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This year’s edition of the Grand Chess Tour kicked off with the rapid and blitz events in Leuven (12-16 June) and Paris (20-24 June). The only major difference from last year is the absence of the World Champion. Perhaps it is not surprising then that the attention of the public was considerably diminished.

‘Slow and steady’ - those were the words Garry Kasparov used to describe Wesley So’s first major triumph in Saint Louis in 2016. Little has changed since then, as slow and steady are indeed Wesley So’s preferred ways of doing things.

Sometimes, however, life has its own way of giving us what we want. It appeared that So’s dominance in the rapid section of the Leuven tournament would easily seal his overall victory (the rapid points in the GCT count double than the blitz points), but things got slightly out of hand in the blitz...

**WITH A SHORT BREAK BETWEEN LEUVEN AND PARIS THE FORM OF THE PLAYERS REMAINED THE SAME. SOMETIMES A BREAK IN THE ROUTINE CAN CAUSE THE FORM TO CHANGE, FOR BETTER OR WORSE, BUT THIS WASN’T THE CASE HERE. SO, KARJAKIN, NAKAMURA, VACHIER LAGRAVE AND ARONIAN WERE AGAIN THE BEST PLAYERS**
**SO LIKE CAPABLANCA**

The following game is perhaps So’s best effort in the rapid - the technique he displayed resembles that of Capablanca.

**Wesley So – Anish Giri**

GCT Rapid YourNextMove Leuven BEL (4)

1.c4 ¤f6 2.g3 e5 3.¤g2 d5 4.cxd5 ¤xd5 5.c3 ¤b6 6.¤f3 ¤c6 7.d3 ¤e7 8.0–0 0–0 9.¤e3 ¤e6 10.¤c1 This is what Anand played against So only 12 days prior to this game! Using opening ideas from your rivals is a common theme in chess, only here - after suffering with Black - So switches sides and pushes this line with White. The first players who made these switches successfully were Karpov and Kasparov in their matches in the 1980s.

10...¤d5 11.¤xd5 ¥xd5 12.£c2 ¦e8 13.a3 a6 Giri doesn’t weaken the b5-square.

13...a5 14.¤a4 immediately, eyeing the weakened b5-square. 14...¤d6 15.¤g5 (/5.¥b5) 15...¥xg2 16.¥e7 17.¥xg2 ½–½ (35) Anand,V (2760)-So,W (2778) Stavanger NOR 2018.

14.¥fd1 In a typical reversed Dragon White has comfortable play, but Black shouldn’t have too much trouble either. It is surprising how quickly Giri lands in difficulties.

14...£f6 14...¤d6 was preferable. Perhaps he was worried about 15.d4, but after 15...e4 the complications lead to an equal position. 16.¤e5 ¥xe5 17.dxe5 ¥xe5 18.¥xe4 ¥xe4! 19.¥xd8 ¥xc2 20.¥xa8 ¥xa8 21.¥xc2 ¥d8 with an equal endgame.

15.¤d2 ¥xg2 16.¥xg2 ¥g5?! Simplifications do not always make one’s life easier. After the exchange of the bishop on e3 White gets a chance to push e3 and d4.

16...¥d7 17.¤e4 ¥e7 18.¥c4 is slightly better for White, but also better for Black when compared to the game.

17.¥xg5 ¥xg5 18.e3 White has an easy play here - he aims to push d4 while at the same time his knight can land on c5 via e4.

18...¥e7 19.¥e4 ¥ac8 20.¤c5 ¥d8 21.d4 Black has been going only backward and White only forward. White has a solid advantage here.

21...e4?!
Out of the frying pan into the fire.

21...exd4 22.\(\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{c}}}d4\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{c}}}}\) when the control over the d-file, coupled with the dominating knight, increases White’s advantage, but at least here Black isn’t losing by force.

22.d5! This fixes the c7-pawn and leaves the knight on d8 without squares.

22...f5 Allowing a nice tactical shot.

22...\(\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{b}}}b8\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{b}}}}}\) avoids the pin along the c-file, but after 23.\(\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{w}}}b3\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{w}}}}} 23...\(\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{d}}}d6\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{d}}}}} 24.\(\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{w}}}a4\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{w}}}}} e7 25.\(\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{c}}}d4\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{c}}}}} f5 26.\(\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{d}}}b4\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{d}}}}} e7\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{e}}}}\) White still wins.

23.\(\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{a}}}xa6\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{a}}}}} \text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{a}}}}f7 23...\(\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{b}}}xa6\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{b}}}}} 24.\(\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{d}}}d6\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{d}}}}} a nice geometry, threatening d7. 24...\(\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{d}}}d7\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{d}}}}} 25.\(\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{c}}}xc7\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{c}}}}} f7 26.\(\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{d}}}xd8\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{d}}}}} \text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{d}}}cxd8\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{d}}}}} 27.\(\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{e}}}c6\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{e}}}}}\) and it’s not so much about the pawn as it is about Black’s weaknesses on a6 and the central files.

24.\(\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{d}}}d6\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{d}}}}}\) Avoiding a blockading knight on d6 and opening the d-file for the rook on d1.

24.\(\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{c}}}xc7\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{c}}}}} d6, even though this is still winning for White.

24...\(\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{d}}}xd6\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{d}}}}} 25.\(\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{c}}}xc7\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{c}}}}} d8 26.\(\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{b}}}b3+\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{b}}}}} e7 26...\(\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{d}}}h8\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{d}}}}} 27.\(\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{e}}}e6\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{e}}}}}.

27.\(\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{d}}}e6\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{d}}}}} xc1 28.\(\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{c}}}xc1\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{c}}}}} e8 29.\(\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{d}}}d4\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{d}}}}} xb3 30.\(\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{d}}}xb3\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{d}}}}}\)

This is a winning position for White. After the tour de force from the first part of the game now So switches to technical mode.

I will try to point out some characteristic decisions in this phase.

30...\(\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{f}}}f7\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{f}}}}} 31.\(\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{d}}}d4\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{d}}}}} g6 32.\(\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{c}}}c3\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{c}}}}}\) The engine suggests a4 first, but So activates the rook by pinning down the b7-pawn.

32...\(\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{f}}}f6\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{f}}}}} 33.\(\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{b}}}b3\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{b}}}}} e7 34.a4 Now the pawn advances to a5, further fixing the b7-pawn.

34...\(\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{e}}}e5\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{e}}}}} 35.a5 \(\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{d}}}d5\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{d}}}}} 36.\(\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{b}}}b6\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{b}}}}} f7\) Black can only wait here. But in order to win White will need a second front on the kingside because Black’s pieces are centralised and can defend against a direct attack on the queenside. A classical example of the principle of two weaknesses!

36...\(\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{c}}}c5\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{c}}}}} 37.b3.

37.b3 g5 38.a6 White eliminates the b7-pawn in order to give his rook greater freedom. The first ‘weakness’ still remains, only this time it is the passed b-pawn.

38...\(\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{b}}}xa6\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{b}}}}} 39.\(\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{c}}}xa6\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{c}}}}} b7\) Preventing \(\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{a}}}a5\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{a}}}}}\), which would have won the f5-pawn. Now So repeats moves to gain time on the clock, a useful technical habit.

40.\(\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{b}}}b6\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{b}}}}} d6 41.\(\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{a}}}a6\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{a}}}}} b7 42.\(\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{c}}}h6\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{c}}}}}\) Switching sides and starting to create a second weakness on the kingside.

42...\(\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{d}}}d6\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{d}}}}} 43.\(\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{h}}}h5\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{h}}}}} g7 44.\(\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{h}}}h6\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{h}}}}}\) Again repeating moves.

44...\(\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{t}}}f7\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{t}}}}} 45.\(\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{h}}}h5\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{h}}}}} g7 46.h4 This weakens Black’s structure as after the exchange White will have easier access to the pawns on f5 and h7.

46...\(\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{g}}}xh4\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{g}}}}} 47.\(\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{c}}}xh4\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{c}}}}} e5 48.\(\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{h}}}h6\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{h}}}}} f7 49.\(\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{h}}}h5\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{h}}}}} f6 50.\(\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{h}}}h6+\text{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{h}}}}}\) So is merciless. It must have been very frustrating for Giri to suffer these repetitions with the knowledge that his opponent accumulates time and the torture continues.
50...\textit{\textbf{\textit{e}}5} 51.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{h}}3} Now the king enters the battle, approaching the weaknesses - the destination is either g5 or h6.

51...\textit{\textbf{\textbf{b}}7} 52.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{h}}5} \textit{\textbf{\textit{f}}6} 53.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{h}}6+} Again repetition...

53...\textit{\textbf{\textit{e}}5} 54.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{h}}4} \textit{\textbf{\textbf{b}}5} 55.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{e}}2} \textit{\textbf{\textbf{e}}7} 55...\textit{\textbf{\textbf{d}}6} 56.\textit{\textbf{f}}4 threatens mate on e6.

56.\textit{\textbf{g}}4 Black cannot take because he loses the knight on b5 after \textit{\textbf{\textbf{h}}5}.

56...\textit{\textbf{\textbf{d}}6} 57.\textit{\textbf{d}}4 And Giri had had enough. White threatens \textit{\textbf{\textbf{c}}6} and will also win the f5-pawn.

\textbf{1-0}

\textbf{BLUNDERS AND MISTAKES}

So was in a class of his own in the rapid. His impressive final score was 7/9. He was the only one who didn’t really make any major mistakes in his games. As for the others, take a look at the following examples:

\textbf{Anish Giri – Viswanathan Anand}

\textbf{GCT Rapid YourNextMove Leuven BEL (2)}

\textbf{13.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{b}}d2}} Still an opening position, but Black’s next is natural and losing.

\textbf{13...\textit{\textbf{\textbf{x}}d2??}} 13...\textit{\textbf{\textbf{x}}e3} 14.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{x}}e3} \textit{\textbf{\textbf{x}}d2} 15.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{x}}d2} is acceptable for Black.

\textbf{14.\textit{\textbf{x}}d2??} The automatic response, and missing the winning \textit{\textbf{z}}wischenzug.

14.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{g}}5!} \textit{\textbf{f}}5 (14...\textit{\textbf{\textbf{x}}f5} 15.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{x}}d5+}) 15.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{x}}f5} (15.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{x}}d2} also wins, \textit{\textbf{\textbf{b}}ut it’s less clear to a human.}) 15...\textit{\textbf{\textbf{x}}f5} 16.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{x}}d2} Black’s problem is along the a2-g8 diagonal. 16...\textit{\textbf{f}}7 17.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{xf}}7} \textit{\textbf{xf7}} 18.\textit{\textbf{g}}4 \textit{\textbf{f}}6 19.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{x}}d5+} with a technically winning position.

\textbf{Shakhriyar Mamedyarov – Anish Giri}

\textbf{GCT Rapid YourNextMove Leuven BEL (3)}

\textbf{14...\textit{\textbf{\textbf{x}}e3} 15.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{x}}e3} \textit{\textbf{a}}5} Now the position is around equal, but Giri still went on to win.

\textbf{1-0}
26...\(\text{d6}\) Mamedyarov is a fierce attacker, so it is surprising that he missed a winning sacrifice here.

27.\(\text{c5??}\) 27...\(\text{xh7!}\) 28.\(\text{h1+}\) 29.\(\text{h6}\) Perhaps he didn’t stop to realise that here Black is helpless? 29...\(\text{f7}\) (29...\(\text{e4+}\) 30.\(\text{e4}\) 30.\(\text{g6+}\) 30...\(\text{xg6}\).

27...\(\text{b7}\) 28.\(\text{c1}\) \(\text{d6}\) And here instead of sacrificing and winning, Mamedyarov agreed to a draw by repetition.

\(\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}\)

Sergey Karjakin - Alexander Grischuk
GCT Rapid YourNextMove Leuven BEL (2)

34.\(\text{d4}\) Black is winning elementarily with a simple exchange operation (I cannot even call it a combination!)

34...\(\text{f6??}\) But Grischuk misses it!!

34...\(\text{g2}\) 35.\(\text{g2}\) \(\text{xg2+}\) 36.\(\text{xg2}\) fxe3 with a piece up.

35.\(\text{e4}\) Now the position is equal, but later it was Grischuk who blundered and lost.

1-0

Please don’t get the impression that all these players do is blunder. They are after all the world’s best players and they are more than capable of excellence even in conditions with limited time.

Hikaru Nakamura, Hi - Maxime Vachier Lagrave
GCT Rapid YourNextMove Leuven BEL (5.4)

26.\(\text{e3}\) Believe it or not, the engine gives 0.00 here, but only after Black’s fantastic next move!

26...\(\text{e8!!}\) 27.\(\text{f5}\) \(\text{xe1+}\) An incredible position. Now White must cover with the queen in order not to lose!

28.\(\text{f1}\) 28.\(\text{f2}\) d2 and suddenly Black wins: 29.\(\text{e3}\) 30.\(\text{xe3}\) d1\(\text{w}\).

28...\(\text{d2}\) And again White has only one move to avoid losing.

IN AN UNTHINKABLE REPEAT OF THE LAST ROUND FROM THE LONDON CANDIDATES 2013, BUT UPPING THE NUMBER, ALL 3 CANDIDATES FOR FIRST PLACE LOST! SO LOST TO NAKAMURA, KARJAKIN LOST TO MAMEDYAROV AND VACHIER LAGRAVE LOST TO ANAND
29.\(\text{\textsc{e}}3\) Preventing the pawn from promoting.

