Foreword by Veselin Topalov

The world championship in San Luis was one of the most difficult, tense, hard-fought and important tournaments I have ever played and because of this it was undoubtedly the most rewarding victory in my chess career. By the end of the tournament I was exhausted both physically and emotionally, but today I can look back and say that all the effort my team and I have made in the last years proved itself in this tournament.

The world championship is the right place for any player to show his best in the very tensest situation. From that point of view I am very satisfied with my level in the tournament. I did not play the most beautiful games of my career, but I think my level of play was high. At this point it is the right place to express my gratitude to all the people who supported me before the tournament and during the course of it and helped me to achieve this level, especially my trainer and manager Silvio Danailov and my second in the past year Ivan Cheparinov.

Two critical games of the event I will remember the most are the win in the first round, when Leko and I were both very nervous and made mistakes, and the win against Svidler, which put me one and a half points ahead of my pursuers. After this I had a clear tournament advantage, even though it brought a lot of pressure and forced me to play stronger and stronger in order not to waste it.

Browsing through the pages of this book I relive the tension that could be felt in the playing hall. I can feel the pressure on each player's shoulders, the concerns, the doubts – move after move, decision after decision, and I am very happy that the authors stood up to the challenge, were not misled by the players' names and Elo's, and managed to compose such detailed and objective analysis, which is worthy of the games played in San Luis.

Based on this tournament, the double round robin format seems to be a great idea for finding the world champion. Almost all the games in this tournament saw uncompromising battles, from start to end. All the players made their best efforts, without taking time-outs with short draws, and at the end of the day we managed to produce many memorable games, novelties, moves and blunders. It is the kind of chess that has a future and can bring more and more fans to our game. It is the chess I love, and this is what makes me especially happy and proud to be the winner of such an event.

Veselin Topalov,
Spain, August 2006
Foreword by Nigel Short

The flight from Buenos Aires began with the jollity of a school outing. A sudden strike had necessitated the chartering of a smallish plane. Chess being a microcosm, each and every member of our party, player or official, was well known to each other. The passengers engaged in pleasant banter and rejoiced in clear views of the sparsely populated landscape below, until shortly before our descent into San Luis. Suddenly an abrupt and unpleasant buffeting of the plane raised a few eyebrows, but being experienced fliers we did not panic unduly. Alas, the turbulence continued with vigour. Glancing around at my colleagues, who were ranged between postures of considerable discomfort and abject prostration, I attempted a note of macabre levity. “Shut the fuck up” came the response from a distinctly sick-looking Peter Svidler, as my normally mild-mannered and polite friend prepared to meet his maker in silence. Touching down, our aircraft veered terrifyingly all over the runway, but eventually was brought to a safe standstill, to our great relief.

After effusive local greetings and TV interviews, we eventually decamped to the Hotel Potrero de los Funes complex—a good few kilometres outside of the modest city of San Luis itself—which served as both venue and domicile for all the players and some of the officials for the duration of the event. The hotel was comfortable, isolated and attractively situated by a lake surrounded by gently undulating hills. The sunrise at breakfast was spectacular indeed. A “Chess Box”—essentially an auditorium with accompanying rooms for media etc.—had been specially constructed for the tournament and adjoined the lodgings.

Playing conditions inspected

Next day, Israel Gelfer, the FIDE official charged with ensuring that playing conditions were satisfactory, asked for my assistance on his tour of inspection. As an experienced grandmaster I was more than happy to aid him in assessing the quality of light, comfort of chairs, proximity of toilets etc. Nevertheless, it struck me that the checking of such important matters should not have been left until last minute. Besides, my obligations in San Luis were to the Argentineans (producing written daily reports on proceedings) and not to FIDE: had I been extremely busy or disinclined to help, there was no obvious expert replacement. Gelfer could certainly have done the job adequately himself, but doubtless then some small details would have been overlooked—and details must be attended to in World Championships. Even as it was, final preparations would proceed over the next couple of days quite literally up until the final seconds, with nameplates being affixed by arbiters, while players, with an air of martyrdom, stood by patiently waiting to assume their seats.

Which brings me on to the activities of the San Luis Appeals Committee: whilst we had one of the most vital and potentially controversial tournaments in the history of chess, where were these august FIDE gentlemen to be found? Usually not in the playing hall, to be sure. If they did deign to visit the playing complex—and more often they did not, preferring the sanctuary of their town centre hotel, where doubtless they conducted very important business, by the swimming pool and elsewhere—they were usually to be found in the bar area outside the hall. Had there been an official protest—and of this there was a fair chance when one considers that at least three of the other seven San Luis participants strongly suspected skulduggery was afoot—these fine custodians of the game’s integrity, those arbiters
of higher appeal, would have been hopelessly unfit to pass any judgment. [As was made clear in the Topalov-Kramnik, Elista 2006 match, where two repeat members from San Luis had to resign after a show of obvious incompetence. Ed.] For this job they received their airfare, food and accommodation plus a fee of several thousand dollars – all courtesy of the San Luis taxpayer.

The Chairmanship of the Appeals Committee has long been the most sought after sinecure in FIDE, but there were an extraordinarily large number of other spongers and hangers-on present as well. The Honorary President of FIDE, Florencio Campomanes, was, as usual, to be found for the entire duration, again courtesy of the beleaguered Argentineans. Zurab Azmaiparashvili robustly defended the presence of this convicted felon, who has only escaped a prison sentence for embezzlement in the Philippines by being over the age of 70, by insisting to me, in what I would describe as a physically intimidatory manner, that organizers specifically request Campomanes' presence to add lustre to their events. The more cynical and perhaps accurate explanation for such munificent hospitality would be that organizers of these official tournaments do not feel they have any choice whatsoever.

Women's World Champion Antoaneta Stefanova also graced us with her presence for the month, and for which she did actually give a simultaneous exhibition – work, as is well-known, expanding to fill the time available for its completion. Since generously laying her talents at FIDE's disposal at Tripoli, Libya, 2004 she has been a more-or-less permanent feature on the FIDE merry-go-round, abandoning herself willingly to what many would regard as an unpleasant duty.

While some, such as Treasurer David Jarrett, undoubtedly had a degree of indispensable work to do, the overwhelming impression of the substantial FIDE bureaucracy present in San Luis – mostly flown in at great expense from different continents – was one of sloth and indolence, if not downright decadence. When people question why FIDE has been incapable of attracting major corporate sponsorship over the last decade or so, they need look no further than the regulations of the World Championship, with its massive institutionalised gravy train, for their answers. No serious company is going to tolerate such waste.
The dynamic Governor, Alberto Rodriguez Saa, however doubtless considered this a price worth paying for bringing a prestige event to what is, after all, a relative backwater (albeit a most charming and attractive one). The Governor’s enthusiasm and indeed that of all his organizational, administrative and support staff was impressive. There were a few teething problems at first, which I have alluded to, but one by one these were overcome with cheerfulness, competence and determination. I would like to thank everyone involved with hosting and organizing San Luis for making it such a great pleasure to witness one of the most important tournaments in recent chess history.

**Gradually all the participants arrived**

Gradually all the participants arrived. Peter Leko, accompanied by his wife Sophie, and father-in-law/coach Arshak Petrosian had been the only one to take the “very comfortable” overnight coach (who was he kidding?). However in view of the near-death experience that many of us had endured, our mirth was somewhat muted: the Magyar had been smarter than us all.

The money was mostly on Viswanathan Anand, Veselin Topalov and Peter Leko, with the Indian being the favourite. The mercurial Alexander Morozevich also had his backers, as did Peter Svidler and Michael Adams. The punters were convinced that Rustam Kasimdzhanov’s brief reign as World Champion was sure to end. This was perhaps to undervalue the subtle qualities of the uxorious Uzbek, but it should be admitted that even his devoutest supporters gave him no more than an outside chance.

He did not help his odds by declining the services of an analyst – in my view, a grotesque but psychologically understandable error, which was shared by England’s Michael Adams. These two, lest we forget, had been finalists of Tripoli 2004 – surely the weakest World Championship in history.
The temptation for each of them was to suppose that having produced his career best result without an analyst in Libya, he could do so again in Argentina. In this they failed to grasp the simple fact that not only was San Luis a significantly stronger event, but it was held according to a totally different format. While preparing for each and every opponent with both colours in a large knock-out tournament like Tripoli was next to impossible, it most certainly was possible and even mandatory in San Luis.

Completing the star-studded line-up was Judit Polgar – the perennial crowd pleaser – back to competitive chess after a lengthy maternity leave. Her high ranking was testament to her ability to survive at the stratosphere. But would she win? While experts considered a top four finish to be well within her grasp, not many could seriously imagine a woman as World Champion. Could this be construed as evidence of sexism? Well, perhaps...or maybe just an accurate evaluation of probability.

Venturing into the dining room at lunchtime, on the day of the first round I faced a dilemma. I was not part of any group and yet being gregarious by nature, I did not wish to eat alone. Instinctively preferring the company of fellow grandmasters to FIDE officials (who are divided by a chasm of understanding) I did not, however, wish to disturb any participant – well knowing, from experience, the solemnity and sacredness of top-level chess. My awkwardness was erased when I was invited to join the Bulgarian table, thus setting a precedent that would last until the end of the tournament.

After Topalov’s victory over Leko in round one, I became his talisman, and was practically forbidden from dining anywhere else. This was all done in good humour, with Silvio Danailov ostentatiously polishing my chair before I sat down, but there was a serious element to it too: chess players, like many other sportsmen, are a little superstitious.

That initial win set the tone. Playing provocatively with Black, Topalov had overstepped the limits of what his position could objectively endure. Leko, in a complicated situation, failed to find a couple of powerful forcing lines. With those opportunities squandered, he was left only with the defects of an inferior pawn structure and misplaced knight, and was duly gunned down. Topalov was unperturbed about his "incorrect" play. He had posed his esteemed opponent difficult problems that he had been unable to solve. He was not the least bit concerned that
he had been theoretically lost, as chess is a competitive sport and not an exact science. Nevertheless, he did not play quite so recklessly in subsequent games...

Early on Peter Svidler astutely remarked that two elements - theoretical preparation and physical fitness - were becoming increasingly important in modern chess. Rather too modestly he considered his own opening knowledge deficient, but he also pointed to his own somewhat flabby bulk as a likely inhibiting factor in his own success. He considered that his energy levels would be OK for around eight rounds, but thereafter he would suffer.

Kasparov's tip for victory

It was a thought-provoking observation and one that was partly prescient. Kasparov's tip for victory - the absurdly talented, but distinctly unathletic Indian, Vishy Anand, did not fully hit his stride. Instead San Luis was to prove Topalov's resounding triumph. The lean and fit-looking Bulgarian exuded such dynamism and energy, in the first half in particular, as to be a veritable tornado. Others were left trailing in his destructive wake. The in-form Svidler - remarkably unfancied for someone who had been Russian Champion on no less than four occasions - could perhaps have given effective chase, had he not succumbed with White to Topalov in round five. Hit by an early tactical blow, he recovered to an endgame of dynamic equality, but then blundered under sustained pressure.

Anand, who suffered an early loss to Kasimdzhanov, did not really reach top gear until the second half. By then he had so much ground to make up that only by defeating Toppy could the Tamil legend hope to catch him. When this gigantomachy petered out into a disappointing but unavoidable early repetition of moves, the race was almost over. Kasimdzhanov, rightly turning down a cheeky pre-arranged draw apparently offered by Topalov's manager Danailov, spiritedly tried to defeat the Bulgar in what, if he failed to win (possible disqualifications excepted) was sure to be his last game as World Champion. The pressure on Topalov steadily mounted, but just as he appeared in trouble he suddenly extricated himself with an ingenious exchange sacrifice, dramatically turning the tables. Kasimdzhanov was now the one left looking for an escape, but he duly found it. The Governor of the San Luis Province, Alberto Rodriguez Saa, was the first of the throng around the board to congratulate the new champion.

So impressive was Topalov's play throughout that other participants, at a loss to otherwise explain such brilliance, have accused him of metaphorically mastering the dark arts, or, more precisely, receiving outside information. So grave are these charges, so ruinous to a man's reputation that I hesitate to reproduce them here for fear of sullying an innocent victim. Moreover it must also be stressed that no official complaint, or at least not one that required the compulsory $500 deposit, was made in Argentina.

Despite this strong caveat, I believe the issues broached by the complainants in private are highly relevant, and are becoming more so, in this computer age. In essence, in an open auditorium, like the one in San Luis, it is exceptionally easy for a member of the audience to surreptitiously communicate with the players. The protagonists were cursorily searched by metal detector prior to each game, but one needs nothing more sophisticated than a man with a laptop outside, text-messaging to a man with a mobile within, followed by a nod and a wink to the player, for the outcome of the World Championship to be decided. And here we are not even talking about tiny wireless earpieces, often
made of plastic, which are becoming ever more difficult to detect. With prize money in the hundreds of thousands of dollars, and with hundreds of thousands more, if not millions, to go in future earnings to the eventual winner, not to mention the vast kudos, the temptation is surely great. The issue here is not one of a rank amateur defeating grandmasters in some random event: in that case the amateur would require constant computer input, lest he blunder himself. This would result in the machine leaving behind recognisable patterns, which could easily be discerned later. A top player, on the contrary, would only require occasional cyber assistance to make him (or her) virtually invincible. I estimate that one or two computer-assisted moves per game, communicated at critical junctures, would be more than sufficient for even the weakest of the elite San Luis participants to win the tournament – the rest they could manage very adequately by themselves. And vitally, there would be no way of detecting such cheating, should it occur, from the game scores alone.

By presenting such facile opportunities for gross fraud, FIDE – the governing body of chess – is doing no one any favours. Those engaged in entirely innocent behaviour – a manager or coach anxiously watching his charge from his assigned (and thereby nearby) seat, for example – can fall under unwarranted suspicion. And those that would wish to offend could, most likely, get away scot-free. The powers that be seem blissfully unaware that they have a colossal time bomb ticking away beneath them.

Nigel Short
Athens, August 2006
Preface by Mihail Marin

I believe that while taking our first steps in chess every one of us was animated by the secret hope of becoming World Champion one day or, as a relatively acceptable Plan-B, reaching the latter stages of the fight for the supreme title.

Happy are those who managed to achieve this golden aim! Their names are entered forever in the history of chess.

Also happy are those who did not lose their passion for our favourite game while growing up, becoming aware of and accepting their own limitations! They will spend the rest of their lives enjoying the others' outstanding artistic achievements.

Having failed to qualify for the former category I consider myself fortunate enough to have landed from my youthful daydreams into the latter, much wider, group. And yet, when I was given the opportunity to accompany one of the participants in the World Championship in San Luis as a second, I immediately felt as if all my old dreams came true, though in an indirect way: I was going to breathe the same air as the strongest players in the world, to measure my strength against them in the background analytical contest. But what thrilled me most was the possibility of watching close-up and from a very favourable angle the birth of a new World Champion; to understand those details that make a decisive difference between titans of similar strength.

The main body of this book offers comprehensive analytical material on the games of the San Luis Championship. The authors have highlighted the winner's strong moves and also some of his minor failures. I will not interfere in any way with them, but instead try to reveal the reality from a more subjective perspective.
For a neutral spectator, Topalov's manner of imposing his superiority can hardly leave room for any doubts. By halfway he had managed to distance himself by two whole points from the runner-up, Peter Svidler, a margin that he managed to maintain almost intact up to the end, in spite of making seven consecutive draws in the second half. The fantastic score of 6½ out of 7 strongly resembles Fischer's ascension to the throne, but was hard to predict in the era of computerized chess, when the technique of play is (just supposedly) so much higher.

It is interesting to follow how several of the participants, including Topalov himself, related to this slightly unusual course of events.

One player, apparently the most disappointed of the pre-tournament favourites, seems to have been searching for external, non-chess explanations for Topalov's success. During dinner on the sixth playing day he complained to arbiter Herman van Riemsdijk about the fact that Topalov was playing all his games at the same table. He never raised an official protest, but the conversation was loud enough to be heard by the surrounding players and seconds. The key to the absurdity of the situation was actually offered by the player himself (most probably, not intentionally) when he repeatedly underlined that he finds himself in the middle of the field and is not challenging Topalov's superiority in any way, but is mainly concerned about the principle itself. I wonder: would the gap between the two players have been smaller if Topalov had been moved from one table to another?

The arbiter calmly explained that in round-robin tournaments the player drawing the last number is supposed to play all his games on Board 1, which was precisely the case now. The player did not give up the fight so easily and mentioned the fact that as a regular participant in super-tournaments he was used to the custom that the central game of each round was played on a certain board, the most visible for the audience in principle. The arbiter replied that this was an official tournament that was supposed to be played in strict accordance with the rules. To my understanding, he could have used the opportunity to fight back with the player's own argument: after all, the game that drew most interest day by day was that of Topalov, which was an additional argument for keeping him on Board 1, the closest to the VIP area.

Anyway, feeling that the player was not totally satisfied with his explanations, Van Riemsdijk made an unofficial inquiry among the other players. Not finding support among his colleagues, the player had to back off.

Much later, soon after the final move of the championship was made and the last scoresheet was signed, another participant publicly accused Topalov of cheating by using computer assistance. The issue of the first board acquired new dimensions in his arguments: since all the seconds had free access to the VIP area, placing Topalov in that zone was supposed to facilitate the transmission of moves from Silvio Danailov. The absurdity of the situation consists of the fact that, to my understanding, one of Topalov's strong points is his ability to play "anti-computer" chess. Take his only draw from the first half of the tournament, that from the second round against Anand. Which computer could be of any use when White is simply an exchange down after the opening? What about the Berlin Defence? Computers claim a clear advantage for White from the very beginning.

But this was probably just a manifestation of the almost unbearable tension. I believe that the attitude of most of the other participants towards Topalov's play is revealed by the following episode.

After winning his seventh round game Peter Svidler found himself as sole runner-up (though by a
margin of two points). Looking for sensational news, or maybe just trying to make the whole issue less one-sided to the readers, journalists asked him during the short press conference whether he considered himself Topalov’s main challenger in the remaining half of the tournament. Svidler was amused by the question and made it clear that the leader would most probably have no challenger at all until the end of the championship. He described his attitude with the words: “Just watch and learn!” I am pretty convinced that Svidler never completely gave up hope of catching Topalov, but these are things that are better kept to oneself rather than making them public. This is chess, not boxing, and we are not supposed to intimidate the opponents by aggressive or over-optimistic statements.

I could notice a symmetrical attitude from Topalov himself. As he advanced towards the highest peak of his career, he was assaulted with questions such as “Now that you are leading by \( n \) points, do you believe that you can count on becoming World Champion?” Topalov used to make a small grimace, possibly an expression of a complex mixture of amusement, modesty and realism, and explain that there is a lot of fight left, that any accident he would eventually suffer could change the course of the tournament. Actually, it looked as if the Bulgarian grandmaster tried hard to convince the audience that he was indeed going to “lose” the title.

Another interesting issue is that of Topalov’s completely different score in the two halves of the tournament: just half a point below 100% in the first 7 rounds and a mere 50% in the second part. To some observers, this might have looked like a thoroughly prepared plan of action, based on optimisation of effort or something of that kind.

I do not believe that Topalov or his manager had any special plan regarding the distribution of points between the two parts of the championship. He won so many games in the beginning because he found himself in better form and was much more relaxed than his opponents. I cannot know how he managed to accomplish the former, but I witnessed the external manifestation of the latter.

Watching Topalov’s general behaviour, one could notice that he did not look like a professional who arrived determined to win a World Championship, but more like a player who wanted to spend a couple of enjoyable weeks playing chess. More than once he could be seen having a leisurely breakfast, followed by amiable chats, while other players hurried to prepare for the game. At lunch Topalov
and his seconds used to sit at the same table as Nigel Short and listen to the Englishman’s enjoyable anecdotes. Many players prefer to preserve their energy and focus for the game by having short, silent lunches, but this can sometimes have a reversed effect.

Good form and relaxed mood are hardly enough to win one game after another in such strong company. By his general approach towards chess, Topalov was optimally suited for such a tough, uncompromising fight. It is no coincidence that the so-called Sofia-rule, prohibiting draw offers unless the position has exhausted all its resources, was introduced by Silvio Danailov, trainer and manager of Topalov for so many years. In an époque when relatively short draws occur with annoying frequency, it certainly takes a lot of energy to play for a win independently of the mood of that day or of the position on the board.

The uninterrupted series of 7 draws from the second half was by no means the result of “premeditation”. Topalov missed a couple of chances because he committed more inaccuracies than in the first half, possibly as a consequence of tiredness. Or, the other players might have simply improved their form after more than one week of playing and relaxed a bit now the fate of the tournament was already more or less decided.

During the past years there has been a lot of talk about the part played by the reigning World Champion in the evolution of chess life in general. From this point of view, I am firmly convinced that the result from San Luis will mark a good turning point. We now have an active World Champion, who loves his job and does not retreat into his ivory tower trying to squeeze more and more favours from his position on a scale of values that could possibly become outdated. As I am writing these lines, Topalov has already signed the contracts for two matches for the supreme title. Could we, as chess fans, dream of more?

Chess history contains many outstanding tournaments in its archives, but we tend to remember best those which are covered by well-written tournament books. While travelling from Europe to South America, I could not help thinking about the Candidates’ Tournament from Zürich 1953 and Bronstein’s book about it. I hope the book you hold in your hands becomes a reliable and long-lasting testimony about one of the most remarkable Chess World Championships!

Mihail Marin
Second of Judit Polgar in San Luis
Bucharest, May 2006
Introduction

Monday, January 11th 1886, New York, USA

The first move of the first official World Chess Championship match between Wilhelm Steinitz and Johannes Zukertort is played, beginning a wonderful tradition of determining The Best of Best. Curiously enough, the second part of that match will be held in St. Louis, Missouri...

119 years later: San Luis, Argentina

It is a very different world, with chess radically changed, and subsequently a different San Luis. There is, however, one great similarity in that it might be a turning point for our beloved game.

The match in 1886 put a start to 107 years (take out the two years following Alekhine's death) during which everybody knew for a fact who the World Chess Champion was. The Great Thirteen who managed to win the title in the course of those 107 years were all outstanding characters, each possessing great, although very different, chess qualities.

They might not always have been the strongest active players on the scene, but no one could question their legitimacy, as they beat the champion in a long, face-to-face match. There were two minor exceptions: one mentioned above, and the other after Fischer's retirement, which handed the title to the challenger — Karpov. Every champion brought something special into the game, took it one step forward — which is inevitable if you are able to defeat the previous King of the Hill.

Ever since 1993, however, when the world champion and undoubtedly the world's strongest player then — Garry Kasparov — decided to leave FIDE, "taking" the title along, the world of chess hasn't been the same.

For the past 12 years a very simple question — 'Who is the world champion?' would have even the most informed professionals mumbling some obscure answer.

The reason lay in the existence of two parallel cycles. Each had its own advantages and drawbacks.

Kasparov had his own cycle (which would later be unofficially regarded as the "World Championship in Classical Chess"), but after the 1995 cycle the rules for determining his opponents seemed to be dictated by sponsorship money. Essentially, this took us back to the times of Steinitz, Lasker and Capablanca, when a worthy opponent would have to provide sufficient funds to take a shot at the highest title, or make way for another.

The official cycle, the one run by FIDE, was also problematic, especially after they introduced their Knockout World Championship in 1997. Although it had a fairly clear system of who might try their luck, there were obvious drawbacks as well. To begin with, it lacked one small detail: it didn't have the World Number One participating, severely damaging the legitimacy of the championship.

Another debatable moment was the format of the world championship itself, with a significantly shortened time control. Although the tournaments were interesting and combative, with plenty of upsets throughout, they seemed to be simply unsuitable for determining a World Chess Champion...
in its original meaning. One mistake in a short two-game match or, even worse, a blunder in rapid tiebreaks, could eliminate even the strongest favourite, as was frequently the case.

If it wasn't complicated enough, the situation became even messier with Kasparov's loss to Kramnik in 2000. After he failed to receive a rematch from his opponent, a curious situation occurred: there were still two cycles for the title (each questioning the legitimacy of the other), but in fact the highest rated player was part of neither of them. A promising solution to this awkward situation was imaginatively suggested by GM Yasser Seirawan and picked up by a businessman – Bessel Kok. The plan, which is known as the "Prague Agreement", had only one ultimate goal: to unify the chess world.

The plan was simple and logical (as much as the situation allowed logic): the current FIDE champion, Ruslan Ponomariov, was to play the World No. 1, Garry Kasparov. Meanwhile the World Classical Chess Champion, Vladimir Kramnik, was to meet the winner of his candidates' tournament, which was scheduled to be held soon after the agreement. This turned out to be Peter Leko. The winners of both matches were to meet in a unification match.

On the road to fulfilling the agreement there appeared unexpected (or rather expected) obstacles from both sides. The Kasparov-Ponomariov match imploded a mere week before its projected start, and the old FIDE champion was replaced by a new, no less surprising one, Rustam Kasimdzhanov, who managed to knock out virtually all the favourites on his way to the title, including Ivanchuk, Grischuk, Topalov, and finally Adams in the final.

Nevertheless, the match between the FIDE World Champion and World No. 1 seemed to lack sporting interest, at least in the eyes of potential sponsors. This led to the match being delayed and later even cancelled. This drove Kasparov to announce his retirement from chess.

Kramnik, for his part, defended his title in a nerve-racking match. Winning the first game (out of 14) with the black pieces, Kramnik seemed to be comfortably in the driver's seat. Kramnik had the initiative at the start of the match until in the 5th round when he, very atypically, lost a slightly worse endgame. The score was now tied and the psychological lead was with the challenger.

In the eighth round it was Kramnik's adventurous opening try that allowed Leko to score a beautiful win and gain the lead in the match, which he managed to cling to entering the final day of the Championships. Just as in the first round, nerves and lack of Championship match experience took their toll. Leko performed below his usual strength (which does not take anything away from Kramnik's powerful play in that game). Kramnik scored his second win in the match, right at the vital moment. By drawing the match maintained his "BrainGames" classical title. However, his overall results in the last couple of years, have been disappointing, to put it mildly.

Again the whole point of the unification process, which was to give the world a legitimate Champion, was jeopardized. Kramnik was ready, but had no opponent.

Surprisingly, this time FIDE's reaction was reasonable, offering a round-robin tournament featuring the world's top eight players. The invitees included the already retired Kasparov, as well as Kramnik. Both naturally refused (each for his own reasons), but nevertheless the line-up featured most of the world's best players. And wasn't that the point of the whole process – to find the best chess player in the world, who would be an acknowledged Champion?

Apart from Kramnik, Kasimdzhanov, Leko (as Kramnik's opponent in the Brissago match) and Adams (Kasimdzhanov's runner-up in FIDE world championships in Tripoli), the selection of the four other
participants was based on an average Elo rating for the July 2004 and January 2005 lists. They were: Kasparov, Anand, Topalov and Morozevich. With the withdrawal of Kasparov and Kramnik they were replaced, according to rating, by Svidler and Polgar. Again, there were other people who could (or should) have been included, but in any case it was an important step towards unity, as it featured players who have generally been the strongest and most consistent over the last few years, with perhaps an exception for Judit Polgar, who was absent from the scene for all of 2004, but did show good chess on her return.

As the date approached and it became apparent that the Championship would in fact take place, chess fans around the world became excited. With the best players in the world competing, we finally had a chance for a World Champion who was acceptable to the vast majority of the chess-playing population, something that had yet to happen in the new millennium.

All the players involved have an immense record of successes. The two most dominant active players in the world – Anand and Topalov – were on the list. Leko, Svidler and Polgar were ranked 3, 5 and 7 respectively (Ivanchuk, who had a fantastic year in 2005 was fourth, but his great play came after the line-up was finalized. Kramnik was the Sixth rated player). Adams and Morozevich have been among the top 5-7 since 2000, but had a rough year in 2005, which brought their ratings down a bit. And last, but not least, Kasimdzhanov. He was the lowest rated, which is natural, as he has had the fewest elite tournament invitations among the group, whereas trying to keep your Elo over 2700 by winning opens is not an easy task. However, he was the reigning FIDE champion, once again proving that Elo and high-level experience can be compensated by great talent and work.

Therefore, the winner of such a double-round tournament, which has the status required of the World Championship, would be a legitimate World Champion.

So, it is time to introduce the main actors, with their achievements.

Please welcome the Big Eight:
Veselin Topalov – Bulgaria 2782
age: 30

Without any doubt the hottest player in the line-up. Ever since the last FIDE KO in Tripoli (where he scored an amazing 9/10 before being eliminated by Kasimdzhanov in the semi-finals, in rapid tiebreaks) Topalov has been the most dangerous player in the world. In 2005 he managed to win both Linares and Sofia, which helped boost his Elo by 51 points to a shared first spot on the July 2005 rating list. Such a burst by Topalov is not new: he had a similar accomplishment in 1996, impressively gaining 50 points in his leap to a 2750 rating. The new Topalov has the same intensity but he simply stopped having breakdowns in the middle of the game, and this makes him a pre-tournament favourite.

Seconds in San Luis: Fellow Bulgarians, the young GM Ivan Cheparinov and manager Silvio Danailov.

Viswanathan Anand – India 2788
age: 36

One of the most shining talents in the history of the game, Anand’s play is so versatile that when playing him one can never guess where the storm will come from: will it be an opening bomb, or a sharp attack out of nowhere. Or will he grab a pawn and weather a deadly attack with his usual coolness and convert the material later on? There is only one thing you do know – it will be fast. Since he often takes up no more than half an hour for his regular games, it is little wonder that Anand is the undisputed king of rapid chess. In fact, after Kasparov’s retirement he was also the most natural contender to occupy the vacant throne. He has already won the FIDE Knockout championship in Teheran 2000, but this time he aims for the real thing.

Second in San Luis: Danish GM Peter Heine Nielsen.
Peter Svidler – Russia 2740
age: 29

Svidler’s huge talent became evident when he won the Russian Championship for the first time at the age of 18. However, in the late 90’s his rating stalled around 2690, and the invitations to super-tournaments stopped. The needed boost came in 2004 with the birth of his twin daughters, after which Svidler became simply unstoppable, unleashing all his might on his opponents. Once the smoke cleared Svidler was fourth in the world, behind Kasparov, Kramnik and Anand. Two years passed, and Svidler is a lot more confident in himself, and perhaps is ready to take his play one level higher. One thing is sure – he is capable of a brilliant performance and a very high finish would be no surprise.

Second in San Luis: Russian GM Alexander Motylev.

Peter Leko – Hungary 2751
age: 26

Leko is definitely a veteran of the elite, hanging around for almost a decade now. Regularly facing the greatest players from such a young age has definitely had a strong impact on the Hungarian’s solid, technical, defensive and almost invincible style. Until the beginning of the new millennium the drawback of such a style was the scarcity of wins, and subsequently results around mid-table. However, this has all changed in the past five years, in which he established himself as one of the strongest players in the world. In 2002 he beat Topalov in the Candidates’ Final in Dortmund, to go on and press Kramnik in a classical World Championship match. Only a win in the last round in Brissago allowed Kramnik to draw the match, and retain his title. This sad finish, however, didn’t seem to upset Leko, as soon afterwards he went on to complete his career “Grand Slam” of the major tournaments by winning Wijk aan Zee 2005.

Michael Adams – England 2718
age: 34

England’s number one and a regular in the world’s top 6-8 players, he has perhaps the most mysterious style of all. On the one hand his victims have no chances once they are caught in a net weaved of subtle positional nuances, on the other – trying to get by the net, one might get hit by an unexpected firework of tactics. Adams’ biggest problem approaching this tournament is the fact that he has had a tough year during which his poor (by his standards!) form was caused by accumulated fatigue yet he kept playing. San Luis, with its expected high level of nervous tension, is not going to be easy for Adams.

No second in San Luis.

Judit Polgar – Hungary 2735
age: 29

By far the strongest female player in the history of chess, Judit Polgar provided us with another example of the good effect parenthood has on chess players. Although she was absent from the scene for a whole year, Polgar has been showing very good form since her return, peaking in Sofia 2005 where her play was so powerful that the question: “Can she fight for the title?” ceased to be a hypothetical one – it was clear that when in good shape she can beat anyone.

Second in San Luis: Romanian GM Mihail Marin.
Technically speaking, Kasimdzhanov is the world champion, and during this tournament he could defend his title, although being the lowest rated player his chances to win the event are close to nonexistent. But Kasimdzhanov has already showed time and time again that he is not going to give his opponents more respect than they deserve, and he has every intention of surprising the world with the quality of his play.

No second in San Luis.

Alexander Morozevich – Russia 2707
age: 28

The Russian grandmaster is perhaps the most intriguing player in the world, with the most peculiar opening repertoire amongst his elite colleagues. Morozevich advertises what could be called “Total Chess”. Every move in his games could change the evaluation by 180 degrees, and this kind of dynamic play brings his many fans all over the world. If he gets going, this tournament might well become a one-man show, but the opposite is also quite possible.

Apart from the player introductions, there is an interesting analysis that could be done before the tournament. One should note that past achievements do not always affect the results of the tournament. What is of real importance when assessing the chances of the players in the Championships is how they usually play against each other, because this will be the bottom line of the whole event.

Therefore, at this point we find it valuable to analyse the history of each of the match-ups in this event. We will also try to predict the results! Are we cheating? One might think it is no big deal to predict the winner once the results are well known. But, as the reader will see, we will try to be completely objective and base our analysis on previous results only.

The following wrap-up is arranged according to the order the players were drawn to meet each other, so some readers may prefer to jump ahead to the games and then glance back at the relevant preview.

Rounds 1 and 8

**Leko – Topalov**

**General Figures:** +14 -9 =24, +3 out of 29 classical games.

One of the most intriguing tournament match-ups - massive ambitions will clash and, consequently, bloodshed is inevitable. The thing is that quite recently Leko himself was about to joined the elite team represented by Kasparov, Kramnik and Anand. Since then Kasparov has left, Kramnik lost his form, and Topalov, instead of Leko, joined lonely Anand. Presumably the Hungarian is not happy about the situation and, after all, his past results cannot be forgotten - the problem is that Topalov has achieved too much success lately. But everybody knows Leko desires to turn the tables.

Topalov also has a hidden axe for Leko. It was Leko who beat the Bulgarian in the so-called Candidates’ tournament final (Dortmund 2002), on the way to one of Leko’s biggest achievements, the honourable tie with Kramnik in a World Championship match (although not everybody thinks Leko should be proud of this result). Noteworthy is Topalov’s profound and professional preparation for San Luis, demonstrating perfect knowledge of history. Their last game (Dortmund 2005) was of great significance in this point:

![Chess Diagram](image)

This situation was the result of White’s (Topalov’s) insufficiently aggressive play against the Sveshnikov. Evidently, White could not undertake anything interesting and a peace agreement would be naturally expected any minute, especially considering the fact that neither player could make it to first place anymore. Surprisingly the game continued, and after several mistakes from Black the following situation arose:

![Chess Diagram](image)

In comparison with the previous diagram, White’s progress is noticeable, though the drawish tendencies still exist. Nevertheless, after 53...Rx a7 54.Rxa7† Kf8 55.Rxh7 Topalov had chances and dragged this endgame out before winning on the 106th move. Because of the lack of sporting significance the game went virtually unnoticed. However, it should have been. Very rarely has such an experienced defender as Leko lost a position like this.
We can clearly see a historical parallel - the well-known struggle between Botvinnik and Keres in their last game before the World Chess Championship (also a round robin match-tournament!) in 1948. Botvinnik prepared very seriously for that "insignificant" game (in terms of tournament placing), and made every effort to win an intricate endgame after an 80-move struggle. Later Botvinnik candidly said that the win was vital, as after this victory Keres could no longer play against him with full confidence. Thus, the essential psychological advantage before the World Chess Championship had been gained, and later paid Botvinnik dividends. The same could be said about this seemingly insignificant game. Will the end of this story be repeated? If so, Leko is in danger of feeling nervous playing against Topalov in the future.

Morozevich – Kasimdzhanov
General Figures: +1 –1 =0, even after 2 classical games.

Morozevich won their only game with a normal time control in a complex endgame after an unclear struggle, which is hardly enough to make a prediction. As for a style comparison, Kasimdzhanov should be the better-prepared player in the opening. After all, he was preparing for a match against Kasparov, and that does not just pass by. On the other hand, Kasimdzhanov sometimes "neglects the details" (for example as in the second round of the Linares 2005 tournament against Kasparov) and that is why he might encounter difficulties. The thing is that Morozevich, being a big fan of concrete play, has a very respectful attitude toward exceptions to "the rules". Take a "normal" position when it is "clear" that some move is bad, and thus is not considered by anyone... except Morozevich, who will critically check everything and will demand proof of "the obvious" by variations. This often appears to be a complicated task, especially for those who are not prepared for such an approach.

Svidler – Adams
General Figures: +6 –7 =23, +1 out of 24 classic games.

The results between these chess friends are rather equal. This is a matter of fact rather than a consequence of their friendship beyond the chess world. Probably it is because they are both classical chess players (although they come to this from different directions). Both seldom bluff, both are objective and even rather sceptical toward their own positions. Obviously if both play solidly (and well!) and do not introduce huge novelties in the opening, it is rather difficult to win at this level. It will be especially difficult to beat Svidler, who is known for his tough and frequently profound defence. And Adams may have another problem: he has recently shown signs of extreme tiredness – the list of tournaments he has played from the beginning of the year is huge: Wijk aan Zee, Linares, French Team Championship, Sofia Masters, crazy rapid match against Leko, cruel Man-Machine match against Hydra, and Dortmund – a total of 65 high-level and very complicated games. In fact, Svidler has played even more, but somehow in recent tournaments Adams’ play has looked really tired. Thus, the Englishman has more reasons to be concerned about the coming fight.

Anand – Polgar
General Figures: +23 –7 =14, +3 out of 17 classic games.

Considering only classical games, the score is not so horrible for the Chess Queen, although such a large number of losses is not so pleasant regardless of the time control. On the other hand, in the new millennium these opponents have not beaten each other in serious games at all (however Polgar missed the whole of 2004 while Anand was defeating everyone who stood in his way). It might bring optimism to Polgar that Anand has not been as unpleasant an opponent for her as Kramnik and Kasparov have been – and they are not here. Besides, she is one of the few who are not afraid to play against Anand in his favourite
Sicilian variations, and in her victorious games she has even checkmated Anand, which is not an easy task. Even if she encounters a bad position, she fights furiously. It seems Polgar, unlike many others, is not afraid of Anand (or at least does not show it). Here is an interesting recent example (Sofia MTel Masters 2005):

Anand (Black) unleashes another novelty: 14...\textit{g8} and after 15.\textit{xf7} \textit{xf7} 16.\textit{xf7} \textit{xf7} 17.\textit{xf7} \textit{xf7} gets more than sufficient compensation for the sacrificed exchange. Polgar dives into the complications: 18.\textit{g3} \textit{xe5} 19.\textit{f4} \textit{f5} 20.\textit{h5} 21.\textit{xe6} 22.\textit{xe6} 23.\textit{xe6} and so on. At some point her position was very dangerous, but she eventually made the draw!

The biggest danger that hangs over Polgar is her immense optimism – although it's been a while since her last loss to Anand, he is still quite a dangerous guy, and had better not be underestimated. Besides, one of the main reasons for Polgar's success since her return (and everybody was amazed by her great level of play after such a long break) was her atypically cautious play.

Anand is well aware of how dangerous a player Polgar is. However, if Polgar loses her objective judgment, and the rumours about her excessive self-confidence have reached the chess world (she was cited as saying she has good chances to win this Championship!) then she might well feel the wrath of the Indian Terminator.

**Round 2 and 9**

**Polgar – Adams**

**General Figures:** 6–5 =11, level after 15 classic games.

Polgar's marginal statistical lead is easily explained: quite recently Polgar won when playing with White, thus breaking an almost ten year old tradition where White could at best make a draw in the encounters of this duo! Here is how the tradition was broken (Sofia MTel Masters 2005):

Surprisingly, the position was not from Adams' old favourite the Marshall, but from a calm Petroff that recently became his main opening. Apparently, White (Polgar) has problems, and Adams launched a new wave of assault: 26...\textit{f5}! Yet, after 27.\textit{h4} he missed a nice tactical idea: 27...\textit{g6}! with the cute variation 28.\textit{xe3} \textit{xe4}! 29.\textit{xe4} (or 29.\textit{xe2} \textit{f3}!) 29...\textit{xe4} 30.\textit{xe4} 31.\textit{xe4} \textit{f4}! and White falls to pieces. Subsequently Adams lost, which was the consequence of his bad form and fatigue.

Then again, the struggle with Polgar is rather unpleasant for Adams even if he is in good shape. Although the score is virtually even, the positions achieved by the English grandmaster are frequently better, and occasionally even decisive. And then a colossal mistake often follows, in the worst-case scenario, or sometimes it is only drawing a winning position. Their battles in the Sicilian Paulsen are illustrative of this issue. Adams continually gets an almost decisive advantage and then... does not always make a draw. So, neither of them will have an easy life in their clashes.
It is now perhaps a proper moment for full disclosure – most chess fans (including the authors) find it impossible not to sympathize with Adams. After all, often his “ordinary” games could be immediately added to the best books of classic chess, not to mention the fact he consistently achieves great positions (without being considered the best theoretician!) and sometimes simply has bad luck. Thus, it seems his result in the Championship in general and this match in particular is not a function only of chess, but also of Caissa’s mood.

Leko – Morozevich

**General Figures**: +6 -3 =14, +2 out of 10 classic games.

Most of the decisive games between these opponents were not in classical chess. Morozevich, in any case, has yet to beat Leko in any of the “classicals”. Analysis of their games proves this is not a coincidence – Morozevich seems to be helpless against Leko’s solid and correct style. In the opening (the Hungarian’s strongest area) every tricky line by Morozevich inevitably leads him into trouble. It is well known that Leko plays exceptionally well when he has a positional advantage, calculating variations perfectly, so his advantage usually increases. Even if he runs into trouble Leko usually escapes thanks to his stubborn defence. As happened, for example, in their last classical game (Wijk aan Zee 2005):

```
55.Wf3 Wd4 56.Wf4 Wd3 57.Wc5 We2 58.Wd6 and here 58...Wxb2!
```

Despite this example the opening is still Morozevich’s biggest problem, as one cannot always spring a surprise, and Leko is clearly better prepared in the main lines.

Svidler – Kasimdzhanov

**General Figures**: +1 -1 =1, +1 out of 2 classic games.

In three currently published games Svidler splendidly won one “real” game, and lost in blitz, although he should have won it too. This is of little assistance when making evaluations about future clashes between these two chess players (Svidler has not even played with Black.)

What does help is a fascinating collision of styles. In spite of his natural tactical vision and love of attack, currently Peter Svidler is first of all a great strategist. Kasimdzhanov, on the contrary, despite the tranquil style of his games, is primarily a brilliant tactician. Both have strikingly proved this evaluation on many occasions.

Consequently, their confrontation might have a classical flavour, especially if the strategist
has a good plan while the tactician has various opportunities to sting his opponent's heel.

The rest is rather equal. Both sometimes get very nervous and make inexplicable mistakes. Kasimdzhanov has recently improved his opening preparation, but his opponent is more proficient and experienced in this area. Apparently, there will be interesting fights between this pair!

Anand – Topalov

General Figures: +18 −11 =30, level after 31 classic games.

As often happens, the bare facts reveal a somewhat twisted picture. The two Elo-favourites' history has known ups and downs. One's victories have been followed by the other's triumphs, and only one thing — a furious fight — has never varied.

Amazingly, many decisive results had nothing to do with the right of the first move, and although Anand owes his general statistical advantage to the white pieces, it often was not a logical consequence of the positions.

Their struggle in recent years was far more interesting especially after Topalov's sudden improvement in 2004. And here a very rare picture is revealed: Topalov's preparation for Anand is usually great, often winning the opening battle, but he rarely has reasons to be satisfied with the overall outcome of their games. Here is one of the toughest examples (Amber 2005):

Topalov has used the Berlin perfectly, outplaying Anand with Black and yet he could not exploit his advantage. Now when he should have accepted the draw, Topalov continued to chase the victory and missed White's only threat. After 45... fx?? (instead of 45... a2 with a handshake) 46.d3! Black had to surrender facing an inevitable checkmate. Tough. Unfortunately for the Bulgarian such examples, although not always so extreme, are quite typical in his encounters with Anand. It seems that Topalov has psychological discomfort playing Anand — there is something in Anand's style the Bulgarian does not like.

Nevertheless, in a purely chess sense, Topalov undoubtedly has reasons for optimism. Topalov won their last "fistfight" (the most appropriate term for their games) very convincingly (Sofia MTel Masters 2005):

In this position, Topalov (White) demonstrates his opening preparation: 14.Qxf7! and after 14... Qxf7 15.0–0–0 Qd6 16.Qh4 Qc8 17.Qe1 Qa6 18.Qe6 Qb4 19.Qxb4 cxb4 20.Qc4 b5 21.Qxb5 Qe7 22.Qg6 he built up an extraordinarily strong attack and then won brilliantly, although not everything was clear. Such a game might well influence their future rivalry.

Round 3 and 10

Topalov – Morozevich

General Figures: +8 −7 =4, +2 out of 9 classic games.

Even though the overall score is about equal, Topalov has a big advantage in classical chess. Peculiarly both opponents have better results with Black. Considering they have only had four
draws (out of 19 games), this means it is much
better not to play White, as the chance of losing
is high. Unfortunately for both, the tournament
rules force each of them to play White once.
What, therefore, should one do to avoid losing
with White? Play without taking unnecessary
risks as Topalov demonstrated in their last game
(Wijk aan Zee 2005):

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{Black (Morozevich) looks slightly better, but}
\text{Topalov levels the chances: 27.\text{g}1 \text{a}f 28.\text{g}4}
\text{g6 29.\text{e}5e3 White is very careful: 29.\text{h}5 30.\text{f}3}
\text{\text{g}7 31.\text{x}e7 \text{e}7 32.\text{x}e7 \text{xe7} 33.\text{c}4 and the}
\text{position is completely balanced.}
\text{Topalov's main advantage is his opening}
\text{repertoire, which is both wide and intensively}
\text{prepared. Morozevich will have to consider his}
\text{choice of opening very carefully prior to this duel.}
\end{array}
\]

Anand – Adams
General Figures: +23 -6 =38, +11 out of 43
classic games.

The devastating figures leave little room for doubt
– Anand is an extraordinarily difficult opponent
for the English grandmaster. These statistics are
rather surprising as we are talking about two of
the strongest players in the world. Anand has had
a higher rating for many years, but the difference
between the two players is not as great as the
results suggest.

Curiously, their results are not so difficult to
explain: Adams is very loyal to his openings.
Although he knows them very deeply, he
can hardly be considered as one of the main
theoreticians. (Is it a crime he enjoys playing
chess more than looking for novelties at home?)

Anand has endless opening surprises that land
on the heads of his opponents, especially those
with predictable opening repertoires. Therefore,
we can see they “fit together” quite unfortunately
for the Englishman. The following recent game
drew attention from chess media around the
world (Wijk aan Zee 2005):

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{In this theoretical position, the Indian Fakir}
\text{(as Anand’s respectful colleagues like to call him)
\text{Suddenly sacrificed an exchange: 15.e5! and after}
15...\text{b}4 16.\text{x}b4 \text{xf}1 17.\text{xf}1 \text{e}5 18.\text{c}3 \text{a}5
19.a3 \text{e}4 20.\text{xe}4 \text{dxe}4 21.\text{b}4 two passers}
\text{reinforced by a bishop pair left Black no chances}
to survive, despite Adams’ very resourceful
defence.}
\text{Their previous results supply an obvious}
\text{forecast, but it is clear that a “difficult” opponent
doesn’t always stay that way forever. Could}
\text{Adams manage to narrow the gap?}
\end{array}
\]

Svidler – Leko
General Figures: +8 -2 =17, +2 out of 17 classic
games.

We have reached the most unpleasant moment for
the Hungarian grandmaster. For Leko, playing
Svidler must be described as suffering, and it has
been this way for many years. The games seem to
follow a similar scenario – a heavy struggle, often
with an initiative for the Hungarian, and then it
is as if he remembers he is playing Svidler, and
Leko collapses in just a few moves. If there were
a reasonable explanation for this weird situation,
Leko would have fixed it long ago. A typical
example is their last game (Dortmund 2005):
30

White (Svidler) chose a strange variation, and landed in a bad position, yet it seemed Svidler did not care much and just kept the tension. Eight moves later, the position was as follows:

Black is already worse, and this without committing an obvious blunder: 30.e5 fxe5 31.fxg6 h8 32.g5 c7 33.f6 e8 34.d7 c8 35.c7 d8 36.f5+ b8 37.xe5

Another 8 moves have been made, and the position speaks for itself: Black soon resigned.

Well, difficult opponents do not always stay that way forever, yet it is hard to predict how the games will go in this case.

Kasimdzhanov – Polgar
General Figures: +3 –2 =0, never played a classic game.

All their previous games have been played at rapid time controls, but the fact that there were no draws is anything but accidental. Kasimdzhanov convincingly won two games with White, and one of his three Blacks, although he should have won them all! So, Kasimdzhanov has had the upper hand in rapids, but what about classical games?

Interesting games are inevitable between this duo: considering their games, defending is hardly the strongest part of either player. And we don’t mean defending worse positions, but protecting their own king. Of course, if the opponent only has a hint of a realistic attack, players of their level manage it easily. However, if the attack is serious, then regrettably both of them seem not to be on the great defenders list (like Anand and Morozevich for example). Besides, both players are rather moody: if it goes well they will perform amazingly, but if not...

That is why a crucial factor here will be the opening – here they both continually prove their knowledge, but what is more important, the opening will determine who has the suitable attitude today! The most significant point in their encounters will therefore be how they have prepared for the event – the outcome will be directly related to this.

Round 4 and 11

Anand – Kasimdzhanov
General Figures: +7 –1 =3, +4 out of 6 classic games.

Anand used to be completely dominant in this match-up: the early results leave no doubt here. It is especially hard for Kasimdzhanov when he faces yet another of Anand’s new opening ideas, as experience is crucial in such circumstances. No matter how well prepared you are, it takes time to find the ability to react calmly and accurately to your opponent’s inventions. And Anand has more than enough inventions for anyone...

Recently Kasimdzhanov has improved dramatically and as such has increased his chances against all future opponents. For example, a couple of months before the championship, Kasimdzhanov showed great ability to resist his formidable opponent in the Leon rapid final (after he beat Alexei Shirov), where Anand had a hard time and needed a lot of luck to win this match (+2 –1 =1). But even before this match the FIDE champion showed in Linares 2005 that he can successfully fight against the Indian in classical chess, at least in one game out of
two (the second he lost hopelessly). Here is his positive experience:

Black (Kasimdzhanov) played the opening badly, but then started a gripping defence, though his weaknesses still seem to be up for grabs by the Indian. Here Black found a perfect solution: 23...\texttt{Qd7!} sacrificing a pawn. But where is the compensation? A few moves later Anand started wasting time and became nervous. After 24.\texttt{Wxd6 Wxd6 25.Axd6 Qc5 26.Ae3 Qd4 27.Ead1 Eab8 28.Ab1 Qxa4 29.Axd4 exd4 30.Axd4 Bb2 31.e5 Qc5 32.Af5 a5 33.Axe6}

The Indian could not find anything better than offering a draw, which was accepted by Kasimdzhanov, but he shouldn't have. Analysis showed that it is White who has to suffer before making a draw. In any case, such an escape against Anand, especially in one's first super-tournament, is a major achievement.

So could it be that the new Kasimdzhanov is a tough challenge for Anand? One could answer positively if it were not for one important limitation: despite all the improvements the Uzbek player has made, he has not shown that he can react properly against opening novelties. Against Anand this can be crucial, so the only hope is to emerge from the opening safely. This is obviously not enough by itself to be successful against Anand, but it would be a good start.

\textbf{Svidler – Morozevich}

General Figures: +4 -6 =4, +1 out of 11 classic games.

This Russian clash will hardly be calmer than the Hungarian one. To accurately forecast what we might see in their games it is sufficient to take a look at their draws. If that is how they settle peaceful matters, we may only guess what happens when they declare war.

Let us illustrate (not explain – illustrate) an example of a peaceful game (Wijk aan Zee 2005):

With 10.e6, White (Svidler) decided to punish Black for his opening boldness, and with it all the commentators. Although this position is known to theory, for some reason these two were the ones to play it.

Forced lines have flown through this position. Not bad, is it?
After the queen exchange, as you can see, it did not cool down.

Thereafter they reached the above diagram, which is painful to look at.

And eventually they shook hands in this position – it is totally unclear how to evaluate it. Apparently the opponents were tired from the mind-bending complications, and that at least is easy to understand. Such is the story in each and every one of their encounters, which is a true pleasure for chess fans. Thus, at least two games of this kind can be expected – with any possible outcome.

Adams – Topalov

General Figures: +11 –7 =16, +2 out of 26 classic games.

These grandmasters’ relations have undergone a serious change recently. Adams was for a long time Topalov’s most difficult opponent, but lately it seems that Topalov, to use the terminology of Botvinnik, “has solved the puzzle of” Adams. Adams reached his statistical advantage before 2001, and since then Topalov has a positive score. It seems that Adams can no longer keep up with Topalov’s huge energy over the board. If previously Adams would prevail with his favourite “surgical procedures”, afterwards it became difficult to restrain Topalov’s ability to fight from start to finish, not giving up an inch, and this despite Adams often obtaining good positions!

The following game is typical (Linares 2005):

With strong, logical moves Adams (Black) humbled Topalov’s opening and a standard attack was launched: 20...g5! 21.f1 g4 22.fxg4

Perfect: the long diagonal and the f-file
are opened, and the squares around the king are looking weak: 22...\textit{h6} 23.\textit{g1} \textit{h3} 24.\textit{d3} \textit{e4} The end seems to be near, and for the white king it won't be a happy one... 25.\textit{f4} \textit{xg3}

Game over? 26.\textit{c3}! Not quite! It seems Black should be winning automatically, but as soon as the concrete fight begins the simple path to victory is not there! When playing so well and having reached such a promising position, it’s hard to accept that the struggle is only just beginning. Moreover, even a route to a clear plus is not so obvious. This is why Adams was uncertain, and went for the unfortunate 26...\textit{e6}? 26...\textit{x}d3! was the only move for the reasons given below. After 27.\textit{e4}! Black's attack suddenly ended with the worst-case scenario: the knight on \textit{g3} is trapped, and amazingly Black has no real threats and no way to save the knight. A very discouraging loss for Adams.

All in all, it seems the new improved Topalov has the advantage in the upcoming battle. But what if Adams throws the scalpel aside and takes up the sledgehammer, just like his opponent?

Leko – Polgar

\textbf{General Figures:} +4 -1 =9, +1 out of 11 classic games.

For two leading players from the same country the number of games they have played against each other is very small. It seems that the rise of Leko coincided with the period Polgar started playing less in elite tournaments, so they are not too familiar with each other.

It is interesting to note that there were times when these two players (and Almasi) were in competition to be called the best Hungarian player. Lately Leko closed this dispute by proving in practice that he is the best. However, as they say in soccer, derby games have their own rules, and one cannot predict their coming fight. Even when having a great tournament, one can always lose to a compatriot. One thing is clear – there will be plenty of nerves in their duels.

\section*{Round 5 and 12}

\textbf{Anand – Leko}

\textbf{General Figures:} +13 -4 =35, +1 out of 26 classic games.

In classical chess the difference is much more narrow than in the general statistics (4-3 in the new millennium), which makes the draw quota even more significant. This is very natural for players who have shared many first prizes in recent years: one cannot win many prizes when losing many games. A significant role in the peaceful relations lies with Leko. He has always been very careful with those he considers to be strong. That is why he has repeatedly tried to make peace with Anand, which is far easier with such a powerful opening repertoire as that of the Hungarian grandmaster. Anand, for his part, would not want to take many risks against Leko – experience shows that it is not wise to play with fire against Leko. Anand could observe it in Leko's match with Kramnik, or feel it at his own expense (Wijk aan Zee 2005):

Anand (White) boldly grabbed a pawn, as if to
demonstrate that Black's attack does not frighten him, while his pawn is a strong candidate for royalty. Counterattack is mandatory: 21 ... f4 (A new move. 21 ... Wh8!? was previously considered the main line.)

22. oc2 oc8 23. ba8 wd6 24. ob4 ib7 Black's threats are quite evident. Despite undoubtedly being aware of them, Anand decides to throw all the burden of proof on the surprised Hungarian's shoulders: 25. ea7 d4 26. ea6? White seems to be teasing his opponent:

What to do? Either find something fast or accept massive exchanges and resign. Being against the wall Leko found 26 ... ixg2! and thereafter he remorselessly tore White's position apart (Going on to record an impressive win in the Wijk aan Zee 2005 super-tournament – the only trophy his mantelpiece was still lacking). After this painful experience Anand will most likely be careful. Leko has always been careful, so the logical result here would be a draw.

Kasimdzhanov – Adams
General Figures: +3 -2 =5, level after 10 classic games.

While not having played a lot against one another, the opponents have studied each other quite well after playing at the FIDE Championship finals in Tripoli (+2 -2 =2 in classic and 1½:½ in rapid). Naturally, when playing a match you study your opponent better than in ten tournaments. And it seems that such an acquaintance was more useful for the Uzbek. That match was very important for Adams, the favourite, but he could not win because of Kasimdzhanov's powerful tactical strength, which allowed amazing resistance on the enemy's territory. In other words, he survived most of the positional tortures the Englishman had for him. The story repeated itself in Linares 2005, where Kasimdzhanov saved a difficult position with Black. It is not clear whether Kasimdzhanov will be able to win, but practice shows that Adams winning is not probable, especially taking Kasimdzhanov's greatly improved opening preparation into consideration.

Morozevich – Polgar
General Figures: +4 -1 =0, +3 out of 3 classic games.

The Muscovite has had an obvious advantage in all their games. The only time he lost was after blundering his queen in a winning position in a rapid game. Therefore, the natural conclusion is that Morozevich has good chances to play successfully against the Queen.

Polgar's chances are not so obvious. It is a typical case of a rolling ball hitting a wall. Morozevich is a near-perfect defender (and he enjoys it!) and thus he defuses the strongest side of the Hungarian.

But the result is not predetermined, of course. If Polgar can catch out Morozevich during his traditional opening adventure, everything might turn out differently. Moreover, if Polgar achieves "her" kind of position, even the Iron Curtain might not save the Russian.

Morozevich, on the other hand, might opt for solid variations, keeping in mind the possibility of his opponent's hot temper and tendency to take risks. Tempting Polgar to overstretch might significantly increase his chances.

Topalov – Svidler
General Figures: +7 -6 =9, +2 out of 13 classic games.

The roughly equal score and rather balanced fights promise equal chances in this mini-match. In fact, it was against Topalov that Svidler managed to
perform a few miraculous escapes, which enhanced Svidler’s reputation as being almost impossible to beat. Here is a recent example (Dortmund 2005):

In this strategically difficult position Svidler (Black) muddies the waters, making it very tricky for White to find the right way: 27...c4 28.bxc4 Bxd3 29.Bxd3 Bxc4 30.Bd2 Bb4 31.f4 Bf8 32.Bh1 Bb6 33.Bc1 Bd4 34.Bxf2 Ba7 35.Bc8 Bc5 36.Be3 Bb3

A few mistakes, and it is now Topalov trying to bail out – a task he completes with great style: 37.Bxc5 Bxc1 38.Bxf7+ Bxf7 39.Bxd5 Bxf2 40.Bd7† with a perpetual check.

The opening might be considered as Svidler’s major problem against Topalov. Svidler has suffered from a “free” type of playing for a long time and he himself has been complaining about it. Svidler’s busy playing schedule leaves him very little time to patch the holes, but playing like that against Topalov, with his powerful opening repertoire, might be punished.

Round 6 and 14

Topalov – Polgar

General Figures: +11 -7 =7, +2 out of 21 classic games.

Topalov’s advantage is somehow deceptive. Polgar and Topalov have rarely played each other in the new millennium and the overall outcome here was in the Hungarian’s favour. In fact, any result is possible with this couple! The recent results and ratings are in Topalov’s favour, but most likely his beloved aggressive and complicated style will be appropriately met by Polgar, who is no less fond of such complexities. For example, consider what happened the last time they met (Sofia Masters 2005):

This position is the result of a great opening fight, which was undoubtedly won by Black (Polgar) who had even more chances in the subsequent complications. After an interesting struggle, they reach the following position:

Now it is quite obvious which player managed to puzzle out the complications. At one point the
brave Judit Polgar, who was playing with Black on the opponent's territory (Sofia!) and after a long break from chess, rejected a draw offer and decided to play for a win, despite being in the cruellest time trouble. Unfortunately for her, she did not have enough power to maintain the same level and bring the game to its logical conclusion, but she definitely proved that she is not going to be a mere decoration in the Championship.

To sum up, the decisive claim in this dispute might lie in the opening repertoires and psychological preparation for the game. On this front Topalov, who has played and won frequently while Polgar was away from the game, has some advantage.

Morozevich - Adams

General Figures: +5 -3 =9, +1 out of 14 classic games.

These opponents don't seem to understand each other yet. Their games flow very inconsistently, without a distinguishable pattern. As a matter of fact, this situation is typical for clashes of different styles. Let us demonstrate a funny episode from the last game between these bullfighters (Wijk aan Zee 2005):

The position is pretty balanced – at any rate, Black (Morozevich) feels comfortable enough, and a quick draw agreement was expected by the spectators. Morozevich, however, decided to improve his hold on the kingside, and after considering its possible positional benefits he played the logical: 28...g5? Generally speaking Black's strategy seems to be correct, but White did not want to talk about positional issues and unexpectedly responded with 29.\textit{Qxg5+}, which left Black a pawn down with a hopeless position. Adams used his advantage smoothly.

Anand - Svidler

General Figures: +5 -2 =19, +3 out of 13 classic games.

Although the statistics favour Anand, analysis reveals that often his wins were a consequence of a superior opening. It seems that Svidler is an equal opponent in all other aspects, while his stubborn defence often allows his escape his opening problems unscathed. Let us take a look at the last classic game between these two (Wijk aan Zee 2005):

Black (Svidler) has a poor position. Understanding this, he breaks the material balance, which is one of the most effective defensive strategies: 23...\textit{Qxf2}! 24.\textit{Qxf2} \textit{Qxe4+} 25.\textit{Bxe4 Bxe4}

This posed the opponent continuing difficulties that he struggled to control.
After reaching this position, Svidler adds an exchange to his sacrifice list with: 42...\textit{\textbf{e}2!} and Black soon gained dangerous pawns that balanced the piece deficit. Not many could confuse Anand in this way.

In general, we should note that recently Svidler has reached a new qualitative level, and most of his past games are irrelevant for his current assessment. It appears that in the past two years that he has begun to really understand himself, and is improving from tournament to tournament, and game to game.

\textbf{Leko – Kasimdzhanov}

\textbf{General Figures:} +2 -0 =4, +2 out of 6 classic games.

One of Leko’s two wins was in the World Junior Championship (1994), which hardly has any meaning now. As for the other games, Kasimdzhanov was apparently aiming to hold, in which he mainly succeeded.

Still, their future battles will be fascinating from a stylistic point of view — they both seem to be the natural successors of the Great Tigran Petrosian. At least their styles recall this famously cautious personality: both opponents like to dot their i’s and cross their t’s.

Leko, being more experienced, will have a considerable advantage. Experience is vital (as many elite players claim) not just in knowing the opponent, but in understanding yourself, your strong sides, and how to better use your style against a particular opponent. Kasimdzhanov has just started gaining top-level experience, and the process is rarely painless.

\textbf{Round 7 and 13}

\textbf{Topalov – Kasimdzhanov}

\textbf{General Figures:} +1 -3 =6, +1 out of 5 classic games.

No doubt Topalov has bad memories of his most important clash with Kasimdzhanov. The FIDE Knockout in Libya was one of Topalov’s best tournaments (no one knew then that it was just the beginning of his rise). Having scared everyone with his 9.5 out of 10, he met the far less famous Rustam Kasimdzhanov in the semi-final, who miraculously survived in the classical games (+0 -0 =4). Kasimdzhanov, despite being exhausted from his previous long matches, deservedly won both tiebreakers, sending Topalov home.

Since then Topalov has been preparing his gunpowder for the Uzbek, meanwhile winning many tournaments in which, alas, the FIDE champion did not participate. And then inevitably the payday came (Linares 2005):

Kasimdzhanov (Black) chose a somewhat problematic line, although he did introduce a novelty: 20...\textit{\textbf{f}6} Topalov over the board proved that no new ideas will help Black here: 21.\textbf{Bb}5 \textbf{\textbullet}{\textbf{e}5} 22.\textbf{Bf}4 \textbf{\textbullet}{\textbf{g}6} 23.\textbf{Bd}4 \textbf{\textbullet}{\textbf{d}7} 24.\textbf{Bd}5

How else could White’s position be described other than a show of rage towards last year’s offender? After 24...\textit{\textbf{e}6} 25.\textbf{e}2 a direct hunt on the black queen commenced, resulting in a quick victory.
It appears that the true balance of power before San Luis is represented in this game, rather than their encounters in Tripoli. But is it possible that Kasimdzhanov could again be Topalov’s nemesis?

**Leko – Adams**  
**General Figures:** +13 –12 =36, +1 out of 30 classic games.

As usual with Leko, many of his games against elite players end in draws, reflecting his carefulness. This became even more evident in the new millennium, when Leko has yet to lose to Adams in classical chess, but has occasionally managed to pull off a win. Perhaps he has forgotten how to lose a serious game against Adams. In their recent rapid match, however, they produced a real slaughter. Leko’s break before the match was translated into three consecutive losses in the beginning, and then Adams’ exhaustion played the same trick on him, with the same sad result (the match finished with two draws which satisfied both players). The following game reveals the effect of their characters (Linares 2005):

This position is the result of an opening novelty by Leko (White), who has pushed the black pieces to the sides and intends to break through in the centre. Adams understands that energetic measures are needed: 18...\texttt{\textbackslash x}e5 19.dxe5 \texttt{\textbackslash x}xf2!  
Realizing that Adams has humbled his adventure, Leko switches to a tough defence: 20.\texttt{\textbackslash x}x\texttt{\textbackslash x}f2 \texttt{\textbackslash w}h4\texttt{\textbackslash t} 21.\texttt{\textbackslash g}f1 \texttt{\textbackslash w}xh2 22.\texttt{\textbackslash g}a3 \texttt{\textbackslash e}e6 23.\texttt{\textbackslash w}a2 \texttt{\textbackslash e}d8 24.\texttt{\textbackslash c}5

Black has to decide whether to risk playing for a win or agree a draw. It’s hard to calculate everything, so he chose the latter: 24...\texttt{\textbackslash w}h6 25.e6 \texttt{\textbackslash w}f4\texttt{\textbackslash t} with a perpetual check. Here we see why it is hard to beat Leko. His tough defence has frustrated many, while his strong openings frequently lead to a great advantage. Not often do his opponents manage to find the right answer at the board.

**Polgar – Svidler**  
**General Figures:** +7 –1 =6, +2 out of 5 classic games.

Polgar has an advantage statistically especially when playing White. Scrutinizing the games it appears that both opponents have difficulties playing Black, particularly because their main opening is the Sicilian, and both are extremely dangerous when playing it on the white side! Svidler has perhaps come to the conclusion that it is wiser to play something different against Polgar. This does not always help, as was demonstrated in their last game (Wijk aan Zee 2005):

Black (Svidler) played into this Marshall
position without much hesitation. However, after the exchanges 18...\(\text{dx}e4\) 19.\(\text{Bxe}4\) \(\text{Bxe}4\) 20.\(\text{Bxe}4\) \(\text{Bxe}4\) it turned out that with simple attacks White is able to pose serious problems for her opponent. There followed: 21.\(\text{Bc}2\) \(\text{Wf}e7\) 22.\(\text{Bg}5\) \(f6\) 23.\(\text{Bc}3\) \(\text{e}6\) 24.\(\text{Wf}3\) \(\text{Wd}7\) 25.\(\text{Bd}1\) \(\text{Bd}8\) 26.\(\text{Bc}4\)

Black is quite obviously already in trouble. Various pins and weaknesses make Black’s life difficult, and do not allow him to simplify. Svidler decided to tease his opponent with 26...\(\text{Bxa}2\), but after 27.\(\text{Bb}6\) \(\text{Bb}3\) 28.\(\text{Bd}4\) \(c5\) 29.\(\text{Bxc}5\) \(\text{e}6\) 30.\(\text{c}4\) all Black could do was resign, facing inevitable material losses.

