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How Nana Dzagnidze won

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The European Individual Women’s Chess Championship in Riga had 144 participants and among them were 12 GMs and 31 WGMs, 31 IMs and 22 WIMs, resulting in a total of 96 players with titles of Women International Master or higher. The event was won by 4th seed Nana Dzagnidze, with 8.5/11, her first European title.

In such a high quality event with so many strong players some of the favourites inevitably stumbled, even though one look at the final standings shows most of the favourites at the top. Russian super-talent Aleksandra Goryachkina won silver and the bronze medal went to the experienced Alisa Galiamova, who won her last two games to finish on the podium. Both Goryachkina and Galiamova finished with 8/11.

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Open tournaments with a lot of participants are very difficult to play. In the beginning, it is impossible to gauge who is in good form and who is not. A lot depends on pairings - somebody will get a rating favourite who is not playing well and somebody will get an under-rated youngster on fire.

Two of the rating favourites who disappointed were the first seed Anna Muzychuk and fifth seed Antoaneta Stefanova, both finishing with 6.5/11 and sharing 26th place.

The winner Nana Dzagnidze demonstrated controlled and stable play. With White she relied on Reti setups and with Black on the Semi-Slav. The following game is a good example of a fine understanding of the reversed Benoni positions that can arise from the Reti.
ALTOGETHER 12 GMs AND 31 WGMs, 31 IMS AND 22 WIMs - 96 PLAYERS WITH TITLES OF WOMEN INTERNATIONAL MASTER OR HIGHER TOOK PART

Nana Dzagnidze – Ekaterina Atalik
18th ch-EUR Indiv w 2017 Riga LAT (6.3)

1.♘f3 d5 2.c4 e6 3.b3 d4 One of the most ambitious set-ups against the Reti. Black enters a reversed Benoni position, but with a pawn on e6, meaning that she will have to spend a tempo to play ...e5 later on in the game. It is, of course, possible to play like this as Black, but if things go wrong White will have an excellent Benoni type position with easy play on the queenside.

4.e3 c5 5.exd4 cxd4 6.g3 ♠c6 7.¥g2 ♠f6 8.0–0 ♠e7 9.¦e1 0–0

10.¥a3 10.d3 is the usual move here, but Dzagnidze prefers to exchange the "bad" bishop on c1 as soon as possible. In the Benoni the bishop is the most problematic piece (in the usual Benoni it is the bishop on c8 for Black). 10...♗e8!? was recently tried by Nakamura. The idea is to play ...f6 and ...e5 (10...♗d7 is a usual move in these structures). A recent game saw 11.a3 (11.♗a3 is also possible, as is 11.♗e5!?) 11...a5 12.♗d2 f6 13.♗b1 e5 14.♗h4 ♔e7 15.♗h5 ♔e8 16.♗xe8 ♔xe8 17.f4 with unclear play, even though the queen exchange probably favours Black here. ½–½ (132) Topalov,V (2761)-Nakamura,H (2787) Leuven 2016.

10...♗e8 11.d3 a5 12.♗xe7 ♔xe7 13.♗e5!

A typical simplifying manoeuvre in the Benoni. It is worth noting that the more pieces are exchanged the easier White's play is because she has a clear plan of advancing on the queenside while Black's central play needs more pieces in order to be successful.

13...♗xe5 14.♗xe5 ♔c7 15.♗b5 A very comfortable square for the rook in the Benoni structures after the a-pawn has moved forward two squares.

15...♗a7 Threatening ...♗d7, but that is easily parried.

16.b4 Opening the b-file and defending against ...♗d7.

16.a3 was also an option worthy of consideration.

16.axb4 17.♗d2 e5 18.♗xb4 h6 19.a4 White's plan is simple - double on the b-file, advance the black a-pawn and attack b7 with all the pieces. Black usually advances in the centre, but here that is impossible, so she needs to find a plan how to defend against White's attack along the b-file.

19...♗d7 This makes it slightly difficult for Black on the next move, hence I would call it
a "practical imprecision." Black unnecessarily
puts herself in a situation when she must be
precise and find a more difficult solution than
the one she had to find on this move.

19...b6! 20.\texttt{ab}1 \texttt{g}4! 21.\texttt{c}e2 \texttt{d}7 would
have been a nice regrouping - the \texttt{d}7
safely protects b6 and the bishop is active,
它可以 go to f5 to attack d3.

20.\texttt{ab}1 \texttt{c}5? Black does not understand
that she needs that knight for defence. After
White's next move we reach a position with
no superfluous pieces for White, who can
use all 4(!) of them to attack b7.

20...b6 Now this is not as good as on the
previous move because after 21.\texttt{d}5 \texttt{b}7
White has 22.\texttt{f}3!; 20...\texttt{e}6! 21.\texttt{d}5 \texttt{ea}6
is a manoeuvre suggested by the engine and
it is a very instructive one - Black uses her
own rooks to attack White's a-pawn, thus
limiting White's activity. In my opinion this
is more difficult to find than the simple
plan after 19...b6, which means that Black
made things more difficult for herself by
not taking the first opportunity to solve her
problems. After 22.\texttt{f}3 \texttt{f}6 23.\texttt{xb}7 \texttt{g}4
24.\texttt{g}2 \texttt{xa}4 25.\texttt{xa}4 \texttt{xa}4 Black is fine.

21.\texttt{e}4! \texttt{xe}4 21...\texttt{e}6 keeping the
knights does not help Black because the
\texttt{e}6 is very awkwardly placed. 22.c5! \texttt{a}5
(22...\texttt{xc}5? 23.\texttt{xc}5 \texttt{xc}5 24.\texttt{c}4 loses a
piece) 23.\texttt{b}5 and White dominates.

22.\texttt{xe}4

This is a dream position for White. She can
safely increase the pressure on the queenside
until Black cracks. Sitting still is one of the
most difficult things to do in chess, and very
few people manage doing it successfully, so
Black understandably starts pushing pawns
on the kingside. But this only creates a
second weakness later on.

22...\texttt{g}6 22...\texttt{e}6 with the idea of ...b6
23.\texttt{h}5! b6 24.\texttt{f}5 Black will lose the
b6-pawn, but her hope is to take on a4 and
create some counterplay. A few illustrative
lines: 24...g6 25 \texttt{g}4 \texttt{c}6 26.\texttt{x}e8 \texttt{xc}8
27.\texttt{xc}8+ \texttt{xc}8 28.\texttt{g}2 there is no rush
to take on b6. 28...\texttt{c}6. And now:

A) 29.\texttt{f}3 is natural, but Black somehow
manages to create counterplay. 29...f5
30.\texttt{b}5 (30.\texttt{xb}6 \texttt{xb}6 31.\texttt{xb}6 \texttt{xa}4
32.\texttt{g}6+ \texttt{f}7 33.\texttt{h}6 \texttt{a}3 34.\texttt{e}2 \texttt{a}2+ 35.\texttt{f}1
\texttt{a}3 with counterplay) 30...\texttt{xa}4
31.\texttt{xe}5 \texttt{a}3 32.\texttt{e}2 \texttt{a}2+ 33.\texttt{f}1 \texttt{a}3;

B) 29.\texttt{f}4! exf4 30.\texttt{xb}6! this is very difficult
to find 30...\texttt{xb}6 31.\texttt{xb}6 \texttt{gx}3 32.\texttt{hx}3
\texttt{xa}4 33.\texttt{f}3 and the d4-pawn will drop
when White's two connected passed pawns
give her excellent winning chances.

23.\texttt{f}3 \texttt{f}5?! It was better to do nothing, but
that is easier said than done.

23...\texttt{g}7 24.\texttt{d}5 \texttt{d}8 25.\texttt{b}6 \texttt{c}7 with
the idea of ...\texttt{e}7 was better.

24.\texttt{d}5+ \texttt{g}7 25.\texttt{h}4 Threatening h5.

25...\texttt{h}5 26.\texttt{d}1 Defending a4 in order to
liberate the \texttt{b}4.

26...\texttt{d}7 27.\texttt{b}5 \texttt{f}4 A desperate attempt,
but waiting was no longer possible.

If instead 27...\texttt{h}7 here is what happens
if Black does nothing: 28.a5 \texttt{g}7 29.\texttt{d}2
\texttt{h}7 30.\texttt{b}4 \texttt{g}7 31.\texttt{c}5 winning the
pawn on b7.

28.a5 \texttt{h}3 29.\texttt{g}2 \texttt{g}4 30.\texttt{f}3 \texttt{h}3
31.\texttt{e}1 Defending a5 and attacking e5.
31...e4 31...£f5 32.£b4 £f7 33.£e4 £h3 34.£d6! and White's attack is faster. If instead 31...fxg3 32.fxg3 £f5 33.£e4 £h3 34.£b6.

32.£g2 £d7 33.£xe4 £c7 33...£h3 34.£f1.

34.f3 Cementing the £e4.

34.£d2 fxg3 35.£g5 gxf2+ 36.£xf2 is the engine's more direct preference.

34...fxg3 35.£g2 £d7 36.£g5 Now we see the consequences of Black's 23...f5.

36...£f5 36...£e8 37.£b6 £a6 38.£xb7 £xb7 39.£xb7 £xe1 40.£xa6 is the easiest win.

37.£b5 £xe4 38.fxe4 After this White will take on g3 and will be a pawn up with a completely dominating position.

38...£f4 39.£xg3 £d2+ 40.£f2 £xf2+ 40...£xd3 41.£xg6+! mates for White as follows: 41...£xg6 42.£g5+ £h7 43.£f5+ £h8 44.£f8+ £h7 45.£g8+ £h6 46.£g6#.

41.£xf2 £a6 42.£b6 £xb6 43.axb6 £e6 44.c5 The rest is easy because White can combine the threats of taking on d4, advancing the e-pawn and penetrating with the king.

1–0

A RESURRECTION OF OLD LINES

I was surprised to see an old line in the King’s Indian resurrected. If it withstands the tests of the modern engines it can provide Black with a sound alternative to the more popular lines with 9...£h5.

Alina Kashlinskaya – Kateryna Lagno
18th ch-EUR Indiv w 2017 Riga LAT (8.5)

1.d4 £f6 2.c4 g6 3.£c3 £g7 4.e4 d6 5.£e2 0–0 6.£f3 £e5 7.0–0 £c6 8.d5 £e7

THE MAGICIAN FROM RIGA

Many great grandmasters have come from Latvia such as Hermanis Matisons, Mikhail Tal, Alexei Shirov... The little known Hermanis Matisons was the very first Latvian chess master and the first winner of World Amateur Chess Championship; he significantly influenced chess popularity and traditions in Latvia in the early 20th century.

Riga, Latvia’s capital, is a city with a long chess tradition. It is the birth place of one of the world’s greatest ever players, Mikhail Tal, and the place where Tal scored his first victories on the path to becoming the Soviet and World Champion. Today, in one of the central parks in the city, a statue stands in memory of the great “Magician from Riga”, famous for his brilliant and highly complex attacking play and his chess writings. Tal was also a gifted pianist.
9.b4 a5 9...h5 is much more popular nowadays.

10.\( \text{a3} \) axb4

10...b6 is an alternative, but recently this was put under a cloud of doubt thanks to a fantastic idea by Pelletier. 11.bxa5 h5 12.d2 f4 13.axb6!! (13.b3 was the usual move) 13...\( \text{xa3} \) 14.b5 a5 15.bxc7 d7 16.a4 a6 17.b3 \( \text{xb5} \) 18.cxb5 xc7 19.xa5 xa5 20.g3 xe2+ 21.xe2 h6 22.fb1 and White went on to win: 1–0 (38) Pelletier,Y (2557)-Nakamura,H (2816) Skopje 2015.

11.xb4 b6 12.a4 e8 Here it is - the mysterious rook move. You do not get to see this move in the Mar del Plata, where the rook is glued to the f-file to support ...f5 and perhaps go ...f7-g7 or h7. I remember the first time I saw the move in 1998 - I was shocked and could not believe it (a year later I played it in one of my games). But the idea behind it is sound - Black wants to defend against White's queenside attack by playing ...c5 herself. When White takes en passant White can take the pawn on d6 with the bishop so Black removes the rook from f8 well in advance.

13.e5

13.d3 f5!? is another tactical justification of the the rook move.; 13.e1 f8! shows yet another idea seen decades ago - the bishop uses the liberated f8 square in order to protect the d6-pawn so that Black can play ...c5 14.f1 c5 15.a3 g7 16.b2 f8 and now all Black's pieces are back to their usual KID positions! 17.b5 e8 18.d2 f5 with unclear play: \( \frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2} \) (42) Fressinet,L (2700)-Grischuk,A (2764) Beijing 2012.

13...c5! 14.dxc6 xc6 15.xd6 xa5 15...d4 is what I played in 1999, but the game continuation is safer. 16.xd4 exd4 17.b5 xe4 18.c7 f4 is rather messy.

16.xa5 xa5 17.xe5 xd1 18.xd1 b7? All theory so far, and the theory continues, so it is very surprising that Lagno went for this move that leaves Black without compensation.

18...xe4! 19.xe4 xe5 20.xe5 xe5 21.d8+ g7 22.xe8 xe4 has already been played before.

19.c7 Threatening to take on b6 or force an exchange of the rooks by xd8.

19...xe4 20.xe4 xe4 21.f1 Black is
in trouble because she will lose the pawn on b6 and taking on c4 does not work for other reasons.

21...\(\text{\textit{\textbullet}}\text{xc4} \ 21...\text{\textit{\textbullet}}\text{c3} \ 22.\text{\textit{\textbullet}}\text{c1} \ \text{\textit{\textbullet}}\text{b2} \ 23.\text{\textit{\textbullet}}\text{c2} \ \text{\textit{\textbullet}}\text{f6} \ 24.\text{\textit{\textbullet}}\text{xb6}; \ 21...\text{\textit{\textbullet}}\text{f6} \ 22.\text{\textit{\textbullet}}\text{d3} \ \text{\textit{\textbullet}}\text{e7} \ 23.\text{\textit{\textbullet}}\text{xb6}.

22.\text{\textit{\textbullet}}\text{d8+} \ \text{\textit{\textbullet}}\text{f8}

23.\text{\textit{\textbullet}}\text{d3!} Now Black loses the exchange.

23...\text{\textit{\textbullet}}\text{f6} \ 24.\text{\textit{\textbullet}}\text{xe4} \ \text{\textit{\textbullet}}\text{xe4} \text{And even though White's technique allowed Black chances eventually White won. To Lagno's credit, she scored 2.5 out of the remaining 3 games to finish in shared 4th place.}

A RARELY SEEN TYPE OF MATE

From the many interesting moments in Riga here is a question to finish with - is it possible to mate with two knights? The following game provides the answer...

Stavroula Tsolakidou - Ilze Berzina

18th ch-EUR Indiv w 2017 Riga LAT (3.19)

41...\text{\textit{\textbullet}}\text{f4} \ 42.\text{\textit{\textbullet}}\text{xe3?} Panic, but from a practical perspective all is not lost.

42.a4! Much better now than on the next move, as played in the game. 42...\text{\textit{\textbullet}}\text{e4} \ 43.\text{\textit{\textbullet}}\text{f1} \ \text{\textit{\textbullet}}\text{f3} \ 44.\text{\textit{\textbullet}}\text{xe4!} \ \text{\textit{\textbullet}}\text{xe4} \ 45.\text{\textit{\textbullet}}\text{e2}

---

Tournament hall
and the Nc2 loses a lot of time in order to help the passer on e3. 45...a1 46.a5 b3 47.a6 c1+ 48.e1 f3 49.a7 d3+ 50.d1 e2+ 51.e2 e1= with a draw.

42...xe3 43.a4?? This is the final mistake. It is a move made on general principles, the knights find it most problematic to fight against an a- or h-pawn, but general principles are worth nothing without precise calculation to support them.

43.b4! was the only move, which is difficult to understand at this point. The idea is that if Black continues as in the game and creates the same mating construction the b-pawn can queen with check. 43...e4 44.b5 g3 45.b6 d2? (45...c5 is better and according to the engines Black wins, but in practice this is a very difficult task)

46.b7 f3+ 47.h1 g4 48.b8=+ and now White wins.

43...e4 Now White gets mated.

44.h2 g5 45.a5 f3 46.g1 If 46.a6 f2 47.a7 g4+ 48.h1 e4 49.a8= g3=.

