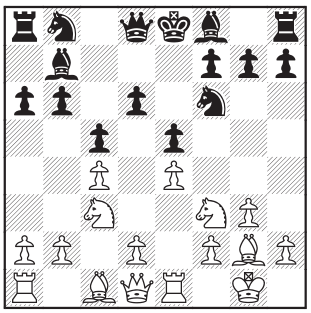
If only Black could play ...♔d6! But unlike the rook on a8, the bishop on b8 is alive and is doing very important work: controlling the b8–h2 diagonal! The rest is simple:

51. ♔e5 ♔e7 52. ♔f5 ♔f7 53. ♔e5 ♔e7 54. f5 ♔f7 55. f6 h5 56. h4 ♔f8 57. ♔e6 1–0

Stevens-Hebert [A30]
Canadian Closed (4), 2007

[Notes by Jean Hébert]

1. ♘f3 ♘f6 2. c4 c5 3. ♘c3 e6 4. g3 b6 5. ♗g2 ♗b7 6. O–O a6 7. ♖e1 d6 8. e4 e5!?



A new idea in this position, I believe. Over the board I did consider, and regarded as dubious for White, the refutation attempt that is coming up. Otherwise, in a closed position, it

seemed to me that, even though White is slightly better placed to achieve f2−f4 than f7−f5 for Black, it should not be too difficult to equalize and then try to outmanoeuvre my opponent later on.

9. d4?!

Played after a long thought.

9... cd4 10. ♘d4 ed4 11. e5 de5 12. ♗b7

You will notice that if Black had played ...♗e7, instead of... a7−a6, this line would of course be unplayable.

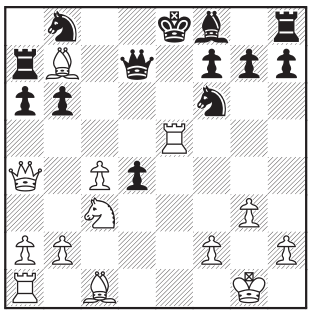
12... ♖a7 13. ♕a4!

The only decent try, as 13. ♖e5 ♗e7 simply wins a piece for very little.

13... ♕d7

Or 13... ♘bd7!? 14. ♖e5 (14. ♘d5 ♘d5 15. ♗d5 ♗d6 and White's compensation for the pawn appears insufficient) 14... ♗e7 15. ♘d5 ♘d5 16. ♗d5 b5 17. ♖e7 ♕e7 and although Black stands somewhat better it is difficult to say how much because of White's bishop pair.

14. ♖e5



14... ♔d8!?

Quite natural, considering that after 14... ♗e7! 15. ♗c8 it seems that White has avoided material losses with a decent position. However looking deeper we find that the ♘/a4 stands very badly on the rim: 15... ♕a4 16. ♘a4 ♘bd7! and Black wins, because the white rook cannot stay on the 5th rank to prevent ...b6−b5! trapping the knight!

15. ♗g2 ♗d6?!

It was best to win the piece after exchanging the queens: 15... ♕a4! 16. ♘a4 ♘bd7 17. ♖f5 b5! ∓.

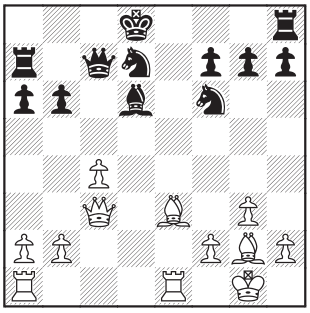
16. ♖e1

Or 16. ♖g5 h6 17. ♖g7 dc3.

16... dc3 17. ♕b3

Now, with queens on the board, it is much harder to keep the black king safe. White's practical chances are certainly significant.

17... ♕c7 18. ♗e3 ♘bd7 19. ♕c3



With a strong bishop pair and Black's king stuck in the centre, White has some compensation for the piece.

19... ♖e8 20. ♖ad1 ♖e6!?

At this point I was quite willing to give back an exchange (this rook for a bishop) to get rid of the strong light square bishop and try to find refuge for my king on the king side.

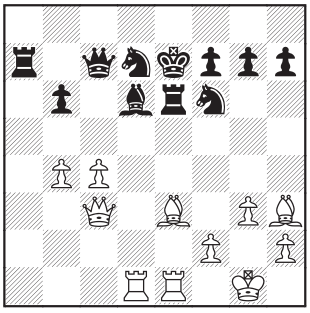
21. b4

Around here Christian offered a draw which I refused on principle, even though I was very aware of the dangers of such positions.

21... a5 22. a3

Not 22. c5? since 22... bc5 23. bc5 ♗c5! is possible.

22... ab4 23. ab4 ♔e7 24. ♗h3



Well, it had to come, but I was psychologically well prepared for it...

24... ♕c6

Perhaps best is 24... ♔f8 25. ♗e6 fe6 ∓.

25. ♗g2 ♕c7 26. ♗h3

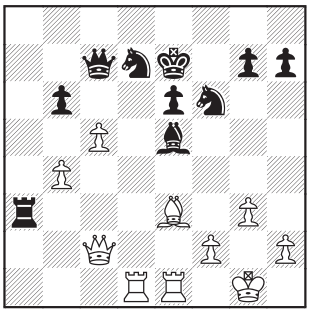
Suggesting a draw once again, this time by repeating the position. But I felt (wrongly) that I still had some advantage.

Veteran *Jean Hébert won the Closed in 1978, and tied first this year.*
photo: monroi.com

26... ♗e5 27. ♕c2?!

Fritz likes White after 27. ♕b3! and it is certainly right after 27... ♔f8 28. ♗e6 fe6 29. c5 bc5 30. ♕e6 ♖a8 (Only move! If 30... ♖a4 then 31. ♖d7! ♘d7 32. ♗f4 wins.) 31. ♗c5 ♘c5 32. ♕e5 ♕e5 33. ♖e5 and Black can certainly not hope for more than a draw.

27... ♖a3 28. ♗e6 fe6 29. c5



Now that material is balanced, White is in no way forced to play aggressively and has many options possible. For example, he could play 29. ♖d3.

29... ♖c3

An alternative was 29... bc5 30. bc5 ♔f7 (but not 30... ♖c3 31. ♕e2 ♘c5 32. f4 ♗d6 33. ♗d4 ♖a3 34. f5 ~ ♗g3 35. hg3 ♖g3 36. ♔h1 ♖h3 with only perpetual check).

30. ♕a4?!

Better is 30. ♕e2! bc5 31. bc5 ♘c5 32. f4 ♗d6 33. ♗d4 ♖b3 34. f5 =.

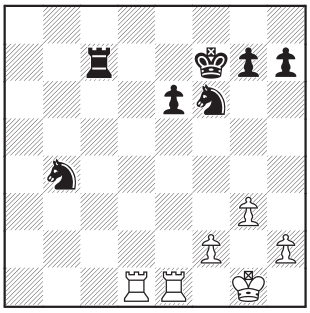
30... bc5 31. bc5 ♘c5 32. ♕b4 ♔f7 33. ♗f4

Weaker would be 33. f4 ♘d3 34. ♖d3 ♖d3 35. fe5 ♕e5 ∓ giving Black much better winning chances than the game continuation.

33... ♘a6!

This was overlooked by Christian.

34. ♗e5 ♘b4 35. ♗c7 ♖c7

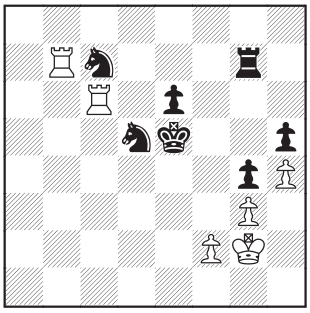


Of course two knights are better than a rook. But with all pawns on the same side and no easy target, proving a win is a very tough task.

36. ♖d6 ♖e7 37. ♖a1 ♘bd5 38. ♖da6 ♘c7

Trying to keep my one remaining rook but this proves rather difficult.

39. ♖a7 g5 40. ♔g2 ♔g6 41. ♖c1 ♘fd5 42. ♖c4 ♔f5 43. ♖b7 ♖g7 44. ♖a7 h5 45. h4 g4 46. ♖b7 ♔e5 47. ♖c6

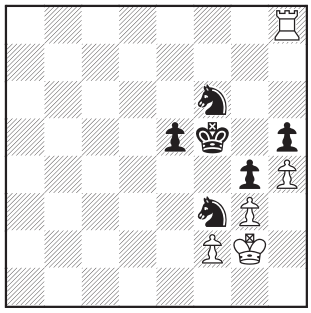


Preventing ...♔d6 which would have untied my rook. At this point agreeing to a draw would not have been a big sin, but with the fast time control lots of things can and do happen.

47... ♔d4 48. ♖a7 ♔e5 49. ♖b7 ♘e8

There was no way to avoid the rook trade. Is there anything left to try for the knights? We will see.

50. ♖g7 ♘g7 51. ♖c8 ♘f5 52. ♖h8 ♘f6 53. ♖a8 ♘d4 54. ♖f8 ♔f5 55. ♖a8 ♘f3 56. ♖h8 e5

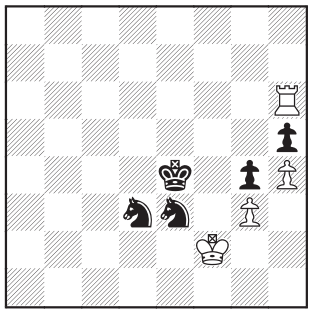


There we go for an attack with king and knights following the e5−e4−e3 push.