That is why the choice of openings in this mini-match is particularly interesting. Will anyone be brave enough to play the Sicilian? This may primarily determine the outcome, as both opponents have demonstrated the ability to bring “their” positions to a logical conclusion.

**Anand – Morozevich**

**General Figures:** +7 –5 =6, +1 out of 6 classic games.

The games between these players are always remarkable. The first celebrated incident was when Morozevich, aged 17, won many fans by daring to play the King’s Gambit against the terrifying Anand, and subsequently forced Anand to surrender on the 28th move. A lot has changed since. Anand has become even more terrifying, and Morozevich has proved his ability to inflict defeats on the strongest players not only with the King’s Gambit.

Both players are perfect defenders and sometimes manage to pull off seemingly impossible saves. Anand showed his defensive skills in Wijk aan Zee 2005:

Anand played 11...0–0–0 with a grin, as if inviting his opponent to attack. Morozevich did not resist the temptation: 12.\(\text{a}4\) \(\text{h}5\) 13.\(\text{a}5\) \(\text{Bxa}5\) 14.\(\text{b}4\) \(\text{c}6\) 15.\(\text{c}4\) \(b5\) 16.0–0

Morozevich generously offers a piece, which seems quite dangerous. Anand, however, accepts the offer unalteringly: 16...\(\text{bxc}4\) 17.\(\text{b}5\) \(\text{Bb}8\) 18.\(\text{Bxa}7\) \(\text{d}5\) 19.\(\text{e}5\) \(\text{Bd}7\) As we mentioned, perfect defence is not a problem for Anand. 20.\(\text{Bc}4\) \(\text{a}8\) 21.\(\text{Bxc}4\) \(\text{xc}4\)! 22.\(\text{Bxc}4\) \(\text{Bc}7\) 23.\(\text{Bxb}7\) \(\text{Bd}8\) 24.\(\text{Bf}2\) \(\text{d}6\) 25.\(\text{Bf}1\)
At this point it is clear that the attack is no longer dangerous. Anand with his usual coolness continued collecting everything available. 25...\(\text{xc3}\) and after the confused 26.d5 everything was finished with 26...\(\text{xb7}\).

As we can see, no bluff will work on this pair. As for the rest, Anand has a serious advantage, for he has been at the very top long before Morozevich even began aiming there.

**Conclusion**

In retrospect, the outcomes of many matches were a very logical follow-up to the players’ recent encounters, but on the other hand we witnessed results and individual moments that are simply impossible to qualify into anything understandable.

Certainly surprises are natural, and they tend to become more frequent (and surprising), the greater the pressure. And in San Luis the tension appeared unbearable for some.

Apart from all the calm, almost mathematical, assessments regarding each of the match-ups we must point out one peculiar opening paradox concerning our players: how could it be that Adams often outplays Topalov, who often outplays both Anand and Kasimdzhanov, both of whom, in turn, outplay Adams, who outplays Polgar who often makes Anand and Topalov suffer, and so on? The answer is simple – sometimes a player has problems with a certain opponent’s style, and reaches an understanding of it only after a few losses. Then he starts trying to look for a way to get his opponent out of “their positions”, which is not easy and also costs some losses. And finally he accepts this weird situation – that is how one becomes a “difficult opponent”, and usually openings have nothing to do with it.

Of course, there is no better place to overcome a difficult opponent than here, at the world championship. Moreover, we should bear in mind that world championships have dynamics of their own, as no player will save a novelty for better times, or preserve energy for the next event. This tournament is 14 rounds of pure action; and you are hereby invited backstage to the best show in town.
## ROUND 1

### Results:

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### Standings:

1-2 Anand  1
1-2 Topalov  1
3-6 Adams  ½
3-6 Kasimdzhanov  ½
3-6 Morozevich  ½
3-6 Svidler  ½
7-8 Leko  0
7-8 Polgar  0

At last the first round has started! The interminable talk, predictions and analysis ends, and it is time to move some pieces...

Ask any fan and you will hear the following response: at the start of the first round everyone was genuinely excited, because the chess world missed World Championships very badly. And if that was just the fans, one can only guess how the players felt! Indeed, the first round was distinguished by the extreme nervousness of the participants.

### Confusing opening

The opening of Polgar vs. Anand was certainly confusing. To be on the safe side, Anand decided to choose a calm and quiet Caro-Kann against the Hungarian. But if such precautions had an evident explanation then Polgar's choice of an obviously unpromising variation could only be explained by nerves, since Anand's opening was not too unpredictable. Already by the 10th move White had to forget about any advantage. In situations like this a calmer chess player would make a few quiet moves, exchange a couple of pieces, and then go prepare for the next game – after all, White would have to try
hard to lose this position. The Hungarian Diva overcame this obstacle fairly easily: unwilling to accept a calm position, she did her best to set the board on fire, which, unfortunately for her, spread all over the white camp. Anand kept playing in rock-solid style not allowing his tricky opponent any counterplay (at times even passing by very promising continuations), but he eventually won the game without having to show even a fraction of his abilities.

An interesting struggle was produced by friends/opponents Svidler and Adams. The Briton chose “his” variation of the Petroff and Svidler’s response was far from the most principled one. The game soon became very confusing: it was not easy to prove the correctness of the moves, but it was even harder to evaluate the consequences of the resulting complications. The players resolved this problem by agreeing to a draw at the moment of truth.

The game Morozevich vs. Kasimdzhanov resembled a very nervous twelve-round boxing match. Luckily, in a chess fight there is no need to nominate a winner on points, for it would be extremely difficult. The advantage switched several times, whereupon each time, as if by a spiral, one of the players raced further ahead. The last turn was in Kasimdzhanov’s hands, who was an inch away from a simple technical endgame, but he missed his chance. He tried his luck in a rook endgame that forced Morozevich to find a few accurate moves before the draw.

Severe Slaughter

The most severe slaughter occurred between two of the pre-tournament favourites: Leko and Topalov. Topalov went, very bravely, for his pet line in the Najdorf, which was undoubtedly carefully studied by his rivals. After the game there were a great number of voices criticizing the Hungarian grandmaster for extreme carefulness, blaming everything on Leko’s style being unsuitable for such positions. This is rather unfair or just partly true.

The point is that Topalov had one overwhelming advantage – he was the only one who was really calm. First, he played a variation he had studied in detail; second, he had serious psychological advantages after his last encounter with Leko, as was described in the introductory article. In addition to that, in all his successes this year the Bulgarian has started badly, but then improved and surpassed everyone. A willingness to risk losing and a recent history of success are effective weapons in the hands of a strong chess player.

It is easy to be confident about this explanation after the event, but during the game Topalov had to defend in a very unpleasant situation. Leko did his homework very professionally, and completely decoded Topalov’s plan. Already by his 17th move he could start a direct attack, which, as was proved later, should have doomed the black king. However, Leko hesitated and the Bulgarian hovered on the brink of the abyss. The audience was amazed, only a short while ago White’s victory was only a matter of two steps (or two checks), and an instant later Black had a significant edge in the endgame and never looked back.

Summing up, the round did not show a real correlation of power. Objectively, only Adams played really well. He made 24 effective moves which completely neutralized his opponent’s attempts to gain an advantage. And concerning the favourites, Topalov took big risks against one of the main contenders for the title, but Caissa was on his side. This could not have gone unnoticed by his future opponents.
A great example of the changing nature of chess fashion. White’s mainstream idea is to carry out the typical so-called English attack: 0-0-0, g4, h4 etc. To accomplish that White can choose between two move orders: 8.g4 or 8.\( \text{d2} \).

First, let us examine 8.g4. The idea behind this move is to prevent Black from transferring his b8-knight to b6 (because 8...\( \text{bd7} \) will now be met with 9.g5). The drawback of this move order is White’s weakening of the f3-square, which was shown in the so-called Topalov variation: 8...h6 9.\( \text{d2} \) b4 (this move, played as soon as possible, establishes Topalov’s idea) 10.\( \text{a4} \) \( \text{bd7} \) 11.0-0-0 \( \text{e5} \)

The first game in which Topalov employed the ...b4 idea immediately made its way into history at Wijk aan Zee 2005, when the Bulgarian hurricane left Kramnik homeless after a mere 20 moves: 12.\( \text{xb4} \) \( \text{d7} \) 13.\( \text{b3} \) \( \text{b8} \) 14.\( \text{a3} \) \( \text{xf3} \) 15.\( \text{h3} \) \( \text{xe4} \) 16.\( \text{e2} \) \( \text{c5} \) 17.\( \text{h1} \) \( \text{c7} \) 18.\( \text{d4} \) \( \text{c6} \) 19.\( \text{c3} \) d5 20.\( \text{bc5} \) \( \text{a7} \) and White resigned.

Half a year later, however, Anand came up with an improvement: 12.b3 13.\( \text{b2} \) d5 (perhaps in view of that game 13...\( \text{a5} \) is worth considering for Black) 14.\( \text{f4} \) and now, after 14...\( \text{xf3} \) 15.\( \text{xf3} \) \( \text{xe4} \) 16.\( \text{d4} \) f6 17.\( \text{d3} \)!

Anand introduced an interesting queen sacrifice which seems to have placed new problems in the path of this line’s Black devotees. That game continued: 17...\( \text{c5} \) 18.\( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{xd4} \) 19.\( \text{g6} \)\( \text{h8} \) 20.\( \text{xd4} \) with an irrational position, in which White’s chances seem to be higher, Anand – Topalov, Sofia 2005.

As we mentioned, 8.\( \text{d2} \) chosen by Leko, allows Black to refrain from playing the weakening 8...h6, and therefore used to be considered as less precise than the immediate 8.g4. This assessment
was re-evaluated after the game Leko – Kasparov, Linares 2005, in which the Hungarian managed to improve White’s play on the 12th move after: 8...\texttt{Qd}7 9.g4 \texttt{Qb}6. However, White found 10.a4! \texttt{Qc}4 11.\texttt{Qxc}4 bxc4 12.a5!.

An important move, that seems to be closing the whole line. Black’s position looks grim, as White has managed to seize too much space on the queenside, and take control over b6. Black is virtually left with no counterplay. The game continued: 12...\texttt{Qb}7 13.\texttt{Qa}4 \texttt{Qc}8 14.\texttt{Qc}3 \texttt{Qd}7 15.0–0–0 \texttt{Qe}7 16.h4 \texttt{Qxh}4, but here, instead of going for the kill in a straightforward way, Leko continued improving his position, and let the moment slip away: 17.\texttt{Qe}2?! (better was 17.\texttt{Qb}4! \texttt{Qb}8 18.\texttt{Qxh}4! \texttt{Qxh}4 19.\texttt{Qxd}6 and Black’s position is falling apart) After 17...\texttt{Qf}6 18.\texttt{Qd}4 e5 19.\texttt{Qe}3 \texttt{Qe}7 Black managed to stabilize his position in Leko – Kasparov, Linares 2005. (One might guess that this game was in front of Topalov’s eyes while preparing for Leko).

After that game the line with 8...\texttt{Qbd}7 lost most of its attractiveness. Topalov revived the variation with the daring 8...\texttt{b}4 idea, but the current game seems to slam yet another blow against Black’s setup, and this time against its new leading exponent – Topalov.

8...\texttt{b}4

Topalov copied & pasted this idea from positions with the insertion of \texttt{g}2-\texttt{g}4 \texttt{h}7-\texttt{h}6, and until the current game it looked like Black’s last try to revive the line.

9.\texttt{Qa}4

Leko is following Anand’s footsteps (see previous note), with a small, and yet mighty difference: White has not weakened \texttt{f}3 yet.

Prior to this game White’s attempts to deal with Black’s plan were rather modest. A good example is Kramnik – Topalov, from the last round of Sofia 2005: 9.\texttt{Qce}2 e5 10.\texttt{Qb}3 \texttt{Qc}6 11.\texttt{Qe}7 12.\texttt{Qg}3 \texttt{g}6 13.\texttt{Qd}3 \texttt{Qd}7 14.\texttt{Qd}1 0–0 15.\texttt{Qf}2 \texttt{a}5 and Black achieved a good game.

9...\texttt{Qbd}7

Played in analogy to the lines with the insertion of \texttt{g}4 and \texttt{h}6.

An attempt to break free with 9...\texttt{d}5, as was played in the few games that did reach this position, does not look good: 10.e5 \texttt{Qfd}7 11.\texttt{f}4 With the moves \texttt{g}4 and \texttt{h}6 this position is very bad for Black, since he has severely weakened the \texttt{g}6-square. However, even without it, this French-like structure is good for White: all his moves were useful for this structure, while Black kept moving his pawns on the queenside, creating weaknesses for himself.

10.0–0–0

10...\texttt{d}5?! Black’s was not too successful in developing his pieces until now, which means opening the position should not be in his favour.

10...\texttt{Qa}5 was the more solid, and probably stronger continuation. Then, after 11.\texttt{b}3 11...\texttt{Qe}5?, threatening ...\texttt{Qd}7, is refuted by 12.\texttt{Qxe}6! \texttt{fxe}6 13.\texttt{Qb}6 \texttt{Qxf}3 14.gxf3 \texttt{Qh}5 15.\texttt{Qg}1 with a big advantage for White. Therefore Black would have to play 11...\texttt{Qb}7 12.\texttt{Qb}1 \texttt{Qe}7 13.\texttt{c}4 bxc3 14.\texttt{Qxc}3 \texttt{Qxc}3 15.\texttt{Qxc}3 0–0 16.\texttt{Qe}2. White is marginally better due to
his pawn majority on the queenside, but it is much better for Black than the game.

By the way, an attempt to reproduce the idea he played against Kramnik: 10...\textit{d}e5 11.\textit{xe}b4 \textit{d}d7 12.\textit{xb}3 \textit{b}b8 13.\textit{d}d4 fails, as the f3-pawn is now protected.

11.\textit{ex}d5 \textit{xd}5 12.\textit{c}c4

Black is facing a clear problem: how to protect the knight?

12...\textit{e}7\textit{f}6?

The source of Black's misfortunes in the future, as he probably overlooked Leko's strong reply.

Stronger was 12...\textit{b}7 although after 13.\textit{e}h1 it is not easy to advise Black on a good move:

a) 13...\textit{e}c8 14.\textit{g}g5! (weaker is 14.\textit{xd}5 \textit{xd}5 15.\textit{f}4 g6 and White still has to prove his advantage) 14...\textit{f}7\textit{f}6 (after 14...\textit{xc}7 Black's position collapses after the thematic: 15.\textit{xe}6 fxe6 16.\textit{xe}6\textit{f}! \textit{f}7 17.\textit{e}e4!) 15.\textit{xf}6 gxf6 (15...\textit{xf}6 16.\textit{xe}6 fxe6 17.\textit{xd}5 \textit{xd}5 18.\textit{xd}5 is completely one-sided) 16.\textit{xe}6 fxe6 17.\textit{xe}6\textit{f}! \textit{f}7 18.\textit{b}b6!, White has extra material, and a winning position.

b) Kasparov, in his analysis for \textit{N/IC}, suggests 13.\textit{c}c7 as Black's most stubborn defence, providing the following line: 14.\textit{xe}6! \textit{xc}4 15.\textit{c}c7\textit{f}! \textit{xc}7 16.\textit{f}4\textit{f}! \textit{d}8 17.\textit{xc}7\textit{f}! \textit{xc}7 18.\textit{c}4 \textit{xc}3 19.\textit{xc}3 with advantage for White.

c) 13...\textit{e}c7 14.\textit{f}5 0-0 (14...\textit{xe}3 loses to 15.\textit{xe}7\textit{f}! \textit{xe}8 16.\textit{xe}6\textit{f}! fxe6 17.\textit{xe}3 with a decisive attack) 15.\textit{xd}5 \textit{xd}5 16.\textit{b}b6! \textit{xb}6 17.\textit{xe}7\textit{f}! \textit{h}8 (after 17...\textit{xe}7 18.\textit{xb}6

White is just an exchange up) 18.\textit{xb}6 \textit{xb}6 19.\textit{xd}5 \textit{ex}d5 20.\textit{xd}5

Here Black's best practical chances to save the game would be after 20...\textit{c}c8, whereas Kasparov's suggestion to regain the pawn with 20...\textit{h}6\textit{f} is too risky for Black because of 21.\textit{d}d2 \textit{gh}2 22.\textit{h}1 \textit{g}3 (22...\textit{b}b8 23.\textit{h}4) 23.\textit{xb}4 (23.\textit{h}3 \textit{g}6 24.\textit{h}1 a5 25.\textit{d}d6) 23...\textit{xe}g2?! 24.\textit{h}4 \textit{g}6 25.\textit{d}d1 \textit{h}6\textit{t} 26.\textit{xb}6\textit{h}6 27.\textit{xb}6 with a totally winning endgame for White.

13.\textit{g}5 \textit{c}7

14.\textit{xd}5\textit{f}!

A very strong and simple reaction. White is not willing to lose precious time retreating the bishop.

14...\textit{xd}5 15.\textit{e}h1

White already has the concrete threat of 16.\textit{xe}6 followed by 17.\textit{xd}5, which has to be attended to, forcing Black to postpone the solution of his main problem – poor development.
15...\texttt{b7}

Not a move one wants to make, especially as White does not even try to hide his intentions about \texttt{e6}, but \texttt{d5} is also very vulnerable, and Black simply had no other options.

15...\texttt{e7} is refuted prosaically with: 16.\texttt{xe7} when Black cannot play 16...\texttt{xe7} due to 17.\texttt{f5} followed by \texttt{xd5} on the very next move. So, after 16...\texttt{xe7} 17.\texttt{xb4} the pawn on \texttt{b4}, which was the only justification for Black going through all the misery so far, disappears. Without it one would have a hard time finding an explanation why Black should go into this position.

16.\texttt{e2}

17.\texttt{xe6} is already a clear and immediate threat. Black’s position is critical, but Topalov is defending very resourcefully.

16...\texttt{d6}!

A gutsy move, which was quite undeservedly criticized by Kasparov in his analysis for \textit{NIC}. The queen steps up to protect its king, nor minding the white pieces flying around. The main point behind this move is that after it White does not have any concrete wins, in the shape of “sac-sac-resign”.

a) 16...\texttt{c8} 17.\texttt{e5} White maintains a very strong initiative while Black has no good way to develop.

b) 16...\texttt{c8} 17.\texttt{xe6} \texttt{fxe6} 18.\texttt{xe6} 19.\texttt{b1} \texttt{c6} (19...\texttt{xc2} 20.\texttt{a1}) 20.\texttt{d6} \texttt{xa4} 21.\texttt{b3} and White wins.

c) Kasparov, in his analysis for \textit{NIC}, suggests 16...\texttt{f4} as Black’s only possible continuation and provides the following line: 17.\texttt{e3} \texttt{g2}
White has a much easier way to refute his opponent's defensive idea:

17.\texttt{xf4}! \texttt{xf4}†

18.\texttt{b2}!

Although it is not easy to make such a move over the board. The point behind this move is that once White takes on e6, the rook will be ready to join the attack along the e-file. The immediate threat is, of course, 19.\texttt{xe6}.

The more natural 18.\texttt{b1} would also do the job, although less convincingly: 18...\texttt{c7} 19.\texttt{xe6} \texttt{xe6} 20.\texttt{xe6} \texttt{c7} 21.\texttt{c5} (Now White does not have time to double his rooks with 21.\texttt{d2} \texttt{b8} 22.\texttt{b6} \texttt{d8}, when Black would still be in the game.) 21...\texttt{b8} 22.\texttt{x}d8+ \texttt{xd8} 23.\texttt{xb7}+ \texttt{xb7} 24.\texttt{d1}+ \texttt{e8} 25.\texttt{d6} \texttt{a7} 26.\texttt{a4} \texttt{b8} 27.\texttt{xa6} The material is equal, while Black is completely paralysed. White should win without much trouble.

18...\texttt{h6}!

The original attempt to solve the problems around the king with 18...0–0–0

22.\texttt{xd8†} \texttt{c7} 23.\texttt{h4†}, and on either capture of the knight White wins the \texttt{b8}-bishop in a different way: 23...\texttt{xb6} is met with 24.\texttt{xf8} \texttt{xf8} 25.\texttt{xb4†}, whereas on 23...\texttt{xb6} the fork comes from a different side: 24.\texttt{xf8} \texttt{xf8} 25.\texttt{c7†}.

19.\texttt{f4} \texttt{c7} 20.\texttt{e5}

White's play here is rather straightforward. Now he is threatening \texttt{c7}.

20...\texttt{b8}

After 20...\texttt{d8} White wins a piece with 21.\texttt{f5} \texttt{xf6} 22.\texttt{xd8†} \texttt{xd8} 23.\texttt{d6†} \texttt{e7} 24.\texttt{xb7}.

21.\texttt{b6}

Black suffers heavy material losses.

These fairly forced lines prove that Topalov's intuition did not fail him, and 16...\texttt{d6}, not allowing any forced wins, was the best choice from a practical standpoint.

Back to the game:

17.\texttt{b1}?

A complete waste of time. White should have played 17.\texttt{f4} when he has Black at his mercy. For example:

a) 17...\texttt{xf4}? 18.\texttt{g4} \texttt{d5} 19.\texttt{xe6} is an 'ouch'.

b) 17...\texttt{h6}?! weakens the \texttt{g6}-square, and therefore loses immediately to 18.\texttt{xe6!} \texttt{xe6} 19.\texttt{d3}, which needs no explanation, while 18...\texttt{fxe6} is bad due to 19.\texttt{h5†} \texttt{d7} 20.\texttt{f7†} \texttt{e8} 21.\texttt{xe6} \texttt{d7} 22.\texttt{e7†}! (the less spectacular 22.\texttt{b6†} \texttt{xb6} 23.\texttt{xd7} \texttt{xd7} 24.\texttt{h4} \texttt{d5} 25.f5 wins as well) 22...\texttt{xe7} 23.\texttt{xd5†} \texttt{xd5}

19.\texttt{c4†} \texttt{c7} 20.\texttt{b6†} \texttt{b8} 21.\texttt{c6†}! \texttt{xc6}

does not work due to spectacular geometry:
24.Qb6+ Qc7 25.Qxd7 Qxe6 26.Qxe6 Qd6 27.Qe5 White has a queen and two pawns for two black rooks, but what matters here is the open position of the black king.

c) 17...g6 18.f5
A good illustration of the dangers awaiting Black on every move can be seen after:

18...h6?
Returning the favour. The correct and natural reaction was 17...g6

White has quite a few possibilities, although only one is really promising:

a) 18.Qc5 does not work because of 18...Qxe5

b) Kasparov suggested the spectacular 18.a3 awarding the move two exclamation marks, providing the following line:

18...Qg7
18...bxa3 is now met with 19.c4, whereas after

With a substantial advantage for White in the endgame.

However, Black can improve his play with 20...Qb6!: The queen is moved away from X-rays along the d-file, and creates threats along the b-file. On 21.Qxb7 Black has a strong intermediate move at his disposal: 21...Qxb4!, with the threat of 22.fxe6, and Black has the upper hand in the complications. 21.c3 is simply met with 21...Qf8 (threatening Qxf6), with a very dangerous initiative for the pawn, and 21.Qd7 is again bad due to 21...Qxb4.

c) Even having wasted a tempo (on 17. Qb1) White's strongest move is still 18.f4!!:

18...Qg7
On 18...h6 White can sacrifice the whole set with 19.Qc5! hxc5 (19...Qe8 20.Qe4) 20.Qxb7 Qe7 21.Qe4. Black's position is as lost as a position can be. One of the unpleasant threats occupying Black's mind is Qxe6 followed by Qxg6† with a party.
19.f5 Qd4
19...0-0 20.Qxe6 Qac8 (20...Qxd4 21.e7) 21.exf7† Qxf7 22.Qe6! and now either 22...Qc7 23.Qf1 or 22...Qxe6 23.Qxe6 is very difficult for Black.
20.Qxd4 Qxf5
Worse is 20...0-0 21.f6 Qc8 (21...Qfd8 22.Qd2 Qc6 23.Qh4 e5 24.Qxe5 Qac8 25.Qb6! either winning material or mating) 22.Qd2 Qc6
23...h4! The weakness of the dark squares around the king establishes White's advantage beyond any doubt.
21...h5 c8

22.g4!
Gaining control over the important e4-square.
22...f4
After 22...fxg4 23.exd4 Black has no hope.
23.h6 c6
23...f3 loses to 24.d2, and Black is unable to hold his kingside
24.c4! d6 25.xf4 xf4 26.xf4
White continues his attack against the king while maintaining the material balance, whereas:
26...d2? lethally abandons the king: 27.xe6# fxe6 28.xe6# d8 29.xf6# d7 30.d4# and White wins.
18.h4 f4!
The only move that protects the vital e6-square, and does so with a tempo. What more can one ask from a single move?!
Having said that, we must state that Black's position is still lost, provided White plays correctly.
19.f2
And now it is the critical point of the game.
19...c7

20.d5?
A bad mistake by Leko, who was under heavy time pressure by now, but he usually spots such things in blitz.
20.d6! was the correct path: the beauty of which can be observed after 20...xb6 21.xe6!
xf2 22.c7 mate, or 21...xe6 22.a7!, both winning in some style.
So, Black would have to answer with 20...b8 and only now 21.d5. The addition of a knight...
in the game (b6) has a huge impact on the situation. 21...g5 already does not work due to 22.\text{\textd双}d7! (threatening \text{\textd双}f6 mate!) 22...\text{\textd双}d5 23.\text{\textd双}xd5 and White wins. The attempt to get rid of the annoying knight with 21...\text{\textd双}c6 fails to 22.\text{\textd双}d4! \text{\textd双}g8 23.\text{\textd双}c4 g5 24.\text{\textd双}g3 followed by an inevitable \text{\textd双}d6†.

20...g5

An accurate assessment of the situation in the game (not just the position) can only be given relatively to what used to be a few moves ago. Black's position is still suspicious, but it cannot be compared to the abyss he was facing throughout the past five moves.

21.\text{\textd双}g3 \text{\textd双}c8

The attempt to reduce White's attacking potential with exchanges by means of 21...\text{\textd双}d8 leads to quite a serious advantage for White after 22.\text{\textd双}xd8† \text{\textd双}xd8 23.\text{\textd双}c5 \text{\textd双}d5 24.\text{\textd双}e4! (threatening \text{\textd双}xf4 and \text{\textd双}d4) 24...\text{\textd双}xe4 25.fxe4. Black cannot take to knight as it would prove deadly to his own king, whereas tolerating the knight is virtually impossible as well.

22.\text{\textd双}d4?!}

Leko is still under the influence of the huge advantage he had a few moves ago, but it was time to think in positional terms now.

The queen sacrifice 22.\text{\textd双}b6 \text{\textd双}c5 23.\text{\textd双}xc8 \text{\textd双}xf2 24.\text{\textd双}cd6† \text{\textd双}f8 25.\text{\textd双}xf2 does not lead to the goal after 25...\text{\textd双}d5 (but not 25...\text{\textd双}xf5 26.\text{\textd双}e8† \text{\textd双}g7 27.\text{\textd双}d4† \text{\textd双}f6 28.\text{\textd双}xf6† \text{\textd双}xf6 29.\text{\textd双}h8 with an unclear game) 26.\text{\textd双}d4 \text{\textd双}g8 27.\text{\textd双}f6 \text{\textd双}g6 and Black wards off White's initiative.

However, the best move was 22.\text{\textd双}d2 when it is hard to see a better move for Black than 22...\text{\textd双}d8, which we looked at in the previous annotation.

22...\text{\textd双}g8

Now it suddenly turns out that none of the white pieces coordinates with each other.

Of course, 22...\text{\textd双}xc2† loses, as after the king's retreat Black will be unable to defend both h8 and d7.

23.c3?

It is a known fact that mistakes never travel alone. This move can be awarded more than one question mark, since not only does it change the
course of the game by 180 degrees, but the flow of the whole tournament (and arguably chess history).

It was vital to bring the queen back home with 23...\(\text{b}2\), and Black’s position would still be far from pleasant. The seemingly tempting 23...\(\text{a}5\) loses to 24.\(\text{b}6\) \(\text{xf}5\) 25.\(\text{xc}8\) \(\text{xc}8\) 26.\(\text{b}6\), while after 23...\(\text{c}6\) 24.\(\text{b}3\) \(\text{d}5\) 25.\(\text{d}4\), White is still better.

23...\(\text{b}8\)!

This is probably the move that escaped Leko’s attention. Topalov forces a queen exchange. Without the ladies Black’s monarch will be very comfortable in the centre, whereas both white knights are much worse than the black bishops. The rest of the game does not really need explanations. Just sit back and enjoy Topalov’s technique.

24.\(\text{y} xd8\)!

24.\(\text{e}3\) \(\text{c}6\) 25.\(\text{b}6\) \(\text{bxc}3\) with a serious advantage for Black.

24...\(\text{f}6\)? \(\text{xd}1\) \(\text{f}5\) and there is no compensation for the material deficit.

24...\(\text{xd}8\) 25.\(\text{xd}8\) ? \(\text{xd}8\)

Miraculously, Black has managed to survive the attack with zero damage and, contrary to what might have been expected, he even has the more active pieces in the endgame. His bishop pair is going to be extremely strong in just a few moves, as there are no obstacles in the centre to prevent them from playing on both sides of the board. The knight on \(\text{f}4\) is suddenly putting very unpleasant pressure on White’s kingside (along with the light-squared bishop). White’s pieces, on the other hand, are no longer operating as a unit, but as unconnected (and hunted) soldiers.

26.\(\text{c}3\)

Or 26.\(\text{d}1\) \(\text{c}7\) 27.\(\text{d}c3\) \(\text{bxc}3\) 28.\(\text{xc}3\) \(\text{e}5\) 29.\(\text{b}3\) \(\text{f}6\) and Black is much better.

26...\(\text{c}6\) 27.\(\text{b}6\)

27.\(\text{b}\) \(\text{xa}4\) 28.\(\text{bxa}4\) \(\text{bxc}3\) 29.\(\text{c}2\) \(\text{g}7\) is hopeless for White.

27...\(\text{bxc}3\) 28.\(\text{bxc}3\) \(\text{g}7\)

Black’s bishops indisputably control the whole board, and each and every one of White’s weaknesses is going to get special treatment.

29.\(\text{a}4\)

29.\(\text{c}2\) \(\text{c}7\) 30.\(\text{ec}4\) (30.\(\text{bc}4\) loses to 30...\(\text{a}4\) 31...\(\text{h}5!\) and Black wins easily.

29...\(\text{e}6\) 30.\(\text{d}1\)

It is almost painful to look at White’s position...

30...\(\text{b}5\)

Precision to the end. This move cuts the white knight off.

31.\(\text{a}4\) \(\text{d}3\) 32.\(\text{c}1\) \(\text{c}7\) 33.\(\text{a}5\)

The pawn is doing a great job protecting the knight on \(\text{b}6\). Too bad it will not stay there for long.

33...\(\text{h}8\) 34.\(\text{d}2\) \(\text{b}5\) 35.\(\text{g}1\) \(\text{c}6\)

Now White loses material.

36.\(\text{e}2\) \(\text{e}5\)

Principally stronger was 36...\(\text{g}5\) when the rook penetrates from the other flank, snatching a5 in the process.

37.\(\text{c}4\) \(\text{d}4\) 38.\(\text{f}2\) \(\text{c}3\)!

An inaccuracy that could and should have made the win more difficult to achieve, whereas 38...\(\text{g}5\) would have ended it on the spot.

39.\(\text{e}4\)!

The final mistake.

The stubborn Leko would normally have undoubtedly found the unexpected resource: 39.\(\text{c}1\) \(\text{xa}5\) 40.\(\text{d}5\) \(\text{xd}5\) 41.\(\text{xd}5\) \(\text{b}6\) 42.\(\text{d}6\) \(\text{ex}6\) The a-pawn will probably decide matters in Black’s favour, but there is still some work to be done.

39...\(\text{xa}5\) 40.\(\text{c}5\) \(\text{f}5\)

0–1
Alexander Morozevich

Rustam Kasimdzhanov

Sicilian Najdorf B92

1.e4 c5 2.\d3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.\dxd4 \f6 5.\c3 a6 6.\e2

Morozevich opts for a relatively calm position – some would say it does not suit his style, but his style is to be unpredictable, so everything is OK.

6...e5 7.\b3 \e7 8.0-0 0-0

A very popular position for many years. In the past, White used to try and strangle Black by pushing his a- and f-pawns to the fifth rank. With time, however, Black (namely: Fischer, Kasparov) learned to deal with it, and since then White has played in a more careful manner. Now one of the main ideas at his disposal is to place a knight on the tasty d5-square. Despite the fact that the beautiful knight will only be exchanged there, the changed pawn structure might be pretty promising for White.

9.\c1

Quite common, and perhaps undeservedly. The king is hiding in the corner, thus freeing the f-pawn for movement, and in the meantime White is waiting for Black’s reaction – will he weaken his position? Black tried many ways here, mostly with success, but is still looking for new possibilities, trying to take an even bigger bite out of White. To conclude: in the opening phase one could say that Black has many ways to achieve equality – it is up to the player’s personal preference. White does not choose this line to shock Black, but rather because the arising positions are to his taste.

Another key continuation is 9.\e3 and after 9...\e6 10.\d3 \bd7 11.\d5 \xd5 12.exd5 the arising position could be a theme for a most intriguing book.

9...\c6?!)

One of the most popular continuations, and a very interesting one. Now the game is rerouted, surprisingly enough, into Boleslavsky Variation positions: 1.e4 c5 2.\f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.\xd4 \f6 5.\c3 \c6 6.\e2 e5, where 7.\b3 is not considered to be dangerous for Black. The difference between the Boleslavsky and the game lies in the fact that here Black enters the line with his “rightmost” pawn on a6, which is not the best way, since a7-a5 is considered to be more promising. On the other hand, even if Black decides to advance a6-a5 anyway, it appears that White did not really win a tempo either, as the king on h1 is not exactly a huge achievement.

An interesting alternative that is believed to be among Black’s best is 9...b6. It virtually replaced the immediate 9...b5, since after 10.a4 b4 (or 10...\b7 11.\d5 \bd7 12.\xe7+ \e7 13.\f3 and Black’s queenside cannot withstand the pressure) 11.\d5 \xd5 12.\xd5 \a7 13.\e3 \e6 14.\d2 \b7 15.\f4 Black is in trouble.

However, after the modest 9...b6 Black has more chances to get a satisfactory position. For instance: 10.\e3 \b7 11.\f3 and only now 11...b5, as after the thematic 12.a4 Black has 12...b4 13.\d5 \xd5 and the queen cannot capture on d5 – here the distinction from
9...b5 becomes clear. After 14.exd5 Qd7 15.c4 bxc3 16.bxc3 Qg5 17.Qg1 (17.Qf2!) 17...f5 18.c4 Qf6 19.Qb1 Qh5 20.g3 f4 21.g4 Qf6 Black achieved a good game in Adams – Anand, Corsica Masters 2005.

10.f3

It is interesting that Morozevich is familiar with all the subtleties of the move – judging from the database, the main supporters of this move are grandmasters Jakovenko and Smirnov, who play together with him in the Russian league for the team Tomsk-400. Despite that it feels strange to criticize a move which has been played quite a few times by strong players, there is, nevertheless, a strong feeling that among the trio Wh1-f3-ie3 (ie3 to be played next move), at least one is redundant. 10.f3 is a preparation for Qd5 – that’s clear. But how exactly does 9.Qh1 help White here? True, a waste of a tempo in these positions is of less importance, but it is hard to believe that Black will not find a way to use the time, and reach a good position.

More principled seems 10.f4.

Now 10...b5 is possible, since the scary forced line 11.a4 b4 12.Qd5 Qxe4 13.Qf3 f5 14.Qxe7 Qxe7 15.fxe5 dxe5 16.Qxd8 Qxd8 17.Qxe4 fxe4 18.Qg5 Ba7 proved insufficient for White in Dervishi – Kobalia, Istanbul 2003.

However, the most ambitious seems to be 10...a5 11.a4 Qb4. Apart from the white king, who has managed to escape to h1, a well-known Boleslavsky position has arisen, which is known to be good for Black. To sum up, 9.Qh1 is maybe White’s only reason to hope for something, but he is not the only one who is going to be hopeful here.

10.b5!

Kasimdzhanov opts for a very rare line – it had only been played once before now. A specific justification of this move is as follows: as we already mentioned, the knight from c3 is heading to d5, and therefore, Black is not hurrying to develop his bishop to e6, thus preserving the option of capturing on d5 with the knight. In the meanwhile, Black is playing on his flank. The drawback of the move is that White gets a target on the queenside as well, which he can attack with a2-a4, for example, and can hope to seize the initiative on the queenside as well. And on more general grounds:

a) ...Qc6 and ...b5 do not fit together well.

b) b7-b5 is better played after White has gone f2-f4 – then Black will have counterplay against the e4-pawn.

More popular is 10...Qe6 intending after 11.Qd5! to ignore the knight (as after taking it, Black will eventually miss his light-squared bishop) a-la Sveshnikov. An interesting counterplan was demonstrated two weeks after this tournament: 11...a5 12.Qe3 a4 13.Qc1 Qxd5 14.exd5 Qd4!

With strong counterplay, as one can see in the diagram in, Asrian – Grischuk, Beer Sheva 2005.

11.Qe3

11.Qd5 is playing into Black’s hands, and even gifts him the initiative. Sutovsky takes no prisoners in such cases, as we can see in the following example: 11...Qxd5 12.exd5 Qa5
54 ROUND 1

13. \( \text{d2} \) (13. \( \text{xa5} \)!? deserves consideration)

13. \( \text{dc4} \) 14. \( \text{xc4} \) \( \text{bxc4} \) 15. \( \text{a5} \) \( \text{d7} \) 16. \( \text{b3} \) \( \text{f6}! \) 17. \( \text{bxc4} \) e4! 18. \( \text{b1} \) e3! (rollicking play by Sutovsky) 19. \( \text{b4} \) \( \text{e8} \) 20. \( \text{e1} \) \( \text{b8} \) 21. a3 e2 22. \( \text{d3} \) \( \text{b6} \) 23. \( \text{b3} \) a5, and here White lost his way with 24. \( \text{xa5} \). After 24... \( \text{e8}! \) 25. \( \text{c6} \) \( \text{b6} \) 26. c3 \( \text{e3} \) 27. \( \text{d2} \) \( \text{xc3} \) White resigned, Palac – Sutovsky, Pula 2000.

11. ... \( \text{a5} \) 12. \( \text{xa5} \)

Of course the black knight's arrival on c4 cannot be allowed. For example, 12. \( \text{f2} \), with a classical idea of reorganization (\( \text{f1} \), \( \text{d2} \)), permits Black's dreams to come true, since after 12... \( \text{c4} \) White feels serious discomfort from the resident on c4.

12... \( \text{xa5} \) 13. \( \text{d2} \)

Forcing the black queen away from a5 by setting a mini-trap. As long as it goes along with the big plan, there is nothing wrong with setting childish traps... Who knows, it might work one day.

13. \( \text{g5} \) is doubtful, since after 13... \( \text{e6} \) 14. \( \text{xf6} \) \( \text{xf6} \) this Sveshnikov-like position can be considered as fine for Black – the knight that is going to land on d5 will be no more than a paper tiger, while Black's plans for a kingside initiative seem to be even more powerful than White's chances of finding something on the opposite flank.

13... \( \text{c7} \)

Of course, in such tournaments people do not normally fall for cheap shots. The "threat" of \( \text{c3-d5} \) is dismissed, while the queen is placed on the most suitable square.

13... \( \text{e6} \) would have allowed White to execute his 'hidden' threat after 14. \( \text{d5} \) \( \text{xd8} \) (14... \( \text{xd2} \) 15. \( \text{xe7} \)† 15. \( \text{xf6} \)† \( \text{xf6} \) 16. \( \text{d1} \) \( \text{e7} \) 17. a4 and White is about to direct all his love and care to Black's weaknesses on the queenside.

13... \( \text{b4} \) also leads to an unpleasant endgame by force after 14. \( \text{d5} \) \( \text{xd5} \) 15. \( \text{exd5} \) \( \text{b7} \) 16. a3! \( \text{xd5} \) 17. \( \text{xd5} \) \( \text{xd5} \) 18. \( \text{xb4} \), and White's wing pawns are much more dangerous than Black's central lazybones.

14. a4

GM Sakaev rightly spoke in favour of preparing a2-a4 better, suggesting 14. \( \text{fcl} \) as an improvement. It seems that Black has to play very carefully here. Otherwise, after 14... \( \text{e6} \) 15. a4 b4 16. \( \text{d5} \) \( \text{xd5} \) 17. exd5, for instance, White is a tempo up, compared to the game, which allows him to play 17... \( \text{xf5} \) 18. a5! with a big edge.

But the natural response here is 14... \( \text{b8} \): if White is going to prepare himself for a2-a4, why can't Black use prophylaxis as well? After 15. a4 b4 16. \( \text{d5} \) \( \text{xd5} \) 17. exd5 \( \text{a5} \) a position similar to the game is reached.

14... \( \text{b4} \) 15. \( \text{d5} \)

Another well-known plan, 15. \( \text{a2} \), does not work here, since after 15... \( \text{a5} \) the typical 16. c3 meets the retort 16... \( \text{b3} \)! 17. \( \text{c1} \) \( \text{e6} \) and White is in trouble.

15... \( \text{xd5} \) 16. \( \text{exd5} \) \( \text{f5} \)

As a consequence of White's plan, Black has managed to achieve equality.

17. \( \text{f1} \) \( \text{a5} \)

17... \( \text{a5} \) could be a serious positional mistake, since it actually increases White's pressure: the b5-square weakness will help him to develop the initiative. For example: 18. \( \text{b5} \) \( \text{f6} \) 19. c3 and Black is under heavy pressure.

18. c4

White had no choice – he's getting rid of a weakness on c2, and he now has ideas of advancing the pawn to c5. On the other hand, White has weakened his backyard, and Black is going to take advantage of it.

18... \( \text{bxc3} \)

Black prefers to open the b-file, because if he does not, for instance with 18... \( \text{ac8} \), he'll be left with no counterplay. This statement might look strange, as Black intends to play on
the kingside, so why not close the other flank? However, it is an illusion: advancing f7-f5 by itself does not gain much, and it is even less dangerous without active pieces. Comparing to the position in the game, it becomes clear that in this case White could build up unpleasant pressure on both sides (with ideas of f4 and c5) without looking.

19.\textit{Ex}c3 b\textit{ab}8

Morozevich is very patient, but now was the time to get going.

After 20.b4 a complicated position arises, where White is at least not worse. 20...\textit{Ex}b4 (less convincing is 20...\textit{Ex}b4 21.e4 \textit{E}fb8 22.b4 \textit{Ex}b4 23.\textit{Ex}b4 \textit{Ex}b4 24.a6 with a better ending for White) 21.a6 f6 with dynamic equality.

20...f6

Now Black steals the initiative.

21.b3 e4?!

As opposed to White, who has too much self-restraint, Black is in too much of a hurry exploiting his advantages, especially as White is much better prepared for opening the game.

After 21...\textit{Ed}8 (here or on the previous move) intending to swap the dark-squared bishops, White is able to gain the initiative by attacking the a6- and d6-pawns with 22.f1! b6 23.e6 with an advantage.

But after the correct 21...\textit{E}e8, keeping the option to play e4 at a convenient time, Black is fine.

White does not have many useful things to do with the given time. The only thing Black should pay attention to is not to allow a moment when White will be able to respond with f4 to Black's e5-e4. Such positions have been investigated in the King's Indian for a long time, and the results showed that the beautiful pawn on e4 does not compensate for the lack of active plans.

22.d4 \textit{Ex}d4 23.\textit{Ex}d4 e3 24.\textit{Ex}f3 \textit{E}g6

As a result of Kasimdzhanov's rash decision, the advantage has changed hands one more time. Black would like to advance his a-pawn to the fifth rank, but as soon as the queen vacates the a5-square it will be seized by a white pawn, thus fixing the a6-pawn as a permanent weakness. In the forthcoming moves all the play circles around this matter.

25.e3 \textit{E}e8 26.h3 h6 27.a2 \textit{Ex}e3 28.\textit{Ex}e3 \textit{E}a8

This move looks awkward, but is strong. Black protects the a6-pawn and, what is more important, deprives the white queen of an entry point on a7. If such moves are needed, though, it is further evidence that White is on top.

29.\textit{Dr}2

Once again, White does not spot the right moment to transform his initiative into something more tangible.

After 29.e7 Black would have to defend d6 with his queen, which allows White to play a4-a5.

29...h7 30.a1 \textit{E}g8 31.\textit{E}f4

There was a great way of using the advantage:
to supplant the queen from a5 by threatening an exchange. This means that very strong, possibly decisive, was 31.\texttt{Ke1}. After the black queen moves, White will finally advance 32.a5, with a big advantage.

31...\texttt{Ad8} 32.\texttt{Fb4} \texttt{Be8} 33.\texttt{Af1}

After a series of idle moves, Morozevich misses Black’s only idea.

33...\texttt{Ab4}!

Black uses the fact that White cannot play a5 and solves his biggest problem. In truth, it is White who has problems now.

34.\texttt{Ff4} \texttt{Bc5} 35.\texttt{Ff2} a5

Without the weakness on a6 Black takes back the advantage with interest. It is about piece placement now, and that is clearly in Black’s favour.

36.\texttt{Fd3}?

The well-known principle works – a small mistake leads to a bigger one. This move gives up on a pawn with no compensation and was probably the result of miscalculation. Sadly, Morozevich demonstrates once again that he plays badly in the beginning of tournaments.

36...\texttt{Fxh3} 37.\texttt{Fg6} \texttt{Fxg6} 38.\texttt{Fb8}+ \texttt{Fh7} 39.\texttt{Fg8}

It turns out that after 39.\texttt{Ff7} not only does White fail to deliver mate, but is forced to trade queens after 39...\texttt{Fxh5} with a winning rook ending for Black.

39...\texttt{Bf5} 40.\texttt{Ff4}

40...\texttt{Fxd5}?

With the last move before the time control Black throws away all the advantage. The arising endgame is impossible to win.

40...\texttt{Fg5}! on the other hand, would lead to a technically won endgame: 41.\texttt{Ff2} (the alternative 41.\texttt{Ff2} is no more appealing: 41...\texttt{Fxd5} with two extra pawns and an easy win) 41...\texttt{Fxd5} 42.\texttt{Fxd6} \texttt{Fxd6} 43.\texttt{Fb2} \texttt{Fxd6} 44.\texttt{Fh1} \texttt{Fh1}\# and Black wins easily.

41.\texttt{Fxd6} \texttt{Fxd4} 42.\texttt{Fxd4}

Now Black is better, but with no way to win.

42...\texttt{g5} 43.\texttt{Fg3}

43.\texttt{Fc4} loses after 43...\texttt{Ff4}.

43...\texttt{h5} 44.\texttt{Bc4} \texttt{h6} 45.\texttt{Be6}!

White must attack the a5-pawn. After 45.\texttt{Fb4} h4\# 46.\texttt{Fg4} \texttt{Ff2} White loses another pawn, which brings the game to the end.

45...\texttt{g6} 46.\texttt{Ba6} \texttt{Bc5}

46...\texttt{h4} would change nothing: 47.\texttt{Fh2} \texttt{Fh5} 48.\texttt{g4}! with a draw.

47.\texttt{Fh2} \texttt{Fg7}
Black's last chance to win the game is to drive his king to the queenside.
48.g3 g4 49.hxg4 hxg4 50.g2 e5 51.f2 f7 52.a7 f6
52...e6 was Black's last try to play for a win. White still has a draw, but has to sweat a bit for it: 53.a6† d7 54.xg6 e4 55.g5 xa4 56.e3 With a draw.
53.a6† f5 54.c6 e4 ½–½

GAME 3
Peter Svidler
Michael Adams
Petroff Defence C42

The motto of this game is 'aggressive defence'. Quite a few times during the game Black faced a problem, and each time the only way out was the most active continuation. Eventually, Black conducted a good game, played the best moves, even some "only" moves.

1.e4 e5 2.d3 d6

A Petroff, of course, though Adams also played the Ruy Lopez in San Luis, but in the first round against Svidler, who plays it himself, he chose the more solid option.

3.xe5 d6 4.d3 xe4 5.d4 d5 6.d3 c6

Despite that the position is symmetrical, the move order here is quite significant, since Black has to be ready for White's thematic c2-c4.

7.0–0 e7

In the past 7...g4 used to be popular (even Anatoly Karpov used to play this way), but it now appears to be problematic thanks to one of the most spectacular moves ever played in any opening. 8.c4 d6 9.d3 xf3 10.xf3xd4 11.h3 e6 (of course, better is 11...dxc4 although here, too, Black does not always manage to equalize) 12.cxd5 xe6. Here White uncorked the amazing 13.xg6! deciding the game, and entered quite a few combination books, Nadanian – Sharbatov, Correspondence 1992.

8.c4 d4

This position used to be considered as unfavourable for Black, as White eventually manages to seize control over the centre. As time went by, the perception has changed: if Black manages to create a few weaknesses in White's camp, his counterplay will be sufficient.

9...e2 0–0 10.a3

Another key move is 10.d3, which can lead to positions similar to the game (after 15...e5), but allows Black to deviate after 10...e6 and here White's best try is surprisingly to encourage Black to play f7-f6 with 11.e5 f6 12.d3. A knight can go back, a pawn cannot. 12...h8
13.a3 \texttt{a}xc3 14.bxc3 \texttt{c}c6 f6 turns out to be quite damaging for Black. For instance, after 15.\texttt{d}d2 \texttt{a}a5 16.cxd5 \texttt{x}xd5 17.c4!, White managed to achieve a serious advantage, Kasimdzhanov – Adams, Tripoli (7.2) 2004.

10...\texttt{c}c6 11.\texttt{x}d5 \texttt{x}d5 12.\texttt{e}c3

White, of course, is not ready to live with weaknesses for nothing, so he is taking over Black's positions in the centre.

12...\texttt{c}c3 13.bxc3 \texttt{a}a5

A very popular move in the Brit's games, and he undoubtedly would not play a move he does not have confidence in. So, it is time to try and understand the concepts of this position: White has a pawn majority in the centre, with the obvious plan of advancing it. The problem he is facing is how to do so without losing the pawns in the process. If Black manages to block the pawns from moving, they could prove to be weaknesses rather than strengths. So far the plans are very clear. What is not so clear is who is right, and it depends on the timing of the execution, and move order. Our strong belief is that Black's chances to equalize are higher than White's chances of getting an advantage, but one must be extremely careful. In the given position White has tried virtually every possible continuation, and the problem, again, is timing. e.g. had Black already played ...\texttt{f}6, then 14.\texttt{f}4 would have given White an advantage, as this would force a rook to be allocated to the protection of c7. If White plays 15.\texttt{f}4 now, however, Black will play ...\texttt{d}6, so White needs a useful move, but which?

The main continuation here is 13...\texttt{f}5. It should be mentioned that the dispute about White's advantage is fierce at present.

14.\texttt{b}b1

This seems to be not only useful, but also a pressurizing move – if we’re waiting for the opening of the position, why not give Black an additional headache on b7, and threaten \texttt{b}5 in the process? The drawback of the move is no less obvious, as it allows \texttt{f}5 with a tempo, and it seems that this beats all other factors.

A serious alternative is 14.\texttt{e}e1, which is useful, but does not really prevent Black's forces from camping inside White's territory. Black should decide on his pieces' placement now, especially that of the dark-squared bishop. The most natural is 14...\texttt{d}d6 15.\texttt{b}b1 \texttt{d}d7 16.\texttt{e}e3 \texttt{c}c4 17.\texttt{d}d2 \texttt{xe}3 18.fxe3 \texttt{g}5 19.\texttt{f}3 \texttt{a}e8 20.\texttt{c}c4 and Black's position is fine despite the fact he lost the game in Polgar – Adams, Sofia 2005.

Later on in the tournament Leko will play 14.\texttt{e}e5?! against Michael Adams (Game 27) with great success.
14...a6

A logical reaction, which prevents \( Bb5 \), but \( b7 \) is still screaming for defence.

Another interesting possibility is 14...b6, over-protecting the knight and solving the pawn issue. The long diagonal becomes problematic now, but there are no apparent ways for White to exploit it. \( e.g. 15.Bf4 Bd6 16.Bf5 Bf5 17.Bb5 Be4 18.Bg3 Bc2 19.Bf1 a6 20.Bd1 Bb2 \) and it was Black enjoying a clear edge, Harper – Rene, Internet blitz 2004.

15.Df5

It looks as if the insertion of 14.Bb1 a6 should be clearly to White’s advantage: he brought in a rook while Black wasted a tempo on ...a6. But, as we said earlier, it allows Black to develop the bishop with tempo, so paradoxically the reality is the opposite.

15...Bd6!?

It turns out that White has nothing serious here.


Perhaps Svidler had something in mind? What could it be?

Surely not 17.Be1, as there is no advantage here either: 17...fxf3 18.Bxf3 Bx6.


17.Bb2
Black must be aggressive here. If he stalls, White will successfully complete his takeover of the centre. The good news is that the calculations needed are not very complicated.

17...\textit{\texttt{Bxa3!}}

Tactics allow Black to equalize. It is interesting to see how, from a seemingly dull position, Black must dive into complications in order to stay alive.

After the calm 17...\textit{\texttt{Bad8}} White gets a pleasant edge: 18.\textit{\texttt{Bc1}} 19.\textit{\texttt{Ba4}} b6 20.\textit{\texttt{Bce2}} with a big plus: such a construction, with rooks taking control over the central files, and a beautiful knight on the e5 outpost, is the ideal set-up in this line.

18.\textit{\texttt{Bc2}}

The try 18.\textit{\texttt{Bxb7}} looks fascinating, but Black escapes: 18...\textit{\texttt{Bxc1}} 19.\textit{\texttt{Bxc7}} 19f4 20.\textit{\texttt{Bc5}} 19b3 21.\textit{\texttt{Bc6}} 19e7 22.\textit{\texttt{Bxb3}} 19xe5 23.dxe5 19xe5 with equality.

Another way leads to more of a fight: 18...\textit{\texttt{Bxb7}} 19.\textit{\texttt{Bxa3}} 19d6 (but not 19...\textit{\texttt{Bb8}} 20.\textit{\texttt{Bc1}} with a clear advantage) 20.\textit{\texttt{Bxa8}} 19x8 This is probably a draw, but both sides can play for an advantage nonetheless.

18...\textit{\texttt{Bc1}}

As the analysis shows, this variation is almost a forced draw. During the game, however, that was not so obvious: Black's pieces are hanging somewhat, after all. Adams proves that every part of the puzzle is in place.

19.\textit{\texttt{Bc6}}

Nice, but it meets as cold-blooded response.

There is nothing after 19.\textit{\texttt{Bxc1}}. White will get back a pawn sooner or later, and as compensation Black will get back to equality: 19...\textit{\texttt{Bd6}} 20.\textit{\texttt{Ba1}} 19c6 21.\textit{\texttt{Bxc6}} bxc6 22.\textit{\texttt{Bf1}} with a most probable draw.

19...\textit{\texttt{Bf6}} 20.\textit{\texttt{Bxa5}} 19f4 21.\textit{\texttt{Bxb7}}

The moment of truth: is there sufficient counterplay against White's simple plan of conquering Black's weaknesses?

21...\textit{\texttt{Bab8!}}

Black finds the answer! The counterplay with the rook's invasion promises him equality, at least.

Without the text move White would indeed get an advantage, e.g. 21...\textit{\texttt{Bae8}} 22.g3 19d6.

Or 22...\textit{\texttt{Bg6}} 23.\textit{\texttt{Bxe8}} 19xe8 24.\textit{\texttt{Be1}} 19xe1+ 25.\textit{\texttt{Bxe1}} \textit{\texttt{Bf8}} 26.\textit{\texttt{Ac5}} and White's advantage is indisputable.

23.\textit{\texttt{Bxe8}} 19xe8 24.\textit{\texttt{Ba4}} and the weakness on a6 guarantees White's advantage.

22.\textit{\texttt{Bf1}} g6 23.\textit{\texttt{Ba2}} c6

And after:

24.\textit{\texttt{Bc5}}

As Spassky used to say: "and the opponents resigned to a draw". One might complain: 'Why do these GMs agree a draw at such an early stage?' Well, after the game many commentators looked for, and found an explanation, even more than one.

After the obvious 24...\textit{\texttt{Bb1}} White has an interesting choice:

The aggressive queen sacrifice with 25.\textit{\texttt{Bxb1}} does not work for concrete reasons: 25...\textit{\texttt{Bxb1}} 26.\textit{\texttt{Bxb1}} 19b8 27.\textit{\texttt{Ba1}} as after 27...\textit{\texttt{Bc7}}!

Enough for draw is 27...\textit{\texttt{Ba5}} 28.\textit{\texttt{Bxa5}} 19xa5 29.\textit{\texttt{Bxa5}} 19xh2 30.\textit{\texttt{Bf4}} 31.\textit{\texttt{Bf4}} 32.\textit{\texttt{Bf4}} 33.\textit{\texttt{Bf4}}+ with a perpetual.

White finds himself on the defence, as he cannot take the pawn with 28.\textit{\texttt{Bxa6}}, because of 28...\textit{\texttt{Bxa6}} 29.\textit{\texttt{Bxa6}} 30.\textit{\texttt{Bf4}}+.

But the true reason Svidler offered the draw was 25.\textit{\texttt{Be2}}. After the forced 25...\textit{\texttt{Bb8}} 26.\textit{\texttt{De4}} 19e6 27.\textit{\texttt{Df1}} all that is left to be done is to exchange everything and enter an opposite coloured bishops ending after 27...\textit{\texttt{Bxa1}} 28.\textit{\texttt{Bxa1}} 19xe4 29.\textit{\texttt{Bxe4}} f5, terminating all life in the position.

$$\text{½} - \text{½}$$
1.e4 c6

Anand opts for a safe way to start the tournament, and thus the choice of the solid Caro-Kann, rather than diving into Polgar’s favourite sharp games in the Sicilian — this can wait for later.

2.d4 d5 3.e5

3.e5 has become very popular in recent years, mostly due to it being less analysed, and to the fact it leads to completely different positions than those in the normal lines (See for example Game 26).

3...dxe4 4.dxe4 d7

The most solid for Black is considered to be 4...f5, after which White has to work very, very hard for any advantage. The drawback is, however, that Black is limited to only making a draw.

5.d3 g6

In recent years 6.g5 has been the main continuation at the highest levels, and this game seems to provide another supporting argument for that.

6...exd4 7.exd4 d6 8.d3 g4

This is the point. White’s sixth move allowed Black to pin her knight. Statistics shows Black is OK here. On the other hand, the last time this position occurred in Polgar’s praxis, a decade ago, she beat Karpov in fine positional style.

9.e3


Nowadays 9...e6 is more common, and after

6.df3

Black’s position is rock solid, with no weaknesses whatsoever, and his problems are very short-term. His problems are: 1. Being behind in development. 2. Having less space for manoeuvring. If he manages, however, to exchange a few pieces, and carry out a thematic freeing break ...c5 (or ...e5), all his problems will be solved on the spot.
10.h3 \( \text{h5} \) 11.g4 \( \text{g6} \) 12.\( \text{De5} \) White usually does not get much.

The text move is a less common alternative to 9.c3, which, however, does not change the essence of the position – White has no realistic opening advantage.

9...\( \text{e6} \) 10.c3?!

And this is already a serious inaccuracy. Combining 9.\( \text{e3} \) with 10.c3 (or vice versa) spends too much time, and allows Black to prevent White’s freeing manoeuvre of h3-g4-\( \text{De5} \).

A more natural way to continue was 10.h3, and after 10...\( \text{h5} \) 11.g4 \( \text{g6} \) 12.\( \text{De5} \) White’s weaknesses are balanced out by her spatial advantage.

10...\( \text{d6}! \)

The usual location of the dark-squared bishop in this opening is on e7. But Anand understands that, due to White’s unthreatening set-up he can afford this more active development.

Now h3-g4 followed by \( \text{De5} \) is not an option for White, as the d6-bishop controls the e5-square.

11.h3 \( \text{h5} \) 12.\( \text{e2} \)

Polgar is developing her pieces to decent spots, but the pin along the d1-h5 diagonal is quite unpleasant, and it is not easy to find a solution to this issue.

As we said, g4 with \( \text{De5} \) is no longer an option: 12.g4 \( \text{g6} \) 13.\( \text{e5? xe5} \) 14.\( \text{xg6} \) h\( xg6 \) 15.\( \text{xe5} \) \( \text{xd1} \)† 16.\( \text{xd1} \) \( \text{xg4} \).

And without the 13.\( \text{De5} \) follow-up, 12.g4 makes little sense, since it severely weakens the kingside pawn structure.

12...\( \text{a5}! \)

This is not a standard manoeuvre for Black, but Anand is, as always, very concrete. He prevents White from casting long, and therefore invites his opponent to weaken her position.

It seems that Judit Polgar was not ready for this kind of Indian craftiness – she probably expected at some point to exchange pieces peacefully, but Anand does not allow it. He does not start a war (as he does not stand better yet), but he also does not exchange pieces, keeping the tension and hoping his temperamental opponent will start “twitching” and make weaknesses.

13.a4 0–0

Continuing the above plan – White would definitely prefer Black’s king to be on the queenside – in this case her last move would be more appropriate. But Anand provides White with no concrete plan.

14.\( \text{c2?} \)

It is hard to justify this decision, especially in conjunction with White’s last move. With a ruined kingside pawn structure, the king will have to look for safety on the queenside, for which 13.a4 is hardly useful. The text-move simply hands Black the advantage.

After the natural 14.b4 \( \text{c7} \) (intending a7-a5) 15.a5 White has nothing, due to her falling behind in development: 15...\( \text{d5} \) 16.\( \text{d2} \) e5 is to Black’s advantage, since 17.\( \text{xh7} \)† fails to 17...\( \text{h8} \) 18.dxe5 \( \text{xe5} \) 19.g4 \( \text{f6} \) 20.\( \text{xe5} \) \( \text{xex5} \) with a very strong attack.

However, White should have accepted the fact there is no advantage here, and try to complete her development with 14.0–0, keeping the game balanced.

14...\( \text{xh3} \) 15.\( \text{xf3} \) \( \text{h5} \)
Straight and to the point! From h5 the queen attacks White’s weaknesses on the kingside, protects his own king (namely, keeps an eye on h7) and, with the current pawn formation, is virtually invulnerable. Now Black can play for a win for as long as he wants, with no risk – White has no counterplay, and too many weaknesses.

16.0-0-0 \textit{$\text{d}5$}

Black does not even need to grab a pawn with 16...$\text{xf}3$, as after 17.$\text{hg}1$ White might even seize the initiative. Time is more important than a useless pawn.

17.$\text{b}1$ b5!

Anand is after the king, not a pawn. As we mentioned before, the a4-pawn provides Black a wonderful trigger for opening up the game on the queenside. Black’s game is developing smoothly, while White lacks any possibility for active play, as her pawns can no longer storm the opponent king position.

18.$\text{dg}1$ f6

At first sight, Black is protecting against $\text{g}5$. In reality, Anand is preparing a queen transfer to the queenside via f7 or e8.

19.axb5

Generally speaking, White is not fond of opening the c-file, but the weaknesses on the queenside (e.g., the threat of ...bxa4) leave her no choice.

19.$\text{c}1$ bxa4 20.$\text{xa}4$ $\text{ab}8$ 21.$\text{xc}6$ $\text{xf}3$ 22.$\text{e}3$ $\text{fd}8$ followed by ...$\text{b}6$ with a strong attack.

19...cxb5 20.$\text{c}1$ $\text{ab}8$
White has nothing productive to offer:
21...g4 f5 22...g2 hxg3 23...g1 g6 and it is a good time to remember Mr. Smith's famous line from "The Matrix" - "It is a dead end, Mr. Anderson". White's attack has ended, whereas Black's will not be as peaceful.

21...gxe8 22.Y;lie4 'th8
Making sure there are no surprises along the g-file.

23.h4
After 23...g4 f7 24.g4 f5 the white queen is out of the game.

23...f5 24.We2 We7 25.Y;g2
White could have tried to make the black pawns on the kingside move with 25.h5, but after 25...e5 the position does not look tasty at all.

25...f4
This looks a bit superficial, although Anand's approach - to simply improve the position until the opponent cracks under the pressure - can be easily understood.

However, he passes by an opportunity to virtually decide the game by force with:
25...e5! 26.dxe5
Or 26.Y;dl exd4 27.cxd4 We4 28.b3 Y;ec8 (with an unpleasant threat of ...WeC3) 29.Y;e2 Y;e6 (again, the threat of ...Y;ad6 is quite annoying) 30.Y;e3 Y;e6! 31.Y;e2 Y;ad6 and White's best move would be to stop the clock.

26...Y;xe5 27.Y;e2
27.Y;g5 loses to 27...Y;xc3! 28.Y;g5 Y;f6 - White has nothing left to protect her king.

27...b4 28.c4 b3
Black is on a fast track to victory.

26.Y;hgl
Now the black rook has to leave the e-file, and White gets time to take a breath. Her problem is that there is little to do with it.

26...Y;g8 27.Y;e3 Y;d7
Anand does not even look in the direction of immediate assaults. It can be postponed for some time.

Too early would have been 27...b4 28.c4 Y;e3+ 29.bxc3 Y;xg3+ 30.Y;e1 (but not 30.Y;e1?? Y;g2 and Black wins) 30...Y;f7 31.Y;e2 and the king escapes.

28.Y;e2

28...Y;e6
Again, Anand bypasses a promising, but committing line. Black's position is so good that he need not take risks to achieve the goal. He's got a plan, and is not going to abandon it.

Objectively speaking, the fastest way to victory was: 28...b4 29.c4 (29...Y;g4 bxc3 and White can resign. Or 29.cxb4 Y;e4 30.b5 Y;f4 and the troubles come from an unexpected direction.) 29...Y;e4! 30.Y;e4 28.Y;e4 Y;f4 and Black wins.

28...Y;e6
31.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{c1}} \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{a1}} \texttt{+} 32.\texttt{\textcolor{blue}{b1}} \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{gc8}} \texttt{+} 33.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{d1}} \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{c2}}! 0-1)
30...b3 31.\texttt{\textcolor{blue}{xb3}} \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{xb3}} 32.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{xd5}} \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{gb8}} 33.\texttt{\textcolor{blue}{xf4}} \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{a3}}!! A beautiful way to end the game, although even if Anand was looking at such stuff, there is little justification to go for it while life is good without it.

29.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{c2}} \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{b7}}
29...b4 was just as good: 30.c4 b3 31.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{xd5}} bxc2\texttt{+} 32.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{xc2}} exd5 with a huge advantage for Black, but Anand wants an improved version of it, and also makes Polgar suffer before their next encounter in the second round.

29...f4 is, of course, bad because of 30.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{d3}}!

30.\texttt{\textcolor{blue}{g5}} b4

We are entering the final (and rather cruel) part of the game – the realization of the advantages. Black undermines the last bastion around the white king. Polgar cannot allow an opening of the b-file, but then Black will have a pawn on b3 – too close to the enemy's king.

31.c4 b3
31...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{c3}}\texttt{+} unnecessary complicates matters after 32.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{c1}}!.

32.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{d3}}
32.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{xd5}} bxc2\texttt{+} 33.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{xc2}} \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{xd5}} Black's position is winning both dynamically and strategically.

32...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{b4}}

Another way to win was 32...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{a6}} 33.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{xd5}} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{a2}}\texttt{+} 34.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{c1}} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{a1}}\texttt{+} 35.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{b1}} \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{gc8}}\texttt{+} 36.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{d1}} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{c2}} and, just like in previous lines, White does not make it.

33.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{e2}} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{a6}} 34.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{h6}}

This does not even look frightening.

34.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{xd5}} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{a2}}\texttt{+} 35.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{c1}} \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{gc8}}\texttt{+} 36.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{d1}} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{a1}}\texttt{+} mating.

34...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{c3}}\texttt{+}!

Removing the very last defender.

35.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{bxc3}} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{xc3}} 36.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{c1}} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{a3}}\texttt{+}

The most human way, although Fritz is furious... Apparently it found mate in 9 after 36...b2\texttt{+} 37.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{c2}} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{a2}} 38.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{xc3}} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{b3}}\texttt{+} 39.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{d2}} b1=\texttt{\textcolor{red}{c}}\texttt{+} 40.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{e3}} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{xe2}}\texttt{+} etc...

37.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{d1}} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{a1}}\texttt{+} 38.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{c1}} b2 39.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{e3}} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{xd4}} 40.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{d2}} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{xb1}}\texttt{=}

40...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{b3}}\texttt{+} was possible as well, but it is a matter of personal preference.

41.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{xc1}} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{a2}}

Time trouble is over, and after Polgar had enough time to examine her position (or what's left of it), she decided that enough is enough.

0-1
The seemingly peaceful atmosphere of the second round was misleading. Although all four games did finish in split points, all featured fierce battles, and at least four participants could be unhappy with the result. Nervous struggles took place on every board, even the extraordinarily calm Anand could not stand the stress.

**Topalov vs. Anand** featured a uniquely dramatic battle. The Bulgarian faced one of his main contenders for the title for the second time in as many rounds. He chose a relatively quiet line of the Queen's Indian. This choice was especially surprising as not long ago Topalov, against the same opponent, opted for a much riskier approach, emerging victorious after a brilliant game. The initial stage of the game was well-known to Anand, who is not only the world's leading expert on the Black side of this line, but has also employed this variation with White on numerous occasions. He, therefore, chose the safest (to his mind) continuation. The point of which is that White is practically forced into sacrificing an exchange for the initiative, but Black has good chances to withstand it.

Topalov stepped up to the challenge with great enthusiasm, uncorking a novelty in his favourite style – for a fight. From here on it was one big illusion, as many spectators mistakenly counted the game as all Topalov's achievement, allotting Anand the role of a supporting actor. In reality, Anand
reacted well and could have forced a draw. It was due to his doubts (on two occasions, as the situation was repeated later in the game) whether it was worth playing for a win and how to do it, that he erred and found himself in difficult positions, and even a lost one near the end.

Topalov has to be credited for exploiting his chances, and for a correct psychological line: Anand was tearing himself apart choosing between a draw (from a superior position) with Black or taking risks while playing for a win.

In the end Topalov needed just a little more effort to win but then something unpredictable occurred: Topalov lost his way! It could be seen by the time he spent on every move, and his inaccuracies. The game ended in a split point, although on the way Anand twice failed to force a draw, and the Bulgarian did not use his chances. It was a tough struggle for both, but a great delight for the spectators.

Adams vs. Polgar was a much calmer affair. The Hungarian messed up in the opening, obtaining an essentially lost position. Furthermore, Adams started slowly accumulating advantages in his favourite style: it sometimes seemed that these preparatory moves would last forever. Unfortunately for the Briton, the winning method was not obvious and he, having missed several opportunities to decide the game by a direct attack, allowed Polgar to create counterplay. However, Adams managed to suppress the threats in timely fashion. Eventually, after yet another unexploited opportunity, the game terminated in a rook endgame, which Adams decided not to continue. But there was a point in playing on – for Black to achieve a draw was anything but trivial, and it was worth testing the tired opponent.

Kasimdzhanov – Svidler was a short game, but not an easy one. The Russian grandmaster took his opponent into unknown territory by opting for a complex line of a rarely played Pirc. White reacted superbly. After both players had followed the theory (of which they were unaware during the game) for some time he unleashed a very poisonous, although slightly overestimated, novelty.

This new idea would have been admirable even if it had been the fruit of home preparation. It is even more impressive that is was apparently a creative effort over the board. After Svidler’s inaccurate reply White had the opportunity to obtain a significant edge with a strong exchange sacrifice. The finale was like a bolt from the blue: in an overwhelming position Kasimdzhanov played a rather strange move and, being in time trouble, decided that one inaccuracy could be followed by others, and that the best option was to offer a draw. Analysis showed that it is not clear who is better in the final position and therefore it is also not entirely clear which player should be pleased with the peace treaty.

In the last game of the round Morozevich managed to be creative right from the start, even though it was an English Attack – an opening where there seemed to be little room left for fantasy, as it is based on pure calculation. In any case, the Muscovite’s original idea logically led to a significant advantage for Leko! But just like in the previous round the Hungarian was not energetic enough, and his reaction to Morozevich’s pawn sacrifice put him on the defensive. Later on the Russian had serious winning chances. At one moment he had the opportunity to exchange queens, which would have removed all doubts about the outcome. He missed that chance, and never got another one from his tough opponent.

To sum up, we now have two groups of players – those under-scoring, and the rest are the lucky ones. Kasimdzhanov and Adams threw away their chances, Topalov missed a real opportunity to have a one point lead after only two rounds, and Leko not only failed to convert another great position, but found himself on the verge of losing.
GAME 5

Rustam Kasimdzhanov

Peter Svidler

Pirc Defence, Austrian Attack B09

This game can be treated as one big calculation exercise (or many small ones).

1.e4 g6

A rare choice, but Svidler has already opted for this opening on a few occasions in the past.

2.d4 g7 3.c3 d6 4.f4 c6 5.f3 0–0 6.d3

Combining development with prophylaxis, aiming against the opponent’s main plan: c7-c5. Black, for his part, has to choose between preparing c7-c5, trying to play it immediately anyway, or giving it up the idea altogether.

An ever popular alternative is 6.d3 where the most interesting seems to be the modern 6...a6?? For example 7.0–0 c5 8.d5 a5 9.c4 c7 10.a4 a6 11.a5 b5 12.c5 xxc3 13.bxc3 d7 with a sharp double-edged game, Sutovsky – Svidler, Internet Rapid 1999.

6...b6

A very irritating line for White. After the immediate 6...c5 White gets an edge, as Black will have to recapture with his d-pawn: 6...c5 7.dxc5 a5 8.d3 dxc5 and White is better thanks to his strong and dynamic centre.

The text-move prepares the break in the centre, but it has an advantage compared to 6...bd7, as it keeps the option of developing the knight to a better place.

7.d2

Intending to castle quickly and start attacking Black’s kingside as in the Dragon.

A curious game developed once (upon a time) following the energetic 7.e5. After 7...g4 8.g1 c5 9.h3 h6 10.d5 b7 11.d2 f5 12.h2 dxe5 13.fxe5 e6 14.0–0 exd5 15.xd5 xxc3 16.c3 cd4! it was Black who seized the initiative in Beliavsky – Anand, Munich 1991.

A worthy alternative is 7.c4, developing the bishop to an active position, but it has its drawbacks (White delays the start of his kingside assault, and the bishop is in range of attacks from Black’s pieces). For example: 7...c5 8.e2 and here Black tried a pawn sacrifice 8...xe4, which looks very strong and even brought him an advantage in Bologan – Ponomariov, Enghien les Bains 1999.
An interesting move, preventing White from closing the centre too early. On the immediate

7...c5

White would, most probably, answer with 8.d5, as was played by one of Kasimdzhanov’s seconds (that is, one of his seconds before the tournament, as during the championships the FIDE Champion was only accompanied by his wife). 8...\:\:b7 9.0–0–0 \:\:a6 10.e5 \:\:g4 11.h3 \:\:xe3 12.\:\:xe3 c4 13.h4 and White managed to obtain an advantage in Sadvakasov – Dzhumaev, Hyderabad 2005.

8.e5

The most principled.

8...\:\:g4

White’s centre looks impressive, but it won’t stay this way for long, due to the heavy fire aimed at it, thus White has to use it as a diversion while developing a kingside attack. The big question is who succeeds first.

9.0–0–0

Now Black’s play in the centre will be combined with an attack on the king, but it could not be left in the centre either.

Also interesting is the thematic sacrifice 9.e6 where a possible continuation is 9...\:\:xf3 10.gxf3 \:\:xe3 11.\:\:xe3 f5 with a complicated game in Kotronias – Smirin, Aeroflot Open 2004.

9...c5

After the advance of the e-pawn to e5 this seems to be the most natural way to undermine White’s centre. From now on White will have to forget about kingside attacks (as he was trying in some of the previous annotations), and place his bets on piece play in the centre.

10.dxc5 bxc5


11.\:\:xc5

A strong theoretical move, which White found during the game. Now the bishop is transferred to a more relevant spot.

On 11.h3 Black took the initiative with 11...\:\:xe3 12.\:\:xe3 \:\:c6 13.\:\:c4 \:\:a5 14.\:\:b3 \:\:b6 15.\:\:he1 \:\:ab8 16.\:\:d5 \:\:xd5 17.\:\:xd5 \:\:a6 18.\:\:b1 c4 and never looked back, Plaskett – McNab, Birmingham (4ncl) 2005.

11...\:\:a5 12.\:\:a3 dxe5 13.\:\:d5!
A successful novelty that received too many exclamation marks around the globe. As always, the commentators were under the influence of the big advantage White gained in the game. The arising complications, however, are so huge that even if (after enormous efforts) White proves to be better, it is of very limited value in a practical game. Our conclusion is slightly surprising: the main strength of the novelty is that... White is not worse afterwards (which could well be the case in other lines). All in all, Kasimdzhanov deserves the compliments for finding such an interesting idea over the board (following a long think), which in fact managed to confuse Svidler and various commentators, but it is in no way a threat to the whole line from Black's point of view.

Hitherto White only opted for 13.h3. Apparently the knight on g4 is so annoying that one needs really strong nerves to ignore it. Anyway, White can hardly claim anything here: 13...hxg4 14.xg5 exf4 15.xxf7 xf7 16.hxg4 A few continuations have been tested here, in all of which Black had good chances.

For example, a very beautiful line arises after 17.b1 f3 18.f2 f5 19.xg2 xxf2 20.xb7, but objectively speaking, White is by no means better here, Charbonneau - Lahno, Montreal 2004.

But also the more logical 17.e4 xd2+ 18.xd2 f3 19.gxf3 xf3 20.xc4 xh1 21.xh1 xc6 gave Black compensation for the soon-to-be-lost pawn on h7 that is at least sufficient.

13...xd2+ 14.xd2

Threatening both c7 and e7, so Black must part with his important bishop.

14...xd5

Normal means of defence fail now: 14...xc6 15.b5! xh8 (what else?) 16.xxe 7 xxe 7 17.xe7 f8 18.fxe5 xxe5 19.xe5 xxe5 20.e2 and White is simply a pawn up.

15.xd5

15...e3!

An undeservedly criticized move (including by Svidler himself), which in fact works well! The name of the game here is active play, which is Svidler's only trump against White's control in the centre and his passers on the queenside. Thus, 'attack and distract' is his best policy here, hoping to complete his development in the process.

Interesting was 15...e4 and after 16.e5 (16.e5 is worse: 16...f2 17.g1 h6 and the problems can only be on the white side of the river) 16...xe5 17.fxe5 g6 White's pawn majority on the queenside is compensated by an initiative of Dragon style. A possible continuation could be 18.b5 xxe5 19.xe7 f8 20.e3 and the bishop pair promises White a small edge, although a small advantage in this type of position does not really mean anything.

An alternative that looked more promising is 15...h6, but here too, Black is suffering: 16.e1 e4

a) 17.xe7 was suggested as a way to achieve an advantage, but the result is exactly the opposite: 17...e8 18.g5 e3 19.e2 Black develops with
19...\(\text{Qd7}!\) and here 20.\(\text{Ec3}\) (20.\(\text{Ac7}\) \(\text{Qb6}\) 21.\(\text{Af4}\) \text{exf4} and Black is even better) 20...\(\text{Qd5}\) 21.\(\text{Fd3}\) \(\text{Qf7}\) \(\text{b6}\) and again, White has nothing.

b) The correct move is:
17.\(\text{g3}\) \(\text{Qe3}\)

Even worse is 17...\(e4\) 18.\(\text{gx}\text{f4}\) \(\text{exf3}\) 19.\(\text{Qxf4}\) \(\text{Ec8}\) 20.\(\text{Ac4}\) \(\text{Qc3}\) 21.\(\text{Qd5}\) 22.\(\text{Qxf4}\). We believe the reader will agree that this is no way to play against the bishop pair in such a situation.

18.\(\text{Cc5}\) \(\text{e4}\) 19.\(\text{gx}\text{f4}\) \(\text{exf3}\) 20.\(\text{Ac3}\) \(\text{Qxf1}\)

20...\(\text{Qd8}\) 21.\(\text{Qb5}\)! and again, all the black pieces are caught offside.

21.\(\text{Qxf1}\) \(\text{Qe8}\) 22.\(\text{Qxf3}\)

Black is worse in all possible areas: White's pawns are more promising, the rooks are more active, and the bishop is better than a knight in dynamic endgames.

16.\(\text{Ed2}?\)!

This allows Black equal chances. The computer suggests the awkward 16.\(\text{Ed3}!\) (what about the bishop on \(f1\)?)

Although it may not seem dangerous for Black, concrete lines are more important than first impressions. Now Black is forced to be precise and find many only moves (in forced and beautiful lines) and it seems neither of the following gives clear equality:

Both 16...\(\text{Qxf1}\) 17.\(\text{Qxe5}\)! and 16...\(\text{Qc4}\) 17.\(\text{Qxe7}\) \(\text{Ec8}\) 18.\(\text{Ed8}\) \(\text{Qxd8}\) 19.\(\text{Qxd8}\) promises White a clear advantage.

The first interesting idea seems to be 16...\(\text{exf4}\) 17.\(\text{Qxe7}\) \(\text{Ec8}\) 18.\(c3\) \(\text{Qc6}\) 19.\(\text{Qd6}\) \(\text{Qh6}\) 20.\(\text{Qg1}\). However, White will soon untie his kingside, and then his queenside pawns will give him better chances.

The most curious seems to be 16...\(\text{Qxc2}\):

Now 17.\(\text{Qxc2}\) \(e4\) and 17.\(\text{Qxe5}\) \(\text{Qxa3}\) 18.\(\text{Qxa3}\) \(\text{Qc8}\) 19.\(\text{Qb1}\) \(\text{Qc6}\) are hardly advisable.

The most principled move is 17.\(\text{Qxe7}\) \(\text{Ec8}\) 18.\(\text{Ec3}\) \(\text{Qc6}\) (18...\(\text{Qxc3}\) 19.\(\text{bxc3}\) \(\text{Qd3}\) 20.\(\text{Qxe5}\) \(\text{Qxe5}\) 21.\(\text{fxe5}\) \(\text{Qxf1}\) 22.\(\text{Qxf1}\) \(\text{Qd7}\) with an unpleasant endgame for Black). Now:

Nothing is gained by 19.\(\text{Qxc2}\) \(\text{Qxe7}\) 20.\(\text{fxe5}\) \(\text{Qh6}\) 21.\(\text{Qb1}\) \(\text{Qxc2}\) 22.\(\text{Qxe2}\) \(\text{Qc8}\) 23.\(\text{Qd3}\) (too dangerous is 23.\(\text{Qb3}\) \(\text{Qb6}\) and the king had better go back as after 24.\(\text{Qa3}\) \(\text{Qc6}\) White can only lose) 23...\(\text{Qc1}\) 24.\(\text{g3}\) \(\text{Qc6}\) 25.\(\text{Qg2}\) \(\text{Qc5}\) 26.\(\text{Qe1}\) \(\text{Qg7}\) winning the e5-pawn with a draw.

But very strong is 19.\(\text{Qa6}\)! and here:

a) 19...\(\text{Qd4}\) 20.\(\text{Qc5}\) \(\text{Qe8}\) 21.\(\text{Qxe5}\) (weaker is 21.\(\text{fxe5}\) \(\text{Qxf3}\) 22.\(\text{Qxf3}\) \(\text{Qxe5}\) 23.\(\text{Qa3}\) \(\text{Qb8}\) and the position is equal) 21...\(\text{Qxe5}\) (21...\(\text{Qxe5}\)? 22.\(\text{Qxd4}\) with a healthy extra pawn) 22.\(\text{fxe5}\) \(\text{Qxe5}\) In this complicated position White enjoys an advantage due to his bishop pair.

b) Another option is 19...\(\text{Qxe7}\) with a forced line: 20.\(\text{Qxc8}\) \(\text{Qb4}\) 21.\(\text{Qb7}\) \(\text{Qb8}\) 22.\(\text{Qc7}\) \(\text{Qd5}\) 23.\(\text{Qxd5}\) (23.\(\text{Qd7}\) \(\text{Qb6}\) does not give anything. Also weaker is 23.\(\text{Qc8}\) 24.\(\text{Qxc8}\) \(\text{e4}\) 25.\(\text{Qg5}\) \(\text{e3}\) and Black has good counter-chances.) 23...\(\text{Qxd5}\) 24.\(\text{Qd7}\) \(\text{Qxf4}\) 25.\(\text{Qhd1}\) \(\text{Qe6}\) and White is better, although the position is still full of life.

16...\(\text{Qc6}\)!

This is the mistake that allowed White to get a big, perhaps even decisive, advantage. To be honest, finding the right path is definitely not an easy task here. Judge for yourself:

16...\(\text{e4}\) is bad due to 17.\(\text{Qg5}\) \(f5\) 18.\(\text{Qb5}\)!, emphasising Black's main dangers - the knights are in trouble.

16...\(\text{exf4}\) 17.\(\text{Qxe7}\) \(\text{Ec8}\) 18.\(\text{Qd6}\) White is going
to grab a pawn, on top of already having a better position.

The capture 16...\(\Box_f1\) could lead to an even worse version of the game, after 17.\(\Box_f1\) \(\Box_c6\) 18.\(\Box_e5\) \(\Box_e5\) 19.\(\Box_e5\) \(\Box_h6\) 20.\(\Box_e7\) \(\Box_d2\) 21.\(\Box_d2\) \(\Box_c8\) 22.\(\Box_d6\) and White is close to winning since Black is a long way from organising some activity as compensation for the pawns on the queenside.

Surprisingly enough, however, Black does have a way to solve all his problems with 16...\(\Box_h6\)!

Thanks to threats along the overloaded c1-h6 diagonal Black gets a good game. Here are a few possible continuations:

a) 17.\(\Box_g5\) is not good: 17...exf4 18.\(\Box_e7\) \(\Box_e8\) and White loses material.

b) Also 17.\(\Box_e7\) is not a fortunate choice: 17...\(\Box_f1\) 18.\(\Box_f1\) \(\Box_f4\) 19.\(\Box_f8\) \(\Box_f8\) 20.\(\Box_d1\) (the idea 20.\(\Box_e5\) \(\Box_xe5\) 21.\(\Box_d8\) \(\Box_e7\) 22.\(\Box_g8\) a5 sees Black breaking to freedom, and leaves White empty-handed) 20...\(\Box_d2\) 21.\(\Box_d2\) \(\Box_c6\) and Black is by no means worse.

c) 17.\(\Box_b5\) a6 and the bishop has to look for a better place, as clinging to it with 18.\(\Box_a4\)? fails to 18...\(\Box_c4\) 19.\(\Box_e5\) \(\Box_f4\) 20.\(\Box_f8\) \(\Box_f8\) 21.g3 \(\Box_h6\) 22.\(\Box_e1\) \(\Box_d7\)! and the knight is immune: 23.\(\Box_xd7\) is bad as after 23...\(\Box_d8\) Black is getting all his investments back, with a good rate of interest. In this position again Black develops and is better.

d) The most promising seems to be 17.\(\Box_d3\), which gives White some winning chances, but mostly losing ones. 17...\(\Box_c6\) 18.\(\Box_e4\) \(\Box_c8\)
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19...\texttt{xc6} 20.\texttt{lbxe5} \texttt{l!c7} 21.\texttt{g3} \texttt{fc8} and, shockingly, White cannot hold on to his pawn anymore: apart from attacking c2, Black also plans to play ...f6 followed by ...lc4 or ...e5. The lines are pretty much clear:

22.\texttt{b3} lbxc2
22.\texttt{tb1} f6 (22...\texttt{exc2}? 23.\texttt{xe7}+) 23.\texttt{f3} \texttt{c4} 24.\texttt{xe2} \texttt{xa3}+ 25.bxa3 e5! 26.\texttt{fxe5} fxe5 and White's in trouble.
22.c3 f6 23.\texttt{bd3} fxe5 24.\texttt{xe3} exf4 25.\texttt{xe7} \texttt{exc7} 26.\texttt{xe7} fxe3+ 27.\texttt{c2} gxh2 and Black is not worse here.

17.\texttt{b5}!

Entering a forced line, leading to a clear-cut advantage. The only problem is Svidler's ability to confuse anybody he wants. Or almost anybody...

17...\texttt{fc8}

Even worse is 17...\texttt{d4} 18.\texttt{xd4} \texttt{exd4} 19.\texttt{xe7} \texttt{fc8} 20.\texttt{a6} \texttt{c7} 21.\texttt{d6} \texttt{d7} 22.\texttt{c5} \texttt{c7} 23.b4 with a better position to compensate for... the extra pawn.

18.\texttt{xc6} \texttt{xc6} 19.\texttt{xe5} \texttt{xe5} 20.\texttt{xe5} \texttt{c4}

20...\texttt{ac8} would have forced White to play a good move: 21.c3 \texttt{c4} 22.\texttt{xe7} With a better version of the game.

19.\texttt{xc6} \texttt{xc6} 20.\texttt{xe5} \texttt{c7} 21.g3 \texttt{fc8} and, shockingly, White cannot hold on to his pawn anymore: apart from attacking c2, Black also plans to play ...f6 followed by ...\texttt{c4} or ...e5. The lines are pretty much clear:

22.b3 \texttt{xc2}
22.\texttt{b1} f6 (22...\texttt{xc2}? 23.\texttt{xe7}+) 23.\texttt{f3} \texttt{c4} 24.\texttt{xe2} \texttt{xa3}+ 25.bxa3 e5! 26.\texttt{fxe5} fxe5 and White's in trouble.
22.c3 f6 23.\texttt{bd3} fxe5 24.\texttt{xe3} exf4 25.\texttt{xe7} \texttt{exc7} 26.\texttt{xe7} fxe3+ 27.\texttt{c2} gxh2 and Black is not worse here.

17.\texttt{b5}!

21.\texttt{xe7}!

The only move, giving White a close to decisive advantage.
21.\textbf{B}d3 is less convincing for various reasons, but mainly because of 21...\textbf{Q}xe5 (Kasimdzhanov was also worried about 21...\textbf{Q}f8 22.\textbf{B}e1 \textbf{B}a6 with substantial technical difficulties in the endgame) with the forced line: 22.\textbf{B}e3 f6 23.\textbf{Q}xe7 \textbf{B}ac8 24.c3 \textbf{B}xc7 and Black escapes. e.g. 25.\textbf{Q}xf6 \textbf{O}g4 26.\textbf{Q}d4 \textbf{Q}xe3 27.\textbf{Q}xe3 is similar to the game, but not quite. Without the e- and f-pawns the black rooks have much more freedom to play.

Even worse idea is, as always, the rook endgame after 21.\textbf{Q}e2 \textbf{Q}xa3 22.bxa3 \textbf{B}d8, which would mean great technical difficulties.

21. ..\textbf{Q}xd2 22.\textbf{W}xd2 \textbf{B}b8

This position is crucial for the understanding of all White's achievements: he has two pawns for the exchange, and both are very good runners, which should eventually decide the game. Black, on his part, has to activate his rooks to both prevent the pawns from advancing (a virtually impossible mission) and snatch a few pawns on the kingside, hoping to have a passed pawn of his own one day. Simple arithmetic tells us that White should be much faster, but he has to act now — Black is not going to wait. Therefore, the move Kasimdzhanov played

23.\textbf{Q}c1?!

Looks dubious. For the reasons stated above, it is clear White should start pushing and, indeed, with this move he gave up a big part of his achievements.

More logical is 23.b3. Not only do the pawns run fast, they also prevent the black rooks from entering the game: 23...\textbf{B}b5 (23...\textbf{Q}e6 24.\textbf{Q}f6 and the rooks are stuck) 24.\textbf{B}e1 (24.\textbf{Q}d6? \textbf{B}d5† 25.\textbf{Q}c1 f6 and it is no longer clear who's better) 24...\textbf{B}a5 25.a4 \textbf{O}d5† 26.\textbf{Q}c1 \textbf{B}d7 27.\textbf{Q}d6 a5 Black did all he could to resist, but his achievements did not solve the problem. After, for instance, 28.\textbf{B}b2, we are going to witness a new-born queen soon. Note that in this line the king went to c1. Perhaps this variation is the reason for the text move: Kasimdzhanov wanted to deprive Black of any counterplay, taking into account that the king might go there anyway? Unfortunately, trying to remove every possible chance from the opponent is often a good recipe for the opposite.

23...\textbf{Q}c4!

A great idea. The rook joins the game through the fourth rank and is going to disturb the white pawns. In fact, facing such a surprise, after having an overwhelming position just one move earlier, is not a pleasant feeling. Here White understood that it was no longer a game with only two possible results.

24.\textbf{Q}d6?!

Following this unfortunate move, Kasimdzhanov offered a draw, which was accepted. Now, in order to win, he will have to risk losing, and for that he was not yet ready. The tournament is still young...

By the way, after 24.\textbf{B}e1 White has good prospects to succeed with similar plans to above, despite the tempo lost.

But more interesting is to realize what could have happened after 24.\textbf{Q}d6? Various commentators were wondering about the reasons
Black must look for activity at any price, he just need to find the correct way.

Amazingly, the logical 25...e4 (or 25...ff4, which leads to same position) does not promise anything: 26.d1 e2 27.ed2 edx2 28 edx2 f6 and now White does have a chance to queen a pawn, after all: 29.f3 f7 30.e4 e6 31.f5 fxe5 32.e4 although Black's chances for a successful defence are quite high as well.

The best idea seems to be 25...d4!, which would have kept things unclear, forcing Kasimdzhanov to be precise in time trouble.

From an objective point of view, however, after 26.cc2 f5 27.cc1 f7 it would be an exaggeration to state that Black has any significant chances, but practically – it is all open. For instance: 28.e6† (Too dangerous is 28.b3 f6 29.cc2 h4 30.g3 h3! followed by a pawn advance on the kingside (finally!). White might find himself in trouble.) 28...e8 29.a3 e4 with the idea: 30.e7 e4

31.d1 e2† 32.d2 (32.cc1 e8 and White hardly has anything better than 33.d2 edx2 34.dxd2 g5 with something similar to the main line) 32...edx2† 33.dxd2 g5 with a double-edged position, where it is White who should be careful, since Black's better pawns on the kingside are significant and at least compensate for his poor king position. Considering that Peter Svidler noticed 25...d4 only after the game, however, his reasons are quite clear.

½—½
1.e4 c5 2.\textit{\textit{d}}f3 e6

As usual in her games with Adams, Polgar goes for the Paulsen (as it turned out Polgar decided to make the Paulsen her main weapon for this tournament). An interesting peculiarity: almost every time the English Grandmaster gets a good advantage he re, but mostly fails to convert it against Polgar, and occasionally even loses (in 5 games he lost 3 (in rapid chess) and 2 was drawn, while in all 5 cases he had great, mostly won, positions.).

3.\textit{\textit{d}}4 \textit{\textit{c}}xd4 4.\textit{\textit{d}}xd4 \textit{\textit{c}}c6

On a previous occasion Polgar chose a different move order: 4...a6 5.\textit{\textit{d}}d3 \textit{\textit{c}}c6 6.\textit{\textit{x}}xc6 bxc6 7.0-0 d6 8.\textit{\textit{f}}c3 \textit{\textit{f}}f6 9.f4 \textit{\textit{e}}e7 10.\textit{\textit{h}}1 \textit{\textit{b}}7

11.\textit{\textit{e}}5 \textit{\textit{d}}d5 12.\textit{\textit{e}}4 c5 13.\textit{\textit{exd6}} \textit{\textit{x}}xd6 and after 14.f5 White had a strong attack, Adams – Polgar, Frankfurt Masters 1999. This time she does not want to cope with Adams’ very strong pressure for a whole game, although that time she even won eventually.

5.\textit{\textit{b}}c3 \textit{\textit{c}}c7 6.\textit{\textit{e}}e3

After 6.g3 Black seems to have quite a few problems. In any case, Polgar suffered a bit against the same opponent in Sofia 2005 (despite her novelty on move 14), but managed to save half a point: 6...a6 7.\textit{\textit{g}}g2 \textit{\textit{f}}f6 8.0-0 \textit{\textit{xd4}} 9.\textit{\textit{xd4}} \textit{\textit{c}}c5 10.\textit{\textit{d}}d3 \textit{\textit{g}}g4 11.\textit{\textit{e}}e2 \textit{\textit{e}}e5 12.\textit{\textit{h}}1 d6 13.\textit{\textit{f}}f4 \textit{\textit{c}}c6 14.\textit{\textit{e}}e3 b6 15.f5 \textit{\textit{e}}e5 16.\textit{\textit{a}}ad1 \textit{\textit{b}}b7 17.\textit{\textit{g}}5 0-0 18.\textit{\textit{f}}6 g6 19.\textit{\textit{a}}a4 with an initiative for White, Adams – Polgar, Sofia 2005.

6...a6 7.\textit{\textit{d}}d3

One of a 1000 possible continuations, each leading to another 1001 lines.

7...\textit{\textit{b}}5 8.\textit{\textit{xc6}}
This continuation is very fashionable, especially in Adams' games. The capture is common, but the timing is particularly interesting.

Postponing the game plan by one move with:
8.0–0 is somewhat problematic, as after 8...\(\text{b7}\) 9.dxc6 \(\text{xc6}\) 10.e5?? is energetically refuted by the rude 10...\(\text{xg2}\) mate.

8...\(\text{xc6}\)

Of course, 8...dxc6?! is not good: 9.0–0 \(\text{b7}\) 10.a4! with a healthy positional advantage for White.

So, the queen was politely asked out (to a not-so-great place), and had no choice but to accept. Black is also falling behind in development, but how could one make use of it?

9.e5?

With the queen moving away from c7 the e5-square is weakened, and White exploits it. d3-e4 is, of course, a threat now (for instance after 9...\(\text{xg2}\)). The knight on g8 does not look happy either. The statistics confirm that White is in control here. Black's main problem at this point is to find counterplay, while White is going to play on the dark squares. Critical seems to be the immediate 9...f5:

Black's potential can be seen after 10.exf6 \(\text{xf6}\) 11.f3?! \(\text{c7}\) 12.\(\text{d2}\) \(\text{b7}\) 13.0–0–0 \(\text{b4}\) 14.b1 0–0 15.a3 \(\text{a5}\) 16.e1 b4 and he had a dangerous attack in Mohr – Bistric, Batumi 1999.

Another typical game for the structure continued 10.e2 \(\text{b7}\) 11.e3 \(\text{c7}\) 12.xb7 \(\text{xb7}\) 13.0–0 \(\text{c8}\) 14.a3 \(\text{e7}\) 15.h5+ \(\text{g6}\)
16. \( \text{De2} \) \( \text{Ec5} \) 17. \( \text{Exc5} \) \( \text{Exc5} \), followed by a justified draw agreement in Korneev – Lazarev, Assisi 2003. It seems that the order of piece development here is more logical than the one in our current battle.

9...\( \text{b4}?! \)

After this White seems to be getting a substantial advantage, one way or another. And indeed, why shouldn't he, after Black deliberately parts with her only piece that is able to fight for the dark squares? Moreover, one of White's usual plans is to play \( \text{yg4} \), which, without the black bishop on \( f8 \), gains considerably in force (not to mention that on \( b4 \) the bishop itself will be attacked by the queen).

10.0-0

10. \( \text{yg4} \) would be too early: 10... \( \text{xc3} \text{t} \) 11. \( \text{bxc3} \) \( \text{yg4} \text{t} \) 12. \( \text{e2} \) \( \text{xe5} \) and White's initiative hardly compensates for the material.

10...\( f5 \)

The continuation 10...\( \text{b7} \) would allow White to underline all the drawbacks of the early development of the dark-squared bishop: 11. \( \text{e4} \) \( \text{Ec7} \) 12. \( \text{xb7} \) \( \text{xb7} \) 13. \( \text{gg4} \) and Black has trouble finding a move.

Also 10...\( \text{xc3} \), as usually happens in this opening, did not do any good because of the eternal weakness of the dark squares. Destroying White's pawn structure is, of course, a good thing, but not enough – it should better stay a threat. In the following game, Adams handling the white pieces, was able to prove it:

11. \( \text{xc3} \) \( \text{b7} \) 12. \( \text{g4} \) \( \text{e7} \) 13. \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{g6} \) 14. \( \text{ae1} \) \( \text{wc7} \) 15. \( \text{e3} \) \( \text{h5} \) 16. \( \text{g3} \) \( \text{e7} \) 17. \( \text{g5} \) \( \text{d8} \) 18. \( \text{gg3} \) \( \text{g6} \) 19. \( \text{f6} \) and White's on top, Adams – Lutz, Leon 2001.

11. \( \text{e2} \)

As we've already seen, taking on \( f6 \) fails to do the job. The exchange of light-squared bishops is called for, thus preventing accidental mates on \( g2 \), or something even worse...

11...\( \text{b7} \)

Black does not even have time to tousle White's hair on the queenside, as on 11...\( \text{xc3} \) White wins an exchange with 12. \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{c7} \) 13. \( \text{xa8} \). It is not that capturing on \( c3 \) is so desirable, but it is still better than the game version, which ended up with the same material set-up, except the white pawns were not disfigured.

12. \( \text{h5} \text{t} \)!

A logical novelty. Compared to its predecessor (an almost 50-year-old game) the bishop arrives on \( f3 \) after drawing \( ...g6 \). Not a huge achievement, but a 'nice to have' item, as on many occasions White has to work hard to provoke Black to play it. Here he gets it free of charge.

After 12. \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{c8} \) 13. \( \text{xb7} \) \( \text{xb7} \) 14. \( \text{e2} \), had Black continued 14... \( \text{c8} \), a position from Korneev – Lazarev (see the note to 9...\( f5 \)) would have arisen, with a tempo less for Black. This, of course, promises White more, but, in fact, nothing concrete.
Anyway, in the previous game Black did quite well, but White might not have played in the most precise way: 14...\( \text{Oe7} \) 15.\( \text{c3} \) \( \text{a5} \) 16.\( \text{f4} \) \( \text{c7} \) 17.\( \text{d4} \) 0-0 18.\( \text{c5} \) \( \text{xe5} \) 19.\( \text{xe7} \) \( \text{xf4} \) 20.\( \text{xf8} \) \( \text{xf8} \) with some compensation for Black, Baxter – D.A. Smith, British Championship Whitby, 1962.

12...g6 13.\( \text{f3} \) \( \text{c8} \) 14.\( \text{d2} \)

Translating into words: White is ready to exchange all the light pieces, as long as the opponent is left with weak dark squares.

A typical alternative is 14.\( \text{xb7} \) \( \text{xb7} \) 15.\( \text{e2} \), although it seems that after 15...\( \text{c8} \) 16.\( \text{f4} \) \( \text{c5} \) 17.\( \text{e1} \) White’s advantage is difficult to cash in – Black learned to hold such positions many years ago. In the game White goes for the attack.

14...\( \text{xc3} \)!

A natural move that would have been praised in the past – then it was fashionable to perform plans of bishop limitation. Today the story is a bit different, much more concrete.

Along with the normal plans, Black is given a chance to end her misery right away after 14...\( \text{e7} \)? 15.\( \text{xb5} \)!. Much more flexible, however, would be 14...\( \text{c5} \) and it is still up to White to find a good plan.

15.\( \text{xc3} \) \( \text{e7} \) 16.\( \text{b4} \) \( \text{xf3} \) 17.\( \text{xf3} \) \( \text{d5} \)

This position is sure to give a classical player some severe cognitive dissonance. It is so hard to admit, after all, that such a Paulsen-like position, with good pieces, gladly located on a light squares, such a monstrous knight in the centre (which cannot be driven away without weakening White’s position) against a bishop that, at least according to Capablanca’s definition, would not be thought of as the “good” one – is in fact a bad position. But this is the situation, and for the following reasons:

1. Black has no long-term plan.
2. Black’s dark squares are weak.
3. Black’s king is unsafe. And it is not about castling, but rather the lack of an appropriate safe spot on the board where it will not be hunted. These three points prove to outweigh the abstract measures of good, bad and ugly bishops.

18.c3

Black was already threatening to take on c2, along with \( \text{xb4} \), so Adams’ move is forced. But can Black exchange the light pieces now?

18...\( \text{c4} \)

No, as Polgar does not want to fight for a hard draw without any counter-chances.

It is hard to suggest a continuation like 18...\( \text{xb4} \) 19.cxb4. Black is under unpleasant pressure. Where is Black’s suffering greater, here or in the game? Hard to say, but the choice is quite unpleasant. For example:

a) 19...0-0 20.\( \text{ac1} \) \( \text{b8} \) 21.\( \text{f4} \) (As we’ve seen previously, moving the d-pawn might solve many of Black’s problems: 21.\( \text{c5} \) \( \text{d6} \) 22.\( \text{xd6} \) \( \text{d6} \) 23.\( \text{d1} \) \( \text{e7} \) 24.\( \text{b3} \) \( \text{f6} \) 25.\( \text{e1} \) \( \text{d8} \) 26.\( \text{c5} \) \( \text{d6} \) 27.\( \text{h3} \) \( \text{f7} \) and Black holds.)

b) Even worse is 19...\( \text{c6} \) 20.\( \text{xc6} \) dxc6 21.\( \text{ac1} \) \( \text{c8} \) 22.\( \text{fd1} \) \( \text{e7} \) 23.\( \text{f1} \) and Black’s best chance would be playing a rook endgame, a pawn down: 23...\( \text{h8} \) 24.\( \text{xd8} \) \( \text{d8} \) 25.\( \text{e2} \) \( \text{c7} \) 26.\( \text{d1} \)! Penetrating on d6, as Black cannot exchange the rooks: 26...\( \text{d8} \) 27.\( \text{xd8} \) 28.\( \text{e3} \) \( \text{c7} \) 29.\( \text{d4} \) with a big advantage for White. Undoubtedly, such lines kill one’s desire to exchange the knight on d5.

19.\( \text{fd1} \)
Black is naturally interested in swapping queens when White will find it much harder to break through or create threats. White, of course, knows it, and will only trade the queens on his way to the cashier.

The alternative way to offer a queen exchange, 19...e4, is worse: 20.xe4 fxe4 21.d6! The bishop stays alive, preventing Black’s rooks from entering the game, while White can calmly take care of the e4-pawn. 21...f7 22.d4 e3 (a pawn down, Black will not hold, of course) 23.xf1 exf2† (23...g7 24.d3 transposing to the main line) 24.xf2† g7 (Total control can be observed in the following line: 24...e8 25.d3 g7 Otherwise the white rook will get to f7, and Black will not be able to move. 26.d3 f5 27.g4 xd6 28.exd6 and Black is helpless against the white rooks’ invasion.) 25.d3 h8 26.d3

20.d3
A polite ‘No’.

The exchange on g4 looks as promising as on e4, but it is not. After 20.xg4 fxg4 21.d6 h5 it seems that Black weathers the storm: 22.a4 f7 23.xf3 gxf3 24.xh1 xh3 25.xh3 d5 20...f7 21.h3 f6 22.e2 c4 23.b3 a5

For quite a few moves Black could not take on b4 because of the weakness of d7. Now she forces the bishop to d6, using it to cover the d7-pawn. The problem is that now the b5-pawn will require protection in many variations. In the next few moves Polgar does not manage to find a plan, and finds herself thrown backwards after Adams regroups his pieces.

24.d6 a4

Grischuk suggested 24..e4, but here Black experiences even bigger problems than we’ve seen before: 25.xe4 fxe4 26.d4 e3 27.xf1 g7 (If 27..e8, in addition to ideas we’ve already seen, there is another one: 28.a4! It turns out that Black has no way to protect b5. After 28..bxa4 29.xa4 Black can no longer resist — the same idea of penetrating through the f-file, together with the a-pawn’s weakness, makes it impossible.) 28.d3 exf2† 29.xf2 and the rooks invade, again, along the f-file.

25.d4

From now on Black is left with nothing that would even resemble counterplay, but White still has to break through.

25..c6 26.ad1 h6

Here, once again, Black’s position is hopeless.
The time for the typical sacrifice has not yet come: 27.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Nd4}} exd5 28.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Qxd5+ Kg7}} 29.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Nf4}} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{Qa7}}! and Black survives. e.g. 30.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Bb6}} e6 31.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Qh7}} e7 32.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Qe7??}} (32.dxe7? Bd8 and Black's already in the lead) 32...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Be8}} and Black holds, although by no means easily.

Grischuk offered 27.g4! and Black's survival chances become even more problematic.

a) 27...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f4}} is not good as now the sacrifice is timely: 28.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Qxd5}} exd5 29.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Qxf4+ Kg8}} 30.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Bh7}} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{Qe7}} 31.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Qxg6+ Kg7}} 32.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Qxh6}} Three pawns for the exchange, with a weak king, leave little doubt about the outcome of this game.

b) Most tenacious is 27...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Bd8}}, although here too, after 28.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Qh2}} Qb6 (28...f4 is not an option: 29.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Bxd5}} exd5 30.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Qxf4+ Kg8}} 31.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Bd3}} and Black simply cannot move) 29.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{We2}} Qg7 30.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Bgl}} Qh7 31.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Qxf5}} gxf5 32.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Qdd1}} Black will soon have to continue without his king.

27...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Qg7}} 28.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Qh2}} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{Bac8}}

The general feeling is that the time to move forward has come: White has brought his forces to their best positions and it is time to storm Black's citadel.

29.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Qg3?}}

The exchange sac falls short again 29.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Bxd5}} exd5 30.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Qxd5}} after 30...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Bhe8}} there is nothing concrete to be found for White.

But again 29.g4! leads to a decisive attack. Now this is even stronger – the king is already on h2, and White has some serious threats.

Black can lose beautifully in different ways:

a) As usual, 29...f4 loses to 30.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Bxd5}} exd5 31.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Qf4}} and there is no adequate defence: 31...h5 32.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Bf3}} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{Qh7}} 34.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{exf6}} dxe6 35.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Bd5}}! and Black is helpless against White's invasion on the seventh rank.

b) Also hopeless is 29...g4 30.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Bxg4}} h5 31.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Bf3}} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{Qh7}} 32.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Be2}} Qf5 33.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Bd3}} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{g5}} 34.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{a4}} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{Qh7}} 35.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Bf3}} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{Qg7}} 36.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Be2}} and it's over.

c) After more cautious continuations, like 29...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Bh8}}, comes 30.gxf5 gxf5 31.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Bxd5}} exd5 32.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Bxf5}} with a lethal attack.

29...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Bh7}} 30.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Bh4}}

Every move by Adams bites off another piece of Polgar's will to live. The 'Spiderman' lives up to his nickname. However, there were already quite a few occasions when White could have achieved something more concrete than a net around the chess Queen's neck. True, everyone has his own style, but there is one indisputable measure – the result.

30.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Bh8}}

Reassured by White's slow play, Black goes for counterplay, thus forcing White to take some precautions.

31.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Bg3}} g5

Of course! Polgar feels that all the power lines cross on g2 (the rooks on the g-file, the queen, and the knight [soon to be on f4]). Although there is no real reason for optimism (the stronger white pieces can easily push the enemy
backwards) it is still a positive development for Black - Adams is no longer unthreatened, and cannot do whatever he pleases.

32...h5 g7 33.d1

Preventing the queen from being caught offside: after the immediate 33.h4 g4 it is left out, and only White should be worried about the future.

33...f4

34.h4!

Despite his cautious nature, whenever there is a deadly threat, Adams responds with great precision.

Staying still would have allowed Black to create counterplay: 34.d2 g8 Now 35.h4? already loses after 35...gxh4 with an accident on g2.

Thus White would have to cope with Black’s initiative. For instance: 35.a3 h5! (less convincing is 35...h5 36.d1 h4 37.f3 g6 38.f1 and Black’s initiative comes to an end) 36.f3 (dangerous is 36.e3 f4 37.e1 g4 and the initiative develops freely) 36...f4 and White’s best is to accept a repetition after 37.g3, since after 37.d1? xg2! 38.xg2 g4 39.hxg4 Exg4 White has a clear advantage. Nevertheless, after 38.bxc4 h7 39.e1? with a decisive invasion into the unprepared opponent’s camp) in order to try and seal possible entry points. Nevertheless, after 38.bxc3 h7 39.d1 (39.xa4? e2† with an unclear game) 39...h8 40.h5 a8 41.a3 g8 42.c4 a7, despite White’s obvious advantage, Black can defend.

36...xb3 37.axb3 h7

34...h8

Black is one(!) tempo short of developing her initiative, and is forced to invent awkward manoeuvres in order to create some threats. Instead 34...c8 would have lost nicely to 35.hxg5 hxg5 36.fxg5.

35.g1

Adams’ play is a study in prophylaxis. Whenever he needs to jump into hot water (and he did), and probably decide the game – he does not do so, but whenever the opponent creates some threats, the Briton enters his favourite state: depriving the opponent of any chance with great skill. It is hard to win this way, but even harder to lose.

35.g8 36.b3

Preparing to open another front (after c4), thus catching the opponent (dreaming of attack on a kingside) totally unready.

A good alternative was the immediate 36.c4. After 36...bxc4 37.c2 Black is pretty much forced to return the pawn with 37...c3! (not 37...h7 38.xc4 b7 39.h5! with a decisive invasion into the unprepared opponent’s camp) in order to try and seal possible entry points. Nevertheless, after 38.bxc3 h7 39.d1 (39.xa4? e2† with an unclear game) 39...h8 40.h5 a8 41.a3 g8 42.c4 a7, despite White’s obvious advantage, Black can defend.
Now 38.c4 would be met with 38...gxh4! 39.cxb5 \(\text{w}b7\) and all Black's dreams are fulfilled: 40.\(\text{w}xg7+\) \(\text{w}xg7\) 41.f3 \(\text{w}xg2\) 42.\(\text{c}f2\) (42.\(\text{h}1\) \(\text{g}3\)) 42...h3 and wins.

So, Black is ready to open the g-file for an attack...

38.h5!

But again, Adams ends it before it starts!

38...\(\text{h}8\)

Now Black's rooks look ridiculous, and Polgar is seeking a fast way to improve them.

39.\(\text{a}3!\)

Fritz, and with it many commentators, suggested 39.\(\text{e}7\), but here the way to victory is far from clear. Incidentally, if White wanted to exchange his bishop using this manoeuvre, he could have done it earlier.

Now 39...\(\text{d}5\) plays into White's hands: 40.\(\text{x}d5\) \(\text{x}d5\) 41.\(\text{x}d5\) exd5 42.\(\text{f}6\) \(\text{f}7\) 43.\(\text{x}g7\) \(\text{x}g7\) 44.\(\text{d}3\) \(\text{c}8\) 45.\(\text{x}d5\) \(\text{xc}3\) 46.\(\text{x}d7\) \(\text{f}8\) 47.\(\text{h}7\) Black has severe problems holding this endgame - an extra pawn plus Black's bad king are decisive factors here.

But after 39...\(\text{e}7\) 40.\(\text{x}f4\) \(\text{g}7\) 41.\(\text{d}4\) \(\text{c}8\) 42.\(\text{g}3\) \(\text{c}7\) there is no clear way to win. The text move is much stronger.

39...\(\text{h}7\) 40.\(\text{c}1\)

Now White advances with threats.

40..\(\text{d}5\) 41.\(\text{c}4\) \(\text{bxc4}\) 42.\(\text{bxc4}\) \(\text{a}6\) 43.\(\text{d}6\)

The d7-pawn has been living in overdraft for way too long, and its account is about to be cancelled.

43...\(\text{w}a4\)

44.\(\text{w}xa4!\)

Another positive decision by Adams - without the queens Black will have no good pieces left.

He could have kept the queens on with 44.\(\text{w}f1\) and after 44...\(\text{b}8\) (now the c4-pawn is poisoned: 44...\(\text{xc}4?\) 45.\(\text{d}4\) 45.\(\text{xc}3\) \(\text{c}8\) (not 45...\(\text{a}5\) because of 46.\(\text{b}3\), but also possible is 45...\(\text{g}8\) 46.\(\text{c}3\) \(\text{c}8\) 47.\(\text{d}4\) 46.\(\text{d}1\) \(\text{b}1\) 47.\(\text{d}3\) perhaps White still has some advantage, but it is already much harder to convert.

44...\(\text{xc}4\) 45.\(\text{a}3\) \(\text{c}5\) 46.\(\text{a}7\) \(\text{c}8\)

The previous moves were the strongest and we've reached a position that looks close to winning for White. But what allows Black to keep her head up? First and foremost she has only one weakness on d7. Secondly, the battle is concentrated on one front. And, the fact is that rook endgames,
which are 'unwinnable', as was noted by the great minds of the game long ago, are a key factor in this position.

47.\texttt{e}3?!

A cruel mistake, allowing Polgar to enter a relatively good rook ending, by a single tempo.

Stronger was 47.\texttt{a}3! keeping the option of capturing on c5 at any given moment. Black has some chances to hold on, but she's really walking a thin line here. The idea is that on 47...\texttt{g}8, White simply plays 48.f3, slowly improves the position and then captures on c5 at the most appropriate moment.

Critical is the forced line starting with 47...\texttt{e}4. This leads after 48.\texttt{xd}7 \texttt{xd}7 49.\texttt{xd}7+ \texttt{g}8 to a very bad position, but still hanging on. Here we have a few options:

a) 50.\texttt{e}7

This gives nothing because of a crazy counterattack.

50...\texttt{d}8! 51.g3

No remedy is 51.\texttt{x}e6 \texttt{d}1+ 52.\texttt{h}2 \texttt{xf}2 and White cannot escape the draw, for instance:

53.\texttt{d}6 \texttt{g}4+ 54.\texttt{h}3 \texttt{h}1+ 55.\texttt{g}3 \texttt{e}1=

51...\texttt{d}1+ 52.\texttt{g}2 \texttt{d}2

Again, Black's counter-threats force White to be modest.

53.\texttt{e}6 \texttt{f}2+ 54.\texttt{g}1 \texttt{f}3 55.\texttt{g}6+ \texttt{h}7 56.\texttt{f}8 \texttt{g}3+ 57.\texttt{f}1 \texttt{f}4! 58.e6 f3

White is the one begging for a draw after:

59.\texttt{g}7+ \texttt{h}8 60.\texttt{f}7 \texttt{h}3 61.\texttt{g}1 \texttt{g}3+=

b) Much stronger is 50.f3!.

b1) A bit scary, but interesting, is 50...\texttt{a}8:

Now not 51.\texttt{xe}4, although it is very interesting: 51...\texttt{x}a3 52.\texttt{xf}5 \texttt{xf}5 53.\texttt{d}6 \texttt{e}3 54.\texttt{xe}6 \texttt{xe}6 55.\texttt{g}6\texttt{f} No proof is needed after 55...\texttt{f}7? 56.\texttt{xe}5 \texttt{c}5 57.\texttt{g}4 \texttt{xc}4 58.\texttt{xf}5\texttt{g}7, although there are many drawing positions here, but who needs the headache. For example, not 59.\texttt{g}5?! \texttt{h}7 60.\texttt{g}6 \texttt{c}2 leading to a draw appearing in one of Kasparian's studies (which are, unfortunately, beyond the scope of this book), but after 55...\texttt{h}7 56.\texttt{xe}5 \texttt{c}5 it is a clear draw.

Much better is 51.c5, when after 51...\texttt{x}a3 52.\texttt{c}6 \texttt{c}3 53.\texttt{c}7 \texttt{g}3 54.\texttt{d}8\texttt{g}7 55.\texttt{c}8=\texttt{x} \texttt{xc}8 56.\texttt{xc}8 \texttt{h}5 White has good chances to bring the victory home, since he prevents Black from organising her forces.

b2) The strongest seems to be 50...\texttt{g}3 51.c5 f4!
Suddenly Black has extremely strong threats:
52.\text{B}d6 \text{B}b8 53.\text{B}e6 \text{B}d8 54.\text{B}b1 \text{B}a8 55.\text{B}b4 (55.\text{B}e2 \text{B}a5 and Black is even better. After the safe 55.c6 \text{B}e8 56.\text{B}b6 \text{B}e2 57.\text{B}f2 \text{B}d4 the position is even.)} 55...\text{B}a2 where Black's active pieces promise her at least equality.

52.\text{B}f2 \text{B}a8 53.c6! \text{B}xa3 54.c7 \text{B}c3 55.\text{B}d8 \text{B}f7 56.\text{c}c=8 57.\text{B}xc8 \text{B}xh5 Black has pretty good chances for a draw. Opposed to the similar position we've seen, the king now has the vital square f5 — and that's worth half a point. For instance: 58.\text{B}g7t \text{B}g6 59.\text{B}e7 \text{B}f5 60.\text{B}h7 \text{B}xe5 61.\text{B}xh6 \text{B}f6 and the position is very close to a draw.

47...f4!

Right on time. Adams probably miscalculated, missing that he is, pretty much, forced to give up the bishop.

48.\text{B}xc5

Nothing comes of 48.\text{B}d4 \text{B}c4 49.\text{B}xd7 \text{B}xd7 50.\text{B}xd7 \text{B}g8, and with the fall of the c4-pawn the game will be equalized.

Here a draw was agreed, leaving many spectators wondering about the reasons. Well, Black does seem to hold here, but it depends on her finding a few precise moves. Perhaps it would not be such a bad idea to test the tired opponent. In any case, after 48...\text{B}xc5 49.\text{B}xd7 \text{B}xd7 50.\text{B}xd7 \text{B}g8 51.\text{B}e7 \text{B}xe5, White has the strong 52.f3!

preventing ...g4. It is not easy to find the right plan, since the right plan is to stand still. The position is apparently a fortress; the only requirement is to find one great idea.

Wrong, for example, is 52...\text{B}b8? 53.\text{B}h7 \text{B}c5 54.\text{B}xh6 \text{B}f7 55.\text{B}g6 and the draw is as far away as can be.

Possible, but not best, is:

52...\text{B}e1 53.\text{B}f2 \text{B}e5

Not 53...\text{B}e3 54.\text{B}c3 55.\text{B}xe6 \text{B}xc5 56.\text{B}xh6 \text{B}g7 57.\text{B}g6t \text{B}h7 58.\text{B}g1 \text{B}a5 59.\text{B}h2 \text{B}b5 60.\text{B}h3 \text{B}a5 61.\text{B}g4 \text{B}a2 62.\text{B}xg5 \text{B}xg2t 63.\text{B}xf4. Theoretically, positions with f- and h-pawns are drawn, but this is true mostly in theory, not in practice.

54.\text{B}c7 \text{B}a5 55.\text{B}c5 \text{B}a2t 56.\text{B}g1 \text{B}a1t 57.\text{B}h2 \text{B}c1 58.\text{B}e7 \text{B}xc5 59.\text{B}xe6 \text{B}g7 60.\text{B}e7t \text{B}f8 61.\text{B}h7 \text{B}c6 62.\text{B}h3 \text{B}f6

White cannot improve his position.

The toughest is 52...\text{B}h8 53.\text{B}f1 \text{B}g8 54.\text{B}f2 \text{B}h8 55.\text{B}c7 \text{B}g8 56.\text{c}c5 \text{B}d5! 57.\text{B}c6 \text{B}d6!.

White's king cannot enter the game, and without the monarch such endgames cannot be won. 58.g3 \text{e}5 59.\text{B}g2 \text{B}f6 60.\text{B}h3 \text{B}d6 61.\text{g}xf4 \text{e}xf4 62.\text{B}g4 \text{B}f6! That's it. White has no more ideas. 63.\text{B}c8t \text{B}g7 64.\text{c}c7 \text{B}c6 65.\text{B}f5 \text{B}c1 with a simple draw.

½-½
GAME 7

Veselin Topalov
Viswanathan Anand
Queen’s Indian Defence E15

1.d4 ½f6 2.c4 e6 3.½f3 b6 4.g3 ½a6
A move that’s become an automatic procedure. By attacking the pawn Black forces his opponent to alter his development.

5.b3
The most common reply.

One of the other possibilities is 5.½a4, but this is not considered to be promising for White. By removing a defender from d4 he allows Black to quickly organize counterplay with c7-c5. For instance: 5...½b7 6.½g2 c5 7.dxc5 ½xc5 8.0–0 0–0 9.½c3 ½c7 10.½f4 and after 10...½a6 (not the only move) Black gets a very solid position. It is sufficient to mention the fact that no player rated over 2600 has ever lost a game from this position, while the overall statistics since 1990 are in Black’s favour.

5...½b4
A standard manoeuvre that’s been with us since Alekhine’s day, dragging the white bishop to a place no other white piece wants to see it.

6.½d2 ½e7 7.½g2
A surprising choice! Lately Topalov has had great success with the complicated 7.½c3, including against Anand himself. It seems that the Bulgarian did not want a Wild-West game – like their last one – right at the beginning of such an important event. Nevertheless, this previous game cannot be erased from memory, and it can even be found in the preview (page 28). But Anand’s is not the only scalp in Topalov’s bag here: his old training partner Ponomariov tried 7...½dxe4 8.½xe4 c5 9.0–0 0–0 10.½d3 ½xc3 11.½xc3 ½d6 12.½e4 d5 13.exd5 ½e5! (13...d4! was much better) 14.½d4 h6 15.½c1 Black was soon mated in Topalov – Ponomariov, Sofia 2005.

7...c6
Preparing d7–d5.

8.½c3
’d2’ is the knight’s square.

8...d5 9.½e5 ½fd7 10.½xd7 ½xd7 11.½d2 0–0
12.0–0

12...½c8
A decent alternative to the text is 12...½f6, but only if after 13.e4 b5 14.exd5 Black plays 14...exd5 and, although White still has a plus, the position is very complicated. 15.½e1 ½h8 16.½a3 ½e8 17.c5
Round 2


The positional idea 14...cxd5 was pretty much refuted by the brutal 15.c5! b4 16.axb4 xf1 17.xf1 and White’s compensation is far more substantial than the material sacrificed for it, Anand - Adams, Wijk aan Zee 2005. (See also page 29)

13.e4 c5

Anand’s ultimate choice in this line. 13...b5 is more popular, although the Queen’s Indian is such a common guest in today’s praxis that the text is not exactly rare either. In any case, the key position arises after 14.e1:

14...bxc4 is currently out of favour, for example: 15.bxc4 dxc4 16.a4 b5 17.cc2 e8 18.a4 a6 19.a5 and White had the better position, Bologan - Kramnik, Dortmund 2004.

Thus, more popular is 14...dxe4 15.xe4 bxc4 16.bxc4 c5 17.d5 exd5 18.xd5

which is slightly better for White. Black has to be precise before he can eventually claim equality, which is not always achievable: 18.xb6 19.xa5 f6 20.a1 b8 21.f3 and White tortured his opponent for 53 moves in order to win in the end, Bacrot - Adams, Dortmund 2005.


14.exd5 exd5 15.xc5 dxc4

16.c6

Speaking of paths, one that rarely sees a footstep is 16..xc4, although the positions White gets here are not necessarily worse than the one in our game. One of the few games with this move was played by Vladimirov, Kasparov’s ex-coach. Perhaps this means something? In any case, after 16...xc4 (16...xc4 is worth checking) 17.g4 f6 18.ad1 w7c7 19.cf1 White had a clear plus, Vladimirov - Levin, Leningrad 1989. 16...xb3 17.cf1

A very interesting position, although it has been so exhaustively played and analysed that it is hard to believe there is still anything unknown here. White is a pawn down, but that is probably temporary. A more important factor is the unfortunate placement of the black pieces, and it is up to Black to decide whether he hangs on to the pawn, or tries to improve his pieces (or even exchange them).

17...b2

Today this line is considered to be Black’s best try, and this game probably won’t change that.

Less attractive is the once-popular 17...b5 18.axb3 xc6 19.xc6 xc6 20.xa7 f6 (20...xc6?! 21.b1 and Black is in trouble) 21.cc4 (worth checking is 21.e4 xc3 22.xd7) 21...d5 22.x8d8 xd8 23.xf6 and either capture will leave Black having to work hard to survive in the endgame. It is understandable, therefore, that Black is not too excited about this option.
18.\textsuperscript{\texttt{b2}}

Now the attempt to deviate with 18...\texttt{d6} does not work because of 19.\texttt{b3} \texttt{b4} 20.\texttt{xd8} \texttt{fxd8} 21.\texttt{ed1} and, thanks to the c6-pawn, White is much better. But after the main move

18...\texttt{c5}

we enter a crossroads. White has many possible continuations, but the World Championship is undoubtedly a suitable stage for the strongest one.

a) The immediate 19.\texttt{g4} is not good: 19...\texttt{f6} 20.\texttt{xf6} \texttt{xf6} and White even managed to lose in a few moves: 21.\texttt{e4} \texttt{xc6} 22.\texttt{xc5} \texttt{xc5} 23.\texttt{a4} \texttt{b5} 24.\texttt{xa7} \texttt{c7} 25.\texttt{b7} \texttt{xb7} 26.\texttt{xb7} \texttt{c6}, Van der Sterren – Karpov, Wijk aan Zee 1998.

b) After 19.\texttt{a3} Black has a clear way to achieve equality: 19...\texttt{f6} 20.\texttt{xc5} bxc5 21.\texttt{c1} \texttt{b5} 22.\texttt{xc5} In one of Anand's games a draw was agreed. So what was the reason? It was shown in a later game that continued: 22...\texttt{b6} 23.\texttt{e4} \texttt{e7} 24.\texttt{c1} \texttt{xc6} 25.\texttt{d6} \texttt{xd6} 26.\texttt{xd6} \texttt{xg2} 27.\texttt{xb6}, Shulman – Onischuk, Stillwater 2005.

c) Another move Anand had to deal with is 19.\texttt{b3} and here too, after 19...\texttt{d3} 20.\texttt{e2} \texttt{b4} 21.\texttt{d4} \texttt{c5}, a draw agreement between Anand and Gelfand demanded clarification by other players: 22.\texttt{xc5} bxc5 23.\texttt{d2} c4 24.\texttt{c5} \texttt{b5} 25.\texttt{c1} \texttt{d6} 26.\texttt{xd3} cxd3 27.a4 \texttt{xc6} 28.\texttt{xd3} \texttt{e6} 29.\texttt{xc6} \texttt{xc6} 30.\texttt{xc6} \texttt{xc6}= Solozhenkin – Komarov, Yugoslavia 2000.

Topalov chooses to go down the most popular route.

19.\texttt{c4}

This "piece blunder" is White's only way to fight for an advantage. Needless to say, playing this position without profound preparation is not recommended.
19...\texttt{\textit{xc}4} 20.\texttt{\textit{g}4} 
Regaining the piece, while keeping the bishop pair and a strong pawn on c6. White's only problem is that his pieces do not coordinate well.

20...\texttt{\textit{g}5} 
The only way to keep the game on the three-results scale. The possibility of going for a long fight for survival with 20...\texttt{\textit{f}6} 21.\texttt{\textit{xf}6} \texttt{\textit{xf}6} 22.\texttt{\textit{xc}4} is somehow not too appealing.

21.\texttt{\textit{xc}4} 
White has been able to retain the strong pawn, but Black...

21...\texttt{\textit{d}3} 
...wins an exchange (22.\texttt{\textit{e}c}2? \texttt{\textit{xb}2} 23.\texttt{\textit{xb}2} \texttt{\textit{f}6}). Of course, none of this is new. What is yet to be discovered, however, is who will have the last laugh.

22.\texttt{\textit{a}3} 
More active seems 22.\texttt{\textit{e}5}, but shortly an equal endgame is reached: 22...\texttt{\textit{xe}1} 23.\texttt{\textit{xe}1} \texttt{\textit{f}6}! and after 24.\texttt{\textit{xf}6} \texttt{\textit{xf}6} 25.\texttt{\textit{c}7} \texttt{\textit{d}6} 26.\texttt{\textit{c}1} \texttt{\textit{b}5} 27.\texttt{\textit{c}2} \texttt{\textit{g}6} 28.\texttt{\textit{b}7} the picture becomes clear: White wins back the exchange, Black gets rid of the annoying pawn, Bacrot – Lutz, Gothenburg 2005.

22...\texttt{\textit{xe}1} 23.\texttt{\textit{xe}1} \texttt{\textit{e}8} 24.\texttt{\textit{xe}8+} 
Another one of Topalov's novelties. Instead of trying to keep the rook alive (which is normally advisable for the side that is an exchange down) White uses the tempo to build up domination all over the board. The nature of Topalov's novelties is quite noteworthy. They are rarely aimed for an immediate kill, but are rather fight-oriented. He does not always have an advantage, but he is ready to fight.

24...\texttt{\textit{xe}8} 25.\texttt{\textit{d}5} 

It is perhaps a good time to stop and look at the position. White's bishops are controlling the whole board, while Black's pieces are tied to defence – the queen is guarding f7, the rook is stopping the c6-pawn. Thus, despite being an exchange up, it is Black fighting for a draw. What he should do to achieve it is exchange the dark-squared bishops. As simple as that. But White's agreement would be required for that. Another plan might be to return the exchange, winning the c6-pawn in the process. Here too, White has a say. All in all, patience is the name of the game for Black – defending against White's threats. This is where Topalov's strategic plan can be fully understood: he does not threaten anything concrete, and lets the opponent boil.
25...h5!

Anand’s very first decision after the novelty raised many eyebrows. Black’s king needs some air, but why the h-pawn, and why so far? There is, of course, nothing wrong with criticising the players, but Anand, who is not particularly known for spending 40 minutes of thought on one move, has been heavily criticized for playing the best move in the position. The point is that a superficial glance, accompanied by the computer’s ‘help’, will not reveal the key element of White’s initiative, which happens to be the g4-square! It is an ideal square for the white queen where it works on both flanks. The game did not show it all, but only because Black did not allow it. The commentators were mostly influenced by him losing this pawn later on, but that is totally irrelevant to the move itself – Anand’s famous intuition helped him to find the right solution.

But what about other ideas?

a) One curious move that comes to mind is 25...�e3.

Now taking the pesky bishop with 26.fxe3 hands the advantage to Black: 26...�xe3† 27.�g2 �xa3 28.�xf7† �h8 29.�e6 �c7 30.�f4 �e7 and it is White who should be worried.

Standing on the spot leads to nothing: 26.�g2 &c5†! 27.&xc5 (27.&b2? &xc6 and Black is winning) 27...&xc5 (the try 27...&xc6? loses immediately after 28.�a4!) 28.�xc5 &c7 White is not in any danger of being better.

It turns out that the only reply is 26.&b2!.

Now 26...&c5 looks natural. Here one might feel the power of 25...h5: without it White would play 27.�g4! and Black would have to retreat the bishop, with a very passive position.

(After 27...&e1† 28.�g2 &xf2† 29.�h3 he can resign.)

Another try is 26...b5, but now White gets the advantage after 27.�c3! (not 27.�xb5 &xf2† 28.�xf2 &b8 29.�c4 &xb2† 30.�f3 &e5 31.�xf7† &f8 32.�e6 &f6† 33.�e4 &f2 with an inevitable perpetual) 27...&h6 28.�c5! with the idea of exploiting Black’s offside bishop. This turns out to be quite gloomy for Black. e.g. after 28...a6 29.c7! he loses material.

b) The common suggestion for an ‘improvement’ was 25...h6, intending to pursue the exchange of bishops with: 26.�g2 &c7 27.&b2 &f6
With the idea that if 28.\texttt{c1} then 28...\texttt{g5} forces a repetition or bishop exchange. Too bad such a nice idea loses to 28.\texttt{xf6} \texttt{gf6} 29.\texttt{xf7t} \texttt{xf7} 30.\texttt{g4t}, taking the rook on c8.

26.\texttt{g2}

Since there are no immediate tactics in the position (anymore), Topalov starts to collect small threats, perhaps one will be missed by his opponent.

A line similar to the game can arise after 26.h4. Black is doing fine here as well: 26...\texttt{e7} (26...\texttt{e3} is not good, for the same reasons as in the previous comment) 27.\texttt{b2} \texttt{f6} 28.\texttt{c1} and now 28...\texttt{e7}!

The idea of this important manoeuvre is to transfer the bishop to c5, where it would both attack the f2-pawn and, more significantly, hide the key pawn on c6 from its defenders, which would allow Black to sacrifice back on c6. As we saw in the previous variations, this idea did not work without the black pawn on h5 or with the white bishop on b2 for tactical reasons, but here it is absolutely correct. It turns out there is not much White can do: neither repeating moves with 29.\texttt{b2} \texttt{f6}, nor entering a dead drawn position after 29.\texttt{e3} \texttt{c5!} 30.\texttt{xc5} \texttt{xc6} 31.\texttt{xc6} \texttt{xc6} 32.\texttt{a6} \texttt{xc5} 33.\texttt{xa7} are in his plans.

But even the more thoughtful 29.\texttt{f4} only extends the game, while it is a big question who is in more danger. 29...\texttt{c5} 30.\texttt{c7}

a) Too dangerous is:

30.\texttt{e1t} 31.\texttt{g2} \texttt{xf2t} 32.\texttt{h3} \texttt{b5}

White does not have to give a perpetual, but can keep playing with:

33.\texttt{xb5}

After 33.\texttt{xf7t} \texttt{f8} 34.\texttt{xb5} \texttt{xf7} White has to settle for a perpetual after 35.\texttt{d7t} \texttt{f6} 36.\texttt{c6t} \texttt{f5} 37.\texttt{d5t} \texttt{f6} 38.\texttt{c6t} \texttt{f7} 39.\texttt{d7t}.

33.\texttt{b6}

With a threat to take on c7.

34.\texttt{a4t} \texttt{xc7} 35.\texttt{a5!} \texttt{e7}

35...\texttt{c22?} 36.\texttt{e8t} \texttt{h7} 37.\texttt{e4t} mating.

36.\texttt{xb6} \texttt{xb6}

White has only technical difficulties to overcome before securing the full point.

b) But Black has no reason to enter this line.

30...\texttt{e7}

Intending to return the exchange on c7: Black is fine.

31.\texttt{e4} \texttt{xc7}

Not 31...\texttt{xe4}? 32.\texttt{xe4} and the c-pawn is worth a whole rook.

32.\texttt{xc7} \texttt{xc7} 33.\texttt{e8t}

White is definitely not going to win. Actually, it is Black who chooses whether to go for a draw after:

33...\texttt{h7} 34.\texttt{f1}

In order to prevent the capture on g3.

34.\texttt{e7} 35.\texttt{xe7} \texttt{xc7} 36.\texttt{xf7}

With a drawish endgame. Black might even try to win with 33...\texttt{f8}, although with pieces like the bishop on f8, it does not look too serious.

26...\texttt{e7} 27.\texttt{b2}

27...\texttt{f6!}

Of course! With a pawn on h5 this becomes possible...

28.\texttt{c1}
Now Black could have made the draw as we show in the next annotation. But does White have something better? After 28.\textit{xf6? gxf6} there is no hope for White – he does not even have a pawn for the exchange, and will have to work hard to survive. Black, on the other hand, has a clear plan of action: \ldots \textit{gc7, \ldots \textit{e5, \ldots ge7}, which finishes all White’s chances, not to mention the customary idea of returning the exchange with 
\ldots \textit{Bxc6} at an appropriate moment. 

28...\textit{e7} 

One cannot call this move a mistake, as Black should not lose after it, but it is hard to forget what happens next, and perhaps it was wise to head for a clear draw. 

Comparing 28...\textit{e7}! to the annotations two moves ago, the white king on \textit{g2} and pawn on \textit{h2} (instead of \textit{h4}), are only in Black’s favour, when even without this he did not experience any trouble. In fact, it is quite interesting to speculate whether Anand saw the whole idea of \ldots \textit{e7}, but decided to continue, hoping that his aggressive opponent would overestimate his chances, or did he just realize he had no problems at all and feel too safe? We will try to answer these questions after the next move. Meanwhile, after 29.\textit{e4 \textit{d6}} White can either trade queens with no future, or keep attacking with 30.\textit{g6} and after 30...\textit{Bxc6!} accept the draw after all. 31.\textit{h6} (after 31.\textit{b2 \textit{e5}} White has nothing) 31...\textit{e5!} 32.\textit{Bxc6 fxg6} 33.\textit{xe8 gxh6} 34.\textit{xg6 h4!} with a dead draw. Black’s barrier along the dark squares will be impossible to break through.

29.\textit{e3} 

This move was not fully understood either, raising many questions from various annotators. The idea is that Anand created a small threat: 29...\textit{e5!}
After the following forced line: 30.$xf7+ $f8 31.$xc5 bxc5 32.$d5, a position where only Black can play for a win is reached. Perhaps Anand deliberately gave up a drawing line, hoping to steal a victory using this trick?

Apart from the text move, Topalov had another attractive possibility: 29.$f4

a) 29...$c5 does not work anymore: 30.$xf7+ $f8 31.c7 and after 31...$xc4 32.$xc4 $e7 33.$a6 $d7 34.$xe8t $xc8 White should be able to win the endgame.

So, what can we suggest for Black as an improvement?

b) Maybe 29...h4? No, White’s reaction is as strong as it is surprising: 30.gxh4! and the disappearance of the black h-pawn from the board allows White new attacking motifs, mainly connected to advancing the h-pawn.

(In contrast, 30.c7 gives White nothing due to 30...h3! 31.$xh3 g5 32.$b7 [otherwise c7 falls] 32...gxh4 33.$xc8 $e5 with an approximately equal position.) To stop White’s plans the h-pawn must be destroyed with 30.$xh4, but after 31.c7 $d7 32.h3! Black’s threats end, and he is helpless against White’s.

c) This leaves only 29...g5!, which is not as risky as it might appear at first glance, and even helps to create counterplay. After 30.$e3 $c7 it is unclear how to dismantle Black’s bunker. For example, attacking the h-pawn yields nothing: 31.$e2 $d6 32.$f3 g4 33.$e4 $e5 and Black has no reasons to worry. Another idea is 31.$d3 $g7 32.$f5. It looks as if White has managed to maximize his pressure, but in fact Black is the only one who can play for a win, as becomes clear after 32...$e5 33.$xe5 $xe5 34.$xg5 $xe8.

29...$c7

Now, after Black has arranged his pieces, neither side has any real threats. As a matter of fact, it is impossible to find a manoeuvre for White that could force Black to solve serious problems. So he has no choice but to sting, wait, and sting again, hoping Black will miss something.

30.h4

Stopping the h-pawn, and preventing g7-g5 in the future. But there are still only empty boxes in the threat department.

30.$f4 does not give anything anymore after 30...$e5 and there is no point in 31.$e4, the queen on e7 is protected, so Black can simply reply 31...$xf4.

30...$e5?!

A questionable manoeuvre, for the first time in the game. This piece formation is less stable than the one analysed in previous comment, but to realise this in a tournament game is anything but easy. What must have attracted Anand is the
apparent solidity of the triangle $d6-e7-c7$, but it also leads to a very passive position, with the apex on $d6$ being quite vulnerable.

After the calm $30...g6$ White seems to have nothing at all. Judge for yourself: Black wants to put his bishop on $e5$, and seal all the gaps.

$31.d2 e5 32.e4 g7$ does not prevent this, as can be seen after: $33.b4 d6 34.c3 f6 35.e6 e8$ and White has to retreat his bishop, exchanging the queens, ending up in a lost position.

And not $31.f4 e5$ (still). For example:

$32.g5 f6$ and again, White has no threats in the near future.

White can, of course, manoeuvre as much as he wants. For example with $31.d3$, but after $31...g7$ Black’s pieces are ideally placed to protect everything.

Therefore, the only active try is $31.g4 hxg4 32.xg4 g7$. It seems that White is almost there with $33.h5$, but after $33...e5!$ he is the one who should be worried about losing.

$31.e3$!

A strong move! Not only does he want to place the queen on $f5$, but Black can no longer go back to the position analysed previously (there is no $...g6$ now!).

$31...d6$? is impossible because of $32.f4!$ and Black has to part with material.

But the most principled seems to be $31.h8$ renewing the idea of $...g6$, followed by $...g7$ building a very stable bunker. White can only prevent Black’s plan tactically now:

$32.e4 g6$

Anyhow!

$33.xf7! xf7 34.xe5+ bh7 35.d6$

Now the following forced line is possible:

$35...e7 36.xe7+ xe7 37.f4 g7$

For this second edition we have noticed that $37...e2! 38.c7 e8$ will allow Black to win the endgame due to the extra pawn on the queenside. But White can play $35.d4!$ and it is not clear how Black shall be able to make progress, having such an exposed king.

We have kept the old variation as we did not want to remove anything from the book:

$38.c7 e8 39.g5! (The only move to keep any chances.) 39...e8 40.d8$}

With a curious position that, surprisingly,
48.\textit{d}7 b1=\textit{w} 49.c8=\textit{w} and White wins.

45.\textit{g}5! a4 46.\textit{d}2 b3 47.axb3 axb3 48.\textit{c}1 \textit{a}8 49.\textit{c}6 \textit{c}8 50.\textit{a}3! Black is zugzwanged.

b) Better is: 40...\textit{f}7 41.\textit{f}3 \textit{e}6 42.\textit{f}4 b5 43.\textit{g}5 Here Black has to choose: settle for a half, or enter a crazy line. In fact, after:

b1) 43...b4 It looks as though Black is winning, but a surprise awaits! 44.\textit{c}xg6! The greatest surprise is that Black cannot even find a draw now! 44...\textit{a}5 45.\textit{f}4 \textit{f}6 46.\textit{f}5 \textit{f}d7 47.f6 b3 48.axb3 axb3 49.\textit{f}7 b2 50.f8=\textit{w} b1=\textit{w}+ 51.\textit{c}xh5 And Black loses.

b2) Thus the smartest would be to allow a draw by repetition: 43...\textit{f}7 44.\textit{f}4 \textit{e}6 45.\textit{g}5 with a handshake.

So, Anand could have retracted his steps, but he stays with his plan, after which he will have to play carefully, as any mistake could be disastrous.

31...\textit{d}6 32.\textit{g}5!

Asking the queen to leave, while freeing the way for his own queen to \textit{f}3. It is just like in boxing: the black bishop exposed the \textit{h}4-\textit{d}8 diagonal, so White immediately strikes there. Only now does White begin to build up a real initiative.

32...\textit{e}8

Aiming to bail out with an exchange sacrifice on \textit{c}6. For example, after 33.\textit{g}6? comes 33...\textit{xc}6! and the position is lost for White.

33.\textit{f}3

But Anand's idea is, of course, brutally suppressed by Topalov. And now the h-pawn starts causing migraines.

33...\textit{b}5

The only chance to confuse the opponent. A chance that will eventually hand Anand his miraculous escape.

Apart from the objective quality of the move, Black did not really have a choice, as he cannot protect \textit{h}5 with 33...\textit{g}6 because of 34.\textit{f}6.

34.\textit{e}3

Before taking on \textit{h}5 White improves his bishop.

34...\textit{e}5 35.\textit{d}1

A useful technique while conducting an attack is to wear the opponent down psychologically. Here, for example, Topalov sets up a 'childish' trap: \textit{f}4, \textit{xd}6 followed by \textit{xf}7+. But it is much more than that. His opponent is trying to work out a defensive plan, and suddenly has to deal with small, almost irrelevant, threats, and start searching for more surprises. Here the effect is even stronger, as Anand was quite relaxed for the past few moves, feeling too safe. In the same breath, however, it could be said that Topalov makes his own life a bit more difficult, allowing Black to improve his position.

35...\textit{e}8:

A bad mistake, putting Anand on the verge of defeat. For tactical reasons exchanging the \textit{c}- and h-pawns amazingly gives White a big advantage.

Much better would have been 35...\textit{f}5!. After this Black's pieces are still vulnerable, but even so it is much better than the game. White should try to drive Black's queen away from the centre, and
then develop the attack. The bishop on d6 does not help Black and is actually subject to many tactical shots. Every line cannot be given here, but White has a few possible ways to continue: 36.\texttt{f3} \texttt{e6} 37.\texttt{d3} (taking care of f5) 37...\texttt{a6}:

The attempt to win back the exchange does not work out well: 38.\texttt{b6} \texttt{e7} 39.\texttt{d8} 39...\texttt{e8} 40.\texttt{c7} \texttt{f5} 41.\texttt{xf5} \texttt{xd8} 42.\texttt{cxd8=\texttt{t}} \texttt{t} \texttt{xd8} 43.\texttt{d5} \texttt{f6} with a drawish endgame.

But 38.\texttt{d4} seems very strong. If, for instance, 38...\texttt{e8}, then White can show what he really, really wants: 39.\texttt{f5}! with strong pressure. Not a forced line, but good for illustrative purposes.

36.\texttt{xf5}!!

The first exclamation mark is for the move itself, the second for not repeating the position, although with the fall of c6 the game will become much more double-edged. Topalov could not have seen everything, and was just following one simple principle: “FIGHT”.

36...\texttt{xh5}?

Of course, there is no other way.

37.\texttt{xa7}?

Too bad. After deep thought Topalov rejected a continuation that would almost have won. These variations, in fact, are beyond human abilities, even for such a great player. It took the authors, armed with strong computer programs, a long while to find a way through the jungle of variations, but objectively the text lets a big part of the advantage go.

The endgame arising after 37.\texttt{xh5} gives White nothing: 37...\texttt{exf3} 38.\texttt{xh7} \texttt{xf3} 39.\texttt{e4} \texttt{a5} 40.\texttt{d5} \texttt{d7} 41.\texttt{e7} 42.\texttt{c5} \texttt{f8} and despite his active pieces, White cannot win.

But after 37.\texttt{g6}!!

White could have gained a serious, perhaps even decisive, advantage. The point here is that suddenly White has more pieces near Black’s king and he wants to use this in a simple way: the bishop goes to d4 and it is not at all clear how Black should defend against the wild threat h4-h5-h6. At the same time, White smells the delicatessens along the sixth rank, and so knows that during the attack more threats can be added.

Now 37...\texttt{f8} loses on the spot to 38.\texttt{h7}, and 37...\texttt{a6} only changes the move order after 38.\texttt{d4}.

Therefore, the critical line is 37...\texttt{f8} 38.\texttt{d4}. Black has many moves, but none gives a certain defence:

Painful are both 38...\texttt{e8} 39.\texttt{f5}! and Black is helpless against threats like \texttt{f7t} and, mainly, \texttt{e4}; and 38...\texttt{e6} 39.\texttt{h5}! and there is no defence against the h-pawn march.

More complex is 38...\texttt{c7}. Here too, after 39.\texttt{xg7} 40.\texttt{d6}, White has a clear advantage, mainly thanks to the position of the black king, waiting for the white kingside pawns to arrive, as “active” play with:

40...\texttt{c3}

40...\texttt{c2} is even worse due to 41.\texttt{d8} 42.\texttt{f8} 43.\texttt{g5} 44.\texttt{f5} 45.\texttt{xc2} winning.

41.\texttt{h5} \texttt{c5}

Other moves will allow white pawns to run all the way to the endzone. e.g. 41...\texttt{a5} 42.g4 \texttt{b4} 43.g5 \texttt{a4} 44.g6 winning.

After 41...\texttt{c5} a beautiful forced line begins:

42.\texttt{d8} 43.\texttt{g5} 44.\texttt{e5} 45.\texttt{g8}
45.\texttt{h6} \texttt{e8} 46.\texttt{e4} \texttt{h6} 47.\texttt{e4} \texttt{xh6} 48.\texttt{e8} \texttt{h5} 49.\texttt{g8}!

Black can resign.

Therefore Black must give up material. The first way to do this is 38.\texttt{xc5}, but after 39.\texttt{xc6} \texttt{xd4} 40.\texttt{xb5} the endgame is very difficult for Black.

Therefore the most stubborn is 38.\texttt{c5}!

After this it is not at all easy to prove that White's advantage is decisive. Perhaps this is the move that made Topalov give up on the line. However, White does have a clear and dangerous plan:

39.\texttt{xc5} \texttt{xc5}

40.\texttt{h5} does not work because of 40...\texttt{xf2}!

41.\texttt{h6} \texttt{d4} 42.\texttt{x7} \texttt{h8} 43.\texttt{h7} and here cannot move to the right of the h-file, making the position drawn! In fact, this kind of variation makes one feel the position's evaluation is not very clear.

But White has a great idea:

40.\texttt{f5}!

It seems that Black cannot parry the plan of \texttt{g3-g4-g5-g6}!

40...\texttt{b6} 41.\texttt{g4}

The only way for Black to escape is by freeing the king.

41...\texttt{e7} 42.\texttt{g5}

Not 42.\texttt{h5} \texttt{f6}!.

42...\texttt{b4}

Or any other move - Black has to sit and wait for a moment White tries to convert his advantage.

White, on the other hand, has to wait for the appropriate moment.

43.\texttt{g6} \texttt{f8}

43...\texttt{f6} 44.\texttt{xf7} \texttt{f8} 45.\texttt{c8} leads to the main line, with White having an extra tempo.

44.\texttt{xf7}!

This kind of position is, amazingly, the key to the whole line. White is going to combine threats of penetrating with the queen from both sides of the f7-pawn: the h-file from the right, and e8 from the left. At the same time it is important to make sure Black does not have a perpetual and, of course, to watch for queen exchanges. Black is doomed to a passive back and forth. Here are a few variations:

44...\texttt{e4} 45.\texttt{f1}!

The best spot for the king.

45...\texttt{f6} 46.\texttt{e8} \texttt{d8}

46...\texttt{d8} 47.\texttt{e6} \texttt{e7} 48.\texttt{h3} winning.

47.\texttt{d7} \texttt{e7} 48.\texttt{e6}!

What does White want? To put Black in zugzwang. For example:

48...\texttt{b6} 49.\texttt{b3} \texttt{d8} 50.\texttt{c} 5 a5

50...\texttt{e5} 51.\texttt{e6} winning.

51.\texttt{b3}

Black is forced to break his bunker.

51...\texttt{c7} 52.\texttt{h1}!

Now White is winning in variations like:

52...\texttt{d8} 53.\texttt{h7} \texttt{e7}

53...\texttt{a4} loses beautifully: 54.\texttt{g8} \texttt{e7}

55.\texttt{f8} \texttt{xf8} 56.\texttt{e6} \texttt{d8} 57.\texttt{a4} mating.

54.\texttt{e4} \texttt{b8} 55.\texttt{d5} \texttt{d6} 56.\texttt{h7} \texttt{b8} 57.\texttt{g8} \texttt{e7} 58.\texttt{xe7} \texttt{xe8} 59.\texttt{g5} \texttt{d7} 60.\texttt{e3} \texttt{e7}

61.\texttt{b7} \texttt{d8} 62.\texttt{a8} \texttt{d7} 63.\texttt{c6} \texttt{d8}

64.\texttt{e6}

And it is all over.

Of course, Black can defend in other ways, but the essence stays unchanged: an attack with opposite coloured bishops, aided by a strong pawn, is usually winning, even in such a difficult position.
Anand is back in the game... with an advantage!
It seems this conclusion will shock some commentators who continued discussing White's advantage here, but, in fact, now Black unties himself and, without the annoying pawn on c6, White has nothing to offer. All Black needs is a little time.

38...\textit{d4}

White's only chance not to lose(!) is by threatening something all the time, so Black will not have time to think about activity.

38...\textit{B}

Intending at some point to play ...g6 and ...\textit{g7}, which will put an end to all White's threats.

39.e5

There is not much White can do here, and he definitely does not want to make crucial decisions before the 40th move.

39...b4 40.\textit{f5} g6

Of course, Black is not allowing h5.

41.\textit{f4} e7

Protecting b4 and preparing ...\textit{g7}. Black has winning chances, although technically it is very difficult, if not more.

Worse is the immediate 41...\textit{g7} because of 42.xg7 xg7 43.xb4 and again it is White with chances, with two pawns for the exchange and pressure against the king.

42.d4

As we mentioned before, if Black manages to exchange the bishop he will have good winning chances. As long as White keeps both bishops on, Black will be unable to overcome the technical difficulties.

42.b3?! g7 43.c7 (43.xg7 xg7 and White is in trouble) 43...\textit{f6} 44.c4 \textit{e6} and White is struggling hard for a draw.

42...\textit{a5} 43.\textit{f3} g7 44.b6 \textit{b5}
A strong move. Now there is only one square for the bishop, and after

45. \( \text{e}3 \)

Black could force a very positive turn of events.

45... \( \text{c}3 \)?

Black could have forced a desirable endgame, but instead he, not only loses his winning chances, but becomes hunted again.

If Black misses the winning try then he could at least invite White to 45...\( \text{a}5 \) 46.\( \text{b}6 \) (bad is 46.\( \text{g}5 \) \( \text{d}7 \) 47.\( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{f}5 \) 48.\( \text{e}4 \) \( \text{d}4 \) and Black is attacking) 46...\( \text{b}5 \) 47.\( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{a}5 \) with a repetition.

But the point is that he, undoubtedly, saw 45...\( \text{f}6 \)! seeking a queen exchange to enter an endgame only Black can win, but apparently left it as his last choice, trying to find more. 46.\( \text{e}4 \) \( \text{e}5 \)

47.\( \text{d}3 \)

47.\( \text{x}e5 \) \( \text{x}e5 \) 48.\( \text{b}3 \) In this position Black can torture White for many moves, trying to exchange the bishops. If that is achieved, Black will combine threats of giving back the exchange (with his king loitering around the queenside) and pressure on White's lonely kingside. None of this would be possible without the queenside pawns. To Black's huge disappointment, White does not have to exchange the bishops.

By the way, both opponents had already played positions with a similar (but not identical) material balance: Anand beat Kamsky in 1995 and Topalov lost to Kramnik in 2000...

46.\( \text{g}5 \)!

Looks familiar? In the beginning Topalov used Anand's moment of doubt (whether to play for a draw or a win) to uncork 32.\( \text{g}5 \). The same scenario returns, and again Black finds himself in trouble.

46...\( \text{a}7 \)

Many spectators had a feeling of \( \text{d}\text{e} \text{a} \text{v} \text{u} \) once again, after missing \( \text{g}5 \), Black makes another mistake, and this one could have cost him the game. Did it all happen again? No! The biggest mistake Anand keeps for a later stage, and now he could still have escaped.

Weaker is 46...\( \text{f}8 \) after which, as pointed out by Timman in \textit{New In Chess}, there comes 47.\( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{b}6 \) 48.\( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 49.\( \text{a}4 \)! and Black will also have to deal with a passed a-pawn, while the white pieces control the whole board. He has some survival chances, but not higher than those he had in the game. 49...\( \text{d}6 \) 50.\( \text{h}5 \) \( \text{a}6 \) 51.\( \text{e}4 \) \( \text{g}5 \) 52.\( \text{g}5 \) \( \text{e}6 \) and Black is not supposed to lose.

47.\( \text{d}3 \)
Topalov takes his chance. Is Black in trouble again?

47...b6?

Only this is a mistake that places Anand in a lost position. Also 47...b6 48.d8! exd5 49.exd5 with a technical win, and 47...a6 48.d8! cannot help.

But after 47...d7! 48.axf7+ xf7 49.xb5 xa2 winning this position would be a bit difficult, to say the least. The b-pawn is dangerous, whereas White's play on the kingside will expose his king to perpetuals. For example: 50.e7+ g7 51.e7+ f6 52.h6+ g8 53.d8+ h7 and that's it! Draw.

So maybe 48.xg6+ g7 49.b3 f5 50.xf5 e5 51.e3, and White is clearly the only one who can play for a win, but objectively Black should not lose.

48.e3

Now it is all over - White is winning the material back under the best possible conditions.

48...a6!

It would be interesting to know what Anand's motives were when playing this move. On one hand, it leads to a lost position, but the conversion is very tricky, with Topalov having many chances to go wrong (which is indeed what happened in the game).

Another recommended "better" try was 48...c7, which after 49.xb6 xb6 50.a4!

leads to a lost position, and what is more important, a simple one for White. It is obvious that Black has nothing to offer against White's combined plan of pushing his a-pawn and attacking the black king - it is well-known that two distant weaknesses are usually enough for a win.

Therefore, Anand's last move should be praised rather than criticized, as some commentators did during the tournament. He certainly made the best practical call, being fully aware of the consequences.

49.exf7+

Forcing and strong.

49...xf7 50.d7+ h8 51.d8+ f7 52.c7+

White also grabs the g-pawn by force, with a big check.

52...g8 53.xb6 xa2 54.xg6+ h8

We have already seen this position in one of the previous lines, with a slight difference - Black had his g-pawn then. Now White should win, of course.

55.c6+!

Well played, both stopping the b-pawn from moving, and making way for his own runners.

But considering the following part of the game, 55.e4! could be even stronger and primarily a simpler choice.

Now after 55...f7 White simply wins after 56.d4+ since Black is losing his proud b-pawn by force: 56...g8 57.a8+ f8 (or 57...h7 58.h8+ g6 59.xc3 bxc3 60.xc3) 58.d5+ f7 59.d8+ f8 60.g5+ f7 61.f6+ e8 62.xc3 bxc3 63.xc3

Better looks 55...a5, but nothing can defend the poor king anymore, so simply advancing pawns on the kingside finishes the game.

55...f7 56.g4 g7
Black is now ready to push his trump. White is faster, but only marginally, which puts him under pressure, especially when trying to reach the 60th move.

57. h5!

According to the time he consumed over his last moves, Topalov was becoming increasingly nervous. Over the board, however, he played the simplest and the most straightforward winning move.

Much more complex is the win after 57. g5 b3 58. g6.

58... f5 59. e8+ f8 60. b5! c8 61. h5+ g8 And now after the computer idea 62. c5! b7+ 63. f3 f6 64. f5 g7 65. h5 it is all over.

A better try is 58... g8 59. h5 b2, when White has to find the correct 60. b7!, but even then there is still a certain amount of care needed, as after 60... e6 Black is threatening a perpetual.

Again a tough move, 61. f4!, has to be found, intending to meet 61... f5 with

\[
\text{analysis diagram}
\]

62. e5!! g4+ 63. g3 e6 and, finally, 64. h6! xg6 65. h7+ xg7 66. xg7+ xg7 67. e5+ winning. This forced line suggested by GM Shipov is beautiful, but it would require a superman (together with a supercomputer) to find it during such a tense game. Topalov chooses a more human solution.
60...d4?

A painful mistake by Topalov, but one that can be easily understood. He did not know there was a forced win, so he did not look for it. As for exchanging the bishops, he wants to eliminate the risk of losing, especially as he was in time trouble! Without the bishops, even if Black promotes first, White will always have a perpetual in hand, so by exchanging bishops he reduces his chances of losing to zero. Unfortunately for him, the same goes for his winning chances!

Of course, if he had known there was a win, Topalov would have spotted 60.g5! on the fly.

Or 60...xg5 61.xg5 b1=x 62.xb1 d5\^t 63.h2 xg5 64.b2\^t h7 65.xg7\^t xg7 66.hxg7 xg7 67.g3 with the decisive opposition.

61.xe7 xe7 62.d4\^t h7 63.xb2 xg5 64.xg7

White now has a simple win:

64.xg6 65.f3 c1 66.e4 d2 67.f4 c1 68.f5\^t h7

68..h7. 69.e5 and the f-pawn queens.

69.f3 d2 70.g4 c1 71.h5 a3 72.c3

That's it. Perhaps Topalov did not have enough time to evaluate this line in time trouble.

60..g8 61.xf6 xf6

And suddenly, there is no win! In most cases, every pawn except White's f-pawn is eliminated, leading to a theoretical draw.

62.g3

The continuation 62.f3 only "looks" winning.

After 62...b6? 63.g5 f7 (or 63...h8 64.f5\^t and if 64...g8? then 65.g6 mating) 64.h7\^t e8 65.g8\^t d7 66.g7\^t c6 67.f6\^t b7 68.xb6\^t xb6 69.h7 b1=x White should win.

But after the simple 62...h8! White cannot improve his position! For example: 63.b7 c3! And now after 64.g5 d2\^t 65.h3 xg5 66.xb2\^t h7 67.d4 xh6 the position is a theoretical draw. And if White feels like waiting with 63.c2, Black can do the same with 63..g8. We have found no winning plan here.

62...b6!

Simple and strong. White cannot stop the pawn without making concessions. His main problem is the dangerous b-pawn, but there is more. The point is that it is enough for Black to capture the g-pawn, even in exchange for his only trump (the b-pawn), as in this situation White's h-pawn will
die too, and the queen endgame with an extra f-pawn is known to be a theoretical draw.

63...c4† h7 64.g5 g6!

The only move, if Black is to take pawns in exchange for his b2-hero.

Topalov now decides to give a few checks, to test Anand's alertness.

65.c7† g8 66.b8† f7

Not 66...h7 67.b7† g8 68.h7†.

67.b7† f8 68.b8† f7 69.c3† f8

The checks are helping to accumulate time, but do not improve the position.

70.e7† d7 71.d4†

This leads to an immediate draw, but there is nothing else to suggest.

72.e6

Anand misses a forced draw, but does not miss the draw as a whole. The counter-check: 72...d6† 73.xd6† xd6 74.h7 b1=wb 75.h8=wb g1† 76.f3 d1† would have given a perpetual.

73.xb2

There is also no win after 73.c4† d7!

74.b5† c7 75.h7 b1=wb 76.xb1 xb1 77.h8=wb g1†.

73...xg5† 74.f3 h5† 75.e4

After 75...g6†! Anand captures the h-pawn with check (or White will have to allow a repetition) and even gives a perpetual, although the queen ending with an f-pawn is a theoretical draw anyway.

76.e3 g5†!

As GM Shipov pointed out, after 76...h3† Black could have still drawn, but it is a purely computer generated line... 77.d4 g4† 78.c5 h5† 79.c4 (79xb6 xh6=) 79...d5† 80.c3 f3† 81.b4 b7† with a draw.

77.f4

Black is lost again - the king manages to escape the checks. The good news for Anand is that he has already made all his mistakes; now it is Topalov's turn.

77...g3† 78.e4 e1† 79.f3 f1† 80.g3 g1† 81.g2 b1 82.e6† f7 83.d7† f6 84.g7† e6 85.e5†!!

In severe time trouble, Topalov misses a beautiful win now, and an elegant one five moves later. The cute idea is 85.f5†!

85...d5 (85...xf5 86.h7† or 85...xf5 86.h7† d3† 87.h4) 86.d7† c5 87.h7 and White wins by escaping the checks in the f7-area.

85...f7 86.h5† g6 87.g5† f7 88.h5† f6 89.h4† e7

Searching for a spot from which the queen will both protect the king from checks and support the h-pawn. He succeeds in the latter, not so much in the former.

90.h7?

And indeed, the last mistake of the game belongs to White! A different check 90.h5† is a draw due to threefold repetition, but 90.g4† wins: 90...f6 91.h2!
The h-file turns out to be the best place for the king:
91...\texttt{c2} 92.\texttt{h3} \texttt{d3} 93.\texttt{h4} \texttt{d2}
94.\texttt{g5} \texttt{f7} 95.\texttt{f5} \texttt{g8} 96.\texttt{g6} \texttt{f8}
97.\texttt{f6} \texttt{e8} 98.\texttt{h7} \texttt{h2} 99.\texttt{g5} \texttt{g2} 100.\texttt{h6} \texttt{h1} 101.\texttt{g6} \texttt{g2} 102.\texttt{g5} \texttt{c6} 103.\texttt{g7} \texttt{d7} 104.\texttt{h6}
and Black's next check will force a queen exchange.

90...\texttt{e1}^t

Now the checks will continue for eternity!
91.\texttt{g4} \texttt{d1} 92.\texttt{g5} \texttt{d8} 93.\texttt{h5} \texttt{d5}
94.\texttt{g5} \texttt{h1} 95.\texttt{h4} \texttt{d5} 96.\texttt{g4} \texttt{d1}
97.\texttt{g3} \texttt{e1}^t

\[ \frac{1}{2} - \frac{1}{2} \]
1.e4 c5 2.d3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.cxd4 Qf6 5.c3 a6

Luckily for us, there are not many avowed fans of the Petroff in the tournament, while there are Sicilianistas (or should that be Sicilianers) of every kind. Morozevich's choice of a sharp line could be explained by Leko's somewhat hesitant play in the previous round (Game 1).

6.f3

White can check his opponent’s intentions with 6.e3 and after 6...g4 7.c1 (7.g5 will be examined in great depth later in this book, namely in: Kasimdzhanov – Anand Game 15, Svidler – Topalov Game 19, Svidler – Polgar Game 25 and Morozevich – Polgar Game 46) 7...Qf6 continues with 8.f3 as if nothing happened. This is especially useful if you tend to get into time trouble.

6...e6

Morozevich is known for his affection for side lines, but here he's going straight into one of the most topical main lines. There are a few reasons for this:

1. In the previous round Leko failed in a very promising position against Topalov, and could not be too fond of this opening, where the price of every mistake is very high.

2. The Muscovite has an interesting idea in the main line.

3. A couple of rounds from now Morozevich’s strategy for the tournament will be fully revealed: no more avoiding theoretical battles, but rather solid and down-to-earth play.

7.e3 e7 8.d2

Nowadays the English Attack is by far the most popular (and promising) way to target the Najdorf, leading (again, to our great delight) to sharp and interesting positions.

8...0–0 9.g4

This has all been played hundreds of times: White is first to start his attack, but Black is quite solid on the kingside, while his own attack on the opposite flank, although it starts a bit later, might prove devastating. As a rule, games in these positions are decided by a single tempo.

9...Qc6 10.0–0 0d7

A standard manoeuvre: the knight will be driven away from f6 anyway, so Black retracts the knight in advance, so he can react flexibly to White’s continuations later on.

11.h4 Qd5

Another approach is to try and push b7-b5 right away: 11...Qxd4 12.Qxd4 b5 13.g5 Qd7 14.h4 b4 15.Qe2 a5 with a typical opposite-sides castling race. Who is better? Usually the better prepared player.

12.Qe2

Another possibility is:

12.Qg2

From here the queen protects g4, making f4 possible. Morozevich was forced to face this
move two weeks after the current tournament, in another world championship (a team one this time) and reached a great position after:

12...\textit{xd4} 13.\textit{xd4} \textit{dc6} 14.\textit{e3} b5 15.\textit{wb1} \textit{wa5} 16.\textit{g5} b4 17.\textit{de2}

Here Black should not play 17...\textit{e5} as was common before, but instead:

17...\textit{d5}!

It seems that this was prepared to fire against Leko, but once again the Hungarian’s instincts did not fail him.

18.\textit{exd5} b3!

The point!

19.cx\textit{b3} \textit{db4} 20.\textit{el} ex\textit{d5}

Black achieved very promising play, which he managed to convert into a full point, Quezada – Morozevich, Beer Sheva 2005.

12...\textit{d7} 13.\textit{b1}

13.\textit{a5}

A completely fresh idea. Black is delaying ...\textit{b5} for now, and is trying to place a knight on \textit{c4} instead. Morozevich’s plan has obvious advantages and drawbacks. The main idea is to keep a knight on \textit{c4}, not allowing White to get rid of it (as opposed to positions with \textit{b5}, where White can force the black pawn to \textit{c4} by simply capturing the knight – here a knight will be replaced by its colleague). The problematic side of the plan is that the \textit{a5}-knight will be missing from the centre, and so out of play. It is well-known that knights which defend each other, such as \textit{a5-c4}, are doing virtually the same job, because they are on the same route. Judging from the present game, this plan is not going to refute the English Attack.

The regular continuation is 13...\textit{b5} 14.\textit{g5} \textit{wc7} with yet another English Attack position, which one should not play without extensive preparation. Perhaps Morozevich did not want to check Leko’s, and started analysing a few moves earlier.

14.\textit{g5} \textit{de4}

It might seem illogical to move the well-placed centralized knight, while keeping the other on its lousy square. The problem is that on \textit{e5} the knight is subjected to various white attacks, thus undermining the support of \textit{c4}.

15.\textit{el}

Leko is, of course, not going to capture on \textit{c4}, but instead allows the knights to duplicate each other’s work.

15...\textit{b5} 16.\textit{f4} b4 17.\textit{ce2} \textit{wb6}!

A very useful move, improving the queen’s position while threatening ...\textit{e5}.

18.\textit{h2}

And what next? White is already set to play \textit{g6} and \textit{h5} (or vice versa) followed by \textit{h3}, while Black’s plan is far from obvious. The immobility of the black knights is especially felt now, as the “intellectual” on \textit{a5} is blocking the a-pawn, and with it the play.

18...\textit{d5}

Creating counterplay in the centre, and ignoring material (which is of minor importance,
as long as one does not exceed the boundaries of good taste). Perhaps Morozevich prepared this idea in advance specifically for this position, or perhaps over the board he was influenced by his improvement in the other line (see the comments to move 12) – in any case – there is not much joy for Black here.

After 18...e5 19.\\textit{Q}f5 \textit{Q}xf5 20.exf5 White is in the driver’s seat. His kingside pawns are very intimidating, while his light-squared bishop has exciting prospects after the disappearance of its opponent.

19.exd5 \textit{Q}c5

Of course, Black is not going to waste a whole tempo for a mere pawn: 19...exd5 20.h5 \textit{Q}c5 21.\\textit{Q}g2 and White has a dangerous initiative.

20.\\textit{Q}f3 \textit{Q}ad8 21.\textit{Q}b3?

Last round’s game has had an impact – Leko has lost his confidence, and is now more hesitant.

Much more in the spirit of the position was 21.g6!!

Making use of the fact that d5-pawn is still alive by attacking the e6-pawn’s defender. Here the knight on d4 plays a key role in the forthcoming activities.

Now both 21...hxg6 22.h5, and 21...h6 22.gxf7+ \textit{Q}xf7 23.\\textit{Q}h3 exd5 24.\\textit{Q}g2 allow a decisive attack.

The main line starts with 21...fxg6 22.\\textit{Q}h3, then Black has two main alternatives in 22...f6 and 22...e5:

a) 22...f6 23.h5 g5 24.h6 g6 25.\\textit{Q}h1! A multitasking move. The queen evacuates from the f-file and protects ad1 thus creating two threats: dxe6 and fxe5. 25...exd5 26.\\textit{Q}xd5+ \textit{Q}h8 27.\\textit{Q}b3 The position is materially balanced, but only White’s pieces are taking part in the game.

b) 22...e5 23.\\textit{Q}e6 fxe6

23...\textit{Q}a3† misses the goal after 24.bxa3 bxa3† 25.\\textit{Q}a1 \textit{B}b8 26.\\textit{Q}xa3 and White wins.

24.\\textit{Q}xe6† \textit{Q}h8

The attempt to change the course of the game with 24...\\textit{Q}xe6 fails to 25.dxe6 \textit{B}xd1 26.\textit{Q}g3

26...\textit{Q}f6 (on 26...\textit{Q}xb2 the simplest is 27.\\textit{Q}h1 \textit{B}xh1 28.\\textit{Q}xh1 \textit{Q}a4 29.\\textit{Q}e4 and the e-pawn will decide) 27.\\textit{Q}e4 \textit{Q}e3 28.\\textit{Q}h1 \textit{B}xh1 29.\\textit{Q}xh1. White has managed to ward off Black’s initiative, and it is up to the e-pawn to finish the job now.

25.h5 g5

The easiest way to prove White’s advantage is the simple:

26.b3!

Whereas 26.h6 g6 27.f5 gets very messy after 27...\textit{Q}a3†! 28.\\textit{Q}a1 (28.bxa3 bxa3† 29.\\textit{Q}a1 \textit{B}b8 30.\\textit{Q}xa3 \textit{Q}c4 and Black wins!) 28...\\textit{Q}xc2† 29.\\textit{Q}b1 gxf5 (29...\textit{Q}a3† 30.bxa3 bxa3† 31.\\textit{Q}a1 \textit{B}b8 32.\\textit{Q}e4. The difference compared to 28.bxa3 is that now the queen can protect b1. 32...\textit{Q}c4 33.\\textit{Q}h3! and White wins.) 30.\\textit{Q}xc2 e4, where a computer-like cold-bloodedness and precision would be required from White to prove that his position is better.

26...gxf4

26...\textit{Q}a3† 27.\\textit{Q}xa3 bxa3 28.h6 followed by \textit{Q}c3, and Black is falling apart.

27.bxc4 \textit{B}xc4 28.\\textit{Q}e4 \textit{Q}a3† 29.\\textit{Q}a1 h6 30.\textit{Q}b2

Here the white piece is far more valuable than the two black pawns.
Thus, within just two moves, Black got rid of both his knights and his plan completely justified itself. He has the bishop pair, and in this open position that cliché is significant. White, as moral compensation, is a pawn up, which influences nothing. All in all, Black’s chances are better, but he still has to be careful, and not allow White to develop an attack on the kingside.

26...\texttt{f5} or 26...\texttt{d7}, transferring the bishop to c6, keeps the more promising position: 27.f5 \texttt{c6} 28.\texttt{h5} \texttt{d4} with the initiative.

27.\texttt{e3}!

Leko naturally wants to exchange one pair of bishops.

27...\texttt{f5}

Black finds the only (and quite original) way to stop it happening.

28.gxf6 \texttt{f7}  
I’ll pick up that pawn later.”

29.\texttt{f5}!

It was better to keep the f-pawn, and advance 29.h5, as that is much more important for counterplay.

a) The main difference can be seen after 29...\texttt{d4} 30.hxg6 hxg6 31.\texttt{g4} \texttt{xf6} 32.\texttt{h3}, and here either 32...\texttt{g7} 33.\texttt{f5}!, opening all the lines around Black’s king, or 32...\texttt{fe8}
32...\textit{a}e5 33...\textit{f}e4

At first glance the rook is reminiscent of the famous Karpovian rook (against Hort, Moscow 1971), but here its job is rather modest: defence, and not a very successful one at that.

\textbf{29...\textit{d}4 30...\textit{x}g6 \textit{hxg6} 31...\textit{g}4 \textit{xf}6 32...\textit{g}2?!}

Leko is transferring the rook to the fourth rank, where it can play on both flanks. The problem is that the rook won't have enough squares there, and will be an easy target for Black. It is hard, however, to suggest an improvement, as White has no direct attacking plan, whereas the position is wide open, clearly favouring the bishops.

32...h5 no longer achieves the goal of opening the h-file: after 32...g5 the \textit{h}5-pawn will probably fall sooner or later, but it was White's only chance to create counterplay: 33...\textit{g}2 \textit{f}e8 34...\textit{d}1 \textit{x}d3 35...\textit{xd}3 \textit{w}d4, and although we prefer Black, it is a much better version for White than the game.

\textbf{32...\textit{a}5 33...\textit{e}e4}

After this \textit{h}4 just becomes a weakness, and Black's pieces are beginning to occupy controlling positions.

35...\textit{e}5 \textit{h}5?!

35...\textit{b}8 was stronger than the text move as after 36...\textit{g}1 \textit{x}d3 37...\textit{xd}3 \textit{b}h4 Black wins the pawn, and immediately threatens to exchange rooks, which is clearly in his favour.

36...\textit{x}d8 \textit{xd}8 37...\textit{e}e6

Again, White wants to exchange the bishops...

37...\textit{x}h4 38...\textit{g}2 \textit{e}8

38...\textit{g}3 \textit{h}8 39...\textit{h}6t After this Black is dictating the game.

Black's winning plan in this position is rather simple:
1. Exchange the heavy pieces, thus solving the problem of his exposed king.
2. Push the g-pawn all the way.

How to exchange the heavy pieces? There is an algorithm there too: activate them as much as possible, and so make the opponent seek exchanges.

39...\textit{g}4 \textit{e}e5 40...\textit{c}4 \textit{e}1

The first step (activating the heavy pieces) is partially complete - the pin along the first rank is very annoying, and White will not be able to tolerate it for long.

41...\textit{d}3 \textit{f}6 42...\textit{d}2

Leko had a neat way to prevent the queen from getting to \textit{f}2 with 42...\textit{f}5?, but Black does not have to swap the bishops, of course: 42...\textit{f}7 43...\textit{d}2 \textit{e}7 with a position very similar to the game.
42...f2 43.e2

White does not trade queens, as he is hoping to make use of the exposed position of the black king.

43...h6

Here 'Fritzie' comes up with a really amusing line: 44...gxc1† 45.dxc1 g1† 46.d1 (46.d1 g5) 46.e3† 47.b1 e5 48.c3 b5 49.d3 xc4 50.xc4 bxc5 51.bxc3 xc3 52.xc3 xc3 and seems to be quite happy with its position. It is a dead draw, of course. Hey, there are still things computers do not fully understand!

White's next move is virtually forced, as 45.e5 46.c3 xcl† is already a serious threat.

45.c7† xc7

Forced, as if 45...f7?? then 46.d7 and White wins.

46.xe1 g5

Without the rooks Black already feels much safer. All he needs now is to exchange the queens, and then the bishops and the g-pawn will bring the victory home.
47.\texttt{Qd}3 \texttt{Bg}6 48.\texttt{Qg}1 \texttt{Qe}7 49.\texttt{Qg}4 \texttt{Qe}4 50.\texttt{Qg}3

Checks are of no help here: 50.\texttt{Qa}7+ \texttt{Qh}6
50...\texttt{Qf}7 51.\texttt{Qh}3 \texttt{Bd}5

Leko is not particularly known for giving second chances.
54.\texttt{Qf}7 55.\texttt{Qg}2 \texttt{Bd}5 56.\texttt{Qe}4

"Sorry, the last train for today has already left, sir". White’s bishop is occupying a key square, and Black can no longer improve his position.
56...\texttt{Qe}6 57.\texttt{Qc}5

Leko will just sting his opponent over and over again, until he gives up.
57...\texttt{Bd}6 58.\texttt{Qd}3 \texttt{Qe}6 59.\texttt{Qh}1 \texttt{Bd}4 60.\texttt{Qh}7+ \texttt{Qf}8 61.\texttt{Qf}5

52.\texttt{Qf}5?

This should have significantly eased Black’s task.

Leko had to make sure the queens stayed on the board: 52.\texttt{Qg}3 \texttt{Qg}2 53.\texttt{Qc}7+ \texttt{Qg}6 54.\texttt{Qd}7 \texttt{Qh}1+ 55.\texttt{Qa}2 \texttt{Qe}4 Black’s still has good chances here, as his pieces are more active and the white bishop is struggling to find a good square. However, in the game White should have lost immediately.
52...\texttt{Qh}4?

Given that from now on Black will be chasing after the white queen until the very end of the game, it is hard to understand why he did not play 52...\texttt{Qh}1+ exchanging the queens and entering a technically winning endgame, (even though it is not easy to convert). 53.\texttt{Qxh}1 \texttt{Qxh}1 54.\texttt{Qf}2 \texttt{Qf}3 55.\texttt{Qg}4 \texttt{Qd}4 56.\texttt{Qc}1 \texttt{Qf}7 In order to prevent the g-pawn from promoting White would have to give up the b2-pawn, and rush his king to the kingside. Then, however, Black will use the g-pawn to tie up White’s forces to the kingside, and penetrate with his king through d4-c3.
53.\texttt{Qe}3 \texttt{Qd}4 54.\texttt{Qg}3

61...\texttt{Qf}7

61...\texttt{Qxf}5 62.\texttt{Qxf}5 \texttt{Qg}4 63.\texttt{Qxa}5 \texttt{Qg}3 64.\texttt{Qa}8+ \texttt{Qg}7 65.\texttt{Qg}2 We won’t bore you with the many lines that end in a perpetual check. Instead we will just say that due to the open nature of the position White has enough resources to keep the balance. While on 65...\texttt{Qe}3 White even has the cheeky 66.\texttt{Qxb}4 \texttt{Qf}2 67.\texttt{Qb}7+ \texttt{Qh}6 68.\texttt{Qh}1+ \texttt{Qg}5 69.\texttt{Qd}3 \texttt{Qh}2 70.\texttt{Qd}5 and it is White playing for a win...
62.\texttt{Qh}6+ \texttt{Qe}7 63.\texttt{Qh}2 \texttt{Qd}6 64.\texttt{Qh}7 \texttt{Qb}8 65.\texttt{Qg}4

Not falling into 65.\texttt{Qg}6 \texttt{Qg}8 and Black’s back on the winning track.
65...\texttt{Qf}8 66.\texttt{Qh}6+ \texttt{Qe}7 67.\texttt{Qh}7 \texttt{Qf}8 68.\texttt{Qh}6+ \texttt{Qe}7
V2-V2
Round three has been the most combative round so far, and that at a rate that will be hard to beat. However, even more than the results themselves, this round will be remembered for the fantastic play in general and the opening play in particular.

It all began with an encounter between two old rivals: Anand and Adams. Traditionally, the Englishman has a hard time facing Anand with the Black pieces, as he is admirably faithful to his openings, allowing the Indian to demonstrate the full spectrum of his opening arsenal. Adams courageously chose the Zaitsev system in the Ruy Lopez—a truly dangerous decision against a man who used to battle against his biggest experts: Karpov and Kamsky. Not only did Adams choose a position well known to his opponent, he even followed Anand’s recommendations! So it is hardly surprising that a vicious (or Vishious?) novelty awaited him at the end of the road. In fact he stepped on a mine prepared not for him but for Kamsky (by Anand and Yusupov during their preparation for the Candidates’ match in 1995). Later Anand would express his amazement that he actually remembered most of the ten-year old ideas. After the game the salvation for Black would be found, to the great relief of this line’s supporters, but Adams never really stood a chance over the board.
Meanwhile, Judit Polgar was not going to let Anand win the best novelty prize without a fight. Kasimdzhanov was prepared to face Polgar’s piece sacrifice in a sharp Sicilian Najdorf (a line she managed to tear Anand apart in), but she deviated with an even bolder sacrifice, and soon the hunter became the prey. Unprepared for such a turn of events, the FIDE Champion went astray early on, and found himself watching Polgar ripping his position to pieces. In fact, he was so impressed that when the Hungarian Queen graciously (or rather, accidentally) allowed him a way to escape... no, to get a winning position, he missed it as well, and the finale was logical after all.

**Bad Fortune**

Bad fortune keeps following Leko in San Luis. After introducing an interesting novelty on the Black side of the Anti-Marshall against Svidler, the Hungarian’s nemesis, he seemed to have solved all his opening problems, only to find himself in a totally lost position a mere ten moves later. All his pieces lacked coordination. An especially sad sight was his knight on a5. Leko found the only way to restore the coordination of his stalemated pieces: by setting them up in their initial positions.

Morozevich has been barely a shadow of himself so far. He played extremely passively today, beginning with quiet opening play, quickly followed by a draw offer. The real reasons for this were explained by Morozevich himself after the tournament: he usually starts off slowly, and in this particular case his recent illness did not improve his physical and mental state. Therefore, he decided to minimize the damage by trying to draw with White. He was visibly unhappy with this kind of play, and once Topalov rejected his offer the Muscovite quickly lost track of the game, executed a rather suspicious plan, and allowed his opponent to take over the initiative. Soon White’s position was very difficult, and towards the first time control White was simply a pawn down. Though the game lasted over sixty moves, Topalov’s win can be regarded as clean and straightforward – a rarity at such a high level.

So far both pre-tournament favourites are keeping up a very high pace, making sure their rival does not get a lead. The third favourite, Leko, is notably absent from the top part of the table, and it is still not clear how quickly he will recover from his latest painful loss.
Svidler went to this game with a pleasant psychological advantage: since 1998 the score between the two Peters is 8-2 in the Russian’s favour, with 17 draws. Not many people in the world can brag about such a result against Leko. And if that does not suffice – so far Leko has not quite been himself in San Luis.

1.e4 e5 2.d4 d6 3.b5 a6 4.a4 a5 5.0-0

This time Svidler is kindly invited to face the Marshall, but today he does not feel like stepping up to the challenge.

8. h3

In the various forms of Anti-Marshall White develops with d3, h3 (not always, but obviously here that choice has already been made!) followed by a3 or a4. The usual Ruy Lopez idea of the d4-advance is not forgotten, but simply postponed for better times. In the past, White used to opt for a2-a4 as the “only” way of fighting for the initiative. The idea of playing 8.h3 immediately seems like (and at times is) just an innocent transposition, but that is not always true. With 8.h3 White manages to avoid many lines, some of which will be discussed below. On some occasions, however, h2-h3 might be unnecessary, so there is no straightforward answer as to which move order is better.

8...b7

A natural reply for someone who does not fancy entering the classical Ruy Lopez lines (otherwise 8...d6 could have been played, which leads to the classical positions after 9.c3). Here Black keeps the option of a d5-break, should White allow it. At the same time, the fact that Marshall players are virtually forced to make this move might give White some hope, since if he intends to go for the a2-a4 plan, Black will find it more difficult to retort with ...b4, since the bishop on b7 blocks the b-file.

Another idea is attempting to force a Marshall-like position after 8...d5?, but this is dubious because of 9.exd5 Qxd5 10.Qxe5 Qxe5 11.Bxe5, and in comparison with the usual lines, White has played h3 instead of c3, which might be important since he can proceed with 12.d3. The d3-line is very sharp in the Marshall (as we will have the chance to verify in Game 49), but here White has not played c3, thus the pawn on d3 will not be weak. Consequently Black loses one of his important motifs and so has insufficient compensation for the pawn.

9.d3

White correctly continues to avoid the Marshall. After 9.c3 d5 10.exd5 Qxd5 11.Qxe5 Qxe5 12.Bxe5 the exact opposite of the previous note is true: in comparison with regular Marshall positions, Black has played the much more useful ...b7 as opposed to White’s h3.

9...Ee8?
11.a4

It is time for White to choose a plan connected with either a3 or a4, and he picks the one that looks more active. However, one can hardly speak of any advantage for White - Black is ready for everything, and there are many reasons for this. For example, if White plays a2-a4, does he really need h3? It looks as if Black has used the time well. Thus, after 8.h3, the more subtle continuation is 10.a3.

In the Brissago match Kramnik tested 10.Qc3, but did not really equalize(!) after 10...b4 11.Qg5 h8 12.a3 Qxc3 13.bxc3 Qa5 14.Qa2 c5. Nevertheless, after 15.f4 exf4 16.e5 Qd5 17.Qxd5 Qxg5 18.Qxb7 a draw was agreed, Kramnik - Leko, Brissago (2) 2004.

10...h6

Black could once again enter the "normal" lines with 10...d6, but why close the bishop when White has not forced you to do so? Leko's idea looks very logical and natural.

11.Qc3

Leko was holding back ...d6 (hoping for ...d5) and so Svidler takes this option away. As Kramnik's second in Brissago, one could guess he knows a thing or two about these positions, as well as Leko's preferences.

An interesting way of developing the knight in such schemes is 11.Qbd2 (it is possible to start with 11.c3 as well). White is hoping to gain an advantage using the usual Ruy Lopez patterns, as Kasparov has proved many times before. On the one hand, such a development of the knight makes Black's dark-squared bishop's hopes unrealistic, on the other, Black has still saved time on d6, and it is interesting to see whether it can be exploited.

11...b4

Whenever Black plays ...b4 he must take into account White's possible advance to a4-a5. If White manages that, he might seize the advantage.

The double-edged pawn sacrifice 11...b4 was worth considering, with the idea of meeting 12.axb5 with 12...Qd4! and the compensation for the pawn looks serious. For instance: 13.bxa6 Qxb3 14.cxb3 Qxa6 15.Qxa6 Qxa6 Black's bishops are great and White's extra pawn on b3 plays no role. For example: 16.d4 exd4 17.Qxd4 (17.Qxd4 c5) 17...Qxc3 18.bxc3 Qxe4 and Black is fine.

12.Qd5 Qa5

An interesting novelty. In fact, one can be sure Leko's ideas are strong here - after all, he prepared this opening for the match against Kramnik, and...
for such important matches chess players usually prepare in the best way possible. The e7-bishop will have its opportunity to get out, whereas White is robbed off his main plan. It seems that Black has no problems here.

12...c5 has been tried as well, but after the typical 13.a5! White obtained some advantage, although the game was cut in half with draw-crisscrosses: 13...b8 14.e3 e3 15.fxe3 dxc5 16.cxd5 d6 17.e5f1 and the players decided to keep their secrets to themselves: ½-½ Grischuk - Tkachiev, New Delhi (5.1) 2000.

13.a2 c5

This natural move is a slight inaccuracy. It gives White an important tempo, and with it hopes for a small plus. As indicated by Svidler (in Chess Informant 94), Black had a promising continuation: 13...dxc5 14.e5 dxe5 15.exd5 d6!? (15...d6 is also worth considering) 16.c3 bxc3 17.bxc3 c6 with a roughly equal position.

14.e5 d2!

A seemingly simple move – White just attacks a pawn, but his idea is much deeper: this way Svidler forces Black to capture on d5, after which (with a white pawn on d5) the black knight might find itself offside. The “anti Tarrasch” knight on a5 is all White has left to play for (and it is not too much) and he does so very stubbornly.

14...xd5 15.e5 d5 dxd5

It is not obvious why Black should be worse after the atypical 15...c6 16.a2 w8b6: White's bishop pair is no more than a nice notion here. The "strong" bishop on a2 is neutralized by Black's "bad" knight on a5 (which will be particularly felt once Black plays ...b3). Moreover, Black will be able to play ...d5 in the near future. White, for his part, has no obvious active plan.

16.exd5

Black must quickly bring his lame knight into the game. It is hard to believe, but ten moves
from now Black will be totally lost, and this without blundering anything.

16...\textit{\&f6}

Every move that passes reduces the knight’s chance to join the party, thus Black must try to solve his problems using tactical means.

He had an interesting possibility: 16...\textit{c6}

17. \textit{\&xe5} (17.\textit{\&xe5}? is refuted by 17...\textit{\&xf2}†!

18.\textit{\&xf2} \textit{\&xe5} 19.\textit{\&xe5} \textit{\&f6}† 20.\textit{\&f3} \textit{\&xe5} and only White can be worse here) 17...\textit{\&xe5}

18.\textit{\&xe5} \textit{\&f6} 19.\textit{\&f3} Now the greedy 19...\textit{\&xb2}? is bad, since after 20.\textit{\&b1} \textit{\&a3} 21.\textit{\&e5} Black’s pieces find themselves too far away. 19...\textit{cxd5}, on the other hand, is much better since the wandering ‘\textit{\&a5}’ will finally return home. Still, the doubled pawns do not allow Black to claim equality.

By the way, if you wonder whether 16...\textit{d6} is a good move, we suggest asking for the \textit{\&a5}’s opinion – the d6-square is on its only path home.

17.\textit{c3}!

Simple and strong. White has a clear target on a5 and he goes for it.

17...\textit{\&xc3}

Inaccurate. It seems like Leko simply underestimated White’s reply.

The immediate 17...\textit{\&b6} was stronger, although after 18.\textit{\&e3} (but not 18.\textit{d4} exd4 19.\textit{\&xb4} \textit{\&xb4} 20.\textit{\&xb4} \textit{\&xb4} 21.\textit{\&xd4} \textit{\&xd4} 22.\textit{\&xd4} c5 and Black is OK) 18...\textit{\&xe3} 19.\textit{\&xe3} \textit{d6} 20.\textit{\&h4} all Black’s pieces are on the wrong side of the board.

18.\textit{\&xc3} \textit{\&b6}

Black was obviously relying on this multipurpose move to protect the knight, attack f2, and prepare a knight escape from prison via b3. The only problem is...

19.\textit{\&xe5}!

White exploits the fact Black is virtually playing a piece down, and opens up the game on the other flank.

19...\textit{\&xf2}† 20.\textit{\&h1} \textit{d6}?

We already mentioned the significance of the d6-square. The ‘added value’ (could we say ‘reduced value’?) of Black’s move: it weakens the c6-square as well. All these positional ideas were, beyond any doubt, clear to Leko, so it looks like he underestimated White’s 23rd move and was hoping for counterplay along the e-file.
Such blunders are very uncharacteristic of him and provide further proof of his lack of form at the start of the tournament.

a) 20...\texttt{\texttt{b}}b3 is refuted by 21.a5 \texttt{\texttt{b}}b5 22.\texttt{\texttt{b}}a3 \texttt{\texttt{c}}c5 23.\texttt{\texttt{e}}e2, and Black’s forces lack any harmony.

b) A good way to refute 20...\texttt{f}6 was provided by Jacob Aagaard in Chess: 21. \texttt{\texttt{e}}e2! \texttt{\texttt{x}}e2 22.\texttt{\texttt{x}}e2 \texttt{\texttt{b}}b3 23.\texttt{\texttt{e}}f1 \texttt{\texttt{g}}g3 24.\texttt{\texttt{g}}g1! Opening the f-file for assaults on \texttt{f}6 and vacating the route for the queen to the kingside. White has a clear advantage here.

c) Therefore, 20...\texttt{\texttt{b}}b7 was Black’s last chance to stay in the game. White keeps the advantage, but still has to exploit his superiority.

21.\texttt{\texttt{x}}e8\# \texttt{\texttt{x}}e8 22.b4!

Those concerned about the knight on \texttt{a}5 – no worries, it’s misery won’t last long.

22...\texttt{\texttt{b}}b7 23.\texttt{\texttt{e}}a2!

A great multipurpose move. Black wanted to play 23...\texttt{\texttt{e}}e3 and after 24.\texttt{\texttt{d}}d\texttt{d}4 \texttt{\texttt{e}}e2 he would have gained counterplay. Now 23...\texttt{\texttt{e}}e3 will simply lose a piece to the same 24.\texttt{\texttt{d}}d\texttt{d}4. Apart from the prophylactic value of the move, 23.\texttt{\texttt{a}}a2 also serves the idea of regaining control of the e-file. Now Black is totally lost, since his pieces are not acting as an army, but as separate units.

23...\texttt{\texttt{g}}g3

It is hard to blame Black for trying to transfer his bishop to a better place (\texttt{e}5), but his last move seriously weakens the g1-a7 diagonal.

In any case, there is not much else that can be suggested here: 23...\texttt{\texttt{a}}a7 24.\texttt{\texttt{e}}e2 \texttt{\texttt{x}}e2 25.\texttt{\texttt{x}}e2 \texttt{\texttt{e}}e3 26.\texttt{\texttt{x}}e3 \texttt{\texttt{x}}e3 27.a5! The threat of \texttt{b}4-b5, combined with the misery of the \texttt{b}7, would quickly decide the game in White’s favour.

24.\texttt{\texttt{e}}e2 \texttt{\texttt{x}}d8

It is strange to speak about Black losing a tempo in such a position, but he could have prolonged the fight with 24...\texttt{\texttt{f}}f8: 25.\texttt{\texttt{d}}d4 \texttt{\texttt{a}}5 26.\texttt{\texttt{b}}b5 \texttt{\texttt{e}}e5 27.\texttt{\texttt{x}}a5 \texttt{\texttt{x}}a5 28.\texttt{\texttt{e}}e1! \texttt{\texttt{x}}c3 (After 28...\texttt{\texttt{b}}8 29.\texttt{\texttt{b}}b2 Black is forced to part with his queen, as after 29...\texttt{\texttt{a}}6 30.\texttt{\texttt{e}}e5 \texttt{\texttt{d}}xe5 31.\texttt{\texttt{e}}xe5 \texttt{\texttt{f}}f6 32.\texttt{\texttt{xf}}f6 \texttt{\texttt{x}}f6 33.\texttt{\texttt{h}}h6! White is two pawns up, and what’s even more important... well, you know which black piece to look at.) 29.\texttt{\texttt{x}}c3 \texttt{\texttt{f}}6 30.\texttt{\texttt{e}}e7 and resignation seems timely.

By the way, 24...\texttt{\texttt{x}}e2 25.\texttt{\texttt{x}}e2 \texttt{\texttt{f}}f8 is nicely refuted by 26.\texttt{\texttt{d}}d4! \texttt{\texttt{e}}e5 27.\texttt{\texttt{c}}c6! \texttt{\texttt{x}}c3 28.\texttt{\texttt{e}}e7+ \texttt{\texttt{g}}g8 29.\texttt{\texttt{e}}e8+ \texttt{\texttt{h}}h7 30.\texttt{\texttt{e}}e7 h5 31.\texttt{\texttt{x}}f6, when mate is inevitable.

25.\texttt{\texttt{d}}d4

If not for time trouble, Leko would most likely have stopped resisting.

25...\texttt{\texttt{a}}5

25...\texttt{\texttt{f}}f8 26.a5 \texttt{\texttt{a}}a7 27.\texttt{\texttt{c}}c6 \texttt{\texttt{a}}a8 28.\texttt{\texttt{e}}e7 does not differ much from the game.

26.\texttt{\texttt{c}}c6 \texttt{\texttt{f}}f8 27.\texttt{\texttt{d}}d4 \texttt{\texttt{a}}a6 28.b5 \texttt{\texttt{a}}a8 29.\texttt{\texttt{e}}e7

A truly picturesque position.

29...\texttt{\texttt{e}}e5 30.\texttt{\texttt{x}}e5 \texttt{\texttt{d}}xe5 31.\texttt{\texttt{x}}e5

An impressive display of force by Peter Svidler.

1–0
GAME 10
Alexander Morozevich

Veselin Topalov

Sicilian, Moscow Variation B52

1.e4 c5 2.d3 d6 3.b5†

Morozevich does not feel like finding out the exact move number on which Topalov has prepared an improvement over his game vs. Leko from the first round, and thus deviates to a line that can hardly promise White any advantage, but it also minimizes the chances of entering the opponent’s home preparation. Moreover, according to his post-tournament interview, Morozevich was ill before and during the first part of the tournament, which made him opt for more solid openings with White, trying to limit the damage.

3...d7

For many years this continuation has been considered to give Black an equal game.

4.exd7† wxd7

A curious choice by Topalov, who is well-known for his constant desire to play for a win. In this particular line Black develops very naturally, but has very limited possibilities of playing for a win, as White’s game is too obvious.

4...exd7 is another possible move, but many chess players consider the knight’s natural spot to be on c6.

5.0-0

One of the most promising continuations for White is to play d4 sooner or later. He can, however, do it in two different ways: with or without c3 (the pawn will probably go to c4 in the latter case). The former promises White, if it succeeds, chances to play for a win. The latter, on the other hand, leaves Black fighting only for equality, although that is not too difficult.

The immediate 5.c4 lost much of its appeal after Ivanchuk’s idea: 5...f6 6.d3 c6 7.0-0 g7 8.d4 cxd4 9.cxd4 d5 10.f3 c8 11.d5! 12.exd5 cxd5 13.cxd5 c6 14.f4 cxd5 15.exg7 xg7 16.exd5 w5 17.d2 w5 and, as Dvoretsky proved in his analysis (published on the Russian website www.e3e5.com), White is the one who has to play accurately to avoid defeat.

An annoying continuation that deprives White of some lines. For instance, he can no longer execute the plan with c4 and d4. Jumping ahead: soon White will offer a draw, which will be declined. However, had White managed to play his c4 and d4 plan, Black would find it difficult not to agree. For instance: 5...c6 6.c4 g6 7.d4 cxd4 8.cxd4 c6 and whatever White plays, Black has numerous ways of equalising: without the light-squared bishops, White will not be able to prevent the d5- and b5-breaks. However, it only leads to equality, and what’s even more important – with an extremely simple game for White.

6.c3 (after 5...c6) is less frightening that it seems: 6.f6 7.d4 c4 8.d5 e5 9.e1 dxf3† 10.xf3 f6 11.e3!? (11.c4 has lost its popularity – Black has clear directions to either making an easy draw or even trying to win) 11...e6 12.dxe6 fxe6 13.c5 e7 14.c4 0-0-0 and praxis shows that Black is OK, Glek - Najer, Russia 2004.

6.e5

Virtually the only way to exit the well-known paths, and change the character of the position. Other moves have been tested as well. The most interesting of them is 6.e2, but White has not always been successful: 6.c6 7.c3 e6 8.d4 cxd4 9.cxd4 d5 10.e5 e4 11.e3 e7 12.d1 f6 13.f3 c5 14.d3 0-0 15.b2 f7 (another move worth considering is 15...fxe5 as happened,
for example, in Chebotarev – Sakaev, Russia 2005) 16.\textit{Ed}1 f5 and eventually it was White who fought for equality in Rublevsky – Motylev, Corsica (rapid) 2004.

6.\textit{dxe}5 7.\textit{\texttt{Qxe}5}

White puts his hopes on his lead in development – if he fails to exploit it, Black might even play for an advantage himself, as positionally speaking, he has little to worry about.

7...\textit{\texttt{Bc}8}

Black has many retreats with his queen, of which this seems to be the most solid – away from White’s pieces. Now he gets the time required to complete his development, after which his position is by no means worse.

Another popular alternative is 7...\textit{\texttt{Wc}7}, but now White can disturb the black queen, thus making use of his main (and only?) asset here. 8.\textit{d4}? e6 (8...\textit{\texttt{cxd}4} 9.\textit{\texttt{Qf}4} \textit{\texttt{Wb}6} is also worth considering) 9.\textit{\texttt{Qf}4} \textit{\texttt{d}d}6 10.\textit{\texttt{Qa}3}? and Black seems to be having a hard time completing his development: 10...\textit{\texttt{Exe}5} (10...\textit{\texttt{a}6} 11.\textit{\texttt{Qac}4} with initiative, Zubarev – Kurenkov, Voronezh 2005) 11.\textit{\texttt{Exe}5} \textit{\texttt{Cc}6} 12.\textit{\texttt{c}4} \textit{\texttt{Bd}7} 13.\textit{\texttt{d}5} \textit{\texttt{Wb}6} 14.\textit{\texttt{Qg}3} 0-0 15.\textit{\texttt{dxe}6} \textit{\texttt{We}6} 16.\textit{\texttt{Be}1} \textit{\texttt{Cc}6} 17.\textit{\texttt{Qb}5} \textit{\texttt{a}6} 18.\textit{\texttt{Qd}6} \textit{\texttt{Bd}8} 19.\textit{\texttt{Wb}3} \textit{\texttt{Qb}6} 20.\textit{\texttt{ff}5} \textit{\texttt{Qc}8} 21.\textit{\texttt{e}5} with an initiative for White, Bologan – Naiditsch, Mainz 2004.

8.\textit{\texttt{Wf}3}

Typical prophylaxis: White deprives the b8-knight of its ideal square on c6, and if it goes to d7 White will be able to transfer his knight to a5 (via c4) and once again, the queen will be useful on f3. And if all that is not enough, the queen also pins the f6-knight to the defence of f7. Talk about multitasking...

With the black queen on c8, 8.\textit{d4} is no longer effective. Black has enough time to coordinate his pieces. 8...e6 9.\textit{\texttt{Qc}3} \textit{\texttt{Cc}6} 10.\textit{\texttt{Qe}3} \textit{\texttt{cxd}4} 11.\textit{\texttt{Qxd}4} \textit{\texttt{Qe}7} 12.\textit{\texttt{Qxc}6} \textit{\texttt{Wxc}6} 13.\textit{\texttt{Wc}2} 0-0 with at least equal chances, Wippermann – Gouliev, Hamburg 2005.

8...\textit{\texttt{e}6} 9.\textit{\texttt{d}3} \textit{\texttt{Qe}7}

As we mentioned, 9...\textit{\texttt{Qbd}7} allows 10.\textit{\texttt{Qc}4} and White carries out his dream plan. 10.\textit{\texttt{Qb}6} 11.\textit{\texttt{Qf}4} \textit{\texttt{Qfd}5} 12.\textit{\texttt{Qe}5} \textit{\texttt{Cc}6} 13.\textit{\texttt{Qa}5} \textit{\texttt{Wd}7} 14.\textit{\texttt{Qa}3} \textit{\texttt{f}6} 15.\textit{\texttt{Qg}3} \textit{\texttt{Qe}7} 16.\textit{\texttt{c}4}! \textit{\texttt{Qb}4} 17.\textit{\texttt{Qb}5} and White’s initiative is indeed beginning to look threatening, Sutovsky – Karjakin, Pamplona 2003.

10.\textit{\texttt{Qc}3}

An interesting plan for White could have been 10.\textit{\texttt{Qa}3} intending to either support the e5-knight, or make it all the way to a5.

10...0-0 11.\textit{\texttt{Qf}4} \textit{\texttt{Qfd}7}

Black’s last four moves were preparation for exchanging (or driving away) the white knight on e5. As we already mentioned ...\textit{\texttt{Qbd}7} and ...\textit{\texttt{Qc}6} are not satisfactory, which only leaves Black with the text move, but in order to play this he had to defend f7 first.

12.\textit{\texttt{Qe}4}

The text is a thematic knight transfer, except that after Black’s ...\textit{\texttt{Qc}6} it does not get to a5, and ends up looking for a decent square. Perhaps exchanging one pair of knights would have been the better choice. In the forthcoming battle his knights, lacking good squares, will be an additional headache for White.

However, the exchange of knights means admitting that White achieved nothing out of the opening. For example: 12.\textit{\texttt{Qg}3} \textit{\texttt{Qxe}5} 13.\textit{\texttt{Qxe}5} \textit{\texttt{f}6} 14.\textit{\texttt{Qxb}8} \textit{\texttt{Qxb}8} 15.\textit{\texttt{Ba}1} \textit{\texttt{Cc}6} 16.\textit{\texttt{Qg}4} \textit{\texttt{f}5}! 17.\textit{\texttt{Wc}2} \textit{\texttt{Qf}6}! and Black achieved a dangerous initiative, Smeets – Karjakin, Wijk aan Zee 2005.

12...\textit{\texttt{Qc}6}
Finally Black develops his queenside.

13.\text{h}ae1?! 

It appears that Morozevich underestimates the power of a black knight on d4. After this move Black gets the more pleasant position, although objectively it is still roughly balanced.

13.\text{d}d6 is refuted by 13...\text{d}e5, but 13.\text{b}5 \text{d}d4 14.\text{x}d4 cxd4 15.a4 is equal.

13...\text{d}d4 14.\text{d}d1 \text{c}c6!

A very tricky move. Topalov could have played ...b5 now, of course, but he gives his opponent one final opportunity to prevent it with a2-a4, which would eventually lead to the opening of the a-file (after ...b6, ...a6 and ...b5), which is hardly in White's favour with his rooks on e1 and f1.

15.a4?

And White falls into the positional trap. It was the right time to equalize with 15.xe5.

15...b6

16.\text{e}e3?!
An extremely imaginative manoeuvre to... nowhere. Again 16.\textit{\texttt{De}}5 was called for.

16...f6

That's it. There is no more \textit{\texttt{De}}5, and the knights are about to suffocate in the limited space.

17.\textit{\texttt{Ph}}3?

A famous saying claims that it is better to play with a bad plan that without any plan at all. Here is the exception that proves the rule. White should instead have played the "planless" move and retreated the rook to e1, although Black is already firmly better.

17...\textit{\texttt{Ef}}7

Preparing ...\textit{\texttt{Df}}8; White's attack is officially over.

18.\textit{\texttt{Cc}}3 \textit{\texttt{Ed}}8 19.\textit{\texttt{Re}}1 \textit{\texttt{Df}}8

Before taking action on the queenside Black covers all the weaknesses on the kingside (h7) and in the centre (e6). The knight will stay there until the end of the game, to make sure White does not even dream of counterplay.

20.b3

Preparing \textit{\texttt{De}}2. The oxygen level is near critical.

20...a6 21.\textit{\texttt{De}}2 b5 22.axb5 axb5

Black's advantage is indisputable. In addition to White's passivity, his pieces are not coordinating at all, and we shouldn't even mention the h3-rook, which looks like a bad joke.

23.\textit{\texttt{Dd}}2 \textit{\texttt{Cc}}7

24.e4

After the exchange on d4 the c-pawn will not now be weak. It does, however, weaken the b3- and d3-pawns.

More promising seems to be 24.\textit{\texttt{Df}}3 e5 25.\textit{\texttt{Dg}}3 and despite his spatial advantage, Black does not have clear targets for attack.

24...\textit{\texttt{Dc}}6!

Great! The pawn sacrifice is very temporary, while White's weaknesses (the aforementioned b3- and d3-pawns) are not.

25.cxb5 \textit{\texttt{Db}}4 26.\textit{\texttt{Wb}}1

Interesting is 26.d4 \textit{\texttt{Wb}}6 27.dxc5 \textit{\texttt{Ax}}c5 28.\textit{\texttt{Ac}}3 \textit{\texttt{Ff}}d7. Compared to the game Black gets unpleasant pressure along the d-file, but he does not have the c5-pawn.

26...\textit{\texttt{Dxd}}3 27.\textit{\texttt{Dd}}1

On second thoughts, White's weaknesses might well be temporary, as they're about to be eaten.

27...\textit{\texttt{Db}}4 28.\textit{\texttt{Ac}}4 \textit{\texttt{Dd}}5

Black will need his rooks to attack White's weaknesses.

29.\textit{\texttt{Dd}}2 \textit{\texttt{Wb}}8 30.\textit{\texttt{Aa}}5 \textit{\texttt{Ed}}7 31.b6

The pawn has no chance to survive so far away from its army.

31...\textit{\texttt{Dd}}8 32.\textit{\texttt{Fh}}d3

The rook is back in the game, but White is already a pawn down.

32...\textit{\texttt{Ax}}b6 33.\textit{\texttt{Dxb}}6 \textit{\texttt{Dxd}}3

On 33...\textit{\texttt{Ax}}b6 White would gain control over the position with 34.\textit{\texttt{Dd}}6! \textit{\texttt{Ff}}e7 35.\textit{\texttt{Dc}}3 \textit{\texttt{Cc}}7 36.\textit{\texttt{Dcb}}5.

34.\textit{\texttt{Dxd}}3 \textit{\texttt{Ax}}b6

Anticipating White's next move and preparing a strong reaction.
Despite being a pawn up, the win is still quite far away. Topalov plays the technical part very well, even if not always choosing the shortest possible path, he never gives his opponent any chance to escape. A great example of converting a material advantage into an even more material point on the scoreboard.

35.\textit{We}e3

35.\textit{Ac}d6 now does not work because in the similar line (as on the 33\textsuperscript{rd} move) the knight will be dangerously pinned.

35...\textit{Ac}c7

After 35...\textit{Bb}b7 36.\textit{Dx}xb6 \textit{Ex}xb6 37.\textit{Dx}c5 \textit{Ex}b3 38.\textit{D}d4 \textit{Bb}1 39.\textit{D}d2 \textit{Dx}d1\# 40.\textit{D}xd1 it will be much harder for Black to convert the pawn. It is quite important to keep pawns on both flanks in such positions: then it will be easier to take the defence apart.

36.\textit{Gg}3

36.\textit{G}xc5? is bad due to \textit{Sh}h2\# 37.\textit{G}h1 \textit{Ex}xb3.

36...\textit{Gb}b5

Preparing a take-over on the d-file.

37.\textit{G}h4 \textit{Cc}c6 38.\textit{Ff}4

Although White’s last two moves might look like an attempt to create an attack on the kingside, they are really to restrict the bishop by putting pawns on the dark squares. The problem with these moves (especially the last one), however, is that they compromise the king’s position.

38...\textit{Gd}d7

39.\textit{G}e1? 

An important moment. Morozevich decides to keep the rooks on, hoping this will give him chances for counterplay. In reality, however, it is the black rook that will become extremely active soon, especially since White has compromised his king, while White’s rook will remain unemployed.

Better was 39.\textit{D}d7 \textit{D}d7 40.\textit{Cc}1 \textit{Gd}5 41.\textit{D}d3 with some chances to hold.

39...\textit{G}d8 40.\textit{Cc}3 \textit{Ge}7

The first time control is over, and Black has managed to keep all the advantages of his position. Next phase: invasion along the d-file.

41.\textit{Ge}4

White still had a chance to correct himself with 41.\textit{D}d1, and if Black does not exchange the rooks then at least White would regain control over the d-file.

41...\textit{D}d4 42.\textit{Df}2 \textit{Gd}5

Now Black gets full control over the d-file.

43.\textit{G}b6 \textit{Gb}7 44.\textit{Cc}4 \textit{Ff}5

A very strong decision! Black takes e4 away from the white knights, and makes way for his bishop to reach its ideal spot on d4.

45.\textit{Sa}1

Not an easy-to-understand move. Luckily, two moves from now we will get all the answers. After 45.\textit{D}d1 \textit{Dxd}1\# 46.\textit{D}xd1 \textit{Gf}6 47.\textit{Cc}5 (47.\textit{D}xe5 loses on the spot to 47...\textit{Gf}3) 47...\textit{Gxe}5 48.\textit{fxe}5 White is stuck with another weakness on e5. The next few moves clearly illustrate how bad things can become for White: 48...\textit{Gd}7! 49.\textit{Df}2 \textit{Sa}1\# 50.\textit{Gh}2 \textit{Dd}7 51.\textit{Dd}2 \textit{Gxe}5 52.\textit{Dd}8\# 53.\textit{Gc}7\# with a winning endgame.

45...\textit{Gf}6 46.\textit{Dc}2 \textit{Dd}7 47.\textit{Df}3

This is the point of the original king march. Imagination has always been Morozevich's
Morozevich tries to improve his position (2) and ends up worse, not better (1).

On the other hand, it is hard to offer White any improvement. For example, the attempt to escape back to the kingside is no longer valid: 49.\texttt{f1 $\texttt{a7}$} 50.$\texttt{d2 \texttt{a1}$} $\texttt{f1}$ 51.$\texttt{g2 b1}$ and White's position is falling apart.

49...h6 50.h5 $\texttt{b8}$ 51.$\texttt{d2 f7}$ 52.g5 hxg5 53.fxg5

Now Black has a pair of connected passers...

Two of the main principles when defending bad and passive positions are:

1. Do not allow your position to deteriorate.
2. Do not try to improve it.
... and the white king that can be attacked. The rook is on its way to the second rank.

54. \( \text{d} \text{d}3 \)

Morozevich defends, as always, with great creativity. In trying to complicate the game he opened up the position on the kingside, so the king’s place is now on the other side of the board. The problem is that as long as the black bishop is on \( \text{d}4 \), the white king will not be able to find safety.

54... \( \text{h} \text{h}4 \) 55. \( \text{g} \text{g}6 \) \( \text{a} \text{a}7 \) 56. \( \text{d} \text{d}1 \) \( \text{g} \text{g}5 \) 57. \( \text{e} \text{e}3 \) \( \text{g} \text{g}1 \)

One of the problems in such positions is that no matter how hard you try to cover your king, a part of him will always be left exposed. Black does not fall into the simple trap: 57... \( \text{e} \text{e}5 \)? 58. \( \text{e} \text{e}x \text{e}5 \) \( \text{e} \text{e}x \text{e}5 \) 59. \( \text{d} \text{d}5 \uparrow \text{h} \text{h}8 \) 60. \( \text{x} \text{x}e5 \) with a draw.

Perhaps keeping the bishop alive with 57... \( \text{f} \text{f}6 \) was even more accurate.

58. \( \text{d} \text{d}1 \) \( \text{h} \text{h}2 \) 59. \( \text{b} \text{b}5 \) \( \text{d} \text{d}7 \) 60. \( \text{x} \text{x}d4 \) \( \text{a} \text{a}2 \)!

An extremely strong move, forcing White into a very passive position. 60... \( \text{x} \text{x}d4 \uparrow \) would have won as well, but not nearly as convincingly.

61. \( \text{d} \text{d}2 \)

61. \( \text{c} \text{c}3 \) \( \text{c} \text{c}x \text{d}4 \uparrow \) 62. \( \text{x} \text{x}d4 \) \( \text{a} \text{a}1 \uparrow \) winning.

61... \( \text{b} \text{b}2 \) 62. \( \text{e} \text{e}2 \) \( \text{x} \text{x}d4 \)

Black’s control over the entire board is quite impressive. Interestingly enough, two black pieces are dominating White’s four (including the king)!

63. \( \text{e} \text{e}3 \) \( \text{d} \text{d}6 \) 64. \( \text{f} \text{f}3 \) \( \text{h} \text{h}2 \uparrow \) 65. \( \text{e} \text{e}1 \) \( \text{d} \text{d}4 \) 66. \( \text{b} \text{b}7 \) \( \text{d} \text{d}7 \)

Faster was 66... \( \text{g} \text{g}3 \uparrow \) 67. \( \text{e} \text{e}2 \) \( \text{d} \text{d}3 \uparrow \) 68. \( \text{f} \text{f}2 \) \( \text{f} \text{f}4 \uparrow \) 69. \( \text{f} \text{f}3 \) \( \text{c} \text{c}2 \uparrow \) (but not 69... \( \text{x} \text{x}d1 \)?? 70. \( \text{f} \text{f}7 \uparrow \) 70. \( \text{f} \text{f}1 \) \( \text{x} \text{x}d1 \uparrow \) winning.

67. \( \text{f} \text{f}3 \) \( \text{d} \text{d}5 \) 68. \( \text{f} \text{f}1 \) \( \text{e} \text{e}5 \uparrow \) 69. \( \text{e} \text{e}3 \) \( \text{f} \text{f}4 \) 70. \( \text{d} \text{d}3 \) \( \text{g} \text{g}1 \uparrow \)

Again, not 70... \( \text{x} \text{x}e3 \) 71. \( \text{f} \text{f}7 \uparrow \).

71. \( \text{d} \text{d}2 \) \( \text{x} \text{x}e3 \uparrow \) 72. \( \text{x} \text{x}e3 \) \( \text{x} \text{x}e3 \uparrow \) 73. \( \text{x} \text{xe3} \) \( \text{x} \text{xe3} \) 74. \( \text{e} \text{e}3 \) \( \text{d} \text{d}7 \)

Finally Morozevich decided to call it a day.

0–1
GAME 11
Viswanathan Anand
Michael Adams
Ruy Lopez, Zaitsev Variation C92

1.e4 e5 2.\(\texttt{\&b5}\) \(\texttt{\&c6}\)
The Petroff is on holiday today.
3.\(\texttt{\&b5}\) a6 4.\(\texttt{\&a4}\) \(\texttt{\&f6}\) 5.0-0 \(\texttt{\&e7}\) 6.\(\texttt{\&e1}\) b5 7.\(\texttt{\&b3}\) d6
Adams does not go for his pet-line: the Marshall (or Anti-Marshall). It is interesting to speculate about his motives for this choice — whether it was the will to try and win (in the Anti-Marshall, for example, the chances of beating an equal opponent are not very high), or was he just trying to surprise his opponent. In either case, Black refrains from his favourite lines, only to find himself falling into a trap which was prepared for someone else.

8.c3 0-0 9.h3 \(\texttt{\&b7}\) 10.d4 \(\texttt{\&e8}\)

It looks like Black wants to go for a real fight. Why else would he choose the Zaitsev Variation — one of the most complicated in the Ruy Lopez? If so, Adams decision is amazing — he tries to join the leaders by beating his traditionally most difficult opponent.

The Zaitsev was born as an improvement over the Smyslov line, which begins with ...h6, followed by ...\(\texttt{\&b7}\), ...\(\texttt{\&e8}\), ...\(\texttt{\&c6}\) with pressure on the centre. As time passed, 'h6' proved to be useful only when \(\texttt{\&g5}\) becomes a real threat (for now Black can simply retreat the rook to \(\texttt{\&f8}\)). Over the years the Zaitsev Variation has developed a great deal (partly thanks to Karpov, whose second was Zaitsev for a long period). The modern ideas in the variation are to open the e-file as soon as possible and attack the centre.

11.\(\texttt{\&bd2}\) \(\texttt{\&b8}\) 12.a4 h6 13.\(\texttt{\&c2}\)
The line's first key position, where Black must choose whether to open the centre leading to double-edged positions, or keep it closed. In the latter case, Black is extremely passive, and this is one of the reasons the Ruy Lopez is also referred to as "Spanish torture". Nowadays Black usually opts for the more lively option.

13...exd4 14.cxd4 \(\texttt{\&b4}\) 15.\(\texttt{\&b1}\) c5
Instead, if Black fails to target the centre, White will have easy play and nothing to worry about.

One of the possible ways to postpone ...c5 is 15...\(\texttt{\&d7}\). But in the following game Anand shows how should White play in this case: 16.b3 g6 17.\(\texttt{\&b2}\) \(\texttt{\&g7}\) 18.\(\texttt{\&cl}\) \(\texttt{\&ac8}\) 19.\(\texttt{\&c3}\) c5 20.d5 \(\texttt{\&e7}\) 21.\(\texttt{\&f1}\) \(\texttt{\&h7}\) 22.\(\texttt{\&xg7}\) \(\texttt{\&xg7}\) 23.\(\texttt{\&e3}\) with heavy pressure, Anand – Kamsky, Las Palmas (9) 1995.

Black's other option, 15...\(\texttt{\&xa4}\), has virtually vanished from practice, due to 16.\(\texttt{\&xa4}\) a5 17.\(\texttt{\&a3}\) \(\texttt{\&a6}\) 18.\(\texttt{\&h2}\) g6 19.f3!, as this simple reinforcement of the centre promises White a solid advantage, Kasparov – Karpov, New York (2) 1990.

16.d5 \(\texttt{\&d7}\)
Black's idea is to either transfer the knight to e5 or advance ...\(\texttt{\&f5}\). The latter used to be Black's main thematic weapon here. Apart from freeing the way for ...\(\texttt{\&f5}\), 16...\(\texttt{\&d7}\) is generally useful for most of Black's various plans for counterplay.

If, however, Black is not fast enough, White will have enough time to prepare an assault on the kingside. For example: 16...g6 17.\(\texttt{\&f1}\) \(\texttt{\&g7}\) 18.\(\texttt{\&a3}\) \(\texttt{\&d7}\) 19.a5 \(\texttt{\&e5}\) 20.\(\texttt{\&xe5}\) \(\texttt{\&xe5}\)
21.\texttt{Qh2} \texttt{We7} 22.\texttt{Qg4} \texttt{Ac7} 23.\texttt{Qxh6t} \texttt{Ah7} 24.\texttt{Qf5} with a decisive attack, Kotronias – Dumas, Patras 2001.

\textbf{17.Ea3}

A typical manoeuvre. The rook joins the attack on Black's king along the third rank, and when (if) that happens the king's life will be in danger.

\textbf{17...c4}

An unforgettable position for chess fans. It was here that one of the greatest (if not the greatest) matches in the history of the game was decided - the 1986 Kasparov – Karpov match. Two victories in this line gave Kasparov a huge lead in the match. They were thoroughly analysed and published (perhaps keeping some secrets, one might guess) in his famous book \textit{Two Matches}.

An alternative here is 17...f5. As mentioned before, this move, targeting White's centre, is Black's basic idea. It has had many ups and downs, so that even today there is no clear verdict on its real value. In fact, the logic of this variation insists that this line will become the most popular in the Zaitsev. In any case, for some reason Black seems to be suffering in this variation wherever he turns.

After 17...f5 White must use the new kingside weaknesses as soon as possible and transfer the rook to the kingside: 18.\texttt{Qh2} \texttt{Af6} (the most popular). Now White has two main lines:

a) The most popular is 19.\texttt{Bf3} \texttt{Ec5} (interesting, especially for White), was the continuation 19...f4x5 20.\texttt{Qxe4} \texttt{Qxd5} 21.\texttt{Qg4} and White had a strong attack, Karjakin – Bacrot, Wijk aan Zee 2006) 20.\texttt{Bxf5} \texttt{Bxh5} 21.\texttt{Bxf5} \texttt{Qxd5} 22.\texttt{Bxg4}, and now after 22...bxa4 23.\texttt{Qe4} \texttt{Ec7} 24.\texttt{Bh6t} \texttt{Bxh6} 25.\texttt{Qd2} \texttt{Bb3} 26.\texttt{Bf3} \texttt{Bb4} 27.\texttt{Bxh6}, White had a decisive attack, HariKrishna – Vescovi, Khanty Mansyisk (2) 2005.

b) 19.\texttt{Bf3} is also interesting: 19...\texttt{We7} 20.\texttt{Qh6t}

After letting the rook past the knight returns to its natural post. White feels ready to attack, as in fact was the case in the following example: 20...f4x5 21.\texttt{Bxe4} \texttt{Bh5} 22.\texttt{Bxf6t} \texttt{Bxf6} 23.\texttt{Qd2} with a very strong attack, Topalov – Vescovi, Moscow (1) 2001.

It is worth to mention that in these successful games for White he used a classic manoeuvre in such positions: \texttt{Ac1-d2-c3}. It seems this idea is one of the main weapons against Black's idea of blowing up the centre.

Back to our game. White is about to switch his knight to d4, and the only question is whether he should first capture on b5. The pros: b5 will be attacked by the knight; the cons: opening the a-file enhances Black's counterplay. Before Kasparov's analysis it was believed that White was better off postponing the capture. He, however, provided enough evidence to remove any desire to delay.

\textbf{18.axb5}

Today's most topical continuation.

18.\texttt{Qd4} has lost its popularity, since after 18...\texttt{Wf6} 19.\texttt{Qf6} apart from 19...\texttt{Qc5}, which was played in the historic game between the two K's, Black has a worthy alternative 19...\texttt{Qd3} which was analysed in Kasparov's book, and after 20.\texttt{Axh6 b5!} 21.\texttt{Axh6} this passed a high-level test in the important Anand – Kamsky Candidates' Final match 21...bxa3 22.b3 \texttt{Qc5} 23.\texttt{Wc2} \texttt{Wg6} 24.\texttt{Wxh4 Wf6} 25.\texttt{Qf3 Wg6} 26.\texttt{Qh4 Wf6} and a draw was agreed, Anand – Kamsky, Las Palmas (5) 1995.

But it may be too early to bury this line for White. In the game Enders – Lukacs, Budapest
1995, White demonstrated an amazing idea:
18...axb5 19.\textit{\textbf{\textcircled{d}4}}

19.\textbf{\textcircled{d}4} \textit{c6}

20.\textbf{\textcircled{d}5} \textit{c5}!

Thus, White's attempts to gain an advantage here were connected with the move 22.\textbf{\textcircled{e}3}. e.g.
22...\textit{c5} (another try is 22...\textit{e5}) 23.\textbf{\textcircled{b}2} \textit{c8} 24.\textbf{\textcircled{c}6} \textit{h4} 25.\textbf{\textcircled{d}4} \textit{f5} 26.\textbf{\textcircled{f}3} \textit{h5} 27.e5 \textit{f4}
28.\textbf{\textcircled{e}1} \textit{dx5} 29.\textbf{\textcircled{e}xe5} and White maintained the advantage, Anand – Beliavsky, Madrid 1998.

A serious alternative for Black is 19...\textit{c5}, a move that Anand has already fought against in his match against Kamsky, and judged it to be a very positive idea. This move is intended to reduce White's initiative, although this costs Black a pawn. After 20.\textbf{\textcircled{x}a8} \textit{xa8} 21.\textbf{\textcircled{x}b}5 \textit{a5} (less fortunate was 21...a1, Topalov – Almasi, Amber-rapid 2003) 22.\textbf{\textcircled{a}3} \textit{a6} 23.\textbf{\textcircled{e}3} \textit{c5} 24. \textit{c}3 \textit{d}3 25.\textbf{\textcircled{x}d}3 \textit{xd}3 26.\textbf{\textcircled{f}3} with a complicated game, Anand – Kamsky, Las Palmas (7) 1995.

20.\textbf{\textcircled{f}5} \textit{c5}!

Anand’s recommendation as well. It seems he likes Black's knight to be on e5 in this line, but after this game that might be seen as a misjudgement.

21.\textbf{\textcircled{g}3} \textit{g6}

The preparatory stage is over, and each side has to play his card. Actually, White's task is difficult, but pleasant – how to mate Black.

22.\textbf{\textcircled{f}3}

White’s forces gather around Black’s king and we will soon see if they can crash through the defence.

22...\textbf{\textcircled{d}3}
We have come to the much praised novelty, which was awarded a huge number of exclamation marks by all the commentators. Judging by the result, and the fact that no computer in the world is capable of suggesting such a move – all the marks are justified and White's prize is an almost effortless win.

But, as always, there is another side of the coin: first of all, the novelty does not put an end to the whole line, as was thought in the beginning. It transpires that this is one of Anand's novelties that is good for one game, as in the post mortem (by thousands of fans and many computers) a defence was found. By that time, of course, it was no help to Adams. As opposed to many GMs who make short draws in order to rest, Anand plays one of his many novelties on his "rest days".

23...\textit{xd5}?

It feels unfair to award this move a question mark, although it loses. During the game it was absolutely impossible to find the right path, especially given that the strength of White's attack is not immediately apparent and, more importantly, he did not know whether it was a winning-by-force novelty. Moreover, as we mentioned, quite a few commentators, armed with strong computer programs, regarded Anand's novelty as one that kills the line. No one would like to be in Adams' shoes in this game.

The only move that saves Black is 23...\textit{xe1}!. Any third grader will tell you that Black should take as much as he can, so that White has fewer pieces to attack with. This move takes a whole rook, whereas the text only grabs a pawn, so there is no question which is better! And moves that do not grab anything are not even worth considering...

And, a little more seriously, the disappearance of the e1-rook allows Black to create counter threats along the first rank, which might convince White that he does not have all the time he needs.
Our efforts to successfully resist White's attack produced many interesting variations. In this position five candidates have been studied: 24.\*3h4, 24.\*xh6, 24.\*h2, 24.e5 and 24.\*xe1.

a) 24.\*3h4 does not work: 24...\*bd3 25.\*xd3 \*xd3 26.\*xh6\# (26.\*xg6 does not help either 26...fxg6 27.\*xg6\# \*f7 28.\*xh6\# \*e7 29.\*g5\# \*d7 and the black king successfully leaves the troubles behind.) Now Black can choose between forcing White to take a perpetual after 26...\*xh6 27.\*xh6 \*xf2\# 28.\*xg6\# with a perpetual.

b) The "check-check-mate" continuation with 24.\*xh6\# falls short due to the upsetting lack of mate. 24...\*xh6 25.\*xh6 \*xf3\# 26.\*gxf3 \*d4! And now it is White who must find the accurate 27.e5! to avoid defeat: 27...\*d3 28.\*xg6\# fxg6 29.\*xg6\# with a perpetual.

c) Quite interesting is 24.\*h2, and at first we even thought it might be winning, however it is not so. The idea is to try to keep the knight around the black king's neck. However, after 24...\*bd3 (the machine's 24...h5 with the idea of preventing the knight's move to g4 is too much for a human to accept) 25.\*g4 \*d8! it turns out that an inevitable check is hardly enough for victory.

For example, even if White wins a queen after 26.\*c3 \*xc1 27.\*f6\# \*xf6 28.\*xf6 \*e2\# 29.\*h2 \*xg3 30.\*xg3 \*d3 Black still has a huge material advantage.

Another try is:

26.\*gxf6\# 27.\*h6\# The impressive looking 27.\*xh6 loses its appeal after 27...\*f6 28.\*g5 \*h8 forcing the exchange of queens, after which Black will be able to demonstrate his technique in a three-rook endgame.

27...\*h8

After 27...\*h8 28.\*xd3 \*xd3 29.\*xf7 White looks so close, but 29...\*h4! and a draw is all he can get here: 30.\*g4 \*h5 (too risky would be 30...\*xf2\# 31.\*xf2 \*xf2 32.\*xf2 \*a6 33.\*g5\# \*g8 34.\*e6 and only White can win here) 31.\*g5 \*h4 32.\*g4 with repetition.

28.\*xd3 \*xd3 29.\*xf7 \*h4!

Not 29...\*xf7 30.\*h6 \*g8 31.\*g5 and Black has to give up the queen, while not getting enough in return.

30.\*xd6 \*a1

And Black wins.

d) An attempt to add the bishop on b1 to Black's list of worries with 24.e5 fails to 25.\*xf3\# 25.\*xf3 \*e5 26.\*xh6\# \*xh6 27.\*xh6 \*e1\# 28.\*g2 \*e2 and White must forget all his hopes.

e) The remaining possibility is 24.\*xe1. The initial feeling is that by recapturing on el White loses precious time and Black should be OK. However, after long hours of analysis, and a lot of power consumed by over-pushed CPU's, other continuations seem to put White at risk more than anything else, as we have shown in the previous variations. So:

24.\*xe1 \*a1 25.\*xh6\# \*xh6 26.\*xh6

26...\*xd5!

We believe this was what Black missed during
the game. With its multitude of ideas, this move, is the key to Black's defence. The most peculiar fact is that the advantages that immediately strike the eye are not the main reasons why this move is so great. For example, it attacks the e3- and f6-squares, which could otherwise attract White's bishop and others white sharks.

However, it is a little deeper than that: first of all, the knight is untouchable, as taking it would allow the black rooks to run riot. And after 26.\textit{Wh}xh6 what was White's threat? He wanted to play 27.\textit{W}xg6\# fxg6 28.\textit{W}xg6\# f8 29.\textit{W}h6\# e7. Now both 1) 30.\textit{Wh}e6\# f8 31.\textit{W}g5\# c7 30.\textit{W}f7\# and 2) 30.\textit{W}g5\# d7 31.\textit{W}f7\# take the rook with check and a decisive attack.

e1) But after 26...\textit{Q}xd5, 27.\textit{W}xg6\# gives nothing, since there is no 30.\textit{W}e6\# (the d5-pawn is already gone) as in the first variation, and 30.\textit{W}g5\# d7 31.\textit{W}f7\# does not win the rook as the e7-square is defended, which allows either 31...\textit{Q}e7 or 31.\textit{Q}e7. So after 27...fxg6 28.\textit{W}xg6\# f8 29.\textit{W}f5\# (White would only find trouble after 29.\textit{W}h6\# e7 30.\textit{Q}xd5 \textit{Q}xd5 31.\textit{W}g5\# d7 32.\textit{W}f5\# e6 with advantage to Black) 29...\textit{Q}g7 30.\textit{W}g4\# f8 31.\textit{W}f5\# there is only draw by perpetual.

e2) Another idea is 27.\textit{Q}e3, so that if the black queen moves away, White brings the bishop to the central diagonal with 28.\textit{Q}d4, and Black's position looks dangerous. This is not forced, of course. For example: 27...\textit{Q}xb1 28.\textit{Q}xb6 \textit{Qxe}1\# 29.\textit{Q}h2 \textit{Qxb}6 White has nothing better than the same perpetual: 30.\textit{W}xg6\# fxg6 31.\textit{W}xg6\# f8 32.\textit{W}f6\# (32.\textit{W}xd6\# is wrong: 32...\textit{Q}f7 33.\textit{W}xb6 \textit{Qxe}4 34.\textit{W}xb5 and the most White can hope for is a perpetual) 32...\textit{Q}g8 33.\textit{W}g6\#

e3) The last try is the ultra tricky 27.\textit{Q}h2, but it also does not give White the desired result. 27...\textit{Q}xb1 28.\textit{Q}xd5

White can also try: 28.\textit{W}xg6\# fxg6 29.\textit{W}xg6\# f8 30.exd5 (the only move not to lose!) 28...\textit{Q}xe1 31.\textit{Q}h6\# e7 32.\textit{Q}g5\# d7 33.\textit{Q}f7\# e8 34.\textit{Q}f8\# d7 35.\textit{Q}f7\# with a draw.

28.\textit{Q}f3 \textit{Qxe}1! and White does not even have a perpetual: 29.\textit{W}xg6\# (29.\textit{Q}g5 fails to save the day as well: 29...\textit{Q}f6 30.\textit{Q}xf7 \textit{Q}xf7 31.\textit{W}xg6 \textit{Qxf}2 and White can resign.) 29...fxg6 30.\textit{W}xg6\# f8 31.\textit{Q}f5\# e7 The king escapes, and is left with a much bigger army than the enemy.

28...\textit{Q}xe1 29.\textit{W}xg6\# fxg6 30.\textit{W}xg6\# f8 31.\textit{Q}h6\# With an already-so-familiar perpetual.
To sum up these long and complicated variations: we can conclude that this direction of the Zaitsev Variation is still alive, but from the sporting point of view Adams did not have much chance. This is not only because these variations are extremely difficult for any player to find, but because they could only be found by those who have great experience of playing and analysing the Zaitsev. The English grandmaster tried to surprise his opponent, but did so with a very unpleasant boomerang.

24.\(\text{Nh6}^+\)!

Anand does not deviate a single step from his analysis and he is right. For example, 24.exd5 is much worse: 24...\(\text{Nh}1\) 25.\(\text{Nh}1\) \(\text{Ba}1!\) and Black is in the driver's seat.

24...\(\text{Nh6}\) 25.\(\text{Nh}6\) \(\text{xf}2^+\)

25...\(\text{Nh}1\) 26.\(\text{Nh}4\) with mate on the way.

26.\(\text{Nh}2\) \(\text{Nh}1\)

Black's last chance is to try and divert White's attention to his own king.

During the live transmission, before we became so smart, it looked as if White should now go for 27.\(\text{Nxg6}^+\) and after 27...\(\text{fxg6}\) 28.\(\text{Nxf6}^+\) force a draw. But this was only an impression. Anand did not think about making a draw. Actually, he did not need to think at all, as the work was done at home 10 years previously.

27.\(\text{Nh}4!\)

Black has many other options, which will not all be discussed here, in order not to bore you: it is always White who delivers the mate, and it is always the same way.

For example, 27...\(\text{Qf}3^+\) 28.\(\text{Qxf}3\) \(\text{Bxe}4\) 29.\(\text{Nxe}4\) \(\text{Bxe}4\) 30.\(\text{Bc}3!\) \(\text{Be}2\) 31.\(\text{Qd}4\) is mating.

It seems that 27...\(\text{Ba}7\) was the last chance to force the opponent to sweat a bit. The point of Black idea becomes clear after 28.\(\text{Qxg6}?\) \(\text{Bxg3}^+\)!

29.\(\text{Nh}3\) \(\text{fxg6}\) 30.\(\text{Qxg6}^+\) \(\text{Bg}7\) and White loses his shirt.

But White has 28.\(\text{Nh}5!\).

28...\(\text{Bxg3}^+\)

The only move.

29.\(\text{Nh}3\) \(\text{gx}f5\) 30.\(\text{Qg}5^+\) \(\text{f}8\) 31.\(\text{Qf}6^!\) \(\text{Be}6\)

After 31...\(\text{Bxa8}\) 32.\(\text{Qh}6^+\) \(\text{Be}8\) 33.\(\text{exd}5!\) Black should be thankful for only losing material, and not the king.

32.\(\text{Qh}8^+\) \(\text{Bf}7\) 33.\(\text{Qg}5^+\) \(\text{h}6\)

33...\(\text{f}6\) 34.\(\text{exd}5!\)

34.\(\text{exd}5\)

White has a decisive advantage. For instance:

34...\(\text{f}4^+\)

34...\(\text{Qxd}5\) 35.\(\text{Bb}8^!\)

35.\(\text{Qxf}4\) \(\text{Qxd}5\) 36.\(\text{Bb}8!\)

And Black is helpless.

28.\(\text{Qxg6}^+\) \(\text{Bxg6}^+\) 29.\(\text{Qxg6}^+\) \(\text{fxg6}\) 30.\(\text{Qxg6}^+\) \(\text{f}8^!\)

The other retreat does not save the day either:

30...\(\text{Bh}8\) 31.\(\text{Bg}5!\) \(\text{Be}6\) 32.\(\text{Bf}6^+\) \(\text{Bxf}6\) 33.\(\text{Bxf}6^+\) \(\text{Bh}7\) 34.\(\text{exd}5\)

31.\(\text{Bf}6^+\) \(\text{g}8\) 32.\(\text{Nh}6^\)

Black resigned in view of 32...\(\text{Bxa7}\) 33.\(\text{Bg}6^+\) \(\text{Bh}8\) 34.\(\text{Bxe}8^+\).

1-0
13 4
@ GAME 12
Judit Polgar
Rustam Kasimdzhanov
Sicilian, Perenyi Attack B81

1.e4 c5 2.d4 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.exd4 f6 5.c3 a6 6.e3

This move can lead to various lines, from the relatively calm 6..g4 line, through the English Attack to the dangerous Perenyi Attack.

6...e6

It is a dangerous gamble to play this position against Polgar. She knows it extremely well, and loves playing it. This game is further proof of that.

7.g4?

The sharpest continuation, which had disappeared for a while after Black managed to find ways to deal with White's initiative. In the late 1990's personal experience and deep analysis had driven Anand, one of the biggest experts in this line, to state that the 7.g4 line was dead. However, in such sharp lines one can never tell if and when there will be a revival.

7...e5

Black chooses the most principled reaction. A move that seems like an innocent attempt to win a pawn turns out to be one that forces White to sacrifice material, and she hardly needs to be asked twice. Considering the fact that Polgar has in the past employed this line with both colours (and made 2/2 with White and 3½/5 with Black), Kasimdzhanov most likely had something up his sleeve in her pet lines.

Another option here is 7...h6, although White is not forced to enter the double-edged English Attack (after f3 and long castling), and can continue 8.h4 or 8.g2 attempting to transpose into the evergreen Keres Attack.

In contrast, 8.f4 lost some of its attraction after the following game: 8...e5 9.f5 h5? 10.gxh5 and the game concludes with the following forced line: 10...exf4 11.exf4 dxe5 12.dxe6+ dxe6 13.dxe6 h4+ 14.d2 d5+ 15.c1 d5+ 16.d2 d5+ 17.c1 h4+ with a draw, Shirov – Kasparov, Linares 1998.

8.d5 g6

Black must act quickly, as he runs the risk of getting positional squeezed after 9.g5.

9.g5

Nevertheless! This active method is, in fact, the only way to promise real chances for White.

Another variation of the piece sacrifice is 9.g2, although Gelfand proved it to be insufficient in the following wild game: 9...d5 10.gx5 dxe5 11.dxe5 b5 12.d6 bxd6 13.exf5 c6 14.e2 h5 15.0-0 h4 16.d2 d4 17.dxd4 bxd4 18.dxf6 c5! and Black's initiative is extremely dangerous, Ponomariov – Gelfand, Biel 2000.

9...gx5 10.exf5

Utterly wrong would be 10.gxf6 f4 11.d2 e6 with no compensation for the pawn.

10.d5

'Going back' is notably absent from this
line's vocabulary! After 10...\texttt{Qd7} 11...\texttt{Qh5} the f7-square together with much better development gives White a very strong attack.

11...\texttt{Qf3}

This move promises White the most, in fact, it might be the only move to promise anything at all. White opts for fast development, with long castling, and is ready to pay for all that with more sacrifices.

The alternative 11.gxf6 has been in a bit of a slump lately. The following line is quite long and frightening, but in reality Black at least holds here: 11...d4 12...\texttt{Qc4} \texttt{Bc7} 13...\texttt{Qd3} dxe3 and Black has good prospects of emerging alive and with extra material. For example: 14.0-0-0 exf2 15.\texttt{Qxf7+} \texttt{Qxf7} 16.\texttt{Qd5+} \texttt{Qxf6} 17.\texttt{Qe4+} \texttt{Qe7} 18.f6t (pretty much forced) 18...\texttt{Qe8} 19.f7t \texttt{Qe7} 20.\texttt{Qd2} \texttt{Qb6} 21.\texttt{Qg5+} \texttt{Qxf7} 22.\texttt{Qh6} 23.\texttt{Qxf2+} \texttt{Qe8} 24.\texttt{Qd8t} \texttt{Qxd8} 25.\texttt{Qxh6} \texttt{Qe7} 26.\texttt{Qf6t} \texttt{Qxd8} 27.\texttt{Qd5} \texttt{Qe6} 28.\texttt{Qg5+} \texttt{Qd7} 29.\texttt{Qg7t} \texttt{Qc6} 30.\texttt{Qf6} \texttt{Qxd5} 31.\texttt{Qxe6} \texttt{Qxe6} 32.\texttt{Qxh8} Amazingly, the assessment of 11.gxf6 depends on such a complicated line, and it seems that Black should not lose, as actually happened, for example, in the game Almasi – Svidler, Polanica Zdroj 2000.

11...d4

The most principled. Not grabbing the material would leave White with a strong attack almost free of charge. For instance, 11...\texttt{Qe4} 12.\texttt{Qxe4} dxe4 13.\texttt{Qxe4} \texttt{Qc6} 14.\texttt{Qc4} \texttt{Qd7} 15.g6! allows White a very strong attack.

12. 0-0-0

A key position. Since it depends on pure calculation, there is no point in general evaluations. One cannot play such a line without deep preparation. White has tried many things here, some with success.

13.\texttt{Qxd4}?

A relatively rare and rather surprising line. Kasimdzhanov obviously prepared mainly for other continuations and was caught off guard. This sacrifice is not necessarily winning, but the game proved, at the very least, that it is extremely interesting.

Surprisingly, there is an even crazier sacrifice, which in fact looks too generous: 13.\texttt{Qxd4}!! exd4 14.\texttt{Qxd4} \texttt{Qc5} 15.\texttt{Qxc5} \texttt{Qxc5} 16.\texttt{Qc4} \texttt{Qxe4}! 17.\texttt{Qxe4} \texttt{Qxe4} 18.\texttt{Qxe4+} \texttt{Qe7} when Black, a rook up, is likely to be able to castle next move, and so has a bright future.

The main line is 13.\texttt{Qd2}!!, which is as complicated as the text move. The following classic is a relevant game: 13...\texttt{Qxc3} (here and on the next move 13...\texttt{Qc7} is very interesting) 14.\texttt{Qxc3} \texttt{Qg7}? 15.\texttt{Qg1} 0-0 16.\texttt{Qxf6} \texttt{Qxf6} 17.\texttt{Qc6} \texttt{Qh8} 18.\texttt{Qf4} \texttt{Qb6}!! 19.\texttt{Qg3} \texttt{Qh6} 20.\texttt{Qd6} \texttt{Qf6} 21.\texttt{Qd2} e4 22.\texttt{Qc4} b5 23.\texttt{Qe6} \texttt{Qa7} 24.\texttt{Qc6} a5 25.\texttt{Qe3} \texttt{Qb7} 26.\texttt{Qd5} \texttt{Qb8} 27.\texttt{Qc7} With more than sufficient compensation, Polgar – Anand, Dos Hermanas 1999.
13...exd4 14...xd4

The critical position. Black is two(!) pieces up, but is falling behind in development and has serious worries regarding his king's health. The typical approach here is to bail out by giving back some of the goods, and keep some for later. Kasimdzhanov sank into deep thought, and he had every reason to do that. It is hard to play this position unprepared, especially facing the furious Polgar, who is by no means happy with her current tournament situation.

14...g7?

A new move, most likely unintentionally. It looks interesting, especially as in the 13...d2 line this bishop development has been tried on many occasions. Amazingly, however, despite extensive analysis no salvation could be found for Black after this move! Black simply cannot untie himself, whereas White can slowly improve her position, bringing in more forces to deliver the decisive blow. The conclusions are as follows:

1. White's threats are more serious than was believed prior to this game.
2. It is better to refrain from 14...g7.
3. 'The veteran' 14...c5 is much more useful, although Polgar probably had an improvement there as well.

As we mentioned, Black's main reaction is 14...c5!, and then 15...d2. Future theoretical battles are most likely to take place here.

Not convincing is 15...0-0 16.gxf6, as 16...xf6 loses on the spot after 17.g1+ h8 18.e4 e7 19.f6 d6 20.xc5 g4 21.e3 as happened in Firt - Sobek, Czech Republic 1995, but White's attack is extremely strong anyhow. For example, 16...h8 17.e4 b6 18.h5 with no visible defence for Black.

However, Black can play 15...c7! and the assessment of the whole line seems to hang on this position. In the only known game, after 16.gxf6 dxf6 17.c4 c7 18.b3 0-0 19.e1 h8 20.c3 d8 21.d4 xf5 22.e5 g6, White's assault came to a dead end in Pulkkinen - Oll, Helsinki 1990.

15.g1!

One reaction would be to praise Kasimdzhanov for taking Polgar out of her home preparation (even if inadvertently). If, however, she was ready to meet Black's strongest reaction, she should not experience too much trouble facing an inferior one, if it really is inferior. Here Polgar proves beyond any doubt that Black's reaction is indeed less fortunate. The point of White's plan is that her pawns have total domination over Black's pieces: the knight cannot escape from f6, but White is in no hurry to capture it, delaying it until the right moment.

15...d8

A natural continuation of the ...g7 plan. 15...0-0?, on the other hand, loses at once after 16.gxf6 xf6 17.dg4.

Another shot is 15...c7 16.gxf6 xf6
17.\texttt{d}d5 \texttt{d}d6 18.\texttt{x}xf6+ \texttt{x}xf6 19.\texttt{c}c3! and the black monarch enjoys his last moments.

Perhaps the best practical decision was 15...\texttt{b}b6?! White is now forced to find some strong moves in order to bring the victory home: 16.\texttt{e}e3+ \texttt{f}f8 17.\texttt{a}a4! is our binary friend's suggestion and is extremely strong. The black queen is pushed away, leaving White's forces to deal with the king. For example:

a) 17...\texttt{a}a7 18.\texttt{g}xf6 \texttt{x}xf6 19.\texttt{h}h6+ \texttt{e}e7 20.\texttt{d}d2 and Black simply cannot disentangle.
eg. 20...\texttt{e}e5 21.\texttt{h}3 with crushing attack.

b) 17...\texttt{a}a5 18.\texttt{g}xf6 \texttt{x}xf6 19.\texttt{a}a3+ \texttt{g}g8 20.\texttt{c}c3! and it is over.

c) Probably the most stubborn is 17...\texttt{c}c7, but after 18.\texttt{g}xf6 \texttt{x}xf6 (18...\texttt{x}xf6 19.\texttt{e}e4 \texttt{e}e5 20.\texttt{h}h6+ \texttt{e}e7 21.\texttt{f}f4 and wins) 19.\texttt{a}a3+ \texttt{e}e7 (19...\texttt{g}g8 20.\texttt{g}g3!! \texttt{x}g3 21.\texttt{d}d8+ \texttt{f}f8 22.\texttt{x}g3+ \texttt{g}g4 23.\texttt{x}g4 mate) 20.\texttt{x}xe7+ \texttt{g}g8 21.\texttt{e}e7 \texttt{g}g5 22.\texttt{g}g2 White has a technically winning position: she has the better game to "compensate" for her extra pawn.

This, however, might be the best Black can get after the "novelty" 14...\texttt{g}g7.

16.\texttt{e}e3

A very strong move, finally creating a real winning threat. If Black does not take preventive measures he will lose by force after 17.\texttt{g}xf6 \texttt{x}xf6 18.\texttt{e}e4! with numerous devastating threats. For example: 18...\texttt{e}e5 19.\texttt{d}d5 \texttt{d}d6 20.\texttt{f}f6! and that's it.

16...\texttt{e}e7

Black is, of course, happy to swap queens, while defending against White's threat.

16...\texttt{b}5 is of no help to Black: 17.\texttt{g}xf6 \texttt{x}xf6 18.\texttt{d}d5! and he can resign.

17.\texttt{d}d2!

Naturally, White does not want to trade queens and keeps building up the pressure.

17.\texttt{e}e7+ would have been fainthearted: 17...\texttt{e}e7 18.\texttt{g}xf6+ \texttt{x}xf6 18...\texttt{x}xf6 19.\texttt{f}f4+ and Black must give up material, as attempting to save the bishop with 19...\texttt{h}h6 allows an elegant mate in the middle of the board: 20.\texttt{d}d5+ \texttt{x}xf5 21.\texttt{h}3 mate.

19.\texttt{d}d5+\texttt{e}8!

19...\texttt{f}f8 does not work on account of 20.\texttt{x}xf6 \texttt{x}xf6 21.\texttt{d}d8+ \texttt{e}e8 22.\texttt{f}f6!.

20.\texttt{c}c7+ \texttt{d}d8 21.\texttt{x}d7+ \texttt{x}d7 22.\texttt{a}a8 \texttt{x}f5

It is not clear who's better here.

17...\texttt{h}6?!

It is easy to understand Black's choice – he seeks some clarity, and since the queens cannot be exchanged (Polgar wants to keep the queens on, of course), he's willing to reduce the pressure.
in some other way. Having said all that, White's path to victory is easier now, practically speaking.

Again, 17...\texttt{g}g8 was worth considering. Keeping the tension is good for the losing side (if he realizes this is the position's true evaluation), although it is hardly enough to save the day. The problem is that after 18.\texttt{g}g3! Black can no longer tolerate the tension:

a) 18...\texttt{f}f4 19.\texttt{h}xe4 \texttt{h}xh3 20.\texttt{e}e5 21.\texttt{e}e5 \texttt{g}g7 22.\texttt{f}f6 \texttt{h}h8 23. \texttt{b}bxc3 \texttt{f}f6 24. \texttt{g}xe3

An amazing position – Black cannot unravel, even without the queens. For example: 24...\texttt{f}f8 (24...\texttt{h}h5 25.\texttt{x}g8+ \texttt{x}g8 26.\texttt{e}e8+ \texttt{f}f8 27.\texttt{g}g6 \texttt{fxg6} 28.\texttt{c}c4+ \texttt{h}h7 29.\texttt{xf}f8) 25.\texttt{e}e3 \texttt{g}g6 (25...\texttt{b}b5 26.\texttt{g}g2 \texttt{b}b8 27.\texttt{b}b7!! \texttt{xb}b7 28.\texttt{xc}c8 \texttt{d}d7 29.\texttt{xf}f8 \texttt{xf}f8 30.\texttt{xd}d7 and Black can resign) 26.\texttt{g}g8+ \texttt{g}g8 27.\texttt{e}e8+ \texttt{f}f8 28.\texttt{g}g2 and even after 28...\texttt{h}h3 29.\texttt{xa}a8 \texttt{g}xg2 Black has no way to escape the trap on the kingside: he is going down.

b) Also the idea 18...\texttt{h}h5 seems to be in White’s favour: 19.\texttt{f}f6 \texttt{h}xh6 20.\texttt{e}e3 21.\texttt{g}xf6 \texttt{g}xh6 22.\texttt{d}d5 \texttt{d}d8 23.\texttt{xf}f6 \texttt{xf}f6 24.\texttt{b}b4+ \texttt{g}g7 25.\texttt{f}f4 and White regains the material with a bonus. The only question is whether the bonus is good enough? If not, she can keep the pressure with 21.\texttt{f}f4? \texttt{f}f4d7 and here even 22.\texttt{g}g2, and it is not clear how Black can untie himself.

c) Another interesting chance is 18...\texttt{h}h6, especially since after 19.\texttt{g}xf6 \texttt{x}xf6 20.\texttt{d}d6 \texttt{e}e5 there is no immediate winning variation for White. However, deeper consideration proves that Black is paralysed: the d7-knight must cover d8, the g7-bishop takes care of h6, the king can only watch the battle, and the queen is mostly concerned with avoiding being trapped. In other words: White has more than sufficient compensation for the material (which amounts to a piece against two pawns!) and does not even
have to do anything concrete – just improve the pieces: even a move like d1, forcing Black to make a move, might turn out to be a killer.

18.gxf6 \( \text{xf6} \)

Better was 18...\( \text{xf6} \)? 19.\( \text{Ed6} \) (19.\( \text{Exd7? Exd7} \) 20.\( \text{Exd7 Ec6} \) and Black is even better) 19...\( \text{e5} \) 20.\( \text{Gg3} \). Even though it leads to a position similar to the previous note, where White was not exactly suffering. But at least it does not lose by force.

19.\( \text{Ed8} \) \( \text{e8} \)

And here White delivered a fantastic blow:

\[ 20.\text{b5!} \]

How did Polgar find such a move? Apart from her great tactical ability, Polgar must have remembered an incident known in chess history as "The Argentinean Tragedy".

The Argentinean Tragedy

The position in the diagram above had been thoroughly prepared for the black side by three Argentinean players (Najdorf, Panno and Pilnik) for the Gothenburg Interzonal tournament back in 1955.

How great was their triumph when all three of them were paired against Russians (Keres, Geller and Spassky respectively) in the ultra important 14th round, and all three of them had Black.

Moreover, 15 minutes into the game the desired position was reached. The legend even tells that Miguel Najdorf approached one of the Russian players and informed him that they stood no chance – it had all been analysed at home.

The story did not end in Hollywood-style for the Argentineans: while they were trying to cope with their emotions, Geller, after a long thought, came up with the devastating 13.\( \text{b5!!} \), which was later reproduced on the other two boards as well. The Russians won all three games in great style, and the episode gained an evocative nickname: "The Argentinean Tragedy".

Back to our game – the idea of \( \text{b5} \) here is a little different, but there is no doubt that this association helped White to find such a brilliant move during the game.

20...\( \text{xb5} \) 21.\( \text{Be1} \)

After parting with his queen, which looks inevitable, Black will not be able to rely on the material he grabbed earlier the game – the remaining lady knows no diets!

21...\( \text{b4} \)

Black wants to end his misery somehow. The various possibilities are extremely hard to calculate, but against each of Black's attempts to defend, White has a devastating response.

A more complex, although not saving alternative, is 21...\( \text{e5} \) 22.\( \text{f4} \) and now both 22...\( \text{xf4} \) 23.\( \text{Exe8!} \) and 22...\( \text{f6} \) 23.\( \text{exe5} \) \( \text{exe5} \) 24.\( \text{Ed5!} \) leave Black without any hope.

The best try seems to be 22...\( \text{b4} \), but even here White wins beautifully: 23.\( \text{Exe5} \) \( \text{bxc3} \) 24.\( \text{Ed4!} \) \( \text{Exa2} \) 25.\( \text{Exe8!} \) \( \text{exe8} \) 26.\( \text{exe7!} \) \( \text{exe7} \) 27.\( \text{Ec5!} \) \( \text{d8} \) 28.\( \text{Ed5!} \) \( \text{d7} \) 29.\( \text{xa2} \) The end!

Perhaps the only way to muddy the waters a little was 21...\( \text{f6} \). After 22.\( \text{Exe8!} \) \( \text{exe8} \)
22.\textit{\textbf{Qb5}}??

Proof that even the best of us are only human. White misses a relatively simple (at least compared to some other decisions Polgar made during the game) winner, and allows Black back into the game. In fact, Kasimdzhanov now has his best position of the day.

The forced 22.\textit{\textbf{Bxe8}}\textsuperscript{+} wins in all lines:

\begin{itemize}
\item 22.\textit{\textbf{Qxe8}} (22...\textit{\textbf{Bxe8}} 23.\textit{\textbf{Qd6}}\textsuperscript{+} 23.\textit{\textbf{Qd5}} (or even 23.\textit{\textbf{Bxe7}}\textsuperscript{+} winning, as after 23...\textit{\textbf{Bxe7}} 24.\textit{\textbf{Qd5}}\textsuperscript{+}! Black's king is alone in the field, facing an angry firing squad) 23...\textit{\textbf{Bxe1}}\textsuperscript{+} 24.\textit{\textbf{Bxe1}}\textsuperscript{+} \textit{\textbf{Qd7}} (24...\textit{\textbf{Qf8}} 25.\textit{\textbf{Qc7}}\textsuperscript{+} 25.\textit{\textbf{Qb6}}\textsuperscript{+} \textit{\textbf{Qc6}} 26.\textit{\textbf{Bxa8}} \textit{\textbf{Qxf5}} 27.\textit{\textbf{Wh1}}\textsuperscript{+}! and White is winning.
\item 22.\textit{\textbf{Bxb2}}??

It is not entirely clear what Black had in mind, but it seems that he lost control at the very moment Caissa gave him a huge smile...

Vital was 22...\textit{\textbf{Qe5}}! and now the amazing point is that after the automatic 23.\textit{\textbf{f4}}? it is Black who is winning with 23...\textit{\textbf{Bxa2}}! So White has no choice but to play 23.\textit{\textbf{Qb1}}. After 23...\textit{\textbf{Qg7}} Black has good chances to emerge from the storm with extra material. For example:

24.\textit{\textbf{f4}} (24.\textit{\textbf{Bd5}} \textit{\textbf{Qg5}}) 24...\textit{\textbf{Bxf4}}! 25.\textit{\textbf{Bd4}}\textsuperscript{+} (or 25.\textit{\textbf{Bxe7}} \textit{\textbf{Qxd2}} 26.\textit{\textbf{Bxe8}} \textit{\textbf{Qxe8}} 27.\textit{\textbf{Bxe8}} \textit{\textbf{Qa5}}) 25...\textit{\textbf{Bf6}} and Black should win.

23.\textit{\textbf{Qxb2}}

Now it is all over. Black gives back all he took, and some more, while his position remains bad.

23...\textit{\textbf{Bf6}}\textsuperscript{+} 24.\textit{\textbf{Qd4}}

Entering a winning endgame.

24.\textit{\textbf{Qg7}} 25.\textit{\textbf{Bxe8}} \textit{\textbf{Qxe8}} 26.\textit{\textbf{Bxe8}} \textit{\textbf{Qxd4}}\textsuperscript{+}

27.\textit{\textbf{Qxd4}} \textit{\textbf{Qf6}} 28.\textit{\textbf{f4}}!

The last detail. The only way for Black to unpin is by exchanging rooks (with ...\textit{\textbf{b6}} and ...\textit{\textbf{b7}}), but after White's last move the arising \textit{\textbf{Qvs.B}} endgame is hopeless for Black, as he cannot activate his king, whereas White will simply create a passed pawn on the queenside and promote it. This is how the game ends.

28.\textit{\textbf{b6}} 29.\textit{\textbf{Bd8}} \textit{\textbf{Qb7}}

29...\textit{\textbf{Bf7}} 30.\textit{\textbf{Bh8}} \textit{\textbf{Qb7}} 31.\textit{\textbf{Bxh6}} \textit{\textbf{Qd8}} (31...\textit{\textbf{Bd5}} 32.\textit{\textbf{Qc6}}\textsuperscript{+} \textit{\textbf{Bxc6}} 33.\textit{\textbf{Bxc6}} with an easy win) 32.\textit{\textbf{Bxb6}} \textit{\textbf{Qxd4}} 33.\textit{\textbf{Bxb7}}\textsuperscript{+} \textit{\textbf{Qf6}} 34.\textit{\textbf{Qb3}} \textit{\textbf{Bxf4}} 35.\textit{\textbf{Bxb4}} \textit{\textbf{Bxf5}} 36.\textit{\textbf{a4}} is again hopeless.

30.\textit{\textbf{Bxa8}}

The simplest.

30...\textit{\textbf{Bxa8}} 31.\textit{\textbf{Bf3}} \textit{\textbf{Qd5}}\textsuperscript{+} 32.\textit{\textbf{Bxb4}} \textit{\textbf{Qxa2}} 33.\textit{\textbf{Bb5}} \textit{\textbf{Qb1}} 34.\textit{\textbf{c3}}

Of course, there is no need to give Black extra chances after 34.\textit{\textbf{Bxb6}}? \textit{\textbf{Bxc2}} 35.\textit{\textbf{Bxc2}} \textit{\textbf{Bxf5}} 36.\textit{\textbf{Bc6}} \textit{\textbf{Bxf4}}.

34...\textit{\textbf{Bf7}} 35.\textit{\textbf{Bxb6}} \textit{\textbf{Bd6}} 36.\textit{\textbf{Bb4}} \textit{\textbf{h3}} 37.\textit{\textbf{Qd5}} 38.\textit{\textbf{Bc6}} \textit{\textbf{Bf4}} 39.\textit{\textbf{Bd7}} 40.\textit{\textbf{Bc2}} 41.\textit{\textbf{c7}} \textit{\textbf{Qd7}} 42.\textit{\textbf{Bc5}}

1-0
Another very combative round. For a second consecutive round all four games were decisive, and in almost all of them the result was a logical reflection of the course of the game. Almost...

Let's start with the Russian derby, as the fight there was the most unbalanced. Since the rivalry between Svidler and Morozevich dates back to their youth, there was a lot of psychology involved. The first one to spring a surprise (isn't he always?) was Morozevich, going for a closed opening, which is unusual for him. Svidler, fearing a surprise in his favourite Grünfeld, reacted accordingly with his early passion - the King's Indian Defence, but even there he did not opt for his main weapon - the Yugoslav variation - probably for the same reasons he abandoned the Grünfeld earlier. Thus the players found themselves on unfamiliar territory, but Morozevich seemed to be more accustomed, introducing an interesting novelty which gave him a slight plus. It was only after Svidler showed a moment of weakness that White's advantage became threatening. He defended tenaciously, but Morozevich was very alert and precise, not allowing his tricky opponent off the hook, and naturally White's advantage was increasing, until in the early 30's Morozevich could have won with a direct attack, but it was already a time scramble, and he missed it. Svidler immediately gave him another chance, but the Muscovite politely refused. However, his continuation looked very promising as well, at least until it turned out that Svidler's king was invincible - its escape from the mating threats would even have made Houdini proud. After the time trouble was over, White no longer had any advantage, but that was very hard for him to accept in the moves that followed, and by the time the Muscovite had realized it, his position was already lost. Svidler did not even have to produce anything spectacular - the sound and natural moves were also the strongest ones.
The struggle on the other boards was more logical, if Anand losing, to any player, can be defined as logical. And it all started so well for the Indian grandmaster:— choosing a line that is so familiar from his endless battles against Kasparov, Anand was clearly hoping to use his experience. But perhaps he overlooked that there is a difference between playing as White and Black, and secondly, and much more importantly, that Black is not entirely OK, as Kasimdzhanov's great idea demonstrated. Suddenly, Black's main plan, on which his counterplay has been based for years, was no longer possible. Anand could not find a Plan B because he was not in top form. After this game it became quite apparent that he is far from being in his best playing condition. His 2½ points should rather be accounted for by brilliant opening preparation and his very high class (mixed with a slight flavour of luck). His play was not that of the Anand the audience is used to seeing.

And now, not feeling all the subtleties of the position (we are talking about Anand, with his legendary intuition!) he played quickly and rather superficially, and logically ended up in a horrible position. As always, Anand complicated matters, combining serious threats and little traps, but to no avail. Even his opponent's time trouble failed to rescue Anand — with only a few seconds on the clock, and shaky hands, the Uzbek eventually found the winning continuation and mated Anand. That was the moment of truth — everyone saw that Kasimdzhanov's time was running out and he had already repeated moves. Would he really resign himself to a draw? But this thriller had a happy ending for the FIDE champion, following Hollywood's best traditions.

Leko decided to show some signs of life. Polgar courageously repeated a variation she opted for not so long ago against Topalov, pressing the Bulgarian hard. (Although she did not win that game, it was definitely a very satisfying creative experience.) Leko, as usual, had a strong idea ready in his openings arsenal. At first it appeared to be a one-sided affair, but a closer look reveals a totally different situation. The game was by no means a cakewalk for Leko, and when all the commentators considered Polgar's position to be bad, there could still have been a long struggle ahead. Could have been, but was not. Black's natural looking attacking move in fact proved to be a bad mistake, after which Leko never looked back. As early as move 20, Black's position started falling apart, and by move 25 it was all over.

The indefatigable Topalov produced one of his best ever games. This battle perfectly reveals the Bulgarian's style. A journalist once wanted to goad the legendary Tigran Petrosian, asking him: "Which is better, attack or counterattack?" to which he received a witty response: "It is better to win." Topalov's reply would most likely have been much more straightforward: "It is better to fight." Today, after failing to equalize with the white pieces, he nevertheless managed to put pressure on his subtle opponent. His moves after the opening stage remind us of David Bronstein's description of Botvinnik, when he stated that the 6th World Champion did not make moves, but rather hammered huge nails into the chessboard. And soon Adams, instead of searching for ways to stabilize his superior position and increase his advantage, was rather concerned about keeping the balance, which, as happens on many such occasions, he also failed to do. He eventually lost the thread of the position and, despite our sympathy towards the Englishman, objectively the end of the game was pretty much one-sided.

This round made things even less clear than before. Leko and Anand are getting closer to one another, but hardly in the part of the table they were expecting. Topalov has the lead, but Svidler is breathing fire on his back, after adding tournament luck to his great qualities. As for the others, great fluctuations in their level of play seem to be a common "asset", which is rarely a reliable ally.
LEKO – POLGAR

GAME 13

Peter Leko

Judit Polgar

Sicilian Paulsen B48


The English Attack has also managed to sweep the Paulsen aside. Who remembers the classical 6.e2 or 6.g3 lines nowadays?

7...d6 8.0-0-0 Nbd4 9.f3 Ne7

Apart from the text, 9...Nd5 has also been tried many times, leading after 10.Nb5 b6 11.Nb1 Ne7 to sharp positions, which have proved to be very good for White recently.

9...Na5 was introduced by Anand, but it did not find many followers. Anand stuck with it for a while, defending (and even winning) worse endgames, but eventually he too lost faith in it.


10.Nd2 b5

12.Ng1

Leko's home cooking. The general plan is not new, of course, but it has never been played here. And it is very strong. White is ready to either play g5 or f4: 12.Ng1 is helpful for both.

The game Naiditsch – Nisipeanu continued 12.h4 a5 13.a3 b4 14.axb4 axb4 15.h3 a5 16Nb1 d6 17.Nc1 Nxb8 18.d1a2 a3 19.b3 d7 20.g5 h5 21.f4 Nc7 22.Nd4 0-0 23.g6 Ne5 with an unclear position. Black managed to emerge victorious in the end, on his way to winning the European Championship in Warsaw 2005.
This move was severely criticized by many commentators as the source of Black's future problems, but it is not so. Black only lost the game at a much later stage.

12...\(\text{a5}\), in similar style to Naiditsch – Nisipeanu, was worth considering. Now Topalov's plan from Sofia (13.\(\text{d}4\)) is no longer possible because after 13...\(\text{c}6\) 14.\(\text{e}5\) \(\text{b}4\) the queen no longer has the g5-square, and after a queen exchange Black has nothing to worry about.

Therefore, White should play 13.\(\text{a}3\) \(\text{b}4\) 14.\(\text{axb}4\) \(\text{xb}4\) and now:

- a) 15.\(\text{d}4\) \(\text{a}5\) 16.\(\text{g}5\) (On 16.\(\text{f}4\) Black has a strong reaction: 16...\(\text{d}5\), threatening \(\text{xe}4\) with mate, 17.\(\text{b}1\) \(\text{c}6\) and Black has the initiative.) 16...\(\text{x}g5\) 17.\(\text{x}g5\) \(\text{a}1\) 18.\(\text{b}1\) \(\text{c}6\) with an unclear position.
- b) The right way for White to continue is 15.\(\text{g}5\) \(\text{h}xg5\) 16.\(\text{x}g5\) \(\text{g}6\) 17.\(\text{d}4\) \(\text{e}7\) (17...\(\text{b}8\) is met with 18.\(\text{b}5\), a similar idea will be seen in the game, 18...\(\text{xb}5\) 19.\(\text{xb}4\) \(\text{a}8\) 20.\(\text{b}1\) \(\text{b}7\) 21.\(\text{c}3\) \(\text{a}6\) 22.\(\text{c}1\) \(\text{x}h2\) 23.\(\text{xb}5\) and it seems that Black's counterplay is fading.) 18.\(\text{f}4\) \(\text{b}8\) and, although the initiative is with White, Black has managed to create counter chances.

13.\(\text{a}3\) \(\text{c}7\) 14.\(\text{f}4\) \(\text{b}4!\)

A good decision by Polgar. Yes, her pieces are not yet fully developed, but if she takes the time to finish her development (with ...\(\text{d}6\) and ...\(\text{b}7\)), White would become clearly better. Now a more unbalanced position arises, which is hard to evaluate.

After 14...\(\text{d}6\) 15.\(\text{d}4\) (Worse is 15.\(\text{b}1\) which gives Black time to attack e4 with 15...\(\text{b}7\). Now it would be strongly met with 16.\(\text{f}5\)) 15...\(\text{b}8\) the position is a very good (for White) version of the English Attack.

15.\(\text{xb}4\) \(\text{xb}4\) 16.\(\text{d}4\)

The most natural way to unpin.

16...\(\text{a}5\)

Forced, as after 16...\(\text{b}8\) 17.e5 Black is not happy.

17.\(\text{b}1\)

17.e5? is answered with 17...\(\text{d}5\).
17...\textbf{b}8?

Contrary to various commentators’ opinions, only this natural move is a mistake, but it also proves to be fatal. This is the high price of playing sharp Sicilians - one move can ruin hours of hard work in an instant.

The right way to continue was 17...d6!, enforcing Black’s presence in the centre. After that White’s most natural way to continue would have been:

18.g5 hxg5

Worse is 18...\textbf{c}5 19.\textbf{c}4! hxg5 20.\textbf{x}g5 (but not 20.\textbf{x}c5 \textbf{x}c5 21.\textbf{x}c5 dxc5 22.\textbf{x}g5 \textbf{b}7 and a draw is the most probable result here) 20...\textbf{b}4 21.\textbf{x}b4 \textbf{x}b4 22.f5 \textbf{e}5 23.\textbf{x}g7 \textbf{x}h2 24.\textbf{g}5 and Black is experiencing great difficulties.

19.\textbf{x}g5 \textbf{e}5!

The point of 17...d6, blocking the fifth rank.

20.\textbf{d}3 \textbf{d}7!

21.\textbf{d}d5

White has to act rapidly, as the threat of 21...\textbf{b}5 is quite unpleasant. For example, after 21.f5 Black manages to obtain sufficient counterplay: 21...\textbf{b}5 22.\textbf{x}b5 axb5 23.c3 \textbf{a}2† 24.\textbf{c}2 \textbf{a}4† with a perpetual, since attempting to play for a win with 25.\textbf{d}2? leads to the opposite result: after 25...\textbf{h}4! 26.\textbf{x}b4 \textbf{b}3† 27.\textbf{c}1 0–0 and White is not going to make it, 28.\textbf{c}3 runs into 28...\textbf{b}3 29.\textbf{b}1 \textbf{a}3! with the lethal threat: ...\textbf{a}8, while every other white move also has a tactical refutation.

21...\textbf{x}d5 22.exd5

But not 22.\textbf{x}d5? \textbf{xd}5 23.\textbf{x}d5 \textbf{c}6 with a big advantage for Black.

22...\textbf{f}f8!

This is a curious position. Black has managed to stop White’s first wave of attack, maintaining good prospects for counterplay along the b-file, while her kingside rook could join along the h-file. White, on the other hand, will be trying to open up the game in the centre and on the kingside. All in all, with both sides having many weaknesses and trumps, it is a typical Sicilian game.

18.g5 \textbf{h}5?!

This loses immediately, but Black’s position is already critical. The lesser evil was 18...\textbf{a}3, although here too, Black has little to be happy about: 19.b3 hxg5 20.\textbf{x}g5 \textbf{c}7 The point of Black’s 18th move is that now White does not have \textbf{b}5, exchanging the dark-squared bishop as in the game. However, after 21.e5! the reality is still quite sad for Black: 21...\textbf{h}7 (21...\textbf{h}5 22.\textbf{e}4 is just hopeless) 22.\textbf{h}5 \textbf{b}7 23.f5 exf5 24.e6 0–0 25.\textbf{x}d7 White is clearly better here, but the game continues.

19.gxh6!

Perhaps Polgar underestimated the strength of this move. Now White’s g-rook joins the action via the fifth rank and decides the game quickly.

19...\textbf{x}h6

Of course not 19...gxh6 20.\textbf{x}g6 or 19...\textbf{a}3 20.b3 \textbf{x}h6 21.f5 and resigns.
20.\textit{\textbf{f5}}

GAME 14

Alexander Morozevich
Peter Svidler
King's Indian, Saemisch Variation E81

1.d4 †f6 2.c4 g6 3.f3

Svidler is one of the world's leading experts in the Grünfeld, so Morozevich decides to postpone their theoretical dispute to another time.

3...†g7

It is unpleasant enough to play a line which has poor results in recent years, but it is much more frightening to enter that line, which has limited possibilities, against a clearly prepared opponent...

Of course, we are talking about 3...d5. For a long time this Grünfeld variation was considered to be good for Black, until White came up with fast attacks on the kingside. 4.cxd5 †xd5 5.e4 †b6 6.†c3 †g7 7.†e3 0-0 8.†d2

With the straightforward plan of h4-h5 and so on, exploiting that the black pieces have abandoned their king. For example:

8...e5 9.d5 c6 10.h4 h5 and here 11.g4!? cxd5 12.exd5 †d8 13.gxh5 †xf6 14.hxg6 fxg6 15.†h3!? with a strong initiative, Ivanchuk – Åkesson, Antalya 2004.

Or 8...†c6 9.0-0 f5 10.h4 fxe4 11.h5 gxh5 12.d5!? †e5 13.†h6 †f7 14.†xg7 †xg7 15.†xh5 with a powerful attack, Sakaev – Timofeev, Istanbul 2003.

4.e40-0 5.†c3 d6 6.†e3

The Saemisch variation of the King's Indian Defence. When asked his opinion of this line, Eduard Gufeld, a keen fan of the g7-bishop and KID, once answered: "Ask the knight on g1." This phrase had such an impact on the chess community that Vassily Ivanchuk, when opting for the Saemisch, made sure to first develop the knight to e2, so the latter had no complaints...

6...a6

A relatively rare move, and one that had never occurred before in Svidler's praxis. However, he can still transpose into his favourite Yugoslav variation...

7.†ge2 c6

With this move Svidler avoids Morozevich's home preparation, which most likely focussed on 7...†c6, which transposes into the Yugoslav variation: 8.†d2 †b8 9.†b1 e6 10.b4 †d7 11.g3 †b6 12.†d3 f5 13.†g2 fxe4 14.fxe4 d5 15.c5 dxe4 16.†xe4 †d5 17.†d2 e5, Bu – Svidler, Internet 2004.

Another of Svidler's games continued 9.†c1 e5 10.d5 †d4 11.†b3 †xb3 12.axb3 †h5 13.b4 f5 14.b5 axb5 15.†xb5 fxe4 16.†xe4 †f5 17.†d3 †f4 18.0-0 †d7 19.†c4 †h8 with a draw, Obodchuk – Svidler, Poikovsky 2003.

8.†d2

There is no need for this move. About 50% of the games in this line now feature this formation for White, regardless of what Black is doing.
The most promising way to target Black's rather unpretentious play is, however, 8...b5 9.cxb5 axb5 10.e4 Bd7 11.e2 e7 12.d2 b7 13.0-0 Re8 14.Nad1 Nb6 15.Nf2 Qf7 16.Bc1, and White was better in Dreev - Jobava, Moscow 2002.

8...b5

White has tested quite a few moves here, the most common being cxb5, which does not look logical - it is in Black's interests to open lines on the queenside, so why help him? Morozevich's reaction - starting his play against the king - is much more to the point.

9.h4

The eternal question in such positions is which pawn to move first? 9.g4 does not allow Black to delay White's game with ...h5, but on the other hand it might prove to be a waste of time. In the modern world time is of higher value than ever before, which might explain the fashion for starting with h2-h4.

9...h5 10.h6

Typical, although of a different opening! But the general principles stay intact: if White is to achieve anything with his attack (or future opening of the position), he must get rid of the g7-bishop.

9...e5

And this is a privilege Dragon players do not have. Without the dark-squared bishop, Black no longer needs the diagonal open and therefore starts fighting for central squares.

11.0-0-0

This logical move is a novelty. As well as evacuating the king, White is also increasing his pressure along the d-file.

A worse version of this plan happened in an encounter between two less famous players: 11.Qxg7 Bxg7 12.dxe5 dxe5 13.Qxd8 Bxd8 14.Qc1 c6 15.Nb3 Qf7 16.0-0-0 Be8 17.Qa5 Qf8 18.e2 Qe7 19.Qb1 Here too, White had an advantage, but Black's play could have been improved, Cooke - Bogdan, Harkany 2000.

11...Bd7 12.Qb1 e7 13.Qxg7 Bxg7 14.Qc1

A strong manoeuvre. The knight is heading towards a5, where it will be extremely annoying for Black, who cannot, however, prevent it as the a-pawn cannot move.

14...Bb7

Trying to fight White's plan with 14...b4 would decrease the pressure on White's centre, untying his hands. 15.Qa4 a5 16.dxe5 dxe5 17.Qb3 and combining positional threats (Qd6 followed by Qc5) with ideas of kingside attacks gives White a substantial advantage.

15.Qb3 Bc8 16.a3

Another great prophylactic move. On many occasions, after White plays g4 hxg4 fxg4 the e4-pawn might be compromised by b5-b4. Not anymore.

The immediate 16.dxe5 dxe5 17.g4 is not as dangerous as it might look. After 17...Qc5
followed by ... $\textit{c}7$, and Black is OK.

16... $\textit{c}8$

Svidler prevents the knight from reaching a5, but at a heavy price: a lost position by force! The problem with this move is that it allows the Muscovite to launch a devastating attack on the black king.

16... $\textit{f}d8$ was a much better option, protecting the knight on d7 and keeping the position more or less balanced.

17.$\textit{d}xe5$ $\textit{d}xe5$

18.$\textit{d}xc5$ $\textit{w}xc5$ 19.$\textit{g}xh5$ $\textit{d}xh5$ 20.$\textit{w}g5$ $\textit{e}7$ followed by ... $\textit{e}7$, and Black is OK.

18... $\textit{d}8$

19.$\textit{g}xh4$

Now the knight on d7 is hanging, and no less importantly, the placement of the queen on d8 is very poor.

18... $\textit{bxc}4$

After 18... $\textit{h}xg4$ White gets a very strong attack with 19.$\textit{h}5!$ $\textit{gxf}6$ 20.$\textit{h}xg6$ $\textit{fxg}6$ 21.$\textit{d}c5!$ $\textit{d}xc5$ 22.$\textit{w}h6$ 23.$\textit{d}xd8$ $\textit{d}xd8$ 24.$\textit{w}g5$ $\textit{e}8$ 25.$\textit{h}h3$! and Black’s position is falling apart.

19.$\textit{d}xc4$ $\textit{h}b6$

19... $\textit{h}xg4$ is worse. 20.$\textit{h}5!$ with a touchdown.

20.$\textit{w}5$ $\textit{c}7$

18.$\textit{g}4$!

Due to the positional threat of $\textit{d}c5$ this move allows White to win a pawn and keep his advantage, but here Morozevich missed a great opportunity to decide the game by force, as was indicated by Jacob Aagaard in Chess and Alexander Baburin in Chess Today: 21.$\textit{g}xh5$! after which Black has two main options:

a) 21... $\textit{h}xh5$? which loses to a nice sacrificial attack given by Baburin: 22.$\textit{d}c5$ $\textit{d}xc4$ (22... $\textit{b}8$ loses to 23.$\textit{x}d7!$ $\textit{w}xd7$ 24.$\textit{d}d6!$) 23.$\textit{d}d7$ $\textit{a}5$ 24.$\textit{g}g1$! and Black’s position collapses on g6.

b) 21... $\textit{h}7$? 22.$\textit{c}1$!! “A very original attacking move indeed. The point is that not only does the queen stay in touch with the dark squares on the kingside (where damage has already been inflicted), but it also assists the knights to make it to the weakened dark squares on the queenside with gain of time because of the direct threat to regain the piece. As so often before, time is
a major factor in a successful attack.” (Aagaard)

22 ... Qxc4 23 hxg6

Black now has three moves to choose from, but there is no salvation:

b1) 23...fxg6 24.Qc5 Qb6 25.Qa3a4 Qb5 26.h5! g5 27.Qd7+ Qf7 28.Qxf7+ Qxf7 29.Qxb7 and White wins back the piece as 30...Qxa4 is met by 31...Qxc4.

b2) 23.Qf6 24.Qa4 Qb6 25.Qac5 White’s attack develops very powerfully and smoothly, whereas Black’s extra piece (Qb7) can hardly be considered as any consolation.

b3) 23...Qb6 also loses virtually by force to 24.Qxh7 Qxb3 25.Qg5+ Qh8 26.Qxf6+ Qxh7 27.Qf5+ Qh8 28.Qh5+ Qg7 29.Qg1+ Qf6 30.Qg5+ Qf6 31.Qg2. Here Black has no satisfactory defence against 32.Qf4, whereas his only counterplay is one check on a3.

21...c5

Now White gets a tasty square on d5...

21...Qbd7 had a fine tactical refutation 22.Qxh5 Qxb3 23.f4! as 23...Qxf4 loses to (23...Qf6 24.Qg4) 24.Qxd7! Qxd7 25.Qxe5– curtains.

22.Qa5

...and he’s after that d5-square.

22...Qb8 23.Qxh5 Qxh5 24.Qxb7

24...f6

Instead 24...Qxb7 25.Qxa6 would just have lost a pawn for no compensation, since 25...Qbb8 26.Qb5 Qc6 27.Qd6 Qe8 28.Qc7 Qa4 29.Qg1 is hardly appealing for Black. He did have a very creative alternative, again indicated by Aagaard: 24...Qxb7?? 25.Qxe5+ f6 26.Qxc5 Qc4 27.Qb4 Qxb2 28.Qxb2 Qa7, and although after 29.Qb5 White has the upper hand, it was worth considering.

25.Qxc5! Qxc5 26.Qg1

Since he is a pawn up, Morozevich is ready to forget that he is an attacking player, and is willing to bring home the victory in an endgame.

26...Qc6 27.Qc1!

As Black has managed to cover the entry points on the d-file, Morozevich finds a great way to
arrange his pieces for both defence and attack. The c-file is his primary target now.

The greedy 27.\( \text{axa6?} \) would have made things much more complicated for White (especially before the time control) 27...\( \text{xc8} \) 28.\( \text{xc8} \) \( \text{xc8} \) (but not 28...\( \text{xc3??} \) 29.\( \text{a7}\) winning) and the extra open file only helps Black. The pawns will be decisive once the heavy pieces are exchanged, but that would then be much more difficult to achieve.

27...\( \text{b7} \) 28.\( \text{h2} \)

Bringing the rook into the game, while protecting b2 in the process.

28...\( \text{h7} \)

Removing the king from tactics along the g-file, which became possible after White’s last move.

29.\( \text{f1} \) \( \text{f4} \)

30.\( \text{hc2} \)

Both players seem to have underestimated the importance of White inserting 30.h5!.

The key idea is that 30...\( \text{hxh5} \) loses to 31.f4! \( \text{xf4} \) 32.\( \text{e2} \) when Black’s position collapses in no time: 32...\( \text{f7} \) 33.\( \text{hxh5} \) \( \text{gxh5} \) 34.\( \text{c5} \) f5 35.\( \text{c1} \) is crushing.

Also 30...\( \text{g7} \) 31.\( \text{e2} \) \( \text{g7} \) 32.\( \text{h1} \) \( \text{e6} \) 33.\( \text{hxh5} \) \( \text{g8} \) 34.\( \text{h3} \) \( \text{g5} \) 35.\( \text{xg5} \) \( \text{fxg5} \) 36.\( \text{e6} \) \( \text{f7} \) 37.\( \text{h5} \), and Black can resign.

The lesser evil would be 30...g5, but now White keeps playing the same position, only with a pawn on h5, and so Black has severely weakened his light squares.

30...\( \text{e6} \)

Svidler is trying to bring his knight to d4, thus reinforcing his counterplay on the queenside. The downside of this plan is that it seriously weakens his king. Black’s main problem, however, is that he has no good alternatives: White wants to play \( \text{g4} \), cutting the f4-knight off from the queenside, and with it ending Black’s counterplay.

Trying to fight for the c-file with 30...\( \text{xc8} \) fails to 31.h5! \( \text{hxh5} \) 32.\( \text{h3} \) \( \text{c7} \) (32...\( \text{c4} \) loses to 33.\( \text{h2} \) \( \text{xc3} \) 34.\( \text{a1} \), while 32...\( \text{d8} \) is neatly refuted by 33.\( \text{a4} \)!) 33.\( \text{f5} \) \( \text{f4} \) 34.\( \text{e2} \) \( \text{xc2} \) 35.\( \text{xc2} \) and the king is falling.

31.\( \text{d5} \)?

Morozevich finds a way to get to c7, but the enemy king magically escapes, and with it the win.

31.\( \text{g4} \) would have brought White a relatively simple victory – wherever the knight goes, it will be missed on another part of the board: 31...\( \text{d4} \) (or 31...\( \text{f4} \) 32.\( \text{b5} \) with an invasion) 32.\( \text{g2} \) \( \text{f7} \) 33.\( \text{f4} \) and Black is not going to survive much longer.

31...\( \text{xd5} \) 32.\( \text{exd5} \) \( \text{xd5} \) 33.\( \text{c4} \)

34...\( \text{d7} \)?

Time trouble, as we all know, is governed by its own laws. This move allows Morozevich a chance to get back on the right path.

Correct was 33...\( \text{d6} \)! as then White would have nothing better than 34.\( \text{a7} \) \( \text{h6} \) (but not 34...\( \text{c7} \) 35.\( \text{xa6} \) \( \text{c5} \) 36.\( \text{g8} \) \( \text{g8} \) 37.\( \text{xc5} \) \( \text{d7} \) 38.\( \text{c4} \) and White should win) 35.\( \text{xe6} \) \( \text{xe6} \) transposing to the game.
After this White’s advantage is gone. He could win with:

34...\(\text{b}4\) f5

34...\(\text{c}5\) 35...\(\text{x}d7\) 36...\(\text{x}a6\) is technically winning.

35...\(\text{x}e6\) \(\text{xe6}\)

36...\(\text{e}5\)
After 36...\(\text{e}c7\)? \(\text{f}7\) 37...\(\text{g}5\) White even loses to the simple tactical shot 37...\(\text{x}b2\)!

38...\(\text{xb}2\) \(\text{b}6\)!

36...\(\text{b}c8\) 37...\(\text{h}5\) \(\text{xc}2\) 38...\(\text{xc}2\)
White threatens 39...\(\text{x}g6\) 40...\(\text{x}g6\) \(\text{e}7\) winning the a-pawn and keeping the attack. Therefore, Black must look for counterplay with:

38...\(\text{e}4\)
After 38...\(\text{f}7\) 39...\(\text{h}2\) \(\text{g}7\) 40...\(\text{x}g6\) \(\text{x}g6\) 41...\(\text{h}4\) White wins.

39...\(\text{xe}4\) \(\text{xe}4\) 40...\(\text{x}g6\) \(\text{xe}6\) 41...\(\text{h}2\) \(\text{g}7\)

32...\(\text{e}5\) \(\text{g}6\)
Or 42...\(\text{f}6\) 43...\(\text{g}2\) \(\text{f}7\) 44...\(\text{d}5\) \(\text{e}7\)
45...\(\text{xe}4\) \(\text{xe}6\) 46...\(\text{g}7\) \(\text{f}7\) 47...\(\text{xe}6\) \(\text{xe}6\)
48...\(\text{x}f7\) terminating in a winning pawn ending

43...\(\text{h}5\) \(\text{e}3\) 44...\(\text{a}2\) \(\text{f}7\) 45.b3 \(\text{e}2\) 46...\(\text{h}2\) \(\text{e}1=\) \(\text{b}7\) \(\text{xe}1\)

The exposed position of the black king allows White to choose between a pointless attempt to mate, or a much more efficient transfer into a pawn ending.

34...\(\text{x}e6\) 35...\(\text{a}7\)
That was the idea behind 31...\(\text{d}5\). Svidler’s king is forced to go out for a walk, but autumn in Argentina is obviously less dangerous than in Russia, and he stays healthy.

35...\(\text{h}6\)
Worse is 35...\(\text{h}8\) 36...\(\text{c}7\) \(\text{f}5\) 37...\(\text{a}2\) \(\text{h}5\)
38...\(\text{e}7\) \(\text{h}6\) 39...\(\text{c}c7\) \(\text{f}7\) \(\text{f}7\) 40...\(\text{f}7\) \(\text{f}8\) 41...\(\text{i}f8\) \(\text{f}8\) 42...\(\text{a}6\), when White has a technically won position.

36...\(\text{c}7\) \(\text{h}8\)
Keeping the check for a more appropriate time.

37...\(\text{e}3\) \(\text{h}5\)
White would have paid a lot to get rid of the h-pawn now...

38...\(\text{e}c6\) \(\text{f}5\) 39...\(\text{a}1\)
With the benefit of hindsight 39...\(\text{a}2\) was stronger. But such moves, even without time trouble, can only be guessed, not calculated. The difference will be seen only much later.

39...\(\text{b}c8\) 40...\(\text{c}c8\) \(\text{xc}8\) 41...\(\text{xa}6\) \(\text{d}8\) 42...\(\text{e}2\)
Had he played 39...\(\text{a}2\), White would not have to waste a tempo on defence, and could have now played 43...\(\text{a}7\), although after 43...\(\text{d}7\) 44...\(\text{xd}7\) \(\text{f}x\text{d}7\) the position is drawish all the same.

42...\(\text{f}4\)
Black is not worse here, but Morozevich keeps playing for a win...

43...\(\text{a}7\) \(\text{h}6\)

44...\(\text{c}7\)
The easiest thing here would be to criticize the players (especially White) for their far from perfect play in the following stage of the game, but it is more relevant to try to understand the causes.

The first reason is the nature of the position: it is virtually impossible to give a clear-cut evaluation
in this position (especially with no time for deep analysis and no computer to consult). We all might feel that it should be drawish (and it is) but in reality, with pawns running on both sides and both kings in potential danger, the real question to be asked is 'how'. To Black's advantage is the fact that his king is closer to the pawns, and his pawns are further advanced than White's. This means that exchanging at least one heavy piece would, in general, improve Black's chances (of course a tactical detail could ride roughshod over the general principle), and this makes the position more favourable for him, but only slightly, as White has enough counter resources.

The second factor is psychological, and this is of much higher importance. Throughout the game White was dictating the events: he even had forced wins on a couple of occasions, but Black survived. Now it is all about precision, but as Black's morale is growing, White's is headed in the opposite direction.

White's last move was slightly off, and makes his task of drawing more difficult. He should have freed the queen from defending the first rank with 44.\( \text{b}a2 \). It turns out to be important that with the white king on a2 Black does not queen with check in some possible rook endgames, and that makes all the difference! For example: 44...\( \text{d}2 \) 45.\( \text{e}4 \) \( \text{xe}4 \) 46.\( \text{xe}4 \) and now the game ends in a draw. A sample line: 46...g5 47.hxg5 f5 48.\( \text{a}6t \) h5 49.\( \text{e}6 \) g4 50.\( \text{xe}5t \) h4 51.\( \text{e}8 \) g3 52.\( \text{e}5 \) g2 53.\( \text{g}8 \) h3 54.\( \text{e}6 \) \( \text{e}2 \) 55.\( \text{h}8t \) g3 56.\( \text{g}8 \) f2 57.\( \text{f}8t \) e1 58.\( \text{g}8 \) with a draw.

Of course, had Morozevich played 44.\( \text{a}2 \) and lost due to a check along the a2-g8 diagonal, we would have been writing about the necessity of keeping the king away from a2 in such positions...

44...\( \text{d}2 \)

Now every white pawn on the kingside falls. 45.\( \text{e}1t \)?!

Apparently forced, as the rook endings are now lost. It is a fact that in major piece endings the side that benefits from a queen exchange is usually better, as he can always improve his position by threatening to trade queens.

Now the rook ending after 45.\( \text{e}4 \) \( \text{xe}4 \) 46.\( \text{xe}4 \) f5 47.\( \text{b}4 \) is winning for Black, as he queens with check: 47...f4 48.\( \text{e}3 \) h5 49.\( \text{b}5 \) g4 50.\( \text{b}6 \) f3 51.\( \text{b}7 \) (51.\( \text{c}6 \) f2 52.\( \text{f}6 \) d1\( \text{t} \) 53.\( \text{b}2 \) f1=\( \text{g} \) 54.\( \text{x}f1 \) f1 55.\( \text{a}4 \) f8 56.\( \text{a}5 \) b8 and Black wins) 51...d8 52.\( \text{c}8 \) f2 53.\( \text{x}d8 \) f1=\( \text{g} \) 54.\( \text{a}2 \) f7\( \text{t} \) winning. With White's king on a2 it would all have been different.

However, White had a pretty way to draw: 45.\( \text{f}1t \) e4 (or 45...\( \text{xh}4 \) 46.\( \text{c}1 \) \( \text{f}4 \) 47.\( \text{c}8 \) and Black cannot prevent \( \text{h}1-g2 \) with a perpetual check) 46.\( \text{c}6 \) e5 (46...\( \text{x}f3 \) ?? even loses to 47.\( \text{g}8 \) 47.\( \text{h}7t \) \( \text{x}h7 \) 48.\( \text{f}7t \) with a draw. 45...\( \text{d}3 \)

Now Black's position is objectively winning (although by no means simply): with the inevitable fall of White's f-pawn, Black's e-passer will be the farthest advanced on the board and will also be much faster than White's pawns, since pushing it does not expose his king. White's chances here rely on his ability to create counterplay against the enemy king.

46.\( \text{a}2 \) \( \text{x}f3 \) 47.\( \text{c}1t \) h5

The king's wondrous trip continues.

48.\( \text{a}4 \)

A little more stubborn would have been 48.\( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{d}4 \) 49.\( \text{h}7t \) g4 50.\( \text{e}6t \) f5 51.\( \text{b}3 \), keeping the tension around the black king. However, after 51...e4 52.\( \text{e}7 \) \( \text{d}3 \) 53.\( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{f}3 \) Black has clearly outmanoeuvred his opponent in the endgame – since we entered it, he has managed to win White's f3-pawn, and advance his own to e4, whereas White has made no progress whatsoever.

48...\( \text{d}5t \)!

Now the black queen controls the whole board, and the win is rather trivial. 49.\( \text{c}4 \)

After 49.\( \text{c}4 \) the pawn race is short: 49...\( \text{xc}4t \) 50.\( \text{xc}4 \) f5 51.a5 f4 52.a6 f3 53.a7 \( \text{d}8 \) and White resigns.

49...e4

The rest is clear.

50.\( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{d}2t \) 51.\( \text{a}3 \) \( \text{d}6t \) 52.\( \text{c}5t \) f5 53.\( \text{g}1 \) \( \text{hx}4 \) 54.\( \text{a}5 \) \( \text{e}2 \) 55.\( \text{b}4 \) \( \text{d}3t \) 0–1
GAME 15
Rustam Kasimdzhanov
Viswanathan Anand
Sicilian, English Attack B90

A game that will (or in fact already has) become Kasimdzhanov’s visiting card among the Elite.

1.e4 c5 2.d3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.dxd4 e6 5.c3 a6 6.b3

After a painful loss in the previous round (Game 12) Kasimdzhanov repeats the same line, but since he is playing the other side, his intentions are different as well.

6...e4

Who if not Anand would play this! The line is called “the Kasparov Dragon”, but we should not forget that the main lines were developed in games between Kasparov and Anand. Although Kasparov was the one defending the Black side, Anand deserves a good share of the creative credit. Before this tournament, Black was not having any problems in this line. Jumping ahead - this will change by the end of the event.

It could also be interesting to see Kasimdzhanov’s reaction to 6...e6. Would it be 7.g4 as well?

7.b5

After 7.d4 many games end in a draw by repetition: 7...e6 8.b3 g4 and indeed, how can Black prevent it, if he is only familiar with 6...g4 after 6.b3?

7.h6 8.h4 g5 9.e3 g7

A well-known position which has passed its peak of popularity, perhaps thanks to the English Attack’s takeover? In order to avoid this variation White frequently starts with f3.

Black has committed himself with quite a few weaknesses, but as compensation he has more active pieces. Besides, using these weaknesses to start an attack is part of his master plan! White, on the other hand, is interested in a more quiet game, trying to neutralize Black’s activity, and then he will have very good chances, playing against those weaknesses. In general, both parties’ trump seem to balance out, as we learnt from the Anand – Kasparov games.

10.h3

Once upon a time the main line used to be 10.e2, but it allowed Black to seize the initiative on the kingside by attacking the bishop on g3: 10...h5, and although not everything is crystal clear there, the line lost its popularity. We will say more about this in Morozevich – Polgar (Game 45).

10...e5 11.e5

Kasimdzhanov chooses to exchange the bishop on c8, which further compromises the light squares in his opponent’s camp. It is a well-known logical plan.

The calm 11.e2, intending d4-b3 and e3-d5, has also been tested. Nowadays, however, the main alternative to the text is 11.f3 as featured in Svidler – Polgar (Game 25).

11...xf5 12.exf5 bc6 13.d5

Here too, the plan is about placing the knight on d5, although it can easily be driven away with ...e6. The debates will begin later.

13...e6

The knight can be forced back, or instead exchanged: 13...d7 14.c3 d6 15.exf6+ xf6 16.d3 e5 17.e4 Black does not seem to have counterplay, but he also does not have many weaknesses, Yeo Min Yang – Wynn Zaw Htun, Bangkok 2004.

14.fx e6 fxe6 15.e3 0–0

15.a5+ will be played in the very next round (Game 19), so we will postpone our discussion about it till then.

16.e2
Kasimdzhanov wants to manage without c3, which will come only later. Moreover, c3 might run into d6-d5-d4 (at some point), opening lines, which suits Black, who is looking for active play at virtually any cost. For instance: 16.c3 d5 17.ae2 ag6 18.0-0 df4 19.af4 ef7 20.fe1 de5 21.ae2 ad8 22.ag4 ac6 23.ef1 ef7 and White is not going to be better, Cheparinov – Sakaev, Internet blitz 2003.

16...ae7

Preparing to protect the d-pawn, thus freeing the e5-knight to find a better future. However, when Black is finished preparing, he’s in for a surprise...

Following the current game, one might safely expect 16...d5 to come back into fashion. The point is that the natural 17.c4?! does not work here, because of 17...wa5† and White will be unable to castle.

Also 17.ah5 with game-like ideas is problematic: 17...wa5† 18.c3? (it is better to give up castling) 18...d4! and White is falling to pieces.

For this reason, top players choose 17.0-0 which, however, allows Black to carry out the long awaited 17...ag6 and the knight gets to f4 after all. Whereas an attempt to exploit d5 led after 18.c4 d4 19.cxd5 exd5 20.ag4 df4 to an acceptable position for Black in Shirov – Gelfand, Monte Carlo 2000. Therefore, we shall expect interesting developments here.

17.0-0 ad8

The knight is free to join the party...

18.ah5!

But there is no party. This simple and effective idea takes a big part of the sting out of Black’s position. As the author of the idea himself admitted later, he had a decent amount of suffering with the white pieces here, trying virtually everything, but was unable to stop Black’s initiative. And then he discovered that the key to all his troubles is a black knight coming to f4 (via g6). If you cannot cure it, you find a vaccine. This idea seriously threatens the whole line!

Weaker was 18.c4 for the same reasons: after 18...ag6 the knight gets exactly where it wants to be. 19.ad2 df4 20.ab1 ef7 and only White is in danger, Dolmatov – Sakaev, Moscow 2003.

18...wb8?!

A neutral move that does not help Black to organize counterplay, which was justly criticized – some important options have been denied to Black, and so he should find alternatives as fast as he can.

One of the greatest experts in this line, Sakaev, who was the first to mention 18.ah5, suggested 18...d5 immediately. The point is that after 19.e1 Black has time for 19...b5 intending to play on the queenside (placing the knight on c4).

Now 20.c3 is running into the typical 20...d4 and Black is by no means worse. It seems, however, that after 20.a4?! White nevertheless has the advantage. For example:

a) 20...b4 21.ue2 a5 22.ed1 with solid play against Black’s weaknesses. For instance: 22...uh8 23.ag4 dxg4 24.dxg4 ad4 25.ed3 with a tangible advantage.

b) 20...d4 is also not good: 21.ag4 cc4 22.ed3 and Black’s numerous weak points fall one by one, while 22...dxb2? does not work here because of 23.wxg6! and the king will fall even before the pawns.

c) The best is 20...cc4 but after 21.axb5 axb5 White is certainly better. Take this line, for example: 22.ag4? ce5 23.xc4 g3 24.fg3 dxc4 25.wc2 Even more than weaknesses, the difference in king positions influences the evaluation in White’s favour.
19.\textit{\textit{e1 d5}}

Black is trying to carry out the only plan he has left – to put a knight on c4 and pressurize White’s queenside.

![Chessboard Diagram]

But after

20.\textit{a4!}

he is deprived of that too – without ...\textit{b5} there is no ...\textit{\textit{c4}}. Amazingly, one of the greatest players in the world is left without any play.

20.\textit{\textit{c4?}}

And what is even more striking is that Anand lost his usual coolness. White’s Karpov-like moves apparently unbalanced Anand. Black assists his opponent to find greater harmony, and creates another weakness for himself. And exchanges the key piece that once had a dream of going to \textit{f4}...

Shipov suggested 20...\textit{\textit{d7}} as the only way to continue fighting. Sakaev continued with 21.\textit{c4} \textit{\textit{f6}} 22.\textit{\textit{cxd5 e4}} and at first the position does indeed look unclear.

However, White has a very strong initiative:

22.\textit{\textit{f5! e5}}

After 22...\textit{\textit{d7}} 23.\textit{\textit{exg7 xg7}} 24.\textit{\textit{f3}} Black is helpless against such strong bishops. Now White wins by force (even though it is complicated):

23.\textit{\textit{fxg7 xg7}} 24.\textit{\textit{exe6 dxe4}} 25.\textit{\textit{c2! d3}}
26...d6! Bxd6
26...f5 27.Bxf8+ gxf8 28.Bxc4 Qxh5 29.g4 and wins.
27.g6+ h8 28.Bxd6 Bxd6 29.Bxh6+ g8
30.Bxg5+ h7 31.Bg6+ h8 32.Bh6+ g8
33.Ba3!
A triumphant and decisive entrance.

A better suggestion was given by Kasimdzhanov himself: 20...f6, insisting on transferring the knight to f4 after all. Black does not lose, but his position is still difficult, without any counterplay. For example, after 21.Ba3!? Bc4 22.Bb3 he has to face plenty of problems, since bad is 22...Bc4 23.Ba5 24.Bb6 Bbc4 25.Bxf6 Bxf6 26.Bxc4 Bxc4 27.Bxb7 picking up the weaknesses.

21.Bxc4 Bxc4 22.Bg4

White has much more than just an advantage. Black has nothing to offer against White's play on weaknesses and king.

22...Bb4

Admitting the mistake. Perhaps Anand was counting on 22...Bd4 and only now saw that 23.c3! is disastrous for him, as 23...Bc2 loses to 24.Bxe6 Bxe6 (otherwise he's just a pawn down) 25.Bxa1 26.c3 winning.

25.Bxa1 Bxa1 26.c3 winning) 25.Be4! Bd4
26.Bg6 Bxa4 27.Bad1 with full control, nor

24.Bad1
Anand's main problem is not just his bad position (it is not his first time in a worse position), but the fact that White's game is very easy. All he has to do is bring his pieces in, and find the final blow.

24...Bd4
Bad is 24...Bxc2 25.Bf3! and a glance at the position is enough to understand it. As the saying goes: "A picture is worth a thousand words." This is the second time in three rounds that Anand has suffered against two strong bishops.

But also 24...Bxd1 25.Bxd1 Bxa4 is not the answer after the picturesque 26.Bg6! with a very enjoyable position. For White that is.

25.Be4!

The whole game is about centralization. Kasimdzhanov is performing according to Anatoly Karpov's legacy.

25...Bf5 26.Be5

Kasimdzhanov spent precious minutes finding this precise move. The clock now turned this otherwise one-sided game into a drama. Will Anand manage to get off the hook in his opponent's time trouble?

26.Bxf2
What should White do now? Suddenly the “losing” opponent has threats, sacrificing rooks that cannot be taken (27.\(\text{xf2? e5}\)). And the irritating clock does not stop...

27.\(\text{f3!}\)

Kasimdzhanov finds the best answer, which he had obviously seen in advance. But it is not over yet, as he still has to play accurately. Anand understands this, and answers immediately

27...\(\text{d2}\)

leaving the opponent to boil in time pressure, as opposed to 27...\(\text{b6 a5! a7}\) (28...\(\text{c5}\) 29.\(\text{d5}\) 29.\(\text{h1}\).

There was a lot of criticism of Anand for his decisions in this game, namely: Why, when in a very bad position, did he play so many moves so quickly? We feel obliged to support this great player. It is important to remember that Anand is who he is, and this rapid-fire style helped bring him to his exalted position. We find it strange that on the many occasions when his style brings him success, there are no opinions about him playing too fast, but if sometimes it fails him, everybody talks about his fast play.

A common opinion is that Anand’s natural predecessor was the great Jose Raul Capablanca. In this case it is worth noticing that when in bad positions and when his opponents were in time trouble, the third World Champion had a habit of waiting until there were only a couple of minutes left on his clock and then start blitzing (which was known to be one of his greatest specialities). As a result, he would often at least draw these positions. Anand plays according to his great predecessor. We think that in this game’s desperate situation it might be the best way.

28.\(\text{xg7}\) 29.\(\text{e5}\)

So far so good. There is nothing more pleasant than a check in such situations, but there are still 11 moves to be played.

29...\(\text{f6}\)

Absolutely the only move. The others lose immediately: 29...\(\text{g6}\) 30.\(\text{g4!}\) or 29...\(\text{g8}\) 30.\(\text{xd2 xd2}\) 31.\(\text{d5 h7}\) 32.\(\text{f1}\).
Here the reactions were mixed: Kasimdzhanov stated that he was proud of this move, sensing that his position was worth more than just a winning endgame. But it is hard to agree with this— if he has not seen the win here, how would he find it next move? The truth is that Anand helped him, but what if he had not? He would not even have an extra pawn then.

Right now taking the ending was relatively best: 30.Bxd2 Qxd2 31.Bxb7 with an extra pawn, and a technically winning position.

In any case, Anand replied immediately:

30...Qh4?

Forcing White to search for a win now! There are two different approaches in such situations: one is to challenge the opponent to find a relatively complicated line that wins on the spot, and the other is to hold the position, but allow simpler continuations. There are 10 moves to be made until the time control, and in retrospect, it was better to let White look for a nonexistent forced win after 30...b5! As we said before 30.a5, there is no clear win for White here (which is not trivial to understand during the game—what if you simply do not see it?). Before he could take a pawn, now he cannot. His position is still seriously better, but the win is not guaranteed.

31.c3 Qd6 (31...Qxb2 32.Qd5! Qxd1 33.Bxd1 Qa3 34.Qxe6 and the king is helpless) 32.Bxd2 Qxd2 33.Bd1 Qe5t 34.Qxe3 Qxe3 35.Bd7+ Qf8 36.Qb7 Following the rook’s arrival on b6 Black will either have to exchange the rooks, or give up a pawn, which leads to the same result. However, note that we are only on move 36, meaning that Kasimdzhanov would still be hearing ticking, with a position that is not entirely clear.

31.Qc7t

And now the drama reaches its peak. With little time left on the clock, even the spectators on the internet could sense White talking himself into finding the win. In the meantime he gives two checks to bring the time control closer.

31.Qf7 32.Qe5+ Qf6

Forced. 32...Qh7 is losing too: 33.Qe4+ Qg8 (33...Qg6 34.Qe6) 34.Qxd2 (another Fritz-like win is 34.g3—no comment!) 34...Qxd2 35.Qd5 Qf2+ 36.Qh1 and it is over.

Black has no choice. Now it looked like there would be a repetition: there were seconds left on White’s clock, but he found...

33.Qh5!

For the second time in the game, 33.Qh5 gives White a serious boost. This time it is a win.

33...Qg6

There is no escape. 33...Qxg2t is agony after 34.Qh1 Qd2 35.Bxd2 Qxd2 36.Qc7t followed by Qe8 mate.

34.Qxg6

Simple and strong. To deliver mate one does not need more than a rook and a queen.

34...Bxd1

34...Qxg6 loses nicely: 35.Qe8t Qf7 36.Qg8t Qf6 37.Qf1t and that’s it.

35.Bxd1 Qxg6 36.Qe4t

“More precise” was 36.Qe8t with mate in 11 (guess who told us). The rest could have been spared, if not for White’s time trouble.

36...Qg7

36...Qf5 37.Qe6t Qf6 38.Qe8t Qf7 39.Qg8t Qf6 40.Qf1t

37.Bd7t Qg8 38.Qh7t

Mating on the next move.

1-0
GAME 16
Veselin Topalov
Michael Adams
Symmetrical English A30

1. d3 d6 2.c4 e6 3.d4
3.d4 would have transposed to a normal Queen's Indian.
3...c5 4.g3 b6
This move usually spells agreement to play the so-called Hedgehog structure. This may be the English species of the Hedgehog.
5.g2 g7 6.0-0 e7 7.e1 e4
Hedgehog devotees tend to prefer 7...d6
8.e4 d6 9.dxe4 cxd4 10.0xd4 b8 11.b3 a6
12.b2 0-0 13.h3 c7 14.d2 c5 15.bad1, although we believe that this is a good version for White, as he has managed to keep his knight on d4 without exchanging the important g2-bishop. But one can also say it is a matter of taste.
8.d4
White could nevertheless force a Hedgehog with 8.0xe4 Lxe4 9.d3 b7 10.e4. The difference is that Black has already managed to exchange one pair of knights, which favours him: 10...0-0
8...Lxc3 9.bxc3 e4

10Lf1
A typical manoeuvre: the bishop retreat allows Df3-d2 followed by e2-e4. This usually draws an automatic 10...Lxf3...
10...d6
A novelty by Adams, and a very logical one! He simply ignores White's plan, claiming that keeping the bishop is more important than preventing White from gaining control of the centre.
10...Lxf3 occurred on every previous occasion.
One example: 11.exf3 Lc6 12.d5 Lxd5 13.f4
0-0 14.h4 Lf6 15.Lxd2 Be8 16.g4 g6 17.Lf3
g7 18.h5 Typically for these positions, White's structural drawbacks (c3, c4) are well compensated by his kingside initiative, Bu-Anastasian, Tripoli (1.2) 2004.
11.h4
This is a multi-purpose move. For one, White wants to place his bishop on h3, and makes the bishop's future place of residence more comfortable. Another idea of the move is to support Lg5. However, this proves Adams' novelty is a good one - if one wants to move a bishop from g2 to h3, why do so via f1? It seems that 10.Lf1 will have to be spared in the future, since if White continues his line with 11.Ld2 then after 11...Lb7 12.e4 0-0 his spatial advantage is balanced by Black's good prospects for counterplay along the c-file, combined with pressure on d4.
11.Ld7 12.d5
More than anything else, White’s last two moves look like an attempt to liven up the position, and take the opponent out of his home preparation. The problem is that Black has a lead in development in general, and a greater presence in the centre in particular.

After 11.h4 White did not have much of a choice as 12.Qd2 Qb7 13.e4 0–0 is already less efficient – Black will be able to exploit the weakened kingside to create dangerous counterplay.

12...0–0

12...Qf6 is too early with the king still in the centre, as after 13.dxe6 fxe6 White can exploit the advantages of his 11th move: 14.Qg5 Qxc3 15.Qxe4 Qxa1 16.Qxd6† Qb8. This is not an advisable position to play against Topalov, especially since the memories of him torturing Anand (Game 7) in a similar position were still fresh.

At the same time, the immediate 12...exd5 13.cxd5 Qf6 would allow White to finally find a good place for his knight: 14.Qg5! Qg6 (14...Qxc3 15.Qxe4 Qxa1 16.Qxd6† Qf8 17.e4 is still too dangerous for Black) 15.Qd2 h6 16.Qh3, transferring the knight to f4, with a slight advantage for White.

13.a4

Black is better after 13.dxe6 fxe6 14.Qh3 Qf5.

13...h6 14.Qh3 exd5 15.cxd5 Qf6

Topalov’s play in the first part of the game has been far from impressive, and Black has the initiative. He does, however, have to play carefully, and not allow White to consolidate.

16.Qa3 b5

An original idea by Adams, which was greatly appreciated by many commentators, but the objective value of the move is questionable. True, after this he gets a very good square for his knight (b6-c4) and takes a temporary initiative on the queenside, but the drawbacks are just as evident: the rook on a3 gets a chance to rejoin the game, a7 becomes weak and Black is giving up on his queenside pawn majority. All in all, the drawbacks outweigh the plusses.

Adams himself (in Chess Informant 94) preferred 16...Qe5 providing the following line:

17.Qxe5 Qxe5 18.c4 Qf6 19.Qg2 Qg6 with a slight advantage for Black.

More interesting seems 16...c4, which is usually not even considered, as it weakens the d4-square. However, it prevents the white rook from entering the game, isolates d5, and will be useful once the queenside pawns start running.

17.Qd4

The attempt to attack the pawn immediately with 17.Qd2 gives Black a symbolic advantage after 17...Qxd5 18.e4 Qc6 19.Qxc4 Qe5 20.Qxe5 dxe5, thanks to White’s more compromised pawn structure.

17...Qxd5

Worse is 17...Qc5 18.Qc6 Qc7 19.f3 Qg6 20.Qc3 as 20...Qb3 is brutally met by 21.Qxb3! cxb3 22.Qxb3 and Black runs a serious risk of suffocating to death.

18.Qb5 Qe6 19.Qxe6

After 19.Qg2 d5 20.Qxd5 Qxd5 21.Qxd5 Qe5 22.Qxd8 Qfxd8 Black has the better pieces, he controls the d-file, and is ready to start pushing his queenside pawns – therefore, he is better.

19...fxe6 20.Qxd6 Qc5.

The white pieces are poorly coordinated, whereas each of Black’s is very well placed. The problem is the white queen on d6 – White manages to finish his development while Black takes care of it.

21.Qe3 Qc7 22.Qxd8 Qfxd8 23.Qa1 Qe4

We will not bore you with long and irrelevant lines, but although Black is slightly better, the game is closest to a draw.

These lines clearly show that Black had the better of it from the opening, but the urge to
carry out such an aesthetic idea as ...b5 and ...
\( \boxtimes b6 \) effectively transferred the initiative to the
opponent.

17.axb5 \( \boxtimes b6 \) 18.c4!

All the white pieces are back in the game, he
gets rid of the weakness on c3 and it is already
Black who should be careful; after all, White has
a spatial advantage.

18...\( \\boxtimes x f 3 \)!

After this White is better, as Black has
inadequate compensation for the absence of his
light-squared bishop.

18...\( \boxtimes x c 4 \) was the closest to equality Black
could get. 19.\( \boxplus a 4 \) \( \boxtimes x f 3 \)!

Now we can consider two captures:
a) 20.exf3 \( \boxtimes b 2 \) 21.\( \boxtimes x b 2 \) \( \boxtimes x b 2 \) 22.\( \boxplus c 2 \)
Cheparinov, in his analysis for New In Chess,
evaluates this position as too passive for Black.
However, after:
22...\( \boxtimes d 4 \)
intending 23...\( \boxplus e 8 \) with full equality, it is not so
simple. To prevent it, White must enter a long
forced line:
23.\( \boxplus e 4 \) \( \boxplus e 8 \) 24.\( \boxplus x e 8 \)\( \uparrow \) \( \boxplus x e 8 \) 25.\( \boxplus x e 8 \)\( \uparrow \) \( \boxplus e 8 \)
26.\( \boxplus a 7 \) c4 27.\( \boxplus a 4 \)
27.\( \boxplus c 7 \) \( \boxplus e 1 \)\( \uparrow \) 28.\( \boxplus f 1 \) c3 29.b6 \( \boxtimes x b 6 \)
30. \texttt{\textbf{B}}\texttt{xc3} \texttt{\textbf{B}}\texttt{c5} is a dead draw.

27. \texttt{Be1} ² 28. \texttt{Sh2}

28. \texttt{Af1} c3 29. \texttt{Bg2} \texttt{A}d1 and the draw is inevitable, whereas 28. \texttt{Bg2} is met with 28...\texttt{Be2}. Here, the simplest way to make a draw is:

28...\texttt{Bc1} 29. \texttt{Af5} g6 30. \texttt{B}d3! \texttt{Bc3}! 31. \texttt{Be2}

31. \texttt{Bxf2}

Since the bishop endings are drawn (Black will simply place his bishop on \texttt{b6}) White cannot make progress. For example:

32. \texttt{B}g2 \texttt{Bc5} 33. \texttt{B}xe4 \texttt{Bc2}! 34. \texttt{B}h3 \texttt{B}g7

And if anything, White can only claim a psychological advantage.

b) 20. \texttt{B}xc4 strikes us as White’s best shot to fight for an advantage, although after 20...\texttt{B}h5 there are mutual chances, whereas an attempt to shut the h5-bishop in a cage can only put White in danger:

21. g4! \texttt{Bg6} 22. h5 \texttt{Ah7} 23. e4 \texttt{Bb8} 24. \texttt{Wa4} \texttt{Cd7}

(24...\texttt{B}e5 is also worth consideration) 25. \texttt{B}g2 \texttt{Wxb5} 26. \texttt{Wxb5} \texttt{Bxb5} 27. \texttt{B}f4 \texttt{Bb4} 28. \texttt{Bxb4} \texttt{cx}b4

The black passers are much more dangerous.

19. \texttt{B}xf3 \texttt{B}xc4

From this point on Topalov starts playing just amazingly – every move is a great example of his perfect technique.

20. \texttt{Wa4}

Preventing the black queen from entering the game via \texttt{a}5.

20...\texttt{Be5} 21. \texttt{A}a3
Although Adams has beautiful looking pieces in the centre, they are not doing much. The c5-pawn is also potentially very strong, but without having access to c8 Black cannot benefit from it.

White, on the other hand, is planning to use his spatial advantage and keep the fight open on both flanks. White is better.

21...g8?!

Allowing Topalov to block the kingside pawns and with it gain total control over the light squares around the black king.

With hindsight, 21...h5 was necessary, preventing White from developing an attack against the king. However, after 22.f4 White would still be better as Black’s position, although very solid, is just as passive.

The most interesting question is how could the British Grandmaster allow this situation to arise, as all of it was obviously evident to him. The reasons are strictly psychological, as is usually the case at the highest levels. After the mistake on move 16, Black’s position has been deteriorating and White suddenly began building up threats against a7. As a reaction, Adams is eager to offer the pawn extra protection (by means of e8-e7), free up his rook from a8, and then start attacking b5. For this reason his last move is also valuable, as after e8-e7 the queen could be placed on e8, eyeing both b5 and e2. It seems to us that he simply underestimated the speed with which White’s threats on the light squares would become serious (also noteworthy is the fact that the issue of the light squares became relevant only three moves ago).

There will be no more chances to play ...h5 today. Now Black will have a constant headache along the b1–h7 diagonal.

22.h5!

Finally the bishop reaches its natural diagonal and things start looking better for White. This is another case of Topalov’s favourite theme – total centralization.

24...e8!
Black has fulfilled his plan, but in the meantime White has created real threats on the kingside.

The attempt to exchange the dark-squared bishops with 24...\textit{g}5 is beautifully refuted by:

25.\textit{b}1!

Adams, in \textit{Chess Informant}, only considers 25.\textit{x}e5 which allows Black to recapture with a rook. He provided the following line: 25...\textit{xe}5 26.\textit{d}3 \textit{d}2 27.\textit{e}a1 \textit{b}4 28.\textit{c}a2 \textit{b}7 29.e3 \textit{f}8 30.\textit{d}1 \textit{d}7 31.\textit{f}3 \textit{c}3 32.\textit{c}1 \textit{b}4 with a slight advantage for White.

25...\textit{d}7?

Now 25...\textit{x}f4 fails to 26.\textit{c}2! \textit{f}8 27.\textit{g}xf4 \textit{g}4 28.\textit{h}7 and heavy material losses are imminent.

26.\textit{x}e5 \textit{xe}5 27.\textit{e}4 \textit{f}5 28.\textit{xf}5 \textit{xf}5 29.\textit{xf}5 \textit{xb}5 30.\textit{d}6 \textit{eb}7 31.\textit{d}1

Black's numerous weaknesses give White very good winning chances.

25.\textit{c}2

Another option was 25.\textit{b}1. Then:

Natural looks 25...\textit{eb}7; the rook will be missed on \textit{e}7 and the plan with \textit{c}2-\textit{e}4 will be much more powerful. For example, after 26.\textit{c}2 \textit{c}4 (or 26...\textit{xb}5? 27.\textit{xb}5 \textit{xb}5 28.\textit{e}4 \textit{g}6 29.\textit{hxg}6 \textit{fxg}6 30.\textit{xa}7 with a crushing attack) 27.\textit{x}e5 \textit{xe}5 28.\textit{xc}4 \textit{xb}5 29.\textit{e}6 \textit{e}5 30.\textit{g}2!

Black's position is anything but pleasant.

However, Topalov was probably worried about 25...\textit{g}5! as on its own the light-squared bishop will be much less effective: 26.\textit{xe}5 (after 26.\textit{g}x5 \textit{hxg}5 27.\textit{c}2 \textit{d}7! the knight is heading to \textit{f}6, sealing the kingside and pressuring \textit{d}5 and \textit{h}5) 26...\textit{xe}5 27.\textit{e}4 \textit{e}7 Superficially, Black's position might look passive, but he has a clear plan, which is now impossible to stop: simply increase the pressure on \textit{b}5, which will lead to exchange of the \textit{a}- and \textit{b}-pawns, exchanging heavy pieces in the process, and so reaching a sure draw.

25...\textit{d}7?

A crucial moment. Apart from the text move, Black had two options to capture the pawn, but was not satisfied with the consequences:

a) 25...\textit{xb}5

This does not bring any good news.

26.\textit{e}4 26...g6

26...\textit{f}8 27.\textit{b}1 \textit{e}8 28.\textit{xb}8 \textit{xb}8 29.\textit{h}7 is good for White. e.g. 29...\textit{e}8 30.\textit{a}4 \textit{d}8 31.\textit{b}3 \textit{c}8 32.\textit{xe}5! \textit{xe}5 33.\textit{c}6 The rook enters \textit{b}7, and "The Adventures of the King" are about to end.

27.\textit{hxg}6 \textit{d}x\textit{g}6 28.\textit{f}5

Black's kingside is falling apart.

b) 25...\textit{xb}5!

This would have led to a very interesting position.

26.\textit{e}4 g6

White's best shot here is going into an opposite-coloured bishops position with:

27.\textit{xe}5

27.\textit{hxh}6 is bad due to 27...\textit{b}4!, putting an end to all White's plans on the kingside.

27...\textit{xe}5

Or 27...\textit{b}4 (After 27...\textit{xe}5 28.\textit{f}3 White regains the pawn, and an attack on the enemy king with opposite-coloured bishops gives him very good prospects of a win.) 28.\textit{h}1! \textit{xe}5 29.\textit{hxg}6 \textit{fxg}6 30.\textit{xb}6 \textit{e}5 31.\textit{d}2, threatening to double rooks along the \textit{b}-file: 31...\textit{b}7 32.\textit{g}2! Black has too many lines to cover, and not enough rooks to do it.

28.\textit{hxg}6

Transposing into the 27.\textit{hxg}6 line.

28...\textit{fxg}6

Adams gives another try here to play for a win:

29.\textit{h}4 \textit{g}7! 30.\textit{a}4 a6

Here he stops, evaluating the position as unclear. Analysis shows that Black has sufficient compensation for the exchange. Sufficient for a draw that is.

All this is, of course, difficult to figure out during
the game. Adams probably decided not to give his opponent extra tactical possibilities connected with a pin along the a4-e8 diagonal and wanted his queen to observe the opponent's kingside.

26...\textit{We}4 \textit{Q}g6 27.\textit{W}d3

27...\textit{c}4

Perhaps this is a mistake (at least both Adams and Topalov tend to think so), but Black can hardly be criticized for trying to find some life, because 27...\textit{Q}f8 28.\textit{W}xf5 (Adams) 28...\textit{Ex}b5 29.\textit{Ex}d7 \textit{Ex}d7 30.\textit{Q}f5 \textit{E}d8 31.\textit{Ex}a7 \textit{Q}g5 32.\textit{Ex}g5 \textit{hx}g5 33.\textit{Q}h1 is equally depressing for Black, as he cannot untangle. The following line illustrates the problems: 33...\textit{c}4 (worse is 33...\textit{g}6 34.\textit{hx}g6 \textit{Q}g6 35.\textit{B}c7 \textit{Q}g7 36.\textit{B}a7 with a technically winning position) 34.\textit{e}4 \textit{Q}c5 35.\textit{B}a6! \textit{g}6 36.\textit{hx}g6 \textit{Q}g6 37.\textit{B}xg6 \textit{fx}g6 38.\textit{B}c1! \textit{Q}f7 39.\textit{B}c6 Black has to part with either the d6- or c4-pawns, after which the position is technically won for White as soon as his king comes closer to the centre.

28.\textit{Ex}c4 \textit{Q}xf4 29.\textit{Ex}f4 \textit{Q}e5

Black returns the pawn, but his king is the real problem here.

30.\textit{Q}f3

Defending h5, and bringing the queen back to d3.

30...\textit{Q}h3

This is probably what Adams was counting on when playing his 25\textsuperscript{th} move, but it fails to save Black, as there are no real threats against White's king.

The attempt to prevent \textit{Q}d3 with 30...\textit{Ex}b5 loses to 31.\textit{Ex}b1 \textit{Q}e8 (31...\textit{Ex}b1 32.\textit{Ex}b1 \textit{Ex}b1 33.\textit{B}g2 \textit{Q}e7 34.\textit{Q}a6 \textit{Q}e5 35.\textit{Q}f5, and Black's "fortress" is broken down easily due to the weakness of his d6-pawn) 32.\textit{Q}d3 \textit{Ex}b1 33.\textit{Q}xb1 \textit{g}6 (33...\textit{Q}f8 34.\textit{Q}h7 \textit{Q}d7 35.\textit{Q}f8 36.\textit{Q}a8 \textit{Q}d8 37.\textit{Ex}a7f \textit{Q}f8 38.\textit{Q}Qc6 also cannot be recommended) 34.\textit{Q}xg6 \textit{fx}g6 35.e3! and White wins.

31.\textit{Ex}a7 \textit{Ex}h5 32.e3

It is now White who has an extra pawn, while Black's counterplay is limited to a few meaningless checks. It is all over.

32...\textit{Q}h2f 33.\textit{Q}f1f \textit{Q}h3f

33...\textit{Q}h1f 34.\textit{Q}xh1f \textit{Q}xh1f 35.\textit{Q}e2 \textit{Q}xelf 36.\textit{Q}xel Black has no counterplay and too many headaches, the main one being White's passed b-pawn... Hopeless.

34.\textit{Q}e2

After this, the black pieces on the kingside look somewhat irrelevant.

34...\textit{Q}e5 35.\textit{Q}c7f!

Precision until the end. This cuts off the queen.

35...\textit{Q}c8

A blunder in a lost position. More stubborn was 35...\textit{Q}h5 but the loss is still inevitable after 36.\textit{Ex}h5 \textit{Ex}h5 37.\textit{B}b1 \textit{Ex}d5 38.b6 \textit{Q}c5 39.\textit{Ex}c5 \textit{dxc}5 40.\textit{Q}d3 \textit{Q}f8 41.\textit{Q}c4 \textit{Q}e7 42.\textit{Q}c4 \textit{Q}d6 43.\textit{B}g2 (43.\textit{Q}d1f \textit{Q}e5) 43...\textit{Q}e7 44.\textit{Q}b5.

36.\textit{Q}f5 \textit{Ex}f5 37.\textit{Ex}c8f \textit{Q}h7 38.\textit{Q}h1

1-0
This round can safely be labelled as the most significant one in the entire event. In addition to the sporting consequences, which will be discussed later, four extremely hard-fought battles took place.

Undoubtedly, the most notable encounter of the round was between the two leaders. Svidler perhaps had the better chances going into the round — he was White, and many shared the opinion that Topalov surely couldn’t keep winning forever. He could, as it turned out, and in his favourite style — a hard fight.

As early as in the opening both players began setting traps, and both had to step carefully through the minefield. The Russian’s clever and tricky move order was, beyond any doubt, a trigger for his mine. The Bulgarian was doing exactly the same, having prepared a variation analysed by his team in great detail for this very game. The question was whose mine would go off first, and as soon as the explosion occurred it was clear that the mine was Bulgarian. Actually, it was made in Spain and was tested (on his own skin, with the white pieces) a few times by Topalov’s young second — Ivan Cheparinov — in Spanish open tournaments. As will be seen later, Topalov’s novelty was not of the highest quality. No, it has no forced refutation, but with correct play White could have obtained a clear superiority. The most regrettable thing for Svidler is that he actually found almost all the right moves, but consumed huge amounts of time and became fatigued in the process. As a consequence he made no use of his advantage, but his position was still not worse, and he offered a “silent draw”. And here an amazing thing occurred. Instead of logically accepting the offered repetition, Topalov chose a clearly unfortunate continuation. He would
later explain that Svidler was getting visibly nervous, and along with the Russian's approaching time
trouble, he decided the risk was worth taking. And one must admit – the risk fully paid off. Immediately
afterwards White committed three crucial mistakes: first he overlooked a possibility to punish Black's
daring attempt, then he set himself on the brink of the abyss and eventually... he dived straight into
it. The conversion was not too difficult. It has to be noted that even without taking into account the
sporting aspect, which is apparent, this game will be long admired for the rich abundance of ideas. This
game is a perfect example of the tense and sophisticated struggle that is modern chess.

Another pearl was grown by Anand and Leko. Black bravely employed a principled Sveshnikov
variation, which thereby made its first appearance in the tournament. Anand introduced a novelty,
which is hardly surprising. The surprising part is that Leko's reaction to this rather natural plan in a line
he has analysed exhaustively was very unfortunate. In a few moves Black's position deteriorated from
"theory" to difficult. With his back against the wall the Hungarian showed his strength – his tenacious
and resourceful defence had a great impact on all the spectators, and on Anand, who missed a difficult
winning continuation at the critical moment. Luckily for Leko that winning opportunity was the only
one and Anand could not squeeze anything else from his stubborn opponent.

Meanwhile another fierce tussle was taking place in the game between two dangerous attackers:
Morozevich vs. Polgar. After a slow start Polgar was playing carefully yet powerfully, as a reaction
to another unusual opening choice by Black. Dismissing all Morozevich's provocations, Polgar slowly
improved her position until she was strategically winning. When White's victory seemed to be close,
however, it looked as if Polgar suddenly lost her way, first missing a virtually forced way to clinch a
well deserved victory, she then let all her advantage go and finally did not exploit several chances kindly
offered by her opponent in mutual time trouble. As in many such cases the game ended in a draw right
after the time control, except that here it was hardly "to everybody's satisfaction". Polgar later pointed
out that this game (following a painful defeat against Leko in the previous round) was in fact a breaking
point for her in the tournament, after which she was never the same.

In comparison with those nervous duels, the meeting of Adams with Kasimdzhanov was a much
calmer affair. But there were many subtleties here as well. The Uzbek continued to demonstrate his
versatile preparation by opting for another, less principled, line of an opening that occurred in his first
round game. Adams reacted coolly, which led to a small but lasting advantage. Adams was enjoying his
control in the centre, whereas the FIDE champion was combining defence with accurate preparation of
sabotage on the enemy king. Eventually it appeared that the English grandmaster was too comfortable
with his position, underestimating his opponent's potential threats. After identifying the danger Adams
immediately started harassing Black's temporarily hanging pieces and the game culminated in a draw.
Many commentators believed, as did the players, that a draw was the logical result of the struggle.
However, just one move prior to the draw agreement, Black could have unleashed a powerful attack,
after which White's chances to weather that storm would have been rather questionable. In any case, that
moment remained in the shadows.

Thus, we have a clear leader, who has beaten everybody but Anand, opening a gap of no less than 1½
points on his pursuers. When will Topalov's main rivals wake up and reach their usual pace? For the time
being it is a well hidden secret.
GAME 17
Viswanathan Anand
Peter Leko
Sicilian Sveshnikov B33

1.e4 c5 2.d3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.cxd4 d6
5.c3 e5

Finally we get to see the Sveshnikov. An opening that not so long ago used to depress every player who starts 1.e4.

6.db5 d6 7.g5 a6 8.a3 b5

Black has also tried 8...e6 but this allows White to solve his biggest problem: the knight on a3. 9.c4 ec8 10.d5 cxd5 11.xf6 followed by 12.xd5 with a pleasant advantage.

9.d5

The main line, as of the beginning of this year. Some years ago lines with 9.xf6 gxf6 were more popular, but Black seems to be doing fine there.

9...e7 10.xf6 xf6 11.c3 0-0 12.c2

The starting point of the line.

12.g5

The modern favourite, and also that of the boss, Sveshnikov. Although the line has suffered quite a few blows lately, it was obvious that the Hungarian was not going to give up on one of the key positions in his repertoire.

12..b8 was out of fashion for a long time thanks to Kasparov's 13.h4! and the dark-squared bishop seems to have no future, as g5 is no longer a possible square for it.

However, then Black found an idea to improve the bishop's prospects - the classic Sveshnikov b6-square. For instance: 13..e7 14.e3 e6, and then Black carries out the plan of ...d8-d7 and ...e7-d8-b6. Nevertheless, we believe it is too early to resurrect 12..b8: usually the game enters an opposite-coloured bishops position. We believe White can get a version where his bishop's activity will outweigh the drawish tendencies. As a good example consider Kudrin - Eljanov, Khanty Mansyisk 2005: 15.d3 (15.b4 is also worthy of attention) 15..d7 16.d1 d8 17.e2 e7 18.h5 h6 19.0-0 b6 20.d5, and after a long fight White won.

13.a4

Striking on the queenside. As a matter of fact, this is the only play White has in this position.

13..bxa4 14..xa4 a5 15.c4 b8 16.a2

The most popular lately. White does not want to waste time on b3 (as was virtually automatic in the past), thus keeping the options of a4 and b2-b4 in one move open. And there is another idea, more on which later.

16.g6

Here Black faces two decisions:
1. How to carry out ...f5, with or without ...g6?
2. What is the precise move order - should he begin with ...h8 or ...g6?

Positions after ...f5 without ...g6 are interesting, and have quite a few supporters (for example, Radjabov used to play this way).
Black’s problem, however, is that he mostly fights for a draw. The text line is more popular among members of the Elite, but is also more dangerous.

And about the move order, which should come first: ...g6 or ...\(\text{h8}\)? Or, perhaps, both lead to the same position? Well, not necessarily. After 16...\(\text{h8}\) White continues 17.\(\text{c3}\) and on 17...g6 has a promising new plan, developed by Topalov and Ponomariov, with 18.h4. Kramnik, after having a narrow escape with Black against Ponomariov, later made good use of it with White: 18...\(\text{xh4}\) 19.g3 \(\text{g5}\) 20.f4 exf4 21.gxf4 \(\text{h4}\) 22.\(\text{f1}\) f5 23.b4 fxe4 24.\(\text{ah2}\) g5 25.b5 \(\text{e5}\) 26.\(\text{d4}\) with a very strong attack, Kramnik – Van Wely, Monaco 2005.

It is not clear if Black can improve the defence in this popular line, but Leko usually chooses a different move order.

17.0-0

Anand is not a fan of h4-plans. As a rule, his approach when targeting the Sveshnikov is to be strictly solid. This has been quite successful.

Attempting to use the fashionable attack with 17.\(\text{c3}\) might now be met with 17...\(\text{g7}\), instead of 17...\(\text{h8}\). Now the above attack is less convincing, or to be exact, it was less convincing in the only game featuring it to date: 18.h4 \(\text{xh4}\) 19.g3 \(\text{g5}\) 20.f4 exf4 21.gxf4 \(\text{h4}\) 22.\(\text{f1}\) \(\text{h8}\) 23.b3 h5 24.\(\text{g2}\) \(\text{f8}\) 25.\(\text{d2}\) \(\text{g7}\) 26.\(\text{g2}\) \(\text{f8}\) 27.\(\text{d2}\) \(\text{g7}\) with a draw agreed, Berescu – Khairullin, Warsaw 2005.

Black is implying that he is ready to join the Anand – Kasparov dispute.

18.b4

But Anand deviates first and chooses no less poisonous a line.

An important line here is 18.\(\text{c3}\) f5 19.\(\text{a4}\). Kasparov, in his game against Anand, failed to achieve equality after 19...\(\text{d7}\) 20.\(\text{b5}\) \(\text{xb5}\) 21.\(\text{xb5}\) \(\text{d4}\) 22.\(\text{xa5}\) \(\text{xa2}\) 23.\(\text{xa2}\) fxe4 24.\(\text{b4}\) \(\text{e6}\) 25.\(\text{c4}\) \(\text{c8}\) 26.\(\text{b3}\) with a substantial advantage for White, Anand – Kasparov, Linares 2005. Did Leko intend to improve on Kasparov’s game? Of course he did; it would be unrealistic not to think so!

18...\(\text{axb4}\)?

A serious mistake, which was soon corrected in his game against Kasimdzhanov in the next round (Game 21). Curiously, this move has been played before, although the drawbacks of the move are quite evident: opening the a-file, and allowing the knight to join the attack on the queenside are hardly compensated by Black getting the a5-square (after White’s b5).

19.\(\text{cxb4}\) \(\text{e6}\) 20.\(\text{b5}\)

Typical for the fakir. In just two moves a weak pawn has become a bulldozer pushing Black backwards.

Now 20...\(\text{e7}\) is too passive, and allows White to place his pieces optimally. 21.\(\text{c4!}\) \(\text{d5}\) 22.\(\text{xd5}\) f5 23.\(\text{b7}\) with a clear edge, Korte – Siegmund, Arco 1998. For example: 23...\(\text{f4}\) 24.\(\text{xe7}\) \(\text{xe7}\) 25.\(\text{d5}\) when the attack with opposite-coloured bishops, together with the b-pawn, gives White an easy win.

20...\(\text{xd5}\)

Not an easy move, played after prolonged thought. With this capture Leko makes sure the other knight does not get to d5 (thus stopping White’s main plan), but it does not solve all the problems, as Anand’s very next move ends all Black’s hopes for counterplay. There will be no ...f5 or anything else for that matter.

Now the "normal" 21.\(\text{xd5}\) promises nothing: 21...\(\text{e7}\) 22.\(\text{e2}\) \(\text{b6}\) 23.\(\text{c4}\) f5 and Black gets good counterplay. For instance: 24.\(\text{a6}\) \(\text{c5}\) 25.\(\text{exf5}\) \(\text{bxc5}\) 26.\(\text{b3}\) \(\text{xf5}\) with a good position.
But Anand’s intentions are much more serious:

21. exd5!

That’s the idea. Like many of Anand plans, this one spells: “I do not believe in your initiative.” (According to Anand, on many occasions while preparing he attacks the computer until its processors explode. When he learns that there are sufficient defensive resources, he uses them in a game, gaining many points, but sometimes suffering losses against the very best.) The idea is very strong: d5 will control c6 for a knight, freeing the b-pawn to run for presidency. Plain and simple.

Black’s play, on the other hand, is anything but plain or simple. The f-file will not be opened today, and pushing the f- and e-pawns is clearly not going to keep up with White’s play. Therefore, Leko’s game is limited to preventing, defending, annoying and interfering with White’s game, and waiting for his chance, of course.

21. ... a5

From now on Leko defends with his typical tenacity.

21. ... e7 would not interfere with White’s intentions, and give him an important tempo to carry out his plan.

22. a2 a8

Trying to keep things as unclear as possible.

22. ... b6 23. b4 a8 (even worse are both 23...e4 24. a1 and 23...d8 24. c6 a8 25. d3 c7 26. a1 and Black cannot stand up to White’s pressure) leading to a position that could have been reached in the game.

23. b4 b7

Not for nothing is Leko known to be one of the toughest defenders in the world. The knight is transferred to a better position. Black is clinging to the position with his teeth. The attempt to block the a-file fails after 23... b6 24. d3 a7 25. a1 a8 26. a3 and Black will be obliged to let White occupy it, sooner or later.

24. a6!

Very impressive. The knight will not be sufficiently strong on c6 anymore, and is being replaced by a rook, while its (the knight’s) new target is a6. However, the real strength of this move is that it avoids the following trap.

Why did Anand not play 24. c6 anyway? Neither 24... b6 25. a6! a6 26. xa6 with a close-to-decisive advantage, nor 24... d7 25. a1 a2 26. xa2 save Black.

Apparently, Black was planning 24...xa2! 25. xd8 xd8. All of a sudden all White’s pluses became minuses. The pawn goes nowhere, the bishop is stupid, and an active plan – nonexistent. For instance, after “normal play”: 26. c4 a8 27. b6 c5 28. b7 b8 White has no reason to be happy.

Unless he want to find himself in trouble, White’s best bet would be 26. f4. For example: 26. b6 27. h1 e4 28. f5! with a double-edged game, where Black’s chances should not be underestimated.
24...\texttt{c5} 25.\texttt{xc6} \texttt{xa4}!

A great move, sneaking in just when the doors (on a6) are about to close.

26.\texttt{b1}

An original way to push the pawn forward. Trying to win material with 26.\texttt{xc5} is not good here: 26...\texttt{xb4} 27.\texttt{xc6} \texttt{b8} Once the bishop gets to d8, the b-pawn will cease to be a factor in this game.

26.\texttt{a6} would let a substantial pan of the advantage go after 26...\texttt{gd4}!, for example: 27.\texttt{c2} \texttt{xd5} 28.\texttt{xc5} \texttt{d2} 29.\texttt{c3} \texttt{dxc5} 30.\texttt{f3} \texttt{d4} 31.\texttt{xc5} \texttt{e8} 32.\texttt{xd4} \texttt{exd4} 33.\texttt{a6} (33.\texttt{b1?!} \texttt{b2}) 33...\texttt{b2} 34.\texttt{b6} \texttt{b8} 35.\texttt{b7} \texttt{g7} 36.\texttt{a8} \texttt{xb7} 37.\texttt{xb7} \texttt{xb7} and Black should be able to hold.

26...\texttt{d4}!

Black's forces enter the game through the backdoor. It is amazing how Leko manages to find chances.

27.\texttt{a6} \texttt{e4}

Not simplifying the position, which would make White's life easier, Black is diving into immense complications, trying to confuse the opponent. It does not save the position against White's best play, but it is the right way to defend such positions -- no easy moves.

The alternative was 27...\texttt{d4} 28.\texttt{xc5} \texttt{dxc5}. Weak now is 29.b6 \texttt{b4} 30.b7 \texttt{a7} 31.\texttt{e8} \texttt{g7}? and White has let the win slip away. Much better is 29.\texttt{xc5} and Black can win back the d-pawn, but he is helpless against the b-pawn.

28.\texttt{b6}

White has to go forward, and he does. It would not be a great surprise if this position had been analysed by Anand at home -- it surely would not be the first time. And if so, he definitely knew the game was close to being over.

28...\texttt{xd5}

What else? At least grab a pawn, and get closer to the enemy's king.

29.\texttt{b5}?!

This natural move was the prime suspect for losing part of White's advantage. But what was the better solution?

Definitely not 29.\texttt{b5}? \texttt{d2}! 30.\texttt{b2} \texttt{g4}, and White will have to give up material in order to save the king.

Very strong is Jacob Aagaard's recommendation 29.\texttt{c7}! This move looks frightening because of the fork 29...\texttt{d2}. White should retort with the obvious 30.\texttt{d1}. Perhaps Anand considered it to be too complicated, but the game is also messy, while here Black has fewer chances.

Now the most stubborn is 30.\texttt{a2}, and after 31 \texttt{b4} \texttt{xb1} 32.\texttt{d5} Black should play 32.\texttt{b2}! Seemingly, White's win is doubtful, since after 33.\texttt{b7} \texttt{g7} 34.\texttt{a6} \texttt{d2} 35.\texttt{e8} \texttt{e4}, and after ...\texttt{c5} White will have to forget about winning the game.

But very strong is 34.\texttt{d3}! \texttt{d2} and here White has the manoeuvre 35.\texttt{c3}! intending 36.\texttt{e4}. Black seems to be helpless here -- he will have to give up a piece for the b-pawn.

29...\texttt{d4}?!
queenside, and an operative plan to exploit this time is not clear.

b) 31.\texttt{d2} \texttt{dc5!} 32.\texttt{dxc5} \texttt{dxc5} 33.\texttt{dxc6} \texttt{b8} 34.\texttt{d1} e4 35.\texttt{d7} \texttt{e7} and Black has good chances to hold.

c) 31.\texttt{d3} \texttt{dc5} 32.\texttt{dxc5} \texttt{dxc5} (32...dxc5? 33.\texttt{d7}) 33.\texttt{d6} \texttt{b8} 34.\texttt{d1} f5 35.\texttt{d7} e4 36.\texttt{a6} \texttt{e7} The winning plan is not clear, as Black has possible plans of sacrificing an exchange on b7, thus keeping White’s b1-rook tied to its defence.

Now we come back to the text – we are about to witness the tragic moment of the round, and perhaps the whole tournament, from Anand’s point of view. In his opponent’s time trouble he misses a win (that is by no means trivial), by choosing a very natural continuation that in fact leads nowhere.

30.\texttt{c4}?

The loss to Kasimdzhanov in the previous round probably caused Anand to take his later opponents’ attacks more seriously. Here, in any case, caution is justified as this “looks” like the only way to try and win.

We must admit that the game is a demonstration of Leko’s great defensive ability, rather than Anand’s failure to convert his advantage. We believe that finding the win in such a position depends less on the quality of a player than on luck and intuition. And at this point of the tournament both betrayed the Indian player. All applause goes to the Hungarian grandmaster: he was the main reason that Anand did not manage to eat such a nearby cherry.

But there is no doubt that in other cases Anand would (immediately!) play the obvious 30.\texttt{b7}, which actually greatly complicates the position. Black, as it turns out, has a few very vicious and no less beautiful threats. It would, however, force Leko to find all the defensive ideas over the board, which is extremely hard (even if they exist), even without time trouble.

After 30.\texttt{b7}, Black should try his only chance 30...\texttt{xf2}! and now:

a) 31.\texttt{g2} \texttt{g3} 32.\texttt{d1} \texttt{a7} 33.\texttt{d7} \texttt{a1} 34.\texttt{f1} \texttt{d1} and Black mates.

b) 31.\texttt{g4} 32.\texttt{g2} \texttt{e4} 33.\texttt{h3} \texttt{e3}

and from now on White will have to continue without his king.

c) 31.\texttt{b6}! \texttt{xb6} 32.\texttt{xb6} \texttt{d3}! Searching for threats on the king at any cost. 33.\texttt{b8=\texttt{w}}

An amazing position, but who is going to win?

As the safest way to draw Anand suggested 33...\texttt{e4} 34.\texttt{h1} \texttt{b8} 35.\texttt{b8} \texttt{g7} and here 36.\texttt{b4} (also 36.g4 \texttt{c3} 37.\texttt{d4} 38.\texttt{xc3} \texttt{xc3} 39.\texttt{c7} \texttt{b8} seems to be a draw, but not an easy one) 36...\texttt{xf2} 37.\texttt{xf2} \texttt{xf2} 38.\texttt{xf2} \texttt{xf2} 39.\texttt{d5} f5 with a very drawish position.

The main question, however, is whether Black has a draw in the line:

33...\texttt{b8}? 34.\texttt{b8} \texttt{g7}

Now both 35.\texttt{b1} 36.\texttt{h1} \texttt{f2} 37.\texttt{xf2} \texttt{xf2} and 35.\texttt{xf2} \texttt{a1} 36.\texttt{f1} \texttt{a2} bring about positions where it is hard to say who is better. Better looks:

35.\texttt{g3}

White is trying to slip away with the king, which Black obviously will not allow without a struggle.

35...\texttt{a2}! 36.\texttt{g2} \texttt{e4}! 37.\texttt{f3} \texttt{a7} 38.\texttt{xe4} \texttt{f5} 39.\texttt{d3}

Weaker is 39.\texttt{d5} \texttt{xb8} 40.\texttt{d8} (or 40.\texttt{c4} \texttt{d2} 41.\texttt{c6} \texttt{a7} 42.\texttt{d7} \texttt{h2} 43.\texttt{e8} \texttt{e6} 44.\texttt{d6} \texttt{f2} 45.\texttt{f7} \texttt{g7} 46.\texttt{b1} \texttt{xg3} 47.\texttt{b7} e4 and again Black is on top) 40...\texttt{xe2} and White is not threatening to win.

39...\texttt{e4} 40.\texttt{c3} \texttt{xb8} 41.\texttt{c4} \texttt{xb2} 42.\texttt{xb2} \texttt{d4}!

Here is the explanation why this inferior line is included in the book. This picturesque line simply deserves to be in here! Here is what seems to us to be the best play for both sides:
174 ROUND 5

43...Bxg3 44.h5 h6 45.Bxd6 h5 46.Bd7+ Kg5 47.Kc5 h4 48.Kb8 h3 49Kh1 Kh4 50.Kf3 Kg3 51.Kf1 Bg3 52.Bxh3+ Kg2 53.Kh1 Bc3 54.bxc4 g3 55.Kd5 Bc5 56.Ke5 e3 57.Be6 Bxd5+ 58.Bxd5 e2 59.Kh2+ Kf1 60.Kf4 and White wins.

46.Kh1 e3 47.Bxh4 g5 48.Bxg2 Bg4 49.Ke2 and White wins.

Of course, calculating all (or even some) of this in a practical game is impossible. But the annoying thing for Anand is that there was a much shorter win, which was found by GM Shipov: 30.Wd3! Bb2! and here neither 31.Wc2?! Bxc2 32.Bxc2 Bc5 33.Bxc5 dxc5 with equality, nor 31.Bb1? Ba1 32.Bxa1 Bxa1+ 33.Bf1 f5! 34.b7 Bb2! give White what he wants.

But White can play 31.g3!!.

This is what Anand missed during the game. It is anything but obvious, of course. It takes considerable time and faith to be assured that instead of hurrying up White can throw away a tempo, and Black cannot use the tempo to develop his attack. White frees an escape route for his king, which is crucial. So what can Black do?

a) 31...Bc5 32.Bxd6 Be6 33.b7!! This somewhat resembles a checkers combination: 33...Bxb7 34.Bxc5 winning.


c) 31...Bd8 32.Bb1 Ba1 33.Bxa1 Bxa1+ 34.Bg2 Bb2 35.Bxe4 winning.

d) 31...d5 32.Bb5! Ba2 (32...Bxb5 33.Bxb5+ ) 33.b7 Bc3 34.Bxb2 Bxb2 35.Bxc3 Bxb7 winning.

e) 31...Bd2! The most stubborn. 32.Bb5 Bxb5 (32...Ba2 33.Bxf1 34.Bc8+) 33.Bxb5 Ba5

34.Bf1 35.Bxf1 Ba1 36.b7 Bb1 37.Bc8 Bxb7 38.Bxh8 Bg7 39.Bb8 Bxb8 40.Qxb8 and White should win here.

30...Bxc4 31.Bxc4 Qc3! 32.Qd3

The players must also have considered 32.b7 d5 (32...Bxe2+ 33.Bxe2 Bb6 34.b8=Q Bxb8 35.Qxb8 Bxb8 36.Qxe4 Black's pieces do not cooperate well, which gives White some winning chances.) 33.Qd3 Qxd3 34.Bxd3 e4 35.Qxe4 (35.Qc2 Qf4 with advantage to Black) 35...dxe4 36.b8=Q Bxb8 37.Qxb8 e3 with a draw that is similar to the game.

32...Bxc4 33.Bxc4 d5

34.Bxd5?!

Here Anand misses his last chance. Brief analysis shows that he had a promising alternative, which he undoubtedly would have used if he had not been under the impression that his chances were lost on move 30.

The simple 34.Bb3! puts Black in an unpleasant position. After 34...e4 35.b7 Qf4 36.Qa1 Black suddenly has serious problems stopping the pawn. For example:

a) Black's counterplay with the passed pawns succeeds after 36...d4 37.Qc5? Bb8 38.Bxf7 d3! 39.Ba8 d2 40.Qb3 Qg7 41.Qf1 (or 41.h3 e3 42.Qxe3 Qxe3+ 43.Qf1 Qd4 44.Bxb8 Qxb8 45.Qa4 Qxa4) 41...Bxh2! 42.g3 Bxg3 43.fxg3 e3 44.Bxb8 e2+ 45.Qg2 e=Q 46.Bg8+ Qh6 47.b8=Q Qe2+ with a perpetual.

But after 37.Qb4! White wins the pawns, thus stopping the counterplay: 37...Qg7 38.Ba8 d3
ANAND – LEKO

(38..b8 39.axb8 axb8 40.c6 d6 41.dxd4) 39..c8! d2 40.xc3 b8 41.d1 bxb7 42..b3 should be enough for a win.

b) Much stronger was: 36..g7 37.b4! b8 38.xd5 d8! 39.g3 (Weaker is 39.a8 d7 40.g3 xg5 41.xf4 xg4! 42.xd5! [42.h4 xh7] 42..xd5 43.h4 b5 44.h5=) 45.xb8 with even chances) 39..xg5 40.d1 cxb4 41.xd8 c7 42.xd4 a6 43.xe4 with some chances for White to win, as the pieces are tied up to preventing promotion. But there is still a very long way to go.

34..xd5 35.b7 e4!

Planning to exchange pawns, on the way to a theoretical draw.

36.b8= c8 37.axb8 c3 38.fxe3 c6 39.h1 g7 40.c6 h5

The position is not equal; it is drawn. If the knights are exchanged, it will be a draw even without the f-pawn. Also c+d vs. d+c is a theoretical draw, which means White has to keep his knight in the game, but then Black will have sufficient defensive resources. White obviously does not want to exchange pawns, but without advancing pawns White has no chance to succeed. As we said – it’s a draw. Anand tests his opponent for a few moves, to make sure he is not too tired.

41.d1 f6 42.b1 g4 43.g3 g5 44.g2 f6 45.e1 h6 46.f3 g5 47.d1 h6

Black simply waits, and he can do it with both his pieces.

48.h3 f5 49.e7 f8 50.a5 d4 51.g2 f5 52.c4 g7 53.g4

One pawn is gone. One more to go.

53..hxg4 54.hxg4 e7 55.d6 e5 56.d4 g8

With the “threat” ...f6.

57.g5

Now Black exchanges the last pawn.

57..f8 58.b7 f6

And it is over – Black exchanges the last white pawn.

59.c5 e8 60.d3 d6

Agreed drawn because of 61..g7 f8 62.gxf6 dxf6 63..xg6 h7.

½–½
GAME 18

Judit Polgar

Alexander Morozevich

Philidor Defence, Hanham C41

1.e4 d6

Morozevich chooses to avoiding main line openings.

2.d4 df6 3.f3 e5

Philidor's Defence, or at least it will be in a couple of moves – not a very common guest in top GM practice. Black gives up a lot of space, and the centre, but counts on getting good play by attacking White's centre (e4) after the likely ...exd4.

4.d3 d7 5.c4 c7 6.0-0 0-0 7.e2

Kasparov, in a game against Huzman, opted for 7.e1 c6 8.a4 a5 9.b3 exd4 10.exd4 b6 11.a3 d7 12.f1 c5 13.a3 c6 14.e2 f8 15.ad1 ad7 16.b2 c7, Kasparov - Huzman, Izmir 2004. White did not manage to convert his better position.

7...exd4 8.ad4 ab6 9.b3 d7

As in the Kasparov – Huzman game: Black needs to destroy White's bishop on b3, before it starts making trouble.

10.lc3

A novelty, but not one which changes the position drastically; just a solid developing move.

10...c5 11.ad1 f6 12.f4

This move has to be played with great care: it gains space and increases White's presence in the centre, but it does weaken e4 and this might be exploited by Black. Here, however, it is justified: White manages to gain the initiative, since Black is not ready for immediate counterplay against the centre.

12...e7 13.ad3 ad7

The attempt to win the pawn immediately with 13...e8 14.ac1 dx e4 loses to 15.e2 and after Black's only way to protect the knight, 15...g4, there is a nice line: 16.xg4 dx f2 17.xe7 (17.xf2 xd4) 17...xg4 18.xf7 winning an exchange and with it the game.

14.ac1

White has a central and spatial advantage, but Black has no weaknesses. In order to create one, White is going to put a knight on d5 – which will strangle Black's position – and when the latter plays ...c6, White will simply retreat and then play against the d6-pawn.

14...e8 15.e2 g6

A typical manoeuvre in such positions, giving the bishop some air.

16.ad3 bx3

An understandable decision, as the knight might be hanging in various lines when White plays e5. On the other hand, this opens the a-file for White, which will be the cause of Black's difficulties later on.

The real reason for his immediate capture could be that after 16...g7 Morozevich was
worried about 17...\texttt{xf5}, and now 17...\texttt{gx5} is bad because of 18.\texttt{d4} \texttt{e6} 19.\texttt{xf5} (even 19.\texttt{d5} \texttt{xd5} 20.\texttt{exd5} \texttt{exf4} 21.\texttt{xex7} \texttt{xex7} 22.\texttt{xd4} would not be easy for Black to hold) 19...\texttt{xd4} 20.\texttt{exe7} \texttt{xe7} 21.\texttt{fxe8} \texttt{exf8} 22.\texttt{xe7} g3 and White should win.

But after 17...\texttt{xf5} 18.\texttt{exf5} \texttt{f6} 19.\texttt{fxg6} \texttt{hxg6} matters are not so clear. At first sight this position might look unpleasant for Black, but a deeper investigation shows that he has enough counterplay in the centre and on the queenside to compensate for his weakened kingside. For example, after the ambitious 20.\texttt{d5}?! \texttt{xe1} 21.\texttt{exe1} \texttt{xd5} 22.\texttt{xex5} c6! Black even has the upper hand, as White's queenside is falling apart.

17.\texttt{xb3} \texttt{g7} 18.\texttt{f3}

White is finished regrouping and \texttt{e5} is now an option. It is evident that Polgar has seized the initiative.

18.\texttt{f6}

Preventing one of White's ideas, at the cost of shutting out the dark-squared bishop – from now on Black will be relying on a later ...\texttt{f5}.

19.\texttt{eal}!

A strong move: White needs to shake Black's position as much as possible, and switching wings is the best way to do so.

19...\texttt{ec8}

19...\texttt{a6} is, of course, unthinkable: 20.\texttt{xb6} \texttt{cxb6} 21.\texttt{eal} with a huge advantage for White.

20.\texttt{d5}

Usually moves like \texttt{xa7} are not even considered. This time it should have been:

20.\texttt{xa7}

This would have simply won a pawn.

20...\texttt{b6}

The logical try, but failing.

After 20...\texttt{c5} 21.\texttt{b8}! \texttt{c6} 22.\texttt{ad1} the bishop on \texttt{b8} is a hunter rather than a prisoner, whereas after 20...\texttt{xe7} 21.\texttt{xa7} it is not so much the extra pawn, but the fact that White is putting unpleasant pressure along the seventh rank that makes Black's position very dubious: 21...\texttt{c6} 22.\texttt{f5}! Closing off the bishop on \texttt{g7}. With this bishop unable to play an active role, Black's position is difficult.

21.\texttt{d5} \texttt{d8} 22.\texttt{b8}

White is winning.

20...\texttt{d8} 21.\texttt{c4}

21.\texttt{xa7} is now less convincing, as \texttt{e4} is weakened, and after 21...\texttt{xa7} 22.\texttt{xa7} \texttt{f5}! 23.\texttt{xf5} \texttt{xf5} the knight on \texttt{d5} is subject to attacks. Black has at least sufficient compensation here.

21...\texttt{c6} 22.\texttt{ec3}

The knight has done its job, so it can go home.

22...\texttt{c5}

Morozevich wants to solve both the issue of \texttt{a7} and prevent White from playing \texttt{c5}. But the price he pays is high: the \texttt{d5}-square is severely weakened, which compromises his entire flank.

22...\texttt{a6} seems like a better option: 23.\texttt{c5} \texttt{f5} 24.\texttt{e5} (after 24.\texttt{cxd6} \texttt{fxe4} 25.\texttt{xe4} \texttt{f5} Black is fine) 24...\texttt{xe5} 25.\texttt{xe5} \texttt{xe6} and, although Black is still worse, it is definitely better than the game.

23.\texttt{d5}

The knight can go back again, the \texttt{c}-pawn cannot. The only way to get rid of the knight would be to exchange it, allowing White to improve her pawn structure.

23...\texttt{e7}

Perhaps Morozevich missed Polgar's strong reaction, but after this his position is already critical. Such moves are traditionally described as 'a blunder in a difficult position'.
Attempting to prevent White's next move with 23...a5 runs into 24.f5 gxf5 25.exf5 dxf5 26.exa5, returning a pawn but with a huge strategic superiority. The rook is immune: 26..dxa5 (or 26...e1 27.a1) 27.exa5 e8 28.xf6t e7 29.exa8 with a big advantage for White. Nevertheless, this is better than what Black had in the game.

24.b4!

A great move by Polgar, tearing Black's queenside apart. After 24.a7 Black gets a chance for counterplay with 24...e5 25.cxd5 e6.

24...e5

This had to come sooner or later, as the knight on d5 is putting pressure on Black's entire position, and thus cannot be tolerated.

25.cxd5 cxb4 26.a7

White is virtually a pawn up, plus much better pieces.

26...c7 27.a1!

A safe decision, especially nearing time trouble. Such moves are sometimes the key to winning a better position, as they deprive the opponent of counterplay. Leaving the rook on a7 and the king on g1 with a move like 27.d4 would not be too safe, especially against Morozevich, who does not need many invitations to search for tactics. For instance, Black could play 27..f5 28.e4 c4 29.axb7 dxe5 30.xe5 xd5 and, although White is much better, the position is unnecessarily complicated.

However, there is an even more amazing shot: 27..g4, which could definitely have been expected from Morozevich. The point is that after 28.xg4 Black has 28..f5 29.e3 d4 30.xd4 c5 and suddenly we have a balanced position again. True, after the initial shock following Black's 27th move, White can bring the rook back home with 28.a1, but who needs all this excitement?

27..f5

As we said before, Black has to play this sooner or later, as there is no other way except to seek counterplay as quickly as possible. After White's correct reaction, however, it should only have made things worse.

28.e5 c4 29.a1

Apart from being pushed back, Black has no plan for counterplay. All his pieces are occupied trying to prevent White's pawns from breaking through.

29..a4!

This surprising idea, totally exposing e6, is the only (and last) chance to confuse White.

30.d2 c2

31.h4!!

A sad inaccuracy, which makes a deserved win much more complicated. After playing very powerfully, it was perhaps here that Judit Polgar started losing her grip of the game, with this altogether natural move.

But how can such a natural move be a mistake? The problem is that Black's last manoeuvre was
very unusual, and the reaction should have been appropriate. Of course, we are all very smart after the fact, but in a tense battle this was far from obvious, and after 31.h4 White's attack looks promising.

After 31...\texttt{Dg5}!, attacking both Black's weaknesses, h7 and the new one on e6, White's position would be clearly winning.

31...\texttt{e4}  
What else?
32.exd6 \texttt{f6}  
32...\texttt{xd5} is ruled out by 33.\texttt{ed1 c6} 34.d7 \texttt{d8} 35.b3 winning.
33.d7 \texttt{e7}  
33...\texttt{a8} loses to 34.\texttt{xe4} fxe4 35.f5 \texttt{g7} 36.fxg6 hxg6 37.\texttt{g4} etc.
34.\texttt{e6}  
Winning an exchange. The rest is, as the cliché goes, a matter of technique.
31...\texttt{e4}  
The position is no longer so one-sided, and it seems that White began reconsidering the plan started by her last move, and she should not have!
32.\texttt{ed4}  
The point is that 32.exd6 is no longer good since the knight is still on f3: 32...\texttt{xf3} 33.\texttt{xf3 \texttt{xel} \texttt{d8} and it will be a draw.
White should have played the consistent 32.h5. Now Black has the following options:

a) 32...\(\text{axd5}\) 33.hxg6 hxg6 34.\(\text{f5}\) dxe5 35.\(\text{h2}\) Black gets efficiently almost-mated:

35...\(\text{f6}\) 36.\(\text{e1}\) \(\text{d6}\) (an invasion along the d-file cannot be allowed) 37.fxe5! and Black collapses. Such lines are not for time scrambles, of course.

b) 32...\(\text{gxh5}\) 33.\(\text{e4}\) h4 (33...\(\text{axd5}\) loses nicely to 34.exd6 \(\text{e5}\) 35.\(\text{h2}\) \(\text{f7}\) 36.\(\text{xel}\) and the weak king along with the passer on d6 leave Black with no hope) 34.\(\text{xe5}\) and White keeps pressing.

c) However, Black can finally destroy the knight with 32...\(\text{fxe3}\) 33.\(\text{gx3}\) \(\text{g5}\) and, although White's chances are better, there is still a lengthy battle ahead.

32...\(\text{b3}\) 33.\(\text{xe5}\)?

Better seems 33.\(\text{d2}\), making ...\(\text{xa2}\) impossible in view of \(\text{c4}\), which only leaves Black with 33...\(\text{g3}\) 34.\(\text{xe3}\) dxe5 35.\(\text{f5}\) \(\text{xe5}\) 36.\(\text{xe5}\) \(\text{e5}\) 37.\(\text{xe4}\) \(\text{xe4}\) 38.\(\text{exe4}\) with good winning chances for White.

33...\(\text{xb2}\) 34.\(\text{xe4}\) \(\text{xe4}\) 35.\(\text{xe4}\) dxe5 36.\(\text{d3}\)!!

Black's position hangs on tactics: 36.\(\text{xe5}\) \(\text{xe5}\) 37.\(\text{xe5}\) 38.\(\text{xe5}\) \(\text{xf2}\) 39.\(\text{f8}\) but it hangs:

36...\(\text{c3}\)!

Time trouble had a strong effect on both players. With the text move Black misses a chance to clinch the draw. While White's f-pawn is pinned, Black should have used the time to unpin his e-pawn, and the right way to do so was 36...\(\text{e1}\)!, after which the game should end in a draw with 37.\(\text{xe4}\) \(\text{c5}\) 38.\(\text{xc5}\) \(\text{bxc5}\) 39.\(\text{f5}\) \(\text{xe4}\) 40.\(\text{xe4}\) dxe4 41.\(\text{xh6}\) 42.\(\text{xe5}\) (stopping ...b5-b4) 42...\(\text{h6}\) 43.\(\text{e6}\) (or 43...\(\text{f4}\) \(\text{xf4}\) 44.\(\text{xe4}\) \(\text{xf2}\) 45.\(\text{exe5}\) \(\text{d6}\) drawing) 43...\(\text{c7}\) 44.\(\text{exe5}\) \(\text{dxe5}\) 46.\(\text{exe5}\) \(\text{dxe5}\) with a drawish position.

37.\(\text{f5}\)!

A very good move, but with the wrong idea. Black cannot prevent \(\text{c5}\), which makes his position critical again.

37...\(\text{b3}\)

37...\(\text{e8}\) 38.\(\text{f5}\) is just hopeless, of course.

Black's best chance was 37...\(\text{d2}\) 38.\(\text{c5}\) \(\text{xd5}\) 39.\(\text{xb4}\) winning the exchange, after which White should be able to overcome the technical difficulties.

38.\(\text{e3}\)?

This throws away a golden opportunity:

38.\(\text{c5}\) simply won the exchange.

38...\(\text{c2}\)

And the game ends in a draw.

39.\(\text{xb3}\) \(\text{d8}\) 40.\(\text{b6}\) \(\text{d2}\) 41.\(\text{b1}\) \(\text{c5}\)!

After 42.\(\text{b3}\) \(\text{d3}\) 43.\(\text{xd3}\) \(\text{e3}\) 44.\(\text{f5}\) the draw is inevitable.

\(\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}\)
GAME 19
Peter Svidler
Veselin Topalov
Sicilian, English Attack B90

1.e4 c5 2.d3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.cxd4 g6 5.c3 a6

According to Svidler himself he had a dilemma here, seeking to reach the English Attack (in which he is a big expert) but, unfortunately for him, there is no move order to force Black into it. On 6.f3 Black can opt for 6...b6, with a completely different line, which Svidler (again according to his words) was not fully familiar with.

Therefore he chose:
6.e3
But here too Black can disturb White’s set-up.
6...g4
Topalov’s choice is somewhat surprising. For many years he has been happy to face the English Attack. It seems the problems outlined by Leko (Game 1) are yet to be solved (or maybe Polgar’s game against Kasimdzhanov impressed him, like everyone else). Svidler, for his part, landed in a strange situation. Firstly, he was not expecting this from Topalov, and therefore did not prepare specifically for this line. Secondly, this line is part of Cheparinov’s repertoire, while Topalov plays it only rarely – this is enough to make Svidler suspicious. The question is whether one of the favourites for the World Championship would arrive without a novelty hidden up his sleeve? We’ll soon find out who is the hunter and who is the victim.

7.g5 h6 8.h4 g5 9.g3 g7 10.h3 e5 11.d5

Back to the Kasimdzhanov – Anand line, which impressed everybody. Most top players are very versatile, and so when they come across an interesting idea (such as that of Kasimdzhanov) they can immediately make use of it in their own games during the same tournament!

Later on in the tournament, we will learn that Svidler could also have played 11.f3 as he did against Polgar. Against Topalov, however, who was among the pioneers of this line from the white side, he prefers a different road.

11...xf5 12.exf5 b6 13.d5 e6 14.e3

For deeper investigation, the reader could refer to Kasimdzhanov – Anand (Game 15). For now we’ll just point out that this move order (without exchanging on e6 first) is relatively rare. What is its purpose? As a secondary idea, White refrains from opening the f-file for Black. But the main point is to keep ‘g6’ under control, depriving the knight of its typical manoeuvre (...g6-f4). Indeed, the idea is pretty similar to the one Kasimdzhanov executed against Anand.

14...a5

A first indication that Anand’s suffering after playing without an active plan is not going to be repeated today. This check has been tried in the past, but mostly with other plans in mind. It is worth noting that the only previous game that featured exactly the same idea was played by Cheparinov, Topalov’s second in this tournament.

This game was crucial for Black’s choice of today’s opening: 14.fx e6 fxe6 15.e3 a5+ 16.c3 b3+ 17.xf3 xc3+ 18.d1 xb3 19.xc1 xc1 20.xc4 xa2 21.wf6 b1 22.xe6+ f8 23.xd6+ g7 24.d3 and Cheparinov (having the white pieces) won in “a tournament somewhere in Spain” according to Topalov. Well, the game was Cheparinov – Ibarra Jerez, Roquetas de Mar 2000. However, Topalov also said it was played by his assistant more than once, and this/those game(s) do not appear in the databases. An interesting detail...
Moreover, Cheparinov was also the one to conduct all the analysis, preparing a surprise for Svidler. A surprise that will give Topalov a huge practical advantage in such an important game.

The problem is that the position now is not exactly the same one they prepared (without the exchange on e6). So Topalov was taking his time to make sure the idea works in this move order as well.

But let's leave Topalov's ideas for later, and discuss another important point - is Svidler's move order important? On most occasions Black did nothing special to react to this move order. Once, however, Emil Sutovsky tried to make the point that White's move order may have a downside. He played 14...\textit{f}b6!? and now White does not have 15.\textit{f}xd6? since the pawn on e6 is not attacked, which would allow Black to continue 15...\textit{f}xb2, when after the forced line 16.\textit{f}d1 \textit{f}d8 17.\textit{f}c5 \textit{d}d7! 18.\textit{f}c4 \textit{e}c3† White's position has trouble written all over it.

Therefore, in that game White continued 15.\textit{f}xe6 and after 15...\textit{b}4†? (weaker seems to be 15...\textit{f}xb2 16.\textit{b}1) 16.\textit{c}3 \textit{f}xb2 17.\textit{e}c2? Black had a serious advantage, A. Sokolov - Sutovsky, Aghia Pelagia 2004.

Could it be that Topalov and Svidler simply were not aware of this game? Topalov was, spending a decent amount of time checking this line, and preferred to avoid it and not deviate from his home preparation. Svidler, however, admitted learning about Sutovsky's game only afterwards, which sounds suspect, as he could not have been going to such an important game without knowing the line he might play. It seems more likely that Sokolov's play can be improved. For example with 17.\textit{c}1?.

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
& & & & \\
\hline
\textit{f} & \textit{f} & \textit{f} & \textit{f} & \\
\hline
\textit{e} & \textit{e} & \textit{e} & \textit{e} & \\
\hline
\textit{d} & \textit{d} & \textit{d} & \textit{d} & \\
\hline
\textit{c} & \textit{c} & \textit{c} & \textit{c} & \\
\hline
\textit{b} & \textit{b} & \textit{b} & \textit{b} & \\
\hline
\textit{a} & \textit{a} & \textit{a} & \textit{a} & \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

Black has to choose:

a) 17...\textit{xa}2 18.\textit{exf}7† (weaker is 18.\textit{d}5 0–0 with a serious initiative for Black) 18...\textit{xd}7 19.\textit{e}2 0–0 20.0–0 \textit{ad}8 21.\textit{c}4 with good compensation for the pawn.

b) 17...\textit{fxe}6 18.\textit{\text{e}}2 \textit{a}3 19.\textit{h}5† \textit{e}7 20.\textit{e}2 and again, the initiative is clearly worth a pawn, and probably much more.

Amazing, so few moves and so many events! To sum up, Svidler's idea of keeping g6 under pawn control, and possible pawn sacrifices later, is very interesting. It is not his fault that this plan was overshadowed by his opponent's idea! 15.\textit{c}3

Afterwards the Russian grandmaster admitted considering 15.\textit{d}2, as he felt there was a trap prepared for him somewhere. But he made a brave call to enter his opponent's territory, having faith in his position, and mainly in himself. This decision is typical of Svidler - if he believes in a position, he trusts himself to find the right solution during the game, even if it is clear that his opponent has analysed it at home. Here, after 15...\textit{xd}2† 16.\textit{xd}2, neither side can think of any advantage.

15...\textit{xf}3†
for a rook and a pawn – this must be a problem for Black in some positions.

16...\texttt{xf3}

Interesting complications arise after the ugly 16.gxf3, which seems to be losing to:

16...\texttt{xc3}+ 17.bxc3 \texttt{xc3}+

White now has to part with material. Topalov claimed that this leads to unclear positions, but in fact everything looks quite clear:

18.d2

Even worse is 18.e2 \texttt{d4}+ 19.xd4 xd4 20.d1 b2+ 21.d2 b5+ 22.e1 b1+ 23.d1 b4+ 24.d2 c8 and White is in trouble.

18...\texttt{xa1}+ 19.d1

Weaker is 19.d1 \texttt{xd1}+ 20.xd1 e5 killing the bishop, just like in the old classic: “The Torture of Bogoljubow” performed by J.R. Capablanca.

19.d4 20.g2 xf5

White has no apparent compensation for the sacrificed material.

16...\texttt{xc3}+ 17.d1 \texttt{a4}+

In fact only this is really new, improving over Cheparinov’s game.

The original idea 17...\texttt{xb2} is quite possible. Here we can see another reason why the move order chosen by White on move 14 is not helping, as 18.fxe6 trying to attack (and transposing into Cheparinov’s original game) would allow the intermezzo 18...\texttt{a4}+ (instead of 18...fxe6) 19.c2 fxe6 with the exact same position as in our game. Topalov apparently did not want any adventures and chooses the simpler move order.

18.c2

The only way to get winning chances and also deprive Black of playing with a perpetual in hand.

Too dangerous is 18.c1 \texttt{xb2}! 19.xb2 b4+ 20.c1 d4 21.d1 (21.c2? loses on the spot to 21...c8) 21...c8+ (there is a perpetual, for those interested: 21...c3+ 22.b1 b4+) 22.c4:
The attack ends after 22...\textit{bxc4}t 23.\textit{dxc4} \textit{xc4}t 24.\textit{d2}.

Also after 22...e5 23.\textit{d2}! \textit{xc4}t 24.\textit{xc4} \textit{xc4}t 25.\textit{d1} Black is going to miss that rook.

But very strong is 22...\textit{c3}t 23.\textit{b1} \textit{xc4} 24.\textit{xc4} \textit{xc4}. White is unable to untie himself and Black has a draw, but no more. White should play 25.a3! and now Black must find 25...\textit{e2}! (on 25...0-0 or other developing moves White answers with 26.\textit{a2}! terminating Black's attack) 26.\textit{c2} \textit{b5}t with a perpetual.

18...\textit{xb2} 19.\textit{fxe6}

Transposing into "the Cheparinov position". In all the previous lines we could see that White does not benefit (rather the opposite is true, in fact) from the pawn still being on f5, and this is what Topalov was checking at the beginning. And as we have seen, he made the right decision.

19...\textit{fxe6}

20.\textit{b3}?

Forcing an endgame, and thus reducing the complications. A very practical way to deal with a complex novelty. In more relaxed conditions, however, it is possible to find a more powerful approach.

Very strong was 20.\textit{c1}! and now:

a) 20...\textit{xa2}? leads to an immediate loss: 21.\textit{e4}! and Black can only choose how to sac his king:

a1) 21...\textit{d5} 22.\textit{xd5} \textit{exd5} 23.\textit{b1} and White wins.

a2) 21...\textit{e7} 22.\textit{c4} d5 23.\textit{xa2} dxe4 24.\textit{b1} and the ending is lost for Black.

a3) 21...\textit{e5} 22.\textit{xe5} dxe5 23.\textit{c4} 0-0-0t 24.\textit{e2} with resignation.

b) Equally unpleasant is 20...\textit{xc1} 21.\textit{f6}! (21.\textit{xc1}? \textit{xc2}t? 22.\textit{xc2} \textit{d4}t 23.\textit{d2} \textit{xf3}t 24.\textit{xf3} e5! and the bishop on g3 is dying, together with White's position)

21...\textit{b2} (21...\textit{d7} 22.\textit{xc1} \textit{xa2} 23.\textit{e2} and White is first to reach the enemy monarch) 22.\textit{xb2} with a position similar to the game, only with queens, which benefits White as it increases his attacking potential.

c) The strongest is probably 20...0-0-0 and White can choose whether he should play 21.\textit{b3} \textit{xb3} 22.axb3 \textit{xc1} 23.\textit{xc1}, which leads to the same position as in the game, only now the knight is not stuck in the corner, whereas Black has castled long, which it not necessarily to his benefit either; or 21.\textit{g4} which seems even better. After 21...\textit{g4}t (21...\textit{xa2}? 22.\textit{c4}) 22.\textit{hxg4} \textit{xc1} 23.\textit{xc1}
Black has a weakness on h6 in addition to the problems of the previous variations. As we shall see, even the game version is not too great for Black, but here he would really suffer. Therefore, theoretically, Topalov's novelty certainly has problems, but this has little to do with a practical game.

20...\textit{exb3} 21.axb3 \textit{hal} 22.\textit{xxal}

A very complicated endgame has arisen, although White has no objective reason to worry. As Svidler himself put it nicely – the fact of White being "objectively" better has no influence on the game, as it will only tell much later, after both sides play perfectly. Here it is not a typical "better" position, where you have a clear and pleasant game. For this White will have to sweat a lot, just like Black. And we should not forget the time factor, which favours Black as he did not have to face a novelty in the opening.

So what are the plans? First and foremost – bring the knight back into the game and complete development. Then, using his greater number of pieces, attack one of Black's pawns, forcing it to move and then blockade it. If he makes it this far, White will have neutralized his opponent's pawn majority. After that, it is all easy. Again, outnumber the defender by attacking his already-stationary pawns and laugh all the way to the crosstable. Naturally, Black is well aware of all this and will try to develop his initiative as fast as possible, before White coordinates his forces. His general direction should be to open the position as much as possible and make use of the open c-file. Then either White will have to forget about active plans, while trying to defend his weaknesses, or he will have to accept complications, where Black's better development can be significant.

22...\textit{e7} 23.\textit{d3}?! Imprecise, and it could have allowed Black to grab the advantage. After the game Topalov suggested an improvement in \textit{New In Chess}.

23.\textit{xc2} \textit{bac8}

There is no point in 23...\textit{xa5} since after 24.b4 the knight has to retreat as 24...\textit{xb3}? loses to 25.\textit{xc4}.

24.h4

This does look threatening at first glance, but it is not entirely clear what the threat is. Did Topalov really reveal a remedy against his novelty? We do not think so. True, the pressure along the h-file is annoying, the knight cannot enter c4 (\textit{xc4} ...\textit{xc4} and after \textit{hxg5} the rook on h8 is hanging) and he cannot leave the h-file to White.

Also bad is 24...\textit{g4} 25.h5! (adding another weakness to White's basket), but... Black is not zugzwanged! We think that now 24...\textit{xa5}

is in order and after

25.b4

the hyperactive knight gives White a nasty headache:

25...\textit{xb3}!
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a) The knight cannot be caught with 26.hxg5 hxg5 27...hxh8 28...c4 Bh1† 29...e2 Qc1† and after the forced exchange: 30...d2 b5 31...d3 Qxd3 32...xd3 Black reaches his dream position (the rook is in enemy territory, White no longer has two bishops) where his advantage is beyond doubt.

b) White’s rook cannot help either: 26...gh3 g4! as 27...ixd6 (on 27...gh1 Black plays 27...h5) 27...Qxd6 28...xb3 ghf8 allows Black to seize the initiative.

c) Therefore, White must switch to a more quiet game, but it is not easy to develop. For example, 26...f3 a5 27.bxa5 Qxa5 28...f2 g4!? 29.fg4 Qc4 and Black’s strong central pawns make White’s position questionable. In fact, this is one of the main drawbacks of h3-h4: after the pawn sacrifice on g4 the two runners in the centre are rather intimidating.

d) Thus it seems that White should try to develop without f3. After 26...d3 Ec3 White’s chances do look slightly better.

No less interesting than Topalov’s 24.h4 is 24.f3, intending to manage without h4 at all. After 24...Qa5 25.bxa5 Qxa5 26...f2 White has a better version of the game (the knight is breathing) and therefore is better in general.

23...Eac8?!

A very natural move, fighting against White’s attempts to release his knight from the corner, but it leads to a complicated game where White keeps his advantage.

The immediate 23...Ed4 is worse. After 24.f3 Eac8 25...f2 the knight is expelled from the centre.

The point Black missed here, however, is a totally different approach. Keeping the knight on a1 is not only useful for aesthetics reasons, it also prevents it from attacking important squares (like b4). Black could take the advantage of it with 23...Ed4!.

Here Grischuk (www.chesspro.ru) suggested 24...g6 Ee6 25...e4 d5 26...b1 a5 27...c2 Ec6 28.Ee1 with an unclear game, although Black is better placed than he was in the game. But what if we (after 24...g6) switch the move order?

24...a5!

Threatening to open another line for the rooks, allowing them to attack the white pieces from the flanks. In the spirit of the position would be:

25...Ec2

Otherwise Black keeps pushing his a-pawn.

25...Ee6 26...h5

26...xb4 Qxg6 27...c2 e5! (without the light-squared bishop this is already possible) Now ...b5 will follow (which would have been met with Qd4 before) and the only question is whether White can hold.

26...Bh8

Black has a good position. For example:

27...xb4

27...e3 Ec3 28...e2 Ee7 29...b1 b5 and again Black seems fine.

27...AXB4 28...Ee1 Ec3

With a clear advantage.

Another possibility is 24...e4 d5 25...f3, but now 25...Ed3† becomes possible, and either 26...d2 Qf4 27...e1 Qd6 28...c2 e5 with a pleasant edge for Black. Safer is therefore 26...Ec2, where Black will play 26...Qf4, as 26...e5 leads to
an equal position after 27.\texttt{Be}3 \texttt{Bd}8 28.\texttt{Be}2 e4 29.\texttt{Bxd}5+! \texttt{Bxd}5 30.\texttt{Bxe}4 \texttt{Bhd}8 31.\texttt{Bxd}5 \texttt{Bxd}5. So after 26...\texttt{Bf}4! 27.\texttt{Bxe}1 \texttt{Bxd}6 Black will have similar ideas to after 26.\texttt{Bd}2

24.\texttt{Bxe}1

Svidler is playing in distinctly solid style. He believes his knight is getting out eventually and develops his other pieces in the meantime. A very logical approach.

Topalov mentions that 24.\texttt{Be}2 is not good because of 24...\texttt{a}a5, when after 25.\texttt{b}4 \texttt{Bc}4! Black has a nice initiative.

But GM Shipov improved the line.
25.\texttt{Be}4! e5 26.\texttt{b}4 \texttt{Bc}4 27.\texttt{Bf}5+ \texttt{Be}6 28.\texttt{Bc}2

Here he evaluates the position as “OK for White”. Apart from the fact that he wants more than OK, it is not all that simple here:
28...\texttt{h}5! 29.\texttt{h}4

Not the passive 29.\texttt{f}3 \texttt{Bb}2 30.\texttt{Bb}1 h4 31.\texttt{Bf}2 d5 without any play for White.
29...g4 30.\texttt{Be}3 \texttt{Bxe}3 31.\texttt{f}xe3

Apparenty even here it is White who is fighting for a draw. For instance:
31...d5 32.\texttt{e}4

Or 32.\texttt{Bd}2 e4 33.\texttt{Be}2 \texttt{Bc}6! and \texttt{b}4 is falling.
32...dxe4 33.\texttt{Bxe}4 \texttt{Bc}4 34.\texttt{Bxb}7 \texttt{Bxb}4 35.\texttt{Bxa}6 \texttt{Bxb}2+ 36.\texttt{Be}3 \texttt{Bxg}2

Black is not necessarily winning here, but White will surely have to work hard for a draw.

24...\texttt{Be}4

24...\texttt{a}a5 is now pointless, due to 25.\texttt{Bf}5 and e6 falls.

Keeping the knight imprisoned is virtually the only way to keep fighting for something.

25.\texttt{f}3

With a clear plan of driving the black pieces away, as they are taking way too much of White’s airspace. This is the soundest choice of all the alternatives.

Every commentator and even the computer (!) tries:
25.\texttt{Be}2

Sacrificing a pawn to get the knight back into the game.
25...\texttt{Bxb}3 26.\texttt{Bf}5

This position is crucial for the evaluation of the line. Now bad is 26...e5 27.\texttt{Bxc}8 \texttt{Bxc}8 28.\texttt{Bxe}3 \texttt{Bc}5 29.\texttt{f}3 and the three pawns are hardly enough to compensate for the piece. Much stronger is:
26...\texttt{Bc}5 27.\texttt{Bxe}6 \texttt{Bxe}6 28.\texttt{Bd}4 \texttt{Bf}7 29.\texttt{Bxe}6

Two options now caught our interest:
a) Grischuk suggested 29...\texttt{Bc}8 30.\texttt{Bxd}6 \texttt{Bd}8, and not 31.\texttt{f}3 \texttt{Bxd}6 32.\texttt{Bxd}6 \texttt{Bd}8 33.\texttt{Bc}5 b5 and
White is no longer in danger of winning, but 31.\(\text{Qf5}\)! and Black cannot untangle himself as taking on \(d6\) would drop \(b7\).

b) Black could play better with 29...\(b5\). There is nothing to be gained by 30.\(\text{Bxd6}\) (White should bail out with 30.\(\text{Bxd6 c4}\) 31.\(\text{Be5 f6}\) 32.\(\text{Bxa6 f5}\) with equality) 30...\(\text{Bd8}\) 31.\(\text{Qf5}\). In comparison with a previous variation, Black has an extra tempo (...\(b5\)) and it is an important one! He can now play 31...\(\text{Bxd6}+\) 32.\(\text{Bxd6}\) \(\text{Bxe6}\) 33.\(\text{Bc2}\) \(\text{Bd8}\). Only White can lose here!

25...\(\text{Bc3}\)

Topalov continues his way as well – disturb, sting, attack on every possible occasion. The final clash is inevitable.

26.\(\text{Qd2}\) \(\text{Bhc8}\)

This is the moment of the game.

27.\(\text{Bb1}\)?

A serious error, throwing away the advantage when it was close to decisive! Even more annoying is the fact that, prior to this, Svidler was playing really great – some minor inaccuracies cannot change that! But is it possible to play all the best moves in such an important game? Apparently not. Svidler, in the spirit of his previous moves, is preparing \(\text{Bc4}\), but it gives Topalov very precious time.

Stronger, almost decisive, was 27.\(\text{Bc4}\) \(\text{Bxc4}\)

28.\(\text{Bxc4}\) is met with 29.\(\text{Be4}!\) and Black cannot avoid the rook exchange. For instance:

29...\(\text{d5} 30.\text{Bg4}\) \(\text{Qc6}\) (the same position is reached after 30...\(\text{b5}\) 31.\(\text{Qf2}\) \(\text{Qf5}\) 32.\(\text{Bxc4}\) \(\text{dxc4}\) 33.\(\text{Qc3}\)

31.\(\text{Bxc4}\) \(\text{dxc4}\) 32.\(\text{Qc3}\) \(\text{b5}\) 33.\(\text{Qc2}\) This position is probably lost for Black. If the knights are traded, the win is trivial – the bishop alone will be able to hold all the black pawns (in this specific case!) and the king will simply penetrate. Keeping the knights on the board might lead to either Black losing all his pawns, or ending up in a very passive position protecting them. Practically it is perhaps easier to defend than attack here, but the evaluation does not change because of that.

So, Black is pretty much forced to go for 28...\(\text{Ba3}\), as Topalov was indeed planning. He even stated that, because of threats to \(g2\), White’s position is collapsing. Grischuk, however, had a different opinion, uncorking the magical 29...\(\text{Bh2}!\) (such a move is a hundred times more difficult to find than most attractive combinations!).

White has the strong threat of \(\text{Bg1}!\). Therefore Black is forced to play 29...\(\text{Ba2}+\) 30.\(\text{Qc3}\) and now:

a) 30...\(\text{e5}\)

This allows White to demonstrate the power of the bishop manoeuvre.

31.\(\text{Bgl}\) \(\text{Qe2}\)

31...\(\text{Bd7}\) protecting the knight, and renewing the threat of ...\(\text{Bg2}\). 32.\(\text{Bxd4}\) \(\text{exd4}\) 33.\(\text{Qxd4}\) \(\text{Bxg2}\) 34.\(\text{Bb1}\) \(\text{Qc7}\) (Black’s best drawing chances seem to lie in 34...\(\text{b5}\) 35.\(\text{Bb3}\) \(\text{Bg3}\) 36.\(\text{Be4}\) \(\text{Bxh3}\) 37.\(\text{Qd4}\) with good winning chances for White.

32.\(\text{Bb3}\) \(\text{Ed2}\) 33.\(\text{Qe3}!\) \(\text{Ed3}\) 34.\(\text{Bb4}\)

And 34...\(\text{Bxe3}\) is not really a threat, as after 35.\(\text{Qc2}\) White regains the material with a won position.
b) 30...\textit{Qxf}3 is met with 31.\textit{Qxd}6+ \textit{Qxd}6
32.gxf3 \textit{Bh}2 33.\textit{Db}3 \textit{Bxh}3 34.c5†, which gives White excellent winning chances.

27...\textit{B}3\textit{c}5

After escaping the previous potential trouble, Black's initiative is suddenly not so negligible and White's pieces are rather misplaced. White is not yet worse, but already not better.

28.b4 \textit{Bd}5 29.\textit{Bf}2

Not 29.\textit{Be}4? \textit{Qxf}3† 30.\textit{Qe}2 \textit{Ed}2† 31.\textit{Qxf}3 \textit{Ec}3† 32.\textit{Qg}4 \textit{Ed}4 33.\textit{Qe}1 \textit{Bxb}4 when Black is winning back the piece, with a winning position.

29...\textit{Qd}7

A strange move which could only be explained by Topalov himself. In many lines he considered h2-h4 to be White's best plan, and therefore he removed his king from the potential bishop check, so the pawn can be taken without wasting time. Prophylaxis in the middle of an extremely complex battle!

30.\textit{Be}3

Here, with time running out and having gone through enough adventures for one game, Svidler decides to call it a day with a repetition (the bishop returns to f2), while he still believes that his position is better. But Topalov decides that he wants to keep fighting!

A more constructive way to play was 30.\textit{Bb}2 intending to (finally) bring the knight into the game. White does not have anything special anymore - he has already missed his real chance. After 30...\textit{Qc}6 31.\textit{Bc}2 we have:

a) 31...\textit{Qe}5† 32.\textit{Bd}2 (32.\textit{Bf}1 is not too good, because of 32...\textit{Qxb}4! and White is falling apart) 32...\textit{Ed}5 with a draw.

b) With 31...\textit{Qe}5 Black can only get in trouble: 32.\textit{Be}4 \textit{Bb}5 33.\textit{Cc}2 d5 34.\textit{Bd}3 and Black has nothing good. But considering Black's next decision in the game, it is not difficult to guess which path Topalov would have chosen.

30...\textit{Qf}5 31.\textit{Bf}2
The general feeling was that the game would soon be a draw, but then came the thunder:

31...\(\text{Nh4!!}\)

It is not common practice to award a move of questionable chess value, which could have landed Black right back in trouble, two exclamation marks, but he deserves them. If we could give more – he would get it. Courage, the will to fight no matter what – these are the real reasons for the Bulgarian's success. Topalov deserves full credit – he wants to win and is not afraid to take risks. The move itself is not too bad, as Black does not lose by force. He might experience difficulties, but the position would still be closer to a draw than a loss.

32.\(\text{Exh4 gxh4}\) 33.\(\text{Cc2}\)

The knight is eventually released, and Black has two more weaknesses now.

33...\(\text{h5?!}\)

This move justly drew sharp criticism from Topalov. The very deep idea is to prevent the knight from getting to \(g4\) via \(e3\), which could be important in some lines. But could it not be prevented when the threat becomes real?

33...\(\text{Bg8}\) is much more natural and logical: 34.\(\text{Dc3 Ed4}\) and after, for example, 35.b5 the position is similar to what could have happened in the game, with one tiny difference: both black h-pawns are alive. It is not clear whether both his h-pawns are so important, but why lose one for nothing?

34.\(\text{Bf1?!}\)

It seems that Black's decision to continue unbalanced Svidler, according to Topalov he was becoming visibly nervous with the approaching time control. That is probably the reason for this move – the idea of putting the rook on the \(4^\text{th}\) rank and destroying the \(h4\)-pawn makes sense, but it was better to do it another way.

Much stronger was 34.b5 which gives White some chances, but one should not exaggerate their extent. After 34...\(\text{axb5}\) (worse is 34...a5 35.\(\text{Bc1 Ba8}\) 36.\(\text{Ba4!}\) and White indeed gets a serious advantage) 35.\(\text{Dc3 Ed5}\) 36.\(\text{Dxh5+}\) \(\text{Fc7}\) the position is pleasant for White, but what are his chances of winning? After 37.\(\text{Bb4 Ba8}\) 38.\(\text{Ba4 d5}\) 39.\(\text{Exh4 b5}\)!

![Diagram](image)

Black gains some activity. If we continue the line a little bit: 40.\(\text{Cc2}\) (40.\(\text{Bb5}\) \(d4\) or 40.\(\text{Bb3}\) \(\text{Ba3}\) with similar ideas) 40...\(\text{Ba2}\), White is unable to win. For example, 41.Bf4? is not too good, because of 41...\(\text{Bg3}\) 42.f5 (preventing ...\(d4\)) 42...\(\text{Ed6}\) and suddenly White is in trouble.

34...\(\text{Bc8}\) 35.\(\text{Cc3!!}\)

A small mistake that does not yet lose the game, but forces White to play precisely in time trouble. This time a profound move backfires on Svidler – he was depriving the black rooks of the \(d4\)-square in some lines...

35.\(\text{Dc3 Ed4!}\) 36.\(\text{Cc3 Ed4}\) 37.\(\text{Be2}\) (Also possible is Grischuk's 37.\(\text{Bd1 Ec8}\) 38.\(\text{Bb3 d5}\) 39.\(\text{Bf1}\) with a sort of fortress. For example, 39...\(\text{Bc6}\) 40.\(\text{Cc2 Eb6}\) 41.\(\text{Ed4}\) and the win has gone with the wind.) 37...\(d5\) 38.\(\text{Bb3}\) Black will find it extremely hard to break through.

35...\(\text{a5}\)

Of course, no more repetitions here: 35...\(\text{Ec8}\) 36.\(\text{Bd2 Ed8}\) is a draw. Also Black has no interest in 35...\(\text{Exg2}\) 36.\(\text{Dc3 Ed3}\) 37.\(\text{Exd3 Eh2}\), as neither side can win here: 38.\(\text{Dd1 Eh3}\) 39.\(\text{Ec3 Eh2}\) (39...\(\text{Bc3!}\) 40.\(\text{Ed1}\) 40.\(\text{Ed2}\) With such a rook, Black cannot hope for anything.
The text move frees c5 for a rook check, and thus threatens to capture on g2. At the same time Black has in mind advancing the pawn to a4.

36...c4?

As always, a small mistake is followed by a bigger one. Svidler’s last three moves have not been ideal and have changed his position from marginally better to lost. The text is a simple blunder, but the ground for it had been prepared earlier.

Also 36...e2 axb4t 37...e4! fails to satisfy White, as g2 is falling.

But the ugly looking 36...bxa5! was in fact very strong.

36...gxg2 37...e3!

37...e3 does lose to 37...e5t escaping the fork.

37...c6t 38...b4

White survives after all, as his pieces threaten the enemy king now. For instance:

38...e2 axb4t 39...d5! h2 40...b5t...xb5

Giving up the central pawns would end Black’s ambitions.

41...xb5 xe3 42...c1! xf3+ 43...d4 h3

Even here White has to play precisely.

44...c7+...d8 45...c1!

Black cannot improve his position. For example:

45...f4t 46...b3 d5

Both 46...d7 47...c7+...d8 48...c1 and 46...h4 47...xd6 h2 48...xb7+...d7 49...h1 are clearly drawn.

47...d6 d7 48...xb7...c4 49...a1 h2 50.a6

And it is no longer clear who is playing for the win.

36...c8

All of a sudden it is over. White loses material and the game.

37...e3

What White missed on the 35th move is that after 37...b3 Black plays 37...a4+ winning a piece. Quite a normal **zeitnot** blunder for mortals, which is good news for the rest of us – these players are human!

37...b5!

This puts an end to White’s hopes.

Worse is 37...b5 38...d5...c4+ 39...d3 exd5 40.bxa5...d4 41...b1 and White is closer to a draw than in the game.

38...d3...b4 39...e6t

A nice try, but it falls just short.

39...e6 40...c2+...d5 41...xb4+...xb4

42...e7 b5 43...h7

43...b7...c3+ 44...d2...c5

43...c3+ 44...d2...c4!

The most precise and very human. Pawn endgames are the easiest for humans to calculate, even for the best of them. After 45...xh5t...c6 46...h8 b3 47...e8 b2 48...e1...c1 49...xc1+...bxc1=...d5 50...xc1...d5 the win is elementary.

0–1
1.e4 c5 2.d3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.exd4 d5 5.c3 a6 6.e2 e5 7.db3 e7 8.0-0 9.hl

The ideas of this position were discussed in Morozevich - Kasimdzhanov from the first round (Game 2).

9...id7?!

Kasimdzhanov deviates first and not in the best possible way. He wants to have a bishop on c6 rather than a knight (like in Game 2). This manoeuvre was tried by Kasparov in his match against Deep Junior, but apparently ideas that work fine against a computer are too artificial and lead to an unpleasant position against a well prepared human. This does not matter, of course, since Kasimdzhanov always gets unpleasant positions when playing Black against Adams, so why not do it straight from the opening?

10...ig5

Perhaps this should be played simply because it is possible, unlike on many other occasions when it is met with ...ixd4. This shows that placing the bishop on c6 has a few drawbacks:

1. It takes two tempi.
2. White can exchange it for a knight (from a5 or sometime d4) at a convenient time (and if Black captures with the pawn it will also weaken a6).

3. After Id5 taking on d5 with the f6-knight would put Black in a ridiculous situation, having to retract his own (long) steps with the bishop.
4. It allows ig5 with complete control of the d5-square (this idea is shown in the game).

No worse than the text is 10.e3 id6 11.f3. The point of White’s modest play is that it prevents Black from starting the ...e7-d5 break that was such a disaster for Black in Round 2.

After the more accurate 11...Ibd7 White plays 12.Id5, underlining the problems of Black’s plan. After 12...ixd5 13.exd5 Ixa4 14.Id2 h6 15.ib4 White enjoyed a clear advantage in Oll - Wojtkiewicz, Tallinn 1998.

10...id6

10...ixd4? does not work: 11.xe7 Ixc3 12.exd6 and Black can only regret putting a bishop on d7, which blocks the queen's influence on d6.

11.exf6 Ixf6 12.ic4

Chess practice in the last 50 years has proved that controlling d5 does not yield White anything real by itself (apart from good aesthetic feelings). He needs something else on the board – a weakness would be ideal.

12.ie7 13.Ie2

A very logical move. This is the right square for the queen.

13...id7 14.ifi Ihh8
Kasimdzhanov is showing his versatility. Although the Sveshnikov is not one of his openings, he handles this position in the same manner – simply ignoring White’s outpost on d5, finding other objectives. Compared to the Sveshnikov he has not created weaknesses on the queenside, but then White does not have the usual problems with a knight on a3.

14...b5 instead is not good, as after 15...d5 White gets a favourable bishop exchange and a clear target on b5.

15...d2 f6

Trying to start the counterplay immediately with 15...f5 16.exf5 xf5 17.de4 f6 18.f3 achieves the opposite effect – in such positions Black must have better activity as compensation for his d6 weakness and White’s control over the centre. And, what is more, here it is also covered tactically, since Black cannot break through: 18...d5? 19.xd5 xd5 20.xd5 1b4 regaining all the material with interest.

16.a4

The purpose of this standard-looking move is to continue his squeeze on the queenside and not so much to prevent ...b5. As we have already seen in Morozevich – Kasimdzhanov (Game 2), Black’s seemingly logical pawn thrust can become a boomerang if White is better organized on the queenside.

Black of course understands all this and even more – his dreams traverse to the kingside, and he begins with:

16...g6

Slowly preparing ...f5. This Boleslavsky/ Sveshnikov approach naturally does not surprise White. The surprise was probably the fact that this plan undoubtedly gives Black counter chances that compensate not only for his weaknesses, but also for the strange bishop manoeuvre in the opening.

17...b3

The active 17.b4 looks appealing, and reminds us of the game where Anand caught Kasparov off guard with such a surprising attack in their match in 1995. Here, however, the absence of the dark-squared bishop is significant. After 17...c8 White has severe problems on the c-file:

a) The immediate 18.b5 gives nothing after 18...axb5 19.xb5 (or 19.axb5 d7 20.f3 d6) 19...a8 and White’s initiative is suppressed.

b) A slow concentration of forces after 18...b3 is met by the vulgar 18...c7! with a forced line: 19.a5 b6! 20.bxc6 bxc6 21.xa6 xc3 22.xc8 xc8 23.a5 and here 23...a8! stops White’s threats with a material advantage.

c) Finally, the more accurate 18...b3 also does not work: 18...d7! 19.d4 b6 20.d5 xd5 21.xd5 c6, and again, Black’s counter chances against White’s weaknesses are at least as significant as White’s hopes.

17...c7 18.a5 d8 19.f1

19.a4 is not good because of 19...xa4 20.xa4 d5! and it is White who should look for equality.

19...h5 20.e3 g5

Both sides are executing their plans. White, as always, is busy with d5, and he has succeeded there. Black minds his own business: ...f5 in particular and the kingside in general.

21.ed5 b8

This may not look good, but it prevents White from developing a strong initiative. The drawback, of course, is that Her Majesty will be missed in Black’s kingside attack.

The alternative was 21.d7, but here Black is clearly on the defensive, and Kasimdzhanov wants more:

22.b6 e8 23.d5!

Carrying out an important exchange.

23...f4
Problematic is 23...f5 24.exf5 \(\text{Qxf5} \) 25.g4 \(\text{Qxf5} \) 26.e4 \(\text{Qxd5} \) 27.Qxd5 and White is fully in charge. For instance, after 27...c6 he has a nice tactical shot: 28.Qxg5 Qxd5 29.Qxh7!.

24.Qxc6 \(\text{Qxe2} \)
24...Qxc6 25.Qc4
25.Qxe8 Qxc3 26.bxc3 \(\text{Qxe8} \)

With good chances for White thanks to the monster on d5. Black may possibly hold here, but he would rather have a life of his own.

22.Qd3?!

A multitasking move, both eyeing the kingside and possible doubling along the d-file. It is too multitasking to be good in this position, which demands more concrete play. Especially since Black is improving his position with every move.

Much more to the point was 22.Qh4 immediately, forcing Black to sweat if he wants to stay in the game:

22...Qh6 23.Qh4

Black is no longer able to regroup as he did in the game, but he has other resources.

23.f5

The preparatory 23...Qg7 also deserves attention, and after 24.f3 f5 25.exf5 \(\text{Qxf5} \) 26.g4 Qf4 27.Qxf4 Qxf4 Black has decent compensation, which however will be enough for equality at best.

24.exf5 Qxf5 25.Qe4

But not 25.g4? Qg5 26.Qh3 Qf4 27.Qg3 Qxd5 28.Qxd5 Qf4 and White will regret the weaknesses he created.

25...Qf4! 26.g4 Qxd5 27.gxf5 Qe7!

If White manages to dampen Black’s initiative then he will win, but it is not easy to do so.

In the line above the play remains sharp and Black is the one who has more worries. The main problem of the game move is that now it is White who needs to think a lot about his king without real counterplay.

22...Qg7

The knight on h5 only makes it harder to execute ...f5.

After 22...f5 curious complications arise, but Kasimdzhanov correctly assessed that they are mainly to White’s benefit:

23.exf5 Qxf5

Now White can play the precise:

24.Qad1 Qd8 25.f3

Black’s threats turn out to be insufficient, and White is about to start cynically picking on his opponent’s weaknesses. Whereas an attempt to artificially complicate matters with:

25...Qd8 26.Qe1 Qxa5

backfires after:

27.g4 Qxf3 28.gxh5

28.Qxf3? Qxf3 29.gxh5 Qh8! with a decisive attack.
It might seem that Black wins material, but after:

30.\texttt{\texttt{xd1 \texttt{xf1}\# 31.\texttt{xf1} 32.\texttt{xf1}}

White’s advantage is decisive.

23.\texttt{g4} e6

Black is already marginally better, and Adams hurries up, before it is too late.

24.\texttt{b6}!

Black is ready and his next move will definitely be f7-f5. This was a great opportunity for White to exchange as many pieces as possible and peacefully finish the game.

White senses this critical moment, but chooses another idea – he is simply forcing Black to make a move in time trouble. This idea worked well, but it could have been different!

Continuing a calm approach with 24.\texttt{ad1} was no longer possible, as after 24...f5 25.\texttt{exf5} gxf5 26.\texttt{g3} \texttt{d7}! Black gains a rather dangerous attack.

The best try was 24.\texttt{gh3} with the idea of reducing Black’s attacking potential after 24...f5 25.\texttt{g3} e8 26.\texttt{b4} \texttt{d8} with 27.\texttt{xc6} bxc6 28.\texttt{xe6} \texttt{exe6}, and White’s position has some drawbacks, but is much safer than it could have been in the game.

24...f5 25.\texttt{exf5} gxf5

26.\texttt{g3}

26.\texttt{d1} is not good: 26...\texttt{f4} 27.\texttt{g3} \texttt{h4} winning the exchange. Also 26.\texttt{h5} \texttt{xg2}! 27.\texttt{g1} \texttt{d5}! with dangerous threats along the g-file is unwanted. After the most tenacious 28.\texttt{g3} \texttt{g8} 29.\texttt{xd5} \texttt{xd5} 30.\texttt{xd5} \texttt{f4} 31.\texttt{f7} \texttt{xd5} 32.\texttt{xd5} \texttt{f4} 33.\texttt{g2} \texttt{c8} White is still going down.

26...\texttt{f4}

Settling for a draw. In view of the variations it seems that Black’s main consideration for ending the game peacefully was time.

However, he had a surprising resource in 26...\texttt{f6}!

26...\texttt{f4}

Settling for a draw. In view of the variations it seems that Black’s main consideration for ending the game peacefully was time.

26...\texttt{f4}

Settling for a draw. In view of the variations it seems that Black’s main consideration for ending the game peacefully was time.

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26...\texttt{f4}

Settling for a draw. In view of the variations it seems that Black’s main consideration for ending the game peacefully was time.
In this round we were becoming accustomed to the new pecking order. One player has raced so far ahead that the rest have little choice but to wait and hope for him to become exhausted and stumble. History has seen many such slips in crucial moments, but for now the chasers have to cope with continual disappointments.

The game Polgar – Topalov did not seem likely to be a very combative one. The Berlin is not a very promising opening at this level if you want to win with Black. Especially taking into account the Hungarian’s extensive experience in this line, where she even beat the almighty Kasparov. For Topalov, however, it worked well and he has to be credited for his opening choice. Although the Berlin is an important weapon in his arsenal, Topalov does not choose it very often. Apparently he came to the conclusion that this opening was most suitable for restricting Polgar’s best qualities. Her play was indeed anything but convincing – as early as move 20 White found herself in a slightly inferior position, but from there to a loss was still a very long way... or just one move – a big mistake by the Hungarian grandmaster. Following that fatal 20th move White’s play was full of inspiration and effort, but defeat could no longer be avoided. This was, unfortunately, the last straw: breaking the Chess Queen’s faith in a favourable tournament outcome.
A crucial game was played between Anand and Svidler. This game might answer a number of questions, especially regarding the identity of the main pursuer. After all, despite unimpressive play so far, Anand is Anand, and will inevitably come to his senses. For now, however, Anand's opening torpedo missed its target: he played into Svidler's hands going for the Marshall Attack, in which there are no secrets for the Russian, and we all know how well Svidler plays once he manages to survive the opening. Although it was Anand who introduced a novelty, it had already been analysed by Svidler in great depth! In his search to discover how profound Svidler's preparation was, Anand managed to uncover an exceptional prophylactic move and nearly scratched out an advantage after Black's inaccuracy. But Svidler did not repeat his previous round suicide, making all the best moves from that point onwards. At the end Anand could still try to play for a win, but there was nothing real and eyewitnesses will tell you that after the opening shock he considered the peaceful outcome as far from catastrophic. All in all, the game was full of slight nuances, but apparently was always near equality.

**Leko continues his torments**

Meanwhile Leko was continuing his torments in the Sveshnikov. His opponent, Kasimdzhanov, repeated the line Anand opted for against the Hungarian on a previous day — a rather typical situation for modern, fast-changing chess. But it was no problem for Leko, who never goes to bed with his homework unfinished. Black's reaction was tough, not only equalizing but even getting good prospects for an initiative. Alas, once again Leko's form failed to keep up with the level of his preparation and he found himself in a worse position. The opponent had nothing tangible, but he could press virtually forever. It sounds horrible for anyone but the Hungarian goalkeeper, who excels in technically difficult defence. All Kasimdzhanov's attempts were rebuffed by the poker-faced Leko. There are very few who are capable of combining defence and counterplay with such harmony.

**Morozevich**, a champion in rocking the boat, quite successfully confirmed his title. He even managed to drag the ultra logical Adams into a world of chaos. But that was just an impression, and in reality it was the “calm” Adams who decided to punish his opponent, impudently snatching the latter's pawn, and then added two rooks to go with it. However, that pleasure cost him a queen (that would be half a problem) and a central pawn (and that was already utterly unpleasant). In the arising irrational position White appeared to be slightly better, but Black's play was easier. In any case, despite a few inaccuracies, Adams made the draw fairly easily by sacrificing some material and building a fortress.

A new tendency can be observed at the end of the day — the rest seem to fear playing Topalov. And it is not just about his great talent, which is nothing new. In particular, he has simply stopped making mistakes, and in general is showing great technique. It is hard to pinpoint the player who could dispute his triumph.
1.e4 c5 2.d3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.exd4 c6 5.e5 e5 6.d2 a6 7.g5 a6 8.a3 b5 9.f5 e7 10.f6 11.c3 e8 12.d2 g5 13.a4 a6 14.xa6 a5 15.b4 b6 16.b2 g6 17.0-0 e4 18.d4 e7 19.e2 a5 20.axb5 g6 21.b4 h8 18.b4

Very brave – Kasimdzhanov adopts Anand’s methods twice: he both repeats his chess idea from the game against Leko, and picks up another player’s idea that was tested in the same tournament. This ability for quick adaptation is one of Anand’s strengths. But apparently it is not unique...

18...d7!

Here we go. Only one round later and Leko is ready with an improvement. What’s new? The pawn stays on a5 for now on, preventing the knight on c2 from joining the battle for d5. The question is whether d7 is the right square for the bishop.

The alternative was 18...e6, and it is interesting to retrace Leko’s preparation and understand why he chose a more careful idea.

Now the plan which happened in the game is less effective:
19.e2 axb4 20.cxb4 dxb4

Here it is already good to recapture with the knight (in contrast to the game).

21.b4
21.cxb4 cxb5 22.cxb5 cxb5 Again White’s compensation for the pawn is no more than sufficient.

21...c8! 22.d5
22...e6 is pointless as after 22...f6 White fails to achieve a position he would enjoy: without the d5-square he has nothing to hope for.

22...f5
Black is by no means worse.

Also 19.b5 does not get Black too depressed:
19...e7 20.e2 (20.d3 f5) and here Black could continue 20...c8 (weaker is 20...f5 21.dxe7 cxe4 22.dxe4 e7 23.exf5 gxf5 24.exd5 with advantage for White), when we have:

a) 21.ea1 f5 22.xa5 fxe4 23.d4 e3! 24.f3 e4! with a strong initiative for Black.

b) 21.dxc3 dxc5 22.d5 cxd3 23.d4 d5 24.exd5 White probably has compensation for the pawn, but not more than that.

So the conclusion seems to be that Anand’s idea is not dangerous for Black and Kasimdzhanov’s attempt to catch Leko unprepared have failed. For his part, Leko preferred the text move since after 18...e6 Black fights for equality, while in the game he tries for more.

19.e2

Those were the days... In former times, when this variation was taking its first steps, Karpov used to win these positions effortlessly by simply bringing his pieces into the centre (e2, d1), and lining up on Black’s weaknesses. We have come a long way since then and the evaluations of the position have undergone some serious reconsiderations. Today we can note that the evolution of the variation proves that if such plans are the best available in the position, then Black has nothing to worry about.

Very interesting (mostly for Black) is 19.a1 d8 20.d3 axb4 21.d6 d8 22.cxb4 with a position similar to our game. Here Black demonstrated how the Sveshnikov should be handled: 22...f5 23.exf5 gxf5 24.dxc6 dxc6 25.d4 d8 26.d1 f4 27.d4 f3
And the white king did not survive the onslaught, De Firmian – Schandorff, Denmark 1997.

A crucial continuation that will probably decide whether White has anything here is 19...b5, which is fairly typical for the position. Now Black has two choices:

a) The worse one is 19...e7 20.xe7! xe7 (or 20...xe7 21.xa5 f5 22.xa7 xe4 23.e3 and White is in control) 21.e2 b6 22.fal with a somewhat better position for White.

b) After 19...a7! things are different. We should now consider:

b1) 20.d3 xb5 21.a7 f5 Black manages to keep the tension all over the board, which is definitely to his benefit. 22.xa5 xe4 23.e4 (23.e2 ae6! with the idea 24.c4? xc3 winning) 23...c8 24.e3 ec5 25.d3 ec6 and Black is by no means worse.

b2) 20.a1 xb5 21.xb5 xb5 22.d4 What else? 22...xf4 (there is nothing wrong with 22...h6 either) 23.c4 edx5 (23...e5? 24.xf4!) 24.exd5 h4

This looks a bit strange – why would Leko transpose into a position similar to the one he had against Anand, which was bad for him? But it is not so simple. Here Black has a few extra tempi, and this is enough to give him good play. This is the essence of chess today – everybody knows everything and the question is who succeeds in executing his plan first.

20.cxb4, analogous to Anand – Leko, is now not so positive because of 20...f5 with typical Sveshnikov play where Black’s chances are not worse. White cannot even start pushing his b-pawn, as 21.b5 runs into 21...a5 22.d3 xe4 and the pawn is lost.

20.xxb4

The general perception here was that White’s advantage is very small, which is a price he has to pay for his very patient previous play. This, however, is an optical illusion, and the only correct part of it is the implication that Black should not lose such a position. And not because White’s advantage is not big enough, but because White has no advantage at all. Moreover, if White gets nothing real, his position tends to deteriorate, slowly but surely.

20...a5!

Very strong, leaving the white knights doing duplicate work.
21. \textit{B}f_a1

21. \textit{B}d_3 \textit{B}b_3! transferring the knight to a perfect position on c5.

21. . . .\textit{B}xc4 22. \textit{B}xc4

According to the principles of this opening, Black is better! White’s only chance is to take over the crucial squares (c6, d6), but Black clearly has enough resources to prevent this by improving his own pieces. Then Black will be the only one with a plan (...f5 and attack on the kingside). However, to succeed with his plan, Black needs his pieces actively placed. Therefore, Black will have to fight for every good square, for both defensive and offensive purposes.

22. . . .\textit{B}xc4 22. \textit{D}xc4

And Black errs immediately.


The problem is 23. \textit{D}a7! \textit{D}b5 (23. . . .\textit{f}xe4 24. \textit{D}xe4 and Black’s game is not developing smoothly, partly because White controls the seventh rank) 24. \textit{D}a2 \textit{f}xe4 25. \textit{D}c4 \textit{D}d7 (25. . . .c3 26. \textit{D}xb5 \textit{D}xg2 27. \textit{D}c4 \textit{D}ec8 28. \textit{D}g4 winning) 26. \textit{D}c2 and White is better, as he has managed to keep the black pieces passive.

However, Black had a very strong move: 22. . . .\textit{D}b5!, which leads to a better position after 23. \textit{D}c7 \textit{D}xc7 24. \textit{D}xc7 \textit{D}c4. The bishop pair accompanied by two active rooks are more important than controlling d5. e.g. 25. \textit{D}a4 \textit{D}c8 26. \textit{D}bd5 \textit{D}d3 and Black is clearly better.

Better looks 23. \textit{D}b3 \textit{D}c8!! Here Black has managed to improve his bishop, preventing White from penetrating into his position, and is about to start his plan. For example: 24. \textit{D}a7 \textit{D}d3 25. \textit{f}3 A pleasant weakening for Black. 25. . . .c4 26. \textit{D}d1 (or 26. \textit{D}c2 \textit{D}b7 27. \textit{D}f2 f5 with the initiative) 26. . . .b7 27. \textit{D}h1 f5

Only Black is playing here – he has a typical Sveshnikov initiative. So Leko missed his chance by making only one fairly minor mistake in the entire game! The penalty, however, is severe – he will have to fight for equality till the end of the game.

23. \textit{D}e2 \textit{D}c5

Now such moves are necessary: the problem is that he can no longer prevent White’s invasion along the seventh rank (as he would with a rook on b7). Black has lost the battle for activity.

Another important point in such positions is the profitability of exchanging one rook for
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Black, as we will see later. After this manoeuvre this exchange becomes impossible.

24...\textit{a7}!

A correct and timely response. Threats along the seventh rank will prevent Black from developing an initiative.

24...\textit{e6}

Leko is forced into more defensive play, which makes all the superficial assessments right – White is now marginally better, but Black has enough resources to hold.

The inaccuracy of Black's previous move is evident in the following natural line: 24...\textit{b5} 25...\textit{f3}! Now 25...f5 26...\textit{b7}! fxe4 27...\textit{h3} h5 28...\textit{aa7} and Black can safely resign. Therefore, Black had better keep his head down with 25...\textit{g8}, but after 26...\textit{h3} he can barely move.

25...\textit{h6}!!

Not seeing any possible active play for Black, Kasimdzhanov feels he has the luxury of making prophylactic moves. The problem is that White doesn't have much either, and there are possibilities that might never come back.

Therefore, if he is to achieve anything, White's should have acted more energetically: 25...\textit{b7} forcing Black to sweat a little bit.

Now bad is 25...f5, which allows White to demonstrate the ideas behind his last move with 26...\textit{aa7} and Black is helpless.

25...\textit{a5} also doesn't solve all Black's problems: 26...\textit{d1} and it is not clear how White can be distracted from his assault. For example: 26...\textit{a8} 27...\textit{b6} \textit{a1} 28...\textit{xd6} \textit{a4} 29...\textit{xa1} \textit{xa1}† 30...\textit{f1} and Black is far from equality.

He would probably have to try ideas similar to the game: 25...\textit{h6} intending to bring the queen into the action. For instance: 26...\textit{aa7} \textit{g5} with counterplay.

25...\textit{h6}!

The pressure on d5 looks critical. But was it possible to play ...f5 immediately? Apparently not: after 25...f5 White has 26...\textit{xf5}! and Black has to make a positional concession with 26...\textit{xf5}, because 26...\textit{gx5}? loses after 27...\textit{h5}.

Also 26...\textit{xd5} would not help after 27...\textit{xd5} \textit{xd5} 28...\textit{xf6} \textit{hxf6} 29...\textit{e4}! with an elegant win: 29...\textit{b6} 30...\textit{xd5} (30...\textit{xe6}?? \textit{xf2}† 31...\textit{h2} \textit{xf4}† 32...\textit{h1} \textit{xa7}) 30...\textit{xf2}† 31...\textit{h1} \textit{c1}† 32...\textit{d1}.

Therefore, Black continues searching for counter-chances by bringing the queen into the game.

Now White has to create a plan for the next phase. His only chance for something real lies in reaching d6 somehow, and this cannot be done before his second knight joins the game.

26...\textit{a6}

That's how this good idea was born. The knight draws a circle around its starting point, and ends up on b5 rather than b4, threatening black pieces in the process. It is interesting that transferring a knight to b5 is thematic in this structure, but usually the d5-knight is the one to travel to b5. In this case White hopes to arrange both his knights as best he can.
26...\textit{Ba}5

A very important move! As we mentioned, with only one rook in the game White's chances would greatly drop – he would no longer be able to attack with full force, and once the rook leaves the first rank it might be exploited by Black's counter-threats.

27...\textit{Ac}7 \textit{Bxa1† 28.\textit{Bxa1}}

28...\textit{Bc}8

A good decision – Black should not allow his important bishop to be exchanged, even to kick out White's d5-knight. After, for example, 28...\textit{Bg}5 29...\textit{Bxe6} \textit{fxe6 30.\textit{Bc}7 \textit{Bc}8 31.\textit{Bb}5!} White invades Black's weakened camp. 31...\textit{We}7 (31...\textit{Bxc}7? 32.\textit{Bb}8† winning) 32...\textit{Ba}7 with strong pressure. The alternative was 28...\textit{Bd}7 with positions similar to the game, but then the d6-pawn is more vulnerable.

29.c4 \textit{Bg}5 30.\textit{Bh}2 \textit{Bd}8

Leko's trademark is his great sense of danger. He immediately feels when he should be active, or when standing still is more suitable.

Too dangerous is 30...f5 31.\textit{Bb}5 \textit{Bd}8 32...\textit{Bb}8! and if 32...\textit{Bf}8, White answers 33...\textit{Bc}3! and Black is going down. This reminds us of classic games such as Smyslov – Reshevsky, Moscow 1948, in which such an exchange finished the game. 33...\textit{Bxe}3 34...\textit{fxe}3 leaves Black without material.

Yet even worse is 32...\textit{Be}6 33.\textit{exf}5 \textit{gx}f5 34.\textit{Bxd}6! \textit{Bxa}8 35.\textit{Bxe}5† \textit{Bg}7 (35...\textit{Bg}7

36.\textit{Bxe}6 \textit{Bf}8 37.\textit{Bf}7† \textit{Bxf}7 38.\textit{Bxf}7 and White wins) 36.\textit{Bxe}6 \textit{Bg}6 37.\textit{Bd}7! and Black is helpless.

31.\textit{Bb}5

Both white knights are optimally placed, but what's next? Black can easily protect d6 or f7 (after White's \textit{Ba}7). Black only has to avoid exchanging the bishops, and, as in any position, beware of tactics.

31...\textit{Bf}8 32.\textit{Bf}3

The wrong move order. Better was 32...\textit{Ba}7! and Black would have a lot of work to do, especially since 32...f5 is strongly met by 33...\textit{f}4! with a heart attack after 33...\textit{exf}4 34.\textit{Bb}2† \textit{Bd}8 35.\textit{Bb}6†.

Therefore Black must play 32...\textit{Be}6, but after 33.\textit{Bc}7 \textit{Bd}7 White has the thematic 34.\textit{Bb}6!, keeping his advantage. How can Black save the bishop?

There is no solution in 34...\textit{Bc}6 35.\textit{Bf}3 \textit{Bh}6 36.\textit{Bb}5 (36...\textit{Bf}8! and wins) 36...\textit{Bxd}5 (36...\textit{Bb}8 37.\textit{Bb}5 \textit{Bd}8 38.\textit{Bc}7! and Black is helpless) 37.\textit{Bxd}5 with White in full control after 37...\textit{Be}2 \textit{Bf}4† 38.g3 \textit{Bh}6 39.\textit{Bb}5 \textit{f}4 40.\textit{Bxd}7 \textit{Bxd}7.

However, after 34...\textit{Be}6 the struggle continues. For example: 35.\textit{Bf}3 \textit{Bf}4† 36.\textit{Bxf}4 \textit{exf}4 and Black will probably be able to hold, but with a few obstacles on the way.

32...\textit{Bf}5!

As opposed to the other move order, this is very strong and White has no remedy against it.

33.\textit{Bb}7 \textit{Be}6 34.g3
This position is hard to play for both sides. White still has a fraction of his advantage, but has no direct plan. For now he frees his d5-knight by preventing a queen exchange if it leaves.

34...fxe4?!

More precise would be to just wait with something like 34...b8 when White cannot improve his position.

35.\( \text{Qf}6 \)

Before the complications end the players negotiate about the future - if the situation continues to be "two bishops against the d5-square" there will be no winning hopes for White.

From this point of view, the last chance was 35.\( \text{Qf}6+ \text{Qxf6} \) 36.\( \text{Qxf6} \text{g7} \) 37.\( \text{Qxe4} \text{Qxc4} \) 38.\( \text{Qxd6} \text{g8} \) 39.\( \text{Qxf7}+ \text{Qxf7} \) 40.\( \text{Qxf7} \). Here White could torture his opponent until move 80 (and we all know at least one Bulgarian player who would), but Kasimdzhanov does not even want to try.

35...\( \text{g8}! \)

Preventing the mate and with it White's last hopes for an advantage.

36.\( \text{Qxe4} \text{Qf5} \) 37.\( \text{Qe2} \)

White has nothing after 37.\( \text{Qxf5} \text{gxf5} \) 38.\( \text{Qf6} \text{g7} \) 39.\( \text{Qxg8} \text{Qxg8} \) 40.\( \text{a6} \) (40.\( \text{e3} \text{e4} \) 41.\( \text{d5} \text{e5} \text{is alsoequal}) 40...d5.

37...d5 38.\( \text{cxd5} \text{Qxd5} \) 39.\( \text{Qbc3} \text{g8} \)

This position is worth half a point each and it is not clear who has a hundredth of a point more. Perhaps in the final moves it was Leko who wanted to test his opponent's state of mind.

40.\( \text{h4} \text{g7} \) 41.\( \text{e3} \text{f8} \) 42.\( \text{g2} \text{e6} \) 43.\( \text{c7} \text{V2-V2} \)
A classical position in the Sicilian. Here White is not trying to immediately push his pawns in the direction of the enemy’s king, but rather builds up pressure in the centre, and sometimes might even consider playing on the queenside (provided that Black has weakened himself there, of course). It is therefore little wonder that positional players like to handle the Scheveningen in such a way. Morozevich, on the other hand, is no novice in this position, having experience with both colours.

9.f4

Here Black has a wide range of possible plans.  
1) Play 9..a6 and enter the main lines as were featured in the titanic Karpov – Kasparov clashes in the mid 80’s. 
2) The text move, which leads to similar play to 9...a6, except with a small but significant difference: no a7-a6 and a2-a4. 

3) A line that seems to offer Black quite a straightforward way to equality, 9...e5. 

9...d7

Black’s idea is clear and simple: capture on d4 and place a bishop on c6. This “clear idea” was not so clear until Viktor Korchnoi discovered it. It seems natural that Morozevich should feel comfortable with Korchnoi’s ideas. 

A conceptually different idea is 9...e5?. Although this promises Black an equal game the variation is not the most popular. The reason is probably the lack of real winning chances. If Black wants to make a draw out of the opening, why play the Sicilian? There are other, less risky, openings to do so.

10...d5

Less successful is 12...d3 d5 13.e5 dxe5 14...dxe5 dxe5 15...dxe5 dxe5 16.g3 f6 and Black was at least OK in Malakhov – Rublevsky, Poikovsky 2005.

Black equalizes with the typical: 

12...d5 13.e5 dxe5 14...dxe5 dxe5 15.c4 g5!

16.g3 h4

Quite a few games have ended here with a draw by repetition.

10.h1

This move is a typical prophylaxis against future tactics along the opened diagonal. In the meantime White wants to see what his opponent’s plans for the future are, and then react accordingly.

Morozevich has had this position with White and after 10...d5 e8 the game ended abruptly in a draw, Morozevich – Damljanovic, Bled (ol) 2002.
This had nothing to do with the position and everything to do with the fact it was the final round of the Olympiad.

Another plan at White's disposal is $10.\text{Be}1$ transferring the queen to the kingside: $10...\text{Qxd4}$
$11.\text{Qxd4} \text{Cc6} 12.\text{Qg3} \text{g6} 13.\text{Qd3} \text{Qd7} 14.\text{Qh1}$
$\text{Sh4} 15.\text{Qh3} \text{e5} 16.\text{Qe3} \text{exf4} 17.\text{Qxf4} \text{Qe5}$
$18.\text{Qxe5} \text{dxe5} 19.\text{Qad1} \text{Qg5} 20.\text{Qc4}$ with advantage to White, J. Polgar – Zvjaginsev, Las Vegas (4) 1999.

However, the most direct and probably the best way to counter Black's plan is by retreating the knight with $10...\text{Qb}3$. This is despite the fact it is a concession: White does need the knight in the centre for future play, wherever it takes place. For example: $10...\text{Cc8} 11.\text{Qe1} \text{a6} 12.\text{Qg3} \text{b5} 13.\text{Qd3}$
$\text{Cc7} 14.\text{Qae1} \text{Qd8} 15.\text{Qh1} \text{g6}$ with a typically solid position for Black, Nataf – Movsesian, Ohrid 2001.

$10...\text{Qxd4} 11.\text{Qxd4} \text{Cc6} 12.\text{Qad1} \text{Cc7}$

$12...\text{a6}$ is a possible addition, leading to similar positions to the game, only with the insertion of $...\text{a6}$ and $\text{a4}$. It weakens $\text{b6}$, but it takes care of $\text{b5}$.

Swings and roundabouts...

$13.\text{Qf3} \text{Qd8}$

$14.\text{Qc4}$

The beginning of the conflict – until now both players have not paid any special attention to each other's play. The threats now are $\text{Qd5}$ and $\text{Qb5}$.

$14...\text{Qac8} 15.\text{Qb5}$

Not $15.\text{Qxa7}$. This time, as opposed to Morozevich's previous round game vs. Polgar (Game 18), the pawn on $\text{a7}$ is immune, as now the bishop gets caught: $15...\text{b6} 16.\text{Qa6} \text{Qd7}$ and 'Hasta la vista, baby'.

$15...\text{Qd7}$

The attempt to grab a pawn with $15...\text{Qxb5}$
$16.\text{Qxb5} \text{Qc2}$ does not work out too well after $17.\text{Qc1}$, and the queen is in trouble. After $17...\text{a6}$
$18.\text{Qxb7} \text{Qd3} 19.\text{Qg1} \text{Qxc1} 20.\text{Qxc1} \text{Qf8} 21.\text{e5}$
White is in full control.

$16.\text{Qxa7} \text{Qd5}!$

The point behind Black's plan! White is pretty much forced to part with his lady, as retreats are mainly interesting for Black.

$17.\text{Qxc8}$

$17.\text{Qc2} \text{Qc4} 18.\text{Qf2} \text{Qxf1} 19.\text{Qxc8} \text{Qxc8}$
$20.\text{Qxf1} \text{Qd4}!$ Threatening three(!) pawns simultaneously, meaning that at least one is about to fall with a continuing initiative for Black.

If $17.\text{Qd4}$ then Black keeps attacking the queen: $17...\text{Qc4} 18.\text{Qd3} \text{Qxe4}$ and the dark forces are taking over.

$17...\text{Qxc8} 18.\text{Qxc8} \text{Qxe4} 19.\text{Qxe7+} \text{Qxe7}$

After a forced series of moves, White has two rooks for a queen. Generally speaking, with both kings safe, the rooks are supposed to be better than the queen, but here there are two factors which contest this superficial evaluation:

1. Black has a strong centre, greatly limiting the rooks.

2. Against Morozevich you should never base your conclusions on "general principles".
All in all, the position is about equal, but is a bit easier for Black to play as his pieces coordinate better.  

20.c4

White has a pawn majority on the queenside, and quite naturally wants to play there. His last move also prevents Black from enforcing his hold on the centre.

20...h5!

Black is beginning to play on the kingside. As we said in a previous note, king safety favours the rooks, so Black is going to change that. Curiously enough, 20 moves from now the situation will change 180 degrees.

21.b3

21.b4 is still too early, as after 21...hxg3 22.hxg3 d5 23.c5 bxc5 24.a3 a4 White's queenside pawns turn out to be just weak.

The attempt to kick Black from his ruling position with 21.ed4 allows him to develop a dangerous initiative: 21...hxg3 22.hxg3 e5 23.fxe5 dxe5 24.ed1 e4! 25.he3 (Or 25.hf1 dxe4 and the e-pawn, soon to be supported by its f-colleague, is extremely dangerous, not to mention the headaches a + combination can cause White's king.) 25...dxe4 26.a3 f5 and Black is clearly better.

21...h4

21...hxg3 would be too early:

22.hxg3

22.gxh4 covering e4 for good is playable in some lines, but here the weakening of the king is significant, and could be answered with 22...h4 followed by ...d7 and ...h5.

22...d5

Intending ...f5, while after 22...e5 White has an important tempo (compared to 21.ed4) after 23.fxe5 dxe5 24.d5. Without the knight only Black will have worries here.

23.f5!

White is better.

22.ed4
22.\texttt{h3} was worth considering, as after 22...\texttt{xf3} 23.\texttt{Exf3} \texttt{Qe4} White can finally begin his play on the queenside: 24.a4 \texttt{Wf6} (24...\texttt{f5} 25.a5 \texttt{Wc7} 26.\texttt{b6} \texttt{Wc6} 27.\texttt{h2} with a balanced position) 25.\texttt{f2} with an unclear position.

22...d5

The point is that now 22...\texttt{xf3} no longer works: 23.\texttt{Sxf3} e5 24.fxe5 \texttt{dxe5} 25.\texttt{Sxh4} and it is not the pawn itself that's so important, but the squares it was controlling.

23.\texttt{cxd5}

23.\texttt{Sxe4} \texttt{Sxe4} 24.\texttt{cxd5} exd5 25.\texttt{Sxd5} is dangerous for White, as Black quickly gets to the king. 25...h3 26.\texttt{Se5} \texttt{Sd7} (threatening ...\texttt{hxg2t} followed by ...\texttt{Wg4t}) 27.f5 (not 27.\texttt{Sxe4??} \texttt{Wc6!} and White can resign) 27...\texttt{Wc6} and Black is quite clearly in the lead.

23...\texttt{exd5} 24.h3

As we have seen in the previous line, White cannot allow the pawn to h3.

24...\texttt{Wc7}

25.\texttt{Sf2}

It is hard to explain why Adams did not fight for the c-file. Much more logical is 25.\texttt{Sc1} \texttt{Sd6} (or 25...\texttt{wa5} 26.\texttt{Sxe4} \texttt{Sxe4} 27.a4 \texttt{Qg3t} 28.\texttt{Sf2} \texttt{Sb6} 29.\texttt{Sd3} \texttt{Sb4} 30.\texttt{Sf2!} and White's position is much better than in the game) 26.\texttt{Sxe4} \texttt{Sxe4} 27.\texttt{Sd1} \texttt{Wg6} 28.\texttt{Sf2} \texttt{Sg6} 29.\texttt{Sd4d3} and the game should end in a draw.

25...\texttt{Qc3!}

Now the queen will show all its might; the rooks are way too slow to keep up.

26.\texttt{Sg1} \texttt{Wc2} 27.\texttt{Sxe4} dxe4 28.\texttt{Sf2} \texttt{Wc2!}

Forcing the king to g1, where it is much more vulnerable.

29.\texttt{Sg1} \texttt{Sxa2} 30.\texttt{Sxh4} \texttt{Sxb3}

And here is the difference Black's 28th move has made: with the king on h2 White would simply have captured twice now (on f6 and e4).

31.\texttt{Sh2}

A totally understandable move: running short of time Adams did not want to evaluate the \texttt{S} vs. \texttt{W} endgame arising after 31.\texttt{Sxf6}. The knight, however, has a tendency to become very jumpy and annoying in such positions, especially when driven by Morozevich.

31.\texttt{Sxf6} does look a little frightening, as after 31...\texttt{Wc3t} 32.\texttt{Sh1} gxf6 Black's passers look very dangerous. Nevertheless, White has an escape: 33.\texttt{Sb4} and now:

a) 33...\texttt{f5} 34.\texttt{Sxb7} \texttt{Qg7} 35.\texttt{Sd3} 36.\texttt{Sg1} \texttt{Qg3} 37.\texttt{Sh1} \texttt{Qf6} 38.\texttt{Sb5} with a draw, as neither side can improve.

b) 33...\texttt{Qe2} 34.\texttt{Sfb1} \texttt{f5}

34...\texttt{e3} leads to the main line after 35.\texttt{Sxb7} \texttt{Sf2} 36.\texttt{Sb7} \texttt{f5} 37.\texttt{Sf7t} \texttt{Qg7} 38.\texttt{Sbe8}.

35.\texttt{Sxb7} \texttt{Sf2} 36.\texttt{Sf2} \texttt{e3}

Now not 37.\texttt{Sh8t} \texttt{Qg7} 38.\texttt{Sbb7} \texttt{c2} 39.\texttt{Sxh7t} \texttt{Qg6} 40.\texttt{Sd7t} as the king takes a long walk to escape the checks on a6! 40...\texttt{Sh6} 41.\texttt{Sf7t} \texttt{Sh6} 42.\texttt{Sf6t} \texttt{Sd6} 43.\texttt{Sed7t} (or 43.\texttt{Sed7t} \texttt{Sc5} 44.\texttt{Sbc7} \texttt{Sb6} 45.\texttt{Sf7t} \texttt{Qa6}) 43...\texttt{Sc6} 44.\texttt{Se7t} \texttt{Sb6} 45.\texttt{Sf7t} \texttt{Qa6} and Black wins. Instead White should play:
37...\texttt{Bb7}\texttt{f1} \texttt{t} 38...\texttt{Be8} \texttt{f1} \texttt{t} 40...\texttt{h2} \texttt{xf4} \texttt{t} 41...\texttt{h1} with a draw.

38...\texttt{h2} \texttt{xf4} \texttt{t}

Protecting \texttt{b8}!

39...\texttt{h1} \texttt{g3}!

Only Black can play for a win here, although it seems to be a dynamically balanced position.

\texttt{31...Dd5}

There will be no more chances to liquidate into a \texttt{Q} vs. \texttt{Q}'s endgame. Whether it was the position or mutual time trouble that inspired Morozevich to keep the tension, we do not object.

\texttt{31...Bf6} would have transposed into the previous annotation.

\texttt{32...xd3} 33...\texttt{f3} \texttt{b5}

Amazingly, of the four queenside pawns that were on the board entering the endgame, only one lived to see this stage of the game, and it will play a very important role in the forthcoming battle. The position, if handled with care, remains quite drawish, as both sides have enough trumps to keep the balance.

\texttt{34...Bf2}!

The bishop is heading towards the long diagonal where it will both prevent Black's \texttt{b}-pawn from moving and participate in possible counterattacks.

\texttt{34...Bd2} 35...\texttt{Be2} \texttt{Be1} 36...\texttt{Bd1} 37...\texttt{Bb2}

Adams refuses a repetition. Was he eager to punish his over-ambitious opponent, or just not sure Black would repeat the position? In any case, after the prosaic 36...\texttt{e1} we cannot find a suitable way for Black to avoid the repetition.

\texttt{36...Bf1}

Attacking whatever moves, and thus preventing White from arranging his forces the way he would like to.

\texttt{37...Bb7} 38...\texttt{d4}

\texttt{38...e8} would have been premature:

38...\texttt{xf4} 39...\texttt{h8} \texttt{g6} and White has only one remaining check, which is hardly satisfactory compensation.

\texttt{38...Dc7}!

Transferring the knight to \texttt{e6}, where it both covers the king (\texttt{g7}) and is only one step away from the white king.

After 38...\texttt{xf5} 39...\texttt{Bf6} \texttt{xf6} 40...\texttt{e6} \texttt{g6}! 41...\texttt{xb5} \texttt{Bf6} 42...\texttt{Bb2} \texttt{Be4} 43...\texttt{g3} it is White, if anybody, who plays for a win.

\texttt{39...Bb8}?

A serious error right before the time control.

\texttt{39...Be7} was much more to the point. The rook should attack the king, and it is on the seventh rank. The lines could have been quite amusing after 39...\texttt{De6}:

a) 40...\texttt{dd7} \texttt{xf1} 41...\texttt{e3} \texttt{f4} 42...\texttt{xf4} \texttt{xf4} \texttt{t} with an inevitable draw.

b) After 40...\texttt{xf7} GM Shipov on the Russian site www.chesspro.ru suggested 40...\texttt{a2}! 41...\texttt{d6} \texttt{g8} removing a defender from \texttt{f4}. 42...\texttt{b7} (Or 42...\texttt{f5} \texttt{c2} 43...\texttt{xb5} \texttt{xf4} 44...\texttt{g3} \texttt{e4}. Chess is such a drawish game, after all!) 42...\texttt{xf2} 43...\texttt{exe6} \texttt{xf4} \texttt{t} A draw again...

A very tricky position arises after 40...\texttt{xf4} 41...\texttt{xd4} \texttt{g6} 42...\texttt{c7} \texttt{b4} 43...\texttt{e5} \texttt{b3} 44...\texttt{Bb7}:

We will not bore the reader with the extensive analysis of this position, and will simply conclude
that only White can even think about playing for a win, but he has no effective way to improve his position: both his pieces are committed to preventing the b-pawn from moving, and whenever he tries to advance his kingside pawns – Black will be right there with a perpetual.

39...\textit{\textbf{Qe}6}

The slight difference is that now the rook is forced to evacuate the fourth rank, losing the f4-pawn. Luckily for Adams, he still has various ways to bail out with fortress options.

40.\textit{\textbf{Qd}7} \textit{\textbf{Qxf}4} 41.\textit{\textbf{Qxf}7} \textit{\textbf{Qe}4}

In contrast to 39.\textit{\textbf{Ba}7}, White is still forced to give up an exchange, but under much worse conditions.

42.\textit{\textbf{Qxf}4} \textit{\textbf{Qxf}4} 43.\textit{\textbf{Qg}3} \textit{\textbf{Qg}5} 44.\textit{\textbf{Qe}8}!

There is no doubt about his goal in this game anymore, and Adams achieves it very precisely. His last move makes the bishop transfer to the long diagonal possible.

44...\textit{\textbf{b}4} 45.\textit{\textbf{Qe}2} \textit{\textbf{b}3} 46.\textit{\textbf{Qe}5} \textit{\textbf{Wh}5}

46...\textit{\textbf{Qe}7} 47.\textit{\textbf{Qg}1} \textit{\textbf{b}2} 48.\textit{\textbf{Qxb}2} \textit{\textbf{Qxe}5} 49.\textit{\textbf{Qf}2} White will place his rook on f3, with a theoretical draw.

47.\textit{\textbf{Qe}3} \textit{\textbf{Qd}1} 48.\textit{\textbf{Bg}3} \textit{\textbf{Qd}5} 49.\textit{\textbf{Qxg}7} \textit{\textbf{Qd}6} 50.\textit{\textbf{Qb}2}

All White needs to do now is to sacrifice the bishop on b2. Not too hard a task.

50...\textit{\textbf{Qh}6} 51.\textit{\textbf{h}4}

There is no other way to unpin, but White does not need this pawn anyway.

51...\textit{\textbf{Qh}5} 52.\textit{\textbf{Qh}3} \textit{\textbf{Qe}6} 53.\textit{\textbf{Qh}2} \textit{\textbf{Qxh}4} 54.\textit{\textbf{Qh}3} \textit{\textbf{Qg}4}

From now on White is just waiting. Morozevich will make a long trip with his king to the queenside, before admitting the inevitable: it is a dead draw. The rest could have been spared.

55.\textit{\textbf{Qg}3} 56.\textit{\textbf{Qf}3} 57.\textit{\textbf{Qe}4} 58.\textit{\textbf{Qg}1} \textit{\textbf{Qd}6} 59.\textit{\textbf{Qh}2} \textit{\textbf{Qd}5} 60.\textit{\textbf{Qb}2} \textit{\textbf{Qc}2} 61.\textit{\textbf{Qf}6} \textit{\textbf{Qc}4} 62.\textit{\textbf{Qg}1} \textit{\textbf{Qb}4} 63.\textit{\textbf{Qf}4} 64.\textit{\textbf{Qa}3} 65.\textit{\textbf{Qf}3} \textit{\textbf{Qc}5} 66.\textit{\textbf{Qh}2} \textit{\textbf{Qc}1} 67.\textit{\textbf{Qe}7} 68.\textit{\textbf{Qa}2} 69.\textit{\textbf{Qf}3} \textit{\textbf{Qd}6} 70.\textit{\textbf{Qg}1} \textit{\textbf{Qb}6} 71.\textit{\textbf{Qh}1} \textit{\textbf{Qc}2} 72.\textit{\textbf{Qe}3} 73.\textit{\textbf{Qd}2} 74.\textit{\textbf{Qe}2} 75.\textit{\textbf{Qh}2} \textit{\textbf{Qb}2} 76.\textit{\textbf{Qh}3} \textit{\textbf{Qe}5}

The rook cruises between the f3- and h3-squares, and Black is unable to break through.

$\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}$
GAME 23
Viswanathan Anand
Peter Svidler
Ruy Lopez, Marshall Attack C89

1.e4 e5 2.d3 d6 3.Bb5 a6 4.a4 d6 5.0-0 d7 6.Bd1 Bb5 7.Bb3 0-0 8.c3

In recent years the Marshall has become quite a headache for White players, which makes Anand’s move rather brave. Since the cure is yet to be found, White usually prefers to avoid the gambit with Anti-Marshall lines (which was, in fact, the case in most Ruy Lopez games in this tournament). There are, however, those who allow the Marshall with White occasionally, but when doing so they must come up with something new.

8...d5


In early Marshall games Black tried to attack the king at any cost, but with time he developed new ways of playing, and today he regularly tries to take control over the centre, using his more active pieces (especially the light-squared bishop). All in all – one of the most complicated positions known to chess theory.

11...d6 but his opponent was unfortunately Capablanca, who warded off Black’s initiative and won the game. This is why the opening was considered to be dubious for many years.

12.d4

A less popular, but still interesting continuation, is 12.d3 as will be seen in Polgar – Svidler later on (Game 49).

12...d6 13.Bd1 Bh4 14.g3 Bh3

One of the key positions for the whole line. White’s next move has a nice story behind it, which was very colourfully described by the 9th world champion Tigran Petrosian: He was a young boy who used to believe unquestioningly in all theoretical evaluations. In one of the books he saw a ‘How to beat the Marshall’ recommendation, with brief analysis by one of the ‘experts’ of the 15.Bxe4 line, concluding that Black is in trouble. Therefore, with the pride of one who knows, young Petrosian played:

15.Bxe4

but after the immediate and rather unexpected, (as it had not been mentioned in the book)

15...g5!

he was caught off guard and lost without a struggle. Petrosian’s own recommendation based on this story was: “Do not blindly follow other experts’ recommendations, not even mine!”. We fully support this advice.

To continue this short historical digression, we’d like to point out that 15...g5 killed White’s desire to play 15.Bxe4 for a long time (16.Bxg5 is,
of course, bad due to 16...\(\text{\textit{xf}}\) winning a piece). It returned only after all other attempts failed, and an effective way to target the Marshall was still sought. Then people suddenly realized that g7-g5 was not a panacea, as it is a seriously weakening move, right next to Black's king. White's problem is that the rook is not ideally placed on e4, which has to be solved. There have been many tries, perhaps too many, but the question of how best to develop remains, which means: there is no clear solution about how to play this position.

Practice shows that other continuations are indeed problematic for Black. For instance 15...\(\text{\textit{xb}}\) suits White fine: 16.\(\text{\textit{h}}\)h4 \(\text{\textit{e}}\)e6 17.\(\text{\textit{d}}\)d2 \(\text{\textit{f}}\)5 18.\(\text{\textit{h}}\)h5 \(\text{\textit{h}}\)6 19.\(\text{\textit{d}}\)f3 \(\text{\textit{f}}\)7 20.\(\text{\textit{h}}\)h3 c5 21.\(\text{\textit{d}}\)c5 \(\text{\textit{e}}\)e5 22.\(\text{\textit{b}}\)b4 \(\text{\textit{e}}\)ae8 23.\(\text{\textit{a}}\)d1 with an initiative for White, never mind the extra pawn, Leko – Adams, Dortmund 1999.

16.\(\text{\textit{xf}}\)!

Another key line is Anand's choice for this game. Curiously enough, this careful move was Kramnik's choice in his match against Leko and his second then was Svidler. It is clear, therefore, that these lines are not alien to the Russian, making Anand's move a real challenge. This try by Anand reminds us of the funny observation that for any novelty, no matter who, where or when it was introduced, Anand will be the second elite player to play it.

For a long time White's main attempt was 16.\(\text{\textit{f}}\)3, but Black eventually found a way to oppose it. It turns out that after 16...\(\text{\textit{xf}}\) 17.\(\text{\textit{c}}\)c2 \(\text{\textit{xe}}\)4 18.\(\text{\textit{xe}}\)4 \(\text{\textit{e}}\)e6 19.\(\text{\textit{g}}\)g5 f5 Black already has a good position. After White continued 20.\(\text{\textit{xd}}\)5?! \(\text{\textit{cxd}}\)5 21.\(\text{\textit{d}}\)d2 f4 22.\(\text{\textit{xf}}\)4 \(\text{\textit{xf}}\)4 23.\(\text{\textit{g}}\)x\(\text{\textit{f}}\) 24.\(\text{\textit{h}}\)h1 \(\text{\textit{e}}\)e7 his position became really bad, Topalov – Adams, Sarajevo 2000.

Another continuation that used to be considered interesting is 16.\(\text{\textit{e}}\)e2, but the following forced line: 16...f5 17.\(\text{\textit{xd}}\)5+ \(\text{\textit{cxd}}\)5 18.\(\text{\textit{e}}\)e6 f4!

16...\(\text{\textit{xf}}\)!

Svidler's unwillingness to repeat Leko's moves means something, but it is not quite clear what. Perhaps he (and his team) found an advantage for White after all, or he was worried that Anand had. There are still many unanswered questions in this line, but in our opinion the text move has a solid positional base.

Leko opted for 16...\(\text{\textit{h}}\)h5 17.\(\text{\textit{d}}\)d2 \(\text{\textit{xf}}\)5 and after 18.\(\text{\textit{f}}\)3 \(\text{\textit{g}}\)f6 19.\(\text{\textit{e}}\)e1 (19.\(\text{\textit{a}}\)4 should be carefully checked) 19...\(\text{\textit{e}}\)ae8 20.\(\text{\textit{xe}}\)e8 \(\text{\textit{xe}}\)e8 21.\(\text{\textit{a}}\)a4! \(\text{\textit{g}}\)g6! 22.\(\text{\textit{xb}}\)b5 \(\text{\textit{d}}\)d3 23.\(\text{\textit{f}}\)f2? \(\text{\textit{e}}\)e2 24.\(\text{\textit{xe}}\)e2 \(\text{\textit{xe}}\)e2 25.\(\text{\textit{a}}\)a6 \(\text{\textit{e}}\)e3! Black dismantled the white king's position, Kramnik – Leko, Brissago (8) 2004. The most interesting part, however, is that a few months after San Luis this line was played by Motylev, Svidler's second in San Luis. Moreover, his opponent, the well-known theoretician Alexander
Beliavsky (Morozevich's second in San Luis), did not follow Leko's play either, but tried 17...f5 with questionable compensation for the pawn, Motylev – Beliavsky, Wijk aan Zee 2006.

17.\(\text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt{f}}\text{\texttt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22.\text{xf2} \text{fxe1}\,23.\text{xe1}\,\text{e8}\,24.\text{d1} \text{and there is no 24...e2 because of 25.\text{c2}}\,22.\text{xe1}\,\text{e8}\,23.\text{d1} \text{and Black's compensation is insufficient. For example: 23...\text{g4?!} \,24.\text{xe4} \,\text{xe4} \,25.\text{fxe4}\,\text{xe4}\,26.\text{axb5} \,\text{axb5} \,27.\text{a6} \text{with a difficult position for Black.}

20.\text{fxe4} \text{c7}

Of course not 20...\text{c7} \,21.e5 \text{c7} \,22.\text{e4} \text{and Black suffocates, since he cannot blow up White's centre.}

21.\text{g2}

White has achieved all the points mentioned on move 18, but he also has a big problem: his pieces are poorly placed. And while he is improving them Black will try to open as many lines as possible for his rooks. The question is who will be faster.

Instead, too early was 21.e5?! \text{c7} \,22.\text{e4} \text{c7} \text{followed by f7-f6.}

However, Sakaev's suggestion seems to be very timely: 21.\text{f3} \text{intending to keep the centre dynamic and strong. Brief analysis shows that it is very interesting and perhaps better than the game. 21...\text{Bae8 22.c2} \text{and now:}

a) 22.f5 is not good: 23.e5 \text{c7} \,24.h4!

b) 22...b4 doesn't solve the problems: 23.xb4? \text{after the overly calm 23.\text{f2} Black manages to take White's centre apart with 23...\text{bxc3 24.bxc3 e5!}} \,23...\text{xb4} \,24.a3 \text{d6 25.b4 and again, Black is left without play as he is unable to attack White's centre.}

c) 22...\text{e6 23.g2} \text{and weak is 23...f5 24.e5 (but not 24.exf5 \text{f4?! 25.xf4 c2\,26.hf1\,\text{Bxc2 27.\text{e1 hxb2 28.dxd6 e5f}\,29.g1 \text{Bxb2 and White is not even threatening to be better}}) 24...\text{e7 25.h4 and White has the advantage.}}

But stronger is 23...e5 with a real struggle, which still looks slightly better for White. In the game his plan is different: he wants to play e5 first, and if so, why not put a knight on the newly vacated e4-square? The answer is coming soon.

21...e5

Without hesitation, and very natural. Black wants to open lines and weaken the white centre.

The alternative 21...\text{g7} looks interesting, intending to target the centre with the f-pawn. For example: 22.\text{f3 f5 23.e5 c7 24.d2 d5} \text{and Black's chances would not be worse, if only White did not have the thematic 25.h4!, after which Black is forced to solve quite a few problems.}

22.e5 \text{c7 23.e4}

The computer keeps insisting on the anti-positional 23.dxc5, but of course it has a tactical justification and Black has to play accurately. For example, the simple 23...\text{xc5 would allow White to take over with 24.e4 c7 25.e3 d8 26.hf1 d5 27.e4.}

Black cannot move. Even ideas like 27...b4 are pointless as c3 is well protected.

But after 23...\text{Bae8} Black solves his problems:

24.c6

24.e4 doesn't help, 24...d8 and the key pawn on e5 falls.

24...e5 25.c3

Not 25.e4 \text{xe5!} and White must settle for a draw with a beautiful line: 26.e6\,\text{g7}
27.\textit{Dd7 Ee2\textasciitilde} 28.\textit{Eh1} (28.\textit{Eh3}\textasciitilde? f5 28.\textit{Ef1}\textasciitilde \textit{Bf2}\textasciitilde 29.\textit{Eg1 Bf5}\textasciitilde 30.\textit{Eg2 Ee8} and White is in trouble) 28...\textit{Ee1\textasciitilde} 29.\textit{Eg2 Ee2\textasciitilde} with a perpetual.

25...\textit{Eg7}
With the idea of f6.

26.h4
The only move to make Black's life harder.

26...f6!
Nevertheless!

27.hxg5 hxg5
27...fxg5 28.g4 \textit{Dxe6}
Black is not worse. Especially since 29.exf6\textasciitilde is only dangerous for White: 29...\textit{Exf6} and White's lack of development makes itself felt.

Instead of 23.dxc5, Anand was seriously considering 23.d5, but concluded that after 23...c4 24.\textit{Exc4 bxc4} 25.d6 \textit{Dd8} 26.dxc7 \textit{Exc7} 27.\textit{Dxc4 Ee8} 28.\textit{Dxe3} (28.h4 f6 29.exf6 \textit{Ee1} is very painful for White) 28...\textit{Dxe5} 29.\textit{Eif3 Bc8} White is the only one to risk losing.

23...\textit{cxd4}
A move like 23...c4 is against the principle of the position (opening lines for the rooks), although is should also be checked with concrete lines. 24.\textit{Ed1 f5} 25.exf6 (not 25.\textit{Eif2 Dd5} 26.\textit{Eif3 Bc8} with a full blockade of the black pawns) 25...\textit{Exf6} 26.\textit{Eif3} Black is still far from solving his problems, as White controls all the squares along the open lines. In the game Black had more.

24.\textit{cxd4}

24...a5!
A very strong, multifunctional move. Black might open another line on the queenside, but even more importantly, he wants to steal control over the centre, or sometimes blow it up with f7-f6. All this mischief is much harder to achieve with a policeman on b3.

25.\textit{Ee3}\textasciitilde!
Anand exploits the time to complete his development, but it was more important to keep the Spanish bishop on the Italian diagonal. Now Black gets all he wanted.

Better was 25.a3 with the idea, amongst others, of playing d5. And if Black tries to stop it after 25...\textit{Bd8}, White can continue 26.\textit{Ee3 Dd5} 27.\textit{Exf2 Bg7} 28.a4 and Black's blockading strategy fails. For instance, he cannot play 28...f6 due to 29.\textit{Exd5 Exd5} 30.\textit{Ee7} f7 31.e6 when he is losing material.

But the main reason White did not like this idea is 25...a4! 26.\textit{Ea2} and here 26...b4!.

25...\textit{Exf6}

26.\textit{Eh4} gxh4
26...\textit{Exh4} 27.\textit{Eg4} \textit{Exg4}\textasciitilde 28.\textit{Eh2} \textit{Bb4+} 29.\textit{Ee2} \textit{Eg4}\textasciitilde 30.\textit{Ee1} a4!\textasciitilde
Black should not lose here.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{chess_board.png}
\caption{Analysis Diagram}
\end{figure}
25...a4 26.a3

Anand is not used to spending time in the opening while his opponent shows deep knowledge of the position (in fact, usually it is the other way round). However, it was Anand who uncorked the novelty! This position raises many questions with the main one being: Who is better? The best answer, despite its negative logic, is that it cannot be White as he has nothing to offer once Black manages to take over d5 and play ...f6. This undoubtedly put Anand under some pressure, and now it is up to Black to decide how to exploit the favourable situation.

26...d5

Black has done everything in order to prepare ...f6, and when he can – he does not. And once again, he played his move instantly. As we will see, he avoided a line where White is close to solving his problems, which means he wanted more.

After 26...f6 White has to play accurately. Not good enough is 27.exf6 xf6 28.xf6† (after the calm 28..f3 g7 29.e5 ²d8 White will have to switch to a passive defence) 28..xf6 29.e1 ²d5 30.e1 ²e8 and, although Dr Tarrasch used to say that a rook with a pair of bishops are not worse than a pair of rooks and a knight, White would have to be careful – the Great Doctor probably imagined a better pair of bishops when he produced this tenet.

No longer dangerous is 27...f6 28.e3 fxe5 (not 28...²ad8 29.e6! ²c7 30.e5 and Black is falling apart) 29.dxe5 (weaker is 29.xg5 ²xf3 30.e3 e4 31.e5 ²c8 and the rook goes to c2, giving Black a dangerous initiative) and this position must be evaluated as “dynamically balanced” where both sides run the risk of losing.

27...f6??

A great move! 28.e2 is problematic because of 28..c2 29.fxg5 ²a8! 30.f1 (or 30.c3 ²xc3 31.bxc3 ²xc3 and Black is better) 30...a3 31.bxa3 ²xa3 and the other pawn falls as well.

The light-squared bishop cannot enter the game yet, so Anand prepares this idea. In addition, e4-c3 has become an idea (with X-ray eyes on the b5-pawn), forcing Black to hurry. Interestingly, this was the first point in the game when Svidler took time to think about his reply. This shows both the depth of his preparation and the difficulty of predicting Anand’s profound previous move.

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Here Anand felt the danger and showed his powers as a great defender.

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threats. All he needs are minimal precautions:

a) 29.\textit{c}3\textit{c}3 is not good: 29...\textit{e}xc3! 30.bxc3 \textit{d}xc3 31.\textit{f}a1 \textit{a}3 with obvious domination.

b) Also 29.e2 is not clear enough. After 29...b4 30.\textit{b}5\textit{a}3 the natural 31.\textit{a}4 is not enough because of 31...\textit{f}5! 32.\textit{c}5 (32.exf6 leaves Black with some advantage: 32...\textit{d}xf6 33.\textit{d}xf6\textit{f}6 34.bxa3 bxa3) 32...\textit{d}xc5 33.dxc5 and although White is closer to a draw than Black is to a win, there is no point in allowing this position.

c) The strongest seems to be 29.\textit{g}4 \textit{g}2 30.\textit{g}1 followed by \textit{f}5, when it is not quite clear what Black has to offer.

29.exf6 \textit{g}xf6

29...\textit{d}xf6? 30.\textit{d}c3! and White would finally be able to attack the weaknesses on the queenside.

30.\textit{d}d6!

Even so, White manages to attack the weaknesses.

30.\textit{b}c6!

It is now Black’s turn to defend, and he does so accurately – active defence is the key to success here.

The natural 30.\textit{b}b8 would have allowed White to gain the advantage with a fantastic line, found by Svidler: 31.\textit{f}3 \textit{b}4 32.\textit{f}1!! and Black has more problems than it at first appears. For instance: 32...\textit{e}7 (32...\textit{d}xa2? 33.\textit{d}d5\textit{f} and wins) 33.\textit{e}4 \textit{d}xa2 34.d5 \textit{b}4 35.d6 \textit{e}8 (35...\textit{f}6 36.\textit{d}xf6\textit{f} 37.\textit{d}7 and Black is helpless) 36.d7

Black is in trouble: the d7-pawn and the great bishops are paralysing.

31.\textit{b}b5 \textit{b}6 32.\textit{a}4

The only move that promises something. 32.\textit{a}3 only leads to a repetition after 32...\textit{b}4 33.\textit{c}2 \textit{b}6 34.\textit{a}3.

32.\textit{f}b8

Again, the strongest. There would have been unnecessary problems after 32...\textit{a}8 33.b3 \textit{a}5 34.\textit{c}1. After 34...\textit{b}xb5 35.\textit{xb}5 \textit{xb}5 36.\textit{c}5! \textit{xc}5 37.dxc5 White has good winning chances in the endgame. However, the text solves all Black’s problems at once.

33.\textit{a}3 \textit{xb}2 34.\textit{xb}2

Losing his non-existent advantage! Anand understandably wanted to end the game with a draw after all the ups and downs he had to go through.

Many commentators, however, greatly exaggerated White’s winning chances after 34.\textit{b}3 \textit{xb}1 35.\textit{xb}1 \textit{g}7 and now:

a) 36.\textit{d}5 \textit{xb}1 is equal.

b) 36.\textit{d}2 \textit{c}3 and a2 will fall.

c) 36.\textit{f}3!
Both players missed that the draw is not immediate and Black has to prove it. He can, however, do so with:

36...\textit{b}4

threatening, after for example 37.\textit{c}3, to play 37...\textit{a}xa2! 38.\textit{b}b2 \textit{c}c2 and White is certainly not playing for a win.

37.\textit{c}3

This looks impressive and that was the idea – White got the knight out of the corner, and did not lose a2. However, Black can attack other weaknesses now:

37...\textit{d}3 38.\textit{e}3

Even worse is 38.\textit{g}1 \textit{d}1† 39.\textit{e}3 (39.\textit{e}2 \textit{e}8† 40.\textit{f}f1 \textit{f}f3 and Black is winning) 39...\textit{x}d4† 40.\textit{x}d4 \textit{f}f3† 41.\textit{c}5 \textit{x}g1 and White cannot even dream about winning.

The final straw; the game is forced to a dead draw.

35.\textit{c}4 \textit{a}2 36.\textit{b}3

36...\textit{x}f2† 37.\textit{f}f2 \textit{d}4† 38.\textit{e}3 \textit{x}e3† 39.\textit{f}f3

\(\frac{1}{2}\)–\(\frac{1}{2}\)

34...\textit{x}b2
GAME 24

Judit Polgar

Veselin Topalov

Ruy Lopez, Berlin Defence C67

1.e4 e5 2.d3 d6 3.d5 d6

The Berlin Wall – the saddest variation for attacking players. It is not a coincidence Topalov consistently chooses it against Polgar, and quite successfully so.

4.0-0

Many players have given up trying to defeat the classical Berlin and prefer to continue 4.d3. Although the positions arising here might be interesting (or, at least, more interesting) it does come with a price: at best White can get an Anti-Marshall, which is not considered to be the most dangerous line for Black.

4...dxe4 5.d4 d5 6...c6 dxc6 7.dxe5 f5

The Wall’s main position, which was also popular a long time ago – Dr Tarrasch used to play it successfully with both colours. For years Black’s determination to develop his bishop to g7 (with g7-g5) caused him many problems. White would easily obtain good play by means of f4, opening the game in his favour. Naturally this dented the line’s popularity, but at some point the variation gradually began to come back into practice. Defenders of the new variation admitted that the ancient plan was wrong, but the bishop still must be developed, so they put it on b4.

The real revolution happened thanks to the efforts of Zoltan Almasi, who introduced the idea of delaying the development of the bishop, being concerned about more important things. Today his plan is the most popular and is almost the only one that is in use.

The main, and very modern, surprise of this position is that it is rather tactical, as many important plans are already known and the only question is who succeeds in carrying out his first.

9.dxc3

White’s obvious plan is easy to explain: she should complete her development quickly and use the time until Black completes his to place the rooks on central files. Then try to blow up the position with either e6 or f2-f4-f5. But this has to be done quickly, before Black can prevent these simple plans.

One of Black’s essential decisions is where to locate his king. In this game we will discuss the plan of bringing it to the queenside via c8 (which seems to be preferred by most elite players), and in Kasimdzhanov – Topalov (Game 52) we will discuss bringing the king on e8.

If White wants to force Black’s king to stay in the centre, she can try 9...d1+f forcing the king to return home as 9...d7 is bad due to 10.g5. However, Black has a plan with his king on c8 as well, and here he wins a tempo, as White’s second rook must jump from a1 to e1.

9...e7

This multipurpose and flexible move is Black’s main plan nowadays. The knight is heading to g6, where it will play an important role in attacking White’s centre. It also frees the way for the light-squared bishop, and basically keeps all options available. The dark-squared bishop will find its way later, although rarely in the near future.

Another interesting option is 9...d7. This hit the headlines after Kramnik’s successes in his World Championship match against Kasparov in 2000, but has now lost its popularity. Although Kasparov did not manage to break the Wall, this plan has a very serious drawback: it is very slow. The bishop will have to go to e6 anyway, but
White gains important time to advance his pawns in the centre. For example: 10.h3 h6 11.Nf4 c6 12.a4 b6 13.de4 c5 14.Bc1 e6 15.a3 b7 16.g4 Be7 17.Be3 d6 18.Oh2 White is ready to advance his pawns while Black is not well prepared to meet it, Svidler - Bruzon, Beer Sheva 2005.

10.h3

An essential move in virtually all the lines. It prevents the bishop from getting to g4, and is useful to support g2-g4 (which is good for offensive actions, but also blocks the important light-squared bishop). This move also creates a possible retreat for the bishop once it is asked to leave f4. It is hard to believe how much content there can be in such a modest move, and we have not yet mentioned all the ideas.

10...Bg6

The exact move order with which Black arranges his pieces is vital. Should he start with 10...h6, which can be just a transposition, but also deprives White of some possibilities? Topalov, as we can see, does not want to waste time on this move unless he is forced to. Now on 11.Bc3 (11.Bh4 seems to be more principled) Black can already go back to his desired plan: 11.Bd7 12.a4 Be8 13.Bd2 b6 14.Bf1 Bc6 15.Od4 Od5 and Black held the position, Polgar - