TATA STEEL
Magnus wins his seventh title while a great player calls it quits

ALPHAZERO
Interview with Matthew Sadler and Natasha Regan

Kramnik Retires

Endgame Exercises
FM Chris Wallis

Pawns vs Pieces Studies P2
IM Junta Ikeda

Opening Shortcuts
GM Max Illingworth
ARE YOU PLAYING AN INTERESTING EVENT OVERSEAS?

We love to hear stories from other Australians travelling!

Write to me at moulthun@50movesmagazine.com to share your experiences with others.
EDITORIAL

Welcome to the first March edition of 50 Moves!

In this issue GM Ian Rogers recaps the events from Tata Steel earlier this year where Magnus Carlsen won his seventh title, Matthew Sadler and Natasha Regan launched their book on AlphaZero and Vladimir Kramnik announced his retirement.

Max Illingworth presents some useful opening shortcuts to remember. IM Junta Ikeda picks out another set of pawns versus pieces studies for your enjoyment. IM Trevor Tao gives another set of chess puns and FM Chris Wallis finishes with some endgame exercises.

We hope you enjoy this issue.

GM Moulthun Ly
Founder and Editor
50 Moves
CONTENTS

6 PAWNS VS. PIECES STUDIES PART 2
IM Junta Ikeda presents the second part of his pawns versus pieces endgame studies.

8 TATA STEEL 2019
GM Ian Rogers recaps all of the exciting moments from this year’s Tata Steel event where Magnus Carlsen won his seventh title.

18 TATA STEEL COMBINATIONS
Eleven spectacular finishes from Wijk ann Zee.

22 KRAMNIK RETIRES
At the end of the Tata Steel event, Vladimir Kramnik announced his retirement from chess. A sad day for chess, losing such a great player.

36 INTERVIEW ON ALPHA ZERO
Matthew Sadler and Natasha Regan talk about the launch of their new book, ‘Game Changer’ based on the games of AlphaZero.

40 OPENING SHORTCUTS
GM Max Illingworth explains some useful opening shortcuts to know in your games.

51 BAD CHESS PUNS
IM Trevor Tao give you a few chess problems with a twist.

54 ENDGAME EXERCISES
FM Chris Wallis explains exactly how to win these difficult endgame positions.

58 SOLUTIONS TO STUDIES
Solutions to Junta’s six pawns vs pieces studies.
Attacking Chess!

Attacking is something that all players want to perfect. It makes a lot of sense because delivering a checkmate is the ultimate goal of the game. Surprisingly, not many chess players spend time working on the attacking skills. They work on solving tactics, studying openings, drilling endgames but not on “how to attack your opponent to win games”. It sounds contradictory, but it is very true for most club players.

This course includes a powerful toolkit on how to conduct strong and vicious attacks against opponents of any level. We are very delighted to finally bring you a universal system of attack that helped IM Ostrovskiy and IM Shen at beating many strong and very strong opponents.

1.B3 BASH!

Wouldn’t it be great to play the opening that you know well and let your opponent do all the “struggling”?

What if I told you that you could add this kind of weapon to your repertoire in a matter of DAYS not weeks or months?

Introducing the secret weapon for white – the Complete Repertoire with 1.b3
Just like in 2018, we kick off the first set of studies for the year with those where White only has a king and pawns against Black’s army which still boasts stronger pieces in their ranks; coincidentally, in as many as four of the six studies, the enemies of the state are Black’s bishop and knight.

The stipulation in the first three studies is for White to play and draw, and for the latter three studies, White to play and win. In the opener by Pogosjants, both sides are about to promote but Black is ahead by two pieces. How can White force a draw? #2 by Melnichenko sees White have three pawns against Black’s bishop and pawn, but with normal play, Black’s king will eventually gobble up all the White pawns. For the final drawing study, by Gurgenidze, a 1st Prize winner, White only has a lone passed pawn against Black’s bishop and knight, who may be able to work together to prevent the promotion…or can they?

The difficulty significantly increases in the studies where White needs to win, with each presenting different challenges. #4 by Pervakov gives us a position where White has six pawns, but flawless play is required to outfox Black’s agile army. In Nadareishvili’s 2nd Prize winning study, Black is a full bishop and knight up, but White’s passers can still achieve a victory. And finally, #6, another piece from Gurgenidze, sees White’s two passers on the 6th against Black’s rook and bishop.

Happy pushing and promoting.
Pawn vs Pieces Studies P2

Solutions page 58

1. Pogojants, E.
Bulletin Central Chess Club USSR, 1989

2. Melnichenko, E.
Umenie-64, 1996

3. Gurgenidze, D. - 1st Prize
Belfort (Blitz) Tourney, 1994

4. Pervakov, O. - 1st Honourable Mention
Die Schwalbe, 1995

5. Nadareishvilli, G. - 2nd Prize
Lelo, 1950

6. Gurgenidze, D.
1st Honourable Mention
Gorgiev Jubilee Tourney, 1971

White to play and draw

White to play and draw

White to play and draw

White to play and win

White to play and win

White to play and win
Carlsen Earns Seventh Wijk aan Zee Title

Kramnik Retires

By Ian Rogers
Photos by Cathy Rogers
Magnus Carlsen won the 81st edition of the traditional Wijk aan Zee tournament in January, securing his fourth Tata Steel Chess title in five years.

As has become traditional, after his victory Carlsen was honoured in the town square by the local people, the culmination of a day-long street party featuring pea soup, poffertjes and plenty of music.

This year Carlsen and the winner of the Challengers group Vladislav Kovalev were awarded medals by the local Mayor and serenaded by the White Queen, dressed in a costume well known to most children in the Netherlands thanks to the popular chess-themed film ‘Lang Leve de Koningen’ (Long Live the Queen).

Indeed, from the embarrassment showing on his face, the World Champion seemed to have his most challenging moment in Wijk aan Zee when the White Queen sang ‘You Make Me Feel Like a Natural Woman’ to the 28-year-old and finished with a kiss on the cheek.

Carlsen should be getting used to the adulation of the Wijk aan Zee villagers, having played in the Dutch seaside village 14 times in the past 16 years and won the event a record seven times – not including wins of the C and B groups as a 13- and 15-year-old respectively.

Carlsen’s results in Wijk aan Zee have been incredibly consistent over the years. Since a newly promoted Carlsen finished last in 2007, the Norwegian has scored fewer than 8 points only once and secured exactly nine points in his four victories in the past five years. Carlsen’s 10/13 score in 2013 was the equal highest winning score of the modern era. (In earlier years the Wijk aan Zee tournament was often contested over 15 rounds.)

In 2019 Carlsen started very slowly – 4 draws in a row, bringing his tally of consecutive draws to 21. He then began working his way up the field, challenged for the lead by Anand, Nepomniachtchi, and Giri, but shaking them all off to enter the final round with a half point lead over Giri. The Dutchman, who tied for first with Carlsen in 2018 but lost the playoff, had White against Carlsen in the final round but never looked like winning.

One is tempted to say that the Wijk aan Zee win heralds the return of an in-form Carlsen, but it should be remembered that in 2018 the Norwegian also enjoyed the North Sea air in Wijk aan Zee, only to struggle to maintain his world number one ranking later in the year. Nonetheless, the style of Carlsen’s victory gave reason to believe that the Carlsen-of-old – the player that Carlsen, during the World Championship match gave as his most admired player – might be back.

One player who will not be back is Vladimir Kramnik, who announced his retirement two days after the tournament concluded. The great former World Champion was a shadow of his former self in Wijk aan Zee and he had been publicly canvassing ending his career for some time. (See sidebar.)

**ENDGAMES AND COMBINATIONS**

The top division of Wijk aan Zee featured a remarkable number of games which were decided by either a hard-fought endgame or a Capablanca-style petite combination, so much so that it is possible to tell the story of the tournament through examples of these alone.

**ENDGAMES**

At his final press conference, Carlsen nominated his most satisfying game as his draw with Fedoseev, the Norwegian managing to hold a tricky four pawns versus three rook endgame.

Carlsen then named his favourite wins in Wijk aan Zee 2019 as those against Anand, Mamedyarov and Duda. All three games saw Carlsen nurse a minimal endgame advantage to victory, the type of endgame grind for which Carlsen was once famous. The Anand endgame was one of the tournament’s most important, since it was played in Round 10 when Anand and Carlsen (and Nepomniachtchi) were co-leaders.

Carlsen’s win over Mamedyarov was similar, and caused an astonishing loss of form by the Azeri which cost him his world number three position.
The players have just reached the first time control and White’s a-pawn, while dangerous, has trouble moving past a6.

41. \( b7 \) e4 42. c5 e5?!  
“I thought [when I entered the ending] that it was more or less a forced draw,” said Carlsen, “and spent a lot of time immediately after the time control but couldn’t see anything. He should have played 42...e3!, force my king to f1 and then go for ...e5 and ...f4. I am not in time to interfere with \( b3-a5 \) as he has a bunch of checks, so I couldn’t find a winning plan. If I go for the b-pawn his king is really fast.”

43.a6 a2 44. c6  
44. b3 e3 45. f1 f4 46. a5 a1+ is the sort of variation Carlsen was referring to; White cannot escape from the checks without allowing the e-pawn to queen.

44...h5?  
He clearly lost the thread,” said Carlsen. The text move loses a key tempo, whereas 44...e3 45. xb5 d4 was still fast enough, because

46. a4? walks into 46...a1+ 47. h2 e2 48. xe2 xa4.  
45. xb5 g4 46.hxg4 hxg4

47. c4!  
Gaining time to advance the b-pawn after which the advancing Black pawns prove less scary than White’s.

47... a1+ 48. h2 f4 49. b5 f3 50. b6 f4 51. xe4! 1-0  
A stylish finish. “One of those days when you are a little better and your opponent makes a mistake,” was Carlsen’s simple summary of the game.

Indeed the tournament, which for the first time saw more decisive results in the top group than in the Challengers event, featured a plethora of decisive endgames and combinations – far more than in an average super-tournament.

The one endgame which will undoubtedly be remembered long after the tournament was an unfortunate accident which happened to Sam Shankland in the eleventh round.

45...d6 44. f5 d5  
“However, I knew it was still a draw, continued Giri,” so it was very difficult for me to behave. On the one hand I wanted to think about the position and try to figure out if there is still a chance without going 45.b6, but on the other hand I realised that there is probably none. I thought after b6 he thinks he’s lost, so ok, I decided to give it a shot, and with a stone cold face I go 45.b6...”

45.b6! 1-0??  
“Then [Sam] extends his hand!” Giri reported. “Ok, I shake it, and to be sure ask, “Did you resign?” He says, “Yes...OK?”.
Top: Street renamed for Anish Giri - many streets were renamed in Wijk aan Zee this year
Bottom: Wijk aan Zee Village

Photos: Cathy Rogers
Giri then explained to a clearly confused Shankland that the position was a draw - after 45.b6 \( \text{Kd6} \) 46.\( \text{Kg4} \) 47.\( \text{Kd7} \) 48.\( \text{Kxh3} \) 49.\( \text{Kc8} \) it doesn’t matter that the Black king cannot reach the corner since it cannot be dislodged from c8 either. “He had a hallucination,” said Giri, “because he thought that since the king doesn’t get back to a8 it is not a draw. However there are many studies based on this trick. As long as you provoke b6 [by White] the king can stay on c8 and it’s a draw as well. But it’s quite funny that the only way for him to lose is to resign. I would have accepted any offer; if he offers me a draw I accept and if he offers to resign I accept also!”

Shankland disagreed that he had had a hallucination. “I think it was just a lack of chess culture... and the worst moment of my career.” As Shankland discovered, his blunder travelled far and wide. When he arrived back in San Francisco after the tournament, the Border Control Agent returned his passport with the words, “Do me a favor and never resign another drawn position!”

If there is one consolation for Shankland it is that his more famous compatriot Bobby Fischer forgot about a similar theme in his first game of his World Championship match against Boris Spassky and also lost. On move 37 of the game where he blundered a bishop, Fischer could have forced a White pawn to b6 and then exchanged off kingside pawns to create the Shankland draw.

Shankland had one other endgame accident.
Rapport, Richard 2731
Shankland, Sam 2725
Wijk aan Zee GM A 2019

Shankland has slowly been grinding down his opponent Carlsen-style, but it only took one impetuous move to spoil everything...

74...h5?
Played after only two minutes’ thought of the 25 that Shankland had remaining. 74...h6!

75.\texttt{Ng6} \texttt{Kf2} 76.\texttt{h4!}\texttt{Kg3} 77.\texttt{b2}\texttt{g4} 78.\texttt{c2}

78...\texttt{d6}
Had the Black pawn been on ...h6, Black’s king could now win the h4 pawn with ...\texttt{h5}. Now however, Shankland must abandon his c-pawn to win the h-pawn, after which the resulting positions are tricky, but drawn, and Rapport is up to the task.

79.\texttt{c3} \texttt{f5} 80.\texttt{e5+} \texttt{xf4} 81.\texttt{xc4} \texttt{g3} 82.\texttt{g6} \texttt{f3} 83.\texttt{d3} \texttt{e7} 84.\texttt{e5+} \texttt{g2}
85.\texttt{f7} \texttt{h4} 86.\texttt{g5} \texttt{g8} 87.\texttt{e3} \texttt{g3} 88.\texttt{e4+} \texttt{g2} 89.\texttt{g5} \texttt{g3} 90.\texttt{e4+} \texttt{h2} 91.\texttt{f2} \texttt{h6}
92.\texttt{g5} \texttt{g4+} 93.\texttt{f3} \texttt{e5+} 94.\texttt{e4} \texttt{g2} 1/2-1/2

Carlsen, on the other hand, does not have accidents. Here is his save against Fedoseev in an endgame which requires perfection by the defender.

