Choosing the Right Opening
GM Moulthun Ly

European Studies Part 2
IM Junta Ikeda

Love Letter to the Najdorf
GM Max Illingworth

KUYBOKAROV WINS GOLD COAST OPEN 2018
Analysis by GM Ian Rogers

THE BLINDFOLD KING
with GM Timur Gareyev

NORWAY CHESS 2018 RECAP
Fabiano Caruana wins another event heading into the World Championships

Justin Tan
“I prefer the Australian Way of Life”
EDITORIAL

Welcome to the August edition of 50 Moves!

This is now our sixth printed edition and after a full year we have decided to discontinue the printed version. We will of course still have the digital editions available with some changes. To allow us to write better quality material in a timely manner, we have decided to change the format to a quarterly magazine, starting from next year onwards. Now let’s get back to the issue!

In this issue: GM Ian Rogers gives an in-depth look back at Norway Chess and the Gold Coast Open where Kuybokarov became WA’s first resident Grandmaster. GM Max Illingworth writes a funny article looking back on his personal relationship with the Najdorf Sicilian. IM Junta Ikeda gives another set of European inspired studies whilst playing abroad for the past few months. I interview a player from Melbourne whom resides in the UK, GM-elect Justin Tan who made his final GM norm and title recently. Finally, GM Timur Gareyev gives us his thoughts on how blindfold differs to regular chess.

Plus all the regular chess you have come to expect.

We hope you enjoy this issue.

GM Moulthun Ly
Founder and Editor
50 Moves

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JUSTIN TAN

Becomes Australia’s
Newest Grandmaster

Interview by GM Moulthun Ly
How do you feel now after making your final GM norm?

Relieved :)

What was your greatest motivation for trying to obtain the Grandmaster title?

Hm, I suppose it was my urge to prove my favourite maxim that hard work pays off!

What aspects of your game did you have to focus on most to reach that next level?

Maybe psychology? In terms of chess, it is hard to say. I always believed that the main difference between club players and GMs is that GMs are far better at calculating. However, I’m not sure that I necessarily focussed on that recently. One thing which is clear is that I always look for improvements and try to learn as many different perspectives as possible. So I guess you could say I focussed on a number of aspects.

Do you wish to pursue chess further and what other chess goals would you like to obtain?

Of course! But I would not pursue it professionally. A short term goal would be to reach 2550. That seems quite attainable even during my time as a law student. Of course, the indication of a truly strong chess player is the 2600 benchmark - that would take time and effort but I think it’s possible too. Otherwise, I’m considering writing a bit or doing something that might benefit the chess community somehow.

Do you currently do any coaching yourself? I’m sure some of our readers may be interested. If so what would be the best way to get in contact with you?

Yep! I enjoy coaching ambitious students who have a curiosity for the game. Email is best: justin.tan@mac.com.

If you could recommend one tournament to our readers to play, which would it be?

Gibraltar - it helps to have a good roommate :P The atmosphere in that tournament is great.

What have you decided to do after finishing your schooling? Have you yet decided what you might want to pursue?

I have not yet decided. There are areas of my course that frankly bore me, yet there are others that I find very interesting and topical (human rights, jurisprudence and intellectual property spring to mind).

Luckily, law is not exactly a vocational course. So on the one hand, I could go into legal practice straight after my degree, on the other, I could look into other, interrelated fields - it’s fairly flexible.

You mentioned in a post after missing out on your final GM norm the first time due to technicalities, that it was okay since chess was only a part of your life. What other hobbies or work currently interest you outside of chess?

I used to be a gymnast, so I tried to return to my favourite sport last year. It was fun while it lasted although my body cannot really take it anymore (old man things…). I go to the ‘normal people’ gym frequently and I generally like to exercise. In terms of other sports, table tennis is about as addictive as blitz :D Otherwise, my downtime is mostly spent watching series or movies (often French, for the sake of learning) plus I enjoy reading - I recently found it more interesting to read political commentaries than fiction although maybe it’s just a phase!

When I’m in university, I don’t spend so much time on chess, as I’m either studying or going out with friends… does partying count as a hobby?

Now that you have lived in Britain studying for a while. Do you think you enjoy it more than Melbourne? Do you think we will be seeing you return back to Australia again one day?

It’s interesting how the general outlooks are different:
in Australia, I would say you learn how to be warm towards others, while in the UK you learn how to be polite. Well, I prefer the Australian way of life, however I am quite used to the UK now. And let’s be honest, the food and weather is much better at home! (Melbourne).

One point for the UK though - and it’s a critical one- is that the chess is much better. At least, it is closer to the action. The European chess scene is more exhilarating and you are playing in a wholly different ball park. So, whilst I always return to Australia for holidays, it seems unlikely that I would be there long term, at least any time soon. Sorry guys.

**FAST FIVE**

1. **If you could “borrow” any current chess player’s Opening Files from their laptop. Whom would you choose?**
   Anish Giri.

2. **You had to publish a chess book on one topic, what would it be?**
   Insights from the top - interviews and analysis from all the best players in the world. Probably too difficult in reality :)

3. **If chess and gymnastics both didn’t exist. What other hobby would you pursue?**
   What a dystopian question! I’ll go with boxing.

4. **If you are stuck in one non-dominant English speaking country for a year, which country would you choose?**
   France.

5. **Guest appearance or Extra on any TV Show you choose.**
   Simpsons - playing chess in the pub, against Barney with Mo at the bar.
Now that you are more aware and honest about your strengths and weaknesses, the next step is to choose the openings which suit you. This is surprisingly quite important and will determine the resulting middlegame opportunities you will get later. There are so many opening possibilities and branches in chess but I have tried my best to stick to the main possibilities against both e4 and d4. From these you can get an idea of which openings suit each other. Then try to develop a repertoire from there.

One time, surprise and riskier openings. As well as openings difficult to play long term.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>King’s Gambit</th>
<th>Pirc/Modern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Danish Gambit</td>
<td>Slav</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albin-Counter Gambit</td>
<td>Semi-Slav</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budapest</td>
<td>Grunfeld</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Knights Tango</td>
<td>King’s Indian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nimzovich</td>
<td>Dutch</td>
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<tr>
<td>Most gambits named after an animal</td>
<td>Scandinavian</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Alekhines</td>
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<td>Scotch</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Dynamic Openings with chances to unbalance the position. Considered a bit sounder than the previous.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classical 1.e4 e5</th>
<th>Bogo Indian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ruy Lopez</td>
<td>Queen’s Gambit Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queen’s Indian</td>
<td>Queen’s Gambit Declined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nimzo Indian</td>
<td>Petroff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Catalan</td>
<td>Berlin</td>
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<td>Breyer</td>
<td>London/Torre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Caro-Kann</td>
<td>Exchange Spanish</td>
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<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>Exchange Slav</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Solid positions with chances for play to develop.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pirc/Modern</th>
<th>Slav</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Semi-Slav</td>
<td>Marshall Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King’s Indian</td>
<td>Schliemann</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>Benko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scandinavian</td>
<td>Benoni</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Solid and more maneuvering Openings.
I’m currently in Europe for another chess trip, so I’ve compiled some studies from the countries I’m competing in: this time, the Czech Republic, Serbia and Switzerland.

The stipulation in these studies is for White to play and win, with the exception of #2 where we are aiming for a draw.

We kick things off with #1 by Hans Fahrni, who was once Swiss co-champion; Black is trying to draw by munching White’s last pawn. In #2 you will see the Prokeš manoeuvre, a tactic introduced in this study by the prolific Czech composer (look it up after solving!). In #3 by the Serbian composer, Marjan Kovacevic, it looks like a pawn from each side is about to promote. While the first three studies are quite minimal in terms of material, the complexity is increased in the last three. The Czech composer of #4, Oldřich Duras, was also a leading player in the early 20th century, awarded the GM title decades later. White only has a rook against Black’s bishop and pair of knights. Although the most difficult to solve, I especially loved the ideas in the final two studies: #5 by the Czech composer, Jindrich Fritz, looks tense with pieces en prise; the denouement is highly unique. Finally, just from looking at the starting position of #6 by the Czech (New Zealand) composer Emil Melnichenko, you know there are going to be some fireworks; although White is a rook and three pawns up, extraordinary measures are required to win. The twin variations in it are astounding.

Happy solving!
Studies: Czech, Serbian and Swiss Studies

Solutions page 64

1. Fahrni, H.
Das Endspiel im Schach, 1917

2. Prokes, L. - Honourable Mention
Schackvarlden, 1939

3. Kovacevic, M. - 3rd Commendation
Problem, 1972

4. Benko, P. - 1st Prize
Magyar Sakkelet 1985

5. Fritz, J. - 1st Prize
Ceskoslovensky Sach, 1954

6. Melnichenko, E. - 1st Prize
Krabbe 60 JT, 2003
Dearest Najdorf Sicilian,

Normally I am very good with words, but I cannot do justice to your timeless, unparalleled beauty with words alone. How could I tire of you, what with your almost inhuman flexibility and that gorgeous smile formed by the pawns on a6 and d6.
You may remember that our first encounters were not the most pleasant, though. You would constantly warn me against playing 1.e4 as a junior, ‘threatening’ to show yourself if I insisted on playing the Open Sicilian as White. You have no idea how many scoresheets I burned in frustration at not finding a counter to your charms.
However, I already wrote about this bird in a previous 50 Moves Magazine, whereas for many years I kept you, sweet Najdorf, hidden away, so that my opponents could not snatch you away from me.

I lost count of how many years I watched you from afar, trying to understand your enigmatic ways. I read ‘Mastering the Najdorf’ around the same time as Maxime Vachier-Lagrave, but whereas he became a 2800 Grandmaster, I was left more confused than before. What if I forgot some sweet nothings you whispered to me late into the night? Would my coach, my family, my friends approve of my new love? I did give you a chance, but getting mated on move 20 in a 6.g5 Najdorf blitzkrieg (pun intended) broke my heart, and I switched my attention to a cute Chinese girl at school.

Byvshev, Vasily M
Rovner, Dmitry O
URS Soviet Union 1954

1.e4 c5 2.f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4
4.exd4 f6 5.c3 e6 6.g5

Finally, when I was thrown into the deep end of the chess world many years ago, I kept looking at you but would always turn you down, for the scars of my youth had not completely healed, and even the old Sveshnikov had lost its glamour, with 9.d5 e7 10.xf6 xf6 11.c4 being such an easy way for White to make a draw (or sometimes win).

Furthermore, the English Attack had given me the FIDE Master title, and I did not want the aggression I’d encountered in high school to continue into my adult years.
Interested in writing about chess?

If you think you have an interesting article for our readers, send me an email at moulthun@50movesmagazine.com and share it with the rest of the world.
OPENINGS COLUMN

I had some very traumatic experiences with 3...b5 and 3.c3, obtaining better positions as Black only to choke in the most spectacular ways. I would hear your giggles in the background as my opponents would fear your emergence, and I wondered why I spent so much time getting to know you, when we may never even meet again. Now you understand why this part of the letter is a bit wetter.

Hossain, Enamul 2423
Illingworth, Max 2442
Asian Clubs League 2014

1.e4 c5 2.d3 d6 3.b5+ c6
4.O-O d7 5.e1 f6 6.c3 a6
7.a4 c4

8.d4 cxd4 9.g5 h6 10.xf6
gxf6 11.xd3 e6 12.bd2 c7
13.ad1 e7 14.c2 O-O-O
15.e3 b8 16.d4 xd4
17.xd4 c6 18.e4 h8 19.f4
f5 20.a4 xe4 21.b5 axb5 22.axb5
xb5 23.cxb5 xc2 24.xe4
Cc8 25.a1 c4 26.b6 d8
27.a5 e8 28.d2 c5 29.f1

f6 30.e3 d3 31.ab1 c3
32.wa3 e4 33.ed1 d4
34.wa4 e5 35.b6 f5 36.db3 b8
37.fs1 c6 38.h2 d5 39.wa3
a3 40.w7 d6 41.g7
d6 42.db2 c7 43.g3
d4 44.b4 c3 45.b6 c5
46.db6 d4 47.hb6 d3 48.g5
d7 49.wg8+ a7 50.b5
a5 51.d2 xd2 52.b2+ b3
53.wd2 c2 54.g5
d2 55.d1 c1 56.d8 g8+ d8
57.wb3 Qe4 0-1

I do not know whether Zong-Yuan had the same issues with you as I did in our time together, but in any case, I was inspired by Fischer's and Kasparov's patronage of you, and you served me well in 2014.