46...g3 47.a6 f3+ 48.h1 g4 0–1

The top three players at the tournament were followed by 12 players who all had the same number of points - 7.5. They are (in order): Kateryna Lagno (Russia), Mariya Muzychuk (Ukraine), Monika Socko (Poland), Elina Danielian (Armenia), Elisabeth Paethz (Germany), Marina Nechaeva (Russia), Bela Khotenashvili (Georgia), Natalia Zhukova (Ukraine), Natalija Pogonina (Russia), Hoang Thanh Trang (Hungary) and Anita Gara (Hungary). Since only the top 14 finishers in the competition qualify for the Chess World Cup, 15th place finisher Inna Gaponenko (Ukraine) failed to qualify for the tournament, even though she too finished with 7.5 points.

18-year-old Goryachkina started the event ranked number 14, but with 4.5/5 she raced to the top of the tournament and eventually ended in second place.
US CHAMPIONSHIP 2017

THE TRIUMPH OF
WESLEY SO AND
SABINA FOISOR

By GM Aleksandar Colovic

The US Championship is the second strongest national championship in the world, only behind the Russian Championship (but not that far behind). For the new champion, Wesley So, winning the US Championship was one of the greatest achievements in his career (so far) and another addition to the long run of astounding results in the recent period. The triumverate of Caruana, Nakamura and So (in board order that won the Olympiad in Baku) was joined by fellow national team members Shankland and Robson, the old guard Kamsky and Shabalov, plus the young and promising Xiong and Naroditsky. The other participants were Onischuk (who rarely plays nowadays as he has dedicated himself to coaching), Akobian and Zherebukh (who recently switched federation from Ukraine). These last three had a lot to say in Saint Louis! Starting with his win in the Sinquefield Cup in August last year, So has won gold medal on board 3 in Baku at the Olympiad, the London Classic, the Tata Steel in Wijk aan Zee and now his first US Championship. His last loss in a game with classical time-control was on 16th of July 2016 to Magnus Carlsen. This period has seen an impressive improvement of the quality of So’s chess, which cements him at the top of the world chess pyramid right next to the World Champion. So started the tournament in excellent style by crushing Shabalov in 29 moves:
1.e4 c6 2.d4 f3 d5 3.e3 f6 4.d4 g4 5.h3 f5 Somewhat peculiar, but soon it transposes to the usual lines.

5...h5 6.c3 e6 7.g4 g6 is the more usual move order.

6.c3 e6 7.g4 g6 8.e5 bd7 9.xg6 hxg6 10.g5 This is the more direct approach. Black’s idea in this line of the Slav is to establish a strong central structure on the white squares in order to limit White’s unopposed white-squared bishop.

10.d2 is the main alternative.

10.g8 White’s last move weakened f5 so the knight immediately heads there.

10.e4 is an alternative worthy of consideration.

11.h4 e7 12.d2 f5 13.g4 So is actually following the moves of his own game from 2015, however back then he played as Black. He must have liked how White treated the opening.

13...a6

A rather neutral move. The idea is to cover b5 so that later on Black can push ...c5 without worries about a possible b5.

13...e7 was So’s choice and it is the main move. The threat is ...g5. The game continued 14.h3 h5 this was not strictly necessary. 15.0-0-0 c7 16.b1 dxc4 17.xc4 0-0-0 18.e2 with easier play for White: \( \frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2} \) (43) Meier,G (2654)-So,W (2778) Dortmund 2015.

14.0-0 xc4?! This looks dubious. Black commences operations in the centre, with his king still stuck on e8 and his development unfinished. Now as the game opens up, the king on e8 lays deprived of the queenside shelter he found in the game Meier-So.

14...c7 15.b1 dxc4 16.xc4 0-0-0 was better, similar to So’s game against Meier.

15.xc4 c5 16.dxc5 This wins a tempo, but it also helps Black’s development. But not much!

16.b3?! was probably stronger, as Black would not find it easy to continue. 16...cxd4 17.exd4 e7 18.b1 with the imminent d5 - Black’s main problem is his king because it is impossible to castle short in view of the deadly h5 threat.
16...\texttt{xc5} 16...\texttt{xc5} 17.\texttt{e2} \texttt{e7} 18.\texttt{b1} does not change much - Black’s problem with the king will not go away.

17.\texttt{e2} \texttt{e7} 18.\texttt{b1} White’s last preparatory move.

18...\texttt{b6} 19.\texttt{a4} And now the tempo-play starts. No relief for Black in sight.

19...\texttt{e7} 20.\texttt{c1} \texttt{d6} 21.\texttt{a5} The threat is \texttt{c7}.

21...\texttt{e5} 22.\texttt{e4} \texttt{c6} 23.\texttt{hd1} \texttt{hx4} 24.f4 \texttt{b8} 24...\texttt{xa5} 25.\texttt{xd6} \texttt{xd6} 26.\texttt{b4} is equally hopeless.

25.\texttt{b6} \texttt{d6}

25...\texttt{a7} 26.\texttt{a4} with the simple idea of \texttt{f3}.; 25...\texttt{xa5} 26.\texttt{a4+} \texttt{c6} 27.\texttt{xc6} bxc6 28.\texttt{xc6+} \texttt{f8} 29.\texttt{d7+} wins the queen on \texttt{b8}.

26.\texttt{a4} \texttt{a7} 27.\texttt{f3} Simple chess, increasing the pressure as Black’s position is about to burst.

27...\texttt{b5} 28.\texttt{c2} \texttt{c7} 29.\texttt{d7} Black’s position is completely devastated and he has no alternative but to resign.

1-0

\textbf{THE STRUGGLE OF FABIANO CARUANA}

Nakamura also started with a fine win in Round 1, but then got into a rut, drawing 7 games in a row! His problem was not creating winning chances.

Caruana, on the other hand, had a different problem - he struggled to convert the winning chances he managed to create. His first win came in Round 6 (after the first 5 finished in draws) at the expense of an out-of-form Kamsky.

\textbf{Fabiano Caruana - Gata Kamsky}

\texttt{ch-USA} 2017 Saint Louis USA (6.3)

1.e4 c5 2.\texttt{f3} \texttt{c6} 3.d4 cxd4 4.\texttt{xd4} \texttt{f6} 4...\texttt{b6} has been played by Kamsky before.

5.\texttt{c3} e5 A very uncharacteristic choice for Kamsky, who prefers less theoretical lines. I am sure Caruana did not expect this but an elite player can adjust his play according to circumstances.

6.\texttt{db5} d6 7.\texttt{g5} a6 8.\texttt{a3} b5 9.\texttt{xf6} And here comes the adjustment. The popularity of the Sveshnikov dropped dramatically when the line 9...\texttt{d5} \texttt{e7} 10.\texttt{f6} \texttt{f6} 11.c4 turned out to be a "tranquiliser" of Black’s aggression.

The game move used to be very popular but Black’s counterplay was always sufficient. However, I very much doubt Kamsky expected this! Caruana may have analysed this at some point, whereas Kamsky was most probably banking on the slow lines of the current main line after 9...\texttt{d5} and 11.c4.

9...\texttt{d5} \texttt{e7} 10.\texttt{xf6} \texttt{xf6} 11.c4 b4 12.\texttt{c2} and the game will be slow and strategic, not something the Sveshnikov players are attracted to (but Kamsky probably was!). Black is very close to being equal here, but he is never really completely equal, hence the massive drop in popularity of the Sveshnikov and exodus to the Najdorf.

9...\texttt{gxf6} 10.\texttt{d5} \texttt{g7} 10...f5 is more popular nowadays, but both moves are playable. Now we see Kamsky trying to step away from mainstream theory.
11.\texttt{d3 e7} 12.\texttt{xe7 xe7} 13.\texttt{c3} The critical move.

13.\texttt{c4} f5 and extensive theory shows that Black is more than OK here.

13...f5 14.\texttt{c2} f4 This is possible, but not the best. Did Kamsky not know this, or was he still trying to get away from the main lines as soon as possible?

14...\texttt{b7} is the main line here, but also not necessarily the best. 14...0-0 and 14...\texttt{g5} are alternatives.

15.\texttt{h5} Curiously enough, this was the move I analysed back in the 90s! My conclusion was that it was promising for White.

15...h6?! 15...0-0 16.g3 was the main idea behind 15.\texttt{h5}, White plans to castle queenside and start an attack.

16.\texttt{b4 e6}?

A huge blunder, signifying that Kamsky has not overcome his problems from the first rounds. But White is better already so it is not easy to suggest something for Black.

If 16...\texttt{g5} 17.\texttt{xg5} hxg5 18.a4 is clearly better for White; if 16...\texttt{b7} 17.a4 (17.g3) and if 16...\texttt{b7} 17.g3.

17.\texttt{xa6}! A simple tactic that wins a pawn and eventually the game. From this point Black tried all he could on the kingside, but there was simply nothing that could be done.

17...0-0 18.\texttt{b4} f5 19.0-0 fxe4 20.\texttt{xe4 ac8} 21.\texttt{ad1}

Black’s main problem is not the material deficit, but rather White’s continued control over the white squares in the centre.

21...\texttt{c4} 22.\texttt{g6 xe4} Desperate, but there was no other choice.

23.\texttt{xe4} f3 24.\texttt{d5 g5} 25.g3 \texttt{f7} 25...\texttt{h5} 26.\texttt{e3} defends g2.

26.\texttt{h1 h3} 27.\texttt{fe1 f5} 28.\texttt{b4 f8} 29.\texttt{xb5} Calmly collecting more pawns as

**OTHER PARTICIPANTS WERE**
**ONISCHUK**
**(WHO RARELY PLAYS NOWADAYS AS HE HAS DEDICATED HIMSELF TO COACHING),**
**AKOBIAN AND ZHEREBUKH**
**(WHO RECENTLY SWITCHED FEDERATION FROM UKRAINE).**
**THESE THREE HAD A LOT TO SAY IN SAINT LOUIS!**
Black is ruthlessly deprived of counterplay.

29...h5 30.\(\&\)e3 \(\&\)h3 31.\(\&\)c4 \(\&\)g6 32.a4 \(\&\)h8 33.\(\&\)h4 \(\&\)e6 34.a5 e4

35.\(\&\)d8 This was the simpler way.

35.a6 was also possible 35...\(\&\)e7 36.a7 \(\&\)xh4 37.a8\(\&\)+ \(\&\)h7 38.gxh4.

35...\(\&\)h7 36.a6 \(\&\)h6 37.\(\&\)b6 h4 37...\(\&\)xe3 38.\(\&\)xe3 \(\&\)f5 39.a7 \(\&\)h3 40.\(\&\)g1.

38.g4 \(\&\)xg4 39.\(\&\)g1 \(\&\)xe3 40.\(\&\)xe3

1–0

Although he played well, instability started to plague Caruana. He was convincingly outplayed on the Black side of a Breyer Spanish by Zherebukh in Round 7 (a rare sight to see a 2605-rated player outplay a 2817-rated player), crushed Naroditsky’s French in Round 8, lost a winning position against Akobian in Round 9 and beat Robson and Shabalov in the last two rounds. His final result of +2 (6.5/11) allowed him to share 3rd place with Nakamura (who also won his last two games) and Akobian.

This is a far cry from Caruana’s 8.5/11 from last year, but he paid the price for the failure to convert winning positions. This has afflicted Caruana before, most notably at the Candidates Tournament in Moscow last year, and it is definitely something he needs to work on.

**NAKAMURA’S RUDE AWAKENING**

Nakamura seemed somewhat blasé throughout the tournament, but when he finally woke up and started playing his natural game he achieved a winning position against Onischuk. But then, very uncharacteristically, Nakamura miscalculated with dire consequences.

Hakiru Nakamura - Alexander Onischuk
ch-USA 2017 Saint Louis USA (9.3)

This was the position after 31 moves. Black to play...

31...\(\&\)g2?! 31...\(\&\)h2h7 was better, keeping the position dynamically balanced.

32.d5?! Nakamura missed his best chance
here. This move is very important for White, but it seems that Nakamura did not make a precise calculation.

32.£e5! £g7 (32...£f8 33.£d6 £xf7 34.£e5 £g8 35.£d5! cxd5 36.£xf7 £xf7 37.£d5 with excellent winning chances for White) 33.£g1 £xe5 34.£xe5 £xg1 35.£xg1 £f8 36.£a4! Black’s problem is that he cannot take on f7 because of back rank problems. 36...b6 37.£g6 £xf7 (37...£xf7 38.£f6) 38.£xc6+! White will win the exchange anyway, but first he takes an important pawn 38...£c8 (38...£b7 39.£d8+) 39.£g8+ £d7 40.£e5+ £e7 41.£xf7 £xf7 42.£g1± and White has good winning chances here.

32...cxd5 33.£xd5?

33.£e5! once again this was the key move, though this time less effective than on the previous move. There could follow 33...£g7 34.£g1 £xe5 35.£xe5 £xg1 36.£xg1 £f8 and then:

A) 37.£e2!? is a curious positional alternative 37...£a6 38.£d4 £a7 39.£g6 £xf7 40.£f6 £e8 41.£xf7 (41.£xf7 £d6 42.£f6 £e4 43.£xf7 £xf7 44.£xf7 £b5 this is similar to the line after 41.£f7) 41...£xf7 42.£xf7 £b5 43.£xf5 £b6 and the engine evaluates this as a dead draw, which I found surprising, but it is probably right;

B) 37.£xd5 £xd5 38.£d7+ £c8 39.£xf7 £xf7 40.£g7 £e8 41.£e6 and White can safely play for a win for a very long time.

33...£g7! The move missed by Nakamura and at a heavy cost. That is very surprising indeed because it is the only move for Black that does not lose immediately. To make things worse, it turns the tables completely and now it is Black who plays for a win!

If 33...£xd5? 34.£xd5 £xd5 35.£e5++; and if 33...£xd5? 34.£e5++; 33...£xf7? 34.£xc7.

34.£c3 £xf7 35.£e5 £e8 Black is two pawns up and eventually he converted his advantage, although White still had chances to save the game. A very uncharacteristic performance by Nakamura.

0–1

SO AND AMERICA’S MOST PROMISING YOUNGSTER

In the meantime So continued in his trademark “slow and steady” style and notched up another win against Onischuk in Round 4.

After 4 more draws and the tournament coming to an end he was determined to score at least one more win. In Round 10 So was Black against America’s most promising youngster, 16-year old Jeffery Xiong.
1..d4 .gf6 2.c4  e6 3.g3 Playing the Catalan against So is a very interesting psychological choice because So uses the same opening with great effect as White.

3...d5 4..g2  e7 Continuing with the main line, one of the most reliable ways for Black. It is worth noting that Kramnik, who practically single-handedly ushered the Catalan to the elite level starting with his match against Topalov in 2006, when forced to play against it also keeps to this line.

5..f3 0-0 6.0-0  dxc4 7.£c2  a6 8.a4 8.£xc4 is the other main line, but it has lately been abandoned because Black found reliable ways to equalise. One of which is Kramnik’s 8...b5 9.£c2  b7 10.£d2  e4 11.£c1 c6? this was first played by Rozentalis, but it only gained popularity after 12.a4  bd7 13.£c3  g6 1/2-1/2 (63) Giri,A (2768)-Kramnik,V (2769) London 2014.

8...£d7 9.£d1 9.£xc4 is the main line.

9...£c6 10.£c3 Threatening e4.

10...£xf3 11.£xf3  £c6 12.£xc6 Both Xiong and So have played this position before.

12.e3 is an alternative, but then White will not find it easy to recover the sacrificed pawn. 12...£d5 13.£e2  a5 ½-½ (21) Romanishin,O (2580)-Geller,E (2565) Vilnius 1980.

12...bxc6 13.£g5 Xiong follows his own game.

13.a5  £d5 14.£a2  £f6 15.£c3  £d5 16.£a4  b8 and Black was fine in Kovalyov,A (2636)-So,W (2744) Edmonton 2014.

13...b8 14.e3  c5

So’s improvement. It is the engine’s first choice so Xiong must have analysed it. However, from what happened next, perhaps he did not do it very deeply.

14...£d5 15.£xe7  £xe7 16.£e4 was slightly better for White in Xiong,J (2641)-Harmon Vellotti,L (2434) Saint Louis 2016.

15.dxc5  £e8 16.£d4  £d7 17.£xe7  £xe7 18.e6?
This lets the knight get active. It is amazing that from here the game is extremely forced. From a practical perspective I would say that White is lost!

18.f4 is what the engine wants to play, indicating 0.00. But weakening the king like this is not to a human’s taste. 18...e5 (18...•xc5 19.£xc4 ¤b3 20.£b1 ¤a5 21.£d4 c5 22.£dd1 £b4 23.£e4) 19.£xc4 exf4 20.exf4 £e3+ 21.£g2 (21.£f1 £f3+ 22.£g1 £e3+ is a perpetual) 21...£f6 22.£d1 and White’s good central control is a guarantee against problems.

18...£e5 19.£e4 £c5 20.£d5 20.f4?! £g4.