Fedoseev, Vladimir 2724
Carlsen, Magnus 2835
Wijk aan Zee GM A 2019

Though 4 v 3 rook endgames with four rooks on the board are often tricky, here Black seems to have a draw in hand, since 35.g3 can be met by 35...\texttt{b1+}! 36.\texttt{g2} \texttt{b2} when White must sue for peace.

Instead Fedoseev found... 35.\texttt{f3}!, a move which Carlsen admitted missing. Now Black must play with utmost precision to avoid defeat.

35...\texttt{b2}!
35...\texttt{xb4} 36.\texttt{e4} \texttt{f6} 37.\texttt{e5} \texttt{f5} 38.e6 may not be immediately decisive after 38...\texttt{c4} 39.\texttt{e7} due to 39...\texttt{c1+}, but offers excellent chances to White.

36.\texttt{e4} \texttt{f4} 37.\texttt{e5} \texttt{e2}! 38.\texttt{e7} \texttt{f5}! 39.\texttt{e6} \texttt{f8}!!
The point behind Carlsen’s defence.

40.\texttt{xf7+} \texttt{xf7} 41.\texttt{xf7+} \texttt{g8}!

The position Carlsen had seen at move 35. White is two pawns up but cannot save his e-pawn, leaving a 3 versus 2 endgame which is mere technique for any Grandmaster.

42.\texttt{e7} \texttt{f8} 43.\texttt{f7+} \texttt{g8} 44.\texttt{h5}
\texttt{gxh5} 45.\texttt{g5} \texttt{xe6} 46.\texttt{h5}
\texttt{g7} 47.\texttt{f2} \texttt{a6} 48.\texttt{g4} \texttt{a2+}
49.\texttt{g3} \texttt{a3} 50.\texttt{d5} \texttt{f6}
51.\texttt{f4} \texttt{a4+} 52.\texttt{e3} \texttt{a1} 53.\texttt{f4}
\texttt{g1} 54.\texttt{d6+} \texttt{g7} 55.\texttt{f3}
\texttt{e1} 56.\texttt{b6} \texttt{g1} 57.\texttt{e6} \texttt{a1}
58.\texttt{e4} \texttt{a4+} 59.\texttt{f5} \texttt{a5+}
60.\texttt{e5} \texttt{a7} 61.\texttt{d5} \texttt{f7+}
62.\texttt{e4} \texttt{e7+} 63.\texttt{d4} \texttt{e1}
64.\texttt{d7+} \texttt{f6} 65.\texttt{d6+} \texttt{g7}
66.\texttt{d5} \texttt{g1} 67.\texttt{e6} \texttt{xe4}
68.\texttt{d7+} \texttt{g8} 69.\texttt{f5} \texttt{f4} 70.\texttt{f6}
\texttt{f1} 71.\texttt{d8+} \texttt{h7} 72.\texttt{d7+}
\texttt{g8} 73.\texttt{d8+} \texttt{h7} 74.\texttt{d7+}
1/2-1/2
Fedoseev did, however, have the satisfaction of converting an extra pawn against Radjabov with a brilliant pawn endgame trick. After this game the Russian was well placed to fight for a high placing but three consecutive losses in Round 10 to 12 ruined his tournament.

Radjabov, Teimour 2757
Fedoseev, Vladimir 2724
Wijk aan Zee GM A 2019

If White keeps his rook on the back rank it would be impossible to make progress, but Radjabov does not see a problem in a different method of preventing the Black king from marching up the board...

79. g7+? c6 80. g8 c5!
A shock for Radjabov. Surely the pawn endgame that White can now force is at least equal for White?

81. c8+
It is too late for 81. h8 c6 82. f5 gxf5 83. xh5 b4 84. xh5 xa4 when the connected pawns should prevail.

81...c6 82. xc6+ xc6 83. f6

83...b5! 84. axb5 d6!! 0-1
A stunning surprise for Radjabov and the spectators in Wijk aan Zee. Now after 84...d6 85. xg6 (85. b6 a4 86. b7 c7 is no better.)

85...a4 86. f5 a3 87. f6 a2 88. f7 e7! 89. g7 a1=Q
Black queens and White doesn’t, so Radjabov had no choice but to resign.

Santosh Vidit was the most successful of the five debutants in Wijk aan Zee 2019, finishing only half a point behind his idol Anand. Spectacular finishes against Kramnik and Mamadyarov in Rounds 10 and 11 were crowd-pleasers, but the foundation of his success had been laid in Round 3 and 4 when he first held a difficult endgame against Carlsen – but only after 131 moves! - and then squeezed a win from nothing in an opposite coloured bishops endgame against Van Foreest the next day.
47...Ke6 and White cannot make progress.

37. c7+ d7 38. g4 g6 39. f4!

One extra pawn is rarely enough to win an opposite bishops endgame and that remains true here. Vidit explained, “I was not really expecting to win but I thought I have a pawn so why not try?”

30. c5 f8 31. b8 e7 32. d6+ e8 33. c6 d8 34. f2

34. f8 c7 35. xg7 h5 is easy for Black.

34...c2 35. h4 h5 36. e3

36...a4?

“I think the draw is very simple,” said Vidit. “He just puts the bishop on d1. Then I cannot move my king ahead and if I push my pawns it becomes easier for him to defend.”

Giri agreed: “I was quite shocked by the way Jorden played the endgame. All he has to do is put the bishop on d1 and there will be no race [by the White king] to the pawn on h5. [As in the 11th game of the match between Magnus and Fabi], there are many positions where you do not need your king to hold the kingside. I think this is one of those but you have to go d1 in time.”

37. c7+ d7 38. g4 g6 39. f4!

“He probably missed this idea,” said Vidit. “I give two pawns on e2 and f3 and after that in all lines White is just winning.”

39...b5?

“After 36...a4 it was very difficult,” said Giri. Though I analysed with the head of the Dutch Chess Federation, who is a very strong endgame player, and he showed me how to draw it.” Indeed, Black can still save the game with 39...f6! , for example, 40. g5 e5+ 41. g3 fxg5 42. hxg5 d1 43. f2 h4! and the h-pawn saves the day. Play could continue 44. xe5 c8 45. d6 (45. e4 h3 46. g3 h2 is easy for Black.)

45. d7 46. e4 b3 47. g2

World number three Ding Liren was a disappointment in Wijk aan Zee, reaching +2 early but then drawing his final eight games. He failed to take the few chances he created and only won the following endgame by the narrowest of margins.
38...c6 39.b4?
Van Foreest goes looking for counterplay, but chooses the wrong method. “On 39.a4! I was going to play 39...c5!? but I was not sure about the outcome, but it is also very dangerous as I can follow with ...d8,” said Ding. However Ding’s plan allows White a tricky path to a draw after 40.fxe4+ Kxe4 41.Bd6! with the idea 41...d8 42.f2 d5 43.exd5! exd5 44.b4+! and Black is left with only a ‘wrong’ h-pawn.

39...a4!
“After I play ...a4 I think he is just losing,” said Ding, though the subsequent play requires precision.

40.c4 d4

41.fxe4+
“If 41.b5 cxb5 42.cxb5 then I have 42.e5! and the king and pawn endgame is just winning for Black by a tempo,” explained Ding, who envisaged 43.fxe4+ xe4 44.ex5 dxe5 45.d3 d5 46.g3 c5 47.xh3 xb5 48.g3 b4 49.f3 a3 50.e3 xa2 51.d2 b2 and Black is just in time.

41...ex4 42.f1 d3!
Once again, Black is winning by a single tempo.

43.b5 cxb5 44.cxb5 c4 45.e2 xb5 46.f3 b4 47.g4 a3 48.xh3 xa2 49.d6 b3 50.g2

50...c3! 0-1
Van Foreest had no interest in seeing 50.c3 51.f1 b4 52.xb4 (52.e5 a3 53.e2 c3 is equally bad.) 52...xb4 53.e2 b3 54.d2 b2 and once again Black stops the White king reaching the corner.

Anand had managed to exchange down to a three versus two knight endgame, which should normally be a straightforward draw - though Anand knew that Carlsen was guaranteed not to stop trying. “I was always better but I never at any moment thought [a win] was very likely,” admitted Carlsen.

62.d3?! c7
The first piece of encouragement for Carlsen. After 62...b5! 63.a5 c7!, the threat of 64...c6 leads to an immediate liquidation, e.g. 64.e4 c6 65.d5 c4 and a draw can soon be agreed.

63.e4 c6 64.e3 d6 65.c4+ c7 66.c3 e7 67.e5 g6+ 68.f5 e7+ 69.e6 g6

70.a5! b5?
Surprisingly, this turns out to be a decisive error. The less natural 70...bxa5! would enable Black to hang on, e.g. 71.d5 f4+ 72.xc5 c2 73.d6 (Judit Polgar’s suggestion of 73.a3 leads to similar lines after 73...c1!)

73...c1!
(73...xc3? 74.b5+ wins for White.)

74.b5+ b7 75.d4 a6! and Black should survive, albeit not without more suffering.

71.e3! f4+ 72.e5 e2
\[73. \text{d}5+ \text{c}6\]

73...\text{d}7 offered greater resistance, but after 74.a6! \text{c}6 75.e6!, White's king cannot be prevented from reaching c8.

\[74. \text{b}4!\]

\[\text{Nxc3!?}\]

No doubt Anand knew this failed, but the alternative 74...cxb4 75.cxb4 leaves Black's knight too far off-side, e.g. 75...\text{c}1 (75...\text{d}7 also leads the Black knight into unfortunate territory in view of 76.f4 \text{c}3 77.d4 \text{a}4 78.d5 \text{c}7 79.e6+ when Black's king has no good square.) 76.e7+ b7 77.d4

\[75. \text{xc3 cxb4 76.e2! 1-0}\]

After 76.e2 b7 77.d4 a6 78.b3 White is just in time.

Top:
Vishy Anand playing Vidit Santosh, one of India's strongest young talents.

Photo: Cathy Rogers
Shankland, Sam  2725  
Ding Liren  2813  
Wijk aan Zee GM A 2019

Ding found the best combination of the tournament, from a position where none of his pieces had moved beyond the second rank!

28...b4!
28...e8

29. b2  a4  30. e1  c7!!  
The amazing point behind Black’s move. The rook both unpins the a pawn and threatens to double on the c-file.

31. a2  
31.axb4 loses suprisingly to 31... dc8! when White is paralysed and must lose a piece.

31...bxa3  
Not just winning a pawn; White must soon give up more material.

32. b6  c5  33. b1  c2! 0-1

Van Foreest, Jorden  2612  
Fedoseev, Vladimir  2724  
Wijk aan Zee GM A 2019

Van Foreest had been in trouble for much of the game but now completes the great escape with...

39. d1!!  
39...xd1 allows White to force mate after 40. c4+ g7 41. e5+ h6 42. h4+ h5 43. f4+ g5 44. f8+ h5 45.g4+

40. xd2 and the rest was easy for

White.

40... xe7  41. g4  e4  42. g5  d7  43. f2  f7  44. d8+ g7  45. f4  d5  46. b8 1-0

Kramnik, Vladimir  2777  
Anand, Viswanathan  2773  
Wijk aan Zee GM A 2019

A key game in Anand’s rise to the top (before losing to Carlsen in Round 10). Black has a forced win, but Anand needed to find a subtle key point to defeat his old rival.

49... h1+!  50. g2  aa1  51. xc4  f5!!
The threat of $52...\texttt{h4} mate leaves White helpless.

$52.\texttt{xd5+ xd5} 53.\texttt{f3 xg3}

The a-pawn makes Black's technical task easy.

$55.\texttt{g4 a3 56. a7 a2 57. f5 h2} 0-1$

Shankland's one endgame win relied on the following tactical finish.

$48.\texttt{f5! g7+ 49. g4! xc6}

Now both moves by the g-pawn allow Black salvation but $52.\texttt{g5!}$ ended the game. 1-0

Carlsen did win one game with a slashing attack, finishing off Rapport with a spectacular winning sequence.

$38.\texttt{fxg6! xg6 39. xf6+! xf6}

After $40.\texttt{xh7+ xh7} 41.\texttt{xf6+ xh7} 42.\texttt{g7 43. xe8+}$ Black has run out of pieces. 1-0

Duda could have won his piece back with $32.\texttt{b2!}$, leading to a likely draw, but he missed just how strong Black's counter-attack will be.

$32.\texttt{d8? c1+ 33. f2 f1+ 34. g3 f4+! 35. xf4 c4+ 36. g3}

36.e4 walks into 36...\texttt{g5+! 37. xg5 (37. xg5 c1+ 38. f5 c5+ 37...w2+, etc.)}$

Ding Liren 2813

Wijk aan Zee GM A 2019
36...\texttt{e1}+ 37.\texttt{h3}

Black is still alive. \texttt{1-0}

Rapport’s brilliant point, gaining a tempo for the bishop to reach e6, and the only winning move.

37...\texttt{c8}!!

Kramnik has completely outplayed Van Foreest and thought he could win as he pleases.

20.\texttt{f3}?! 

Kramnik said that he looked at the unusual (and winning) idea 20.\texttt{xd6}! \texttt{xd6} 21.\texttt{h8}! \texttt{ff8} 22.\texttt{f3}! but thought that what he played was just as good.

Note that 20.\texttt{h8} g6!! would be far less clear.