Ly, Moultun 2463
Illingworth, Max 2493
Australasian Masters 2014

1.e4 c5 2.d3 d6 3.d4 f6 4.c3
xd4 5.xd4 a6 6.e2 e6 7.e3
c7 8.O-O b5 9.a4 b4 10.a2
xe4 11.xb4 d5 12.wd1

b7 21.c4 xc4 22.wxc4
f8 23.e2 e7 24.d4 d6
25.e5 d5 26.g3 f6 27.f3
e7 28.h4 h6

29.h2 a5 30.e5 wb3 31.wd4
f6 32.d2 wb6 33.g1
e5 34.wxe5 wb4 35.e4
xa4 36.d6 xc1 37.xc1
d8 38.b7 f8 39.e1 wb5
40.e5 b4 41.e3 d5
42.db1 b8 43.d2 xb2
44.b1 e5 45.xb8+ xb8
46.c3 wb6 47.e2 g6 48.e5
g7 49.wc1 wd4 50.c3 fd6
51.g2 h7 52.d2 wd5
53.db4 wb6 54.e5 g7
55.b2 e7 56.b8 f5
57.db2 h8 58.xc3 h5 59.g7
c7 60.g3 e7 61.c3+ f6
62.g5 e5 63.e4 d4 64.f3
e7 65.h3 d7+ 66.g2
f5 67.h2 e7 68.wa3 d5
69.wa6 e7 70.wc6 e3
71.xd6 h7 72.f4 g7
73.b6 d5 74.e8+ h6 75.g6
wa3 76.g8+ g7 77.h3 xd3
78.wf6+ xg8 79.xg6+ f8
80.wf6+ e8 81.xe5+ d7
82.g7+ c6 83.wf6+ c5
84.wf8+ c4 85.wc8+ b3
86.wb7+ c2 0-1

I even used this magazine to defend you against the virulent, obsequious attacks of those GMs serving
under the zealous 6.h3 cult of Weaver Adams, despite having played the little pawn move myself. I apologise that our meetings in this time had to be so brief – I did not wish to bear the brunt of my then-girlfriend’s jealousy.

Openings Column

AUGUST 2018 |

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4

Every now and then I’d get nervous about a White knight landing on d5, but my Sveshnikov experience taught me not to fear this, and I could always play …Bxd5 and replace the beast with a pawn.

Besides, there was always a part of me that got a kick out of correctly pronouncing ‘Scheveningen’ to my opponent after …e6, thus proving that I was not a time-travelling German spy from World War II.
I know you’re still hurt by the fact that I published ‘Dismantling the Sicilian’, and trust me, it was no less difficult for me. I honestly wondered what opening I was going to play once everyone saw how to beat my rock, my precious Sicilian. Even though I had some history with you, for a while I had no idea how I was going to bring up the topic of you on paper. I couldn’t convince myself that 6. Be3 was the Jesus touch, for 6… Ng4 proved much more unbreakable than my old affection for the King’s Indian Defence.
Meanwhile, the English Attack had been worked out to a draw – could I honestly recommend that on a global stage?

Vesely, Pavol  2583
Nefedov, Sergey V  2561
ICCF WC30/Final 2017

1.e4  c5  2.  d3  d6  3.d4  cxd4
4.  xd4  2f6  5.  c3  a6  6.e3
e6  7.f3  b5  8.  d2  d7  9.g4  b4
10.  ce2  h6  11.O-O-O  c7  12.h4
d5

Meanwhile, the English Attack had been worked out to a draw – could I honestly recommend that on a global stage?

Vesely, Pavol  2583
Nefedov, Sergey V  2561
ICCF WC30/Final 2017

1.e4  c5  2.  d3  d6  3.d4  cxd4
4.  xd4  2f6  5.  c3  a6  6.e3
e6  7.f3  b5  8.  d2  d7  9.g4  b4
10.  ce2  h6  11.O-O-O  c7  12.h4
d5

I was so close to giving up, admitting defeat that you could never be trumped – when I finally decided not to do what I thought others wanted of me. You have no idea of the freedom that brought to my life, and I even came to accept that there was no way I could bring an angel like you down, even when I wanted to.

Illingworth, Max  2613
McClymont, Brodie  2454
Gold Coast Open 2018

1.e4  c5  2.  d3  d6  3.d4  cxd4
4.  xd4  2f6  5.  c3  a6  6.e3
e6  7.f3  b5  8.  d2  d7  9.g4  b4
10.  ce2  h6  11.O-O-O  c7  12.h4
d5

Ironically, I recommended the very Adams Attack – 6.h3 – that I had defended you from some years ago. I hope you’ll admire my flexibility to change my views based on new evidence, much as I admire your ability to shift gears at the first sign of danger, averting all blows like Komodo on steroids.

Andscacs 0.921  3250
Komodo 11.3.1  3409
CCRL 40/40 2018

1.e4  c5  2.  d3  a6  3.  ge2  d6  4.d4
cxd4  5.  xd4  2f6  6.  g1  g6  7.g4
g7  8.  e3  b5  9.f3  b7  10.d2
d7  11.O-O-O  b6  12.h4  h5
13.gxh5  2h5  14.  xe6  2f5  15.  e6  e5
16.  xe6  2f5  17.  xe6  2e5  18.  e2
19.  e3  O-O  20.  g2  b4  21.  e2
wa2  22.  xb4  2h8  23.  c3
a2  24.  d4  2h7  25.  e1  2h7
26.f4  g8  27.e5  dxe5  28.  xe5
g2  29.  xe2  2f5  30.  xe7+
2g7  31.  e5  2f7  32.  c5
2xe5  33.fxe5  2f5  34.  g5  2e8
When I sent the final manuscript over, a great weight was lifted from my shoulders, and while I knew I could play my White repertoire book before it was published, the question remained as to what to play as Black. We’d spent hundreds of hours in the same close quarters, and I thought of you whenever I ate something sweet. You were truly flawless, with your curves, loving dark brown eyes and black hair, which you love to style in multi-tudinous ways. I only had to ask Stockfish for approval, and when my computer’s language switched to binary (0.00s everywhere), I knew you were the one.

I was so comfortable with you, trusting you to give me winning chances in every game against 1.e4. Whenever someone would play an Anti-Sicilians, I would join in your laughter, knowing that my opponents were truly terrified of our powerful bond. It is not a coincidence that it was on my favourite Victorian hunting grounds, the Melbourne Chess Club, that many innocent players were Hjorth by my precise, tender handling of you. I was very careful to dodge the subject of past girlfriends at the tournament while in your presence.

Tao, Trevor 2378
Illingworth, Max 2484
MCC Open 2017

1.e4 c5 2.±f3 d6 3...b5+ ±d7
4.O-O a6 5.±xd7+ ±xd7 6.d4
cxd4 7.±xd4 ±c8 8.±a3 e5
9.±d3 b5

I was so comfortable with you,
35. Rac1 Rd4 36. d6 exd5 37. cxd5 exd5 38. Nd5 h5 39. c6 e4 40. g4 hxg4 41. h6+ g7 42. xe4 b5 43. Rf1 f6 0-1

I must thank you for bringing me to the number one position on the ACF Ratings, with a spiffing win over Danny Dwyer in the Big Boards Match. In a time of turbulent interactions with the fairer sex, you kept my focus on chess, and showed me what it means to love. I took you to my place, finding out more about you as I penetrated the heart of your positions, many of which, I must admit, I had not seen before.

My unwavering loyalty to you continued through the beginning of 2018, where after a tough second round game in the Australian Championship (I had the White pieces, but I trust you enjoyed the Sydney sights), I was ready to offer James Morris an early draw and sleep. But, when 1.e4 hit the board, I saw your cute legs run across the room, landing in my lap before I could declare my peaceful intentions. Fuelled by your love, and the lovely lamb roast you brought for me, I scored a devastating win and never looked back.

1.e4 c5 2. f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4. Bb3 e6 5. c3 a6 6. c4 e6 7. b3 Bd7 8.f4

9. O-O Be7 10.e5 dxe5 11.fxe5 Bxb3 12.axb3 c5 13. e3 d5 14. wf3 O-O 15. ad1 xe3 16. we3 wc7

17. h1 b5 18. g5 Bb7 19. ce2 ad8 20.c3 d5 21. f3 fd8 22. xd5 xd5 23. fd4 h6 24. g3 b4 25. fx6 bxc3 26. bxc3 xe3 27. ad6 xd4 28. ecx4 d1 29. c3 xd4 30. h3 wd8 31. xd1 xd1+ 32. h2 d4 33. g5 g1+ 34. g3 d3+ 35. h4 f2+ 36. f3 d4+ 37. h5 f3+ 0-1

I got such a twisted kick out of seeing my opponents look squeamish as I held your hand, before turning away from you with 1.d4.
During my great success, I couldn’t help but notice that you had shared some of the magic with another Australian Grandmaster, Anton Smirnov. Is there an Australian Grandmaster (other than David Smerdon) who has not fallen for you? I did not mind, though – for I knew my time would come when I would enjoy a long winning streak with you.

Perhaps it was the non-exclusivity of our relationship that led me down the ‘dark side’, playing other Sicilians and even making the ‘fingerfehler’ 1…c6 in my next tournament. Without your light to guide me, I quickly lost my way, and was lucky to win even after blundering my queen. I was very close to hanging a forced checkmate when you took me aside, and planted your kiss on my lips one more time.

At the time, I thought it was a
farewell kiss, but I could not stop thinking of you. I would sit at the board saying ‘This time I move on’, only to find my hand bashing out a Najdorf main line before my brain could intervene. To make matters worse, I would score a victory, and check the opening theory, to find every time that I’d played the opening brilliantly, despite being out of book on move 6.

Meanwhile, I had a few students who were playing the Najdorf on my recommendation, and whenever I tried to teach them important things like positional play or endgames, they’d keep chanting ‘Next Lesson Najdorf Nothing’ – which means only covering the Najdorf (in case you haven’t mastered gaming lingo yet).

Thus, I found myself playing through all Najdorf’s wins with the Najdorf, then Fischer, then Karpov, and finally Maxime Vachier Lagrange’s games with this opening. Soon I realised that, put simply, you make me a much better version of myself. Just as I’d found with the London System, I suddenly turn into a 2800+ monster when you are there with me. Now I don’t want to sound needy or anything, but you must admit by now that we are simply right for each other.

I was about to send this letter to you, but I need to apologise for cheating on you recently, with your worst enemy the French Winawer. I was ungrateful of everything you’d done for me in the past, and in looking for something better I’d missed what was right in front of me. I promise not to take you for granted again and trust that we can relive the magical times, where you guided me to number one on the Chess24 server.

O’Chee Kevin 2281
Illingworth, Max 2683
NSW Open 2018

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.c3 c6 4.e5 c5 5.a3 xc3+ 6.bxc3 e7 7.a4

I love you, dearest Najdorf Sicilian, with all my heart, and I promise not to ever let you go. I will give you strength every day, just as you’ve done for me. You are not only the love of my life, but also my best friend and companion through both the tournament-dominating times and the setbacks. You always know what to say to make me feel good, and let’s cheer to the rest of our
wonderful life together.
Love,
Max
PS I'll make sure to introduce you to my next girlfriend. Promise.

Chess Novels
A Survey  by Bill Egan
Now on the Kindle App.

A survey of English language chess novels of all genres, excluding children's and "Young Adult" books. Short form fiction (short story) is not included but anthologies including some of the most notable of these are identified.

Coverage includes seventy-eight books considered to be true chess novels, and another thirty-two identified as having some relevant chess content. There is also identification of some titles occasionally claimed wrongly to be about chess.

The chess novels are assessed under these criteria: Chess content, Chess treatment, Readability, Plot and Characterization, with identification of the author's top picks. The author is a FIDE Candidate Master with a long history of experience in chess administration and is also the author of the book "The Doeberl Cup: Fifty Years of Australian Chess History"
1. Molton-Nos ICC, 2004
2. Molton-Scarlette ICC, 2005
3. Molton-Whole ICC, 2006
5. Molton-Chomsky ICC, 2011

White to move

Solutions on page 66
Kuybokarov Wins Gold Coast International Open

Becoming the first WA Grandmaster

By Ian Rogers  Photos by Cathy Rogers
When 16-year-old Uzbek Temur Kuybokarov tied for the Australian Open title in Brisbane in January 2017, the general reaction, even in his home town of Tashkent, was “Temur who?”. The confusion was understandable – until a few months earlier, Kuybokarov was known as Igonin, ranked among the top 25 juniors aged U/18 in the world. Kuybokarov and his family had just moved to Perth and with the new life came a new name and the Australian Open was only his second tournament, after the 2016 Penang Open, under this moniker.