29...\(\text{\textsc{e}}6\) Black could have started with 29...\(\text{\textsc{x}}f4\) 30.\(\text{\textsc{d}}1\) \(\text{\textsc{e}}6\) and after 31.\(\text{\textsc{xa7}}\) \(\text{\textsc{h}}2+\) 32.\(\text{\textsc{f}}2\) \(\text{\textsc{g}}3+!\) 33.\(\text{\textsc{g}}1\) (33.\(\text{\textsc{g}}2\) \(\text{\textsc{f}}4+\) and White risks losing) 33...\(\text{\textsc{h}}2+\) is an amazing and unbelievable perpetual check.

30.\(\text{\textsc{f}}2\)

It’s hard to believe, but this move gives Black winning chances!

30.\(\text{\textsc{d}}1\) \(\text{\textsc{x}}f4\) would have transposed to the note to Black’s 29th.

30...\(\text{\textsc{x}}f4\) 31.\(\text{\textsc{d}}1\) \(\text{\textsc{g}}3+\) 32.\(\text{\textsc{g}}1\) \(\text{\textsc{h}}2+\) Perhaps even Vachier couldn’t believe it, so he takes the draw. He could have tried to play on...

32...\(\text{\textsc{f}}4!\) 33.\(\text{\textsc{e}}3\) \(\text{\textsc{x}}h3+\) 34.\(\text{\textsc{g}}2\) \(\text{\textsc{x}}f1\) 35.\(\text{\textsc{x}}f1\) \(\text{\textsc{f}}4\) and with 4 pawns for a piece Black can continue.

33.\(\text{\textsc{f}}2\) \(\text{\textsc{g}}3+\) 34.\(\text{\textsc{g}}1\) \(\text{\textsc{h}}2+\)

\(\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}\)
The blitz – So’s bad result

And then the blitz came. The players who trailed So by point and a half in the rapid, Aronian and Vachier Lagrave (5.5/9), and two points, Karjakin and Nakamura (5/9) started winning games while So slowed down. In the first 10 blitz games he won 1, lost 3 and drew the rest. To make it worse, So continued to draw and only won his second game in Round 14.

The tension rose with every passing round and before the last one So was only half a point ahead of Vachier Lagrave and Karjakin. But then, in an unthinkable repeat of the last round from the London Candidates 2013, but upping the number, all 3 candidates for first place lost! So lost to Nakamura, Karjakin lost to Mamedyarov and Vachier Lagrave lost to Anand.

So’s result in the blitz was bad (8/18) while the winners were Karjakin (11.5/18), Nakamura (11/18) and Vachier Lagrave (10.5/18). Still, with the regulations counting the rapid points double, it was still enough to win the tournament overall - So scored 22 out of 36 while Karjakin and Vachier Lagrave scored 21.5.
FROM LEUVEN TO PARIS

With a short break between Leuven and Paris the form of the players remained the same. Sometimes a break in the routine can cause the form to change, for better or worse, but this wasn’t the case here. So, Karjakin, Nakamura, Vachier Lagrave and Aronian were again the best players in the rapid. Caruana struggled again, with the exception of the last three games when he scored 2.5 points. He was still dead last in the blitz with a miserable 5.5/18.

The development of the Paris tournament was similar. So won the rapid, only this time with 6/9, ahead of Nakamura and Karjakin on 5.5/9. This meant that his advantage before the blitz was minimal. He was again mediocre in blitz, 9/18, which meant that Nakamura’s result of 12/18 was enough not only to win the blitz but also the overall event.

The final standings in Paris were: Nakamura 23/36, Karjakin 21.5, So 21. The overall standings in the GCT after Leuven and Paris are as follows: So 21 points, Nakamura 20 and Karjakin 19.

SIX PAWNS FOR ONE:
CARUANA’S BIZARRE BLUNDERS

Speaking of Caruana, his blunders in Paris became even more bizarre (a word the French like to use quite frequently). Here’re a few examples:

Viswanathan Anand – Fabiano Caruana
GCT Blitz Paris 2018 Paris FRA (10.4)

51.\textit{g2} Black is easily winning. He only needs to pick up the a-pawn with the king.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PARIS TOURNAMENT WAS SIMILAR. SO WON THE RAPID, ONLY THIS TIME WITH 6/9, AHEAD OF NAKAMURA AND KARJAKIN ON 5.5/9. THIS MEANT THAT HIS ADVANTAGE BEFORE THE BLITZ WAS MINIMAL. BUT AGAIN, HE WAS MEDIocre IN BLITZ
51...d7?? But this definitely isn’t the way. It impossible to explain this in any other way than lapsus manu, though even that is unbelievable for a player of Caruana’s stature.

51...d6 52.f3 c7 53.e2 a3 54.d2 c1+ 55.xc1 xc1+ 56.xc1 b6 57.d2 xa6 with an easily winning pawn endgame.

52.xc5+ 1–0

Both performed well at the Blitz: Karjakin and Nakamura

114.c4?? 114...b3
115xa2 b5+

½–½

Hikaru Nakamura – Fabiano Caruana
GCT Blitz Paris 2018 Paris FRA (18.1)

53.d3 Black is three pawns up: a relatively straightforward technical task for the World Championship challenger.

1–0
Hikaru Nakamura – Fabiano Caruana
GCT Blitz Paris 2018 Paris FRA (18.1)

98.\texttt{xf5} And this is the position 45 moves later. Nakamura won the game on move 122.

1–0

The last example is baffling. How could Caruana lose all of his 6(!) pawns while winning only the one on g3?

EXAMPLES OF QUALITY

If the blitz is not where we look for quality, then the rapid surely had some admirable efforts. Take a look at Mamedyarov’s superb technique in what seemed like an easily-drawn position with opposite-coloured bishops.

Shakhriyar Mamedyarov, S – Wesley So
GCT Rapid Paris 2018 Paris FRA (2.2)

16.\texttt{c5}+ So has a choice here - to enter a position with opposite-coloured bishops or allow an eternal knight on c5. Understandably he chose the former, but the problems he had to face were greater than expected.

16...\texttt{d7}?! 16...\texttt{xc5} 17.\texttt{xc5} \texttt{h5}!? with some ideas like ...h4-h3, or to fix the pawn on g2 in case White plays h3 himself.

17.\texttt{f6}+! Black’s structure will be a mess now.

17...\texttt{xf6} 18.\texttt{xb4} \texttt{ae8} Still, one would expect So to hold this easily, but the impression of simplicity is deceiving.

19.\texttt{f3}! Blunting the bishop on d5.

19...\texttt{e2} 20.\texttt{f2} \texttt{he8} 21.\texttt{b3} Limiting the \texttt{d5} further.

21...\texttt{f5} 22.\texttt{d1} \texttt{a6} 23.\texttt{d4} Black put all his pawns on light squares, where they cannot be attacked by the bishop, so White now uses his rook to attack them.

23...\texttt{h5} 24.\texttt{f1} \texttt{xf2}+ 25.\texttt{xf2} \texttt{f6}
This is necessary in order to defend the pawn on h5 from f7, though this pawn will be lost, being on a dark square. Black’s logic is that the h-pawn is more important than the doubled f-pawn because losing the h-pawn would give White a passed h-pawn.

26.a3 Liberating the fourth rank for the rook.

26...a5 27.h4 f7 28.xf6 c5 29.a4 c6 30.c3 White consolidates the position. The essence here is not so much the extra pawn, it is the number of weaknesses Black needs to defend. Now White’s plan is to maximise his advantage on the kingside where he has an extra pawn.

30...b5 31.h4 e6 32.a5+ b6 33.b4 This opens the 5th rank so the rook can eye Black’s pawns on the kingside.

33...xb4 34.xb4 c8 35.a3 c2+ 36.g3 e2 37.e5 d7 38.d5 c7 39.d4 This prevents ...f4.

39.d6 is the most precise, according to the engine. It wins another pawn. 39...b5 (39...a5 40.d2; 39...f4+ 40.xf4 xg2 41.xa6) 40.h6 e8 41.xa6.

39...e6?

39...b5!? is an interesting attempt. 40.d5 is better, repeating the position and choosing the move 39.d6 as in the
comments to White’s 39th move. (The idea behind 39...b5 is that if White tries to exchange rooks as in the game 40.d2 d2 41.xd2 Black has the move 41...f1 latching onto the g2-pawn.)

40.d2 Now Black is deprived of counterplay against the g2-pawn and the king can move forward.

40...b5

Black returns to the idea of exchange of rooks and then ...f1 but the time he lost is decisive.

40...g6+ is more resilient, but Black should be lost anyway. 41.f4 g8 42.g3 g6 43.c3 c8 the rook on g6 defends both g5 and a6, so Black is hoping to stand still. Still, after 44.e5 d8 45.b2 White will break through.

41.f4 e2 42.xe2 x2 43.g5 Black’s problem is that the h-pawn is impossible to stop.

23...c7? Vachier needlessly allowed White to penetrate with the queen, though the position remains equal.

23...c7 and Black has no problems.

24.xb6! A wonderful combination.

24.e7 25.xe7! xb6 26.xf7+ h8 27.f8+ g7 28.f7+ h8 29.xf6

29...b4 Understandably, Black wants to activate the queen, but there is nothing to attack.

29...d8 remaining passive wouldn’t change much as Black will run out of moves all the same. 30.f7 b6 31.b7 d8 32.g2 h6 33.f3 h5 34.h4 f6 35.a4 d8 36.g2 f6 37.a7 loses the a5-pawn and then the a-pawn will promote.
The second edition of the traveling exhibition “Art of Chess” was presented in Leuven and will be showcased in St Louis. The exhibition features chess sets and memorabilia stylishly crafted and decorated.

30.\textit{\text AMDP}c6 31.\textit{\text AMDP}d4 32.\textit{\text AMDP}g2 33.\textit{\text AMDP}c7+ 34.\textit{\text AMDP}h8 33...\textit{\text AMDP}h6 34.\textit{\text AMDP}h4; 33...\textit{\text AMDP}f8 34.\textit{\text AMDP}xh7.

34.\textit{\text AMDP}h4 35.\textit{\text AMDP}a4 Zugzwang! White will now win the pawn on c5 and promote the c-pawn. Quite a rare sight in contemporary practice where a bishop and a rook dominate a queen in such fashion.

The Grand Chess Tour now continues in Saint Louis where all three time controls will be represented. The most exciting one will undoubtedly be the classical one, where none other than Magnus Carlsen will obtain the wild card. We are in for a treat with yet another duel between the Champion and the Challenger before their match in November!

1–0
## GRAND CHESS TOUR 2018 - COMBINED TOUR STANDINGS

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The 6th edition of Altibox Norway Chess, which took place from 27th May to 7th June, was marked by a disruption when Ding Liren, the Chinese player, injured himself cycling and had to withdraw so that there were only nine players. With a late run of wins Caruana came ahead of the World Champion Magnus Carlsen who lost to Wesley So.

The 10-player round robin featured the World Champion and most of the world’s top players including former World Champion Vishy Anand. The rules were strict: no talking between the players, so no draw offers are allowed. Games can be drawn by stalemate, threefold repetition, the fifty-move rule and insufficient material. Other draws are allowed only with the consent of the arbiter.

LUCK FAVOURS THOSE WHO GO FOR THE WIN

HEROIC CARUANA WINS ON CARLSEN’S TURF

Comment by GM Aleksandar Colovic, analysis by IM Shaun Taulbut
Photo: Altibox Norway Chess 2018 official/Facebook

The rules were strict: no talking between the players, so no draw offers are allowed. Games can be drawn by stalemate, threefold repetition, the fifty-move rule and insufficient material. Other draws are allowed only with the consent of the arbiter.

THE RULES WERE STRICT: NO TALKING BETWEEN THE PLAYERS, SO NO DRAW OFFERS ARE ALLOWED. GAMES CAN BE DRAWN BY STALEMATE, THREEFOLD REPEATITION, THE FIFTY-MOVE RULE AND INSUFFICIENT MATERIAL
Fabiano Caruana actually wanted to withdraw from the tournament before it began, but came to an ‘amicable agreement’ with the organisers and decided to stay and play in Norway.

He probably quickly regretted that decision when he lost badly to the World Champion in Round 1 and blundered in Round 2 (though he did draw). What could possibly be a worse start?

In the meantime, the World Champion was playing excellent chess and started with 2.5/3, beating Aronian in a vintage Carlsen game. What could possibly go wrong from there?

Things slowly started to develop as Caruana drew with Black in Round 3 and beat Karjakin with White in a very nice game in Round 4. This game was uplifting for him as it was also a sweet revenge for that loss in the Candidates.

Carlsen slowed down after his great start. He drew with Nakamura with Black and couldn’t pose problems with White against Anand. Then he was punished for his social-media bravado - after publicly saying on Twitter that he could draw with So easily if he wished to, he was strangled by the American in an Exchange Slav.

An unfortunate accident forced the Chinese player Ding Liren to withdraw from the tournament and together with the scheduled rest day there were two full days of rest for Carlsen. After coming back to play he was not the same player, lost an advantage against Mamedyarov and agreed a quick draw with Vachier-Lagrave in the last round. He was obviously banking on tie-breaks.

Yet a certain American thought differently. Not that it was his plan, but after beating Karjakin in Round 5 he had no problems drawing with Aronian and Nakamura before going for a strategically risky positional concept in an Exchange French (coming from a Petroff!) against Anand in the penultimate round. An exciting game that ended in a win for Caruana.