However after 20...\texttt{xe4}! 21.\texttt{d2}

Black was close to equal and Kramnik only won 40 moves later after many ups and downs. \texttt{1-0}

Vidit dominated Kramnik in their game but was especially pleased to be able to finish in style.

29.\texttt{f4}!!

If 29.\texttt{f2} \texttt{a1}+ 30.\texttt{f1} h6 and

White thinks he has just recovered a pawn he sacrificed in the opening - but Vidit has other ideas...

20...\texttt{xe4}! 21.\texttt{d2}

A meek response, but 21.\texttt{xe4} loses to 21...\texttt{c6}.

Vidit, Santosh G 2695

Kramnik, Vladimir 2777

Van Foreest, Jorden 2612

Wijk aan Zee GM A 2019

Black is in trouble, but Rapport finds an excellent practical chance.

Mamedyarov, S 2817

Vidit, Santosh G 2695

Wijk aan Zee GM A 2019

Note that 20.\texttt{h8} g6!! would be far less clear.

However after 20...\texttt{xe4}! 21.\texttt{f6}

Black was close to equal and Kramnik only won 40 moves later after many ups and downs. \texttt{1-0}

Mamedyarov, S 2817

Vidit, Santosh G 2695

Wijk aan Zee GM A 2019
25...\textit{\texttt{nx}4!} 26.fxe4 \textit{\texttt{xe}4}
27.\textit{\texttt{xf}7!} \textit{\texttt{h}4+} 28.\textit{\texttt{g}2} \textit{\texttt{f}6!}
28...\textit{\texttt{hx}2+?!} 29.\textit{\texttt{ff}3!} is probably what Vidit was expecting - Black’s attack soon runs out of steam.

29.\textit{\texttt{h}1!} \textit{\texttt{xf}7}

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\filldraw[black] (0,0) circle (1pt);\filldraw[black] (1,0) circle (1pt);
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

30.\textit{\texttt{g}2?!}

Vidit finally falters. There was one, and only one, winning move:

30.\textit{\texttt{c}5!}, threatening to check on e5. Black has nothing better than 30...\textit{\texttt{h}6} 31.\textit{\texttt{e}5+} \textit{\texttt{f}6} when (31...\textit{\texttt{f}6} 32.\textit{\texttt{x}c}7) 32.\textit{\texttt{g}7!} decides the game.

30...\textit{\texttt{hd}4!} 31.\textit{\texttt{f}6} \textit{\texttt{d}1!}

Now Black can save the game.

32.\textit{\texttt{f}3} \textit{\texttt{x}g}1 + 33.\textit{\texttt{x}g}1 \textit{\texttt{d}5}
34.\textit{\texttt{xd}5} \textit{\texttt{xd}5} 35.\textit{\texttt{f}7} \textit{\texttt{d}8}
36.\textit{\texttt{c}1 a}6 37.\textit{\texttt{bxa}6 bxa}6 38.\textit{\texttt{x}c}7 \textit{\texttt{g}7} 39.\textit{\texttt{a}7} \textit{\texttt{d}1+} 40.\textit{\texttt{g}2}
\textit{\texttt{d}2+} 41.\textit{\texttt{g}1} \textit{\texttt{d}1+} 1/2-1/2

\textbf{Top:}
Anish Giri’s endgame bluff payed off against Shankland

\textit{Photo: Cathy Rogers}
Almost immediately after the Wijk aan Zee tournament, Russian great Vladimir Kramnik, 43, announced that he would be retiring from classical tournament chess. World Match Champion between 2000 and 2008 in a divided chess world, Kramnik’s international chess career spanned more than a quarter of a century. Here in pictorial form are some of the highlights and lowlights.
Only 18 months ago, Vladimir Kramnik was ranked number two in the world. Yet from his performance in Wijk aan Zee and subsequent retirement announcement, it is now clear the former World Champion had no longer the desire to return to near the top of the rating list and decided to end his career in his final elite tournament with a bang, not a whimper.

Kramnik explained in his retirement announcement two days after the tournament that he had made his decision a few months earlier, though looking back Kramnik seemed like a man who was prioritising fun over results for much of the past 12 months.

At the 2018 Candidates tournament, Kramnik had shown a penchant for risk-taking, but he mostly played at a high level and finished just below 50%.

However in Wijk aan Zee, Kramnik turned the risk-taking up to 11 and added plenty of errors, large and small, into the mix. He was, to use Spassky’s phrase, playing like a drunk machine-gunner, who was equally likely to shoot himself as he was to injure his adversary.

An extreme example came in the final round.

Left:
After coming to international attention with his 8.5/9 at the 1992 Manila Olympiad, Kramnik played his first Candidates Match in 1994, against Leonid Yudasin. This was to be the only significant match Kramnik won in his career before his world title match in 2000.
After an exciting struggle, where both players had chances, Kramnik has reached a position where he can force a draw with 49.\(\textbf{B}xa6\) \(\textbf{Ra6}\) 50.\(\textbf{B}b3\). Instead, knowing that this is his final tournament game, Kramnik decides to keep the game going with...

49.\(\textbf{B}c4?!\) \(\textbf{b}2\) 50.\(\textbf{a}2?\) \(\textbf{a}5\) 51.\(\textbf{f}1\) \(\textbf{a}4\) 52.\(\textbf{e}2\) \(\textbf{a}3\) 53.\(\textbf{d}2\) \(\textbf{c}6!\)

Kramnik was probably already wondering why he forewent a draw. White has no winning ideas at all, while Black can continue to build up and then try to invade. Indeed, objectively, White is already lost.

54.\(\textbf{h}4\) \(\textbf{e}5\) 55.\(\textbf{e}1\) \(\textbf{d}4\) 56.\(\textbf{b}1\)

Perhaps Kramnik had originally intended a final push for glory with 56.\(\textbf{e}3\) but realised that after 56...\(\textbf{c}1!\) 57.\(\textbf{xa3}\) \(\textbf{a}1!\), White is struggling to hold a draw. Play could continue 58.\(\textbf{a}4+\) \(\textbf{c}5\) 59.\(\textbf{c}4+\) \(\textbf{b}5\) 60.\(\textbf{c}8\) \(\textbf{xa2}\) and White is helpless, e.g. 61.\(\textbf{e}3\) or 61.\(\textbf{e}3\) \(\textbf{a}6!\)

61...\(\textbf{c}4\) 62.\(\textbf{e}3\) \(\textbf{a}3+\) followed by 63...\(\textbf{b}3\).

56...\(\textbf{c}3\) 57.\(\textbf{h}1\) \(\textbf{d}3+\) 58.\(\textbf{c}2\) \(\textbf{c}3+\) 59.\(\textbf{d}2\) \(\textbf{f}3\) 60.\(\textbf{e}2\)

Forced, since 60.\(\textbf{f}1\) \(\textbf{xf2+}\) 61.\(\textbf{xf2}\) \(\textbf{e}3+\) 62.\(\textbf{e}2\) \(\textbf{xf2}\) 63.\(\textbf{xf2}\)

Top:
In 1998, Kramnik and Shirov were chosen by Kasparov to play a match, the winner of which would challenge Kasparov for his world title. (The title had been split since 1993, with FIDE and Kasparov both laying claims to the World Championship title.) Kramnik was badly beaten in Cazorla but received his $US100,000 loser’s prize. Shirov received nothing, and Kasparov then reneged on the guaranteed prize fund for the title match.

Here Kramnik is pictured with Swiss banker William Wirth in Zurich 2016. Wirth was the financier behind the 1998 match, who refused Shirov’s pleas to be paid something after the title match with Kasparov had collapsed.
Kc3 is game over.

60... R d3!

Now Black’s king cannot be prevented from heading towards b3.

61. h5 gxh5 62. e1 c3 63. d2 f4! 64. a2
If 64. gxh4 c1! 65. xc1 bxc1═+ 66. xc1 h4 and Black queens.

64...e3+ 65. fxe3+ fxe3+ 66. e2 c2+

A sad end to a great career. 0-1

The upshot was that Kramnik finished with his worst result since becoming an elite player. At one point Kramnik dropped to a -5 score (5 losses, no wins) for the only time in his career.

During the tournament Kramnik did not seem disturbed at all – for reasons that would later become clear - explaining “It’s not about being optimistic. I’m an old man – I just want to enjoy chess! Of course I know that I’m overstepping limits, but I do it absolutely consciously. I know that I’m risking too much, but that’s the way I want to play. In such a strong tournament it maybe doesn’t pay, but at least I have interesting games.”

Giri, who had no idea that Kramnik was about to retire, viewed the situation differently when, after beating Kramnik from a near-losing position, he said: “I lost to him 7 games in a row, not counting draws and then I have won the last three. I think it’s mostly to do with the fact that his level has clearly dropped. Today [our game] was in his hands and back in the day he would win it. But it’s normal; people age. Of course occasionally he’ll play a brilliant game, but overall his level has dropped.”

Though Kramnik was a happy drunk machine-gunner in Wijk aan Zee, it was hard to imagine that he would be content to provide entertainment at the expense of rating (and his legacy) for much longer.

Nonetheless, Kramnik will be remembered as one of the greats – the only player to beat Garry Kasparov in a match and the only person to win a single super-tournament ten times (Dortmund). The tributes from his peers have been generous and heartfelt. “Vlady, a friend, rival and confidant. One of the most influential chess players of our times. His rivalry was a constant inspiration,” said Anand, while Levon Aronian reacted, “It’s a sad day for chess; another giant leaves the game.”
Kramnik's greatest feud was with Veselin Topalov, seen here playing Kramnik in Linares 1999, happier times. Kramnik and Topalov played a reunification world title match in Elista in 2006 which Kramnik won, though only after multiple protests by the Topalov camp, including, most seriously, that Kramnik was gaining computer help during his toilet visits. For almost the next decade Kramnik refused to shake Topalov's hand, though he did eventually mellow.

Kramnik caused the biggest upset in World Championship history when he defeated Kasparov in London in 2000 by 8.5-6.5 - “probably my most notable achievement,” said Kramnik after retiring. The match still holds some mysteries; in particular, why Kasparov took short draws with White when trailing.

Photo: Ian Rogers
In 1999 Miguel Illescas became a second for Kramnik (also hosting Kramnik’s web site) and stayed with Kramnik through his matches with Kasparov (2000), Leko (2004) and Topalov (2006). The two are seen here together at Linares in early 2000.

The traditional supertournament in Wijk aan Zee was not a happy hunting ground for Kramnik, who won the title only once, jointly with Anand, in 1998. In this photo he is seen in the Wijk aan Zee analysis room in 2000, watched by Australia’s Max Leskeiwicz.
Linares was the world’s strongest tournament for many years and ruled by Kasparov until his retirement. Kramnik and Ivanchuk were Kasparov’s most serious rivals in Linares, both winning the title three times during the Kasparov era. This photo was from Kramnik’s final Linares win in 2004, shortly before Kramnik retained the world title with a 7-7 draw in his match with Leko.

The tournament which Kramnik dominated more than any other was the Sparkassen supertournament in Dortmund. Kramnik won the event 10 times and can be seen here in Dortmund’s ‘Play the Public’ blitz event on a rest day in 2005.
When Kramnik took over at the helm of the Russian team after Kasparov’s retirement, he presided over an unprecedented run of (relative) Olympic failure, Russia failing to win team gold at an Open Olympiad from Turin 2006, from where this picture was taken, until today. Kramnik himself picked up an individual gold medal in Turin.

Kramnik was always one of the most accessible World Champions, here signing autographs at the 2006 Turin Olympiad. At the time Kramnik, who had taught himself makruk - Thai chess - was trying to organise a makruk and chess match in Thailand against a local champion but the contest did not eventuate.
Kramnik played the final high profile human-computer match in Bonn 2006, beaten 2-4 by Deep Fritz. The match is mostly remembered for Kramnik’s colossal blunder in game 2, overlooking a mate in one.

In 2006, shortly after defeating Topalov in the infamous Toilet-gate match, Kramnik married French journalist Marie-Laure Germon. They have two children: Daria and Vadim. (Photo from 2009 London Classic)
The low point in Kramnik’s career. Kramnik has overlooked Anand’s 34...Ne3!! in game 5 and is losing both his second game with Black and also, almost certainly, the world match title he has held for eight years.

Kramnik ponders what might have been after winning game 9 of his title match against Anand when three down with three to play. Anand easily drew the next game to take the title.
Kramnik may have lost to Anand but they continued to be friends, reinforced when Kramnik offered to assist Anand during his title defence against Topalov in 2010. Indeed Kramnik became a de facto second for Anand in that match and they remained close afterwards.

Kramnik won a controversial blitz playoff against Aronian at the Grand Slam Final in Shanghai when he knocked over a piece and pressed his clock before putting the piece upright. Soon afterwards, Aronian lost on time. Aronian protested, but the arbiter did nothing and Kramnik earned his ticket to Bilbao. The photo was taken a few days before the dispute.
The closest Russia came to winning an Olympiad was in Istanbul 2012, when Armenia edged out Russia for gold on tiebreak. The key match came in round 9, Russia losing for only the second time to Cold War rivals the USA, with Kramnik beaten by Nakamura on top board.

Another near miss for Kramnik came at the 2013 Candidates tournament in London. After a last round loss by Carlsen to Svidler, Kramnik needed only to draw with Ivanchuk to challenge Anand for the world title. Instead Kramnik lost, and Carlsen has been World Champion ever since.