Kuybokarov explained the name change as follows: “When I was born my parents decided to give me my mother’s Russian surname. At that time Uzbekistan’s economical and political situation was hopeless and there was a high probability of moving to Russia. Unfortunately in the last four to five years many political and economic changes took place in Russia, including starting wars with neighbouring countries, [suffering] international economic sanctions, and so on. In view of this we changed our plans about moving to Russia and [eventually] I took my father’s Uzbek surname.”

Kuybokarov – then Igonin - had first gained worldwide attention when he defeated Viswanathan Anand in a simultaneous exhibition in Tashkent, aged 11, having already gained the FM title at the Asian Youth Championships a year earlier. He subsequently represented Uzbekistan in international junior tournaments with some success, earning his International Master title in early 2016.

In the early years Kuybokarov’s best performances were political as well as personal achievements, one reported by the media as being “the result of wide-ranging reforms under the leadership of President Islam Karimov in order to foster advanced youths and raise their knowledge base and potential in the international sports arena.”

The 2017 Australian Open, where Kuybokarov was mistakenly awarded the winner’s trophy due to a tie-break mix-up, was the new Perth resident’s first Grandmaster norm. Just a year and a half later Kuybokarov became a fully-fledged Grandmaster by playing the tournament of his life at the Gold Coast Open, edging out another 17-year-old, Sydney’s Anton Smirnov.

In its 26th year the Gold Coast Open was upgraded to an international open, attracting its strongest field ever including all five members of Australia’s open Olympic team. The record entry of 181 players also made the event second only to the Doeberl Cup in size for an adult tournament in Australia. Playing the event over a short weekend, rather than the Doeberl Cup’s Easter long weekend, makes these attendance numbers particularly remarkable.

After the success of the Nell van de Graaff Classic at the Arundel Hills Country Club last September, relocating the new, improved Gold Coast Open to the AHCC was a no-brainer. With two playing halls, a commentary and analysis room plus a restaurant, the AHCC made for excellent playing conditions.

The tournament started on a Thursday evening in sensational fashion, with top seed Timur Gareyev beaten by the mercurial Gene Nakauchi. The blindfold world record-holder, whose opening repertoire seems to be heavily influenced by his blindfold feats, found a series of crowd-pleasing sacrifices – including 5 pawns – but missed one important finesse and ran out of material.
1.d4 Nf6 2.Bg5 Ne4 3.Bf4 c5 4.f3 Qf6 5.d5 e6 6.e4 exd5 7.exd5... was also the more subtle, and harder to find, 50.Rh7!! with the idea that after 50...Rc6+ 51.Ke5 Rxf6! White has

14.O-O-O?!
"This is where I missed my chance," said Gareyev, a mere four pawns down. "I should play 14.g4 immediately, e.g. 14...gx4 15.g1 g6 16.O-O-O and I believe Black’s position would be very dangerous."

14...f6! 15.g4 xg4 16.g1 f5 "Now I don’t have the g5 square," said Gareyev.

17.c3 c6 18.h4 h5 19.d3 d5 20.xd5! "By now I have to keep sacrificing," said Gareyev.

20...xd5 21.c4 e4 22.e1 f4+ 23.d2 c7 24.d5 b6 25.a4 b4 26.c4

26...d5!! "This is where I was really impressed by my opponent’s play,” said Gareyev. “Not many players would allow me to invade on e8 and have their king pushed around."

27.e8+ c7 28.e7+ xe7 29.xe7+ c6 Forced, but good enough.

30.b3 d8 31.d4+ b6 32.xc5+!?
“Well, I have to try to keep the attack going, don’t I?” said Gareyev with a smile.

32...xc5 33.xb4+ xb4 34.a3+ c5 35.hf3 0-1

Zulfic, Fedja 2179
Narayanan, Srinath 2549
Gold Coast Open

After a crazy game where Zulfic was close to winning, then a piece down for little and now is close to a draw, the South Australian, playing on 30 second increments, finally falters...

50.g7? Pushing the wrong pawn. After 50.f7+ g8 51.h7+! xg6 52.h1!!, Black can make no progress, although there was also the more subtle, and harder to find, 50...c6+ 51.e5 xf6! White has
time to capture both Black pawns after 52. Rc7! Rf2 53. Rd4!

50... Re8+! 51. Kd7 c1=Q 52. xe8
It is too late for 52. h8+ f7 53. xe8 in view of 53...d2+ 54. c7 c3+ 55. d7 d4+ 56. c7 c5+ 57. b7 b5+, capturing the rook with the queen.

52... e3+ 0-1

However it was a local, 28th seed Ross Lam, who managed to complete two significant upsets, beating Hughston Parle and Dusan Stojic in rounds 3 and 4.

Gareyev continued to play swashbuckling chess, with his multiple – and this time successful – pawn sacrifices against the unfortunate Zulfic particularly notable.

GM Timur Gareyev demonstrating his win on the commentary board.

Photos: Cathy Rogers
13...\textbf{Re5}+?! 
Having taken the fourth sacrificed pawn, Zulfic makes his first misstep. 13...\textbf{Qc3} was more sober.

14.\textbf{Be2}?! 
14.\textbf{Nxe5}! \textbf{Qxa3} 15.\textbf{Bd3}! was hard to meet.

14...\textbf{Qc3}?! 
Now the queen is in trouble. 14...\textbf{Qb5} was risky but playable.

15.\textbf{c1} \textbf{xe2}+ 16.\textbf{exe2} \textbf{h3} 17.\textbf{xg6}

17...\textbf{f5}?
Missing Gareyev's idea. 17...\textbf{f6} would have left the position crazily unbalanced.

18.\textbf{h5}! \textbf{d8} 19.\textbf{f3}! \textbf{g6} 20.\textbf{xc6} \textbf{d7} 20...\textbf{xf3} 21.\textbf{e5}! was also hopeless.

\textbf{21.g5}! 1-0 
A game more reminiscent of the 19th century rather than the 21st.

However Gareyev's comeback was brought to an end in the fifth round by fellow Uzbek-born Kuybokarov.

I am IM Temur Kuybokarov and here I will show you my game against 2600+ rated GM Timur Gareyev.

1.d4 \textbf{Nf6} 2.c4 \textbf{e6} 3.g3 
I used this move order to prevent a Queen's Indian.

3...\textbf{b4+} 
3...\textbf{b6} This is just bad. 4.\textbf{g2} \textbf{c6} 5.e4 \textbf{d5} 6.e5 \textbf{fd7} (6...\textbf{e4}? 7.f3) 7.\textbf{h3} with a better position for White.

4.\textbf{d2} a5 5.\textbf{g2} O-O 6.\textbf{f3} \textbf{b6} 7.O-O

11.\textbf{dxc5} \textbf{xc5} 
11...\textbf{bxc5} 12.e4 \textbf{c6} 13.e5 \textbf{e8} 14.b3! Important move, preparing \textbf{c3}. 14...\textbf{a4} 15.bxa4 with advantage for White.

12.b4 
12...\textbf{c3}?! with the idea of \textbf{bd2} was very interesting.

12...\textbf{e7} 13.b5 \textbf{b7} 14.e4 \textbf{d6} 15.\textbf{c3} \textbf{c7} 
After 15...\textbf{bd7} White will use
the weakness of c6 by 16.\(\text{Nd4!}\). \(\text{N}\)d4! \(\text{Q}\)a8 (16...\(\text{Qc7?}\) 17.\(\text{Nc6}\) is great for White) 17.\(\text{N}c6\) \(\text{N}\)c8 18.\(\text{N}\)a4 \(\text{N}\)d8 Preparing \(\text{N}\)e5. 19.\(\text{Nd3}\) \(\text{Q}\)e5 20.\(\text{Qe2}\) and White has a great version of the hedgehog.

16.\(\text{Na4}\) \(\text{Rc8?}\)

Better was 16...\(\text{Nd7}\) 17.\(\text{N}d4\) \(\text{Rc8}\) 18.\(\text{Rac1}\)

17.\(\text{Ra4}\)\(\text{Rc8?}\)

We both missed the amazing move: 17.e5!!

17...\(\text{h6}\) 18.\(\text{h4}\)?

Errors don’t happen alone, I played this move to prepare \(\text{f4}\), but it just doesn’t work. 18.c5!! dxc5 19.\(\text{f4}\) \(\text{d8}\) 20.\(\text{e5!}\) is good for White.

18.\(\text{Na7!}\) 19.\(\text{e5}\)? \(\text{e5}\) 20.\(\text{d2}\)

I just forgot about this move, now White should be very careful.

21.exd5 \(\text{xa3}\) 22.\(\text{b2}\)?

I had to give the exchange with 22.\(\text{wa2!}\) \(\text{xc1}\) 23.\(\text{xc1}\) with full compensation.

22...\(\text{xd5}\) 23.\(\text{b3}\) \(\text{xf3}\) 24.\(\text{xf3}\) \(\text{c5}\)

24...\(\text{d6!}\) followed by \(\text{c5}\), Black is a just pawn up.

25.\(\text{c6?!}\)

25.\(\text{a4}\) \(\text{d4}\) 26.\(\text{c6}\) \(\text{d8}\) 27.\(\text{e3}\) was more stubborn.

25...\(\text{g4}\) 26.\(\text{e2?!}\)

26.\(\text{d3}\) \(\text{d4}\) 27.\(\text{d1}\) \(\text{d6}\) is better for Black.

26...\(\text{d6}\) 27.\(\text{d1}\)

Last chance. 27.\(\text{d3}\) e4 28.\(\text{xc5}\) \(\text{xc5}\) 29.\(\text{e2}\) f5 is winning for Black.

27...\(\text{a4?!}\)

Timur had a strong move here—but he miscalculated 27...\(\text{xc6!}\) We both saw it, but position after 28.\(\text{e3}\) \(\text{xe3!}\) 29.\(\text{xg4}\) \(\text{xf2+}\) 30.\(\text{xf2}\) \(\text{xd6}\) looked unclear, but objectively it’s dead lost.

27...\(\text{d4}\) 28.\(\text{c3}\) \(\text{c5}\) 29.\(\text{e2}\) is slightly better for Black.

28.\(\text{xa4}\) \(\text{xa4?!}\)

The last mistake. 28...\(\text{d4!}\) was better.

29.\(\text{xa4}\) \(\text{d3}\)

Analysis Position

17...dxc5 18.\(\text{xf4}\) \(\text{d8}\) 19.\(\text{e5!}\)

Strong manoeuvre, transferring the knight to a wonderful square on c4. 19...\(\text{bd7}\) 20.\(\text{c4}\) \(\text{a8}\) 21.\(\text{ad1}\) \(\text{b7}\) 22.\(\text{d6}\) with advantage for White.

30.\(\text{e3!}\)

This move Gareyev overlooked.
30...\textit{g6} 31.\textit{\textcolor{red}{x}d7} \textit{\textcolor{blue}{x}e3} 32.h5! \textit{\textcolor{red}{x}h5} \\
32...\textit{\textcolor{red}{f}6!} was last chance, but after 33.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{blue}{f}3}} 34.\textit{\textcolor{blue}{f}3} 35.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{blue}{c}6!}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{green}{g}xg3+}} 36.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{blue}{f}1}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{blue}{e}x}e3} 37.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{blue}{c}2!}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{green}{h}3+}} 38.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{green}{g}2}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{red}{x}h}x5} 39.\textit{\textcolor{red}{d}3} when Black's position is hopeless.

33.\textit{\textcolor{red}{x}e3} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{blue}{x}e3}} 34.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{blue}{x}c}8} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{red}{x}f}3} 35.\textit{\textcolor{blue}{d}8+} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{green}{h}7}} 36.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{blue}{c}2+}} e4 37.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{blue}{e}x}e3} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{green}{g}xg3+}} 38.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{green}{f}1}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{blue}{x}e}xe3} 39.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{blue}{f}5+}} g6 40.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{blue}{e}x}e4} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{blue}{c}1+}} 41.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{green}{e}2} 1-0}

Gareyev failed to recover from this defeat and went on to lose further games to Smirnov and Bobby Cheng.

After five rounds Smirnov was leading by half a point over Kuybokarov and the two Australian Kangaroos team-mates met in the decisive game of the tournament. Kuybokarov takes up the story...

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{Smirnov, Anton} & 2529 \\
\textbf{Kuybokarov, Temur} & 2472 \\
\textbf{Gold Coast Open 2018} & \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

This game was played in round 6, and Anton had half a point more, therefore I wanted to fight.

1.\textit{\textcolor{red}{f}3} \\
A small surprise, usually Anton plays 1.\textit{e4}.