57. ♖h6 e4 58. ♖h8 ♘e5 59. ♖a8 ♔e6 60. ♖a6 ♔f5 61. ♖a5

Worth consideration is 61. ♖a8.

61... e3! 62. fe3 ♔e4 63. ♖a6 ♘d5 64. ♖h6 ♘e3 65. ♔f2 ♘d3



66. ♔g1

The line 66. ♔e2? ♘f5 67. ♖e6 ♔d4 68. ♔d2 ♘c5 clearly shows that things are not so easy for White anymore.

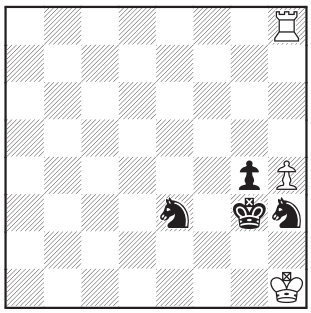
66... ♔f3 67. ♖h5 ♘f2

Or 67... ♔g3!? 68. ♖g5 ♘f4 69. ♖g4 ♘g4 70. ♔f1! (Not 70. h5? ♘e3 71. h6 ♘e2 72. ♔h1 ♘g4 73. h7 ♘f2.) 70... ♘h5 and the question is: is this a theoretical win with the pawn on h4?

68. ♖h8

White can apparently hold by 68. ♖e5 ♘h3 69. ♔h1 ♘c4 70. ♖d5 ♔g3 71. ♖d3 ♔f2 (71... ♔h4 72. ♖g3!) 72. ♖h3 gh3 73. ♔h2 =.

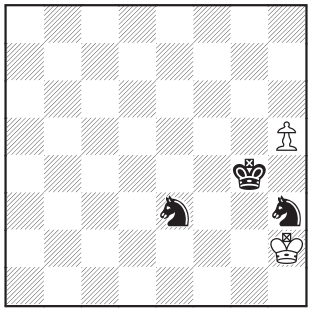
68... ♘h3 69. ♔h1 ♔g3



70. ♖g8?

Taking Black's last pawn proves insufficient here, but 70. ♖a8 keeping the rook active should be adequate.

70... ♘d1 −+ 71. ♖g4 ♔g4 72. ♔h2 ♘e3! 73. h5



Black to move and win

And here with about three minutes left I failed to spot that the restricting knight is on e3 and the manoeuvring one is the other!

73... ♘f1?

What a pity! There was a forced mate by 73... ♘g5! 74. h6 ♘f3 75. ♔h1 ♔g3 76. h7 ♘g4 (or 76... ♘d1).

74. ♔g2 ♔h5

Again 74... ♘e3 75. ♔h2 ♘g5 wins. But when you miss it the first time, chances are good that you will miss it again. Nevertheless, a rich game in all its phases.

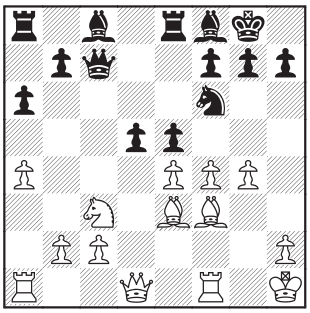
1/2−1/2

Predescu-Livshits [B85]
Canadian Closed (8), 2007
[Notes by John MacPhail]

1. e4 c5 2. ♘f3 d6 3. d4 cd4 4. ♘d4 ♘f6 5. ♘c3 a6 6. ♗e3 e6 7. ♗e2 ♗e7 8. a4 ♘c6 9. O−O ♕c7 10. f4 O−O 11. ♔h1 ♖e8 12. ♗f3 ♗f8 13. g4

This move may not be bad, but to me it looks a trifle loose.

13... ♘d4 14. ♗d4 e5 15. ♗e3 d5!?



Characteristically sharp play from Ron Livshits.

16. ♘d5?

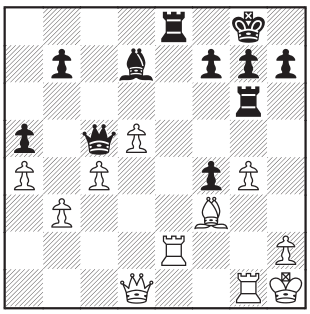
This must be wrong. Better is 16. ed5 (also interesting is 16. fe5 de4 17. ef6 ef3 18. ♕f3) 16... ef4 17. ♗d4.

16... ♘d5 17. ed5 ef4 18. ♗f2

White's position is unpleasant. The queen−side pawns are not very mobile, and there will be worries about penetration on e3.

18... a5 19. b3 ♖a6 20. c4 ♖g6 21. ♖g1 ♗d7 22. ♖a2 ♗c5 23. ♗c5 ♕c5 24. ♖e2

After an off year, *Ron Livshits found his form in the Closed.*
photo: Joshua Henson



24... ♖e3

Though this is thematic, it may be just a little hasty. A good alternative is 24... ♖e2!? 25. ♕e2 (or 25. ♗e2 ♕e3) 25... f5.

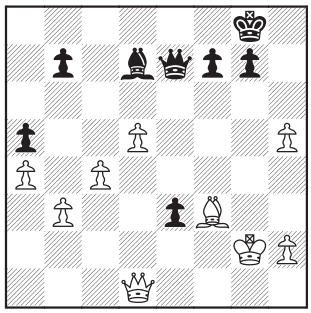
25. ♖ge1! h5?!

Risky, but understandable. After the natural 25... ♖g5 26. d6 b6 27. ♖e3 fe3 28. ♕e2 ♖e5 29. ♖d1 it is clear that Black is better, but much less clear how he should proceed.

26. gh5 ♖g5 27. ♖g2?

Missing a chance to swap one of the h−pawns: 27. ♖e3 fe3 28. ♕a1 f6 29. h6! ♖e5 30. hg7 (Less good is the wild alternative 30. ♖g1 g5 31. ♖g5!? in view of 31... ♖g5 32. ♕f6 ♖g1! 33. ♔g1 e2 34. ♔g2 ♕g1! 35. ♔g1 e1=Q 36. ♔g2 ♕d2 though still 37. ♗e2!? may allow White a slight edge.) 30... ♔g7 31. ♕c3 White's extra pawn is likely winning, but there's a lot of fight ahead.

27... ♖g2 28. ♔g2 ♕e7 29. ♖e3 fe3



30. d6?

It's much safer to activate the king: 30. ♔f1!? ♕h4 31. ♕e1 ♕d4 32. ♔g2 with Black just slightly better.

30... ♕h4 31. ♕e2 ♗h3! 32. ♔g1 ♕d4

Now White's position is grim. While the white king is stuck in the corner, the black king will capture the d−pawn and then waltz all over the board.

33. ♔h1 b6 34. ♕e1 ♔f8 35. ♗g2 ♗g4 36. h3 e2 37. d7 ♔e7 38. ♔h2 ♕d1 39. ♕h4 f6 40. ♕g4 ♕d6 0−1

2007 Nikolay Noritsyn	1984 Kevin Spraggett	1946 John H. Belson	1924 John Morrison	1888 Nicholas MacLeod
2006 Igor Zugic	1981 Igor Ivanov	1945 Abraham Yanofsky & Frank Yerhoff	1922 Johnn Morrison	1887 George Barry
2004 Pascal Charbonneau	1978 Jean Hébert	1943 Abraham Yanofsky	1920 Sydney Gale	1886 Nicholas MacLeod
2002 Pascal Charbonneau	1975 Peter Biyiasas	1941 Abraham Yanofsky	1913 John Morrison	1884 François-Xavier Lambert
2001 Alexandre Lesiège	1972 Peter Biyiasas	1940 Maurice Fox	1910 John Morrison	1883 Jacob Ascher
1999 Alexandre Lesiège	1969 Duncan Suttles	1938 Maurice Fox	1908 Joseph Sawyer	1882 Edward Sanderson
1996 Kevin Spraggett	1965 Abraham Yanofsky	1937 Boris Blumin	1906 Magnus Smith	1881 Joseph Shaw
1995 Ron Livshits	1963 Abraham Yanofsky	1936 Boris Blumin	1904 Magnus Smith	1879 Edwin Pope
1994 Kevin Spraggett	1961 Lionel Joyner	1935 Maurice Fox	1899 Magnus Smith	1878 Jacob Ascher
1992 Alexandre Lesiège	1959 Abraham Yanofsky	1934 John H. Belson	1898 James Narraway	1877 Henry Howe
1991 Lawrence Day	1957 Povilas Vaitonis	1933 Robert Martin	1897 James Narraway	1876 Edward Sanderson
1989 Kevin Spraggett	1955 Frank Anderson	1932 Maurice Fox	1894 Thomas Davison	1875 George Jackson
1987 Igor Ivanov	1953 Frank Anderson & Abraham Yanofsky	1931 Maurice Fox	1893 James Narraway	1874 William Hicks
1986 Kevin Spraggett	1951 Povilas Vaitonis	1929 Maurice Fox	1892 William Boultbee	1873 Albert Ensor
1985 Raymond Stone	1949 Maurice Fox	1927 Maurice Fox	1891 Thomas Davison	
	1947 Abraham Yanofsky	1926 John Morrison	1890 Robert Short	
			1889 Richard Fleming	

Canadian Events

British Columbia

Langley Labour Day Open

In this six-round swiss, Vicente Lee Jr. was the class of the field, ceding just a single draw (with Dan Scoones), and taking clear first with 5.5/6. Tied for second with 5/6 were Bindi Cheng and Yiming Han, both of these two having defeated BC Champion Brian McLaren. An exceptional result for Yiming Han, and another good result for Bindi Cheng (who had come clear second, behind GM Georgi Orlov, in the strong Keres Memorial back in May). The event was notable for the high proportion of juniors (41%) and good results by juniors, who not only took the 2nd and 3rd spots but also four of the class prizes.