The last-round drama was worthy of a thriller. With White against So, Caruana was at first equal, then worse, then better and then winning before time trouble (with no increments!) had its say. In a winning position Caruana blundered into a forced drawing combination which So started correctly with his 40th move. And then, to shock everybody watching, with plenty of time on the clock to check the line, So blundered terribly on move 41 and was immediately lost. Thus Caruana won the game and the tournament.

Carlsen could say that he beat the Challenger in the direct duel, but losing the tournament to him on his home turf will not make him very comfortable. For a second time, after Grenke, Caruana has won a tournament ahead of Carlsen. The manner in which Caruana won the tournament is worthy of admiration. After a horrendous start, the turning point for him was his fine win
against Karjakin. It gave him confidence and he started taking his chances. He had his fair share of good luck, undoubtedly, but in chess, you have to deserve your luck. And Caruana certainly did.

With only a few months to go to the match for the title of the World Champion (in November), Fabio Caruana proved that he is a force to be reckoned with this year as he won the Norway tournament for the first time in his career (this was his fourth appearance).

We have analysed two of the most important games which took place in Norway: Caruana’s victory over So (where Caruana had more luck than So, but where he also showed that luck favours those who go for the win when it matters) and Carlsen’s impressive win over Aronian, a great example of creating and using space advantage.

Caruana won against Wesley So to win the tournament in the last round as follows.

**Fabiano Caruana - Wesley So**

6th Norway Chess 2018 Stavanger NOR (9.2)

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘f6 4.d3

A quiet variation. White simply defends his king pawn.

4...♘c5 5.0-0 ♘d4 6.♗xd4 ♘xd4 7.♖a4 ♖c6 8.c3 ♖b6 9.♗a3 ♖d6

Black could attempt to avoid this move by castling kingside and then playing ...d5. E.g 9...0-0 10.♘c4 ♖c7. The immediate 9...d5 10.exd5 ♘xd5 is met by 11.♘c4 ♖c7 12.♖xe5 ♖xe5 13.♗e1.

10.♗c2 ♖e6 11.♗e2 ♚h6

Black delays castling and has the option of castling queenside once his queen has moved.

12.♗h1 Threatening ♖f4 but Black is prepared for this plan.

12...g5 Black decides to take space on the kingside and play for an attack.

13.♘c4 ♖c7 14.♗e3 d5 15.♖e1 ♚e7 Black prepares to castle queenside.

16.a4 0-0-0

17.♗b1 White prepares b4 with his own attack.
17...d4 18.\f1 b6

18...b8 looks sensible or the energetic 18...h8 19.\d2 h5 20.b4 dxc3 21.xc3 h4 planning ...h3 as White cannot easily play h3 himself because of ...g4.

19.\d2 g4 20.f3 e6 21.g3

21.b4 dxc3 22.xc3 d4, with a slight positional edge for Black, is also possible.

21...h8 22.b4 g4 22...dxc3 23.xc3 d4 is good.

23.a5 dxc3 24.xc3 d4 25.xd4 xd4

If 33..xe4 34.e6+ fxe6 35.xe4 xe4 36.xe4 d6 37.h3 exf5 38.xf5+ b8 39.xc5 White is much better.

34.xf7 x3

If 34...g4 35.xg3 xg3 36.hxg3 f2+ 37.g1 d3 38.e5 xc1 39.xc1 d1+ 40.xd1 xd1+ 41.f2 and the White pawns are very dangerous.

35.f2 Attacking c5 allows White to defend satisfactorily.

35..b4 36.d5 d7 After 36...xd5 37.xc5+ d7 38.xd5+ xd5 39.exd5 xd5 40.e2 wins.

37.b6 37.xc5 is winning: now the game becomes complex in a time scramble.

37...axb6 38.axb6 g4 39.g1 Not 39.h4 when 39...h3 wins for Black.

39...d8 40.h3

26.b5 c5 27.b3

27.a6 b6 is slightly better for White because of the weak squares near the black king.

27...h5 27...gd8 is logical aiming at d3.

28.f5 xf5 29.exf5 White attacks the pawn on e5 but Black has adequate play.

29.e8

Alternatively: 29...gxf3 30.xf3 g4 31.a6 xd3 32.xb7+ xb7 33.axb7 gxf7 34.g1 h3+ could lead to a draw by perpetual check because, if 36.f1 f8 37.e6 f4 38.xe5 xe5 39.xe6 xe6 39.xf5+, Black is better.

30.bc1 gxf3 30...b8 is playable here.

31.xf3 ed8 32.c4 e4 33.dxe4 e5

THE LAST ROUND DRAMA WAS WORTHY OF A THRILLER. WITH WHITE AGAINST SO, CARUANA WAS FIRST EQUAL, THEN WORSE, THEN BETTER AND THEN WINNING BEFORE TIME-TROUBLE (WITH NO INCREMENTS!) HAD ITS SAY
40. \( \text{AXB7} \) is good. Now Black should be able to draw.

\[
40... \text{hxh3+} 41. \text{gxh3} \text{d3}
\]

After 41...\( \text{d2} \)

\[
42. \text{hxg4 hgx4} 43. \text{g2} \text{h8+} 44. \text{g1} \text{xg2+} 45. \text{xg2} \text{h3+} 46. \text{f2} \text{f3+} 47. \text{g1} \text{g3+} \text{is a draw by perpetual check.}
\]

\[
42. \text{g2} \text{g3} 43. \text{hxg4 xg2} 44. \text{xg2} \text{h4} 45. \text{f3} \text{g3+} 46. \text{e2} \text{h3} 47. \text{g1} \text{h4} 48. \text{e5}
\]

1-0

The World Champion scored an impressive win in the following game against Levon Aronian.

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**THE RULES WERE STRICT: NO TALKING BETWEEN THE PLAYERS, SO NO DRAW OFFERS ARE ALLOWED. GAMES CAN BE DRAWN BY STALEMATE, THREEFOLD REPETITION, THE FIFTY-MOVE RULE AND INSUFFICIENT MATERIAL**

**Magnus Carlsen - Levon Aronian**

6th Norway Chess 2018 Stavanger NOR (3.1)

1.e4 e5 2.\( \text{f3} \) c6 3.b5 \( \text{f6} \) 4.0-0 \( \text{xe4} \)

5.\( \text{e1} \) d6 6.\( \text{xe5} \) e7 7.f1

This symmetrical position offers good chances of equality.
11...\(\text{e}8\) 12.\(\text{xe}8+\) \(\text{xe}8\) 13.\(\text{d}3\) \(\text{d}6\)

After 13...\(\text{e}1\) 14.\(\text{d}2\) \(\text{d}1\) 15.\(\text{c}3\) \(\text{xd}3\) 16.\(\text{xd}3\) \(\text{xc}3\) 17.\(\text{xc}3\) \(\text{d}6\) 18.\(\text{b}5\) \(\text{c}6\) 19.\(\text{e}1\) \(\text{d}7\) 20.\(\text{xc}6\) \(\text{bxc}6\) 21.\(\text{xf}5\) \(\text{xf}5\) 22.\(\text{xd}6\) \(\text{xc}2\) 23.\(\text{f}3\) with a better endgame for White which Carlsen would be happy with.

14.\(\text{d}2\) \(\text{g}5\)

15.\(\text{f}3\) \(\text{xc}1\) 16.\(\text{xc}1\)

White has a space advantage and can probe the black position.

16...\(\text{d}7\) 17.\(\text{e}1\) \(\text{d}8\) 18.\(\text{c}4\) Tying the black queen down to \(\text{c}7\) gives White the advantage.

18...\(\text{g}6\) 19.\(\text{h}3\) \(\text{g}7\) 20.\(\text{e}3\) \(\text{a}5\#\)

However, 20...\(\text{c}5\) 21.\(\text{xc}6\) \(\text{bxc}6\) 22.\(\text{f}4\) \(\text{e}8\), with a slightly better position for White, may be best.

21.\(\text{a}4\) \(\text{e}8\) Again 21...\(\text{c}6\) is best here.

22.\(\text{d}4\)

22...\(\text{g}7\) 22...\(\text{c}6\) offers more freedom.

23.\(\text{g}4\) Stopping the knight emerging leaves Black in difficulties.

23...\(\text{c}6\) 24.\(\text{c}4\) \(\text{e}8\) After 24...\(\text{c}5\) 25.\(\text{f}4\) \(\text{xa}4\) 26.\(\text{g}5\) with a strong initiative for the pawn.

25.\(\text{f}4\) \(\text{g}7\) 25...\(\text{cxd}5\) 26.\(\text{cxd}5\) \(\text{f}6\) is worth consideration.

26.\(\text{b}3\) \(\text{b}8\) 27.\(\text{g}5\) \(\text{f}6\)

However, 27...\(\text{f}6\) 28.\(\text{d}2\) \(\text{h}6\) 29.\(\text{e}4\) \(\text{e}7\) 30.\(\text{xf}7\) \(\text{h}8\) 31.\(\text{xf}6\) 1–0

Black resigned because he must give the piece back with ...\(\text{g}5\) to stop mate and then he is two pawns down.

WITH ONLY A FEW MONTHS TO GO TO THE MATCH FOR THE TITLE OF THE WORLD CHAMPION (IN NOVEMBER), FABIO CARUANA PROVED THAT HE IS A FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH THIS YEAR AS HE WON THE NORWAY TOURNAMENT FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HIS CAREER
The playing hall

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</table>
Miracles do happen! That is the case even for FIDE, the survival of which under Kirsan Ilyumzhinov has, in itself, turned into a miracle. For example, some would argue it has been miraculous that the world chess body managed to survive under Ilyumzhinov for 22 and a half years, while others may say that it was a miracle that Kirsan managed to keep all the FIDE events going! Another miracle has happened recently - the seemingly ‘irreplaceable’ head of the world chess body has decided to withdraw from the race for the FIDE presidency, and a surprising new name has taken his place as the favourite; that of Arkady Dvorkovich. But, there might be a slightly sour (depending on your viewpoint) twist to this...

If you take a cynical (or, as cynics would argue, a realistic) look at the world, you may come to the conclusion that logic might not be a virtue for the times we live in. Chess, much like the world, has also been a fruitful source of obscure irrationalities. Let’s just examine the social behaviour of some of the top people in the chess community: look no further than Kirsan Ilyumzhinov, who claims he was abducted by aliens but managed to get at the helm of FIDE and stay there for over two decades, and even wanted to continue running it, despite the fact that it would be impossible for him to run any global organisation while under US sanctions; or Fischer - whose social awkwardness during his career and outrageous political statements in his latter days were the next most famous thing to his chess genius! Although it seemed perfectly logical for Kirsan to step aside and organise a gradual retreat, enabling a smooth transition in FIDE (and possibly reserving a foothold for himself), he switched to ‘fire and fury’ mode, attacking everyone and creating his new team of shady businessmen and people who don’t even exist (for more on the controversial people on Ilyumzhinov’s card, see our leading article in the May issue of BCM)! One would imagine that the Russians, who are anything but naive, would have been more careful about who they support. In the end, after 22 years of backing Kirsan Ilyumzhinov, the Russian Chess Federation switched to supporting Arkady Dvorkovich.

There was an interesting run-up to this. Unlike on previous occasions, Ilyumzhinov this time struggled to get the clear backing of the Russian Chess Federation (RCF). Back in May, the Board of the RCF gave Ilyumzhinov a sort of ‘conditional’ endorsement - when
Andrey Filatov, President of the RCF, pointed out that checks will be made with the Russian Foreign Ministry 'because some people on the ticket raise questions'. Things might have gone differently for Ilyumzhinov had he managed to secure another victory back in February: then the embattled president of FIDE was running against Filatov for the presidency of the RCF, but he withdrew his bid before the voting took place. Was there a trade-off between Ilyumzhinov and Filatov, RCF for FIDE? Or was it all prearranged in a desperate bid by Kirsan to try and put pressure on the RCF to back him for FIDE, as it is widely rumoured? We can only speculate. But, it seems that Ilyumzhinov is out for good (at least for the coming FIDE elections in Batumi this October).

Now, the Russians (and even Ilyumzhinov?!?) are behind Arkady Dvorkovich, the Russian economist who was one of the top people in the Ministry of Economy, advisor to President Putin, deputy PM for six years (2012-2018) and the head of the 2018 FIFA World Cup organising committee. There is more about Dvorkovich in Bloomberg, WSJ and the Financial Times than in the chess media! He held a prominent position in the Russian Chess Federation between 2007 and 2014 and he was also the head of the committee which organised the 2014 Sochi match between Carlsen and Anand. Overall, Dvorkovich seems like a tough opponent in comparison to Georgios Makropoulos who claims to have the backing of 64 chess federations (formally more than his two opponents) and is mostly known for being Ilyumzhinov’s right-hand man.

And what about our very own, England’s Nigel Short? He still believes he has strong chances and has invited the other two remaining candidates - Makropoulos and Dvorkovich - to have a public debate, arguing in favour of ‘clean hands for FIDE’.

Interestingly, in this stream of irrationalities in the chess world, the English Chess Federation finally decided who to back. Or did they? Here is the information published by ECF on 3rd July: ‘At its Board meeting on 15th June, the Board nominated Nigel Short’s presidential ticket for the FIDE election in October. Regardless of its nomination, the Board will remain open-minded as to how the ECF’s vote is exercised in October’. There is a fine Balkan expression summarising this: ‘It may happen, but that doesn’t mean anything’. BCM tried to arrange interviews with the top people of English chess involved in these matters - Malcolm Pein (who is on Makropoulos’ card as the nominee for Deputy President) and Dominic Lawson, head of the ECF, but we were unsuccessful.