20...£d3 21.£xc7

21...£xf2! A very difficult sacrifice to make in the style of the great Russian player Mikhail Tal. The lines are almost impossible to calculate, so Black had to rely on his intuition.

22.£xf2 After this White is lost, but his position was very difficult anyway.

22.£xa6 was better, but after 22...£g5 23.£f3 £xb2 White’s position is not one to be envied. He is under attack and his forces are scattered. In an actual game this is next to impossible to save. 24.c7 is the only reasonable move to continue 24...£h3+! (24...d3 25.£f1 threatening £f7 is OK for White) 25.£h1 h6! the last two moves (and especially this one) are impossible to find by sheer calculation in a practical game. 26.£xc4 (26.£f1 £a5! 27.£xf7+ £xf7 28.c8£+ £h7 wins for Black - here we see the importance of 25...h6!!) 26...£f2 27.£c6 £c8 28.£c2 (28.£b7? £xe3! 29.£xc8+ £h7 30.£b7 £d2 mates for Black) 28...£f6 29.£ac1 £xc2 30.£xc2 £f3+ 31.£g2 £f2+ 32.£g1 £xe3 33.£a1 £d3+ 34.£h1 £b6 and Black wins.

22...£xb2+ 23.£f1 £h5 24.£g4 £xh2 25.£f3 c3! It is impossible to defend against the attack now. There are simply too many threats.

26.£c1 e5 Removing the rook from the d-file because it needs to defend the e4-square.

27.£h4

27...£d5 e4 and the queen must abandon f3 which will result in a mate. 27.£c4 was
the most resilient, forcing Black to find the following winning line. 27...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{d}f}b8 \texttt{\textbf{d}f}2+! \texttt{\textbf{d}f}x\texttt{\textbf{d}d}2 \texttt{\textbf{d}d}x\texttt{\textbf{d}d}2 \texttt{\textbf{d}d}e2 White is a rook up but his position is defenceless. 32.\texttt{\textbf{d}d}c2 \texttt{\textbf{d}d}e2 33.\texttt{\textbf{d}d}c2 \texttt{\textbf{d}d}f1+ 34.\texttt{\textbf{d}d}g2 \texttt{\textbf{d}d}f2+ 50.\texttt{\textbf{d}d}g1 \texttt{\textbf{d}d}h1+ 51.\texttt{\textbf{d}d}g2 \texttt{\textbf{d}d}h1+ with a winning queen endgame.

27...\texttt{\textbf{d}d}2 28.\texttt{\textbf{d}d}d1 \texttt{\textbf{d}d}f1+ \texttt{\textbf{d}d}f2 29.\texttt{\textbf{d}d}d5 30.\texttt{\textbf{d}d}d1 \texttt{\textbf{d}d}f1+ \texttt{\textbf{d}d}d2 30.\texttt{\textbf{d}d}d5 \texttt{\textbf{d}d}f2 31.\texttt{\textbf{d}d}d5 \texttt{\textbf{d}d}f2 32.\texttt{\textbf{d}d}d5 \texttt{\textbf{d}d}f2 33.\texttt{\textbf{d}d}d5 \texttt{\textbf{d}d}f2 34.\texttt{\textbf{d}d}d5 \texttt{\textbf{d}d}f2 35.\texttt{\textbf{d}d}d5 \texttt{\textbf{d}d}f2 36.\texttt{\textbf{d}d}d5 \texttt{\textbf{d}d}f2 37.\texttt{\textbf{d}d}d5 \texttt{\textbf{d}d}f2 38.\texttt{\textbf{d}d}d5 \texttt{\textbf{d}d}f2 39.\texttt{\textbf{d}d}d5 \texttt{\textbf{d}d}f2 40.\texttt{\textbf{d}d}d5 \texttt{\textbf{d}d}f2 41.\texttt{\textbf{d}d}d5 \texttt{\textbf{d}d}f2 42.\texttt{\textbf{d}d}d5 \texttt{\textbf{d}d}f2 43.\texttt{\textbf{d}d}d5 \texttt{\textbf{d}d}f2 44.\texttt{\textbf{d}d}d5 \texttt{\textbf{d}d}f2 45.\texttt{\textbf{d}d}d5 \texttt{\textbf{d}d}f2 46.\texttt{\textbf{d}d}d5 \texttt{\textbf{d}d}f2 47.\texttt{\textbf{d}d}d5 \texttt{\textbf{d}d}f2 48.\texttt{\textbf{d}d}d5 \texttt{\textbf{d}d}f2 49.\texttt{\textbf{d}d}d5 \texttt{\textbf{d}d}f2 0–1

A beautiful game. Calculating the combination precisely was very difficult because there were lot of lines which were impossible to see for a human (especially after 22.\texttt{\textbf{d}d}a6), but this only serves as proof of So’s fine intuition - undoubtedly he saw a lot, but he did not see everything and still he went into Tal’s “deep dark forest”, trusting his senses.

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THE TIE-BREAK: NOT A ONE-SIDED MATCH

Somewhat inconspicuously, as if walking carefully and quietly between the raindrops, Alexander Onischuk achieved a shared first place.
Crucial for his success were the wins in Round 9 (against Nakamura, see above) and 10 (against Xiong, who was obviously out of form).

The last round saw three leaders - So, Onischuk and Akobian. I still vividly remember the times when Kasparov would get excited at the prospect of a last round win that would clinch him the tournament. More often than not, he was successful in such situations.

But, modern times have different rules. So was Black against Naroditsky (whom he outrated by 176 points) and he did not mind a quick draw, which is what happened - a well-known 14-move repetition in the Berlin. He said that he was confident that neither Akobian (playing Nakamura with Black) nor Onischuk (playing Kamsky with Black) would win, so he thought he was not risking much by taking a draw. It turned out he was completely right, but I cannot escape the feeling of nostalgia for the last-round excitement of the Kasparov era.

The tie-break was not as one-sided as many expected. So won the first game after Onischuk erred in a complex position.

[Game Graphics]

Wesley So - Alexande Onischuk
ch-USA TB 2017 Saint Louis USA (1)

1.c4 e6 2.\texttt{\textbf{d}d}c3 \texttt{\textbf{d}d}f6 One might wonder why Onischuk gave So an extra possibility with this move order. Onischuk was very successful with the QGD in the tournament so I assume he wanted to play it, but then why not just 2...d5? Was he perhaps intending the Nimzo Indian defense after White’s 3.d4 move?

2...d5 inevitably leads to the QGD after 3.d4.

3.e4 And White takes the opportunity. So has played like this before.

3...d5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.c5 \texttt{\textbf{d}d}4 6.\texttt{\textbf{d}d}f3 \texttt{\textbf{d}d}f5 7.\texttt{\textbf{d}d}e2 Deviating from his game against Nakamura.

7.d4 \texttt{\textbf{d}d}4 8.\texttt{\textbf{d}d}d2 \texttt{\textbf{d}d}c3 9.\texttt{\textbf{d}d}c3 0-0 1-0 (71) So,W (2770)-Nakamura,H (2787) Leuven 2016.

7...\texttt{\textbf{d}d}7 7...\texttt{\textbf{d}d}c5 is an alternative; if 7...\texttt{\textbf{d}d}c6 8.0-0 \texttt{\textbf{d}d}7 and now the game move 9.\texttt{\textbf{d}d}b3 is not that good in view of 9...\texttt{\textbf{d}d}c5! 10.\texttt{\textbf{d}d}xd5 \texttt{\textbf{d}d}d3 and Black has excellent play - compared to the game the \texttt{\textbf{d}d}c6 here does not allow White to take on b7.

8.0-0 0-0 9.\texttt{\textbf{d}d}b3 \texttt{\textbf{d}d}c6 9...\texttt{\textbf{d}d}c5 is not good here 10.\texttt{\textbf{d}d}xd5 \texttt{\textbf{d}d}d3 11.\texttt{\textbf{d}d}xd3 \texttt{\textbf{d}d}xd3 12.\texttt{\textbf{d}d}xb7!

10.\texttt{\textbf{d}d}xd5 10.\texttt{\textbf{d}d}xb7 \texttt{\textbf{d}d}b4.

10...\texttt{\textbf{d}d}c5?
Instead 10...\(\text{g}5\)! should be played. But, it is such an “inhuman” move. A pawn down, b7 is hanging and Black is moving his most active piece in order to exchange it and concede the bishop pair in the process! But all this does not mean that it is not the best move... There might follow 11.\(\text{x}e7+\text{x}e7\) 12.\(\text{x}g5\) \(\text{x}g5\) 13.\(d)\text{d}3\) (13.\(d)\text{d}4\) \(\text{d}8\) 14.\(e)\text{e}3 \(\text{x}d4\) 15.\(\text{x}d4\) \(\text{x}d4\) 16.\(\text{x}b7\) \(\text{x}e5\) is equal) 13...\(\text{g}6\) 14.\(\text{e}3\) \(\text{x}e5\) 15.\(\text{xb}7\) \(\text{ab}8\) 16.\(\text{d}5\) \(\text{fe}8\) with compensation.

11.\(e)\text{e}3 \(\text{g}6\) 12.\(\text{x}b7\) Two pawns are two pawns, as So said. But this gives Black counterplay.

12.d3! Inverting the move order would have forced the \(\text{e}4\) to go to \(g5\) and not to \(c5\) as in the game. 12...\(\text{g}5\) (12...\(\text{xf}2\) 13.\(\text{xf}2\) \(\text{d}4\) 14.\(\text{xd}4\) \(\text{xd}4\) 15.\(\text{xd}2\) Black does not have any threats) 13.\(\text{xb}7\) \(\text{d}4\) 14.\(\text{xd}4\) \(\text{xd}4\) 15.\(\text{d}5\) with a big advantage.

12...\(\text{d}4\) 13.\(\text{xd}4\) \(\text{xd}4\) 14.d3

14.\(\text{c}5!\) 15.\(\text{b}5\) 15.\(\text{f}3\) \(\text{xe}5\) 16.\(\text{c}4\) is the engine’s preference, but here Black has good play for a pawn.

15.\(\text{b}8\) 16.\(\text{c}4\) \(\text{e}6\) 17.f4 Preventing ...

17...\(\text{xb}2\)

Not bad, but letting White off the hook a bit as the bind is loosened.

17...\(\text{c}5!\) Keeping it positional gave Black great play, but he needed to calculate what happens after 18.f5 \(\text{g}5\) 19.fxe6 \(\text{xe}3+\) 20.\(\text{h}1\) \(\text{xe}5\) and Black is fine here.

18.\(\text{b}1\) \(\text{d}4?\) 18...\(\text{d}4!\) Was the only move
to keep the balance 19.\(\text{\textit{\textsc{en}}}\text{\textit{\textsc{b}}}} 20.\(\text{\textit{\textsc{en}}}\text{\textit{\textsc{b}}} 21.\(\text{\textit{\textsc{f}}}} 22.\(\text{\textit{\textsc{en}}} \text{\textit{\textsc{d}}}} 23.\(\text{\textit{\textsc{en}}} \text{\textit{\textsc{e}}} 24.\(\text{\textit{\textsc{en}}} \text{\textit{\textsc{f}}} 25.\(\text{\textit{\textsc{en}}} \text{\textit{\textsc{g}}} 26.\(\text{\textit{\textsc{en}}} \text{\textit{\textsc{h}}} 27.\(\text{\textit{\textsc{en}}} \text{\textit{\textsc{f}}} 28.\(\text{\textit{\textsc{en}}} \text{\textit{\textsc{b}}}} 29.\(\text{\textit{\textsc{en}}} \text{\textit{\textsc{d}}} 30.\(\text{\textit{\textsc{en}}} \text{\textit{\textsc{h}}} 31.\(\text{\textit{\textsc{en}}} \text{\textit{\textsc{g}}} 1-0

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\(\text{\textit{\textsc{en}}} 19.\(\text{\textit{\textsc{en}}} \text{\textit{\textsc{b}}} 20.\(\text{\textit{\textsc{en}}} \text{\textit{\textsc{g}}} ?

A surprising move that probably confused Onischuk. The bishop is not attacked anymore and f5 is a constant threat.

20.\(\text{\textit{\textsc{en}}} \text{\textit{\textsc{b}}} \text{\textit{\textsc{e}}}} 21.\(\text{\textit{\textsc{en}}} \text{\textit{\textsc{d}}} 22.\(\text{\textit{\textsc{en}}} \text{\textit{\textsc{c}}} 23.\(\text{\textit{\textsc{en}}} \text{\textit{\textsc{b}}} 24.\(\text{\textit{\textsc{en}}} \text{\textit{\textsc{a}}} 25.\(\text{\textit{\textsc{en}}} \text{\textit{\textsc{g}}} 26.\(\text{\textit{\textsc{en}}} \text{\textit{\textsc{f}}} \text{\textit{\textsc{c}}} 27.\(\text{\textit{\textsc{en}}} \text{\textit{\textsc{e}}} 28.\(\text{\textit{\textsc{en}}} \text{\textit{\textsc{b}}} 29.\(\text{\textit{\textsc{en}}} \text{\textit{\textsc{d}}} 30.\(\text{\textit{\textsc{en}}} \text{\textit{\textsc{h}}} 31.\(\text{\textit{\textsc{en}}} \text{\textit{\textsc{g}}} 1-0

In a must-win situation Onischuk went for the popular Reti in order to get a position with many pieces and try to outplay So. And it worked! In a battle of bishops versus knights the bishops prevailed and he achieved a winning position. But winning against So is not a trivial matter, even from a winning position.

THE TRIUMVERATE OF CARUANA, NAKAMURA AND SO (IN BOARD ORDER THAT WON THE OLYMPIAD IN BAKU) WAS JOINED BY FELLOW NATIONAL TEAM MEMBERS SHANKLAND AND ROBSON, THE OLD GUARD KAMSKY AND SHABALOV, PLUS THE YOUNG AND PROMISING XIONG AND NARODITSKY
SOMETHING INCONSPICUOUSLY, AS IF WALKING BETWEEN THE RAINDROPS, ALEXANDER ONISCHUK CLAIMED SHARED FIRST PLACE

41.idente5+! wins for White in all lines. 41...idente7 (41...idente8 42.idente6+ idente8 43.idente6 idente5+ 44.idents3 and compared to the game the bad position of the Black king decides the game in White's favour - Black cannot avoid the exchange of queens after Qd8; 41...idente8 42.idente6+ idente7 43.idents8+ idente6 44.idents8+ g6 45.idents5! 42.idents5+ g6 43.idents8 g7 44.idents2 and Black is completely paralysed.

41...idente7 42.idente6? 42.idents5+

42...idente5+ 43.idents1 idente4 Now Black has counterplay (especially in a rapid game) even though the engine says White is winning easily.

44.idents1+

44.identsf3! is the winning way: 44...identexc4 45.identsa1+ idente8 46.identsb8+ idente7 47.identsa8! not an easy manœuvre to see. The threat is idente5 and idente5. 47...g6 48.identsa7+ idente8 49.identsxf6 and this is technically winning.

44...idente3 45.identsc2 idente8 46.idents2 Even though two pawns up it is not clear that this is winning for White. The queen, knight and the weak f4-square make it very problematic, if at all possible.

46.idents5 47.identes5 g5! Fixing White’s black square weaknesses.

48.h5 idente7 49.idents2 identh6

Black’s pieces control black squares and White cannot advance. It is curious to note that the engine gives a winning advantage to White, but even at depth 48 it is still rated at 1.67, meaning it cannot find a way to win.

50.idents3 identes4+ 51.identes3 idente4 52.idents3 identes4+ 53.idents2 identes4 54.idents6 This allows Black to put the knight on f4, and the engine immediately says 0.00. But what else could White try?

54...idente3 55.idents1 idente4 56.identes2 identa1+ 57.identes2 idente5 58.idents8 identh5+ Now it is obvious that the game will end in a draw.

59.idents2 identes4+ 60.identes3 identes6 61.identes4 identh4+ 62.identes3 identes2+ 63.identes3 idente1+ 64.identes3 idente2+ ½-½

In a tournament where his most direct competitors faltered, So’s stability brought him another success. He has risen to number 2 in the world and at the moment is playing the best chess.

All of a sudden Carlsen’s dominance does not seem insurmountable any longer.

Bearing all this in mind, it is worth repeating...
So’s own views about the future and Carlsen, expressed in a recent BCM interview:
When asked about who does he see as the next world champion, Wesley So had this to say: “I have no idea. Life is strange and weird things happen all the time. Better just to live the part you’re in, instead of wondering about parts of it you may never reach.”

Asked if he is ready to take on Carlsen, So replied: “I never feel ready to take on anyone. I go into each game just hoping for the best no matter who I’m playing! Sometimes lower rated players can pull unpleasant surprises. Sometimes higher rated players aren’t in form. Anything can happen on any day.”