1...d5 2.d4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{f}6} 3.c4 \textit{\textcolor{blue}{d}xc4} \\
QGA! When I was a kid, the Queen's Gambit Accepted was my main weapon against 1.d4.

4.e3 b5

12.\textit{\textcolor{red}{f}d1} \textit{\textcolor{red}{c}7?!} \\
Interesting move, with the idea to put the queen on b8 after \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{blue}{a}c}8}.

13.\textit{\textcolor{red}{a}6} \\
New move, but pretty harmless.

13...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{blue}{a}c}8} \\
Easiest way to equalize was 13...\textit{\textcolor{blue}{c}xd4} 14.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{blue}{d}x}d4} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{blue}{a}x}a6} 15.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{blue}{a}x}a6} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{blue}{c}5}} with equal chances.

14.\textit{\textcolor{red}{a}c1} \\
Here Anton can go to a slightly better endgame with 14.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{blue}{b}7}! \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{blue}{b}7}} 15.\textit{\textcolor{red}{b}5}. \\
14...\textit{\textcolor{red}{d}d8} \\
Centralization first of all!

15.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{blue}{b}7} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{blue}{b}7}} 16.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{blue}{c}4} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{blue}{a}6}?!} \\
Pinning the White queen looks unpleasant.

17.\textit{\textcolor{red}{f}1} \textit{\textcolor{red}{e}4} \\
Here Anton made a positional error.

18.\textit{d5}? \\
18.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{blue}{e}5} \textit{\textcolor{blue}{c}xd4} 19.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{blue}{d}7} but not 19.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{blue}{d}4}? \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{blue}{e}5} 20.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{blue}{e}5} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{blue}{d}2}+}! \\
19...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{blue}{d}7} 20.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{blue}{d}x}d4 with a slight edge.

18...\textit{\textcolor{red}{f}6}! \\
Now nobody can protect the c3 square.

19.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{blue}{f}6} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{blue}{f}x}f6} 20.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{blue}{d}x}d6 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{blue}{x}e}e6} \\
21.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{blue}{d}d}d8+ \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{blue}{d}x}d8} 22.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{blue}{c}d}d2} \\
After the natural 22.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{blue}{d}1}, Black plays 22...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{blue}{e}8}! threatening \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{green}{g}4}} and \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{green}{c}3}. \\

22...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{blue}{c}3} 23.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{blue}{c}4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textcolor{blue}{f}5} 

\textit{\textcolor{red}{b}b}5
24.h3 Nfe4
Here I missed that after 24...h5!
25.Nh4 I had the move 25...Nfe4!!
26.Nxe4 Qxe4 27.Qxe4 Nxe4
28.f3 d3 29.b1 d2! and Black is easily winning.

25.Nxe4 Nxe4 26.Kg1 c3
27.e1 f6 27...d5! 28.xd5

29.e4 d6!? An original move, but d8 also transposes.

30.e5 If 30.e5 then 30...d8 is good for Black.

30...f6 31.c4 d4 32.e5?

The last mistake. The alternative 32.a5 xe4 is still much better for Black. While 32.e3 xa4 33.f4 xc4! 34.bxc4 a5 35.e5 b6 also gives a winning position.

32...xc4 0-1
Gareyev, Timur 2611
Smirnov, Anton 2529
Gold Coast Open 2018

Gareyev had sacrificed a piece for what always seemed to be insufficient compensation, but the top seed kept causing problems for his opponent, with the bizarre diagrammed position being reached after 50 moves.

51. Rh7!? Typical optimism. 51. c1 was the best chance, although after 51... c3! (51... a4 52. e5 is less convincing.) 52. xc2 c7 Black is well on top, though he has no immediate threats.

51... c1= Q 52. xd7+ cc7?! Played instantly by Smirnov who, short of time, could not be expected to find the sole winning path: 52... a8! 53. xd6 h8!!

53. xf5?

Overlooking Black's reply. After the more obvious 53. xc7+ xc7 54. e5! it is far from clear that Black can win.

53... f8!

Forcing an exchange of queens, after which the Black rook can mop up the White pawns with ease.

54. xc7+ xc7 55. g4 xf5
56. xc7+ xc7 57. xf5 xf5 58. a4 g5+ 59. f1

Smirnov was held to a draw by second seed Srinath Narayanan while Kuybokarov demolished another GM norm hunter, Indonesia's top female player Irene Sukandar. Sukandar had earlier destroyed Brandon Clarke's title hopes by winning the craziest non-Gareyev game of the tournament.

Sukandar, Irene K 2396
Clarke, Brandon 2411
Gold Coast Open

1. e4 c5 2. f3 d6 3. b5+ c6
4. O-O f6 5. e1 d7 6. h3

The modern choice. 6.c3 a6 7.Bxc6 Bxc6 8.d4 is an exciting old gambit line, regrettably defanged.

6... a6 7. f1

7... g5!?
The revival of this ambitious line, which almost died out after some successful trials in the 1970s, is probably due to the recent realisation that ... g5 can give a castled king problems in almost any position. The most famous recent example is Kramnik's win over Aronian from the Candidates tournament in Berlin in March, but going back a little further one can find Topalov defeating Carlsen at the 2015 Sinquefield Cup.
Cup in the line 1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.Bb5+ 0-0 4.O-O e6 5.Re1 a6 6.d3 b5 7.c4 g5!?.

8.Qxg5!?
8.d4 g4 9.d5 is the alternative and probably superior main line.

8...Qg8 9.h4 Qe5!?

Clarke is following an old game by Australia’s Julia Ryjanova, no doubt with an improvement prepared on Svetushkin’s successful reply 9.d3! 9...g4! 10.f3 Qd7 turns out to be Black’s most accurate continuation, with full compensation for the pawn.

10.d4!? cxd4 11.f4 Qe4! 12.Qc4! d5!? In keeping with the spirit of the game, although 12...e6 was safer.

13.exd5 b6 14.Qd3! Qf5 15.Qb3 Qc5

16.Qxb7!
Played after long thought and a brave and correct decision. 16.Qd3 Qxd3 17.cxd3 Qxd5 would be handing Black an endgame edge whereas after the text move Sukandar can keep playing for a win.

16...c8 17.Qd3! Qxd3 18.cxd3

Too late, Clarke realises that his long-planned 18...Qxc1 ‘and wins’ in fact loses after 19.Qc3!!.

18...h6!? 19.Qa3!? Tempting Clarke with the g5 knight. The computer claims an edge for

outweighs White’s crippled kingside pawns.

24...e6 25.c1 Qf6 26.e2 h5?
The final error. After 26...g4 Black is still in the game.

27.e5! 1-0

Kuybokarov’s half point victory – a point above the GM norm - was probably the best result of his career. Having finished school in Uzbekistan before he came to Perth, the 17-year-old plans to become the first chess professional based on Australia’s west coast: “My family came to Australia about one and a half years ago and we are planning to stay permanently. I really like Australia, especially the city of Perth. My ambition is to become World Champion.”

Apart from another outstanding Smirnov performance, the most encouraging aspect from the point of view of Australia’s Olympic hopes was Bobby Cheng’s fine showing. The Melbourne 21-year-old missed out on his third and final Grandmaster norm by just half a point, despite finishing undefeated and beating top seed Timur Gareyev in the final round.

Black has all the pressure but Gareyev’s last move, 34.e1, allows Cheng a winning combination...

34...d3! 35.e3 f4!!
Suddenly the threat of mate in 3 forces Gareyev to give up his queen.

36.gxf4 g8+ 37.g3 h8! 38.fxe5?!
Hastening the end. 38.c3 xg3+ 39.fxg3 e4 would be a slow but sure win for Black in any case.

38...f4! 39.exd6+ d8 40.d4? xg3+! 41.xg3 fxg3 0-1

The second seed Srinath Narayanan very nearly became another first round casualty and needed some good fortune to fall over the winning line.

To finish, a spectacular last round game from the U/1800 division, a game which enabled 8-year-old Jayden Ooi to tie for first place, one of the youngest players to win a ratings division in an Australian tournament.
1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.d3 Bc5 5.c3 Bb6 6.O-O d6 7.Bd2 O-O 8.e1 e8 9.f1 g4 10.h3 h5 11.g3 g6 12.g5 h6 13.h4 h7?! 14.Wd2 a5 15.h5 xc4 16.dxc4 g5

17.xg5! xe4! 18.xe4 hgx5 19.g4 f6 20.h4 f5? 20...g6! keeps Black alive.

21.g3 g4 22.h6 f7 23.g7+ e6

24.f4! exf4 25.e1+ e3 26.d4+ e5 27.gxe3+! fxe3 28.xe3+ e4 29.xe4+ 1-0

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Chesslife
Australia’s Booming International Tournament Circuit

For decades Canberra’s Doeberl Cup has been Australia’s premier open tournament; the gap between the Doeberl Cup and its rivals widening after O2C took over organisation and major sponsorship in 2007 and turned each Easter’s Doeberl Cup into an international event with the possibility of earning FIDE titles.

Prior to 2007, Australia had hosted only four Grandmaster round-robins plus a number of open events (including the three Lidums Australian Opens in Adelaide and the 2006 Australian Championship) where Grandmaster ‘norms’ were possible.

However since O2C showed the way in 2007, the number of domestic tournaments where Grandmaster norms are possible have exploded.

From 2008 until 2013 the Sydney International Open in Parramatta followed the O2C Doeberl Cup, but modest turnouts and organisational issues ended that event. The are, however, plans afoot to revive the SIO in 2019.

Two round-robin Grandmaster tournaments are now held each December with Leonid Sandler turning the Australian Masters in Melbourne into a GM level event and the Koetsiers upgrading the Australian Young Masters in Adelaide into a chess festival with a GM tournament at its pinnacle.

Now the Gold Coast Open has made its move to become an international open where GM norm performances are possible.

Organiser Shaun Curtis explains: ‘After the 2017 Gold Coast Open attracted such a strong field, the possibility of the event becoming an international open began to appear more achievable. We polled the players after last year’s tournament (with mixed feedback about the idea!) and discussed options; there were factors such as significantly higher costs, suitable venue and general timing of the event. At the start of this year Andrew Fitzpatrick, Justine Jule and myself had a discussion and made the decision to have a crack at making the Open as big as possible.’

No Australian Grandmaster has secured a majority of their GM norms in a domestic tournament – of our 8 GMs, David Smerdon, Max Illingworth and Moulthun Ly are the only ones to have earned one of their GM norms in Australia - but with so many opportunities nowadays that statistic will surely be be redundant soon.
How did you first discover your talent for blindfold chess?

Blindfold chess must be practiced! This is the only way to find out that you are capable of playing without sight of the board or the moves of the pieces. I believe just about everyone can try and eventually succeed by taking gradual steps to expanding one’s comfort zone. However, if you don’t try, you will never know you can do it, and you’ll never break the world record!

The aspect of visualization without moving the pieces on the physical board is integral to playing sighted chess— that essentially is calculation in its simple or complex form. Thus thinking ahead is a blindfold chess ability, and however new or an experienced player you already are, you play blindfold chess!

As I was working to master my game in my youth, I tended to read chess books without setting up and playing moves over the board. This skill came handy during many hours and days of travels for competitions. Though, I never realized I was exceptionally good at playing multiple games of blindfold chess.

First time I was curious to try and faced 4 players simultaneously back in Austin, Texas in 2012. Surprisingly, even though the sensation of trying to keep track of the openings was getting tough and almost confusing, gradually I was able to visualize the positions and won all 4 games.
As I played more matches and kept increasing the challenge, I was still able to keep up. I started to realize that there was something going for me and I must eventually take the opportunity for the ultimate world record.

You currently hold the world record for playing 48 simultaneous blindfold games conducted in Las Vegas in 2016. Scoring an astounding 38.5/48! While the simul lasted over 19 hours. How do you prepare for such an event both mentally and physically?

Physical and mental preparation are essential!

I feel like daily exercise and activity including just walking as well as focus training with meditation are quite powerful in enhancing one’s ability. I ran a couple marathons including an ultra for 77km prior to my world record in 2016. Due to the length of the effort over many hours of play, just the psychological advantage of being engaged in something over multiple tough hours is critical in preparation.

Do you find it more difficult playing against a player around 1800 level who sticks to known opening positions or a 1200 player whom may move much more randomly in nature?

Skilled players are most challenging to try and defeat, even though my first win in the world record event came against the top participant in the match. The aspect of playing blindfolded comes to my advantage
at times as my opponents anticipate the more peaceful beginning but face a tough dynamic and strategic task. I try to lead an uncompromising attack to put my opponent on the defensive. The tougher my opponent the more careful I have to be about taking calculated “gambles” with all-attacking strategy. Development is truly essential for good initiative! Players rated 1200 in Australia are certainly good fighters, and can come out spotting a lot of good unexpected moves!