Edmonton International 2007

1.	GM Melikset Khachiyan	2490	X	1	=	1	=	1	1	=	1	1	7.5
2.	IM Jesse Kraai	2466	0	X	=	1	=	=	1	1	1	1	6.5
3.	IM John Donaldson	2518	=	=	X	=	1	1	=	=	=	1	6.0
4.	IM Axel Bachmann	2466	0	0	=	X	0	1	1	1	1	1	5.5
5.	GM Valeriy Aveskulov	2548	=	=	0	1	X	=	0	1	1	1	5.5
6.	Zhichao Li	2266	0	=	0	0	=	X	=	1	=	=	3.5
7.	FM Gregory Huber	2323	0	0	=	0	1	=	X	=	=	=	3.5
8.	FM Eugene Yanayt	2335	=	0	=	0	0	0	=	X	=	1	3.0
9.	Dale Haessel	2270	0	0	=	0	0	=	=	=	X	0	2.0
10.	Jeff Reeve	2349	0	0	0	0	0	=	=	0	1	X	2.0

Alberta

Edmonton International

GM Melik Khachiyan dominated this ten-player round robin, taking clear first a full point ahead of the field with 7.5/9. IM Jesse Kraai turned in a solid 6.5/9 for clear second. Note that Zhicao Li and Dale Haessal got in by virtue of good results (tying first with 4/5) in the Edmonton International Qualifier back in April. The result of Alberta Champion Jeff Reeve (who took that title back in April with a 2547 performance) was somewhat of a disappointment. [See crosstable.] In the B section, Blagoj Gicev took clear first with 4/5.

For nice annotations to the following game see the United States Chess Federation web site (*www.uschess.org*).

Bachmann − Khachiyan
Edmonton International (8), 2007

1.e4 e5 2.Ne2 Nf6 3.Nbc3 Nc6 4.g3 Bc5 5.Bg2 a6 6.d3 d6 7.0-0 0-0 8.h3 Be6 9.Kh2?! d5! 10.Bg5?! d4! 11.Bxf6 Qxf6 12.Nb1 Qh6!? 13.Nd2?! Bd6 14.a3 b5 15.Ng1 Ne7 16.Bf3 c5 17.b3 Bc7 18.Qe2 Ba5 19.Rfd1 Rfc8 20.Nf1 c4 21.b4 Bc7! 22.Bg4 a5 23.a4 axb4 24.axb5 c3 25.Rdb1 Bd6 26.b6 Rab8 27.b7 Rxb7 28.Ra6 b3! 29.Bxe6 Qxe6 30.cxb3 Rxb3 31.Rxb3 Qxb3 32.Rxd6 c2 33.Qd2 Qb8 34.Rd8+ Rxd8 35.Qxc2 Rc8 36.Qa4 Qb1 37.Nd2 Qxd3 38.Ngf3 f6 39.Qd7 Kf7 40.Kg2 Rc2 41.Qb7 Rxd2 42.Nxd2 Qxd2 43.Qb3+ Kg6 0-1

Alberta Open

This was a six-round swiss, with eight masters among the participants. Heading into the last round, Torstein Bae, with 4.5/5, was a half point ahead of the pack. But Rob Sasata defeated Bae in the last round, and was joined by Daniel Kazmaier to split first place. Tied for third were Bae, Robert J. Gardner, and Victor Kaminski. [See crosstable.]

Battle at the Border

In this four-round swiss, Torstein Bae and Rob Sasata drew their last-round game to share first with 3.5/4.

Southern Alberta Open

This five-round swiss saw some exciting action, with participation of six masters and six experts—one of them being 10-year-old Daniil Yuffa, newly arrived from Russia. When the dust settled, IM Torstein Bae and Eric Hansen were tied in first place with 4.5/5. [See crosstable.] By winning on tiebreak, Eric qualified for the upcoming Alberta Closed. Adding to the excitement was the presence of a dark horse: Stephan Vasilev was entered with a C-class rating, but is certainly at least expert strength. Here, as Larry Parr would say, is a case in point:

Vasilev-Gold [B91]
Southern Alberta Open (1), 2007
[Notes by John MacPhail]

1. e4 c5 2. ♘f3 d6 3. d4 cd4 4. ♘d4 ♘f6 5. ♘c3 a6 6. g3!?

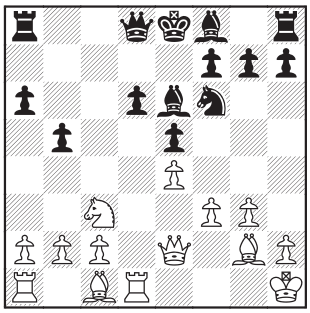
This unpopular move has some surprise value, and is not without sting.

6... e5 7. ♘de2 ♗g4 8. ♗g2 ♘c6 9. O−O ♘d4 10. f3 ♘e2 11. ♕e2 ♗e6 12. ♔h1 b5 13. ♖d1

Alberta Open

1.	Robert Sasata	2336	W23	W17	W9	D4	D2	W3	5
2.	Daniel Kazmaier	2223	W38	W31	D3	W27	D1	W7	5
3.	Torstein Bae	2381	W28	W16	D2	W6	W4	L1	4.5
4.	Robert J. Gardner	2247	W22	W12	W18	D1	L3	W16	4.5
5.	Victor Kaminski	2276	W29	D11	D36	W17	D6	W13	4.5
6.	Eric Hansen	2243	W24	W14	W7	L3	D5	D11	4
7.	Blagoj Gicev	2382	W42	W13	L6	W11	W14	L2	4
8.	Thomas Kaminski	2073	W26	W10	L27	D9	W19	D18	4
9.	Silje Bjerke	2184	W34	W19	L1	D8	W15	D10	4
10.	Dale Haessel	2262	W21	L8	W30	W12	D13	D9	4
11.	Sardul Purewal	2075	W46	D5	W25	L7	W20	D6	4
12.	David Mrugala	2040	W48	L4	W24	L10	W22	W26	4
13.	Micah Hughey	2113	W37	L7	W21	W36	D10	L5	3.5
14.	Keith MacKinnon	2038	W47	L6	W32	W18	L7	D17	3.5
15.	Rick Pedersen	1949	D0	W20	L0	W23	L9	W31	3.5
16.	Roy Yearwood	2137	W35	L3	W31	D19	W29	L4	3.5
17.	Jamin Gluckie	2113	W41	L1	W22	L5	W37	D14	3.5
18.	Vladislav Rekhson	2177	W39	W40	L4	L14	W21	D8	3.5
19.	Juraj Pivovarov	1913	W33	L9	W38	D16	L8	W30	3.5
20.	George Sponga	1509	D0	L15	W49	W40	L11	W29	3.5
21.	Terry Chaisson	1795	L10	W41	L13	W38	L18	W39	3
22.	Vitaly Motuz	1771	L4	W46	L17	W39	L12	W37	3
23.	Arthur Milne	1884	L1	W35	W37	L15	L26	W38	3
24.	Allan Wu	1799	L6	W44	L12	D42	W43	D25	3
25.	Magdi Amasaib	1927	W44	D0	L11	L29	W32	D24	3
26.	Mranal Jain	unrated	L8	L38	W46	W33	W23	L12	3
27.	Nicolas Haynes	2242	W32	D36	W8	L2	L0	L0	2.5
28.	Tim Pradzinski	1878	L3	D39	W40	W30	L0	L0	2.5
29.	Bruce D. Thomas	1801	L5	D0	W48	W25	L16	L20	2.5
30.	Arnold McKay	1687	D0	W45	L10	L28	W42	L19	2.5
31.	Jonathan Day	1788	W0	L2	L16	D32	W41	L15	2.5
32.	Wade Caughlin	1712	L27	W43	L14	D31	L25	W41	2.5
33.	Brandon Ma	1342	L19	D0	D39	L26	D35	W42	2.5
34.	Chris White	1645	L9	D0	L0	L37	W49	W43	2.5
35.	Garry Ahlquist	1575	L16	L23	D41	D0	D33	W44	2.5
36.	Richard, Pua	1965	W43	D27	D5	L13	L0	L0	2
37.	Paul Viminitz	1588	L13	W42	L23	W34	L17	L22	2
38.	Jonathan Mrugala	1680	L2	W26	L19	L21	W40	L23	2
39.	Mike Sekuloff	1616	L18	D28	D33	L22	W46	L21	2
40.	Ron Johnson	1415	W49	L18	L28	L20	L38	W46	2
41.	Keith Aartsen	1447	L17	L21	D35	W44	L31	L32	1.5
42.	Bill Bentley	1887	L7	L37	W45	D24	L30	L33	1.5
43.	Stephen Stone	1379	L36	L32	D0	W45	L24	L34	1.5
44.	Rock Borger	1352	L25	L24	D0	L41	W45	L35	1.5
45.	Alex Schmeisser	1232	D0	L30	L42	L43	L44	W49	1.5
46.	Matt McNiece	unrated	L11	L22	L26	W49	L39	L40	1
47.	Derek B. Thomas	1388	L14	D0	L0	L0	L0	L0	0.5
48.	Mahmood Mousavi	unrated	L12	D0	L29	L0	L0	L0	0.5
49.	Benjamin Levine	1258	L40	D0	L20	L46	L34	L45	0.5

More crosstables: ***www.chess.ca***



White has the initiative.