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The 2017 US Women’s Championship is an elite national championship event, featuring 12 of the strongest female chess players in America and the women’s tournament was no less exciting than the men’s. This year’s winner was Sabina Foisor, who won the title with a spectacular victory in the last round.

The race was between defending champion Nazi Paikidze and Sabina-Francesca Foisor. The rating favourites Irina Krush and Anna Zatonskih did not manage to keep up the pace - Krush lost two games with White against Yu and Paikidze, while Zatonskih lost the crucial game against eventual winner Foisor in the penultimate round.

**Sabina Foisor – Anna Zatonskih**

ch-USA w 2017 Saint Louis USA (10.2)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3..dc3 ¥f6 4.¥f3 ¥e7 5.¥f4 0-0 6.¥c1 c5 7.dxc5 ¥xc5 8.e3 ¥c6 9.a3 a6 10.b4 ¥a7 This is rarely played nowadays.

10...¥d6 is the main line and is considered good for Black.

11.¥g3 11.c5 was played by Gelfand 11...h6 12.¥e2 ¥b8 13.0-0 e5 14.¥g3 ¥e6 with unclear play: 1-0 (51) Gelfand,B (2691)-Topalov,V (2700) Monte Carlo 1999.

11...h6 12.¥c2 ¥e7 13.¥e2 dxc4 14.¥xc4 b5 15.¥a2 ¥b7 16.¥b1 White delays castling in order to provoke weakening of Black’s kingside.

16...¥fd8 17.¥h4 g5 18.¥g3 ¥ac8 19.0-0 A very complicated position now arises. Both armies are well developed and, for the time being, the weakening of Black’s king does not play a role.

19...¥b8 Redeploying the knight to d7 so it does not block the bishop on b7.

20.¥d2 ¥bd7 21.¥b2

Getting out of the pin, but with this White liberates the ¥f6 because it does not have to cover h7 anymore.

21.¥fd1 was entirely possible as Black cannot use the pin on the c-file.

21...¥h5! 22.¥c2? But this is just a waste of time and in such a position time is precious!

22.¥e4 is a typical move, neutralising the strong bishop on b7. 22...¥df6 23.¥xb7 ¥xb7 24.¥e2 with further exchanges to follow.

22...¥f5! Of course, Black takes over the initiative now.

23.¥a2 White operates with one-move threats that are easily parried, but it is already difficult to suggest something constructive.

23...¥g7 24.¥d1 ¥xg3 25.hxg3 ¥e5 26.¥e2 26.¥e2 was better, but Black is still much better after 26...¥xc1 27.¥xc1 ¥d6+.

26...¥d3 Tempting, but it was better to invert the move order.

26...¥f6! The threat of ...¥d3 is stronger now as the ¥c3 will hang. If 27.¥cb1 f4! and White’s kingside will collapse.
27.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsc{c2}}} \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{\textsc{f6}}}

Black is still much better after this but, as they say, a queen is a queen. With time trouble approaching and a safer king now White can hope for some tricks.

28.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsc{d5}}}! The best practical chance.

28...\texttt{\textcolor{blue}{\textsc{xc2}}} 29.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsc{xf6}}} \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{\textsc{xa2}}} 30.\texttt{\textcolor{blue}{\textsc{h5}}} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsc{c6}}} 31.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsc{f3}}} \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{\textsc{xf2}}}??

And there you have it - Black loses control in the complications. It is difficult to play against a queen, especially when the king is not very safe.

31...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsc{hf8}}}! still kept things under control. If now 32.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsc{h7}}} (Black was probably worried about this) the calm 32...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsc{e8}}}! 33.\texttt{\textcolor{blue}{\textsc{h3}}} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsc{h8}}}! rounds up the wayward knight.

32.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsc{e5}}}! And all of a sudden White is winning. Triumph of the pragmatic approach of keeping the king safe and being resourceful in time-trouble! The rest is easy.

32...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsc{xf6}}} 33.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsc{xc6}}} \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{\textsc{dd2}}} 34.\texttt{\textcolor{blue}{\textsc{h6+}}} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsc{f7}}} 35.\texttt{\textcolor{blue}{\textsc{h7+}}} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsc{f8}}} 36.\texttt{\textcolor{blue}{\textsc{e7+}}} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsc{g8}}} 37.\texttt{\textcolor{blue}{\textsc{xe6+}}} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsc{h8}}} 38.\texttt{\textcolor{blue}{\textsc{h6+}}} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsc{g8}}} 39.\texttt{\textcolor{blue}{\textsc{xg5+}}} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsc{h8}}} 40.\texttt{\textcolor{blue}{\textsc{f6+}}} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsc{h7}}} 41.\texttt{\textcolor{blue}{\textsc{xf5+}}} 1-0

A typical high-tension game. On such occasions, the player who has stronger nerves wins. But, also important here was the presence of positional factors that make the position easier to play, namely White’s safer king and the presence of a queen in the vicinity of Black’s king. It requires high class nerves and technique to keep a position under control when these factors are against you (especially in time trouble). Zatonskikh did not quite manage it.

Paikidze and Foisor entered the last round on 7/10 and everything was possible. But Paikidze misplayed an advantageous position against Yu and lost, while Foisor managed to score her first win with Black in the tournament when it mattered most.

\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsc{Did not manage to retain the title:}}} \\
\texttt{\textcolor{blue}{\textsc{Nazi Paikidze}}}
Apurva Virkud – Sabina Foisor
ch-USA w 2017 Saint Louis USA (11.2)

1.d4 ¤f6 2.c4 e6 3.¤c3 ¤b4 Foisor did not have much luck with the QGD in the previous rounds (she lost both games when she played it) so she chooses the Nimzo Indian for the decisive game.

4.£c2 0–0 5.¤f3 c5 6.dxc5 ¤a6 7.c6 Morozevich’s original idea from 2008, but not a good practical choice in my opinion. With natural moves Black obtains a strong centre and her position is easier to play.

7.g3 is much more popular nowadays.

7...bxc6 8.g3 d5 9.¥d2?

Not really necessary, but a useful move nevertheless. White cannot do much anyway.

15...c5 16.¤h4 ¥c8 planning to go ...Re8 and ...e4 was good for Black.

16.¥a5 c5 17.b3 e4 The pawns are rolling.

18.¥d2 ¥e8 19.¥ad1 Too passive.

Better was 19.e3!? but White would still have had to do something to combat Black’s strong centre 19...¥bd8 (19...d3 20.a3 covering b4 and White will prepare f3) 20.exd4 cxd4 21.¥ac1 ¥b8! with the idea of ...¥c6 and Black is still better, but White can fight too. 22.¥xa7? the pawn cannot be taken 22...¥c6 23.¥b6 (23.¥c5 ¥e5 24.¥a3 e3 and Black crashes through) 23...¥b8 24.¥c5 ¥b4 with ...¥d3 to come.

19...¥b6 20.¥b1 20.e3 was still better, but White keeps postponing it to her own detriment.

20...¥e7 This liberates the 6th rank for the rook.
21.e3 Too late now as Black is much better prepared than 2 moves ago.

21...g4 22.d2

This allows for a beautiful finish. A very pleasing way for Foisor to win her first US title!

22...b4! The attack comes from all sides.

23.exd4 e3! 24.fxe3 xg1+ 25.h1 d6 26.g1

26...xg1+! 27.xg1 e1+ 28.f1 xf1+ 29.g2 g1+ 30.f2 ef1+ 31.e3 f3+ Mate would have followed quickly by 32.e2 (32.e4 e1+ 33.e2 xe2#) 32...f5+ 33.e3 e1+ 34.e2 xe2#, and so White resigned.

0–1

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USA Championship 2017, Saint Louis 29.03 - 9.4.2017

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From 8 - 16 April 193 players from more than 34 countries took part in the 17th Bangkok Chess Club Open. Among them was Britain’s GM Nigel Short who won the tournament with 7.5/9. GMs Ivan Rozum, Anton Shomoev, Gerhard Schebler and Jan Gustafsson shared second place with 7/9.

Altogether 19 Grandmasters and 15 IM took part, including Wang Hao and Jan Gustafsson. The winner of this year’s Hastings tournament, Indian GM Deep Sangupta came 6th.

Before this win, Short took the tournament twice before, in 2015 and 2012.

Short played the tournament very well, including the following positional win against Armenian GM, Karen Grigoryan.
Nigel Short – Karen Grigoryan

1st BCC Open 2017 Cha-Am THA (7.2)

1. \( \text{d}f3 \) \( \text{d}f6 \) 2.\( \text{g}3 \) \( \text{d}5 \) 3.\( \text{g}2 \) \( \text{g}6 \) 4.\( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{c}6 \) 5.\( \text{b}3 \)

The double fianchetto; a slow positional opening.

5...\( \text{g}7 \) 6.\( \text{b}2 \) \( \text{b}6 \)
A logical move with threats against the White bishop on b2 now White has to play carefully.

7.\( \text{cxd}5 \) \( \text{cxd}5 \)
Probably best was 7...\( \text{e}4 \) when White must play 8.\( \text{d}4 \) when 8...\( \text{cxd}5 \) 9.\( \text{c}3 \) is equal.

8.\( \text{d}0-\text{d}0 \) 0-0 9.\( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{d}7 \) 10.\( \text{d}4 \)
Now White has a slight edge.

10...\( \text{c}8 \) 11.\( \text{e}5 \) \( \text{e}6 \) 12.\( \text{c}1 \) \( \text{a}6 \)
After 12...\( \text{c}6 \) 13.\( \text{a}4 \) \( \text{a}5 \) 14.\( \text{e}5 \) \( \text{xe}5 \) 15.\( \text{dxe}5 \) \( \text{xc}5 \) 16.\( \text{xc}5 \) \( \text{xc}5 \) 17.\( \text{xf}6 \) is slightly better for White.

Perhaps the key moment; Black does not want a passive position so plays his knight to e4 allowing White to exchange.

13.\( \text{f}4 \)
13.\( \text{d}2 \) is solid and good but White prefers to start a kingside pawn storm.

13...\( \text{c}7 \) 14.\( \text{g}4 \) \( \text{e}8 \) 15.\( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{b}5 \) 16.\( \text{g}5 \) \( \text{xc}3 \) 17.\( \text{xc}3 \) \( \text{e}4 \)

18.\( \text{x}e4 \) \( \text{dxe}4 \) 19.\( \text{g}4 \)
White preserves his knight aiming to probe the kingside dark squares.

19...\( \text{b}5 \)
The alternative was 19...\( \text{b}5 \) 20.\( \text{e}1 \) \( \text{d}8 \) 21.\( \text{d}2 \) b6 when White is slightly better.

20.\( \text{d}2 \) \( \text{d}5 \) 21.\( \text{b}4 \)
The White bishop prepares to invade on e7
and then get to f6 aiming to exchange the bishops when Black will be defenceless on the dark squares.

21...b5 22.e1 h5
On 22...f5 23.g2 b6 24.d6 threatening e5 is good so Black tries to gain some freedom by this pawn sacrifice.

23.gxh6 h8 24.h3 h5
Better is 24...f5 25.e5 xe5 26.dxe5 xd2 27.xd2 h7 28.b4 xh6 29.e7 with a slight plus for White.

25.h2 d7
Again 25...f5 26.e5 xe5 27.dxe5 d8 28.g2 xh6 29.e7 with an edge for White may be the best try for Black.

26.g2
e7 27.g3 exf4+ 28.exf4 is slightly better for White as well.

26...h7 27.e7 f5
27...f5 looks best again here.

28.f2 xc1 29.xc1 c8 30.xc8 xc8 31.e2 d7 32.d6 c6

32...a5 33.b4 d8 34.c5 with an edge for White is the best, now White invades.

33.e5 g5
Black may have missed that after 33...f6 34.c5 fxe5 35.e7+ g8 36.h7 is mate.

34.c5 f6 35.e7+ g6 36.f8 fxe5 37.xh8
Black cannot stop the White h-pawn

1-0

CHESS IN BRITAIN

THE POLAR CAPITAL JERSEY FESTIVAL

by IM Shaun Taulbut

The Open tournament was held from 1st - 8th April. The first place was £1,500, second place £750 and, third place £400, fourth place £200. Fifth place £150, with a series of special prizes.

The tournament was won jointly by Jack Rudd and Alan Merry with 7/9. Daniel Abbas was 3rd with 6.5/9 and Grandmasters Mark Hebden, Tiger Hillarp Persson and Jonathan Speelman all finished with 6/9.

Here are two exciting games played by the joint winners of the Open.

Alan B Merry – Mark Hebden
Polar Capital Jersey Open St Clement Bay JCI (5.3)

1.e4 e5 2.f3 c6 3.e3 The Two Knights opening; a solid choice but not that well known.

3...f6 4.b5 d4 Playable is 4...c5 5.xc6 dxc6 6.xe5 xf2+ 7.xf2 xd4+ 8.Ke1 xe5 9.d4 e7 10.d3 e6 with equality.

5.c4 xf3+ After 5...c5 6.xe5 0-0
7.0-0 d6 8.♕f3 ♕g4 9.♖e2 with a slight edge for White because of the extra pawn.

6.gxf3

This double edged capture poses different problems for Black than ♘xf3 and leads to a sharp struggle.

After 6.♘xf3 ♗c5 7.d3 White has a slight edge.

6...♗e7 Best is 6...♗c5 7.♖g1 0-0 8.d3 ♘e8 9.♖h6 g6 10.♗d2 c6 with an edge for Black.

7.♖g1 After 7.d4 d6 is playable; White plays this logical attack down the g-file.

7...c6 8.d4 8.♘xg7 d5 9.exd5 cxd5 10.♗b3 ♘f8 11.♖g3 d4 with a slight edge for White is also playable.

8...exd4 9.♖xd4 ♗b5 10.♗d3 ♗b4 11.♕f2 11.♕a4 ♗a5 12.b3 is also good for White.

11...c5 12.♗e3

Black has some difficulty on the kingside so opts to develop.

12...d5 13.♗xg7 ♗h5 13...c4 14.e5 ♗b6 15.exf6 ♗xf6 16.♖g3 ♗e6 17.♕f4 cxd3 18.♖xd3 with advantage to White may have been better.

14.♖h6 White decides to sacrifice the exchange but 14.♗b5+ ♗d7 15.♖xd7+ ♗xd7 16.♖g1 is also good.

14...♗xg7 15.♗xg7 ♘f8 16.exd5 White has two pawns for the exchange and a strong attack.

16...♗f6 17.♖h7 ♘b8 18.♗e4+ ♜f8 On 18...♗e7 19.♖e3 ♘xe4 20.fxe4 ♗xb2 21.♖b1 ♗e5 22.♖xc5 a5 23.f4 with strong play for White in the ending.

19.♖e3 ♗d6 20.♗e4 ♗e7 21.♗g3 White aims for e4 when the pawn on c5 will fall.

21...♖h4 22.f4

Very strong was 22.♖e4 ♗xe2 23.d6 ♖xd6 24.♖d5 and if 24...♗g1+ 25.♖e2 ♖xa1 26.♖d6+ Kg7 27.♖f6+ leads to mate eg 27...♗g8 28.♖g5+ ♗h8 29.♖xh4+ ♗g7 30.♖h6+ ♘g8 31.♖f6#

22...♗g4 23.♖e4 ♗h6 24.f5 ♗h8 25.d6 ♖e8 26.♖xc5 White breaks into the Black position; if necessary he can play ♖d2 to get his rook into play.
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26...\textit{b6} \\
After 26...\textit{xb2} 27.\textit{d4} \textit{b6} 28.\textit{xb2} \textit{xc5} 29.\textit{xc5} wins. \\
27.\textit{c6} \textit{d8} 28.\textit{xb6} \textit{axb6} 29.\textit{xb6} \textit{g7} Now White is able to expose the Black King further. \\
30.f6+ \textit{g6} 31.\textit{e3} is strong eg 31...\textit{h6} 32.\textit{g3}+ \textit{xf6} 33.\textit{d4}+ \textit{e6} 34.\textit{c4}+ \textit{d7} 35.\textit{b5}+ \textit{e6} 36.f4 with a decisive attack. \\
31...\textit{f5} 32.0-0-0 \textit{h6}+ 33.\textit{b1} \textit{f4} 34.\textit{b6} \textit{d7} 35.\textit{c5} \textit{xd3} 36.\textit{xd3} \textit{xf6} 37.\textit{f4} The threat of \textit{e5}+ forces Black to retreat. \\
37...\textit{h7} 38.\textit{e5} \textit{d8} 39.\textit{xf7} \textit{f8} 40.\textit{g5}+ \textit{h8} 41.\textit{e3} 1-0 \\
\hline

\textbf{Jack Rudd – Tiger Hillarp Persson} \\
\textit{Polar Capital Jersey Open St Clement Bay JCI (2.1)} \\
1.e4 c5 2.\textit{f3} d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.\textit{xd4} \textit{f6} 5.\textit{c3} a6 6.\textit{e3} \\
\hline

Not 22...\textit{h2} when 23.\textit{h1} is winning. \\
23.\textit{g5} This should win but it is a complicated struggle and time pressure affected the play. \\
\hline

\textit{Jersey Playing Hall}
23...e4 24.¥xh5 Very good was 24.¥g6 .cent 25.¥e5 ¥xf5 26.¥xe8+ ¥f8 27.¥xe4 when after 25.¥xf5 ¥xf5 26.¥xe8+ ¥f8 27.¥e6+ Kh8 28.¥xe4 ¥f6 29.¥g6 Black is lost.