When playing multiple games, do you remember the moves from each game or only the current position on the board? Do you happen to have a photographic memory by any chance?

I remember the games from the very beginning and till the end as a whole story and a major scene of a movie, one leading onto the next as a chain of events I must chunk together. I believe blindfold chess is not so much multi-tasking as it is the focus and attention to individual games one at a time. Then the blindfold master must link those together to be able to associate and differentiate. I do definitely have certain qualities of photographic memory in the same way other chess players do when it comes to chess.

What upcoming plans for your blindfold chess do you have in store?

I think it would be fun to experiment and provide more value, insights in the area of blindfold chess as well as our beloved game in general.

A Blindfold Chess Festival dedicated to setting another world record with all the cool fireworks: high-tech stuff, associated sports, interesting guests, and performances, cool outdoor venue.

Put together a book describing my experience in the game of 25 years as well as elaborating on the intricacies of blindfold chess mind, cool games played over the last couple of years, and interesting stories.

Travels for chess and fun have taken over my life, I certainly see plusses and minuses of the ever-evolving traveler’s lifestyle. However, I feel like there is a certain current of inspiration. I truly enjoy Australia and hopefully the warm currents will bring me once again over to the continent in summer 2018!

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“Your heart is free. Have the courage to follow it.”

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“Your heart is free. Have the courage to follow it.”
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.
Fabiano Caruana continued his stellar 2018 by winning the sixth edition of the Norway Chess supertournament in Stavanger, the American’s third major tournament victory this year.

Altibox Norway Chess 2018 – the sponsor is a cable and internet provider - attracted 10 of the top 13 players in the world and seven of the top 8, to reconfirm the position it has established since 2015 as the year’s strongest round-robin tournament.

The 2018 event was the closest in the series, with the organisers preparing for a five-way playoff at one stage. However Caruana broke away from a large peloton in the final round, beating his compatriot Wesley So while his other co-leaders going into the last round, Magnus Carlsen and Hikaru Nakamura, were playing quiet draws.

For the second time since qualifying to challenge for the world title in March, Caruana finished ahead of World Champion Magnus Carlsen at a major tournament and for the third time in 2018 a strong finish enabled Caruana to run down his rivals.

With his Norway Chess win, Caruana confirmed his reputation for winning clutch games, inched a little closer to the world number one ranking that Carlsen has held for six years, and secured the 75,000 Euro first prize. “[This year] I’ve played well at times and badly at times, but somehow I have always managed to come through,” said Caruana.

Caruana has been a regular visitor to Stavanger, previously without success: “I think [to win Norway Chess 2018] is a big deal; it’s not often you win a tournament with all the top players in the world. I’ve played several times, but never managed to even make a plus score - somewhere during [the last] game I thought I might again finish on 50%! I’m proud of some moments from this tournament, but it wasn’t a flawless performance.”
Caruana struggled to determine why he had performed well this year, eventually settling on the unseasonably warm weather in the normally wet and windy fjordlands. “The weather was great. [My second Rustam Kasimdzhanov and I] had a chance to go outdoors a lot [this year], to do sports and get your mind off the chess and keep a good mood.”

Caruana’s victory did, however, hang by a thread. Having lost the first round to Carlsen, Caruana fought back but did not manage to reach a tie for the lead until the penultimate round. Then So was offered plenty of chances by Caruana in a tense time scramble and a single rushed move after the move 40 time control sealed So’s fate and handed the title to his compatriot. (“Wesley will have a sleepless night,” commented Viswanathan Anand.’)

So dropped from first to fifth place with his dramatic final round defeat, his only loss of the tournament. Having played some of his best chess for the year, So could consider himself unlucky not only to fail to win the tournament but also to receive a prize 57,000 Euro less than Caruana. On the plus side, the 24-year-old became the only player to beat World Champion Carlsen in 2018, his sixth round victory over the local hero throwing the tournament wide open after Carlsen had begun the event in dominating form.

For Carlsen a tie for second place, especially after his 2.5/3 start, can be considered a disappointment; not so for Anand and Nakamura who tied with him.

After six consecutive draws, the Indian former World Champion participated in three consecutive wins for Black, beating Maxime Vachier-Lagrave and Sergey Karjakin but losing a tough game against Caruana in between.

Nakamura, the tournament’s only undefeated player, broke a run of seven draws with a demolition of Karjakin in round eight, but that single victory was not enough, though 28,000 Euros and eight rating points was some compensation for missing out on the title.

Of the rest of the field, Karjakin would be the most disappointed. Having reached 2.5/4 Karjakin suffered heavy defeats against Caruana and Nakamura, followed by a weird loss to Anand in the final round which pushed the Russian down to the tail of the field. Karjakin has now achieved the rare feat of winning Norway Chess twice and finishing last twice!

Norway Chess 2018 was full of incident off the board as well, from a cooking competition to television debates about whether the chess world is infested by match fixing.

World number five Ding Liren was forced to withdraw after fracturing his hip and Shakhriyar Mamedyarov almost did the same at the start of the event due to dental problems. (See sidebar: The Shrinking Tournament)

By the end of the tournament, Norwegian commentator Simen Agdestein stated that Caruana was playing the best chess in the world at the moment. Whether or not his compatriot Carlsen agrees, the World Championship match in November is looking an attractive prospect; the first time the world number one and two will have met in the title match since 1990!
Anand, Viswanathan  2760
Caruana, Fabiano  2822
Norway Chess 2018

Caruana had played aggressively since the start and managed to convince Anand to sacrifice the exchange, however the game is very much up in the air, especially with time trouble looming.

36. \textit{a8}?! After the game Anand said he should have played 36.g3? but Caruana replied that this was the move he was hoping for because of 36...\textit{Qf5}!!.

In fact White had a narrow path to a draw, starting with 36.\textit{Bxb7! Qf4} and now the incredible 37.\textit{Re5!!}. Then after 37...\textit{Qc1+ 38.\textit{Kb5 Qc8!}} 49.\textit{\textbf{b6}?!} 49.\textit{Qb4} is forced, but still losing after 49...\textit{b8+ 50.\textit{b5}} \textit{\textbf{xb5+}} 51.\textit{\textbf{d5}} \textit{\textbf{d1}} 52.\textit{\textbf{c4}} \textit{\textbf{g7}} 53.\textit{\textbf{b4}} \textit{\textbf{h4}} 54.\textit{\textbf{b5}} \textit{\textbf{c1}+ 0-1}

when White's pawns will soon start to fall.

38.\textit{\textbf{e2}! a1 44.\textbf{d3}! b5}

The critical moment for Anand who misses the chance to make his king escape even more impressive.

45.\textit{c4}?

Anand rejected 45.\textit{c6}! because of 45...\textit{\textbf{h1}} which Caruana believed to be winning. However he had missed the unlikely 46.\textit{\textbf{e4}!!}, when Black has nothing better than 46...\textit{\textbf{e1+ 47.\textit{\textbf{x}}e1}} \textit{\textbf{e1+ 48.\textit{\textbf{d5}} e2 49.\textit{\textbf{x}}d6 xg2}} 50.\textit{\textbf{c7}} which leads to a pawn race where White draws without undue difficulty, e.g. 50...\textit{\textbf{h4}} 51.\textit{\textbf{d5}} \textit{\textbf{h3}} 52.\textit{\textbf{d6}} \textit{\textbf{d2}} 53.\textit{\textbf{d7}} \textit{\textbf{g7}} 54.\textit{\textbf{d8}}=\textit{\textbf{e8}} 55.\textit{\textbf{x}}d8 \textit{\textbf{xf6}} and now 56.\textit{\textbf{b3}! \textit{\textbf{e5}} 57.\textit{f4}+ \textit{\textbf{xf4}} 58.\textit{\textbf{c4}} \textit{\textbf{xc4}} 59.\textit{\textbf{xc4}} \textit{\textbf{g4}} 60.\textit{\textbf{d7}!} holds up the kingside pawns long enough to enable the c-pawn to queen.

45...\textit{\textbf{bxc4}+ 46.\textit{\textbf{xc4}} \textit{\textbf{f4}! 47.\textit{\textbf{e2}}}} 47.\textit{\textbf{xf4}} gxf4 is now too slow to hold, e.g. 48.\textit{\textbf{e6}} \textit{\textbf{g7}} 49.\textit{\textbf{d5} \textit{\textbf{f6}}}

46...\textit{\textbf{xh2}} 39.\textit{\textbf{d2}} \textit{\textbf{h4+ 40.\textit{\textbf{f1}} h1+ 41.\textit{\textbf{f2}} h4+ 42.\textit{\textbf{f1 a8}?!}} Allowing Anand’s king to make the great escape After 42...\textit{\textbf{g7}}! 43.\textit{\textbf{x}}b7 \textit{\textbf{g4}} White is in desperate trouble.

43.\textit{\textbf{e2}! \textit{\textbf{a1}}} 44.\textit{\textbf{d3}! \textit{\textbf{b5}}}

1.c4 \textit{\textbf{f6}} 2.\textit{\textbf{c3}} \textit{\textbf{e5} 3.\textit{\textbf{f3}} \textit{\textbf{c6}} 4.g3 \textit{\textbf{b4}} 5.\textit{\textbf{g2}} O-O 6.O-O \textit{\textbf{e4} 7.\textit{\textbf{g5}} \textit{\textbf{xc3}} 8.bxc3 \textit{\textbf{e8}}
9.f3
“Sergey probably didn’t expect this line, since I have not used it since my game against [Aronian last year],” said Nakamura.

9...exf3
“Sergey had previously played 9... e3?,” said Nakamura, the move popularised by Anatoly Karpov after using it to defeat Garry Kasparov in their 1987 world title match in Seville.

10...xf3 d5 11.d4
11.cxd5 was almost universally played when Smyslov introduced Black’s defensive set-up to top level play.

11...dxc4
“11...e4 12.bxc4 dxc4 13.b1 f5 14.g4! was the famous Kasprov-Ivanchuk game which popularised [11.d4 for White],” explained Nakamura.

12.g5 h6 13.xf6 xf6

14.d2!?
A novelty which caused Karjakin to spend 23 minutes on his reply.

14...e7?!
“Probably OK,” said Nakamura. “I was expecting 14...g5 or 14...

15.e4 a5?!
“A terrible move,” said Nakamura, “I guess he was trying to take advantage of my delaying e4. However 15...b5 16.e5 could be similar.” In fact Black already has no easy move, since 15...a3 16.c2 only helps White to double on the f-file.

16.e5!

16...e6?!
“I was shocked by this,” said Nakamura, “since after 17.e4 I thought he pretty much had to resign. I thought he had to try 16...c5 since after 17.a4 c6 is just about OK for Black. (The computer disagrees, offering 18.xc4! cxd4 19.cxd4 xg4 20.d6 e2+ 21.h1 f8 22.c4! trapping the knight. IR) Nakamura also pointed out that 17.e4 is also unpleasant for Black since after 17...cxd4 18.cxd4 d8 17.d6, xd6 fails to 18.exd6 xd6 19.h5!.

17.e4
“Without a ...c5 break in the centre [for Black] I have plenty of time - I don’t even have to rush [my attack],” said Nakamura.

17...ad8 18.h5 b5
“Everything loses here,” said Nakamura. “18...Rf8 loses to 19.Rf6! and 20.Rxh6 is crushing, and on 18...Qf8 I can choose 19.Qf4 or 19.g4.

“I thought Sergey would probably play 18...c5 when I saw 19.Nf6+! gxf6 20.Qxf6 Qf8 21.Qh6 Qg7 22.Qe4! Qg4 23.Qh4 cxd4 24.Qh7! Qxe5 25.Qxg4+ Qf8 26.Qf1, and probably there are other ways to win.”

19.Nf6+! Qh8 20.d5 “I wanted to find the simplest way,” said Nakamura, “but actually I had miscalculated something.”

20...Qxd5 21.Qxd5 Qxd5 22.Qxe8 Qxe5 23.Qxe7 Qxe8 24.Qxe8+

“24.Qxc7 Qc6 25.Qf7 should be winning too,” said Nakamura, “but I didn’t want to give him any activity.”

24...Qe8 25.Qe1 Qe1

26.Qxe1 “After exchanging rooks I knew that at the very worst I could get a +2 v +2 ending,” explained Nakamura. “I didn’t particularly want to get it, but then I realised how simple it should be.”

26...c5!

27.Qf2!