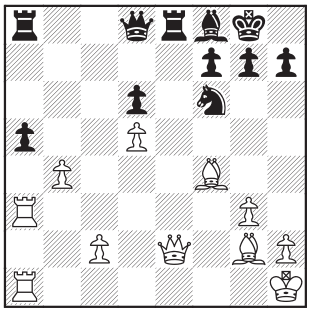
13... b4?

This move is rather rash, setting up a situation where White can open queen−side lines before Black can catch up in development. Perhaps Black believed White's C−class rating? A main reason that stronger players tend to prefer sectioned tournaments is that playing weaker players leads to sloppy habits: playing dubiously in attempts to quickly take advantage of differences in the ability to see tactics. But in this case White, despite showing up with a rating 700 points lower, may not be the weaker player!

14. ♘d5 ♗d5 15. ed5 ♗e7 16. f4 ef4 17. ♗f4 O−O 18. a3! ba3

Of course not 18... a5 19. ab4 ab4 20. ♖a8 winning a piece.

19. ♖a3 a5 20. b4 ♖e8 21. ♖da1 ♗f8



22. ♕f1

Perhaps the more materialistic 22. ♕d2 was even better.

22... ♖c8 23. ba5 ♖c2 24. ♖1a2!

Messier is 24. a6 ♖ee2 25. a7 ♕a8 26. ♗f3 ♖h2 27. ♔g1 ♘h5.

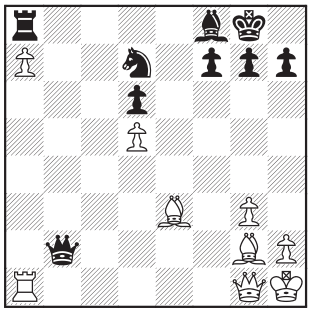
24... ♖a2 25. ♖a2 ♕b8 26. a6 ♕b3 27. ♖a1 ♕b6 28. ♕g1!

Less precise would be 28. a7 ♖a8 29. ♕g1 ♕b7.

28... ♕b2 29. a7 ♖a8

White correctly did not fear 29... ♘g4? in view of 30. h3 ♘f2 31. ♔h2 ♖a8 32. ♗e3 winning.

30. ♗e3 ♘d7



Black's efforts to stop the a–pawn are of no avail.

31. ♖b1 ♕c2

No better was 31... ♘c5 32. ♗c5 dc5 33. ♕f1 followed by 34. d6, winning easily.

32. ♖b7 ♕c8 33. ♕b1 g6 34. ♕b5

Just about a perfect game by White. After move 13, Black never got a chance to recover.

1–0

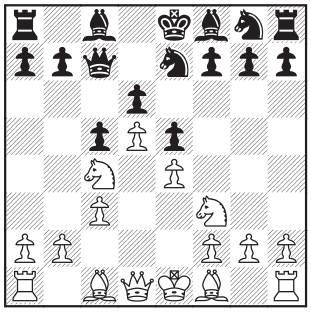
What happened in the next round was less convincing, but more exciting...

Hughey-Vasilev [B22]
Southern Alberta Open (2), 2007
[Notes by John MacPhail]

1. e4 c5 2. c3 ♕a5 3. ♘f3 ♘c6 4. ♘a3 e5

Presumably safer is the 'normal' 4... e6.

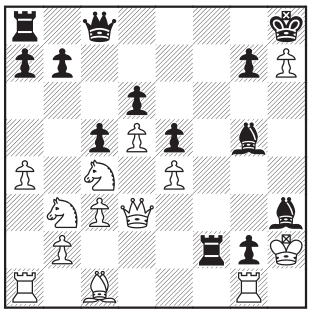
5. ♘c4 ♕c7 6. d4 d6 7. d5 ♘ce7



8. a4

Perhaps believing Black's rating, and expecting to win anyway. Certainly, against a really weaker player, it is better to avoid forcing continuations. But here it looks good to proceed with 8. ♘fe5! de5 (not 8... b5?? 9. ♘d6!) 9. d6 ♕c6 10. d7 after which the white knight will capture the h–rook, and it is not so easy for Black to trap the knight.

8... ♘g6 9. ♗d3 ♘f6 10. O–O ♗e7 11. h3 O–O 12. ♕e2 ♘h5 13. ♕c2 ♘hf4 14. ♖d1 ♗d7 15. ♔h2 ♕c8 16. ♗f1 f5 17. ♘fd2 ♖f7 18. g3 ♘h5 19. ♗g2 f4 20. g4 f3 21. gh5 fg2 22. hg6 ♖f2 23. gh7 ♔h8 24. ♕d3 ♗h3 25. ♖g1 ♗g5 26. ♘b3



Black to play.

26... ♖f4!

Southern Alberta Open

1.	Torstein Bae	2402	W15	W11	D2	W14	W6	4.5
2.	Eric Hansen	2251	W10	W8	D1	W11	W3	4.5
3.	Robert J. Gardner	2261	W16	W14	W7	W6	L2	4
4.	Silje Bjerke	2164	W22	L6	W17	D9	W12	3.5
5.	Rick Pedersen	1927	L6	W22	W12	W10	D9	3.5
6.	Gregory Huber	2327	W5	W4	W9	L3	L1	3
7.	Roy Yearwood	2119	D0	W18	L3	D15	W16	3
8.	Daniil Yuffa	2107	W20	L2	L11	W13	W15	3
9.	Stephan Vasilev	1543	W12	W13	L6	D4	D5	3
10.	Bill Bentley	1805	L2	W20	D0	L5	W21	2.5
11.	Dale Haessel	2250	W19	L1	W8	L2	0	2
12.	Itohan Gold	2247	L9	W21	L5	W18	L4	2
13.	Micah Hughey	2124	D21	L9	D18	L8	W22	2
14.	Keith MacKinnon	2058	W23	L3	W21	L1	L0	2
15.	Jim Daniluk	2037	L1	W19	D0	D7	L8	2
16.	Arthur Milne	1881	L3	W23	D0	D17	L7	2
17.	Franck F. Pellerin	1828	0	0	L4	D16	D20	2
18.	Artur Wojtas	1754	D0	L7	D13	L12	W23	2
19.	Jack Davies	1681	L11	L15	W22	L20	W0	2
20.	Nika Kalaydina	1415	L8	L10	D0	W19	D17	2
21.	Mike Zeggelaar	1528	D13	L12	L14	W23	L10	1.5
22.	Bronislaw Swiecicki	1540	L4	L5	L19	D0	L13	0.5
23.	Horst Ibach	1345	L14	L16	D0	L21	L18	0.5

A very nice move.

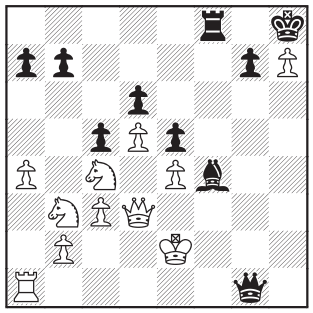
27. ♖g2?

Losing. Better was 27. ♘d6 ♕d7 28. ♘c4.

27... ♗g2 28. ♗f4

No better was 28. ♘d6 ♖h4 winning for Black.

28... ♗f4 29. ♔g2 ♕g4 30. ♔f2 ♖f8 31. ♔e1 ♕g1 32. ♔e2



Black to play

32... ♗c1??

Pretty...careless, actually. Black should win with simply 32... ♕g2 33. ♔d1 ♗g5 34. ♘cd2 ♗d2 35. ♘d2 (or 35. ♔c2 ♗c3) 35... ♕g1.

33. ♖c1??

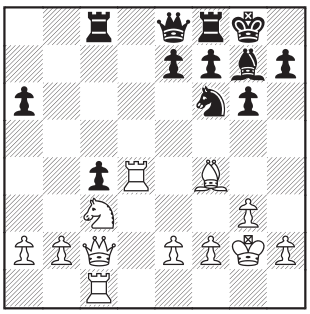
Presumably in severe time pressure, White misses the golden opportunity for 33. ♕h3! which apparently should lead to a draw after some complications: 33... ♖f2 34. ♔d3 ♕d1 35. ♘cd2! (it would not be good to leave the b2−square undefended by 35. ♘cd2? ♕e2 36. ♔c2 ♗d2 winning) 35... ♖d2 (now 35... ♕e2 36. ♔c2 ♗d2 37. ♕d3 looks too risky for Black) 36. ♘d2 ♕d2 37. ♔c4 ♕e2 38. ♕d3 ♕b2 39. ♕b1 (not 39. ♖b1! b5!) 39... ♕e2 and White's safest course seems to be 40. ♕d3.