Kramnik had decided to retire after the 2018 Candidates tournament in Berlin and chose Wijk aan Zee 2019 as his final tournament. In Wijk aan Zee Kramnik could often be seen with his longtime World Championship second and confidant, Evgeny Bareev.
At the village closing party, tournament director Jeroen van den Berg, 56, received a special medal from the Mayor to mark 20 years at the helm of the chess festival in Wijk aan Zee. “I have slept in Wijk aan Zee for two full years of my life,” said the Amsterdammer – probably an underestimate, as van den Berg worked in the tournament’s press office for 16 years before he became tournament director.

In the last two decades, the amiable van den Berg has hosted almost every leading player of the era at his event. Van den Berg uses the Chess Olympiad to establish and keep contacts, saying “The atmosphere at the Olympiad enables me to talk with players and even approach players to see if they want to play in [a future] tournament. It is only possible at an Olympiad.”

Before and during the Wijk aan Zee tournament Van den Berg is not afraid to deal with the small issues involving the players that many tournament directors would delegate – solving issues with players’ travel and hotels – so that small problems do not escalate.

So good was van den Berg’s relationship with leading players and such was their goodwill towards him that when sponsorship – for many editions a year-by-year proposition – was low one year, he managed to assemble a top class field on appearance fees far below normal. (The first prize remained, as always, 10,000 Euros; any top 10 player would normally receive more, possibly much more, than this as an appearance fee.)

Unlike many super-tournament the player selection committee headed by van den Berg, makes a point of extending invitations to players they believe will provide entertainment as well as tournament category. For example, Teimour Radjabov is unlikely to be invited back for some time in view of his 9 draws in 32 moves or fewer in the 2019 event.

The Wijk aan Zee tournament is far from the only string to van den Berg’s bow. He has been involved in most of the GM tournaments held in the Netherlands during the last two decades and was an advisor to the Tata Rapid tournament in Kolkata in 2018.
Top:
There was a prizegiving ceremony in the local town square in honour of the winners of the two
GM tournaments, Carlsen and Kovalev.

Photo: Cathy Rogers
INTERVIEW

ALPHAZERO – GAME CHANGER OR JUST ANOTHER 3,500 PLAYER?

Interview by Ian Rogers
In 2017, Deep Mind’s Alpha programs took on and conquered the best exponents of go, shogi and chess, simply by learning the rules and playing itself over and over again.

Natasha Regan and Matthew Sadler noted AlphaZero’s success at chess and the amazing selection of games that accompanied the news – some said that AlphaZero was Mikhail Tal reincarnated in computer form - and determined to write a book about the program.

The book, Game Changer, was launched during the Wijk aan Zee tournament, with Magnus Carlsen reading the book during the event and commenting after his draw against Radjabov how differently AlphaZero would have handled the position to himself.

With New in Chess believing they have a best-seller on their hands, the authors conducted interviews and gave a lecture in Wijk aan Zee.

Speaking to Ian Rogers, Regan and Sadler revealed how they came to write the book, what makes AlphaZero different from other chess programs and how any chessplayer can learn novel strategies from studying AlphaZero’s games closely.

Natasha Regan: The first time I heard about AlphaZero was December 2017 when the first paper came out with 10 games in it. At the time I was at the London Chess Classic and everybody was talking about it. There was a lot of interest about the fact that a program had taught itself to play. The next day when I looked at the games as well they were very exciting.

Matthew and I had previously written a book together. [The book interviewed, and gave advice for, older players. IR] My title was going to be Chess for Seniors but they said people wouldn’t like that, so it was named Chess for Life.

We approached Demis [Hassibis, the chessplayer behind Deep Mind] and gave him a copy of Chess for Life and said we could write a book [about AlphaZero]. At that stage we had only seen the 10 games but we thought we would be able to do something on AlphaZero’s games and also give a background story as well.

Matthew Sadler: Our goal was to describe how AlphaZero plays and also how it thinks about the game, and pull out thematic elements.

NR: At first Demis said he didn’t know whether we would be able to produce a book for him or not.

Some time later Hassibis came back to Regan and Sadler, agreed to their proposal and offered to provide games to them that had never been published previously, from a match against Stockfish in early 2018.

NR: The [original 10 games] were taken from a 100 game match with Stockfish in 2017. The 210 [games we were given] came from the 1,000 game match against Stockfish 8 in January 2018.

MS The final score of the 1,000 game match was +155, minus 6, the rest draws, There was also an [additional] match of 100 games; 50 each with White and Black from specially chosen starting positions.

How were the 210 games chosen?

NR: Games were cut out if they were going to be duplicates.

MS: Obviously a lot of games played between computers are similar, the openings are similar. If there were, say, 5 similar games starting with the same opening up to move 30, they selected just one of those games. The game selection is described quite precisely in the book, in the technical notes and in the How AlphaZero thinks chapter. We don’t know who picked the first 10 but we picked the 20 (from 210) that went out with the [second scientific paper put out by Deep Mind]. As far as I am concerned we were given a representative
selection of the 1,000 games that were played from the starting position, including all losses by AlphaZero. We got a lot of draws.

NR: We are trying to entertain but to also pull out themes and be instructive. I don’t think at any point we were really trying to give statistics on this and that [for which we might need all the games]. We had enough games.

MS: We had more than enough! Those 210 games are an amazing source of rich chess content and I think that you could spend 2 or 3 years happily analysing them, learning new stuff every single day.

From that point of view, we had a great selection.

**How does AlphaZero ‘think’?**

NR: Alpha knows whether it thinks it is better or worse, [what its percentage winning chance is]. If it thinks it is better it will play a line that it thinks has more potential; it may give the opponent more chance to go wrong. I wouldn’t expect it to do that at the cost of taking it to worse than equal, though you will still find the occasional game where instead of the draw it has lost. However if you average it over all the games then on balance it should be [ahead]. If it works more often than not it will go for it.

What AlphaZero may be able to do better than other computers is to work out the context of when it is good to have, say, an advanced pawn. It does tend to go for pawn advances but usually when it has a reasonable chance of going for an attack.

Sadler noted that he was particularly struck by the number of games when AlphaZero did not automatically keep rooks on an open file.

MS: The beautiful thing about those examples is that what you see is that the [regular computer] engine main lines are constantly expecting an exchange of rooks on the open file, which would negate any danger of a possible kingside attack. But what AlphaZero is doing is spotting some opportunity of opening a file on the kingside, for which it will then need a rook in order to prosecute the attack. Then you see the strategy where it is avoiding putting the rook on the open file, the other engines main lines are constantly exchanging rooks, exchanging rooks, exchanging rooks, and then all of a sudden out of nowhere there is a line being opened on the kingside and an AlphaZero rook ready to come into there and suddenly the engine evaluations all change.

There are a few famous example where players [abandon an open file with their rook, like AlphaZero]. There was an endgame of Tony Miles where he played Rb1 and allowed a rook to come into c2, then chased the rook back.

It’s that sort of flexibility in strategy that is deeply impressive about AlphaZero’s play whereas the engines are far more stuck on the traditional ideas.

**How far ahead does AlphaZero ‘see’?**

NR: AlphaZero looks at far fewer variations [than a traditional engine].

MS: The [published scientific] paper says that it is by a factor of a thousand less. In general AlphaZero starts by looking at all variations and then it prunes pretty significantly. It has a clear view on how to play chess and comes quite quickly on the path that it wants to follow. On that path it goes quite deeply – until it actually has to make a move.

In the match against Stockfish, its time management is described in the paper. On each move it uses one 20th of its remaining time on each move and when that time runs out, it plays its move.

It looks down its chosen path quite deeply and in this way shows a lot of drive, a lot of energy really.

**Could a traditional calculating computer beat AlphaZero if it saw far enough ahead?**

NR: AlphaZero’s advantage to other computers seems to be to find a way through to [a good plan] but there is value in [pure calculating machines] as well. It depends
on the position which [type of program] will come up with the best plan. There are certain positions where AlphaZero will find the right plan and others where brute force [calculating a long way ahead] will be better.

Deep Mind are interested in AI and their particular approach [Monte Carlo learning – the computer teaching itself, IR] – they are not particularly saying “How do we create the strongest chess computer?” Nonetheless, it is interesting that you can make a machine this strong by using this form of AI.

**Could AlphaZero improve substantially?**

NR: AlphaZero could get better but it would need work put into it. I think there are diminishing returns if you just increase the time [it plays against itself]. I believe that there were a higher percentage of draws with AlphaZero playing itself as it became stronger.

MS: Maybe 90%.

NR: Simply playing against itself forever wouldn’t guarantee a perfect game. Maybe you would also need to change the time control: it was playing against itself very fast – 40 milliseconds pr move. For example you could consider giving it an opening book, or you could consider giving it endgame tablebases. Tablebases might well improve it. But putting in human knowledge is not what Deep Mind were wanting to do.

**Has Sadler played a game in his career that he could sneak into the 210 games and no one would notice?**

MS: (Looking sad) No, no. AlphaZero’s games are too good, actually. The reasons why the games are so fantastic as well is that it is a huge clash of styles. If you play Stockfish against Stockfish, it is not that interesting and if you played AlphaZero against AlphaZero, I don’t think you would get such exciting games as AlphaZero versus Stockfish.

However, if you play these two different style of machines against each other, the qualities of both sides come out at their very best and it leads to a fantastic games collection.

**Will the authors be jaded now when they see human brilliancies?**

MS: No! The thing about this book is that it has been a real joy from the chess point of view. If the games had just been stronger than Stockfish but played in the same way, I am not sure we would be writing the same sort of book. The point is that it was such fantastic chess that it really appeals to you from a chess aesthetic point of view. Then when you start to see that there are masses of themes that you can pick out, that also gives you a passion to capture that and try to tell other people about it.

So it has only increased my joy for chess. In the book we also compare [AlphaZero’s play] to a lot of great moment’s in chess history: games of Karpov, games of Kasparov, that look very similar somehow.

**Will Regan and Sadler be working with Deep Mind in the future?**

NR: Deep Mind recently [applied the same techniques to the video game] Starcraft, and for that they need Starcraft experts. Deep Mind’s philosophy is to make their algorithm fairly general. So what they will be lacking is domain-specific knowledge for [each new area they enter] so they will pick the people that have that knowledge. Perhaps they won’t need chess experts any more.

MS: Of course, if we can do some more stuff with chess and Deep Mind then that would be lovely.
Izzat, Kanan 2496
Cheng, Bobby 2510
2019 Australian Open

Opening Shortcuts - In this article, I give my take on various ‘opening shortcuts’ that have recently been played in high-level games.

An opening shortcut is a move or variation that is played less often, and requires less work than the main move. Granted, because of opening fashion, the best ‘shortcuts’ may well evolve into main lines in their own right! Professional players often use shortcuts to get the opponent onto unfamiliar territory sooner, therefore increasing the chance that the opponent falters. For amateurs, there’s the added attraction of needing less work to construct and maintain your repertoire when you have a few good shortcuts in your arsenal. Because most of the games in this article are blitz/rapid games, my approach will be more personal/practical than analytical. Especially in quickplay games, but also in classical, the objective should be to reach a position where we are more comfortable than our opponent.

1.\textit{f3}
As I’ve mentioned before, 1.\textit{f3} is good for avoiding the Nimzo, Queen’s Indian and Grunfeld, at the price of allowing the Symmetrical English (...c5).

1...\textit{f6} 2.c4 \textit{e6}

\begin{center}
\textbf{The likely choice of a Nimzo player.}
\end{center}

3.g3 \textit{d5} 4.\textit{g2}
White has avoided the ...\textit{b4+} Catalan lines.

4...\textit{e7}
4...\textit{dx}c4 5.\textit{a}4+ regains the pawn, with the easier position to play for White, though 5...\textit{d}7 6.\textit{x}c4 \textit{c5} 7.\textit{e}5 \textit{c}8 is very solid for Black, as in Johansen-Tan, 2019 Australian Open (played in 2018, yes I realise it’s confusing for those reading this relic in 2048).

5.O-O O-O 6.d4
Move ordering Black into the ...\textit{e7} Catalan, which is still a good opening of course.

6...\textit{dx}c4
6...\textit{db}d7 7.\textit{e}c2 \textit{c6} 8.\textit{db}d2 \textit{b6} 9.\textit{e}4 is traditionally thought to favour White, though Erdos’s 9...\textit{dx}c4!? 10.\textit{xc}4 \textit{b}7 , followed by ...\textit{c}5, is quite tough to prove an advantage against. The engine slaves will disagree with me, so let me point out something: 11.\textit{f}4 \textit{c}5 12.\textit{fe}1 \textit{cxd}4 13.\textit{d}6 \textit{xd}6 14.\textit{xd}6 \textit{e}8 15.\textit{a}4 \textit{e}8 16.\textit{xd}4 \textit{c}5 17.e5 \textit{fe}4 18.b4 \textit{xd}6 19.\textit{xd}6 \textit{d}7 20.\textit{ad}1 \textit{d}5 21.\textit{e}5 \textit{xe}5 22.\textit{xe}2 \textit{xe}5 23.\textit{xe}5 \textit{d}7 24.\textit{e}3 \textit{c}6 25.\textit{g}1 \textit{ed}8 The engine gives White a small edge, but it’s pretty obvious that White is tied up to the d-pawn after ...\textit{d}7, and has no real way to make progress.

7.\textit{c}2 \textit{c6}
In so many of the Australian Open games, I recognised my favourite ‘blitz openings’, but that is probably just a coincidence :) Anyway, the point of Black’s system is to play a Meran setup against the Catalan! And I have scored 6/6 with it online.
against strong players without even knowing what I’m doing, so it cannot be that bad.

7...a6 8.a4 c5 9.dxc5 Bxc5 is another good shortcut for Black, if he only wants a draw.