Nakamura explained the 11 minutes spent on this move by saying, “When I went into this line I had intended 27.e5 but to my horror I realised that he had 27...Qb3!. Taking the knight loses, e.g. 28.axb3 cxb3 29.Qf2 (29.Qxc5 loses to 29...b4!) 29...a5! 30.Qe1 (30.Qxc5 allows 30...b4!) 30...a4 31.c4!? (If 31.Qb1 c4 wins.) 31...b4! 32.Qe3 a3 33.Qd2 a2! and he wins by one tempo. ‘I suspect 28.Qf1 is winning but already [something could be going wrong].’

27...b4 28.Qe3 bxc3 29.Qc1 Qc6 30.Qxc3 Qb4 31.Qxc4

“I believe that the pawn ending after 31.a4 is also winning, but after getting to this point I couldn’t bring myself tocalculate it,” admitted Nakamura, who showed a number of pawn endgame lines to the commentators, accidentally losing a tempo with White but still winning!

31...Qxa2 32.Qxc5 Qb4
33.Ke4
“When I played 31.\textit{Rxc4} I realised that he couldn’t even get a good set-up on the kingside, so [the 2v2 endgame] was easily winning,” said Nakamura.

33...Kh7 34.Rc4 a5 35.Rc5 a4 36.a5 c6 37.xa4 d8

37...\textit{Ne7} is a better square,” said Nakamura, “but after 38.a6 g8 39.Kf5, without the knight [reaching] f6 Black doesn’t really have a chance.”

38.a6 f7 39.f5 h8 40.h4 f7 41.g4 1-0

Stavanger

Home to the Norwegian oil industry, Stavanger suffered a mini-recession after the oil price dropped dramatically between 2014 and 2016, witnessing job losses and business closures.

As the oil price has recovered, so has the city. This year hardly a shop was vacant and Stavanger also enjoyed the warmest May in living memory.

Stavanger, on the south-west coast of Norway and offering access to tourist attractions such as the fjords, the old town, and Pulpit Rock, has always been an appealing place to visit but the city has become prominent for a new attraction.

The sunny days showed up Stavanger’s astonishing variety of street art, displayed on everything from city centre buildings to oil silos. (The NuArt Festival in Stavanger each September encourages artists from around the world to find a blank wall and create art on it.)

The improved economic situation enabled the tournament to attract new sponsors in addition to the regular funding sources of local government, TV2 and the naming rights sponsor, Altibox, which is in the final year of their three year contract with Norway Chess. (Negotiations are in progress to continue the agreement.)

Altogether, a budget of 7 million kroner enabled the organisers to bring the strongest field of 2018 together to Stavanger.
The day before this game, when asked about his round six clash with So, Carlsen opined, “To be honest, usually nothing happens in these games. I can’t remember him ever being close to beating me. If I want a draw, I will often get it easily.” Famous last words...

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.cxd5

Played after eight minutes thought. “I was totally surprised by his Slav Defence,” admitted So, “but I had studied [the Exchange variation] recently and what’s the point of studying it if I’m not going to play it?”

3...cxd5 4.Bf4 Nf6 5.Nc3 Nc6

6.Nf3

“So, Wesley 2778
Carlsen, Magnus 2843 NORWAY CHESS 2018
Norway Chess 2018

Magnus decided to go for a sideline that I had not looked at much,” said So.

7.c1 f5 8.e3 c8 9.e2 e6 10.O-O d7

“10...e7 is the main move,” said So. However the line 11.Wb3 a5 12.Wa4+ c6?! (12...f8) 13.xa6!! has scored very well for White.

11.a4 e7

“I have to play 12.h3,” said So, “because if I play the simple move 12.a3 then Black has 12...g5! 13.g3 h5 14.h3 g4 with a powerful initiative.”

12.h3

“I assume Magnus was still in his preparation since he has very deep preparation, but I remembered that White should be [a little] better here because I occupy the c5 square faster than he occupies ...c4,” explained So. “I thought at least here if I did not make too many mistakes I wouldn’t end up losing [to Magnus] ... again.” So may have been mistaken about the depth of Carlsen’s preparation since from his next move, Carlsen started thinking hard about almost every move.

13...a5

“If 13...b5 14.c5 xc5 15.dxc5, this structure is better for White, which is good because usually I do not get anything with White!” half-joked So.

14.c5 c4

After the game So could find no good answer to 14...xc5 15.dxc5 b6, analysing 16.b4 c4 17.xc4 dxc4 18.Wxd8 xd8 but missing that here White can win a safe pawn with 19.cxb6! xb6 20.e5!.

15.b4! xc5 16.dxc5 xa3?!

Very risky. “16...b5 was also an option,” said So.

17.d4 e4 18.f3 g6 19.Wb3 c4

“This seemed forced to me since after 19...b5 Black will be a little worse,” said So.

20.xc4 dxc4 21.Wxc4 e8

“I expected 21...g5, trading some
pieces,” said So, “but Magnus [feared] 22.\textit{Bxg5} \textit{Qxg5} 23.e4 \textit{Rfd8} 24.\textit{Nb3}. [After] 21...\textit{e8} I thought he must be playing for a win again.”

22.\textit{Bg3}!
“\text{If} 22.\textit{Rfd1} e5! 23.\textit{Bxe5} \textit{Bxe5} 24.bxc5 \textit{Bxc5} 25.e4 \textit{h8} and Black is probably OK as he just needs to play ...f6 or ...f5, [freeing] his bishop,” explained So.

22...e5 23.\textit{Nb3}

23...\textit{Bd8}?
“\text{I was expecting 23...}\textit{g5} \text{when I was considering 24.}\textit{ce1},” said So. “\text{After the game we looked at 24...}\textit{f5} 25.\textit{wc3} 26.e4 \textit{d7} 27.a5 when probably White is still a bit better. ‘Anyway 23...}\textit{g5} \text{is better [than 23...}\textit{d8} since it doesn’t lose a pawn!’”

24.\textit{d5}! \textit{b5} 25.\textit{xe5} \textit{e7}
“Magnus explained that he thought he could take on b4 but he had missed that after 25...\textit{xb4}? 26.d6 \textit{e8} 27.c6, 27...\textit{bxc6} is impossible in view of 28.\textit{xb4} cxd5 29.\textit{xc8},” said So.

26.\textit{d2} \textit{fd8} 27.\textit{d6} \textit{f6} 28.e4 \textit{h6} 29.\textit{d4} \textit{x4+}
Hoping for salvation in a future opposite bishops endgame, but Black is never given time to free his bishop with ...f5.

30.\textit{xd4} \textit{e8} 31.\textit{fe1} \textit{h7}

32.g4!
“I like this move,” said So. “\text{We were both down on time and [I get some automatic moves].}”

32...\textit{f6} 33.\textit{f4} \textit{c6} 34.\textit{f5} \textit{f7} 35.\textit{h4} \textit{a8} 36.\textit{c2}
“I want to mate him, but 36.\textit{c3} was stronger because after 36...a5 37.g5 Bh5 I have 38.\textit{g3} and there is no ...\textit{f3} [counterplay],” said So.

36...\textit{a5} 37.\textit{g5}

37...\textit{h5}
“I thought he was just going to give up a piece with 37...\textit{xb4} 38.g6+ \textit{gx6} 39.fxg6+ \textit{hxg6} when my 36.\textit{c2} would be more precise than 36.\textit{c3},” explained So.

38.\textit{g6+}
So used up almost all of his remaining time on this move. “\text{With the pawn on g6 he has back rank problems forever},” explained So.

38...\textit{h8} 39.\textit{b5} \textit{xb5} 40.\textit{b2} \textit{c6}?! This makes So’s job easy. As So indicated after the game, 40...\textit{d7} was necessary, after which 41.\textit{Re3} keeps the bishop locked away on h5 and should win slowly but surely.

41.\textit{b6} \textit{c8} 42.\textit{d5}

42...\textit{a4}
So was most nervous about 42...\textit{gx6} 43.\textit{fxg6} \textit{g4+} 44.\textit{f2} \textit{ad8} but had the position been reached there is little doubt So would have been able to calculate the winning line 45.\textit{f5} \textit{xb4+} 46.\textit{g3} 47.\textit{e3} \textit{gxg6+} 48.\textit{xd2}, etc.

43.\textit{xb7} \textit{g8}
On 43...\textit{a3}, 44.\textit{xb7} wins.

44.\textit{c6} 1-0
Carlsen’s first loss for 2018 and “my first classical victory against Magnus - I finally managed to get Magnus on his off day,” said So.
The Match-Fixing Controversy

During the seventh round, Magnus Carlsen took over as host of the TV2 coverage of Norway Chess.

Carlsen, who was scheduled to play the injured Ding and so had a bye, did not hold back in his comments on the top players and chess world, saying that the status quo in the world body FIDE could not continue.

However Carlsen’s comments which created the greatest stir, and led to days of discussion on TV2, were that he had noticed in Shamkir how often Sergey Karjakin and the top Azeris prearranged draws against each other. Carlsen also commented that he suspected, but wasn’t sure, that the draw a few days earlier between Karjakin and Mamedyarov was also prearranged.

That day when Mamedyarov was interviewed after his game, he readily admitted prearranging draws in the past, particularly against his Azeri teammate Teimour Radjabov, but noted that if two players really wanted to draw it was hard to stop them, prearranged or otherwise.

TV2’s commentary team were stunned at how ‘match fixing’ was so apparently widespread in chess – though far less common than in decades past - and debated the ethical and sporting consequences of this. (Ethically, it is hard to tell the difference between prearranging a draw or a loss, but in a sporting sense a prearranged draw rarely makes much difference to the result of a tournament.)

The debate seemed to end when local hero Carlsen took a 20 minute move-repetition draw in the final round against Vachier-Lagrave, despite the Sofia Rules in operation at Norway Chess which forbade any draw offers at all. Prearranged or not, short draws, they decided, were a real scourge of tournament chess, but little could be done to stop them.
The Shrinking Tournament

Norway Chess, as usual, managed to contract 10 of the top 12 players in the world for their 2018 tournament, but this year seemed to have great difficulty keeping them in the event!

Weeks before the start of Norway Chess 2018, Fabiano Caruana expressed his wish to receive an extra fee given his new status as a challenger for the world title or, if not, to drop out of the tournament. Negotiations followed and ultimately Caruana honoured the original contract he had signed.

Then Shakhriyar Mamedyarov found himself suffering a severe toothache on his arrival in Stavanger and indicated that he might have to withdraw. Anish Giri was the proposed substitute but the Dutchman declined. Fortunately a series of dental appointments in Stavanger solved the problem for Mamedyarov, though the Azeri admitted that due to the tooth he had had little sleep in the early days of the tournament.

Then came the bicycle crash heard around the chess world.

On the first rest day Ding Liren went cycling with his father around the Byfjorden – the fjord running past Stavanger - when he took a corner at excessive speed and was thrown off his bicycle. Feeling pain in his hip and wrist, Ding was not unduly worried about his injuries. He declined an offer to be checked out by a hospital, instead proceeding to the rest day cooking competition where he was paired with Anand.

By now Ding was unable to stand and was confined to a chair, from where he chopped vegetables while Anand created a winning hollandaise sauce for the judges from a top hotel.

In severe pain, Ding did not wait for the judge’s decision and was taken to a local hospital where he was told he had broken his hip and would undergo an operation the next day.

Ding’s fourth round game against Caruana was postponed but Ding said later “I already knew when they mentioned an operation that I would be out of the tournament.”

By the second rest day Ding was well enough to take the yacht trip around the fjords offered to the players, although he needed crutches to walk.

A day later Ding returned home to China, leaving Norway Chess with just nine players and Ding’s three draws annulled.

7...O-O "The most solid move, said Caruana. "One of the points of 7.b3 is that after 7...d5 White can play 8.d4 exd4 9...xd4 Qxd4 10. Qxd4 and now after 10...dxc4 11.Qxc4 White has taken back on c4 with one tempo more than in the 7.e2 line. Of course these lines are still very sharp."

8. Bb2 e8 9.a3 a5 'A waiting move. I was expecting 9...d5 10.cxd5 Qxd5 11.Qc2 Qg4 or 9...e4, when I can choose between 10.Qd4 and 10.Qg5!," explained Caruana.

10.h3 "So I came up with a waiting move myself. I think Sergey's idea was that after 10.Qe2 he plays 10...d5 11.cxd5 Qxd5 12.Qc2, giving a position where I have to lose a tempo to get my bishop to the [ideal] b5 square," said Caruana. "Here 12...e4 13.Qd4 Qxd4 14.Qxd4 b6 looks playable for Black."

10...b6 "A little slow," said Caruana. "I was [again] expecting 10...e4 or 10...d5."

11.e2 In the commentary room Agdestein had advocated 11.g4!? but Caruana dismissed the idea, saying "My position is fine. Why invite chaos?"

11...b7 12.O-O d5 "This surprised me, but after 12...e4 I was simply intending 13.Qh4," explained Caruana.

13.cxd5 Qxd5 14.Qc2 e4 15.Qh2!

Left: Caruana played aggressively with the Petroff taking Anand by surprise. Scoring a crucial point with the Black pieces.  

Photo: Cathy Rogers
'After 15...d4 dxe4 16...xd4 c5 Black would be very comfortable,' said Caruana.

15...g5

'He would love to play 15...e5, preventing 16.f4,' said Caruana, 'but after 16...xe4! c3 17...xb7 nothing works for Black, e.g. 17...eb8 (17...ab8 18...a6 a8 19...xc3 is similar, while after 17...xe2+ 18...h1 d3 19...f3 xb2 20...xe2 he is a pawn down and his knight is trapped.) 18...xb8+ xb8 19...xc3 I am up almost a whole [set].'

16.f4 exf3 17...xf3 g3

'The queen is pretty annoying here,' said Caruana. 'If he’d played a move such as 15...ad8, we’d reach this position with his queen worse placed on e7.'

18...f2

'If 18...xf5?, 18...f4! at least equalises,' Caruana pointed out.

18...ad8 19...c4

'I decided to play quickly and not worry too much if I was playing the most accurate way,' admitted Caruana. 'I knew 19...c4 couldn’t be a bad move - it’s on such a beautiful diagonal.'

19...f6?!

Played after 8 minutes. 'A panicky decision - it’s just so [ugly],'' said Caruana. '[Playing such a move] is admitting that your position isn’t good. 19...d6 might be bad tactically, but at least there will still be hope positionally. I was intending 20...af1 f6 21...f5!? (21.e4!) 21...x8 (21...h6! is necessary. IR) 22...g5 when it is hard for him to deal with all the threats.'

20...xf6 gxf6 21...af1

'I wanted to play 21...xf7+? xf7 22...x7+ g7 (If 22...xf8 23.Nh4 is very strong.) 23...g5+ f8 24...xf6+! xf6 25...f1 xf1+ 26...xf1 and I have too many threats," explained Caruana. 'But I didn’t see what to do after 22...e6. After all, I am not attacking with so many pieces.'

21...d6 22.b4!

'22...xf7+ was again tempting,’ admitted Caruana, 'but after 22...xf7 23...x7+ g7 24...g5+ f8 my threats are not clear, and after 25...h5 he can just run with 25...e7.’ Later analysis showed that 25...h4! would keep the attack going since 25...e7 26...e4 causes the f6 pawn to fall.

22...axb4 23.axb4

23...e7

'I am not sure how seriously he considered 23...xb4 24...xf7+ xf7 25...xc7+ but I couldn’t see what to do after 25...g8?!” admitted Caruana, mentioning Caruana analysed 25...e7 26...g5+! xg5 27...xd6 d5 28...f5 g6 29...xd5 “and I should win this.”

26...xb7 d3 27...d4! xf2 28...xf2, describing the final position as “unclear” but he had missed 28...f5!! when Black has no defence. ‘I was thinking I might need to play 24...b3 d5 25...d4 but after the only move 25...e5! I knew that I had to find a good move but I didn’t know what it was!’ confessed Caruana. In fact 26...c2 retains White’s edge in this line and, as Caruana said, ‘I had a feeling I would find something!’

24.b5 e5 25...d4 e8

‘25...xc4 26...xc4 e4 may be a better defence, but 27...e2 looked very good for White to me,” said Caruana.

26...h1 g7 27...e2 h8

"My position is very solid and I was threatening 28...f5!,” explained Caruana. ‘He can try 27...g6 but after 28...c3, I don’t see how it helps him.”

28...c3 g7
“Once he started playing ... $g7-h8-g7$ I was quite sure I would find a way to break through,” said Caruana.

“Then I noticed the plan to put my bishop on $f5$...”

34... $\text{d}7$ 35. $\text{d}1$ $\text{a}8$

“More accurate than 34. $\text{a}1$ when he can defence with 34... $\text{d}8$, explained Caruana.

35... $\text{x}h3$?

A combination which Karjakin knew to be flawed but he felt had little choice since it was played with 31 seconds left on the clock.

“I think Sergey missed that after $\text{d}7$! 36. $\text{d}8$ he has 36... $\text{g}6$! - a hard move to see because you never want to move this knight - and if $\text{xf}6$ $\text{x}h3$! 38. $\text{a}8$ $\text{x}g6$ 39. $\text{x}h3$ $\text{x}h3+$ is still messy,” said Caruana. “So I was intending 36. $\text{f}5$!”

36. $\text{d}3$ $\text{h}3+$ 37. $\text{g}1$ $\text{d}4$! 38. $\text{g}2$!

“The last important move,” said Caruana.

38... $\text{g}3$ 39. $\text{d}4$ $\text{g}4$ 40. $\text{f}3$ $\text{e}1+$ 41. $\text{f}1$ $\text{g}2$!

“After 41. $\text{h}4$ 42. $\text{h}3$ $\text{e}1+$ 43. $\text{f}1$ $\text{g}3+$ my queen gets back with 44. $\text{g}2$!,” said Caruana, “and with all my pieces defending I should be pretty safe!”

Carlsen, Magnus 2843
Caruana, Fabiano 2822
Norway Chess 2018

1. $\text{e}4$ $\text{e}5$ 2. $\text{c}4$

Avoiding Caruana’s new weapon, the Petroff’s Defence.
6.c3 d6 would have had happy memories for Caruana, who beat Carlsen with this line at the 2014 Sinquefield Cup on his way to a 7/7 start.

6...Bxd2+ 7.Nbxd2
7...a5!? "7...a5 is not a very usual move," said Carlsen, "but it is known. [With my opening] White is not pretending to play for too much. As you will see [after my ninth move], although the position is balanced the pawn structure is not completely symmetrical so there is something to play for for both sides."

8.c3 Bd7 9.exd5 cxd5 10.O-O O-O 11.e1 e8 12.f1

12...b5!?
"12...b6 looks normal," said Carlsen. "Then I would probably continue 13.e3 b7 14.d4 e4 15.d2 when 16.f3 is coming and I am trying to claim that the ...b7 bishop is misplaced."

13.a4 b4 14.axb4 axb4 15.e3 b7 16.d4 e4

17.e5!?
A promising pawn sacrifice. "I spent a lot of time on 17.d2," said Carlsen, "but after 17...b6 (If immediately 17...f8 I have time for 18.c2 e6 19.b3 when I think White is a little better.) 18.df1 f8 19.c2 d6 20.d2 and I found it very difficult to assess these types of position."

17...xe5?!
Played after six minutes thought - "A very short time" said Carlsen. "The position after the opening wasn't particularly exciting but it could have become exciting [now]. I expected him to sacrifice the exchange and then I didn't really know what was going to happen, e.g. 17...xe5! 18.dxe5 dxe5 19.d4 c6 20.d2 d4 and I wasn't sure about this at all - it's completely unclear."

18.dxe5 xe5 19.d4 e7
"He probably thought he was doing well here," said Carlsen of Caruana. "It's very hard for me to make progress since I have to maintain the d4 blockade. You often get this sort of position with colours reversed in a Ruy Lopez. With Black in such a position you are always happy but with White I was thinking 'Am I really better or is my position just comfortable?"

20.ac1 d7 21.ed1 h6 22.c5 a5
"All very logical," said Carlsen.

23.xa5 xa5 24.h3 h7
"I am not sure about 24...h7," said Carlsen, but Caruana's response was "I didn't see a move any more."

25.c1

25...c7? "This is just insane," said Carlsen. "His position is unpleasant but I am really not sure if I can make serious progress, though it is harder for him to find a move."

25...a6!? was suggested after the game, though Carlsen did not believe even this was necessary since he agreed that 26.c5 will be well met by 26...a7.
26. Rxc7 Qxc7 27. Qxb4 Qc1+ 28. Bd1
"Now he's just much worse. " said Carlsen who avoided 28. Kh2 because of 28... Qxb2 29. Qxb7 Qxf2 30. Nxd5 Qg4+! with a perpetual check. However after the game Carlsen was shocked to learn that in this line White has 30. Qb6 and then his intended 30... Qg4+ no longer works, and his plan B 30... Nh5 fails to 31. Bc4, so White is winning. However 28. Kh2 Qc7+ 29.g3 Bc6! is harder to break down.

"Let the computer figure it out," said Carlsen, happy with 29. Bd1.

28... Ba6?!

"scratch and claw" to use Carlsen's words.

30. Nxd5 Nc4

48... f4 49. Qd5 Qa4

50. f7+ Kh8 51. Qg6! Qxb4

61. g6+! Kh8 62. Qxd6 f1=Q 63. Qh6+

Some felt that resignation would have been more polite around here but Carlsen disagreed, saying "He has every right to play on. He felt he might have some chances [to hold] so why not fight on?"


Carlsen, Magnus  2843
Aronian, Levon  2764
Norway Chess 2018

1... Qxe4

Completely controlling the Black knight after which Black can only
5. Re1

"5. Re1 in the Berlin is often considered [complete] boredom, but it can actually become a real game, explained Carlsen. "In the Berlin it is hard to get much anyway. My approach was just like the first round; I didn’t aim for too much with White. I just wanted a position where perhaps I am slightly better, relatively safe, and I have something to play for."

The immediate 10... e8 may after this game be regarded as a more reliable equaliser.

11.d5 e8 12. xe8+

12... xe8 13. d3?!

Initiating a new plan which Carlsen after the game admitted he had prepared in depth.

14... g5?!

"A terrible move," said Carlsen, exaggerating only slightly. "I was surprised because I can play as I did, [very simply], and hold a comfortable advantage." If Aronian had had any idea of how difficult his position would soon become, he would have tried 14... c6?!, e.g. 15. e4 e5 16.c3 cxd5 17.xd5 d7! when Black’s isolated pawn is of little consequence and the position is roughly equal.

15. f3

"15.b3 was also possible," said Carlsen. "However after 15. f3 I have a comfortable advantage and I am not sure what his plan is."

15... xc1 16. xc1 d7 17. e1 d8

Aronian still cannot find a good moment to break out, since after 17... f8 18. c4 c6 19.dxc6 bxc6 20.d3! is awkward for Black.

18. c4 g6
“There were many moments when he could try ...c6,” said Carlsen. “I didn’t think 18...c5 was good because of 19.\textit{Q}f4!, with both 20.g4 and 20.\textit{B}d3 threatened.”

\textbf{19.h3 \textit{N}g7}  

“Here he could have tried 19...c6,” said Carlsen. “I was thinking about 20.\textit{B}d3 and if 20...\textit{cxd5} 21.\textit{Q}f4!.”

\textbf{20.\textit{R}e3 a5 21.a4 \textit{N}e8}  

20.\textit{e3} a5 21.a4 \textit{Q}e8

\textbf{22.\textit{Q}d4!}  

“I’m not sure if there was a turning point because I thought I was always on the front foot,” said Carlsen. “I felt that very early on I had a very nice position, not a lot better but certainly more pleasant. In positions where you have a slight advantage with more space it’s easier to find good moves. For him, it’s trying to break out and then it’s easy to go wrong.”

\textbf{22...\textit{Q}g7}  

Played almost instantly; while Carlsen was thinking about his last move Aronian was accepting that his planned 22...\textit{f6} now fails to \textbf{23.\textit{R}xe8+}, while 22...\textit{f6} 23.b3 leaves Black struggling to find a constructive move.

\textbf{23.g4!}  

I think what he underestimated was 23.g4. He probably felt that I was asking too much of the position, but it feels very normal to me. I’m playing all these moves, a4, g4, everything just to restrict his pieces. Now if my knight gets to e5, or even g5,
it a big deal.

23...c6
The first of three moves which cost Aronian 35 minutes and saw Black add time trouble to his worries. “In a position where you have more space it is always easier to find good moves,” said Carlsen, “and for him, trying to break out, it is easy to go wrong. He can put up better resistance but after 23.g4! the battle is already very much in my favour.”

24.c4 Ne8 25.Qf4 Kg7 26.Rb3 Rb8
This obvious move cost Aronian five and a half of his last nine minutes, leaving Black in near-disastrous time trouble given that there were no 30 second increments during the first two time controls in this tournament.

27.Ng5
27...Nf6?
Aronian’s first quick move since 23.g4 and a blunder. 27...Rf6 was necessary, although after 28.d2 White stays well on top.

28.f3! h6
28...e7 29.e3 d8 30.xd6
29.e4! xe4 30.xf7+! h8

11.e1!? A rare move at top level. Anand with White has played both of the more popular lines, 11.c2 - by far the main line - and 11.e2.

11...c5 12.d4!
“I surprised him with the [Open Ruy Lopez] opening, but he surprised me with the variation,” admitted Anand. “In almost all openings Maxime has an idea. It was clever of him to catch me with this.” 12.c2 is more usual but then 12...d4 has effectively put the whole variation out of use.

12...xd4 13.cxd4 d3 14.e3 f4
“After 14...xc1 15.xc1 White is slightly better,” said Vachier-Lagrave.

15.f3 g4 16.h3 h5 17.c3!? “Despite not having checked this line I think I managed to come up with something a little venomous,” said Vachier-Lagrave. Previously only 17.c2 had been played here, after which 17...c5 would equalise.

17...e6 18.g4!
“Maybe I should start with 18.e3,” said Vachier-Lagrave, and his instinct was correct since Anand’s suggested 18...xf3?! 19.xf3 c5 fails to 20.dxc5! d4 21.d1 when 21...xc5 can be met by 22.xe6 fxe6 23.xc6.

18.g6 19.e3

19...a5!
“It is important to fight for space on the queenside. Though I really like my knight on c6 and it is holding the Blacky position together, in itself it’s not enough,” explained Anand. “If he can put a rook on c5 it is not clear what I can do.”

20.c2
Vachier-Lagrave spent much of his 15 minutes thought on this move on 20. Rac1 - the move Anand feared - yet missed that after his intended exchange sacrifice 20... b4 21. Rxc2 (21. c6! is the critical line.) 21... Bxc2 22. Rxc2? Black wins immediately with 22... Bxc2 Rb8 is fine for Black. 22... a4!

20... Bb4 21. b3 f5!
“20... Bb4 and 21... f5 seemed to be the only plan for Black,” said Anand, yet 21... f5 was a surprise for Vachier-Lagrave who went to the confessional after 20. b3 and said, “I expect he will take on c2 and play ...c5 after which I am still slightly better although it is far from clear.”

22. exf6
“After 22.a3 e7 I have problems on the kingside,” said Vachier-Lagrave.

22... Bxc2 23. Qxc2 Qxf6
“Suddenly, after [playing ‘only moves] I realised that I was playing for advantage,” said Anand.

24. e5

24... c5!
An exchange sacrifice played after only five minutes’ thought. “It was automatic - I don’t know if I have any other plan. 24... d6 25. dxe5! (25. d7 f3!) 25... xe5 26. dxe5 Qxe5 is not better for Black than the game so it makes no sense to play this,” said Anand.

25. d7 f7
“I thought I might be in trouble after 25... h4,” admitted Vachier-Lagrave, although it turns out that Black has no more than a draw after 26. xf8 xf8 27. dxe5! f3! (27... d4 28. e4! f6 29. g5! was Anand’s reason for avoiding 25... h4.)

28. d1 g3+ (28... xd3 29. xh3 29. f3xg3 xg3+ with perpetual check.

26. xf8 xf8 27. f5
“I thought that 27. a3 c4 would give Black no problems, but of course in hindsight I should have been [happy] to equalise,” said Vachier-Lagrave. The players analysed 28.xb4 cxb3 29. c6 (Both players underestimated 29.xb3! f3 30. d1 xh3 31. bxa5! when Black has many ways to attack but no obvious way to force a win.

Photo: Cathy Rogers

Fabiano Caruana wins yet another super tournament and looks in great shape leading into the World Championship matchup.

Photo: Cathy Rogers
29...a4! but even here White is in trouble, e.g. 30.\( \text{Q} \text{x} \text{b} 5 \) (30.\( \text{Q} \text{x} \text{d} 5 \) \( \text{N} \text{f} 4 \) gives a large endgame advantage.

30...\( \text{g} 5 \)! 31.\( \text{Q} \text{x} \text{g} 5 \) \( \text{Q} \text{xf} 2 + \) 32.\( \text{K} \text{h} 1 \) \( \text{Q} \text{f} 3 + \) 33.\( \text{Q} \text{h} 2 \) \( \text{a} 3 \)! and Black crashes through.

27...\( \text{c} \text{xd} 4 \)

“A relief,” admitted Vachier-Lagrave in the confessional. “I thought his best way to keep the attack going would be 27...\( \text{Q} \text{d} 7 \) 28.\( \text{Q} \text{e} 5 \) but after 28...\( \text{c} 4 \) (28...\( \text{c} \text{xd} 4 \) 29.\( \text{Q} \text{d} 6 \) 30.\( \text{Q} \text{e} 3 \) when I cannot be worse, I assume.) 29.\( \text{Q} \text{x} \text{b} 4 \) \( \text{a} \text{b} 4 \) 30.\( \text{Q} \text{d} 2 \) when I am completely out of danger.”

28.\( \text{Q} \text{x} 7 + \) \( \text{xf} 7 \)

29...axb4 30.\( \text{Q} \text{d} 2 \)

When calculating 27.\( \text{Q} \text{f} 5 \), Vachier-Lagrave thought that this position was fine for White, forgetting about...

30...\( \text{b} 3 \)! 31.axb3 \( \text{Q} \text{f} 3 \)!

“I spent a split second contemplating 31...\( \text{Q} \text{c} 5 \)??,” said Anand, “since the knight on b3 is much better for helping the d-pawn. But of course it loses to 32.\( \text{Q} \text{a} 8 + \text{f} 8 \) 33.\( \text{Q} \text{x} \text{f} 8 + \text{Q} \text{x} \text{f} 8 \) 34.\( \text{Q} \text{b} 4 \).”

32.b4 \( \text{d} 3 \) 33.\( \text{e} 1 \) \( \text{f} 7 \) 34.\( \text{c} 1 \) \( \text{x} \text{h} 3 \) 35.\( \text{e} 5 \)

35...\( \text{d} 3 \)!

“I was thinking I might just have a chance, but [now] I don’t,” said Vachier-Lagrave. “Yes, my rook is dominating your bishop,” agreed Anand. “I think it’s just gone.”

36.\( \text{Q} \text{f} 1 \) \( \text{d} 1 + \) 37.\( \text{e} 1 \) \( \text{x} \text{e} 1 + \) 38.\( \text{x} \text{e} 1 \) \( \text{g} 6 \) 39.\( \text{f} 4 \) \( \text{d} 8 \) Threatening to create a new passed pawn with 40...\( \text{h} 5 \).

40.\( \text{g} 5 \) \( \text{e} 6 \) 0-1
SOLUTION 1

Difficulty: ★★★★★

White is a knight up, but it’s not easy to prevent Black from liquidating White’s last pawn; the only move to win is a nice sacrifice.

1. Nh6+!
1. Kg3? Kb7 2. Ne7 Kb6

1...cxb6
1...b7 2. c6 b6 3. d4 c5

2. Kf3

1...Kb7 2. Ne7 c6 3. b6

2...Kb6 3. Ne4 e2 4. Ne2 Kb6


11...a8 12. b6 b8 13. b7

SOLUTION 2

Difficulty: ★★★★★

Two connected passed pawns on the sixth are usually deadly, but White has an aesthetically pleasing way to draw.

1. Kg4 e2
1...d2 2. Kf3 Kd3 3. Rb1+ Kc2

2. Kf3 Kd3 5. Ke2 Kc3

2...Kd5 3. Ke2 d2 4. Rc4+ Kxc5 5. Ke2

3. Ne3 d2 4. Rc4+!

The key move! By giving itself up, the rook denies Black the option of capturing on c1, which Kxe2 wouldn’t have protected against.

4. Rf3
4...d3 5. Rxe2

SOLUTION 3

Difficulty: ★★★★★

One forced line, from start to finish!

1. b7 g2 2. b8=Q g1=Q 3. Qb4+ d3 4. Qd2+
4. Qb5+ wins the knight, but it isn’t enough: 4...c2 5. Qxa4+ b1


4...Qe4
4...Qc4 5. Qd5#

5. Qd5+ Qf4 6. Qd2+ Qg3
6...Qg4 7. Qg8+

7. Qg8+ Qh2
7...Qf2 8. Qc3+

8. Qf4+ Qh1 9. Qd5+ Qg2
10. Qd1+ Qg1 11. Qf3+ Qg2
12. Qh5+ Qg1 13. Qe3+ Qf1
14. Qd1#
SOLUTION 3
Difficulty: ⭐⭐⭐
White's down on material, but Black's king in the corner is in grave danger.

1.f7
1. Rg5? Nb3!

1... Bxf7 2. Rg4
Of course, White must go for mate or Black will promote.

2... b3 3. g1!
3. g5? d5! 4. xd5 Nb3 and Black escapes.

3... c2
3... d1 4. g5 Nb3 5. b6

3... e1= 4. xe1 d1 (4... c2)
5. e5 d5 6. b6 a4 7. xd5 d7
8. xd7) 5. b6 h5 6. e7 b8
7. g7

4. g5 d5 stopping mate on the a-file...
5. b6 d4 stopping mate on the 8th rank...

5... g6 6. xg6 d4 7. d6

6. c7 but with the king switchback, Black is helpless!

7... c4 Black must renew the threat; 8. c5 White must pin again; 8... b4 and Black must sidestep again.

9. c6 b5 10. b6 a5 11. b7 a6 12. a7
A beautiful idea, with Black's king and bishop following their respective diagonal paths. Now, there are no more tricks so White wins with the extra rook.

SOLUTION 5
Difficulty: ⭐⭐⭐
White is only up a rook for knight and pawn, so mate or material gain is required; however, Black has threats of his own so White must defend those first.

1. g2+ forced, as the rook and bishop were both en prise.

1... f2
1... f4 2. e4+

2. e4 the only safe square on the e-file, defending e6, and also threatening c5#!

2... e2! 3. c5+ e1 4. g1 it looks like White is a winning piece.

4... d2!
Other moves lose, e.g. 4... g4
5. f3 f2+ 6. xf2+ xf2 7. xe2

5. xh2 d3
Now we see Black's idea; they're a rook down, but White has to keep parrying with the rook while avoiding mate; two bishops against one is only a draw.

6. d4 c3 7. d5 surprisingly, a staircase manoeuvre appears!

SOLUTION 6
Difficulty: ⭐⭐⭐⭐
This composition is actually a twin; in the other, the Black king is instead on a6 and the two bishops are on a8 and d6, with all the other pieces on the same squares; the solution is similar, but different, and again, beautiful. Let's take stock of the position; White is up a lot, but Black is threatening mate in one on the h-file; basically, White must keep checking the Black king until they are able to release the g8-rook with check, after which g8=Q will save the monarch. The moves must all be checks, so it doesn't seem like it should be complicated; but the false trail and the pleasing patterns deservedly gave this work a 1st Prize in the tourney.
1. b7+
1. d7+? the 'try', which also occurs in the other twin (albeit in a different way).

5... f8+ 6. g7 xg6+ 7. f8 xg6+ 8. b8+ e6 8... xg6+ 9. xg6+ f4 and Black draws.)

2. c8+ b6 3. xh5 a1+ 29. d1# 1-0

2. c8+ b6 2... xh5 3. b8+ a6 4. a8+ b5 5. gb8+

3. x6+ b5 3... xh5 4. b8+ xc6 5. g8= 8... f8+ 6. g7 xg6+ 7. xf8 8... e6+

8. e6+ x6 9. f7 is a winning rook endgame.

4. a6+ a5 5... xc6 6. c8+ b6 6.g8= 6... f6+ 7. g7 xg8 8.fxg5

5. c5+ a4 6. b5+ b4 7. c4+ b3 8. a4+ a3 9. c3+ a2 10. b3+ b2 11. c2+ b1 12. a2+ a1

13. c1+ and there's no more escape.

13... xa2 14. a8+ and White wins, e.g. 14... b2 15.g8= 8... f6+ 16. g7 xg8 17.fxg5

SOLUTION 2

Difficulty: ⭐⭐⭐⭐

38. g7+ xg7 39.hxg7+ g8 40. h8# 1-0

SOLUTION 4

Difficulty: ⭐⭐⭐⭐

17.Nxe5+ fxe5 18. hf1+ e6 19. d6+ xd6 20. f7# 1-0

SOLUTION 6

Difficulty: ⭐⭐⭐⭐

22... xf3 23.gxf3 xf3 24. h1 d6 0-1
THINK DIFFERENTLY

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