33... ♖f2 34. ♔e3 ♕g3 0−1

In the same round, a calculated risk paid off for Torstein Bae:

Haessel-Bae [D71]
Southern Alberta Open (2), 2007
[Notes by John MacPhail]

1. d4 ♘f6 2. c4 g6 3. g3 ♗g7 4. ♗g2 d5 5. ♘c3 dc4 6. ♘f3 O−O 7. ♕a4 a6 8. ♕c4 b5 9. ♕b3 ♗b7 10. O−O ♘c6 11. ♖d1 ♘a5 12. ♕c2 ♖c8 13. ♗f4 ♕e8 14. ♖ac1 ♘c4 15. ♘e5 ♗g2 16. ♔g2 c5 17. ♘c4 cd4 18. ♖d4 bc4



Black has obtained a double−edged position, but at considerable risk, as the c4−pawn is rather weak.

19. ♘e4? e5?!

What was *actually* wrong with White's 19th is that it allowed Black to equalize by swapping off the weak c−pawn, such as by 19... c3!

20. ♘f6 ♗f6 21. ♖e4 ♕c6 22. ♗h6 ♖fd8 23. ♕c4??

Losing, whereas White would have some advantage after, say, 23. ♗e3.

23... ♕a8 24. ♕a4 ♖c1 25. ♗c1 ♖d4 26. ♕d4 ed4 27. f3 h5 28. b4 ♕c6 29. ♗b2 d3 30. ♗f6 ♕e4 0−1

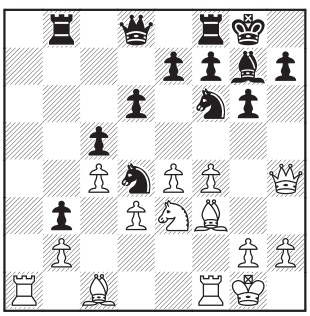
And now here is one of the decisive games from the last round:

Gardner-Hansen [A02]
Southern Alberta Open (5), 2007
[Notes by John MacPhail]

1. f4

Gardner stands by the Bird.

1... ♘f6 2. ♘f3 g6 3. d3 ♗g7 4. e4 d6 5. ♗e2 O−O 6. O−O c5 7. ♘a3 ♘c6 8. c3 ♖b8 9. ♘c2 b5 10. a3 a5 11. ♕e1 b4 12. ab4 ab4 13. c4 ♗g4 14. ♕h4 ♗f3 15. ♗f3 b3 16. ♘e3 ♘d4



Black's pieces are harmoniously placed, and the position is about equal.

17. f5 e6 18. g4

Over extension.

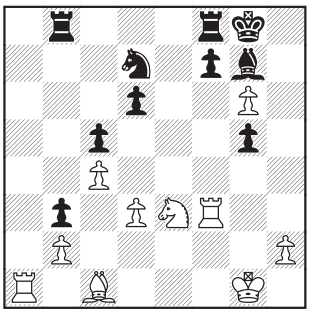
18... ef5 19. ef5 ♘d7 20. g5 h6

Even better is the simple 20... gf5.

21. fg6 ♕g5?

Black could have stayed on top with 21... ♘e5.

22. ♕g5 ♘f3 23. ♖f3 hg5



White to play

24. gf7?

Better is 24. ♘f5!

24... ♖f7 25. ♖f7 ♔f7

White's position is difficult at best.

26. ♘f5 ♗e5 27. ♖a7 ♔e6 28. ♘e3 ♗f4 29. ♔f2 ♘e5 30. ♔e2 ♖h8 31. ♖b7 ♖h2 32. ♔d1 ♖h1 33. ♔d2 ♗e3 34. ♔e3 ♖c1 0−1

Manitoba

Yanofsky Memorial Open

In this five-round swiss, Sam Lipnowski ceded only a last-round draw to take clear first with 4.5/5. Otherwise interesting was the performance of Jay Khedkar, who had belied his A-class rating back at the April Sectional Group A by turning in an astounding 2438 performance to utterly dominate that event. In the Yanofsky Memorial, Jay suffered a disappointing last-round loss but still turned in a solid expert performance.

Ontario

GTCL Canada Day Open

In this six-round swiss, Nikokay Noritsyn took clear first with 5.5/6, leaving Artem Samsonkin and Michael Schleifer to tie second with 5/6. (All three of these had notable results in the previous quarter. Schleifer dominated the Toronto Open back in April with 5.5/6. Though just tying second in that, Noritsyn swept the York Region April Open with a perfect 5/5, and at the Guelph Spring Pro-Am was in a three-way tie for first with Samsonkin and Doug Bailey.)

Toronto Labour Day Open

1.	Zhe Quan	2436	W10	W17	D7	W3	D2	W5	5
2.	Bator Sambuev	2503	W13	W14	D3	W12	D1	W6	5
3.	Artem Samsonkin	2432	W22	W28	D2	L1	W15	W7	4.5
4.	Jura Ochkoos	2364	D9	D15	D23	W8	W10	W14	4.5
5.	Nikolay Noritsyn	2498	W23	W27	L12	W17	W7	L1	4
6.	Victor Plotkin	2304	L19	W20	W22	W13	W12	L2	4
7.	Shiyam Thavandiran	2388	W21	W11	D1	W15	L5	L3	3.5
8.	Yuanling Yuan	2120	L12	W29	W14	L4	W24	D11	3.5
9.	Nikita Gusev	2038	D4	W24	L15	W23	D11	D17	3.5
10.	Haonan Zhou	2125	L1	W16	W28	D11	L4	W20	3.5
11.	Brian Fiedler	2232	W26	L7	W19	D10	D9	D8	3.5
12.	Ron Livshits	2431	W8	W19	W5	L2	L6	L0	3
13.	Alexander Martchenko	2155	L2	W21	W27	L6	L14	W19	3
14.	Louie Jiang	2259	W29	L2	L8	W20	W13	L4	3
15.	Walter H Chan	2175	W25	D4	W9	L7	L3	D16	3
16.	Alan Ang	2018	L28	L10	W26	D24	W23	D15	3
17.	Kevin Chung	2231	W30	L1	W25	L5	D19	D9	3
18.	Sheldon Pimentel	2071	L27	L23	L20	W26	W25	W22	3
19.	Neal Pan	1993	W6	L12	L11	W22	D17	L13	2.5
20.	Carl Sellars	2073	D24	L6	W18	L14	W21	L10	2.5
21.	Avinaash Sundar	2104	L7	L13	D24	W25	L20	W23	2.5
22.	Arthur Calugar	2112	L3	W26	L6	L19	W29	L18	2
23.	Hugh Siddeley	2141	L5	W18	D4	L9	L16	L21	1.5
24.	Liam Henry	2308	D20	L9	D21	D16	L8	L0	1.5
25.	Mario Moran-Venegas	1684	L15	W31	L17	L21	L18	D26	1.5
26.	Ian Finlay	1830	L11	L22	L16	L18	W0	D25	1.5
27.	Michael Schleifer	2371	W18	L5	L13	L0	L0	L0	1
28.	Mihnea Voloaca	2317	W16	L3	L10	L0	L0	L0	1
29.	Omaray M Shah	1952	L14	L8	D0	D0	L22	L0	1
30.	Ken Le	1715	L17	L0	L0	L0	L0	L0	0
31.	Alexandru Florea	1782	L0	L25	L0	L0	L0	L0	0

Hamilton Open

Going into the last round of this five-round swiss, Doug Bailey with a perfect 4/4 was a full point ahead of the field. But Jura Ochkoos defeated him in the last round, to tie for first.

Toronto Labour Day Open

A really strong six-round swiss, see crosstable. To tie for first with 5/6, both GM Bator Sambuev and IM Zhe Quan performed over 2600.

RA Fall Open

In Ottawa, the Civil Service Recreation Association ('RA') has been for many decades a centre of chess activity. The Fall Open was a five-round swiss, i n which, Dusan Simic took a half-point bye in the third round, won his other games to score 4.5/5, a full point ahead of...third place! In first with a perfect 5/5 was young Lloyd Mai. Among scalps collected by Mai were Karoly Szalay and David Gordon. Mai's resulting performance, over 2500, is a feat to repeat.

Chessca Open

This new Guelph event got off to a good start. In the top section, GM Bator Sambuev tore through this five-round swiss with a perfect score, performing over 2700. Goran Milicevic took clear second with 4/5. [See crosstable.]

In the under 2000 section, 4/5 was good enough to tie for first, accomplished by Jesse Wang (performing several hundred points above his rating) and Mahmud Hassain. The under 1600 section was a clear victory for Jerry Wang with 4.5/5, a full point ahead of the field. In the under 1400 section, Terry Song blew everybody away with a perfect 5/5.

Toronto Thanksgiving Open

In this six-round swiss, GM Sambuev ceded a draw to Canadian Champ Nikolay Noritsyn, and was half a point ahead of the field going into the last round. In the last round, Sambuev got the full point against Artem Samsonkin, while others were drawing. So Sambuev took clear first with 5.5/6 while there was a three-way tie for second with 4.5/6 between Nikolay Noritsyn, Avinaash Sundar, and Haonan Zhou. Noteworth is Sundar's performance, 250 points above his rating.