8.\text{\textit{\textbar}} xc4

8.a4 can be met with Erdos’s setup, starting with 8...b6

8...b5

9.\text{\textit{\textbar}} c2

9.d3 scores quite well for White, but no one has tried my favoured approach of 9...\text{\textit{\textbar}} bd7 10.\text{\textit{\textbar}} g5 \text{\textit{\textbar}} b7 11.\text{\textit{\textbar}} c3 b4 12.\text{\textit{\textbar}} xf6 gx6!?, taking back with the pawn to keep a hold on c5.

9...\text{\textit{\textbar}} b7 10.\text{\textit{\textbar}} d1 \text{\textit{\textbar}} b6

Black mixes up the move order, which is easily done after playing chess non-stop for a month.

10...\text{\textit{\textbar}} bd7 is how I played in online blitz. Now people tend to transform the position with \text{\textit{\textbar}} e5 in various versions, but it’s nothing special. 11.\text{\textit{\textbar}} e5 (11.\text{\textit{\textbar}} c3 \text{\textit{\textbar}} b6 12.\text{\textit{\textbar}} e5 \text{\textit{\textbar}} xe5 13.dxe5 \text{\textit{\textbar}} d5 14.\text{\textit{\textbar}} e4 c5 looks like a better structure for Black, and White must be quite dynamic to maintain the balance, in my view.) 11...\text{\textit{\textbar}} xe5 12.dxe5 \text{\textit{\textbar}} d5

13.e4 \text{\textit{\textbar}} b4 14.\text{\textit{\textbar}} e2 \text{\textit{\textbar}} c7 Black’s knight is a bit awkward, but he has a nice structure and no other positional problems.

11.\text{\textit{\textbar}} e3

11.a4 is a bit more pointed.

11...\text{\textit{\textbar}} a6 12.a4

I’m quite impressed by this move - it looks like a positional mistake, but it’s very useful to have both a5 and axb5 in the air.

12...\text{\textit{\textbar}} b4 13.\text{\textit{\textbar}} c1 \text{\textit{\textbar}} bd5

13...\text{\textit{\textbar}} d5 was the right square, as White isn’t in time to kick away the knight with \text{\textit{\textbar}} d2/e4: 14.\text{\textit{\textbar}} d2 \text{\textit{\textbar}} ac8 15.e4 c5! 16.exd5 cxd4 regains the piece with interest.

14.\text{\textit{\textbar}} d2

In the Catalan, the dark-squared bishop is generally happy to trade itself for a Black knight, so this retreat is just a waste of time.

14...\text{\textit{\textbar}} fc8 15.\text{\textit{\textbar}} c2 c5 16.axb5 cxd4 17.\text{\textit{\textbar}} d3 \text{\textit{\textbar}} b4

The turning point of the game. Black clearly missed White’s 21st move, so instead 17...a6 was the way to secure equal chances, e.g. 18.\text{\textit{\textbar}} xd4 axb5 19.\text{\textit{\textbar}} xa8 \text{\textit{\textbar}} xa8 with equal chances, as 20.\text{\textit{\textbar}} xb5 is hit with 20...\text{\textit{\textbar}} g4! threatening both f2 and ...\text{\textit{\textbar}} e5.

18.\text{\textit{\textbar}} xb4 \text{\textit{\textbar}} xb4 19.\text{\textit{\textbar}} xd4 \text{\textit{\textbar}} g2

20.\text{\textit{\textbar}} xg2 \text{\textit{\textbar}} d8 21.\text{\textit{\textbar}} f3

White is up a pawn but more importantly, has a serious initiative. He was merciless from here.

21...e5 22.a6 \text{\textit{\textbar}} c5 23.\text{\textit{\textbar}} f5 \text{\textit{\textbar}} e8 24.b6!

24...\text{\textit{\textbar}} c4 25.\text{\textit{\textbar}} xa7 \text{\textit{\textbar}} ab8

26.\text{\textit{\textbar}} xd8 \text{\textit{\textbar}} xd8 27.\text{\textit{\textbar}} c3 \text{\textit{\textbar}} xc3

28.bxc3 \text{\textit{\textbar}} b8 29.\text{\textit{\textbar}} a8 e4

30.\text{\textit{\textbar}} xb8 exf3+ 31.exf3 1-0

Verdict: Both sides played good shortcuts in this game - White reached a ...\text{\textit{\textbar}} e7 Catalan while avoiding ...dxc4/...\text{\textit{\textbar}} b4 lines, while Black’s anti-Catalan is a simple system well worth adding to your repertoire.

\textbf{Illingworth} 2807
\textbf{dulerile} 2492
Chess.com Live 2018
Normally I wouldn’t give my mediocre blitz games any time in my openings column, but it shows quite well what White is aiming for in the b3 systems, and I doubt many of you wanted to see a quick draw as the main game.

1.b3
1...Nf3 d5 2.e3 Nf6 3.c4 e6 4.b3 is another move order I use, when I want to avoid 1.b3 e5. Knowing how to dodge and weave becomes more important when you stop working on chess. You can also start with 1.c4 and then Nf3.

1...Nf6
1...e5 2.Bb2 Nc6 3.e3 Nf6 4.Bb5 is the main line, when the shortcut 4.e4 became popular lately, but both Caruana and I found these positions really tough to play. I do wonder though, why hasn’t 4...Qe7!?, with the idea of ...a6, ...dxc6 and fast queenside castling, been seen more often? Surely this is no less logical than the main line 4...Bd6.

2.Bb2

2...e6
2...g6 3.e3 g7 4.f3 O-O 5.d4 c5?! 6.dxc5 a5+?! 7.c3 axc5 8.a3 winning the e7-pawn for insufficient compensation is a trick Nakamura caught a few top GMs with earlier this year in the Grand Chess Tour. You have been warned!

3.Qf3
I recently switched to this move order, to keep options of g3/Bg2 depending on my mood.

3...d5 4.c4
4.e3 c5 5.d4 is another path, transposing to a Colle-Zukertort with Black committed to ...e6/...d5.

4...e7
4...c5 5.dxc5 Qa5+?! 6.c3 Qxc5 7.Ba3 winning the e7-pawn for

5.e3
In some ways this resembles a more annoying version of Axel Smith’s ‘e3 Poison’ repertoire (d4/c4/Nf3/e3), in that we delay d4 in favour of b3/Qb2.

5...O-O 6.Qc2 c5 7.cxd5 Qxd5 8.Qc3 is a useful move order for avoiding reversed Benonis with ...d4, but the counter-shortcut 8...b6!? 9.d4 Qb7 is too solid for White to have realistic hopes for pressure. 10.e4 Qf6 11.e5 Qd5 might play into Black’s hands, as his knight on d5 is untouchable.

5...O-O 6.Qc3 c5
6...b6 7.cxd5 exd5 8.d4 Qb7 9.Qd3 move orders Black into a Queen’s Indian where his bishop should be on d6, not e7.

7.cxd5 exd5

This is how most play against me, but now White gets a nice anti-IQP setup. 7...Qxd5 8.Qc2 Qc6 9.h4 is a fun hacking line that scores insanely well for White.

8.d4 Qc6 9.Qe2 Qg4
The usual move, but I find the bishop to be better placed on e6 in these positions. 9...Qe4 10.O-O Qf6 is where Black should look for equality.

10.dxc5 Qxc5 11.O-O
White essentially has a Karpov Variation of the Nimzo with two extra tempi, as his bishop is on e2 rather than the ‘Nimzo square’ b5.

11...Qe8
11...a6 12.h3 Qe6 13.Qd3 and Qe2 is a nice setup for White, as I already showed in a previous 50 Moves article (Howell-Houska, for those willing to search in their ChessBase archives).

12.Qc1
Because Black didn’t play ...a6, the bishop can’t retreat to a7.

12...Qd6 13.h3
13.Qb5 and heading for d4 is the club player move, and it may well be better than what I did.
13...\(\text{h5}\) 14.\(\text{d4}\)
This is the idea of inserting \(h3/\text{h5}\) - now the Black bishop can't retreat along the \(h3-c8\) diagonal.

14...\(\text{g6}\) 15.\(\text{xc6}\)
I played this too much on autopilot, though the structure is at least easy to play for White in blitz.

15.\(\text{cb5}\) is an opportunity I saw the instant I let go. I'm sure you can relate.

15...\(\text{bxc6}\) 16.\(\text{c5}\) 16...\(\text{c8}\) 17.\(\text{d4}\)
A very wasteful move. I should start with 17.\(\text{c5}\) and only then \(\text{d4}\).

17...\(\text{b8}\)
Fortunately my opponent was too fixated on attacking my king. Otherwise he may have seen the annoying 17...\(\text{a3}\)!

18.\(\text{f3}\)
18.\(\text{c5}\)! \(\text{d6}\) 19.\(\text{f4}\) doesn't look natural, but it's incredibly effective at killing all Black's play.

18...\(\text{e4}\) 19.\(\text{g3}\)
I knew I was playing very badly this game, so I decided to defend and wait for the opponent to self-destruct.

19...\(\text{d6}\) 20.\(\text{g2}\)

20...\(\text{xg3}\)
A tempting but speculative sacrifice. 20...\(\text{h5}\) and ...\(\text{h4}\) is what I was much more worried about.

21.\(\text{fxg3}\) \(\text{g3}\) 22.\(\text{f2}\)
22.\(\text{f3}\) \(\text{h2}+\) 23.\(\text{f1}\) \(\text{e4}\) both- ered me a lot, but I missed that after 24.\(\text{g4}\) I am threatening mate, which significantly slows Black's attack.

22...\(\text{h2}+\)
Chasing my king to safety.

23.\(\text{f1}\) \(\text{g3}\) 24.\(\text{d2}\)
Going against my instinct, which was to be practical and play 24.\(\text{c5}\), returning material but dominating the position.

24...\(\text{b8}\)

24...\(\text{f5}\) is what I was most concerned about, though White should still be better.

25.\(\text{c5}\)
Now I get the domination and the material.

25...\(\text{f5}\) 26.\(\text{f3}\) \(\text{g6}\) 27.\(\text{f2}\) \(\text{d6}\) 28.\(\text{h1}\)
Forcing the trade of queens. Even missing a free piece next move wasn’t enough to avoid victory.

28...\(\text{h5}\) 29.\(\text{g2}\) \(\text{g2}+\)
30.\(\text{g2}\) \(\text{g3}\) 31.\(\text{f2}\) 32.\(\text{d3}\) \(\text{f4}\) 33.\(\text{h6}\) \(\text{h8}\) 34.\(\text{exf4}\) \(\text{cd8}\)
35.\(\text{xc6}\) \(\text{f8}\) 36.\(\text{c4}\) \(\text{xf4}\) 37.\(\text{xf4}\) \(\text{xf4}\) 38.\(\text{xf2}\) \(\text{ff8}\)
39.\(\text{e1}\) 40.\(\text{e4}\) 41.\(\text{c5}\) \(\text{g6}\) 42.\(\text{e7}\) 43.\(\text{d4}\) \(\text{xc6}\)
44.\(\text{g7}\) 45.\(\text{xf8}\) 1-0
Ilingworth won on time. Verdict: I like this \(b3/\text{b2}/\text{f3}/e3/c4\) setup a lot, and it’s nice that we can play it via. many move orders. It’s up to Black to decide which equal middlegame he feels the most comfortable playing.

Andreikin, Dmitry 2777
Firouzja, Alireza 2667
FIDE World Blitz 2018

In this game we'll debate the effectiveness of the 'Wolf Attack' as an Anti-Najdorf. The name refers to the Shamkir press conference before Carlsen-Wojtaszek, where Carlsen joked that in Norway, people have to fear attacks by wild wolves. Then again, in 'Bart to the Future', on March 19, 2000, the Simpsons predicted that Trump would become President of the US...
OPENING SHORTCUTS

Possibly the most flexible Anti-Sveshnikov/Anti-Najdorf.

2...d6
2...a6 3.g3 b5 4.g2 b7 5.d3 e6 6.h3 d6 7.O-O f6 8.f4 c7 9.f5 e7? 10.fxe6 fxe6 11.g5 is a trap I’ve got in more than once in rated blitz.

2...Nc6 3.Bb5 Nf6 else Bxc6/d3 is an improved Rossolimo for White. 4.f3 meanwhile continues to gain traction as a serious anti-Sicilian, and admittedly I still haven’t found a 100% comfortable solution for Black.

2...e6 3.Nge2 a6 White should probably transpose to an Open Sicilian, as 4.g3 b5 5.g2 b7 6.O-O Qf6 7.d3 d6 sees the knight on e2 rather than the more flexible h3 square, making f4-f5 less effective.

3.d4
3.Qe2 f6 4.g3 is another Anti-Najdorf, transposing to a Closed Sicilian with Qge2...Qf6. I believe that variation is easier for Black to play at the professional level, but there is d2-d4 to transpose into a Fianchetto Dragon later.

3...exd4 4.Qxd4 Qc6 5.Qd2 g6

5.Qf6 6.b3 e6 7.Qb2 a6 8.O-O-O b5 9.f3 was Carlsen-Wojtaszek, Shamkir 2018 - a slightly improved English Attack for White, as the bishop on b2 guards the king while assisting with the kingside attack.

6.b3

6...h6
The main line, trying to disrupt White’s harmonious queenside setup, but Firouzja follows it up originally.

7.f4 f5
7...e5? 8.Qb5 is a powerful blow, but 7...Qf6 8.Qb2 O-O 9.O-O-O a5 10.a4 e5 was played twice by Sarana and seems a good route to counterplay.