24...¥e3 25.¥h3 ¥xf1 26.¥xf1 ¥e3 27.¥xf5 ¥h6

Black has defended well. White still has an edge with the monster knight on c6.

28.¥g4 e3 29.¥d4 g6 30.¥e1 ¥h5 31.¥e6+ Kh8 32.¥e4 ¥f2 33.¥xe3

33.a3 ¥xh2 (33...¥e8 34.¥xe3 ¥xh2 35.Ka2) 34.g4 ¥h6 35.¥f3 is very strong.

33...¥e8 34.a3 ¥xh2 35.Ka2 Kh7 36.¥g4 36.¥c3 ¥xg3 37.¥e3 is winning.

36...¥xg3 37.¥h1+ 1-0

The holiday tournament (under Elo 1900) was won by Alan Hall with 7/9.

The UBS Jersey Open Blitz was won by Dominic Klingher with 8/9, followed by Jon Speelman with 7.5/9.

How Mike Basman (who on 16th March celebrated his 71st birthday!) won the 2016 London under 18 Championship

CHESS TIME TRAVELLER

by Stephen Lowe and Mike Basman

Mike Basman is one of the UK’s best known chess players and became an International Master in 1980. A prolific writer, he has made many contributions to chess opening theory and practice, and is particularly well known for choosing offbeat or rarely played openings, including the St. George’s Defence (1.e4 a6!? with which English Grandmaster Tony Miles famously defeated the then World Champion Anatoly Karpov in 1980), the Grob (1.g4), and also The Creepy Crawly which goes 1.a3, then h3 followed by a quick c4 for White. He tied for first place in the 1973 British Chess Championship but lost the play-off against Bill Hartston. In 1975 when England contested a match over ten boards against France, Mike played board one ahead of future super Grandmasters John Nunn and John Speelman. He is rightly famous for creating the UK Chess Challenge, since 1996 a UK-wide tournament for juniors of all standards and ages played over four stages throughout the school year, which has encouraged and brought to prominence some of the UK’s best players.

Given Mike’s long and distinguished chess career, how is it that he recently won the London Under 18 Championship, held in Harrow from the 28th - 30th December 2016, thus adding to the junior titles he had captured earlier - U14 (1959) and U16 (1961)?
The answer is simple. The U18/U21 London Championships were run jointly as a FIDE rated 6-round event, and were thus open to all players. The entry form stated that ‘an U18 clear winner in this event would hold both titles and trophies’. Mike was the clear winner of the tournament but, due to the technicality of his not being under eighteen years of age, he could not become Champion. Conor Murphy was not the clear winner but, being under 18, complied with the age rule and thereby gained the title London U18 Champion. So, many congratulations from BCM to Conor and also of course to Mike.

As regards the tournament itself, after winning his first round game and also in round 2 (after narrowly avoiding defeat), Mike was held to a draw in round 3 by Conor Murphy and was bamboozled to a draw by Daniel Gallagher in round 4. In rounds 5 and 6, however, he won both games and so lifted himself clear of the field finishing with a score of 5 out of 6.

Unfortunately, despite being born and living in the London area and enjoying supremely youthful looks, Mike was not awarded the title which went to the somewhat younger Conor Murphy (who will go on to study mathematics at Christchurch College in Cambridge this year). Mike, so you see - age catches up with all of us in the end! Nonetheless, great performances by both Mike and Conor.

Here is the last round game by the intrepid age-defying Mike Basman.

M. Basman - S. Warman

Orang-utang Opening

(Notes by Mike Basman)

1.b4 d5 2.b2 f6 3.e3 f5 4.f4 e6 5.a3 c5

[Diagram]

Black is up for the fight, immediately contesting White’s early domination of the dark squares.

6.f3!?

A pawn sacrifice to accelerate development.

6...cxb4 7.b5+ c6 8.e5 b6 9.e2 xc2

[Diagram]
A risky indulgence losing time and ignoring his development. Black gorges himself on another pawn, but inadvertently opens the c file which leads to his demise. The simple 9...e7 or 9...bxa3 are better.

10. 0–0! a6?

Another overly optimistic move. Black does not want to move his king’s bishop (although he needs to in order to castle) because then, after white plays axb4, he will have to move it again. But this attempt is doomed to failure, as white now rapidly develops his queen’s rook. 10...c8 is better.

11. axb4!

Now black cannot capture at b5, because of the pin along the “a” file.

11. ... axb4 12.c1!

It is hard for Black to avoid losing a piece now.

12. ... 0–0 13.c6 bxc1=Q 14.d4!

This attack is devastating. The black queen has no good squares.

14...c7 15.axb1 e7!

Desperately trying to cause trouble. If White now meekly retreats with 16 Ba4, Black at least has two passed pawns on the queenside for his piece.

16.d3!

This ensures that the black queenside pawns will not remain intact.

16...c8!

Another resourceful defence in a dying position.

17.xb4 a5!

White is going to be a piece up here whatever happens. What is the most incisive way to realise his advantage?

*Answer below.*

Very youthful play by Mike Basman to seal his victory in the event!
“I WOULD LOVE TO BE REMEMBERED BECAUSE OF ALL THE PEOPLE I ENCOURAGED TO PLAY CHESS”

By Pete Tamburro

Grandmaster Arthur Bisguier has passed away on 5 April 2017, at age 87. Dubbed the Dean of American Chess, he was U.S. champion in 1954 and won three US Opens outright and tied for first in two. He had wins over Spassky, Geller, Keres, Najdorf, Taimanov, Portisch, Benko, Larsen, Reshevsky (he lost a match +2-4-4 to Reshevsky in 1957) and Fischer. His other major tournament victories were firsts in the Stevenson Memorial Tournament at Southsea 1950 (ahead of Tartakower [on tie-breaks] and Golombek, Penrose, L. Schmid, Bogoljubov), Vienna 1952-53 and Lone Pine, 1973 (ahead of Browne and Szabo).

He was part of the “Pre-Fischer” group that defined American chess from 1945-1957. That group’s “coming out party” was the U.S. Open Championship in Pittsburgh in 1946. In the preliminary Swiss, Bisguier (age 16) was 7th, Donald Byrne (age 16) was 5th, Robert Byrne (age 18) was 13th and Larry Evans (age 14) was 20th.

Bisguier’s performance ratings were often over 2600 during the 1950s. When Fischer beat him on tie-breaks at the U.S. Open in 1957, it marked a change in Bisguier’s (and Evans’ and Byrnes’) fortunes in chess. He also had a wife, children and a profession.

His international play diminished greatly, but his participation in American Swiss tournaments, frequent simultaneous exhibitions and his genial demeanor made him wildly popular throughout the country. He was also popular and friendly with the Soviet stars, especially

BISGUIER WAS PART OF THE “PRE-FISCHER” GROUP THAT DEFINED AMERICAN CHESS FROM 1945-1957...

HE HAD WINS OVER SPASSKY, GELLER, KERES, NAJDORF, TAIMANOV, PORTISCH, BENKO, LARSEN, RESHEVSKY (HE LOST A MATCH +2-4-4 TO RESHEVSKY IN 1957) AND FISCHER
Bronstein, who was a great friend. Bisguier, in his second The Art of Bisguier book relates that even at the height of the Cold War even the KGB apparently just got used to Bisguier in friendly conversation with everyone. Although his personality never left him, his play changed: “My originality was gone, but I just played chess like a butcher [to win].” He used his GM technique to win because the hard work that had become necessary in a new age of chess rankled him. Modern chess, he said in 1994, was “screwed up by computers. Preparation now is simply too much work. I would not have been a professional chess player today. There is all kinds of money, but too many people, and now the Russians are all over the world, which makes it tougher.” In the outpouring of sentiment in the U.S., Facebook pages contained wonderful personal reminiscences of the man as well as the chess player. However, an old quote from editor and organizer Kenneth Harkness described him best: “As friendly as a puppy, Art Bisguier doesn’t have an enemy in the world. If he cannot say something nice about you, Art doesn’t say anything. He bubbles over with enthusiasm for chess and chess players. It is no effort for Art to win friends and influence people. It is a natural gift.” When asked what he thought his place in chess should be, he said, “I made my own peace with chess. I would love to be remembered because of all the people I encouraged to play chess.”

ORGANIZER KENNETH HARKNESS: “AS FRIENDLY AS A PUPPY, ART BISGUIER DOESN’T HAVE AN ENEMY IN THE WORLD. IF HE CANNOT SAY SOMETHING NICE ABOUT YOU, ART DOESN’T SAY ANYTHING... IT IS NO EFFORT FOR ART TO WIN FRIENDS AND INFLUENCE PEOPLE. IT IS A NATURAL GIFT.”

The game against Spassky is a classic:

Boris v Spassky – Arthur Bernard Bisguier

Gothenburg Interzonal Gothenburg (12), 02.09.1955

1.e4 e5 2.ªf3 ªc6 3.ªb5 f5 4.ªc3 ªf6 5.ªf7 e2 6.ªxe4 exd4 7.e5 ªg4 8.h3 ªh6 9.ªd1 ªe7 10.c3 ªc6 11.ªd3 dxc3 12.dxc3 ªf5 13.ªxf5 ªxe5 14.ªe3 ªc5 15.0-0 d5 16.ªd3 ªxe5 17.ªxf5 0-0 18.ªe3 ªxe3 19.ªxe3 ªae8 20.ªae1 ªg5 21.ªc2 ªf4 22.ªe3 ªxe3 23.ªxe4 ªe4 24.ªxe4 ªxe4 25.f3 ªc5 26.ªd4 ªe8 27.ªb1 ªa4 28.ªf2 ªf7 29.f4 ªe4 30.ªf3 g6 31.g3 ªe7 32.ªc2 b5 33.ªb4 ªd6 34.ªd3 a5 35.h4 c5 36.a3 ªe7 37.ªc5 ªb7 38.ªe3 c4 39 ªd4 ªc5 40.h5 gxh5 41.ªh1 ªe6+ 42.ªe3 ªg7 43.g4 b4 44.axb4 axb4 45.gxh5 bxc3 46.bxc3 ªf5+ 47.ªf3 ªb3 48.ªc1 ªd4+ 49.ªg4 ªe2 50.ªa1 ªxc3 51.ªa6+ ªc5 52.ªa5+ ªd6 53.ªa6+ ªc7 54.ªa5 ªg3+ 55.ªf5 c3 56.ªxd5 c2 57.ªc5+ ªd6 58.ªxe2 ªd4+ 59.ªf6 ªxc2 60.ªf7+ ªd5 61.ªg5 ªg4 62.ªxh7 ªxf4+ 63.ªg5 ªe5 64.h6 ªd4 65.ªg6 ªe6 66.ªg5 ªg4 67.h7 ªxg5+ 68.ªh6 ªf5! 0-1

The final position is worth a diagram:
Arthur Bernard Bisguier - Mijo Udovcic
Zagreb Zagreb (3), 1955

1.e4 c5 2.\(\text{\textgreek{e}}\)e2 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.\(\text{\textgreek{e}}\)xd4 \(\text{\textgreek{c}}\)f6
5.\(\text{\textgreek{c}}\)c3 a6 6.\(\text{\textgreek{e}}\)e2 e5 7.\(\text{\textgreek{b}}\)3 \(\text{\textgreek{e}}\)e7 8.0-0 0-0
9.\(\text{\textgreek{e}}\)e3 \(\text{\textgreek{b}}\)d7 10.f3 b5 11.a4 b4 12.\(\text{\textgreek{d}}\)d5
\(\text{\textgreek{e}}\)xd5 13.\(\text{\textgreek{w}}\)xd5 \(\text{\textgreek{b}}\)b8 14.\(\text{\textgreek{w}}\)fd1 \(\text{\textgreek{b}}\)b7 15.\(\text{\textgreek{w}}\)a5
\(\text{\textgreek{w}}\)e3+ 25.\(\text{\textgreek{c}}\)h1 \(\text{\textgreek{w}}\)c8 26.\(\text{\textgreek{w}}\)xd6 \(\text{\textgreek{w}}\)xb2
27.\(\text{\textgreek{w}}\)xb2 \(\text{\textgreek{w}}\)xc4 28.\(\text{\textgreek{w}}\)c1 f6 29.\(\text{\textgreek{w}}\)d3 \(\text{\textgreek{w}}\)g5
30.\(\text{\textgreek{w}}\)d8+ \(\text{\textgreek{w}}\)xd8 31.\(\text{\textgreek{w}}\)xd8+ \(\text{\textgreek{w}}\)f7 32.\(\text{\textgreek{w}}\)xa8
\(\text{\textgreek{w}}\)e3 33.\(\text{\textgreek{h}}\)h3 \(\text{\textgreek{w}}\)b4 34.\(\text{\textgreek{w}}\)d2 \(\text{\textgreek{w}}\)xh3 35.\(\text{\textgreek{w}}\)xe3
\(\text{\textgreek{w}}\)xe3 36.\(\text{\textgreek{a}}\)a7+ \(\text{\textgreek{g}}\)g6 37.\(\text{\textgreek{w}}\)xa6 \(\text{\textgreek{a}}\)a3 38.\(\text{\textgreek{w}}\)a7
h5 39.\(\text{\textgreek{h}}\)h4 \(\text{\textgreek{a}}\)a1+ 40.\(\text{\textgreek{h}}\)h2 \(\text{\textgreek{w}}\)h7 41.a6 \(\text{\textgreek{w}}\)g6
42.\(\text{\textgreek{g}}\)g3 \(\text{\textgreek{a}}\)a2 43.\(\text{\textgreek{a}}\)a8 \(\text{\textgreek{w}}\)h7 44.\(\text{\textgreek{h}}\)h2 \(\text{\textgreek{a}}\)a1
45.\(\text{\textgreek{g}}\)g4 \(\text{\textgreek{h}}\)xg4 46.\(\text{\textgreek{f}}\)xg4 \(\text{\textgreek{a}}\)a4 47.\(\text{\textgreek{a}}\)a7 \(\text{\textgreek{a}}\)a2+ 48.\(\text{\textgreek{g}}\)g3 \(\text{\textgreek{a}}\)a3+ 49.\(\text{\textgreek{f}}\)f2 \(\text{\textgreek{a}}\)a2+ 50.\(\text{\textgreek{f}}\)f3
\(\text{\textgreek{a}}\)a3+ 51.\(\text{\textgreek{g}}\)g2 \(\text{\textgreek{g}}\)g6 52.\(\text{\textgreek{h}}\)h5+ \(\text{\textgreek{g}}\)g5 53.\(\text{\textgreek{h}}\)h6
\(\text{\textgreek{g}}\)g6 54.\(\text{\textgreek{h}}\)xg7 \(\text{\textgreek{g}}\)xg7 55.\(\text{\textgreek{c}}\)c2 \(\text{\textgreek{a}}\)a2+ 56.\(\text{\textgreek{b}}\)b3
\(\text{\textgreek{a}}\)a1 57.\(\text{\textgreek{b}}\)b4 \(\text{\textgreek{a}}\)a2 58.\(\text{\textgreek{b}}\)b5 \(\text{\textgreek{b}}\)b2+ 59.\(\text{\textgreek{c}}\)c6
\(\text{\textgreek{a}}\)a2 60.\(\text{\textgreek{d}}\)d6 \(\text{\textgreek{a}}\)a6+ 61.\(\text{\textgreek{c}}\)c7 \(\text{\textgreek{a}}\)a5 62.\(\text{\textgreek{c}}\)c6
\(\text{\textgreek{a}}\)a3 63.\(\text{\textgreek{g}}\)g5 \(\text{\textgreek{f}}\)xg5 64.\(\text{\textgreek{f}}\)f5 \(\text{\textgreek{f}}\)f3+ 65.\(\text{\textgreek{g}}\)g5
\(\text{\textgreek{f}}\)f7 66.\(\text{\textgreek{g}}\)g8+

A rook and pawn endgame masterpiece:

After Black’s 32nd move.