Chessca Open, Top Section

1.	Bator Sambuev	2535	W9	D2	W5	W3	D4	4
2.	David Gordon	2272	W27	D1	W18	D4	W8	4
3.	Mihnea Voloaca	2302	W15	D0	W13	L1	W7	3.5
4.	Tom O'Donnell	2476	W14	D13	W12	D2	D1	3.5
5.	Deen Hergott	2481	W17	W8	L1	D7	W12	3.5
6.	Armando Valdizon	2274	W16	D12	L7	W17	W13	3.5
7.	John Upper	2113	W26	D23	W6	D5	L3	3
8.	Karoly Szalay	2184	W25	L5	W20	W10	L2	3
9.	Zi Yi (Joey) Qin	2107	L1	D0	W21	D18	W19	3
10.	Danilo Aniag	2109	D0	D24	W11	L8	W14	3
11.	Emil Smilovici	1895	L12	W0	L10	W25	W18	3
12.	Jerry Xiong	2157	W11	D6	L4	W15	L5	2.5
13.	William Doubleday G.	2170	W22	D4	L3	W16	L6	2.5
14.	Ray Kuryliw	2064	L4	W27	D15	W23	L10	2.5
15.	Halldor Palsson Peter	2057	L3	W25	D14	L12	W22	2.5
16.	Saeid Sadeghi	2054	L6	D22	W26	L13	W24	2.5
17.	Daniel Cossette	2085	L5	W21	W24	L6	L0	2
18.	Michel Desjardins	1928	D23	W19	L2	D9	L11	2
19.	Claude Carrier	2077	D0	L18	D22	W20	L9	2
20.	Sonja Xiong	1837	W0	D0	L8	L19	D27	2
21.	Robert Laszlo	1833	D0	L17	L9	D26	W0	2
22.	Alex Danilov	1905	L13	D16	D19	D24	L15	1.5
23.	Dusan Simic	2183	D18	D7	D0	L14	L0	1.5
24.	Noel Pagayatan	1950	D0	D10	L17	D22	L16	1.5
25.	Gabriel Brown	1932	L8	L15	W27	L11	D26	1.5
26.	Mate Marinkovic	1872	L7	D0	L16	D21	D25	1.5
27.	Van Eric Dusen	1941	L2	L14	L25	W0	D20	1.5

KW Oktoberfest, Open Section

A hotly contested five-round swiss. Things began to heat up in the third round, when Artem Samsonkin held GM Bator Sambuev to a draw. Then veteran Mike Dougherty, who'd taken a half-point bye in the first round, defeated Sambuev in Round 4. Dougherty and Samsonkin drew in the final round, both landing with 4/5, joined in a three-way tie for first by Jeff Willms. This was a terrific result for the imaginative but not always consistent Dougherty, who turned in a performance rating over 2600.

National Capital Open

This strong five-round swiss was another triumph for GM Sambuev, this time sharing first with David Gordon at 4/5.

Guelph Pro Am

In the second round of this five-round swiss, Mikhail Egorov defeated GM Sambuev, opening the way for Artem Samsonkin to sail to clear first with 4.5/5, a full point ahead of the field.

Quebec

Myriam Roy FIDE II

In this 8-player round robin, Nicolas Arsenault and Steve Bolduc shared first with 5.5/7, a full point and a half ahead of the field.

New Brunswick

August Knights

A four-round swiss. The favourite had to be Bill Bogle, with a master rating, who had won the SJCC Master/Expert Class (in March) and the

New Brunswick Open in June. But Bogle took a half-point bye and drew with Jonathan MacDonald, so winning his other games to score 3/4 only got him a three-way tie for first with Ken Duff and Liam Keith-Jacques.

Nova Scotia

NS Closed

A six-player round robin. Alvah Mayo and Gary Ng tied first with 4/5, a full point and a half ahead of the field. Alvah took the title on tiebreak.

Paul Hake Labour Day Open

In this eight-round swiss, Antoni Wysocki ceded only a couple of half-point byes and a draw with Jean Desforges, to take clear first with 6.5/8. Tied for second with 5.5/8 were Jean Desforges and Rex Naugler.

Maritime Open

An eight-round swiss, won by Anthony Howarth with 6.5/8. In clear second with 6/8 was Jason Kenney.

Remembrance Day Open

Another eight-round swiss, another clear victory for Antoni Wysocki with 6.5/8, having taken a couple of half-point byes and a last-round draw with Paulo Ferreira. Tying for second with 5.5/8 were Brian Pentz and David Poirier.

PEI

UPEI Open

A five-round swiss. Tom O'Donnell defeated both Bill Bogle and Jonathan MacDonald, ceding only a draw to Jean Desforges, enroute to clear first with 4.5/5. In a four-way tie for second at 3.5/5 were Bogle, MacDonald, Desforges, and Anthony Banks. [See crosstable.]

Newfoundland

NL Open

In this five-round swiss, dominated by Grant Spraggett in clear first with a perfect score, Jordan Berson was clear second with 4/5.

National Capital Open, Top Section

1. Bator Sambuev	2535	W9	D2	W5	W3	D4	4
2. David Gordon	2272	W27	D1	W18	D4	W8	4
3. Mihnea Voloaca	2302	W15	D0	W13	L1	W7	3.5
4. Tom O'Donnell	2476	W14	D13	W12	D2	D1	3.5
5. Deen Hergott	2481	W17	W8	L1	D7	W12	3.5
6. Armando Valdizon	2274	W16	D12	L7	W17	W13	3.5
7. John Upper	2113	W26	D23	W6	D5	L3	3
8. Karoly Szalay	2184	W25	L5	W20	W10	L2	3
9. Zi Yi (Joey) Qin	2107	L1	D0	W21	D18	W19	3
10. Danilo Aniag	2109	D0	D24	W11	L8	W14	3
11. Emil Smilovici	1895	L12	W0	L10	W25	W18	3
12. Jerry Xiong	2157	W11	D6	L4	W15	L5	2.5
13. William Doubleday	2170	W22	D4	L3	W16	L6	2.5
14. Ray Kuryliw	2064	L4	W27	D15	W23	L10	2.5
15. Halldor Palsson	2057	L3	W25	D14	L12	W22	2.5
16. Saeid Sadeghi	2054	L6	D22	W26	L13	W24	2.5
17. Daniel Cossette	2085	L5	W21	W24	L6	L0	2
18. Michel Desjardins	1928	D23	W19	L2	D9	L11	2
19. Claude Carrier	2077	D0	L18	D22	W20	L9	2
20. Sonja Xiong	1837	W0	D0	L8	L19	D27	2
21. Robert Laszlo	1833	D0	L17	L9	D26	W0	2
22. Alex Danilov	1905	L13	D16	D19	D24	L15	1.5
23. Dusan Simic	2183	D18	D7	D0	L14	L0	1.5
24. Noel Pagayatan	1950	D0	D10	L17	D22	L16	1.5
25. Gabriel Brown	1932	L8	L15	W27	L11	D26	1.5
26. Mate Marinkovic	1872	L7	D0	L16	D21	D25	1.5
27. Van Eric Dusen	1941	L2	L14	L25	W0	D20	1.5

UPEI Open

1. Tom O'Donnell	2473	W9	W2	W5	D3	W7	4.5
2. Jonathan MacDonald	2068	W12	L1	W9	D7	W6	3.5
3. Jean Desforges	2123	W14	W4	W6	D1	L5	3.5
4. Anthony Banks	1717	W7	L3	W11	D5	W 9	3.5
5. Bill Bogle	2251	W13	W8	L1	D4	W3	3.5
6. Ashish (Justin) Gulati	2211	D0	W10	L3	W8	L2	2.5
7. Anthony Howarth	2293	L4	W14	W8	D2	L1	2.5
8. Fred McKim	2016	W11	L5	L7	L6	W13	2
9. David Paulowich	1823	L1	W12	L2	W10	L4	2
10. Ed Keunecke	1651	D0	L6	W13	L9	L0	1.5
11. Iain Crowell	1184	L8	D13	L4	L0	W12	1.5
12. Ryan Doucette	1200	L2	L9	W14	D13	L11	1.5
13. Ryan Drew	1216	L5	D11	L10	D12	L8	1
14. Aaron Rainnie	1215	L3	L7	L12	L0	L0	0

Canadian Women's Championship

by Robert Hamilton

The Canadian Women's Championship was held alongside the Men's event in Kitchener in early August.

Pre-tournament favourite Natalia Khoudgarian lived up to expectations by racking up a score of 6.5/7 to walk away with clear first.

The critical encounter occurred in the last round, when Khoudgarian was pitted against Dina Kagramanov, who trailed by 1/2 point heading into the round.

Dina compromised her own chances of winning the event by playing to a draw against her sister Dalia early in the tournament.

In the post Nava Starr era, Natalia has emerged as Canada's top female player. She is top rated, anchors the Olympiad team and is the perennial favourite to win the national championship.

Canadian Women's Championship 2007

1. Natalia Khoudgarian	2262	X	1	1	1	=	1	1	1	6.5
2. Dina Kagramanov	2127	0	X	1	=	1	1	1	=	5.0
3. Daniela Belc	2069	0	0	X	1	1	1	=	1	4.5
4. Julia Lacau-Rodean	1900	0	=	0	X	1	=	=	1	3.5
5. Irina Barron	2119	=	0	0	0	X	1	1	1	3.5
6. Glenda Bayton	1706	0	0	0	=	0	X	1	1	2.5
7. Natasa Serbanescu	1854	0	0	=	=	0	0	X	1	2.0
8. Dalia Kagramanov	1925	0	=	0	0	0	0	0	X	0.5

Khoudgarian-Kagramanov [B00]
Canadian Women's Championship, 2007

[Notes by Natalia Khoudgarian]

It was the last round. I was leading half a point ahead of Dina, and a draw was enough for clear first. Dina had a tough task to play for a win with Black.