8.Qb2 Qf6 9.O-O-O
9.Qd3 was Nakamura’s choice, though he didn’t get any objective edge out of 9...a5 10.exf5 Qxf5 in my view.

9...fxe4 10.Qb1
10.g3 is possible but hardly fighting for an advantage.

10...a5
10...O-O would be normal and fine.

11.Qc4 Qf8 12.Qe2 Qg4

Continuing ambitiously.

12...Qd7 was the quiet option.

13.h3 Qxe2 14.Qxe2 Qf4
15.Qxe4 Qe5
15...Qxe4 16.Qxe4 Qe5 was the correct move order, because of a tactical opportunity next move.

16.Qxd6+
Very tempting, but Black can hold the centre. 16.Qc3 Qc7 17.Qxe5 Qxe5 18.Qb5+ and Qg5 proves to be very strong.

16...exd6 17.Qxd6 Qd7 18.Qd5
18.Qxe5 Qxe5 19.Qd1 and Qd1 gives White a strong attack, with only 19...Qf5! holding things together.

18...Qc7 19.Qb5 O-O-O
20.Qxc6 Qxc6 21.Qxe5 Qxe5
22.Qxe5 Qf8
23. f1 e6 24. e1 c6 25. f2 b6 26. f7 d7 27. f3 d5 28. c3+ b7 29. c7+ a8 30. c3 xe1+ 31. xe1 d7 32. c3 c8 33. f3+ c6 34. e2 e8 35. d2 e7 36. g3 d7 37. f4 b7 38. b2 a6 39. a4 d5 40. f2 e7 41. f8 e5+ 42. b1 b7 43. g3 e4 44. b8+ a6 45. c8+ b7 46. f2 d5 47. b2 e5+ 48. b1 c7 49. e6 b8 50. e2+ b7 51. f3 c6 52. f7+ a8 53. e7 c8 54. e2 xg2 55. a5 bxa5 56. e6 c6 57. e2 a4 58. b4 a3 59. c5 e8 60. f2 d5 61. f1 a2+ 62. b2 c6 63. xa2 b8 64. f7 a4+ 65. b2 xb4 66. xb4 xb4 67. c1 e1+ 68. b2 e5+

69. c3 b5+ 70. c1 g5+ 71. b2 b5+ 72. c1 c6 73. c2 e4+ 74. c1 h1+ 75. c2 g2+ 76. c1 g5+ 77. b2 b5+ 78. c1 c6 79. c2 h5 80. h4 a5 81. c4 Qe4+ 82. b3 b7+ 83. xb7+ xb7 0-1

Verdict: I like 2. c3 best as an Anti-Sveshnikov, while the Wolf Attack leads to very interesting, sharp battles, but Black has just as much fun as White.

Nakauchi, Gene  2190
Ikeda, Junta  2421
Australia Open 2019

I selected this game because I quite like the Benko-style approach to the King's Indian, at least against the Fianchetto Variation.

1.d4 f6 2.c4

Some players like to use the move order 2. f3 g6 3.g3 g7 4.g2 O-O 5.O-O, to have non-c4 options against the KID, Grunfeld or both. 5...d6 6.b3 a5 is one appealing reply, going for queenside counterplay with ...a4. And if 7.a4, Black can claim an improved version of other lines, such as with 7...e5 8.dxe5 dxe5, played twice by Maze.

2...g6

Naturally, one attraction of the King's Indian is that you can reach it against virtually anywhere where White doesn't play e4 very rapidly.

3.g3

This is the main trend lately though often with f3 before g3, to dodge pure Grunfeld lines.

3...g7

3...c5 was my recommendation for Black in an old Grunfeld article for 50 Moves, but subsequently 4.dxc5! a5+ 5. c3 g7 6. g2 xc5 7. a4 and c3, as recommended by Avrukh in his latest GM Repertoire, has proven a bit unpleasant.

3...c6 4.g2 d5 is the usual choice of 'solid' Grunfeld players. White has many options, but the main trend is 5. a4, also recommended by Avrukh. The idea is to get in ...cxd5 without allowing ...cxd5 (thus reaching a nice Grunfeld structure for White), but 5...g7 6.cxd5 O-O was played in three MVL games this year and is a nice shortcut to neutralise this try.

4.g2 O-O 5.f3

5.f3 is a more flexible move order to avoid the Grunfeld, though 5...c6 6.f3 (6.e3 is the way to go if White wants to avoid the next line) 6...d5 7.cxd5 cxd5 8.O-O gets there anyway, if Black is inconsistent. Furthermore, 8.e5 9.xd5 e4 is a reliable independent option that can't really be put under pressure.

5...d6 6.O-O c6

6...e4 7.c2 f5 is a very interesting shortcut, going for Dutch style play. I think it's rarely seen only because it can be avoided with 6...c3.
6...c5
This can lead to the Yugoslav Variation, which has quite a good reputation - hence, most strong players fight for a small edge by taking on c5 at some point.

7.dxc5
7...c3 dxc6 8.d5 a5 9.d2 a6 transposes to the main game.

7.b3 c8 6.b2 cxd4 9.xd4 d7 10.c2!? is another promising line, playing it like a Double Fianchetto English, and keeping the minor pieces on to deprive Black of space. I’ve had some trouble dealing with this approach as Black in blitz games.

7...dxc5 8.e5!
This promising option is only available in the 6...0-0 move order. Now an amusing dance of the knights may follow: 8...d6 9.d3 e6 10.b3 c6 11.xc5 c8 12.f4 e5 13.e3 and I don’t see full compensation for the pawn for Black. 9.d3 d6 10.c3 de5 11.xc5 xc4 12.b4 a4 b6 13.h4

6...b7 7.c3 e5 8.e4 is the old main line, but Black has been struggling to equalise here for a while now. 8...xd4 9.cxd4 e8 does score very well for Black in recent games, but a good answer is 10.e3!? c5 11.f3 fd7 12.d2 e5 13.b3, when Black can place to a knight into d3, but without any benefit. Otherwise it is hard to see Black’s counterplay.

7.c3
Now Black can play the old main line Panno, the new main line, or a sideline.

7...a6

I have written before that 7...f5 8.e1 e8 9.e4 d7 10.Nc2 is favourable for White, as Black lost time with ...f5-d7: 1-0 Roiz,M (2605) - Guseinov,G (2664) St Petersburg 2018

7...e5
The point of this approach is that after 8.d5 b8, White’s queenside play is a fair bit slower than in the Mar del Plata. Therefore, I recommend 8.dxe5 dxe5 9.g5 g6 and White has a few ways to keep slight positional pressure, using the central light squares. 10.d2!? This move is not very common, but it scores extremely well for White in GM games. (10.c1 was Avrukh’s recommendation in his book, preparing d1 and stopping ...h6, and using the fact ...xc4 fails tactically.)

10.h6 (10.b8 prepares ...d7 and ...h6, but 11.a4 keeps up the pressure.) 11.xf6 xf6 12.de4 e7 13.c1 Once again we see Avrukh’s idea in action. 13.g7! 14.d1 e8 15.d5 White has quite unpleasant piece pressure because of his d5.

8.d5
This is the old main line, but it was neutralised some years ago by a nice Benko-style pawn sacrifice.

8.f4 b8 9.c1 is a simple development scheme aimed against ...b5, which can now be met with d5! and pressure down the c-file.

9.h6
Black prepares counterplay with ...g5, with the idea of meeting e3 with g4 and d2 with g4. (9...d7 This is most common, preparing ...b5. 10.a3 However, this line is quite unpleasant for Black. White is ready to meet ...b5 with cxb5 and b4, but otherwise it’s not clear where Black’s counterplay arises from. In a recent GM game, Black was lost within a few moves: 10.c8 11.d5 b5 12.d2 e5 (12...b5 had to be tried) 13.g5 b6 14.ce4 f5 15.b4 b7 16.a4 1-0 Kravtsiv,M (2654) - Moussard,J (2579) Cap d’Agde 2018

10.d3
I like this move best, so that ...g5 is well met by d2. 10...g4 11.d2 e5 12.d5 d4 Black has less space, so he should trade some pieces. 12...e7 13.h3 f6 14.e4 is a much worse version of the Mar del Plata positions for Black. White can neutralise the kingside by meeting ...f5 with h4 and exf5.

13.h3 xf3+ 14.xf3 f6 15.e4 h7 Black’s position should be fine with ...f5 coming soon.

8...a5 9.d2 c5 10.c2
Because of the game continuation, the more precise move order seems to be 10.b1 b8 11.b3 b5 12.c2, with a theoretical variation.
where Black has struggled in the most recent games. 12...e5 13...b2 c5 14.e3 f5 looks to be a theoretically adequate solution, though, with counterplay on both flanks. If 15.f4 e4

10...b5

I really like this move, which completely neutralises 8.d5. I first learned of it in Van Kampen’s ‘Cutting Edge KID’ video series on Chess24.

11.cxb5 axb5 12...xb5 wb6
It’s important to start with this move, and not ...a6.

13...a3
A curious retreat, as White’s knight will not manage to stay on c4. 13...c3 f5 14.e4 c8 is the point of Black’s play, provoking e4 so that the d3 square is weak later. 15.b2 This move has caused some problems for Black, in that quiet play allows White to harmonise with b3/ a3. 15...g4 I haven’t found any advantage for White after this move, intending ...e5 (and ...ec4 if f4). For instance, 16.h3 e5 17.d1 a6 18.d1 b4 19.f4 e4 20.e5 b8 makes it difficult for White to back up his central expansion.

13...a6 14.b3
This is a common tactical blunder at the sub-2200 level, though it’s hard to explain here.

14...d4 15...c4 wc4 15...xc4 wb4 is comfortable for Black, while 14...db1 and c3 may be best, but it makes a3 look quite out of line.

14...xd5 15...xd5 x3
16.axa8 x3

Now Black is obviously much better, and he went on to win.

17...ac4 wc7 18.b2 c6
19.b1 x2b2 20.xb2 xe2
21...e1 g4 22.a3 f5 23...c1 wb7 24.c4 e5 25.f4 e6
26.d3 e7 27.f3 c8 28.fxe5 dx5 29.xe5 xe5 30.xe5 d6 31.c3 d8 32.e4 d1+ 33.f2 d3 34.f6+ h8
35.d5 f3+ 36.xg1 xc3 37.d8+ g7 0-1

Topalov, Veselin 2749
Nakamura, Hikaru 2780
Saint Louis Champions 2017

1.e4 c5 2...f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4
4.xd4 f6 5.c3 a6 6.f3
This move was used exclusively by Topalov in this match, to avoid
but I have not found a clear route to equality after 8.a3! b7 9.\textit{\texttt{d2}} bd7 10.g4!, which scores excellently for White in both correspondence and engine games.

8.\textit{\texttt{d2}}

8.a4 brought Caruana success in an earlier game against Nakamura, but it wasn’t because of the opening.

8...\textit{\texttt{c6}} 9.\textit{\texttt{c4}}

This setup feels a bit inconsistent to me.

9.\textit{\texttt{c7}} 10.\textit{\texttt{e2}} e7 11.\textit{\texttt{O-O}} \textit{\texttt{c5}} 12.\textit{\texttt{b3}} d7 13.f4 eg4 14.\textit{\texttt{h1}} xe3 15.\textit{\texttt{xe3}} \textit{\texttt{c5}} (15...g4!)

16.\textit{\texttt{d2}} O-O-O may even give Black chances to be better with his bishop pair, and 16...g5?! is an alternative for those who prefer chaos to an edge.)

16.\textit{\texttt{ad1}} and in 1-0 Caruana,F (2795) - Nakamura,H (2787) Saint Louis 2016, Black would have had a fine position after 16...\textit{\texttt{g4}} 17.\textit{\texttt{d2}} O-O-O 18.h3 h4!=, as taking on g4 would open up a huge attack down the h-file.

In the first game of the match featuring this position, Topalov went for 8.\textit{\texttt{c4}} \textit{\texttt{c6}}! This may be the more accurate move order.

8...\textit{\texttt{d7}}?! N 9.\textit{\texttt{O-O}} \textit{\texttt{c6}}

Is interesting, saying that White has no pawn break and that Black can develop normally. That may not be true, though: 10.\textit{\texttt{xc6}}?! \textit{\texttt{xc6}} 11.a4! \textit{\texttt{a5}} (11...\textit{\texttt{e7}} 12.a5 is the kind of queenside bind I would rather avoid, even if the engine considers 12...O-O 13.\textit{\texttt{d2}} d5 14.exd5 exd5 15.\textit{\texttt{b3}} \textit{\texttt{c8}} acceptable for the second player.) 12.\textit{\texttt{b3}} e7 13.\textit{\texttt{e1}}! h4 14.\textit{\texttt{h3}} \textit{\texttt{d7}}! Black looks to have sufficient counterplay with the White pawns relatively fixed, and (14...\textit{\texttt{h5}}?! with the idea of ...\textit{\texttt{g3}} also makes sense.)

(8...\textit{\texttt{c7}} 9.\textit{\texttt{b3}} c6 (9...\textit{\texttt{bd7}}?!) allows Black to play ...\textit{\texttt{c5}} in some positions, to trade the b3-bishop. 10.\textit{\texttt{O-O}} (10.\textit{\texttt{d2}} \textit{\texttt{c5}}=) 10...\textit{\texttt{c5}} 11.a4 \textit{\texttt{xb3}} 12.cxb3 10.\textit{\texttt{d2}} \textit{\texttt{e7}} (10...\textit{\texttt{a5}}?! strikes me as the more accurate move order, to play ...b5 and accelerate the queenside play if White castles queenside. And if 11.\textit{\texttt{f2}} \textit{\texttt{c4}} 12.\textit{\texttt{xc4}} \textit{\texttt{xc4}} looks safe for Black.)

11.\textit{\texttt{O-O-O}} \textit{\texttt{a5}}! 12.\textit{\texttt{b1}}

(12.h3 h4 13.\textit{\texttt{he1}} b5 14.\textit{\texttt{g5}}! is a logical alternative, switching to central play with f4/e5. In this case, I have been unable to find an equaliser for Black.)

12...\textit{\texttt{d7}} 0-1 Topalov,V (2749) - Nakamura,H (2780) Saint Louis 2017. Now instead of the strange 13.\textit{\texttt{g3}}?!, White should prefer 13.h3!, threatening g4. After 13...h4 14.\textit{\texttt{he1}} b5 15.\textit{\texttt{g5}}! I don’t see how Black generates counterplay; if 15...b4 16.\textit{\texttt{a4}} \textit{\texttt{xb3}} 17.axb3 and Black has no constructive plan. On this basis, one wonders why Topalov didn’t repeat 8.\textit{\texttt{c4}} in several subsequent games.

9.\textit{\texttt{e2}}

9.\textit{\texttt{O-O-O}} was Topalov’s attempted improvement on the last day of the match.

After 9...b5 10.\textit{\texttt{b1}}

10.g3 \textit{\texttt{b7}} 11.\textit{\texttt{h3}} \textit{\texttt{c6}}! 12.\textit{\texttt{xc6}} \textit{\texttt{xc6}} (now play resembles a Rauzer where White played some strange moves) 13.\textit{\texttt{b1}} b4 14.\textit{\texttt{e2}} a5 15.\textit{\texttt{d4}} \textit{\texttt{d7}} was very comfortable for Black in ½-½ Topalov,V (2749) - Nakamura,H (2780) Saint Louis 2017, as his flank play is clearly faster and his king proves very safe in the centre when White can’t opt for g4 or f4.

10...\textit{\texttt{b7}} 11.\textit{\texttt{d3}}

11.a4?! is a somewhat inhuman move that was once played in
an email game. I’d reply 11...O-O! 12.axb5 axb5 13.\_\_xb5 \_\_c7
14.\_\_b3 \_\_c6 15.\_\_he1 \_\_fc8 = when in \_\_1/2-\_\_1/2 Schueppen,H (2422) - Horvath,A (2497) ICCF email 2012, Black had full counterplay for the pawn with the open files against White’s king.

11...\_\_bd7 12.\_\_he1 \_\_c8 =
This position has arisen by transposition in several games, with White scoring quite poorly. There is even an indicative example from Nakamura’s play: 13.h4?! (13.a3 O-O 14.\_\_g5 \_\_e5 = with equality is more advisable.) 13...\_\_e5 14.\_\_g5 O-O! Black is basically a tempo up compared to a Rauzer main line. 15.\_\_ce2 d5! 16.exd5 \_\_xd3 17.\_\_xd3 \_\_xd5 18.\_\_xe7 \_\_xe7 0-1 Van Haastert,E (2416) - Nakamura,H (2670) Gibraltar 2008

9...\_\_d7
Nakamura switched to this move in the blitz section. 9...b5 is a natural move, as ...\_\_b7/...\_\_bd7 is an ideal setup when White goes for \_\_e2/0-0. 10.a4 (10.O-O O-O 11.\_\_fb1! with the idea of b4/a4 is a deep engine move rated as favouring White. If we try to avert it with 11...e5 12.\_\_b3 \_\_b7, White has other trumps with 13.\_\_d5 \_\_xd5 14.exd5 \_\_bd7 15.a4 b4! 16.c4 \_\_xc3 17.bxc3 and now Black needs to know the thematic 17...\_\_h7! =, preparing the exchange of dark-squared bishops with ...\_\_g5, to maintain the balance.) 10...b4 11.\_\_a2 and in \_\_1/2-\_\_1/2 Topalov,V (2749) - Nakamura,H (2780) Saint Louis 2017, Black should have opted for 11...e5! 12.\_\_b3 a5 13.\_\_b5+ Bd7 14.O-O O-O 15.c4 \_\_e6! = with a fine game, as the b5-bishop suddenly proves a bit misplaced.

9...\_\_c7?! 10.O-O (10.O-O-O \_\_bd7 11.\_\_b1 b5 12.a3 \_\_b8 13.h3 h4 = gave Black a nice attacking setup in 0-1 Silin,V (2223)-Budkin,G (2309) ICCF email 2011.) 10...\_\_bd7 11.\_\_a1 (11.a4 is well met by 11...b6, nullifying a5 ideas.

11...b6!? (11...b5 is the more normal move. Nakamura probably wanted to avoid sacks on b5, but I don’t buy them here, and conversely 12.a4 b4 13.\_\_a2 d5! 14.\_\_b4 dx4 = looks very healthy for Black with his strong centre.)

12.f4?! \_\_b7 13.\_\_f3 \_\_g4 14.\_\_h1 \_\_xe3 15.\_\_xe3 b5 = The engines rate this as equal, but I would already prefer Black with his bishop pair and central majority, \_\_1/2-\_\_1/2 Topalov,V (2749) - Nakamura,H (2780) Saint Louis 2017

10.O-O-O
10.a4 \_\_c6 11.\_\_b3?! A positional approach that should be taken seriously, as Black can easily fall into a bind on the queenside. (11...\_\_xc6 \_\_xc6 12.O-O h4 feels OK for Black, who can steadily prepare the ...d5 break. Note that 13.a5 is less effective now because of 13...d5!)

11...\_\_c8 12.a5 O-O 13.O-O (13.\_\_a4 d5 14.\_\_b6 dx4! 15.\_\_xc8 \_\_xc8 = is a typical exchange sacrifice - Black has good compensation due to White being behind in development.)

11.f4?! \_\_b4 14.\_\_f3 is probably where White should look for an opening advantage.)

13...\_\_e5 14.\_\_fd1 (14.\_\_ad1 may be the better choice of rook, but 14...\_\_c4 15.\_\_xc4 \_\_xc4 still looks fine for Black, who has no real weaknesses.)

14...h4 (14...\_\_c4 15.\_\_xc4 \_\_xc4 was the alternative.)

15.h3 (15.\_\_b6 \_\_e8 looks awkward, but Black can untangle with \_\_xc4 and ...d5, or ...\_\_c6 and ...d5.)

15...\_\_g6!
A strong move, anticipating f4.

16.f4 \_\_xc3!
A Najdorf veteran doesn’t have to be asked twice to play such a sack!

17.\_\_xc3 \_\_xe4 18.\_\_d3 (18.\_\_b4 \_\_g3 19.\_\_d3 \_\_c8 =)

18...\_\_g3 (18...d5?)

19.\_\_f3 \_\_c8 Black had the advantage in \_\_1/2-\_\_1/2 Topalov,V (2749) - Nakamura,H (2780) Saint Louis 2017, as White’s rooks are pretty useless in this structure.

10...\_\_c6
10...b5 turns ...b4 into a real threat, as there won’t be many takers for \_\_b1 retreats. After 11.a3 \_\_c6 Black has somewhat limited White’s options.

11.g3?! I don’t really understand Topalov’s fascination with this move, since ...h4 is hardly a threat, but it shows the shrewdness of Nakamura’s opening choice for this match. 11.h3 h4 12.\_\_g5 b5 13.a3 \_\_b6 14.\_\_b3 b4 15.\_\_xb4 \_\_xb4 gives
Black good counterplay, so the central approach is not so effective for White.

11. Rh1 is Stockfish’s suggestion at a high depth, which tells you how hard it is for White to find a good plan!

11.a3! is probably the best move, anticipating ...b5-b4. That may also explain why Nakamura did not want to force it with the 10...b5 move order.

11...b5 12.a3
12...Rb8 also deserves attention, intending ...b4 too open the queenside. 14...e3 b4 15.axb4 Rxb4 16.e5 dxe5 17...xe5 c6 18...g5 is a problem line for me, though, as White has real attacking chances against Black’s king.)

13.h3
13...g5 14...xd4 14...xd4 Rb8 and ...a5/...b4 sees Black’s counterplay come just in time.

If 15.f4 c6! = 13...h4 14...g5 Rc8
15...xc6
15...b3 e5 and ...c4 looks fine for Black, while 15...b4! 16.axb4 cxb4 with ideas of ...a5-a4 may be even better.)

15...xc6 16...f4 d8 17...he1 O-O 18...d3 h5 19...g5 e5! = This position looks about equal to me, due to Black’s strong grip over the dark squares. However, I am sure the top players will be looking hard for improvements for both sides, especially since for those players who didn’t grow up with computers, the early ...h5 would be considered a slight insult to one’s chess understanding.

11...b5 12.a3
Black has several decent options, but I am not sure Nakamura’s was one of them.

12...c8?!
When White has played a3 in such positions, the rook belongs on b8: 12...b8 at this point may run into 13...xc6! c6 14...f4 e5 15...g5 when d5 is a sore point, so Black should be patient with 12...O-O, not fearing the coming g4.

After 13.h3 (13...g5 b8!)
13...b8! 14.g4 15...xd4 15...xd4 a5 16.g5 15...e8 Black’s counterplay arrives in time with ...b4. If 17.a4 bxa4 18...xa4 e5 19...c4 c7 is very promising for Black, who already opened lines on the queenside.

13...b1 a5 14.h3 g6 15.g4

Nakamura has been outplayed over the last few moves, as ...d4 does little to further Black’s attack, but he used his greater overall strength in blitz to win regardless.

15.e5 16...b3 d6 17...xa5
BAD CHESS PUNS

By IM Trevor Tao

Solutions on page 53 - Check out Trevor’s Facebook page for more!

Black to play and achieve awesomeness

Roger Federer found the right continuation and the evaluation was _______ _______ _______

White to play and win

The top seed gave the doctor a ______

______ ______ ______

Black to play and win

An extra _______ is an _______ _______ of _______ ______ ______

White to play and win

The correspondence player went _______ after receiving a _______ ______ ______

MARCH 2019 | 51
I was taught to play chess at around 8 years old by my father. It took me a while to get used to how the pieces moved, and understand the value of sacrifices e.g. Should I take a bishop to lose a rook? Very often I would get caught with the four move mate. One day my father bought me my first chess book. On the first page it had a picture of "The World’s shortest possible game of chess". Two moves each - Game over! I was very impressed with this, and it made me want to learn more about chess. I remember the book had lots of pictures in colour, and explained strategic plays very well. It took me until I was about 11, or 12, to finally beat my father. I started getting the upper hand, and winning more than not. We played very little chess after that (he was not a good loser), but the seed had been sown, and my love for chess would be forever.

The only time I could play was with kids at school during lunch. Sometimes the chess master at school would stay back after school finished to teach us some more about chess. I couldn’t always attend, but did when I could. We were living in Blackwater at the time, and I used to enjoy doing the chess puzzles in the Saturday newspaper. They offered a $10 prize for the first correct entry opened. If I could solve them, I would send them in. One day I got a cheque in the mail for $10 from the Rockhampton Chess Club, and an invitation to join the club, and play every Saturday. Unfortunately we were two hours drive away, so that was not doable.

From there I became a teenager, and other interests took over. Chess was put far down the list of importance, but had a way of coming back at certain times. Later in life I found myself playing a lot of internet chess. I thought I was good at chess - I was not. I got beaten almost every game I played, sometimes I lost my concentration, and found myself getting beaten by the four move checkmate again. I never took chess seriously, didn’t study it for hours on end, didn’t play tournaments, and I had no intentions of making a living out of playing chess. Sometimes I would get frustrated with how easily I could be beaten. I got to the point where unless I studied chess, and took it seriously, I was never going to be highly ranked, or even be competitive with good players. You only have to make one bad move, or lose a major piece for no gain, and a good player should beat you every time.

One night I was playing a game of chess with a friend, and I made one stupid move, and lost the game because of it. The frustration of losing so easily empowered a thought - What if chess could be more exciting? What if you could have more pieces on a bigger board, and make chess more entertaining?

My friend, and I, started working on creating a better game. The idea was to create a game of Double Chess. We decided that the original game of chess should remain central, so we started expanding the board around...
it one square at a time to make it 10 x 10 squares. There was not quite enough room to put all of the pieces, and the game was too cluttered to get a good flow happening, so we expanded the board to 12 x 12 squares. From there, we laid the pieces out in different positions to see what worked, and what didn’t. It wasn’t too long before we began to recognise a good pattern, however we were stuck with a few things we weren’t happy with, e.g. The pawns on c2, and j2, used to be on a3, and l3, but this made it too hard to get the rooks on a, and l, into action. By placing the Pawns on c2, and j2, they do not interfere with other pieces. The pawns in the middle quickly become cannon fodder, so if you are experiencing a competitive game, the Pawns on c2, and j2 become important in defending your line later in the game. The kings used to sit on g1, and g12, with the queens on f1, and f12, but once the pawns on the g-file were gone, it was too easy to get an attack happening on the two kings. We switched the kings’ positions on ranks 1 and 12, and now this makes a much better game.

Synergy Chess has been set up so the pieces move together very well, e.g. If you are playing White, and one of your first moves is Ne5, and your opponent plays g8, or g7, then b4 is weak. If you play N1d3, then the pawn is covered, and you have also backed up e5.

Once we had established all of the rules needed to make Synergy Chess work, I financed the production of some prototypes, and we went to the local markets to demonstrate our idea to the general public. We live in Cairns, Australia, which doesn’t have a chess club, but we get a very good mix of international visitors to the region. We asked chess players to try Synergy Chess, and offer some feedback. That feedback was well received - players were sceptical at start, but once they understood how it worked, and played a couple of times, they really liked our idea. The future of Synergy Chess was looking very positive. What started as a fun idea, was now commercially viable.