Bisguier on the 1973 Chess Life & Review cover, Source: USChess

Bisguier’s only win over Fischer:

After Black’s 37th move.

Arthur Bernard Bisguier – Robert J Fischer
New York Rosenwald New York, 1956
An easy-to-learn chess opening that may look innocent, but is actually full of venom!

One of the best and most popular ways to meet White’s first move 1.e4 remains the tried and tested 1…e5. After this move many games steer for the Ruy Lopez.

The Ruy is a perfectly fine choice for White, but one that requires you to study countless different setups and follow the continuously evolving theory in that opening.

The authors present an alternative that is ideal for the average club player: a complete repertoire for White in the Italian Opening.

This modern version of the age-old ‘Giuoco Piano’, 1.e4 e5 2.♗f3 ♗c6 3.♗c4 ♗c5, followed by c2-c3 and d2-d3 (rather than the more traditional open game reached by d2-d4), is not only popular amongst club players, but is also regularly adopted by an increasing number of strong Grandmasters, including even the very best, such as Magnus Carlsen and Anish Giri.

The set-up is easy to learn and understand, and theoretical novelties are much less important than the sound principles it is based on, such as the latent pawn push d3-d4 or the transfer of the b1 knight over to the kingside and into the attack.

The Slow Italian may look innocent, but is actually full of venom, because White has many ways to generate aggressive play by making natural looking moves with his pieces.

The authors have assembled a solid weapon that every amateur chess player will delight in playing. They have also included a wealth of exercises to test your understanding of both the strategy and tactics inherent in this opening.

Karsten Müller is a mathematician and a chess Grandmaster from Hamburg. He is a prolific writer whose books include the bestselling Bobby Fischer: Career and Complete Games and The Modern Scandinavian. Georgios Souleidis is an International Master from Germany who works as a chess trainer and journalist. He has played the Slow Italian with good results himself.

From the foreword by Anish Giri: “One easy, yet prideful way out of the opening carousel, or madhouse if you wish, is the Italian Game ... The basic principles, the plans and the concepts as well as the model games offered in this book will help many ambitious chess lovers come closer to understanding the subtleties of this quiet yet fascinating opening.”

AN EASY-TO-GRASP CHESS OPENING FOR WHITE
BY KARSTEN MÜLLER, GEORGIOS SOULEIDIS
SOFTBACK. 320 PAGES. NEW IN CHESS. £22.95.
BOOK REVIEW & PUZZLE

Because of the specific pawn formations repeatedly arising from the Slow Italian, familiar tactics appear again and again. Here are seven exercises from the many given in the book. In each case it is White to play and if you can solve them then this opening may be just the right choice for you!

The answers are given on page 319

1) Ivan Saric – Alexander Toth
Balatonlelle 2006

2) George Ardelean – Ilie Baile 2012

3) Levente Vajda – Ralph Muller
Pardubice 2014

4) Evgeny Janev – Diana Soares
Lisbon 2001

5) Ladislav Kotan – Andrej Veres
Tatry 2003

6) Salome Melia – Turkan Mamedyarova
Marmaia 2016

7) Dimitar Pelitov – Mitko Garkov
Primorsko 1987
Russia boasts a rich tradition in chess education, and its chess teachers and trainers have long had the reputation of being quite simply the best in the world.

Thus it is particularly valuable to see *The Complete Manual of Positional Chess*, being made available to the wider chess public. This tutor was originally created specifically for chess teachers at the DYSS, the special sports school for young talents in Russia. The quality of this work is assured by the calibre of its authors. Konstantin Sakaev is a Grandmaster and a former Russian Champion. He won Olympiad gold in 1998 and 2000 with the Russian team and has assisted World Champion Vladimir Kramnik as his second. Konstantin Landa is a Russian Grandmaster and a FIDE Senior Trainer.

The two authors present a complete set of instructions and tips for both trainers and self-improvers. By following the lessons systematically you will learn not only how to enhance your fundamental knowledge and technical skills, but also how to work on your physical and psychological conditioning.

You are handed basic and advanced tools to improve in a wide array of areas such as:
- clean calculation and decision-making in the middlegame
- tackling your fear of disturbing the material balance, and, last but not least:
- how to restrict the role the chess computer plays in your life.

Indeed when you have completed the entire 320 page course you should be able to assess accurately the majority of chess positions with which you are confronted.

Amongst the wide variety of technical topics covered are:
- An advantage in development
- The centre and its significance
- Coordination and piece activity
- Developing the initiative
- Prophylaxis
- Limiting the opponent’s counterplay
- Regrouping one’s forces
- Space advantage
- Exchanging and simplification
- Weak squares
- Open files
- Secure points, outposts
- Play on the wing
- Methods of defence, etc. etc.

Here is an extract from the chapter entitled ‘Good and bad bishops’:
“‘Bad’ bishop is one that is obstructed by its own or the opponent’s pawns, and that cannot be exchanged off for an equivalent enemy piece. A ‘good’ bishop, by contrast, usually controls a lot of squares at once or can attack the enemy’s weaknesses. Everyone knows the rule that operates in the majority of cases: “Do not put pawns
on the same colour as your bishop!” In my observation, among young players, breaking this rule is the most common positional mistake. It always seems to them that, if they put their pawns on the same colour squares as their bishop, these pawns will be more securely protected. Of course, there are exceptions, when a so-called ‘bad’ bishop fulfils the function of defending its own pawns, but such cases are very rare...”

Later in this same chapter, by way of an illustrative example, the authors annotate the following game. Coincidentally, this encounter also appears in Timman’s Titans so we have taken the opportunity to add the Dutch grandmaster’s comments as well. It makes very interesting reading!

Jan Timman – Mikhail Tal
Tallinn 1973

1.d4 ♜f6 2.c4 e5 3.d5 g6 4.♗c3 ♝g7 5.e4 d6 6.♘f3 0-0 7.♗e2 e5 8.0-0 ♘e8 9.♗e1 ♛d7 10.♗d3 f5 11.f4 ♜e7 12.exf5 gxf5

Timman: This position originates from a mix of the Benoni and King’s Indian Defences. White has not played in the most accurate way, and it is questionable whether he can hope for an opening advantage.

13.♗h1
Timman: ‘Clearly White is uncertain how to proceed’, Cafferty remarks in Tal’s 100 Best Games. He is right, but an even more important factor is that I didn’t know two of Petrosian’s games. In Donner - Petrosian, Santa Monica 1966, the diagram position had also appeared on the board after a slightly different order of moves, That game had continued as follows: 13.g4 e4 14.♗xf2 ♜xc3! 15.bxc3! fxg4, and Black obtained a strategic advantage. As said, the move order in the Santa Monica game was different. Donner had exchanged on f5 one move earlier, so Black could, instead of developing his queen to e7, immediately have played 12...e4, followed by 13...♗xc3. Why hadn’t Petrosian done this? For an answer to this question, his comment in the tournament book is a clue:

‘To my knowledge a similar idea was first tried in my game with Bronstein in the Candidates Tournament in 1956. The object of the move is to lessen the sphere of activity of White’s QB, limited by the pawns on c3 and f4.’

Aha, he had played it before. In Bronstein - Petrosian, Leeuwarden 1956 (two rounds of this Candidates Tournament were played not in Amsterdam, but in Leeuwarden), the following position arose in the middlegame:

Petrosian didn’t hesitate and presented his opponent with the bishop pair: 17...♗xc3!.

The exclamation mark is from Euwe in the tournament book. He writes: ‘In this way, Black once and for all prevents his
opponent from carrying through an attack against the queenside with b2-b4. It is remarkable, by the way, that the absence of the generally very important king’s bishop is not felt here. The further course of the game is instructive; with accurate play by both sides, neither of the two will be able to make any progress.

In Santa Monica, Petrosian had a bad start with 1½ points out of 4 games. He was probably hoping for a win against Donner, and he didn’t want the game to peter out to a draw, as had happened against Bronstein.

13...e4 14.f2

[At this point we also pick up the notes to this game from The Complete Manual of Positional Chess -ed.]

Sakaev/Landa: The black bishop on g7 looks like the strongest piece on the board, which makes the decision taken by Black all the more paradoxical.

14...xc3!?

Timman: Apparently, Tal is not afraid that the game will peter out to a draw. There can be no doubt that he knew both of Petrosian’s games.

Sakaev/Landa: The basis of this strategic idea, which has become a classic, is as follows: apart from his dark-squared bishop, Black has no other active pieces, nor any active plan. White, meanwhile, has a long-winded but perfectly realisable plan: he will exchange dark-squared bishops down the long diagonal, put his knight on e3, and prepare the break g2-g4. The exchange on c3 puts the maximum difficulties in the way of this plan, because the pawn on c3 closes the long diagonal, and prevents White getting his bishop to this line.

[We are also reminded of the line in the Four Pawns Attack which runs 1.d4 ¤f6 2.c4 g6 3.¤c3 ¥g7 4.e4 d6 5.f4 0-0 6.¥e2 c5 7.d5 e6 8.¤f3 exd5 9.exd5 ¥h5!? 10.0-0 ¥xc3!? 11.bxc3 f5 12.¤g5 ¥g7 13.¤f3 ¥d7 14.¤e1 ¥f6 which, for example, led to equality in Forintos - Gligoric, Vidmar Memorial 1969 -ed.]

15.bxc3 ¥df6 16.¤e3 ¥h8 17.h3?

Timman: A bad move, which weakens the g3-square. I should have followed Bronstein’s plan here with, for example, 17.£d2, followed by 18.¦g1 and 19.g3.

Sakaev/Landa: In this instance this move is just an unnecessary weakening of the kingside. More solid is 17.¥d2 ¥g8 18.a4 ¥d7 19.a5 ¥d8 20.¥fb1 ¥c8 with rough equality.

17...¥g8 18.¥d2 18.¥g1 19.g4

18...¥g7

19.¤d1
Timman: I wanted to bring the knight over to e3, but this plan is much too time-consuming.

Sakaev/Landa: White should have prevented the immediate appearance of the knight on h5: 19.♗d1 ♖d7 20.♖b1 b6 21.♗g1 ♖af8 22.g3 ♖e8 23.♖g2 with a reasonable position.

19...♘gh5

Timman: The passive knight has turned into a fierce attacker.

Sakaev/Landa: Now the weakening of g3 starts to tell.

20.♕xh5

Timman: Relatively best, since after 20.♕f2 ♕g7 Black’s pressure would become too strong.

20...♕xh5 21.♕f2 ♖d7 22.♖e1 ♖af8

23.♖e3

Timman: This is consistent, but the knight has no business here, especially because the f-pawn is no longer solidly protected. More tenacious was 23.a4, to bring the rook to a2 for the defence.

Sakaev/Landa: White should have kept the knight on d1. Then, it would have been more difficult for Black to carry out the plan used in the game: 23.a4 ♕f6 24.a5 ♘h6 25.♖a2 ♘g3+ (25...♕g4 26.♕h2 ♘xf4 27.♖e3 ♖f6 28.♕g3 is unclear) 26.♕xg3 ♘xg3 and only now 27.♖e3 ♖xg8 28.♖b2

23...♕f6 24.♖h2 ♖h6

Sakaev/Landa: The pawn on f4 is hanging, and White does not manage to defend his kingside.

25.g3 ♖f6 26.♖g1

26...♗f6!

Sakaev/Landa: Another possibility was the immediate 26...♕xe4 27.gxf4 ♕xf4+ 28.♕g3 ♖h6 29.♕f2 f4 30.♖xg8+ ♗xg8 31.♖g1+ ♗f8 32.♕g4 ♖xg4 33.♖xg4 e3 with a decisive advantage.

27.♗g2 ♕xf4!

Timman: Not one of the most difficult sacrifices in Tal’s career.

Sakaev/Landa: Black wins with a direct attack.

28.gxf4 ♕xf4+ 29.♖g1 ♕f3 30.♖f2 ♕xh3 31.♗b1 f4 32.♗b2 ♖f3 White resigned.
Curt von Bardeleben, a journalist and member of the German nobility, had a long and distinguished chess career, but is largely remembered for a game he lost, the brilliancy Steinitz - von Bardeleben Hastings 1895.

He launched his career by winning the Hauppturnier at Berlin 1881 and confirmed his place in the ranks of the masters by winning first prize at the Vizayanagaram tournament held in London in 1883.

Gunsberg was impressed by the winner who “played in the evenings only, and thoroughly devoted himself, from beginning to end, to the task before him in a manner which will serve as a lesson to some of his less steady fellow competitors”. Knowledge 15th June 1883.

The step up to master level did not prove too much of a hurdle and he scored a further success at Nuremburg 1883 where he won 8 games on the way to fifth place.

He completed his law studies over the next four years. When he returned his good form continued. Von Bardeleben scored +8 =10 -2 at Frankfurt 1887, winning fourth prize behind Captain Mackenzie, Blackburne and Max Weiss, and would have finished even higher but for a last round loss to Weiss. Tarrasch was 5th equal, Louis Paulsen 8th equal, Burn 11th equal, Gunsberg and Zukertort tied for 14th place.

In 1888 he recorded two further successes: 3rd equal at Bradford behind Gunsberg and Mackenzie, then first equal at Leipzig tied with Riemann, but ahead of Tarrasch who was a distant seventh. Around this time he could be regarded as the strongest German player, but he was soon overtaken by two rising stars.

His fourth equal at Breslau 1889 was about a par performance, but Tarrasch excelled, winning first prize by a point and a half margin, without losing a game.

Lasker won the Hauppturnier. Soon afterwards he played a short match with Lasker, which saw the new star defeat Bardeleben +2 =1 -1.

The next Deutsches Schachbundes congress was held at Dresden in 1892. Tarrasch again dominated while Bardeleben finished equal fifth. The next year he tied for first place at Kiel with Walbrodt and defeated his co-winner in impressive style, note the early appearance of the Chameleon Sicilian.
C. von BARDELEBEN - C.A. WALBRODT
Kiel 1893

1.e4 c5 2.©c3 ©c6 3.g3 e6
The tried and tested 3...g6 is better.

4.©g2 a6
This can wait. 4...©f6 is better but 5.©ge2 keeps Black guessing, 4...g6 is probably best.

5.©ge2 ©ge7
All very well but this blocks in his bishop.

6.0–0
Delaying the thematic d3 White keeps black guessing.

6...g6? A careless slip 6...d5 is consistent.

7.d4! cxd4 8.©xd4 ©g7 9.©xc6 dxc6?
Black’s only hope was to try 9...bxc6.

10.©xd8+ ©xd8 11.©e3 ©c7 12.©c5! ©e8 13.©d1 b6 14.©d6+ ©b7 15.e5!

Just because the queens have been exchanged does not stop White playing for mate.

15...©d7 16.b4 ©ad8 17.a4 f6 18.f4 f5
Preparing ...©d5

19.©xe7! ©xe7 20.b5 ©c8 21.a5 ©f8?

21...bxa5 may seem counterintuitive but Black seems to be hanging on after 22 bxa6+ ©xa6 23.©d4 ©a8 24.©a4 and the passed a pawn should give Black good counterplay in the endgame.

22.axb6 ©f7 23.bxa6+ ©xb6 24.©d1+
\textbf{8th Deutsches Schachbundes Kongress Kiel 1893, round 3}

A quite year in 1894 was followed by a much busier one. In 1895 he won a match versus von Gottschall at Leipzig, then travelled to London, where he met Blackburne in a hard fought match that was drawn +3 =3 -3.

Members of the Bohemian Chess Club took advantage of his visit to arrange a match with Richard Teichmann. Bardeleben started slowly and trailed after four games. Then he found a point of attack, Teichmann struggled against the Harrwitz Attack in the Queens Gambit Declined. Von Bardeleben won three brisk games 5, 7 and 9 and won the match +3 =6 -1.

\textbf{C. von BARDELEBEN - R. TEICHMANN}

\textit{mg 7 London 1895}

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.\textit{c}c3 \textit{f}6 4.\textit{f}4 c5 5.e3 \textit{c}6? 5...	extit{e}7 is safer.

6.\textit{b}5!?

\textbf{This may look obvious but Steinitz ducked the challenge when he had this position against Lasker at St Petersburg 1895-96, that game continued 6.\textit{f}3 a6! 7.dxc5 \textit{x}c5 8.\textit{xd}5 \textit{xc}5 9.\textit{xd}5 exd5 and drawn in 44 moves.}

6...\textit{cxd}4 6...\textit{e}5 saves the exchange, but after 7.\textit{xe}5! \textit{xe}5 8.\textit{dxe}5 \textit{a}5+ 9.\textit{d}2 \textit{xe}2+ 10.\textit{xe}2 \textit{e}4+ 11.\textit{e}1 the threat of 12.\textit{c}7+ costs Black a second central pawn.