It seems logical that Dvorkovich is the favourite to win the presidency. He has the backing of the Russian Chess Federation, he has the money, he has contacts, and there’s not as much negative noise around him as with Ilyumzhinov or Makropoulos.

So, should we expect Dvorkovich to win in October?

Here comes the twist: chess sources are already speculating that Georgios Makropoulos is discussing a power-sharing arrangement with the Russian candidate. It has even been suggested by several independent sources that Dvorkovich will actually back Makropoulos, who will return the favour in the next FIDE elections. This seems highly illogical, but - given that acting against logic has become a modus vivendi of the chess community - this outcome is perfectly plausible.

So, chess finally becomes politics even in its cynical aspect: everything has become possible and nothing is impossible.
The Croatian Chess Federation organised the traditional - 32nd - 9-round open tournament in Pula. This regular Open tournament attracted 169 players from 22 countries. A number of British players took part and the event was a success for Ravi Haria (who was leading from the start of the event) and Daniel Fernandez who shared first place with four other players on 7½/9. Joseph McPhillips and Andrew P Horton were in the group on 6½/9. This was an important event for British players who are aiming to qualify for global chess titles.

The top woman player was Russian WFM Ekaterina Smirnova, who finished 27th with six points.

Writing in The Guardian, Leonard Barden has said that success in Pula “reflects well on the English Chess Federation’s elite programme, which provides an annual grant to the best talents to be spent on coaching, books, or travel to tournaments and which has benefited all the winning group in Croatia”.

Here are two most interesting wins from the top two players of the event, Daniel Fernandez and Ravi Haria.

**Daniel Howard Fernandez - Daniel Beletic**

32nd International Open Tournament Pula (8.4)

1.f4 Bird’s Opening.

1...b6 Black responds with an unusual line; 1.d5 would lead to a reversed Dutch.

2.a4
An unusual move planning to undermine the Black queenside with a5.

2...a6 Black prepares...b5 in response to White pushing ahead with a5.

3.b3 White switches tack, starting his development with a queenside fianchetto.

3...b7 4.b2 f6 5.f3 c5 Probably best is the disruptive 5...xf3 6.gxf3 which leads to a double-edged position with a slight advantage for Black.

6.e3 e6 7.e2 d6 8.0-0 bd7 9.c4 c7 10.c3

After the unusual opening a normal position has been reached with White being slightly better.

10...h6 Black plans to commence a kingside attack leaving his king in the centre.

11.d4 g5 A bold move!

11...cxd4 12.exd4 e7 gives White a slight edge.

12.d5 White sensibly closes the position, blocking out the Black queen’s bishop.

Also: 12.fxg5 hxg5 13.xg5 d5 is good for Black, who has a strong attack on the kingside against h2.

12...g8 13.a5 A good positional move, breaking up the Black queenside and also making it more difficult for Black to castle queenside.

13.bxa5 14.f5

14.d2 is playable since, if 14...exd5, 15.xd5 xd5 16.exd5 xd5 17.xc4 xc4 18.xc4 with a raging attack for White.

14...e5 Black decides to close the position, leaving White a very good square on e4 but averting immediate danger.

14...exf5 15.d3 regains the pawn with advantage to White.

15.d2 g4 16.de4 h5

Black has defended successfully so it is hard to break through to his king.

17.a3 White plans to double on the a-file and capture the pawn on a5: simple and good.

17...h6 18.d3 b8 19.fa1 c8 20.xf6 xf6 21.d1 White is ready to capture on a5 now but Black forces a clarification in the centre.

21.e7 Black threatens ...e4, forcing White to block.

22.e4 h4 23.xa5 h5 A strong move aiming for f4.

24.g3 White is practically forced to play this move which leaves a weakness on g3.
24...hxg3 25.hxg3 $g5 26.$c5a2 26.$c1 $f6 27.$xh6 $xh6 28.$h1a2 $h8 29.$h2 $c1 30.$e2 $g5 is slightly better for White; now it is almost equal.

26...$e3+ 27.$xe3 $xe3+ 28.$g2 $f6 29.$c2 $h8 30.$h1 $hxh1 31.$xh1 $d4 32.$d1

A tempting move but now White has the two bishops and potential for his queen’s bishop on the dark squares.

36.$xf2

White has a small edge in the ending but it should be a draw.

32...$f8 33.$c1 $g7 34.$g2 $b7 35.$f2 $h8 36.$d3 Enabling the rook to capture on f2 and stop the black rook from invading on h1.

37.$xf2 $h3 38.$e2 White is able to defend g3 with this plan which leaves Black worse.

38...$h5 39.$e3 $f6 40.$d2 The bishop invades the black position on the dark squares and it is already difficult for Black to save the game.

40...$h8 41.$a5 41.b4 $d7 42.$e2 $c8 43.$b3 is very good for White.

The Croats dubbed the venue ‘The chess Wimbledon’
41...\text{c8} 42.\text{e1} \text{h8} 43.\text{c2} 43.\text{b4} is again very good.

43...\text{f8} 44.\text{d8} \text{h6} 45.\text{d1} \text{g7} 46.\text{c7} \text{e8} 47.\text{b8} White wins material since the pawn on g4 is lost.

47...\text{f6} 48.\text{xg4} \text{e7} 49.\text{f3} \text{d7} 50.\text{b1} a5 51.\text{a1} \text{c8} 52.\text{a7} \text{e7} 53.\text{xa5} \text{f6} 54.\text{b4} exb4 55.\text{c5} dxc5

55...b3 56.\text{b6}+ \text{c8} 57.\text{c6} wins.

56.\text{xc5+} \text{d7} 57.\text{b8}

1-0

Josef \text{Kainz} - Ravi \text{Haria}

32\text{nd} International Open Tournament Pula (1.7)

1.d4 e6 2.c4 \text{b4}+ A favourite of Paul Keres!

3.\text{d2} a5 4.g3 \text{c6}

Black aims to play in the centre.

5.\text{f3} After 5.d5 \text{e5} is playable for Black.

5...\text{d6} The alternative is 5...d5 6.a3 \text{xd2+} 7.\text{bxd2} with a slight edge for White. Black aims to advance with ...\text{e5}.

6.\text{c3} \text{f6} 7.\text{c2}

Black aims for b3, but White has the two bishops; probably this favours White.

13.\text{d2} After 13.\text{b4}, \text{e7} 14.e4 b6 15.\text{fe1} \text{c5} with an equal position.

13...\text{c5}
Black has his knight on a good square on c5 whence it cannot be easily dislodged.

14.f4 An aggressive try, but this is a mistake.

14.e3 looks best followed by £e1, preparing to advance in the centre, eg.

14...£e7 15.£e1 £d7 16.f4 with an edge for White.

14...g4 15.f3 This mistake loses.

White could still fight with 15.fxe5 £e3 16.£c1 £xf1 17.£xf1 when White has compensation for the exchange, though after 17...dxe5 18.£xe5 f6 19.£d4 £d6 20.£f2 b6 Black should be able to make his advantage tell.

15...e4 16.£xe4 £f5 17.£f6+ £xf6, winning a piece.

18.e4 £xe4 19.£xe4 £e4 20.£xf6 £xf6 21.£e3 £fe8

22.£e1 £d2

0–1

**GRAND CHESS TOUR 2018 - COMBINED TOUR STANDINGS**

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The chess player whose writings influenced J.R.R. Tolkien, and whose imaginative chess compositions gripped readers

Lord Dunsany

The Renaissance man of chess

By Milan Dinic
Lord Dunsany (1878–1957) was a prolific Anglo-Irish playwright, poet, traveller, sportsman and a person of many interests, including chess. Born in London (Green Park) 140 years ago, on 24th July 1878, Edward John Moreton Drax Plunkett, the 18th Baron of Dunsany, is not so well known in the wider chess world although he greatly enriched it, not the least with his marvellous story ‘The Three Sailors’ Gambit’ (1916) which we are publishing in this month’s BCM.

The obituary published in the BCM in December 1957, and written by D.J. Morgan, describes Lord Dunsany as a ‘man of many parts and distinguished in them all’, adding that ‘he was a strong [chess] player and turned out compositions which displayed the whimsical touch so often seen in his writings’.

Although he was the President of the Irish Chess Union and of the Kent Country Chess Association, Dunsany is better known as a fantasy-story writer and the forefather of J.R.R. Tolkien. A 2002 article in The Irish Times points out that ‘Dunsany was among the first novelists to indulge in ‘world building’, plucking vast romanticised universes from the furthest recesses of his subconscious’, having a major influence on the works of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis and Terry Pratchett.

The famous author of ‘The Hobbit’ and ‘Lord of the Rings’ refers to Dunsany on several occasions in his collected letters: praising Dunsany for his fantasy stories and character-naming skills; and complimenting his ‘Chu-Bu and Sheemish’ story (about two deities struggling with one another in creating miracles). It has been claimed that Tolkien even presented Professor Clyde S. Kilby (a close friend and an expert on Tolkien’s work) with a copy of Dunsany’s ‘The Book of Wonder’ (a collection of short fantasy stories), as a kind of preparation for his auxiliary role in the compilation and development of ‘The Silmarillion’ during the 1960s.

Eddy to his father and ‘Eddie’ to close friends, Lord Dunsany grew up at the family property in Shoreham, Kent, Dunstall Priory, and at Dunsany Castle, County Meath, Ireland. Edward went to Cheam school, then Eton (1891) and from there to Sandhurst in 1896 from where he left to go and fight in the Boer War, until 1901.

Although he was the President of the Irish Chess Union and of the Kent Country Chess Association, Dunsany is better known as a fantasy-story writer and the forefather of J.R.R. Tolkien
A rich and wealthy background (he was the first son of John Plunkett, an Irish Conservative politician and peer, coming from a family that can trace its ancestry to the twelfth century and which holds one of the oldest dignities in the Peerage of Ireland) enabled Edward to pursue a renaissance lifestyle focusing on writing. As an interesting man living in interesting times, he travelled the world and his circle of friends included the likes of W. B. Yeats, George Bernard Shaw, Rudyard Kipling, James Stephens, George William Russell (‘AE’) and H. G. Wells. In his travels around the world Lord Dunsany met many famous and intriguing people including the first president of Czechoslovakia, Masaryk, as well as the daughter and sister of President Roosevelt. He was also a cousin of the renowned explorer and writer Sir Richard Burton.

Upon returning from the Boer War in 1901 Edward settled in the family seat in Dunsany Castle and started writing and publishing his work which included poems, plays and novels. During his career Lord Dunsany published more than eighty books and his plays were performed in some of the most prestigious theatres in London and New York (at one time, five of his plays ran simultaneously there). In addition, some of his works were adapted for radio and television. Lord Dunsany was also nominated for the Nobel prize in literature in 1950, which that year went to Bertrand Russell.

The Sea and Chess

Silence. And silence still.
Then one long roller breaks,
And Hastings’ houses fill
With the wild sound it makes.

Silence again. The sea,
Though it may seem to sleep,
Is still the vast and free
Inscrutable old deep.

Who shall entirely scan
All its mysteriousness?
Even the mind of man
Has deeps beyond our guess.

So, when a move has brought
Some strategy in sight,
We cannot plumb the thought
That brought that move to light.

And, small although it be,
And missed by careless eyes,
A chessboard, like the sea,
Has unplumbed mysteries.

Recited at the opening of the Hastings 1950-51 congress.
The poem, specially written for this ceremony, appeared in the February 1951 issue of BCM.


In his travels around the world, Lord Dunsany met many famous and intriguing people including the first president of Czechoslovakia, Masaryk, as well as president Roosevelt’s daughter and sister.
Some of Sidney Herbert Sime’s illustrations for Lord Dunsany’s works
A chess-lover who ‘avoided chess’

Dunsany learnt chess while at Cheam school. As his biographer Mark Amory notes in ‘Lord Dunsany: A Biography’ (1972), ‘... he liked it so well that later he saw it as a danger, for he could imagine succumbing to the temptation to do nothing else’.

In his 1938 autobiography ‘Patches of Sunlight’, Lord Dunsany marked the beginning of his journey to the world of Caissa at Cheam with the following words: ‘And the path that led the wrong way was chess, for it is so completely satisfying that a man may easily devote his life-time to it. It is not because they can do nothing else that men play chess, as one often hears said, but because on those sixty-four squares the human intellect can roam, not indeed without boundaries, but without any boundaries that the mind of man has yet been able to surpass; for no-one has beaten chess, no-one has yet been able to set the board as for play, and to announce White to mate in so many moves. And so there is strong temptation to a man’s fancy, that is able to travel those squares, to travel nowhere else.

A victory at a school tournament in his second year at Cheam was the starting point of a life which took great pleasure in chess. However, the handsome 6'4” Edward was by no means only good at chess. Various sources mention him as a fantastic player of bridge, a great driver ‘who drove furiously and then lost interest and hardly ever drove again’, a competitive hunter, a fan of tennis and ping-pong; a master cricket player; a keen marksman; and a cross-country runner.

Lord Dunsany never took up chess professionally. In his autobiographical work ‘While the Sirens Slept’ (1942) he points out that he ‘rather avoided chess, for there is no doubt that it can completely fill a man’s lifetime...’
In 1942 Dunsany even invented his own version of chess, also called Dunsany’s Game.

The rules of the game are as follows: it is played on a standard chess board. White begins with 32 pawns, positioned on squares in rows one to four. Black has a standard set of pieces, positioned like at the beginning of any other chess game. White pawns cannot make the initial double move but they can be promoted, like in chess. Black plays according to standard chess rules. Black starts the game. While White needs to checkmate Black, the goal of the black player is to win all the white pawns.
On those sixty-four squares
the human intellect can roam, not indeed without boundaries, but without any boundaries that the mind of man has yet been able to surpass; for no-one has beaten chess, no-one has yet been able to set the board as for play, and to announce White to mate in so many moves.

Dunsany was a gifted player who faced at least two of the world's top champions: Capablanca and Alekhine, although not in tournament play.

Something about chess to those who don't play it...

'Let me say this one thing about chess to those that do not play it: a blind man can hear something of a football match, but he can never quite estimate the vigour, the speed or the skill of the players and so can never quite realize the excitement of the game. Watching a game of chess we are all blind; for, except a few whose imagination serves as very strong glasses to see into the minds of the players, we cannot see the exciting thoughts that flash rapidly to and fro, until a move is made, placing something visible occasionally before us, as the boom of a football kicked into the goal comes now and then to the ears of the blind man.'

Lord Dunsany, While the Sirens Slept (pp. 64)
Quirky chess compositions

Lord Dunsany was a keen composer of problems which were published by The Times in their Literary Supplement, but also by other publications.

Dunsany composed his chess problems with the following logic (as described in his autobiography “While the Sirens Slept”): “My first principle was that it should look childishly easy, my next, but still more important, was that an examination of it should make it appear entirely impossible, and then if I could add a little humour to the situation I was content”

Here are a few examples of the quirkiness of Lord Dunsany’s chess compositions:

(XIIIIIIIIY)
9-snrtR-tRrsn0
9zppzp-mk-zP-0
9l+P+L+p+0
9+P+pmKpzPQ0
9-+-+pzP-zp0
9-+-+-zP-+-0
9-+-zP-+-+0
9+-+-+-+-0
xiiiiiiiiy
(Dec. 21, 1922, p. 864)
White to move, mate in 1

Solution:
Black’s previous move could only have been f7-f5, therefore - White’s g5 pawn takes the f5 one en passant.

On his blog ‘Spragett on chess’, GM Kevin Spragett points to the following example first published in Hubert Phillips’ Week End Problems Book from 1932:

White to play and mate in 4 moves

The key thing in this position is to notice that Black’s king and queen have switched places. As this would not be possible in the original position, this means that we are looking at it upside down, ie. Black’s pieces are on the second and first row, the black king is on e1, not d8, while all the White’s pieces are on the eight row. One of the solutions is: 1.¢c6 ¢f3 2. ¢b4 (threatening ¢d3#) ¢e5 3. ¢xe5 (any) 4.¢d3#.

A list of some of some wonderful chess problems by Lord Dunsany can be found on:

Playing Capablanca and Alekhine

Capablanca and Dunsany met twice over the board: In 1928 (at the Imperial Chess Club, where Lord Dunsany lost) and in 1929 (when they drew).

As the president of the Kent Chess Association, Dunsany played Capablanca in the spring of 1929. As his biographer Mark Amory points out: ‘He muddled his opening, thought that he was to be humiliated by a swift disaster but regained his position at the cost of a pawn. Uncle Horace had always said that it was his middle game that was fine and he excelled himself by winning back the pawn and eventually extracting a draw from Capablanca. The game was recorded in The Times. Another Kentish player drew and Capablanca lost one game to another county so Kent scored two half-points to tie first place. It was the zenith of Dunsany’s chess career and he was given a cocktail-shaker as a prize. Capablanca became a friend.’ (pp. 215).

Dunsany’s recollection of the encounter is recorded in his autobiography ‘While the Sirens Slept’ as follows: ‘...We sat at a row of tables in a long room with a large crowd leaning over us, and Señor Capablanca walked along the row. I was rather anxious that it should not be thought that I had been chosen to play merely because I was president of the Kent Chess Association, and the only way of showing that was to hold out for at least half an hour. I have mentioned earlier my ignorance of the openings, and Capablanca, who of course had first move on every board, chose the opening that probably corresponds with whatever is the most complicated theory in any science, that is to say the Ruy López. I made for my fourth move one that should have come later, not realizing how much it mattered.

Of this simple blunder Capablanca naturally took immediate advantage, and I looked very unlikely to hold out for half an hour. But then I began to play, and by sacrificing a pawn got out of the muddle into which I had strayed, though playing with a pawn down against Capablanca did not seem a very hopeful proposition. Curiously enough my blunder saved me, for in the complications of an ordinary Ruy López as played by Capablanca I should no doubt have been easily beaten; but the clock went on and I was still playing, and at last I got the pawn back, and at the end of four hours when play ended, I had an obvious draw... My game with Capablanca was recorded in The Times, in the Chess Column, that year’ (pp. 112-113).

According to his biographer Mark Amory, Lord Dunsany also played Alexander Alekhine in the Irish capital in 1938: “In Dublin he was one of several chess players to struggle with the world champion Alekhine who, after a long game, defeated him’ (‘A Biography’, 1972, pp. 242).
World War Two caught up with Lord Dunsany while he was in Athens as a professor of English. His return to Britain by ship took a path through the Mediterranean, to Sierra Leone and eventually Glasgow, from which he got a train to London. During that journey he came across chess opponents, mostly among sailors and people he travelled with on the ships, mostly coming out victorious from the 64-square battlefield.

Lord Dunsany had an attack of appendicitis in 1957 and never regained consciousness after being operated on. He died in Dublin on the 25th of October. According to his wishes, he was buried in Shoreham, in memory of the time spent there at the height of Nazi bombardment.

A draw with Capablanca after losing a pawn in the opening

**Jose Raul Capablanca - Lord Dunsany**

Simul, 21b Selfridges, London ENG, 12.04.1929

1.e4 e5 2.\(\text{\&}f3\) c6 3.\(\text{\&}b5\) a6 4.\(\text{\&}a4\) b5 5.\(\text{\&}b3\) \(\text{\&}f6\) 6.\(\text{\&}g5\) d5 7.exd5 \(\text{\&}e7\)

A pawn down but with high spirits, Lord Dunsany said he sacrificed a pawn to get ‘out of the muddle into which I had strayed... Curiously enough my blunder saved me, for in the complications of an ordinary Ruy López as played by Capablanca I should no doubt have been easily beaten; but the clock went on’...

8.d6 \(\text{\&}ed5\) 9.dxc7 \(\text{\&}xc7\) 10.\(\text{\&}c3\) \(\text{\&}b7\) 11.a4 b4 12.\(\text{\&}xd5\) \(\text{\&}xd5\) 13.\(\text{\&}xd5\) \(\text{\&}xd5\) 14.0-0 \(\text{\&}e7\) 15.d4 0-0 16.dxe5 \(\text{\&}xe5\) 17.\(\text{\&}e1\) \(\text{\&}d6\) 18.\(\text{\&}e4\) \(\text{\&}c6\) 19.\(\text{\&}g5\) \(\text{\&}xg5\) 20.\(\text{\&}xg5\) \(\text{\&}ac8\) 21.\(\text{\&}f3\) \(\text{\&}f6\) 22.\(\text{\&}e2\) \(\text{\&}h6\) 23.\(\text{\&}xc6\) \(\text{\&}xc6\) 24.\(\text{\&}f3\) a5 25.\(\text{\&}d4\) \(\text{\&}e5\) 26.\(\text{\&}b3\) \(\text{\&}d5\) 27.\(\text{\&}ae1\) \(\text{\&}d7\) 28.\(\text{\&}e4\) \(\text{\&}b6\) 29.\(\text{\&}e5\) \(\text{\&}fd8\) 30.\(\text{\&}xd5\) \(\text{\&}xd5\) 31.\(\text{\&}f1\) \(\text{\&}xa4\)

Here Capablanca reluctantly accepted a draw.

\(\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}\)
The Three Sailors' Gambit

By Lord Dunsany (1916)

Sitting some years ago in the ancient tavern at Over, one afternoon in Spring, I was waiting, as was my custom, for something strange to happen. In this I was not always disappointed for the very curious leaded panes of that tavern, facing the sea, let a light into the low-ceilinged room so mysterious, particularly at evening, that it somehow seemed to affect the events within. Be that as it may, I have seen strange things in that tavern and heard stranger things told.

And as I sat there three sailors entered the tavern, just back, as they said, from sea, and come with sunburned skins from a very long voyage to the South; and one of them had a board and chessmen under his arm, and they were complaining that they could find no one who knew how to play chess. This was the year that the Tournament was in England. And a little dark man at a table in a corner of the room, drinking sugar and water, asked them why they wished to play chess; and they said they would play any man for a pound. They opened their box of chessmen then, a cheap and nasty set, and the man refused to play with such uncouth pieces, and the sailors suggested that perhaps he could find better ones; and in the end he went round to his lodgings nearby and brought his own, and then they sat down to play for a pound a side. It was a consultation game on the part of the sailors, they said that all three must play.

Well, the little dark man turned out to be Stavlokratz.

Of course he was fabulously poor, and the sovereign meant more to him than it did to the sailors, but he didn't seem keen to play, it was the sailors that insisted; he had made the badness of the sailors' chessmen an excuse for not playing at all, but the sailors had overruled that, and then he told them straight out who he was, and the sailors had never heard of Stavlokratz.

Well, no more was said after that. Stavlokratz said no more, either because he did not wish to boast or because he was huffed that they did not know who he was. And I saw no reason to enlighten the sailors about him; if he took their pound they had brought it upon themselves, and my boundless admiration for his genius made me feel that he deserved whatever might come his way. He had not asked to play, they had named the stakes, he had warned them, and
gave them the first move; there was nothing unfair about Stavlokratz.

I had never seen Stavlokratz before, but I had played over nearly every one of his games in the World Championship for the last three or four years; he was always of course the model chosen by students. Only young chess-players can appreciate my delight at seeing him play first hand.

Well, the sailors used to lower their heads almost as low as the table and mutter together before every move, but they muttered so low that you could not hear what they planned. They lost three pawns almost straight off, then a knight, and shortly after a bishop; they were playing in fact the famous Three Sailors’ Gambit.

Stavlokratz was playing with the easy confidence that they say was usual with him, when suddenly at about the thirteenth move I saw him look surprised; he leaned forward and looked at the board and then at the sailors, but he learned nothing from their vacant faces; he looked back at the board again.

He moved more deliberately after that; the sailors lost two more pawns, Stavlokratz had lost nothing as yet. He looked at me I thought almost irritably, as though something would happen that he wished I was not there to see. I believed at first that he had qualms about taking the sailors’ pound, until it dawned on me that he might lose the game; I saw that possibility in his face, not on the board, for the game had become almost incomprehensible to me. I cannot describe my astonishment. And a few moves later Stavlokratz resigned.

The sailors showed no more elation than if they had won some game with greasy cards, playing amongst themselves.

Stavlokratz asked them where they got their opening. "We kind of thought of it," said one. "It just come into our heads like," said another. He asked them questions about the ports they had touched at. He evidently thought as I did myself that they had learned their extraordinary gambit, perhaps in some old dependancy of Spain, from some young master of chess whose fame had not reached Europe. He was very eager to find out who this man could be, for neither of us imagined that those sailors had invented it, nor would anyone who had seen them. But he got no information from the sailors.

Stavlokratz could very ill afford the loss of a pound. He offered to play them again for the same stakes. The sailors began to set up the white pieces. Stavlokratz pointed out that it was his turn for the first move. The sailors agreed but continued to set up the white pieces and sat with the white before them waiting for him to move. It was a trivial incident, but it revealed to Stavlokratz and myself that none of these sailors was aware that white always moves first.

Stavlokratz played them on his own opening, reasoning of course that as they had never heard of Stavlokratz they would not know of his opening; and with probably a very good hope of getting back his pound he played the fifth variation with its tricky seventh move, at least so he intended, but it turned to a variation unknown to the students of Stavlokratz.

Throughout this game I watched the sailors closely, and I became sure, as only an attentive watcher can be, that the one on their left, Jim Bunion, did not even know the moves.

When I had made up my mind about this I watched only the other two, Adam Bailey and Bill Sloggs, trying
to make out which was the master mind; and for a long while I could not. And then I heard Adam Bailey mutter six words, the only words I heard throughout the game, of all their consultations, "No, him with the horse's head." And I decided that Adam Bailey did not know what a knight was, though of course he might have been explaining things to Bill Sloggs, but it did not sound like that; so that left Bill Sloggs. I watched Bill Sloggs after that with a certain wonder; he was no more intellectual than the others to look at, though rather more forceful perhaps. Poor old Stavlokratz was beaten again.

Well, in the end I paid for Stavlokratz, and tried to get a game with Bill Sloggs alone, but this he would not agree to, it must be all three or none: and then I went back with Stavlokratz to his lodgings. He very kindly gave me a game: of course it did not last long but I am prouder of having been beaten by Stavlokratz than of any game that I have ever won. And then we talked for an hour about the sailors, and neither of us could make head or tail of them. I told him what I had noticed about Jim Bunion and Adam Bailey, and he agreed with me that Bill Sloggs was the man, though as to how he had come by that gambit or that variation of Stavlokratz's own opening he had no theory.

I had the sailors' address which was that tavern as much as anywhere, and they were to be there all evening. As evening drew in I went back to the tavern, and found there still the three sailors. And I offered Bill Sloggs two pounds for a game with him alone and he refused, but in the end he played me for a drink. And then I found that he had not heard of the "en passant" rule, and believed that the fact of checking the king prevented him from castling, and did not know that a player can have two or more queens on the board at the same time if he queens his pawns, or that a pawn could ever become a knight; and he made as many of the stock mistakes as he had time for in a short game, which I won. I thought that I should have got at the secret then, but his mates who had sat scowling all the while in the corner came up and interfered. It was a breach of their compact apparently for one to play by himself, at any rate they seemed angry. So I left the tavern then and came back again next day, and the next day and the day after, and often saw the sailors, but none were in a communicative mood. I had got Stavlokratz to keep away, and they could get no one to play chess with at a pound a side, and I would not play with them unless they told me the secret.

And then one evening I found Jim Bunion drunk, yet not so drunk as he wished, for the two pounds were spent; and I gave him very nearly a tumbler of whiskey, or what passed for whiskey in that tavern at Over, and he told me the secret at once. I had given the others some whiskey to keep them quiet, and later on in the evening they must have gone out, but Jim Bunion stayed with me by a little table leaning across it and talking low, right into my face, his breath smelling all the while of what passed for whiskey.

The wind was blowing outside as it does on bad nights in November, coming up with moans from the South, towards which the tavern faced with all its leaded panes, so that none but I was able to hear his voice as Jim Bunion gave up his secret. They had sailed for years, he told me, with Bill Snyth; and on their last voyage home Bill Snyth had died. And he was buried at sea. Just the other side of the line they buried him, and his pals divided his kit, and these three got his crystal that only they knew he had, which Bill got one night in Cuba. They played chess with the crystal.
And he was going on to tell me about that night in Cuba when Bill had bought the crystal from the stranger, how some folks might think they had seen thunderstorms, but let them go and listen to that one that thundered in Cuba when Bill was buying his crystal and they’d find that they didn’t know what thunder was. But then I interrupted him, unfortunately perhaps, for it broke the thread of his tale and set him rambling a while, and cursing other people and talking of other lands, China, Port Said and Spain: but I brought him back to Cuba again in the end. I asked him how they could play chess with a crystal; and he said that you looked at the board and looked at the crystal, and there was the game in the crystal the same as it was on the board, with all the odd little pieces looking just the same though smaller, horses’ heads and whatnots; and as soon as the other man moved the move came out in the crystal, and then your move appeared after it, and all you had to do was to make it on the board. If you didn’t make the move that you saw in the crystal things got very bad in it, everything horribly mixed and moving about rapidly, and scowling and making the same move over and over again, and the crystal getting cloudier and cloudier; it was best to take one’s eyes away from it then, or one dreamt about it afterwards, and the foul little pieces came and cursed you in your sleep and moved about all night with their crooked moves.

I thought then that, drunk though he was, he was not telling the truth, and I promised to show him to people who played chess all their lives so that he and his mates could get a pound whenever they liked, and I promised not to reveal his secret even to Stavlokratz, if only he would tell me all the truth; and this promise I have kept till long after the three sailors have lost their secret. I told him
straight out that I did not believe in the crystal. Well, Jim Bunion leaned forward then, even further across the table, and swore he had seen the man from whom Bill had bought the crystal and that he was one to whom anything was possible. To begin with his hair was villainously dark, and his features were unmistakable even down there in the South, and he could play chess with his eyes shut, and even then he could beat anyone in Cuba. But there was more than this, there was the bargain he made with Bill that told one who he was. He sold that crystal for Bill Snyth’s soul.

Jim Bunion leaning over the table with his breath in my face nodded his head several times and was silent.

I began to question him then. Did they play chess as far away as Cuba? He said they all did. Was it conceivable that any man would make such a bargain as Snyth made? Wasn’t the trick well known? Wasn’t it in hundreds of books? And if he couldn’t read books mustn’t he have heard from sailors that it is the Devil’s commonest dodge to get souls from silly people?

Jim Bunion had leant back in his own chair quietly smiling at my questions but when I mentioned silly people he leaned forward again, and thrust his face close to mine and asked me several times if I called Bill Snyth silly. It seemed that these three sailors thought a great deal of Bill Snyth and it made Jim Bunion angry to hear anything said against him. I hastened to say that the bargain seemed silly though not of course the man who made it; for the sailor was almost threatening, and no wonder for the whiskey in that dim tavern would madden a nun.

When I said that the bargain seemed silly he smiled again, and then he thundered his fist down on the table and said that no one had ever yet got the best of Bill Snyth and that that was the worst bargain for himself that the Devil ever made, and that from all he had read or heard of the Devil he had never been so badly had before as the night when he met Bill Snyth at the inn in the thunderstorm in Cuba, for Bill Snyth already had the damndest soul at sea; Bill was a good fellow, but his soul was damned right enough, so he got the crystal for nothing.

Yes, he was there and saw it all himself, Bill Snyth in the Spanish inn and the candles flaring, and the Devil walking in and out of the rain, and then the bargain between those two old hands, and the Devil going out into the lightning, and the thunderstorm raging on, and Bill Snyth sitting chuckling to himself between the bursts of the thunder.

But I had more questions to ask and interrupted this reminiscence. Why did they all three always play together? And a look of something like fear came over Jim Bunion’s face; and at first he would not speak. And then he said to me that it was like this; they had not paid for that crystal, but got it as their share of Bill Snyth’s kit. If they had paid for it or given something in exchange to Bill Snyth that would have been all right, but they couldn’t do that now because Bill was dead, and they were not sure if the old bargain might not hold good. And Hell must be a large and lonely place, and to go there alone must be bad, and so the three agreed that they would all stick together, and use the crystal all three or not at all, unless one died, and then the two would use it and the one that was gone would wait for them. And the last of the three to go would take the crystal with him, or maybe the crystal would bring him. They didn’t think, they said, they were the kind of men for Heaven, and
he hoped they knew their place better than that, but they didn’t fancy the notion of Hell alone, if Hell it had to be. It was all right for Bill Snyth, he was afraid of nothing. He had known perhaps five men that were not afraid of death, but Bill Snyth was not afraid of Hell. He died with a smile on his face like a child in its sleep; it was drink killed poor Bill Snyth.

This was why I had beaten Bill Sloggs; Sloggs had the crystal on him while we played, but would not use it; these sailors seemed to fear loneliness as some people fear being hurt; he was the only one of the three who could play chess at all, he had learnt it in order to be able to answer questions and keep up their pretence, but he had learnt it badly, as I found. I never saw the crystal, they never showed it to anyone; but Jim Bunion told me that night that it was about the size that the thick end of a hen’s egg would be if it were round. And then he fell asleep.

There were many more questions that I would have asked him but I could not wake him up. I even pulled the table away so that he fell to the floor, but he slept on, and all the tavern was dark but for one candle burning; and it was then that I noticed for the first time that the other two sailors had gone, no one remained at all but Jim Bunion and I and the sinister barman of that curious inn, and he too was asleep.

When I saw that it was impossible to wake the sailor I went out into the night. Next day Jim Bunion would talk of it no more; and when I went back to Stavlokratz I found him already putting on paper his theory about the sailors, which became accepted by chess-players, that one of them had been taught their curious gambit and that the other two between them had learnt all the defensive openings as well as general play. Though who taught them no one could say, in spite of enquiries made afterwards all along the Southern Pacific.

I never learnt any more details from any of the three sailors, they were always too drunk to speak or else not drunk enough to be communicative. I seem just to have taken Jim Bunion at the flood. But I kept my promise, it was I that introduced them to the Tournament, and a pretty mess they made of established reputations. And so they kept on for months, never losing a game and always playing for their pound a side. I used to follow them wherever they went merely to watch their play. They were more marvellous than Stavlokratz even in his youth.

But then they took to liberties such as giving their queen when playing first-class players. And in the end one day when all three were drunk they played the best player in England with only a row of pawns. They won the game all right. But the ball broke to pieces. I never smelt such a stench in all my life.

The three sailors took it stoically enough, they signed on to different ships and went back again to the sea, and the world of chess lost sight, for ever I trust, of the most remarkable players it ever knew, who would have altogether spoiled the game.

“The Three Sailors” Gambit’ was published in his 1916 volume “The Last Book of Wonder”
Although unofficial NATO Chess Tournaments had been held in Denmark every year since 1978, officially the NATO Chess Championship was established in 1989. The event brings together those countries signed up to NATO to play for the accolade of being NATO Chess Champions. The tournament is hosted every year in different countries and each team is composed of Military and serving Civilian (MOD) members only who have qualified through their own nation’s competition.

The 29th Championship this year was held for the very first time in the United States of America, in Lubbock, Texas.

Ten countries participated. Usually there would be more but distance, cost and other commitments were clearly factors. Nevertheless, the competition was as strong as ever. In the past, GMs have played and there are always IMs and FMs so the chess is very serious.

NATO may have issues politically, but the NATO chess family really does reflect the FIDE motto ‘Gens una sumus’ and the atmosphere is always unfailingly special. The opportunity to meet old friends and make new ones is a most pleasurable experience - not to mention experiencing the culture of the hosting nation.

The competition is usually dominated by Germany, Poland or Denmark, but Greece are particularly strong too. This year Poland clinched the win, Germany came second and Greece earned the third place. Team UK finished just below par on 9th from 14 teams. Now I said that ten countries entered but under the rules there are also two Veterans’ Teams and Two NATO Teams. I played for NATO A (captains of all teams make up two NATO teams, ‘A’ and ‘B’) and our team finished in sixth place, so that was a good result.

I am honoured to have been the Captain of Team UK and I want to thank all the lads who made my job so enjoyable. The UK team has players graded right across the board, comprised as it is of members of all three services and civilians. Danny Wells, Dave Tucker and Dave Onley are the shining lights but there are other players who could not make it this year.
The official programme contained a message written by Garry Kasparov in which he noted that chess is an allegory for warfare. Kasparov was correct of course. Chess is a war game and a very old one at that. Strategy, tactics and plenty of military doctrines apply. Let’s take logistics for one… No army can operate without supplies. This might be ammunition, food, machinery or even clothing. In chess we need to bring our supporting troops up into the areas of battle. We need to know what areas of the battlefield to focus on, when to make sacrifices for the greater good, and fundamentally how to get the very best use out of each of our fighting units. No soldier goes into battle untrained. No chess piece should go into battle without us knowing how to utilise their strengths and get the very best out of them.

The Military Chess world is no different from everyone else when it comes to playing the game. When the clocks are pressed and the pawns are pushed, equality reigns. There are no uniforms, no barriers in terms of gender, rank, social standing, (dis)ability or anything else. As with chess in general. It transcends such barriers and we each get to play our own game.

A nice little custom of the NATO Championships is that each player exchanges a small gift before play begins. For the UK I wanted to give each opponent a copy of British Chess Magazine and these were very well received. One of the organisers was Grandmaster Alexander Onischuk, former US Champion. I presented him with a copy of the magazine and he instantly began reading it. I also managed to get a draw with him in an eleven-board clock-simul that he gave so that was an extra nice memory to take away from Texas. Alex runs the Texas State University chess programme and I found him to be a thoroughly decent and engaging gentleman - and well done to him and his team and all the organisers for hosting such a great event.

At the chessboard, one of the UK players, Dave Onley played a particularly nice game as white against the French Defence, Fort Knox Variation. I will show the position when Black had just played his queen to f4. This proved to be a big mistake (he could just have chopped knights off where the position would be level says the engines) and one does not have to ask Onley twice when it comes to inviting the most aggressive moves. What did he play here?
D. Onley (2113) – J. Middaugh (1918)
Position after 31...\texttt{\textgreek{f}4}? White to play

He essayed the rather wonderful 32.\texttt{\textgreek{e}5} and now Black is just busted. If the queen takes with 32...\texttt{\textgreek{e}xe5} then White has 33.\texttt{\textgreek{d}xh6+}. If 32...\texttt{\textgreek{xd}4} then 33.\texttt{\textgreek{xf}6+} pins the g7-pawn. This is typical Dave Onley where every piece is utilised both in a short and long-range capacity. Infantry (h-pawn), Cavalry (the knight) and Artillery (the bishop and rook) are gainfully employed and the queen simply causes the mayhem, parachuted as she is like a hand-grenade into the black lines. Very instructive for aspiring chess players.

Next year the 30\textsuperscript{th} Championships will be hosted by Germany (in Berlin) so I look forward to trying to get into the squad for that event. Chess preparation will have to begin early if I want to keep trying to play the strongest players in NATO but as the Germans would say \textit{"\textlangle{\textuuml{u}b}{\textumlung{a}ng} m\textlangle{\textumlung{a}ch}t d\textlangle{\textumlung{a}n} \textlangle{\textumlung{u}m}\textlangle{\textumlung{e}}st}"} (or, as we would say - Practice makes perfect!)

You can find details about the history of NATO chess, games, and much more on the official web page which is www.natochess.com.
Problem World
by Christopher Jones
cjajones1@yahoo.co.uk
Grandmaster of Chess Composition
Solutions are given on page 447

David Shire (Canterbury)
Mate in 2
ORIGINAL

David Shire (Canterbury)
Mate in 2
ORIGINAL

Cedric Lytton (Sheringham)
Helpmate in 2 - 2 solutions
ORIGINAL

Christer Jonsson (Sweden)
Helpmate in 3 - 2 solutions
ORIGINAL
Openings for Amateurs

UNDERSTANDING THE STRUGGLE IN THE CENTRE
A CLOSER LOOK AT A MISSED OPPORTUNITY TO PLAY D5 IN THE OPEN GAMES

by Pete Tamburro, ptamburro@aol.com

Capablanca’s miniature win in an offhand game has long been a model of attacking play and has been one of the most oft-quoted instructional games. Books on Capablanca have it. Chess Life used it recently. Books of miniatures quite often have had it. Yet, it has never really been looked at all that closely as many annotators have a tendency to orient their comments to the winning side as though it were a foregone conclusion.

What makes it even more critical is that the Capa game brings up the necessity of Black getting d5 in at the right moment. Over and over again, young chess players are told that d5 is the freeing move in the Open Games, but it’s not always thought of. In fact, in one of our key positions in this game, GM Milan Vidmar in 1953 missed an opportunity to play d5 and lost. The other aspect of this is that the famous Tarrasch-Marco, Dresden, 1892 game which sprung the ‘Tarrasch Trap’ after 0–0 rather than exd4 is that White has to know by heart 18 moves into the game in order to win.

The best lesson for a chess teacher to give is not just a superficial ‘Let’s see how brilliant Capablanca was.’ It should be a lesson on the real struggle that’s going on in the centre. Let’s take a closer look.

Jose Raul Capablanca - Marc Fonaroff
Offhand game NYC, 17.06.1918

1.e4 e5 2.f3 c6 3.b5 f6 If Black tries for the Steinitz right off the bat, then 3...d6 4.d4 d7 5.c3 f6 6.xc6 xc6 (6...bxc6 7.dxe5 dxe5 8.xe5) 7.d3 exd4 8.xd4 e7 9.f3 d7 10.e3 0–0 11.0–0–0 is a good way to play for a win. White has a kingside attack involving a pawn advance as long as he controls d5. It is similar to the White attack in the Dragon without Black having the semi-open c-file available, but Black still has e5–c4 as an idea as well as getting the dark squared bishop to the ‘Dragon’ diagonal.

4.0–0 White can head for the Four Knights with 4.c3 and then still end up in the Tarrasch Trap.

4...d6 5.d4 d7 An old analysis by Tartakower in The Hypermodern Chess Game goes: 5...exd4 6.xd4 d7 7.xc6 bxc6 8.f3.

A) 8...e7 9.e5!

B) Modern players would prefer 8.b8 9.e1 (9.b3??) 9...e7 10.b3 (10.e5 dxe5...
I encourage my younger students to play the Four Knights, a nice stepping stone to the Ruy Lopez. I have stopped being amazed at how many Four Knights games end up in this position by transposition after 4.\(\text{Q}b5\) d6 5.d4 \(\text{Q}d7\) 6.0-0 \(\text{Q}e7\) 7.\(\text{Q}e1\). We’ve discussed these types of positions in this column back in 2014. Again, it all depends whether you like this sort of position to play.

Perhaps objectively best is to take the space advantage with 7.d5 \(\text{Q}b8\) 8.\(\text{Q}e2\) 0-0 9.\(\text{Q}c4\). We’ve discussed these types of positions in this column back in 2014. Again, it all depends whether you like this sort of position to play.

**YOUNG CHESS PLAYERS ARE TOLD THAT D5 IS THE FREEING MOVE IN THE OPEN GAMES, BUT IT’S NOT ALWAYS THOUGHT OF**
A common sense approach is 9.\(\texttt{\textit{xd7}}\+ \texttt{\textit{xd7}}\) 10.\(\texttt{\textit{xd4}}\) \(\texttt{\textit{f6}}\) 11.\(\texttt{\textit{b4}}\) \(\texttt{\textit{xc3}}\) 12.\(\texttt{\textit{xc3}}\) 0-0 13.\(\texttt{\textit{e3}}\) and White is a bit freer than in the lines below. Black’s \(d5\) will be very difficult to play, and the bishop will be better than the knight in the long run. White has more cramping moves with \(\texttt{\textit{d3}}, \texttt{\textit{ad1}}\) and \texttt{c4} as possibilities.

9...\(\texttt{\textit{xb5}}\) If Black castle here 9...0-0 10.\(\texttt{\textit{e2}}\)! brings the bishop back to keep Black cramped. No need to exchange bishops.

10.\(\texttt{\textit{xb5}}\) 0-0

Our second key position. White needs to either prevent \(d5\) or weaken \(d6\). Capablanca chooses the latter. Considering what could have happened, what other choices does White have?

A good practical try for club players would be 11.\(\texttt{\textit{c4}}\)?? \(\texttt{\textit{d7}}\) 12.\(\texttt{\textit{e3}}\) \(\texttt{\textit{f6}}\) (12...\(\texttt{\textit{e5}}\) 13.\(\texttt{\textit{f4}}\) \(\texttt{\textit{g4}}\) 14.\(\texttt{\textit{h3}}\) (14.\(\texttt{\textit{ad1}}\) \(c6\) 15.\(\texttt{\textit{c3}}\) \(\texttt{\textit{xe3}}\) 16.\(\texttt{\textit{xe3}}\) \(\texttt{\textit{f6}}\) 17.\(\texttt{\textit{d2}}\) \(\texttt{\textit{e8}}\) 18.\(\texttt{\textit{xd6}}\)?? (Too greedy) 18...\(\texttt{\textit{xd6}}\) 19.\(\texttt{\textit{xd6}}\) \(\texttt{\textit{e7}}\) 20.\(\texttt{\textit{d1}}\) \(\texttt{\textit{c5}}\)!! 14...\(\texttt{\textit{f6}}\) 15.\(\texttt{\textit{d2}}\) \(\texttt{\textit{xe3}}\) 16.\(\texttt{\textit{xe3}}\) \(\texttt{\textit{e8}}\) 17.\(\texttt{\textit{ae1}}\) \(a6\) 18.\(\texttt{\textit{d4}}\) \(\texttt{\textit{d7}}\) and although it’s equal, it’s not necessarily drawn. Lots of opportunities for both sides to demonstrate what they know - or don’t know how to do.);

11.\(\texttt{\textit{g5}}\)!! and now the moves for both sides focus on playing or preventing \(d5\), and \(d5\) will get played: 11...\(c6\) 12.\(\texttt{\textit{c3}}\) \(h6\) 13.\(\texttt{\textit{h4}}\) \(\texttt{\textit{e8}}\) 14.\(\texttt{\textit{ad1}}\) \(\texttt{\textit{a5}}\) 15.\(\texttt{\textit{e3}}\) \(\texttt{\textit{ad8}}\) 16.\(a3\) \(d5\).

11.\(\texttt{\textit{c3}}\)

Another choice is 11.\(\texttt{\textit{c3}}\) \(\texttt{\textit{e8}}\) 12.\(\texttt{\textit{g5}}\) \(h6\) (12...\(\texttt{\textit{d7}}\) 13.\(\texttt{\textit{xe7}}\) \(\texttt{\textit{xe7}}\) 14.\(\texttt{\textit{ad1}}\)) 13.\(\texttt{\textit{h4}}\) \(c6\) 14.\(\texttt{\textit{ad1}}\) \(\texttt{\textit{a5}}\) 15.\(a3\) \(\texttt{\textit{ad8}}\) and Black is solid and cramped. Note the queen move to \(a5\) occasioned by \(c6\), which also kept the knight off \(d5\). The queen’s lateral influence along its whole fourth rank is useful.

11...\(c6\)? Not keeping in mind the need for a well-timed \(d5\).

Black, an amateur, misses the opportunity to play 11...\(d5\)! Reinfeld gives White having an advantage, though misses the best move for Black: 12.e5 (12.exd5 \(\texttt{\textit{xd5}}\)

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**The Struggle in the Centre is an Introduction of Sorts to Positional Chess... There is a Real Lesson for Black in Countering Along the E-File and Even Getting the Queen a Bit More Active to Bring the Rook to D8 to Help Effect D5**
13.£b3 ¥c5 14.¤c3 ¤xc3 15.£xc3 £d6=; 12.£xc7 dxe4) 12...£e8 (The equalizing move here is 12...c6! 13.exf6 ¥xf6 14.£b3 cxb5 15.£xb5 a6 16.£xb7 £d6= White will have to give the pawn back in some way just to get his pieces out to contend with Black’s active army.) 13.¤d4 c5 14.£f5 With a strong position for White - Reinfeld. He’s quite correct here: 14...d4 15.£f3 £e7 16.£e4 £e6 17.£g4 £h8 18.£xb7±.

12.¤d4 ¥d7? Necessary was a Lasker-like defensive sequence: 12...£e8! 13.£f5 £f8 14.£g5 £e6 15.£h4 g6 16.£d4 £xe4 17.£xc6 bxc6 18.£xf6 £xe1+ 19.£xe1 £d7=.

13.£f5 £f6 14.£g3 £e5 15.£f4 Also good is 15.£e3 £g6 16.£ed1±.

15...£c7 15...£b6 16.£ab1 £fd8 17.£e3±.

16.£ad1 £ad8 17.£xd6!? Often given one or two exclamation marks, but 17.£a3 is better.

17...£xd6 18.£xe5 £d1??

The classics are still useful, and, now in more than just one way. As for the Steinitz Defence itself, world champions and great masters played it a hundred years ago.

19.£xd1 £xe5 20.£h6+ £h8 21.£xe5 £xe5 22.£xf7+ 1–0

There were a good many teachable moments in this game. Yes, Capa’s finish was pretty and instructive for younger players; however, the struggle in the centre is an introduction of sorts to positional chess. Not only are two d5 opportunities demonstrated in two notes to move 11, but there is a real lesson for Black in countering along the e-file and even getting the queen a bit more active to bring the rook to d8 to help effect d5.

The classics are still useful, and, now in more than just one way. As for the Steinitz Defence itself, world champions and great masters played it a hundred years ago. As modern chess became more dynamic, it moved away from solid and relatively cramped and passive defences. Your winning chances in the Steinitz come when White overreaches. The challenge for White is to be patient and steadily increase your usual space advantage. Again, both sides, in many of these positions have to be acutely aware of preventing or enforcing d5.
Endgame Studies

by Ian Watson
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Solutions are given on page 446

1

Slumstrup Nielsen
PCF 2016
WIN

2

M. Minski
WCCT 2016
DRAW

3

M. Minski
Die Schwalbe 2013
WIN

4

M. Minski, A. Rusz & S. Slumstrup Nielsen
Magyar Sakkvilag 2017
DRAW
Who are the top study composers right now? I’ve introduced several to you in this column - Pervkov and Bazlov, for example. In the most recent composing tourneys, several other names have kept appearing in the top prizes: Richard Becker, Pavel Arestov, Steffen Slumstrup Nielsen among them. Yes, it’s invidious to pick a leader, but if you force me to, I think one composer is maybe slightly ahead of the others: Martin Minski. He’s a maths teacher from Berlin born in 1969, and, although he began composing in 1993, most of his best-known works are from the last ten years.

In a composing tournament, you are competing against other composers, but it’s not a tooth-and-nail struggle and composers often submit joint compositions. Our first study is a joint by Minski and Slumstrup Nielsen which won the Polish Chess Federation tourney of 2016. The solution goes: 1.d6 ¤d4 2.¤e2+ ¤d5 3.¤e8 ¤f5+ 4.¢g4 ¤xc8 5.e8¥ ¥f8+ 6.d7 ¤xe8 7.¢e6 ¤xd7 8.¢f4 mate. Many of these moves are surprising. I particularly enjoy 4.¢g4; the natural 4.¢xg6? is a thematic try, met by 4...¢e6+ 5.¢g5 ¤f5+ 6.¢g4 ¤xc8 7.e8¥ ¥f8+ and, because there is no g6 pawn, 8.d7 is countered by 8...¤e8 9.¢e6 ¤g8+ and Black is winning. There are lots of sidelines, but two sacs on e6 are of special note: 3...¤xd6 4.¢e6+ and 4...¢e5+ 5.¢xd7 ¤xe2 6.¢e6+. The judge wrote ‘three double sacrifices on e6, a thematic try allowing the Black rook to escape, and an impressive mate in the final position.’ He added ‘In my opinion, this excellent and impressive study would be the winner of any tourney.’ That comment’s a bit over-the-top for my taste, but maybe the translation wasn’t perfect, and anyway it’s certainly a striking work.

The second composition won the top study prize in the World Chess Composition Tournament. That’s an event in which composers represent their country; points are awarded to each study and the points are added up to find which country wins; Minski’s study was the highest scoring. To appreciate this study fully, you need to know that the tourney required the entries to show a specified theme - the study had to have a thematic try which had similar play to the correct solution and failed only because of a very slight difference from the correct solution. Minski’s study has several such tries and displays the theme to maximum advantage, but it is a fine piece in any context. The solution is 1.¢e6+ ¥h5 2.¢xe2 ¥a8+ 3.¥a7 ¥xa7+ 4.¥b3 a2 5.¥xa2 ¥xa2 6.¥xa2 h2 7.¥b1 ¥g1 8.¥b8 ¥g4 9.¥g8+ draws. I can’t give all the variations, but one of the main thematic tries is: 1...¢xe2? ¥a8+ 2.¥a7 ¥xa7+ 3.¥b3 a2 4.¥xa2 ¥xa2 5.¥xa2 h2 6.¥b1 ¥g1 7.¥b8 ¥g7 8.¥b7+ ¥g6 9.¥b6+ ¥g5 10.¥b5+ ¥g4 11.¥b4+ ¥g3 12.¥b3+ ¥f2 13.¥b2+ ¥e2 14.¥b1 ¥c3+ wins. Another line is 1...¥g5 2.¢xe2 ¥a8+ when ¥b3 works but ¥a7 doesn’t: 3.¥a7? ¥xa7+ 4.¥b3 a2 5.¥xa2 ¥xa2 6.¥xa2 h2 7.¥b1 ¥g1 wins. Another: 3.¥b3? a2 4.¥xa2 ¥xa2 5.¥xa2 h2 6.¥b1 ¥g1 7.¥d4 b1¥ wins but wouldn’t win if the black king were on g5, because of the forthcoming knight fork on f3. There are many such lines; the position of the black king is slightly different in each variation and the apparently irrelevant differences determine whether the result is a draw or a loss.