Over time, and a lack of funds, and direction, my friend and I unfortunately fell out, and the project came to a complete stop. After a few years, I decided to make another go of it. I told myself that it was time to stop making excuses, and start making an effort. My friend was not interested in continuing, so I went it alone. I bought some sets, had the website built, and continued from there. I hired a programmer to write the internet version of Synergy Chess, which we are in the final phases of testing now. Cairns is not a great place to market chess games commercially, so I am concentrating on the web based game. The business may be moved to a major city for better logistical viability in the future.

The online version has been very challenging, especially with correct notation. It is very important that anyone from any language could understand what was happening in a game, just as they can with standard chess. Keeping the notation as short as possible was also important. Please watch the short videos on the website from iPinned Kings to iCheckmate - Be Careful!, to understand more on how the notation works. The features will include a General FAQ page, email verification process, challenge player, play against computer (limited logic to start with, but improvements will follow), fit to browser, pictures of captured pieces, realtime score adding, choose length of time you wish to play for (includes bonus time e.g: 10 seconds), chat feature (including Chat Violation policy) and Board Editor - this feature allows you to set up the board however you want and continue to play on. Players holding a current FIDE rating will be able to apply to keep this, all other players will start at 1500. More features will be added in the future to improve your Synergy Chess experience.

If testing continues as well as it is, I am hoping to launch live around March/April 2019. Everyone will be able to play online for free for two months, and then a small subscription fee will apply, with options of 1 month for $5.95, 3 months $16.95, 6 months $29.95, and 12 months $49.95, All in AU$. Buy your set today for $39.95 with free postage within Australia. Go to http://synergychess.net/product/synergy-chess-standard-set, click “Add to Cart”, and enter the code 50 Moves then click apply in your cart to receive a $14.95 discount = Free postage.
ENDGAME EXERCISES

ENDGAMES COLUMN

with FM Chris Wallis

GAME 1

Cheng, Bobby 2510
Kuybokarov, Temur 2513
Australian Open 2019

For this column, we will firstly look at a very complicated knight ending played at the recent Australian Open in Melbourne, and then two positions from the Gibraltar Masters where the side to move can win are shown as exercises.

At first glance, White’s advantage seems insignificant. There are certainly several points in his favour – the slightly more active king and his knight’s positioning a move from c5, where it would strike against e6 and a6 - but at present his king is cut off and the weaknesses cannot be attacked. A careful rearrangement of the knight and king is called for.

37. \textit{d2}

Not best - the knight has made way for the king but is now too passive. 37. \textit{c1} not only prepares \textit{b3}, but allows the knight to approach c5 from another direction. A detailed analysis reveals that White can reasonably expect to win; his king will arrive on a5, he will manoeuvre his knight through d3 to b4, tying Black’s pieces to the defence of a6, and the knight’s threat against d5 offers every chance of placing Black in zugzwang.

Probably the best continuation is 37...\textit{b6} 38. \textit{d3} \textit{d7} 39. \textit{b3} \textit{c7} 40. \textit{b4} g5 41. \textit{a5} \textit{b7} 42. \textit{g4} \textit{a7} 43. \textit{b4} \textit{b8} 44. \textit{f3}, and Black’s situation is dire.

37...\textit{b6} 38. \textit{b3}

Probably intending to correct his error in case Black’s knight returned to a4, but...

38. \textit{d7}

Black realises the danger and brings his knight to a secure location.

39. \textit{c3} \textit{c7} 40. \textit{b4} \textit{b6} 41. \textit{a4} \textit{h5} 42. \textit{h3} \textit{g5} 43. \textit{g4} \textit{h4}

At first 43...hxg4 44.hxg4 f5 appears somewhat dangerous, opening a path for the knight through f6 to the kingside, but the knight would then lose control over c5; after 45.f3 fxg4 46.fxg4 \textit{f6} 47.\textit{c5} a5+ 48.\textit{c3} \textit{xc4} 49.\textit{xe6} \textit{xe3} 50.\textit{dxg5} it is clear that there is no danger for either side.

44. \textit{f4}

This natural attempt to use all the resources available should in fact lose, though the analysis to demonstrate this is incredibly deep and we will out of necessity show only a summary of it. The point is that ‘pawns don’t move backwards’; in particular, White has lost the ability to counter Black’s 44...\textit{f5} with f3, so Black’s pawn at h4 is suddenly a very great danger.

45. \textit{c5}

45. \textit{d2}, bringing the knight over
to catch Black’s pawns, might put up more practical problems for Black but he can overcome them, for example after 45...fxg4 46.hxg4 h3 47.Nf3 gxf4 48.exf4 Nf6 49.g5 h5 50.g6 a5+ 51.c3 c7, Black’s king moves over towards f6 and afterwards White’s pawns will fall.

45.gxf5 loses after 45...g4.

45.fxg5 fxg4 also offers no advantages compared with the similar variation after 45.Nc5 a5+ 46.c3 c6.

45...a5+ 46.c3
46.b3 is a reasonable attempt to improve on the game continuation, avoiding a check on e4.

However, Black still wins with 46...c6 47.fxg5 (47.gxf5 g4 48.hxg4 xc5+ 49.dxc5 xc5 50.g5 d6 51.f6 d7 is very clearly won.)

47...fxg4 48.g6 c6 49.hxg4 h3 50.d2 h2 51.e2 e8 52.c3 followed by the transfer of the king to f6, starting with 52...d7.

46.xc5
Now Bobby can draw. 46...c6 however leads to a very complicated win. There are now three plausible options for White; two of these we already considered prior to 45.c5. It seems the moves played meanwhile have helped White, but he still cannot hold the draw. The analysis below has been simplified as it would have been much too long; it would be very worthwhile for the reader to try to fill in the gaps.

47.fxg5
Absolutely the best defence, this would demand an extraordinary level of precision from Black.

47.xe6 fxg4 48.xg5 loses to 48...gxh3 (48...g3 appears natural, establishing a protected passed pawn, but after 49.f3 White has everything under control.)

49.hxg4 b6 - White has to contend with the h-pawn and the weaknesses on a4 and e3, and it’s not possible to cover all of these. As we have seen so often, Black’s king can also be transferred to the kingside to clinch the matter.

47.gxf5 g4 48.hxg4 h3 49.d3 d6 50.e5+ d6 51.b3 b4 45.xg4 fxe6 h2 53.xh2 xh2 is quite straightforward.

47...fxg4 48.g6 f6 48...gxh3 49.xd7 xd7 50.g7 draws.

49.hxg4 h3 50.d3 50.g5 is another challenging line of play, White hopes to prove that the connected passed pawns on the 6th along with his knight can draw against Black’s queen. Unfortunately Black won’t play along, and

50...e8
50...h2 51.gxf6 h1= 52.d3 is indeed drawn.
allowed for significant counterplay involving the advance of White’s a-pawn. Nevertheless it’s a win, and it would be interesting to play over this with a strong engine to confirm the result.

47.dxc5+ Kxc5 48.fxg5 fxg4
49.g6 gxh3 50.g7 h2 51.g8=Q h1=Q 52.Qc8+ d6 53.Qd8+ c6
There is no escape from the checks: after 53...e5 White plays 54.g5+ and then the king must go back, as after 54...e4 55.f4# is mate.

54.Qc8+ d6 55.Qd8+ c6
56.Qc8+ d6 57.Qd8+
Draw agreed.

64.Qc5
Preparing d5 whilst barring the approach of Black’s king. The game itself was drawn following 64.Qd6 e8 65.d5 c4 66.c6 c8+ essential! 67.d7 h8 68.d6 xb5 69.c7 h7+ 70.d7 xd7+ 71.xd7 xb6.

64...e8
64...e4 is useless;

65.d5 e5
65...e5 66.b7 xd5+ 67.c6 d8 68.c7 wins.

66.c6 e8 67.b7 and White continues to steadily advance all the pawns.

White had just retreated his king from d4 to e3, the wrong square - the king is in the way of the e8-rook, while Black’s additional b-pawn on b7 is blocking the rook in the other direction, allowing for a breakthrough.

59...xc3+
The game continued 60.d4 c4+
61.d3 c2 62.h8 xb2 63.xh6
and Black played 63... h2 to ensure White’s rook wouldn’t make it onto the first rank via e1!

63... h2 is also strong. 64. xf6+ c5 65. e6 Or 65. f7 c6 66. f6+ b5 67. f7 b6.

65... b2 66. e1 doesn’t really work, owing to 66... b5, ... a4 and ... xa3.

64. xf6+ c5 65. f7 b6 66. xe2 b2 67. h6 b1= Q 68. h7 c2+ 69. e3 c3+, and Black was winning though care is still required. 0-1
**SOLUTION 1**

Difficulty: ⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐

1...e8=\( \text{Q} \)
1...f1=\( \text{Q} \) 2...Qe7+ Kg8 3...Qe8+

1...Bxf5+ 2.Kxf6 and Black even loses.

3...Qg6+! Qxf6
Stalemate, with Black’s new queen pinning White’s pawn.

**SOLUTION 2**

Difficulty: ⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐

1.d2

1...d1? c3 2.e2 d4 3.f3 e5 and Black will win.

1...c4 2.e3 d5 3.f4 e6 4.g5 f7
To retreat now would allow ...f6 and a Black win, so...

5.g8=\( \text{Q} \)+! xg8
5...Qg8 6.e6 f8 (6...Qh8 7.f7) 7.g5 Qg8 8.e7 Qh8 9.f7 will be a draw. 9...Qg8+ 10.xg6 a2 11.f6 Qh7

6.h7! Qxh7 7.Qh6 Qg8
7...g8 8.g5

8.g5 Qh8
Another stalemate saves the day.

**SOLUTION 3**

Difficulty: ⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐

1.g7 d5
1...h7 2.c5 c2 3.d6 e3 4.e7 g4 (4...f5+ will be the same.) 5.f8 h6 Qg8=\( \text{Q} \)+! Qxg8 (6...Qxg8 7.Qg7) 7.Qg7

2.c5 a2 3.d6 c2 4.e7 d4 5.f8 e6+ 6.g8 Qf4+!
7.h7 7...h8? g6+ 8.h7 e7

7...d5! 8.g8=\( \text{Q} \)+!
Reaching a drawn endgame!
8.g8=\( \text{Q} \)? f6+

**SOLUTION 4**

Difficulty: ⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐

1.b6
1.a5? Qxe4+ 2.e1 Qc7 3.b6 Qa6 and the pawns are all blocked.

1...Qxe4+
1...Qd6 2.a5 Qxe4+ transposes.

2.Qe1!
2.d2? Qd6 3.a5 Qc4+ 4.Qc2 Qxa5, and other king moves are also unsatisfactory.

2...Qd6 3.a5 Qf5!
3...Qxd4 4.a6 Qf3 5.g6
3...d5 4.b7 Qxb7 5.a6 Qc6 6.a7!

4.g6!
4...f2? f7! stopping the queen-side pawns from d5.

4...Qxg6
4...Qxg6 5.b7 Qxb7 6.a6
4...Qe6 5.b7 (5...f2? Qxg6) 5...Qxb7 6.d5+ Qxd5 7.a6 Qc6 8.a7

5.Qf2! preventing ...Qf3.
5...g4 6.b7! xb7 7.a6 c8 8.a7!

And here lies the difference: by sacrificing the e-pawn, the c1-h6 diagonal is now open!

5...g4 6.b7! xb7 7.a6 c8 8.a7!

SOLUTION 5

Difficulty: ★★★★☆

1.g6 f6!
1...e5 2.g7 b3 3.h6 f3 4.h7 h4 5.g8=Q g6+ 6.g7
2.g7 h7! 3.e4!
3...f3 4.g8=Q g5+ 5.xg5+ xg5 6.h6 c4 7.g7 c3 8.h7 c2 9.h8=Q c1=Q 10.h6+ g4 (10...f5? 11.e4+) 11.7xe6+ is only a draw. The main line improves on this line in a surprising manner.
3...f3
Other moves would end in the same motif.
4.e5! xe5 5.xh7 f3 6.g8=Q g5+ 7.xg5+!
7.xh8 f7+ 8.xh7 g5+ 9.h6 f7+ forces White to revert to the correct line.
7...xg5 8.h6 c4
8...f6 9.g8
9.g7 c3 10.h7 c2 11.h8=Q c1=Q 12.h6+

SOLUTION 6

Difficulty: ★★★★☆

1.h7 It looks to be all over, but Black has a clever trick. 1.f7? 1.f1 2.h7 e5
1...a1+! 2.b3 2...xa1 d5+ 3.a2 xf6 is a draw.
1...b1+
Where can White escape?
3.a4
3...c4? c1+ 4.d5 c8 5.e6 a5
3...c2 b2+! 4.c1 f4+

BAD CHESS PUNS

Solutions:

1 ... Qxd4! wins a pawn
Roger Federer found the correct continuation and the evaluation was ADVANTAGE BLACK (*)
1.xe5!! e8 2.xe8+ Qxe8+
3.e4 any 4.a8 1-0

The top seed gave the doctor a TASTE OF HIS OWN MEDICINE
1...e1+! 2.xe1 Qxg1+ 3.e2 Qxa7 0-1

An extra HORSE is an EXTRA HORSE OF COURSE OF COURSE
1.g8+!! Qg8 2 f7+ 1-0

The correspondence player went POSTAL after receiving a CHECK IN THE MAIL
Digital App now available on both Android and iOS.