1. e4 b6!?

Interesting choice. I consider it has only one idea: to avoid well−prepared lines. I cannot call it a good choice for such an important game, because just with reasonable play White can always get a slight advantage.

2. d4 ♗b7 3. ♗d3

The alternative is 3. ♘c3.

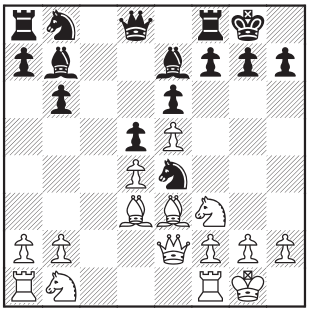
3... e6 4. ♘f3 ♘f6 5. ♕e2 d5 6. e5 ♘e4!?

After 6... ♘fd7 the game could continue as 7. O−O c5 8. c3 ♗e7 9. ♘bd2 ♘c6 coming to a French−like position where White is slightly better.

7. O−O c5 8. c3 cd4 9. cd4 ♗e7 10. ♗e3?!

White should go for 10. ♘bd2 ♘d2 11. ♗d2 with a better game.

10... O−O



11. ♘fd2

Now looking at 11. ♘bd2 I was not happy with 11... f5 12. f6 ♗f6 and there is no 13. Ne4. Still White would have a good game continuing 13. ♗f4.

11... f5 12. f6 ♗f6 13. ♗e4

Gives Black a good game. A better choice would be 13. ♕g4 forcing the trade 13... ♘d2 14. ♘d2 with a comfortable game.

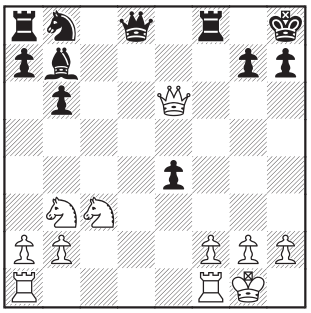
13... de4 14. ♕g4 ♗d4

An interesting idea is 14... ♕d5 and after 15. ♘c3 ♕f5 Black's position is good

15. ♕e6 ♔h8 16. ♗d4 ♕d4 17. ♘b3 ♕d3?

Waste of time. It seems that Dina was trying to avoid trading the queens with 17... ♕d7 though Black's position is fine. But it would be interesting to go for complication with 17... ♕b2!? I simply thought to answer 18. ♕e7 with two threats, but Black could develop an attack after the knight sacrifice 18... ♘d7 19. ♕d7 ♖ad8 and now White has difficulties and probably has to retreat 20. Qg4, because after 20. ♕b7 Black wins with 20... ♕f2.

18. ♘c3 ♕d8



Better is 18... ♕d7.

19. ♘e4! ♗d5

Not 19... ♖e8? 20. ♘g5! winning

20. ♕g4 ♕e7 21. ♖fe1 ♕f7 22. f3

More practical would be 22. ♕g3.

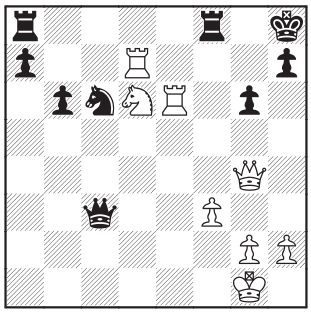
22... ♘c6 23. ♖ad1

Safer would be 23. ♘bd2 keeping the extra pawn, as Black would lose a piece by 23... ♗a2? 24. b3 ♗b3 25. ♘g5 after which White swaps on b3 and puts the queen on e4. At this point we could already feel a time tension. I decided to go for complications, aiming for active play.

23... ♗b3 24. ab3 ♕b3 25. ♖d7 ♕b2 26. ♘d6

Here 26. ♘g5 keeping an eye on h7 looks good, as it would give ideas for additional threats.

26... ♕c3 27. ♖e6 g6??



Black could hold the game with 27... a5 Then with 28. ♘f7 ♔g8 29. ♘h6 I would go for a draw.

28. ♖h7 ♔h7 29. ♕g6 ♔h8 30. ♕h6 1–0

Natalia Khoudgarian, Canada's top female player

The Scholastic Scene

by Hal Bond

Beijing's Loss is Winnipeg's Gain

By the time you read this article our youth team will have returned from the WYCC in Antalya, Turkey. Despite the many challenges facing the CFC, our youth programs continue to be immensely popular. Our 2007 youth team was blessed with extra coaching on site and many of the participants were able to take advantage of the Karpov Academy's inaugural training camp this past October. These enhancements were made possible thanks to the sponsorship dollars generated by Gordon Ritchie's team at the 2007 CYCC in Ottawa, and by the Chess'n Math Association. Our future teams will need more assistance of this kind if we wish to keep pace with the world's best.

One of the world's hottest chess countries right now is China. During his camp in Toronto, former World Champion Anatoly Karpov remarked that China had adopted the Russian Chess School and improved it. Karpov's second, GM Emil Sutovsky, suggested that Canada's best chances on the world stage could well come from the young Chinese who immigrate to Canada.

A case in point is Dezheng Kong—recently arrived from Beijing, China and now making his home in Winnipeg. Dezheng turned 8 years old this year. We have selected a game from his first Canadian tournament (the August TNT in Winnipeg) where the moves speak for themselves. The young Dezheng continued to turn heads on the Labour Day weekend at the Abe Yanofsky Memorial. He shared first place in the U1800 section with a score of 4/5. After four tournaments he sports a formidable 1861 rating.

At 8 years of age, Dezheng Kong approaches Expert strength

Dezheng was identified in China as a talented young player and scored a respectable 5th place in the national championship for his age. He continues to adapt to his new homeland, learning the English language (including chess notation) while maintaining a daily regimen of study at the board.

Canada infrequently sends an expert player to the Under 10s at the WYCC. This year Christopher Knox was one such rarity. FM Shiyam Thavandiran and IM Stephen Glinert each broke through the 2000 barrier before their respective debuts at the World Youth U10s. While it is always tricky to predict the future heights that our young stars might reach, Dezheng is clearly a conspicuous talent.

In the following game Kong conquers comrade Nathan Wood from the dark side of a Sicilian. His attack is masterful.

Wood-Kong [B84]
August TNT (3), 2007
[Notes by Nikolay Noritsyn]

1. e4 c5

Sicilian—a great weapon for tactical and positional players! Dezheng, like me and many others, seems to be a fan of this opening.

2. ♘f3 d6 3. d4 cd4 4. ♘d4 ♘f6 5. ♘c3 a6

The Najdorf variation. Black has many alternatives, including 5... ♘c6, 5... e6 and 5... g6

6. ♗e3 e6

Dezheng prefers the strategic 6. ...e6 to the tactical 6. ...e5.

7. ♗e2

Here 7. f3 is considered better.

7... ♗e7 8. ♕d2 O–O!

Black is not scared of White's future pawn storm on the king–side. Black's counterplay will be attack on the queen–side, against White's king.

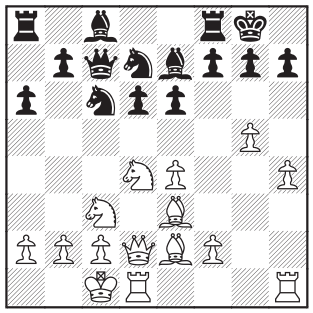
9. O–O–O

I would prefer 9. O–O with a quiet game.

9... ♘c6 10. g4 ♕c7

Black continues with his plan.

11. g5 ♘d7 12. h4



An interesting alternative was 12. g6!? hg6 13. h4 sacrificing a pawn in order to immediately open the h–file for the attack.

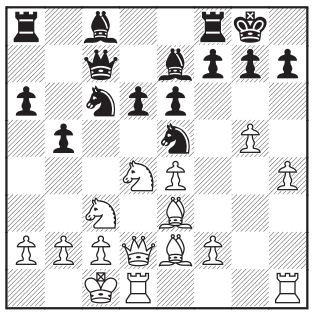
12... b5 13. ♗g4?

White wants to sacrifice the bishop on e6, winning some material, but...

13... ♘de5!

Pushing the bishop back. White probably only considered 13... ♘ce5?! 14. ♗e6! fe6 15. ♘e6 ♕c6 16. ♘f8 ±.

14. ♗e2



White lost two moves, but even now it is not easy to prove that White's position is worse.

14... ♘c4!

Black forces the opening of the b–file, to start an attack against White's king.

15. ♗c4 bc4 16. h5

At least White is consistent with his previous play. Of course, Black's attack is much faster.

16... ♖b8 17. ♘ce2?!

White is worried about his pawn on b2 and wants to protect it by playing c3 to defend it with the queen. But the remedy is worse than the disease... Better is 17. ♘c6! ♕c6 18. ♔b1 ♕b7 19. b3, and it will not be easy for Black to crack White's defences.

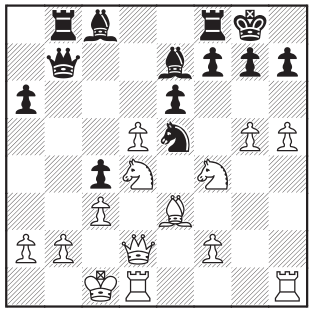
17... ♕b7 18. c3 ♘e5!

Dezheng sees that White weakened his d3 square and immediately sends his knight there.

19. ♘f4 d5!

Black opens the diagonal for his bishop. Now White has no choice, as giving up the e4–pawn would lead to complete control of the d3 square by Black.

20. ed5



Black to play

20... ♗a3!

Simple and strong. Black wins at least a pawn.

21. ♖dg1

Of course, after 21. ba3 mate would follow: 21... ♕b1.

21... ♗b2 22. ♔d1

The king runs to a better place.

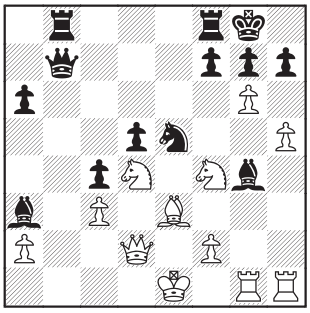
22... ed5 23. g6

White still has some hopes for an attack...

23... ♗g4

Not giving White any chances.

24. ♔e1 ♗a3



With the threat of ...♕b1 and checkmate.

25. gh7 ♔h8!

A strong positional move: the king hides under White's pawn, which becomes a very strong defence that White cannot eliminate.

26. ♔f1 ♕b1

The queen finds a new square from which it can terrorize White's king.

27. ♔g2 ♕e4 28. ♔g3 ♖b2!

The rook victoriously comes into the game.

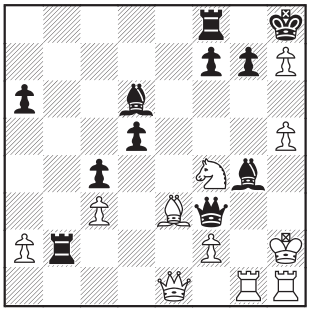
29. ♕e1 ♘f3

Fork!

30. ♘f3

White still has a defence.

30... ♕f3 31. ♔h2 ♗d6



Pin! And now it is decisive.

32. ♖g4 ♕g4 33. ♕c1 ♗f4 34. ♗f4

White resigned before getting mated. A very strong game by Dezheng!

0–1

Coming Events

BC

March 21-24, Grand Pacific Open, **Victoria**

May 16-19, 21nd Paul Keres Memorial, **Vancouver**

Saturdays, Ho Math and ChessT Junior Tournaments, **Vancouver**
see ***www.mathandchess.com*** for details

every Sunday, Weekly Active, Croatian Cultural Centre, **Vancouver**

AB

Jan 8 - Feb 19, Calgary Closed, **Calgary**

Jan 13, Calgary Junior New Year Tournament, **Calgary**

Feb 10, Calgary Junior February Tournament, **Calgary**

Feb 26, Speed Chess #1, **Calgary**

every Monday, Edmonton Chess Club Tournaments, **Edmonton**

second Saturday monthly, Rooty Hill Cup, **Calgary**

NB

Club d'Échecs Régional Chaleur Regional Chess Club,
see ***www.madisco.ca/CRCC/calendrier.htm***

ON

January 2-6, Canadian Junior Championship, location to be chosen

February 2-3, Winter Pro-Am, **Guelph**

February 15-17, KW Winter Open, **Kitchener**

February 23-24, Hamilton Winter Open, **Hamilton**

February 29 - March 2, RA Spring Open, **Ottawa**

April 14-15(?), McIntosh Open, **Morrisburg**

May 3-4, 27th Annual R. N. Webb Memorial, **Arnprior**

May 30 - June 1, Eastern Ontario Open, **Ottawa**

every Sunday, Junior tournaments, Chess Academy of Canada, **Toronto**
also see ***www.chessacademycanada.com***

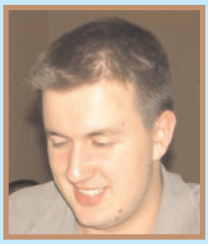
Details ***www.chess.ca***

National Ratings

Top since 1980

1.	Kevin Spraggett	2665	1999
2.	Alexandre Le Siège	2660	2002
3.	Deen Hergott	2580	1995
4.	Igor Ivanov	2576	1988
5.	Mark Bluvshtein	2557	2007
6.	Dimitry Tyomkin	2570	2006
7.	Peter Biyiasis	2555	1980
8.	Igor Zugic	2553	2007
9.	Duncan Suttles	2550	1982
10.	Yan Teplitsky	2549	1997
11.	Bryon Nickoloff	2536	1988
12.	Ron Livshits	2536	1999
13.	Jean Hébert	2534	1998
14.	Tomas Krnan	2534	2007
15.	Pascal Charbonneau	2534	2007
16.	Tom O'Donnell	2514	1989
17.	Lawrence Day	2514	1997
18.	Oleg Linskiy	2509	2002
19.	Marat Khassanov	2496	1998
20.	Michael Schleifer	2494	1999

Top Canadians



1.	Mark Bluvshtein	2557	
2.	Igor Zugic	2553	
3.	Tomas Krnan	2534	
4.	Pascal Charbonneau	2534	
5.	Nikolay Noritsyn	2492	
6.	Deen Hergott	2481	
7.	Tom O'Donnell	2476	
8.	Thomas Roussel-Roozmon	2469	
9.	Zhe Quan	2460	
10.	Leonid Gerzhoy	2459	
11.	Jean Hébert	2428	
12.	Ron Livshits	2427	
13.	John C (Jack) Yoos	2414	
14.	Eric Lawson	2401	
15.	Grant Spraggett	2385	
16.	Robert Hamilton	2378	
17.	Shiyam Thavandiran	2377	
18.	Blagoj Gicev	2367	
19.	Goran Milicevic	2362	
20.	Jura Ochkoos	2362	

Top Women

1.	Natalia Khoudgarian	2255
2.	Hazel Smith	2223
3.	Anastasia Kazakevich	2152
4.	Yuanling Yuan	2146
5.	Dina Kagramanov	2137
6.	Nava Starr	2135
7.	Amanda Benggawan	2064
8.	Daniela Belc	2052
9.	Iulia Lacau-Rodean	1966
10.	Myriam Roy	1935
11.	Yelizaveta Orlova	1923
12.	Natasa Serbanescu	1850
13.	Jasmine Du	1846
14.	Alexandra Botez	1840
15.	Sonja Xiong	1837
16.	Dalia Kagramanov	1816
17.	Anca Datcu-Romano	1815
18.	Alexandra Benggawan	1791
19.	Claire Woodworth	1778
20.	Glenda Baylon	1772

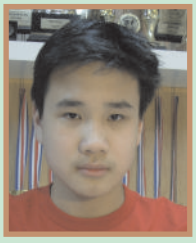
Top Under 18

1.	Nikolay Noritsyn	2492
2.	Zhe Quan	2460
3.	Shiyam Thavandiran	2377
4.	Bindi Cheng	2349
5.	David (Yu) Peng	2335
6.	Lloyd Mai	2276
7.	Victor Kaminski	2275
8.	David Wang	2260
9.	Eric Hansen	2251
10.	Kevin Chung	2228
11.	Hazel Smith	2223
12.	Noam Davies	2209
13.	Roman Sapozhnikov	2207
14.	Karoly Szalay	2184
15.	Trevor Vincent	2176
16.	Haonan Zhou	2168
17.	Jerry Xiong	2157
18.	Alexander Martchenko	2155
19.	Sammy Yao	2148
20.	Yuanling Yuan	2146

Top Under 16

1.	Nikolay Noritsyn	2492
2.	Shiyam Thavandiran	2377
3.	Lloyd Mai	2276
4.	Victor Kaminski	2275
5.	Louie Jiang	2251
6.	Eric Hansen	2231
7.	Kevin Chung	2228
8.	Hazel Smith	2223
9.	Noam Davies	2209
10.	Roman Sapozhnikov	2207
11.	Karoly Szalay	2184
12.	Haonan Zhou	2168
13.	Jerry Xiong	2157
14.	Alexander Martchenko	2155
15.	Yuanling Yuan	2146
16.	Nikita Kraiouchkine	2122
17.	Thomas Kaminski	2110
18.	Zi Yi (Joey) Qin	2107
19.	Nikita Gusev	2083
20.	Keith MacKinnon	2056

Top under 14



1.	Lloyd Mai	2276
2.	Louie Jiang	2251
3.	Roman Sapozhnikov	2207
4.	Karoly Szalay	2184
5.	Jerry Xiong	2157
6.	Alexander Martchenko	2155
7.	Yuanling Yuan	2146
8.	Nikita Kraiouchkine	2122
9.	Thomas Kaminski	2110
10.	Zi Yi (Joey) Qin	2107
11.	Nikita Gusev	2083
12.	Avinaash Sundar	2082
13.	Arthur Calugar	2075
14.	Keith MacKinnon	2056
15.	Christopher Knox	2050
16.	Richard Huang	1987
17.	Kevin Gibson	1969
18.	Michael Kleinman	1952
19.	Brendan Fan	1948
20.	Myriam Roy	1935

Active within 24 months. Ages at 2006-12-31.