The first two studies would be really tough to solve, but the other two are at least a little easier. In the Die Schwalbe study, Black will lose if he can’t exchange his bishop for White’s bishop; if he does swap them, then the two knights versus pawn position will be a draw. I’ll give you some help: the main plan is to shield the corner bishop with a knight to prevent the exchange, but first you need an eight-move preliminary plan to make the f4 square available for a knight. The final study is another joint composition with Steffen Slumstrup Nielsen, this time also with Arpad Rusz. The biggest thunderbolt is on move six...
When a chess player becomes champion of their county it is usual for them to play top board for that county in the following season’s matches. Amos Burn famously declined to play board 1 for Lancashire in 1901 and played board 2 below the county champion Dr J.H.Shaw.

The Yorkshire captain for the 1909-1910 season, I.M.Brown, was faced with an awkward dilemma. The British champion Henry Atkins had recently taken up a post in Huddersfield and was available for the county. He was duly placed on top board and the Yorkshire champion for 1909, Frederick Yates, had to be content with board 4.

Atkins scored +5 =5 in his first ten games for his new county. Here is the best of those wins.

Henry Atkins – Charles Coates
Yorkshire - Cheshire, Sheffield 1914

1.d4 d5 2.c4 f3 3.f6 3.e3 e6 4.d3 c5 5.b3 c6 6.d2 d7 7.0-0 c8 Blackburne adopted this set-up in game two of his 1887 match with Zukertort.

8.c4 cxd4 9.exd4 e7 10.bd2 0-0 11.e2 e8 12.h1 b4 13.b1 b5?! 14.c5 According to Amos Burn 14.cxb5 would have been met by 14....c2 15.xc2 xc2 16.ab1 a5 17.a4 b4.

14... f8 15.e5 a6 16.f4 g6 17.df3 g7 18.a3 c6 19.g4 e7 20.c3 e4 21.e1 Rather than accepting the offered pawn and weakening his light squares.

21...f5 22.gxf5 exf5 23.h4 f6 24.xf6 xf6 25.g2 e4 26.xc6 xc6? This rook regrouping puts the rook on a vulnerable square. Burn recommended 26...xc6 instead.

27.e5 ce6 28.xe4! dxe4 28...xe4 allows 29.f5.

29.d5 xe5 30.fxe5 xe5 31.ad1 e8 32.b4! xd5 33.a2 f7 34.c5 xd5 35.d1 xa2 36.c8+ f7 37.c6 e3 38.g1

1–0

Field, 24th January 1914
Reginald Broadbent defeated British International Edmund Spencer 2-1 in the final of the 1930 Lancashire championship. The following season he played top board for the county. The meeting with Yorkshire was a friendly match, where he encountered the renowned Henry Atkins. Their game gives us a glimpse of a future British champion meeting one of his illustrious predecessors.

**Reginald Broadbent - Henry Atkins**

Lancashire - Yorkshire, Leeds 1931

1.e4 e5 2.\(\text{\textcopyright} f3\) \(\text{\textcopyright} c6\) 3.\(\text{\textcopyright} b5\) a6 4.\(\text{\textcopyright} a4\) d6

The Modern Steinitz Defence was a regular choice of Alekhine.

5.0-0 \(\text{\textcopyright} d7\) 6.c3 g6 7.d4 \(\text{\textcopyright} g7\) 8.\(\text{e1}\) 8.dxe5 dxe5 9.\(\text{\textcopyright} g5\) is more forcing.

8...\(\text{\textcopyright} ge7\) 9.\(\text{\textcopyright} e3\) b5

Black could try 9...0-0 followed by 10...\(\text{\textcopyright} e8\).

10.\(\text{\textcopyright} c2\) \(\text{\textcopyright} a5\) 11.\(\text{\textcopyright} bd2\) 0-0 12.h3 \(\text{\textcopyright} c8\)

13.\(\text{\textcopyright} f1\) \(\text{\textcopyright} c4\) 14.\(\text{\textcopyright} c1\) c5 15.b3 \(\text{\textcopyright} b6\)

16.dxe5 dxe5 17.\(\text{\textcopyright} d6\)! This is awkward to meet.

A flawed result

**Eugene Delmar - Wilhelm Steinitz**

Exhibition game, Manhattan Chess Club 1883

1.e4 e5 2.\(\text{\textcopyright} f3\) \(\text{\textcopyright} c6\) 3.\(\text{\textcopyright} c3\) g6

This line of the Three Knights Opening is one of Steinitz’s many contributions to chess opening theory. He played it habitually from 1870 to 1883.

4.\(\text{\textcopyright} b5\) The week before 4.d4 exd4 5.\(\text{\textcopyright} xd4\) \(\text{\textcopyright} g7\) 6.\(\text{\textcopyright} e3\) \(\text{\textcopyright} f6\) 7.\(\text{\textcopyright} e2\) 0-0 8.0-0 d6 9.f4 \(\text{\textcopyright} e7\) 10.\(\text{\textcopyright} f3\) c6 11.h3 d5 was played in the Mackenzie-Steinitz match game 3. Black won in 27 moves.

17...\(\text{\textcopyright} c6\) 18.\(\text{\textcopyright} e3\)? Over refining 18.\(\text{\textcopyright} xc5\)! is much better.

18.\(\text{\textcopyright} b7\)? Returning the favour. 18...\(\text{\textcopyright} d8\)! is best as 19.\(\text{\textcopyright} xc5??\) loses on the spot to 19...\(\text{\textcopyright} f8\)! 20.\(\text{\textcopyright} xb6\) \(\text{\textcopyright} b8\)! White can do better 19.\(\text{\textcopyright} d1!\) \(\text{\textcopyright} xh3\) 20.\(\text{\textcopyright} e2!\) and c5 will fall.

19.\(\text{\textcopyright} xc5\) \(\text{\textcopyright} c8\) 20.\(\text{\textcopyright} ad1\) \(\text{\textcopyright} d8\) 21.\(\text{\textcopyright} g5\) f6 22.\(\text{\textcopyright} d5+\) \(\text{\textcopyright} h8\) 23.\(\text{\textcopyright} xe5!\) Exploiting Black’s congested back rank.

23...\(\text{\textcopyright} e8\) Black has no better move, 23...fxg5 loses to 24.\(\text{\textcopyright} f7+\) ,while 23...fxe5 is met by 24.\(\text{\textcopyright} xd8\) \(\text{\textcopyright} xd8\) 25.\(\text{\textcopyright} xb7\) \(\text{\textcopyright} xb7\) 26.\(\text{\textcopyright} xd7\).

24.\(\text{\textcopyright} xc6!\) \(\text{\textcopyright} xc6\) 25.\(\text{\textcopyright} xd8+\) \(\text{\textcopyright} f8\) 26.\(\text{\textcopyright} xf8+\) \(\text{\textcopyright} g7\) 27.\(\text{\textcopyright} f7+\)

1-0

Yorkshire Post, 9th March 1931

Broadbent retained his Lancashire Championship title in the 1931 event and the two met again a year later. They repeated the first four moves, but then Broadbent varied, lost a pawn and went down quickly..
ENDGAME STUDIES

(See page 442)

Minski 2013

1. \textbf{c}e8 \textbf{a}a4 2. \textbf{f}f8 \textbf{a}a1 3. \textbf{e}e8 \textbf{b}b7 4. \textbf{h}h8 \textbf{e}e5 5. \textbf{x}xe5 \textbf{a}a8+ 6. \textbf{b}b8+ \textbf{x}xb8+ 7. \textbf{d}d7 \textbf{e}e8+ 8. \textbf{d}d6 \textbf{c}c6+ 9. \textbf{e}e5 draws. White has to surrender his new queen, to free a retreat square for his king; if he doesn’t, then \ldots \textbf{c}c6 will be mate. White’s alternatives: 2.\textbf{h}h8? \textbf{d}d4+ 3. \textbf{f}f8 \textbf{e}e6+ 4. \textbf{g}g8 \textbf{g}g4+; in the main line, 4.\textbf{f}f8? \textbf{e}e5; and Black’s alternative: 4\ldots \textbf{a}a8+ 5. \textbf{x}xe5 \textbf{x}xb8 6. \textbf{f}f8 \textbf{h}h3+ 7. \textbf{d}d6 \textbf{d}d3+ 8. \textbf{e}e6 draws.

Minski, Rusz & Slumstrup

Nielsen 2017

Minski, Rusz & Slumstrup

Nielsen 2017

1. \textbf{b}b3+ \textbf{c}c3 2. \textbf{c}c5 \textbf{d}d4 3. \textbf{e}e6+ \textbf{e}e5 4. \textbf{x}xe5 \textbf{f}f4 5. \textbf{e}e6+ \textbf{e}e5 6. \textbf{c}c5 \textbf{d}d4 7. \textbf{e}e6+ \textbf{e}e5 8. \textbf{c}c5 \textbf{d}d4 9. \textbf{e}e6

This is where the original score starts to go wrong. 25.\textbf{B}B2 concedes a key pawn. What follows is my reconstruction, using the score as a guide.

25...a5 26.\textbf{e}e4 \textbf{xe}4! Creating another weakness in White’s position.

27.\textbf{f}x\textbf{e}4 \textbf{e}e6 28.\textbf{f}f4 d3! 29.\textbf{xd}3 \textbf{d}d4+? 30.\textbf{f}f1?? Missing the point, 30.\textbf{h}h1 was obligatory.

30...\textbf{e}e5! 31.\textbf{g}g4 \textbf{h}hxh2 32. \textbf{e}xe6 fxe6 33.\textbf{d}d4 \textbf{f}f4 34.\textbf{e}e2 \textbf{c}c1 35.\textbf{d}d3 \textbf{x}xb2

0–1

\textit{New Orleans Daily Picayune,}

18\textsuperscript{th} February 1883

\textbf{446 | BRITISH CHESS MAGAZINE}
This month’s problems

We start with two solver-friendly 2-movers, both fairly traditional, though in the second there are two plausible tries as well as the solution and it is interesting to compare the play after black defences in all three phases of the problem. The last two are helpmates - Black starts and collaborates with White to produce a position in which Black is mated. In each case, there are two solutions from the diagram position. We welcome Cedric Lytton, long one of the leading lights of British ‘problemdom’, to this column!

Mate in 2 – how to threaten mate?

In David’s first problem, it may at first appear that White can quite easily find a way to threaten mate, but as the queen is the only unit guarding d5 and the g6 bishop is the only one guarding d3 things are not quite so easy. In fact the key, 1.¥f7!, releasing control of d3 but threatening 2.¤f4, provides for 1...¥d3 2.¥c2. We also have 1...¥d3 2.¤d4 (since we no longer need to guard d3 but we do need to intercept the line d3-d5) and 1...¥d4 2.¤c5 (and not 1...¤f4 2.¥d5; 2.¤c5 works because we no longer need to guard d4).

Mate in 2 – which way to threaten mate?

In David’s second problem, the key piece is obviously the out-of-play white rook, but there are three possible moves to consider. 1.¥c1 would threaten 2.¥xc5. Now 1...¥e4 is met by 2.¤f4, and 1...¤c4 (or ...¤b3) by 2. ¥(x)c4; but 1...b6! refutes. If 1.¥e1 we threaten 2.¥e5 and we have 1...¤c4/¤e4 (etc.) 2.¤f4/¥(x)e4, but 1...¤c6! refutes. And so we arrive at the key, 1.¥a4!, which has a rather subtler threat, 2.¤f4 (which appeared as a mate in the try play). Pleasingly there are in all six defences: 1...¤c4 / ¤h3 / ¥xe6+ / c4 / gxf5 / ¥f6+ 2.¥c4/ ¥e4 / ¥xe6 / ¥d4 / ¥f5 / ¥xf6.

Active and passive white sacrifices

Cedric’s helpmate arises from the challenge in a recent composing tourney to show two white pieces each being sacrificed passively (i.e., without moving) in one solution and actively in the other. The way in which this is shown, engineering the necessary chinks in the phalanx of defenders around the black king, is neat: 1.exd2 ¥e6 2.dxe6 ¥e8 and 1.dxe2 d4 2.cxd4 ¥c2.

Active black sacrifices

It’s not only White that gets to make sacrifices in helpmates… In Christer’s nice 3-mover, the featured performers are the black queen and black bishop, and, as in the previous problem, there is a reciprocal relationship between the functions of these two pieces in the two solutions (something that many problemists would consider a prerequisite for a successful helpmate) as in each case the piece not sacrificed is instead used to block a potential flight square: 1.¥f4 d3 2.¥c4 dxe4 3.¥e5 ¥g4 and 1.¥e6 d4 2.¥e5 dxe5 3.¥f5 ¥e8. Note that the black king opens lines for both black queen and black bishop in both solutions. No moves appear in both solutions (another prerequisite) and the use of the two possible moves of the white d2 pawn on the d-file is a pleasant feature. Is the non-use of the h3 pawn in the second solution a tiny (unavoidable) imperfection (and if so the only one), do you think?
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