7.\textit{c}7+ \textit{d}7 8.\textit{d}5 \textit{xd}5 9.\textit{xa}8 \textit{b}4+ 10.\textit{e}2 \textit{xf}4+ 11.\textit{e}2 \textit{f}6 12.\textit{a}3 \textit{d}6 13.g3! \textit{d}8 14.\textit{g}2 \textit{e}7 15.\textit{f}3 \textit{b}6 16.\textit{e}1 \textit{a}6+.

16...\textit{b}7 allows 17.\textit{f}1 when Black has no compensation for the exchange.

17.\textit{d}2 \textit{xa}8 18.\textit{d}4! \textit{b}7 19.\textit{d}5

19...	extit{c}8?

A blunder in a lost position, 19...	extit{e}5 is no better after 20.fxe5 \textit{xf}2+ 21.\textit{e}2

20.\textit{xc}6+

\textbf{1-0}

\textit{Daily News 16th July 1895}

This was probably his peak as a player. He started well at Hastings 1895 with +6 =3 including a win over Lasker, but the loss to Steinitz in round ten really took the wind out of his sails. During the next eight rounds little went right, he
even lost to the tail ender Tinsley and then defaulted against Pillsbury. He rallied and scored two wins and a draw at the end to finish seventh equal tied with Teichmann.

In January 1897 he won a strong seven player event held in Berlin. He scored +4 =1 -1 to finish ahead of Charousek, Wilhelm Cohn, Mieses and Walbrodt. This was probably the best of his tournament wins.

He continued to play but less frequently and with increasingly variable results. There were odd glimpses of his best form. He tied for first place at Coburg 1904 with Schlechter and Swiderski and defeated Spielmann in a short match in 1907.

Coburg was his swansong and he failed to finish in the top half in any of his subsequent appearances.

If that makes you think he was not quite grandmaster strength, then consider his record in tournament and match games against the following opponents-

v Lasker  +2 =1 -3
v Tarrasch  +2 =4
v Gunsberg  +2 =4

He may have lacked the steely nerves and determination of a world champion, but he was still a very strong player.

Bardeleben apparently committed suicide by jumping out of a window in 1924. According to one obituary, however, he fell out by accident. His life and death were the basis for that of the main character in the novel The Defense by Vladimir Nabokov, which was made into the movie The Luzhin Defence.
This piece is for those who want to know more about how to cope with psychological barriers when playing a game. While I am no expert on the matter, I would like to share my experience inviting everyone to share theirs, if this article provokes you.

For a long time I have struggled psychologically, mainly with regard to ratings and perceived playing strength. Even though I am young and improving, I often had an inferiority complex when playing against higher rated opposition. When playing against supposedly stronger players, I have always found it difficult to play normally, often playing overcautiously. Another strange thing is that I used to feel an almost crippling nervousness before and during the game. On the flipside, I have always had a very high score against lower rated players because I have felt much more confident playing them.

Before the Central Florida Chess Club tournament I spent some time conditioning myself psychologically, imagining different scenarios and thinking how I should respond to them. I came to the conclusion

“So, first of all, let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself — nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance”

Roosevelt
that I should view my playing strength as an unknown quantity, because in between tournaments (in theory!) I improve by studying. Therefore, my playing strength is not necessarily equal to my rating, which means that I should not be scared of anyone - I should always play as I do against lower rated opponents. Note that studying between tournaments is a very important part of the process because that gives you confidence, and not studying leads to lack of self-belief. I believe that this kind of problem happens to nearly every chess player.

Hopefully you can take inspiration from my experience and use it for yourself!

**Theo Slade - John Ludwig**

CFCC (2), 28.01.2016

In this tournament, after a win in round one (against a lower rated player!), I was paired against John Ludwig, only a few months older than me, but one of the best young players in America: his FIDE rating is 2397, and his peak USCF rating converted into a FIDE rating is 2456. He is the 6th highest rated player in Florida, the 22nd equal highest rated junior in America, and the 136th equal highest rated player in America, all according to his USCF rating. However, before and during the game I was not intimidated and believed in myself, which was probably the most important thing.

Before this game I quickly revised the theory which I had already worked hard on previously. On the one hand, I did not feel very good having to frantically memorize all the variations just before the start of the round, but on the other, I felt good that I had already done the hard work - this was just about not letting that go to waste. Besides, I believe that there is too much to remember - Anish Giri once said that of all
the variations he has in his repertoire, he only has "about five percent" of that in his memory at any one time. I have to call this game the best of my career so far simply because of how good my opponent was, and the fact that I won! I had never beaten an opponent who was close to his rating before, so this was a milestone game for me.

1.d4 ¤f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6 4.¤c3 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.e4 g6 7.¤d3 ¤g7 8.h3 0-0 9.¤f3 ¤h5 Having said that, I had not looked at this variation. Also, this was my first ever classical game in the Benoni, so I was nervous because I was not sure if I understood the general ideas well enough to get a result.

10.0-0 ¤d7 11.¥e2

11.¥g5! is theory. The idea is to lure the g7-bishop to f6, when White argues that it is worse on f6 than on g7. I knew this idea, but I was not one hundred percent certain that this was the position where it had to be applied. Therefore, I opted for a prophylactic retreat against ...¤e5.

11...a6 12.a4 This is played automatically against ...a6.

12...¥e8 The f3-knight wants to go to d2, but if ¤d2 immediately then ...¥f4, so White should play:

13.¤e3 first, followed by ¤d2, to keep the h5-knight out of f4.

Stockfish 8 suggests 13.a5. However, I did not want to play this move at any point because Black can go ...b6 or ...b5, which more or less forces axb6, and then he can recapture with a heavy piece with pressure down the b-file. I instead preferred to keep the pawn at a4, preventing ...b5 (and with it Black’s play on the queenside).

13...¥b8 I got a bit concerned about 13...¤xc3 14.bxc3 ¤xe4, when my original idea was either 15.¤g5 or even after 15.¤d2 ¤xe3 is still an option, even though White should be better after 16.fxe3 ¤g3 17.¤f3 ¥g5 18.¥e1 ¥xe2+ 19.¥xe2 ¥xd5 20.¤f4. It turns out that White can play calmly with 15.¥d2, with long-term compensation for the pawn based on the two bishops, better pieces and Black’s weak king. However, if we got to this position, hopefully I would have avoided 15...¤xe3 16.fxe3 ¥xg5.

14.¤d2 ¥hf6 To be honest, I do not fully understand the point of ...¥h5 in Benoni structures because more often than not it ends up going back rather than starting play on the dark squares or on the kingside with ...f5.

15.¥c2 Connecting the rooks and overprotecting e4.

15...¥c7 16.¤f4 Another improving move. I have a big space advantage here so, like Gelfand says, you should ask your opponent to navigate his way out of the situation he is in. I must say I enjoyed walking around while John had a hard time coming up with
a plan! He thought for over half an hour, and ended up sacrificing a pawn.

16...\(\text{\textit{f}}\textit{e}5 17.\(\text{\textit{h}}\textit{h}2\)

17...c4 This was John’s idea. The point behind my last move is that if 17...\(\text{\textit{d}}\textit{d}7\) then 18.f4.

18.\(\text{\textit{x}}\textit{e}5  \text{\textit{x}}\textit{e}5 19.\(\text{\textit{c}}\textit{c}4\)

19...\(\text{\textit{e}}8\) I was surprised by John’s play, but after 16.\(\text{\textit{f}}\textit{f}4\) there really is little Black can do, and I presume he wanted to win even if it meant taking risks in a worse position, so from that point of view this sequence makes sense. I spent a lot of time in this phase of the game being careful. I have lost a lot of games to higher rated players in these types of tactical positions where I drift a bit, so I made sure that did not happen in this game.

20.a5 Stopping ...b5. It is tempting to say that I am just a pawn up for nothing, but that is not completely true because my position is just a little bit overextended - not enough for a pawn, but it is slightly uncomfortable.

20...\(\text{\textit{d}}\textit{d}7\) I expected 20...\(\text{\textit{d}}\textit{d}7\), but then 21.\(\text{\textit{f}}\textit{e}1  \text{\textit{c}}\textit{c}5\) 22.\(\text{\textit{f}}\textit{f}1\) and Black has not achieved much.

21.\(\text{\textit{f}}\textit{e}1\) I spent a very long time on this move, but I saw six moves ahead where the position changes drastically, so I think it was worth it. 21.\(\text{\textit{a}}\textit{a}1  \text{\textit{h}}\textit{h}6\) and I do not really want to weaken myself with 22.\(\text{\textit{f}}\textit{f}4\).

21...\(\text{\textit{b}}\textit{b}5\) Again, there is little Black can do besides this. 21...\(\text{\textit{c}}\textit{c}8\) runs into 22.\(\text{\textit{b}}\textit{b}6\).

22.\(\text{\textit{x}}\textit{b}5\) 22.\(\text{\textit{b}}\textit{b}6!\) \(\text{\textit{x}}\textit{e}4\) I stopped my calculations here, but after 23.\(\text{\textit{e}}\textit{ec}1\) Black’s position is NOT falling apart - it is just not very good.

22...axb5 23.\(\text{\textit{a}}\textit{a}3\) \(\text{\textit{w}}\textit{c}2\) 23...\(\text{\textit{w}}\textit{e}7\) 24.\(\text{\textit{x}}\textit{b}5\).

24.\(\text{\textit{x}}\textit{e}2  \text{\textit{x}}\textit{e}4\) 24...\(\text{\textit{x}}\textit{e}4\) 25.\(\text{\textit{x}}\textit{b}5\).

25.\(\text{\textit{x}}\textit{b}5\) \(\text{\textit{e}}\textit{e}1+\) 26.\(\text{\textit{x}}\textit{e}1\) \(\text{\textit{x}}\textit{d}5\) At this point I was happy because there was little risk in my position and I was basically content to draw, even though I was much better earlier in the game. This is mainly because I struggle for confidence against higher rated players. However, after this game my confidence was boosted tremendously, and in the last round I drew comfortably as Black against another 2400 to finish third equal with John and tying for the best U2200, winning a trophy on tiebreak.

27.\(\text{\textit{c}}\textit{c}4\) \(\text{\textit{f}}\textit{f}6\) After 27...\(\text{\textit{f}}\textit{f}4\) 28.g3 I missed that 28...\(\text{\textit{x}}\textit{h}3+\) is possible - I suffered from the "retained image" problem - I thought my g-pawn was still on g2.

28.\(\text{\textit{d}}\textit{d}1\) 28.\(\text{\textit{e}}\textit{e}3\) would have been better I am told by the computer, and the point is to avoid 28...d5!

28...\(\text{\textit{e}}\textit{e}8\) Very passive, but the construction with the knight on f6 and the bishop on g7 do not coordinate very well.

28...d5! 29.\(\text{\textit{x}}\textit{d}5\) b6! 30.a6 \(\text{\textit{x}}\textit{d}5\) 31.\(\text{\textit{x}}\textit{d}5\) a8 32.\(\text{\textit{b}}\textit{b}4\) \(\text{\textit{x}}\textit{b}2\) is a fabulous way of relieving the pressure that neither me nor John saw during the game, but I believe that was mainly because we were short on time.

29.b4

\(\text{\textit{c}}\textit{c}8\) 30.\(\text{\textit{e}}\textit{e}3\) Squeezing hard on d5, as Gelfand would say.
30...¢f8 John offered a draw very quietly here - I had to ask him to repeat it because I did not hear what he said. Dad opined after that he did not want the "crowd" (at least fifteen people were watching the game at this point) to know that he had offered a draw.

31.¥d5 ³c7 32.b5 ³e5 I missed this when I played 32.b5, but it is not an issue.

33.¥xb7 I spent a bit of time here. I was right that this decision changed the direction of the game, but my move was wrong! I considered 33.³b1, but I thought I saw a win after 33.¥xb7, and I wanted to play a forcing move, which is quite ironic considering how many quiet moves I had played earlier on in this game.

33...¥xb5 34.a6 ³a5 35.³c4 35.³d5 was better, stopping ...³c7 with the idea ³b4-c6 hitting the rook. I think that we should admire the engine in this situation - it is very difficult to find such moves over the board in time pressure, especially when you have already anticipated this position in your previous calculations. Plus, it is more natural to hit the rook first (and attack d6), rather than hit the rook later.

35.³a2 36.g3 The worst thing when you are in time trouble is when your opponent does nothing! This cuts out the tactics after ³xd6 ...³xd6 ³xd6 ...³a1+ ³h2 ...³e5+ forking the king and rook. I stopped recording here because I had less than five minutes.

I still had over two minutes left with a five second delay, but I was shaking because I was so nervous. As I explained to Dad, even if the game does not mean anything, the longer the game goes on the more nervous I become because you do not want to put so much effort in all for it to be undone. However, I had the chance to beat the highest rated player I have ever beaten, so I was extremely nervous, even though in my heart I knew that I was easily winning. I sacrificed my bishop on f7 to transform my advantage into a winning pawn endgame, when John resigned shortly after.

It was a great feeling to win, and psychologically very important as now I think if I have done it once, then I can do it again, and build on that success.

"Do the thing you fear most and the death of fear is certain" — Mark Twain

I wanted to go 36.³d3 or 36.³d5, with the idea of swinging one of the pieces over to the a-file, followed by queening the a-pawn. However, after I could not make either of them work, I went for a much subtler approach.

36...³e7 This was what I wanted to encourage. It is a mistake but it is very human to be materialistic.
PROBLEM WORLD

by Christopher Jones
cjajones1@yahoo.co.uk

Grandmaster of Chess Composition

Solutions are given on page 318

Jose Antonio Lopez Parceria (Spain)
Mate in 2

K.R.Chandrasekaran (India)
Helpmate in 2 - 2 solutions

David Shire (Canterbury)
Helpmate in 2 - 2 solutions

Michael McDowell (Westcliff on Sea)
Helpmate in 8

ORIGINAL

ORIGINAL

ORIGINAL

ORIGINAL
In our April column, we looked at how GM Pal Benko used several key ideas to combat the Stonewall Attack: the re-positioning of the knights and the freeing e5 move. We also talked about learning ideas rather than memorizing moves. In this game, over 20 years ago, I tried to apply Benko’s ideas against the London System. It was an important game for me, as I had to beat a Chicago area master in the last round of the U.S. Open to finish "in the money" with an 8-4 score. To add to the tension, GM Robert Byrne, whom I had interviewed before the tournament, wandered over to see how I was doing! And the clock kept ticking away...

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 d5 3.c3 This is what you might expect of a master playing against an amateur in the last round. London Systems do not start this way. The idea: to get the amateur out of his "book."

3...♗bd7 4.♗f4 c5 5.♗bd2 g6 6.h3 ♗g7 7.e3 0–0

A well-trained chimpanzee could get this far as Black. Do we start right in with the ♗e8-♗d6 and ♗f6 idea? No, because we have not yet seen what White is up to. We know he has to develop the bishop, castle and most likely put his knight on e5. Since a central theme for Black is to contest the centre, fianchettoing the bishop to help hit e4 seemed logical to complete development.

8.♗e2

8...♗b6 It was quite good, and perhaps better, to play 8...♗e4 followed by 9...♗df6,
initiating the knight switch. 9.0–0 ♖b7

I was astonished, when writing this column, to find over 100 games with this position. Moves like ♖e5 for White and ♖e4 for Black keeping popping up. Because White has delayed ♖e5, Black goes about his business where he can expand - the queenside.

10.♗a4?! Probably an attempt to confuse the issue, but it should be obvious that it allows Black to make pawn moves without falling behind in activating his pieces.

10...a6 11.♖fc1!? A bit of over-refinement. It is clever if he wishes to operate on the queenside, as the queen’s expected retreat will allow the rooks to stay connected. It is not clever if he does not really have a plan.

11...b5?! Black should just go with 11...♖e8 to get to d6. Getting your minor pieces on the right squares is more important than a meaningless attack on a queen which may very well head to c2 to continue his build-up on the queenside. However, White goes all the way back, which was puzzling.

12.♖d1 ♖b6 13.♕e5 White could try hitting the b5 pawn, when, again, the knight switch is in the notes. 13.a4 ♖e4 14.♖c2 ♖d6 15.h4 ♖f6.

13...♗ac8 I must admit to a certain prejudice against letting my opponent occupy e5; however, it would have been better have calculated real lines here: 13...♕xe5 14.♕xe5 (nicely thematic for Black would

At least I do not have a prejudice in favour of bishops over knights. My bishop is a "tall pawn," as they say in the midwestern US.

17.a5 ♖b7 Now, we have to discuss the kingside! At the time, I remembered watching Bent Larsen play the queen and bishop battery like that with the exception that Larsen’s queen was on a8. It restrains e4, and White would have to give up his nicely posted horse to lessen the pressure.

18.♗a2 White takes his least effective piece and improves its position - a rook lift ready to swing over for kingside action.

18...♖ad8 One of many possible moves for Black. Putting it opposite the opponent’s
queen seemed like a latent threat, but at least it’s an indirect threat. \( \text{Q} \times e 5 \) is still possible. It might be the most important lesson I learned from this game.

19.g4

A master has two ways to win against an amateur: with strategy or tactics. His long-term queenside plans have dissolved, so he decides on double-edged tactical play. It is positions like this that always make me ask myself, "Have I done anything wrong?" In this game, some non-fatal "yes" answers come to mind, but at least I still have a strategy to yet play: that Benko idea. White’s g4 gives me the impetus to play it.

19...\( \text{Q} \)e8 20.\( \text{Q} \)g1 \( \text{Q} \)d6 21.\( \text{Q} \)e1 It is as though White is waiting for Black to make a mistake rather making a plan.

21...\( \text{Q} \)de8 Oh, my! Yet again, Black declines to take on e5. Whereupon, Black swore a blood oath to take that idea more seriously. 21...\( \text{Q} \)xe5 22.\( \text{Q} \)xe5 \( \text{Q} \)e4 23.f3 g5 24.\( \text{Q} \)h2 \( \text{Q} \)xd2 25.\( \text{Q} \)xd2 (25.\( \text{Q} \)xd2 f6) 25...f6.

22.f3 f6 And here we are, the Benko idea in full formation. It is the 22nd move, but the opening system chosen was headed toward this position with a singleness of purpose (an explanation, but not an excuse, for avoiding \( \text{Q} \)xe5 all those times).

23.\( \text{Q} \)xe6 \( \text{Q} \)xe6 24.\( \text{Q} \)f1 e5! 25.\( \text{Q} \)h2 exd4 26.exd4 f5! Thanks to White’s abortive attempt at a kingside demonstration with g4, Black now has all his pieces bearing down on White’s position.

27.\( \text{Q} \)d2 fxg4 He can’t afford to concede e4.

28.hxg4 \( \text{Q} \)f7! With the idea of supporting g5 to restrict f4 or supporting \( \text{Q} \)h6.

29.\( \text{Q} \)e1 \( \text{Q} \)e6 Black has used a good deal of time getting here, but the guideline in this middlegame should be similar to the opening’s goal: get your minor pieces activated on their best squares. My rook was on a perfectly good square. My knight was in need of joining the fray. Years later, Boris Gulko got me to see this, and I am thankful to him for that. I wish I had him for a coach at 19 rather than at 69! 29...\( \text{Q} \)xe5 30.\( \text{Q} \)f4 (30.\( \text{Q} \)d1 \( \text{Q} \)h6 31.\( \text{Q} \)f2 \( \text{Q} \)g5) 30...h5 31.\( \text{Q} \)h2 \( \text{Q} \)e6 and Black’s position is active and dangerous for White. If 29...\( \text{Q} \)h6 30.f4.

30.\( \text{Q} \)d1 \( \text{Q} \)e8 31.\( \text{Q} \)xe6 \( \text{Q} \)xe6 Mindlessly doubling my major pieces. More active was: 31...\( \text{Q} \)xe6 32.\( \text{Q} \)g2 \( \text{Q} \)e1.

32.\( \text{Q} \)f2 \( \text{Q} \)e1 33.\( \text{Q} \)d2 \( \text{Q} \)h6 34.f4 \( \text{Q} \)xf2+ 35.\( \text{Q} \)xf2 \( \text{Q} \)d6?

After 35 moves and in some time difficulties, the amateur misses his best chance: 35...g5! 36.f5 \( \text{Q} \)f6 37.\( \text{Q} \)g3 \( \text{Q} \)f8 38.\( \text{Q} \)f3 \( \text{Q} \)d6 and e4 will belong to Black.

36.\( \text{Q} \)c2? White returns the favour: 36.g5! \( \text{Q} \)f8 37.\( \text{Q} \)f3 \( \text{Q} \)e4 38.\( \text{Q} \)e2 \( \text{Q} \)f7 39.\( \text{Q} \)xe4 \( \text{Q} \)xe4 40.\( \text{Q} \)xe4 dxe4 41.\( \text{Q} \)f2 \( \text{Q} \)e6 42.\( \text{Q} \)e3 \( \text{Q} \)d5 43.\( \text{Q} \)d2 \( \text{Q} \)xb4 44.exb4 c3 45.\( \text{Q} \)xe4 c2 46.\( \text{Q} \)c3+ \( \text{Q} \)e4 47.\( \text{Q} \)a2 \( \text{Q} \)b3 48.\( \text{Q} \)d2.

36...\( \text{Q} \)f8 Better was 36...\( \text{Q} \)e4 but that could easily go wrong, too: 37.\( \text{Q} \)e2 \( \text{Q} \)df6 38.g5 \( \text{Q} \)xc3
39.\texttt{xe8+ \texttt{xe8} 40.gxh6 \texttt{e2+} 41.g2 \texttt{xd4} 42.e3 \texttt{f6} 43.f5 \texttt{c6} 44.f4!}

\texttt{f5} The game gets understandably messy here as we head toward move 40. \texttt{g5}.

37...\texttt{e4} 37...g5.

38.f3 \texttt{g7} 38...xc3 39.xc3 \texttt{g7} 40.h1 \texttt{xd4} 41.h3 \texttt{e2} 42.d3 \texttt{e1} 43.g2 cxd3 44.xd3 \texttt{e}4.

39.fxg6 39.xe4 \texttt{xe4} 40.e3 \texttt{f6} 41.fxg6 \texttt{xg4} 42.gxh7+ \texttt{h7} 43.h3+ \texttt{h6} 44.xd5 \texttt{g6} 45.c7 \texttt{f5}.

39...hxg6 40.xe4 \texttt{xe4} 40...dxe4!.

41.e3

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{chess_board.png}
\end{center}

Black is now officially in trouble as d5 is very weak and can be successfully attacked. Inspiration born of desperation helps Black decide to really unbalance the position to see what two passed pawns can do.

41...\texttt{xd4}! 42.cxd4 \texttt{xd4} 43.g3?! The gamble worked. Better was 43.f4.

43...\texttt{d3} 44.f2 d4 Black should have remembered the old phrase, "Passed pawns must be pushed." 44.c3 45.f4 \texttt{d2+} 46.e1 \texttt{g5} 47.xg5 \texttt{e5} 48.h3 d4 49.f5 \texttt{b2} 50.xd4 \texttt{xb4}.

45.f1 45.d5.

45...\texttt{d1} The rook is more valuable on the board.

46.f4? 46.e2.

46..\texttt{e5} Black could win here quickly with 46..c3.

47.e2 \texttt{d3} 48.e4 Now it is White’s turn to miss a win. We are like two tired boxers in the 15th round, just flailing away. 48.f6+-.

48..\texttt{c6} 49.d6 \texttt{b3} 50.d2 \texttt{b2+} 51.c1 c3 52.g5 White still has visions of a kingside attack!

52..d3? First play 52..a2+- then d3.

53..c5? Losing. A perpetual arises from the rook being able to go to e3, something that had escaped both of us. 53.e3 d2+ 54.xd2 \texttt{xd2} 55.e6 \texttt{d4} 56.e8+.

53..a2 Now, it is over.

54.e8+ \texttt{f7} 55.b1

At this point Byrne walked by for the last time and stopped and stared at the position. I wanted to play my move right away, but had to double check to make sure I did not miss something obvious. He got bored and left.

55..c2+ 56.xa2 \texttt{c1} 57.e3 \texttt{d2+} 58.a1 \texttt{c1}+ 59.a2 d2 60.d4 \texttt{xd4}

0–1

Even though Black had his problems with seeing an alternative plan (\texttt{xe5}) at numerous occasions, it was another plan from a different d-pawn game that he kept in mind from opening into middlegame. Now, Black had two ideas he could have as part of his repertoire.

The London System has had quite a comeback in recent years, so if any reader would like to contribute a game with any of these ideas in it, please do!

Overall this game shows the value of concepts. It also demonstrates the certain prejudices you unconsciously develop over the years can make you blind to better moves.
Endgame Studies

by Ian Watson

The answers are given on page 319

1 2

O. Pervakov
Shakhmaty v SSSR 1986
WIN

O. Pervakov
Shakhmaty Rossii 1991
WIN

3 4

O. Pervakov
Die Schwalbe 2001
WIN

O. Pervakov
HvdH 50 JT 2011
WIN
Oleg Pervakov... not a familiar name? Shameful! Add him to your list of the great study composers. He has won numerous composing tourneys, become a GM of Chess Composition, and has three times won the study World Championship in Composing for Individuals. That World Championship has been held every three years since its inauguration in 1998, and Pervakov has won three of the six Championships so far completed.

Pervakov’s studies are often highly complex, but more than repay the effort of understanding by their torrents of tactics, subtle strategy and fabulous finales. I will give you some hints to help you solve them. If you want to try the studies without assistance, stop reading now!

Our first study is from 1986, when Pervakov was 26 years old. You are probably familiar with the extraordinary game Kasparov – Topalov, played at Wijk aan Zee in 1999, and known as ‘Kasparov’s Immortal’; if so, you will recognise the early play in the Pervakov study. Kasparov claimed that he hadn’t seen that study before he played his game against Topalov, but I wonder... Anyway, in the study, there are a lot of clever moves by the white queen after the ideas you will recognise from the Kasparov - Topalov game.

No hints for the 1991 study, which is easier - by Pervakov’s standards! In the 2001 study, White wins the black queen, then Black plays for stalemate; White’s move four is tough to find. The 2011 study won an endgame composing tourney held to celebrate the 50th birthday of Harold van der Heijden, the creator of the leading database of chess studies. This composition was also honoured as Study of the Year 2011. To stop the black a-pawn while avoiding 1...b6+, you need to choose between the two ways to sacrifice the e4 rook. The later play is about White avoiding mid-board stalemates.
Old-fashioned values

This month we start with a very old-fashioned 2-mover. We don’t have plausible tries or complex strategic effects, we just have a striking key move and a good number of defences, each accurately defeated by a unique white follow-up. It is the sort of problem that if you were minded to try your hand at chess composition you might cut your teeth on, a good exercise for beginning to hone compositional techniques. Looking for a striking key move you are likely to discover 1.£a8! quickly. This threatens 2.£a1, and if Black defends with 1...¥a7 then we complete the set of four corners: 2.£h8. (Setting yourself a task, such as the queen visiting all four corners, can be another catalyst for early composing efforts.) There are a number of other black defences – you will see why 1...¤c2, 1...¤xd3+, 1...¤d5, 1...¦xe2 and 1...£a6 fail.

Follow-my-leader

In the first of our helpmates (you will remember that Black plays first and helps White to mate him) we can envisage mates by ...£e4 and ...£f3 (if the flight £g4>g3 could be excluded) and by ...£e3 and ...£f4 (if the flight £g4>g5 could be excluded). In addition to excluding those flight moves we also have to contend with the fact that as matters stand the mating piece would be pinned. Putting these thoughts together we find the two solutions: 1.£g3 e4 2.£h1 f3 and 1.£g5 e3 2.£g8 £f4. The parallel between what has to be achieved (and how it is achieved) in the two solutions is characteristic of most good helpmates. Notice in this case the final flourish: in each solution Black’s second, unpinning move is to the square vacated on his first move - a follow-my-leader (or in problem jargon ‘FML’) effect.

Parallel solutions again

My comments above about parallel motivations for the moves in two helpmate solutions apply equally to our next problem. Here we also see reciprocal line-play effects featuring w£ and w¥ - the two pieces that are so often the star performers in 2-move and 3-move helpmates. A line-play feature that one often encounters in such helpmates is that a black officer provides a shield for a subsequent move by the b¢, with the effect that that black officer has ’self-pinned’, a motif that is exploited by the mating move. Sometimes, as in this case, the self-pinned piece is also serving to block the line of guard of one of his colleagues. The relevant officers here are the b£ and the b¦ – 1.£f5 ¤f2+ 2.¢f4 ¥h6 and 1.¦e5 ¤d2+ 2.¢d4 ¦d7. The two w¤s play matching supporting roles, contributing to aesthetic mate positions.

Last (and perhaps least)...

In a long helpmate such as our fourth problem you usually don’t get the pleasure of parallel solutions and the strategy is less sophisticated. (In this case, a solver will immediately expect the b¢ to set off on a diagonal march across the board, the only route that could satisfy the requirement for a unique move order.) The w¥ at present is immobilized by the cluster of black pieces in the bottom right-hand corner of the board, but it won’t be too difficult to release it... It turns out that the idea of the problem is that it would be quite piquant if the bK finished up immobilized by that cluster of pieces. So - 1.¢b7 ¢e3 2.¢c6 £xg2 3.£d5 £f1 4.%e4 £e1 5.%f3 £d1 6.%f2 £h4 7.%g1 £e1 8.g2 £f3.
In the main line, the alternative rook moves fail: 3.¢d6? ¢e2 4.¢h1+ ¢e1 5.¢f3+ ¢e2 6.¢b3+ ¢e1 7.¢e6 ¢d1+; or 3.¢d4? h4 4.¢f3+ ¢e2 5.¢c6 ¢e1 6.¢h1+ ¢f1 7.¢xf1+ ¢xf1 8.¢xd2 ¢g1.

In the main line, the alternative rook moves fail: 3.¢d6? ¢e2 4.¢h1+ ¢e1 5.¢f3+ ¢e2 6.¢b3+ ¢e1 7.¢e6 ¢d1+; or 3.¢d4? h4 4.¢f3+ ¢e2 5.¢c6 ¢e1 6.¢h1+ ¢f1 7.¢xf1+ ¢xf1 8.¢xd2 ¢g1.

In the main line, 4.¢a1 3.¢h1 2.¢h8¢ 3.¢xh8 3.¢xh8 c4 4.¢a1 3.¢d2 5.¢c3 3.¢e2 6.¢a3 3.¢b1 7.¢b2 wins by zugzwang. The theme is corner-to-corner bishop moves - three of them. Notice also the pleasing diagonal walk of the White queen in the alternative first move defence: 1...¢xa1 2.¢h8¢ 3.¢b1 3.¢e5+ 3.¢f1 4.¢f6+ 3.¢g1 5.¢g7+ 3.¢h1 6.¢h8+ 3.¢g1 7.¢g8+.

In the main line, 4.¢b2? 3.¢d2 5.¢c3 3.¢c2 6.¢a3 3.¢b1 and the zugzwang is against White.

Solutions to Puzzles

1) Ivan Saric - Alexander Toth
1.¢xf6+! 3.¢xf6 2.¢g4! Threatening mate on g7. Black stops the mate but really had to give up the exchange now by 2...¢xf5 because after 2...¢g6 3.¢h6+ wins the queen.

2) George Ardelean - Ilie
1.¢xg7! 3.¢xg7 If 1...¢xg7 2.¢xf6. 2.¢h6+! 3.¢g8 Or 2...¢xh6 3.¢xf6+ 3.¢h5 4.¢g4 mate. 3.¢xf8 3.¢xf8 4.¢xf6 1-0

3) Levente Vajda - Ralph Muller
1.¢xd5 3.¢xd5 2.¢xg6! If ...¢xg6 3.¢xg6+ 3.¢g7 4.¢xe7 wins two pawns. 2...¢xg2 Hoping for a capture on g2 when ...¢g8 wins the queen but 3.¢h6 Threatening both 4.¢xg2 and 4.¢g6+ winning the queen so Black resigned.

4) Evgeny Janev - Diana Soares
1.¢e6! Delivering a double attack on the black bishop and rook. The exchange is lost since if 1...¢xe6 2.¢xe6+ wins the queen.

5) Ladislav Kotan - Andrej Veres
1.¢xf6! 3.¢xf6 1...¢xf6 can be met simply by 2.¢xf7 3.¢h5 and White is a pawn up with a winning position. 2.¢f5 Threatening 3.¢g4+ and 3.¢g7 mate. 2.¢h7 3.¢h5 Line

6) Salome Melia - Turkan Mamedyarova
1.¢h5! 3.¢h5 Or 1...¢e7 2.¢xf4 winning a knight. 2.¢g5 traps the queen.

7) Dimitar Pelitov - Mitko Garkov
1.¢g6! 3.¢g6 If 1...¢xf6 2.¢g6 mate. 2.¢xg6 3.¢xe7 1-0 White has won the exchange.

ENDGAME STUDIES

(See page 297)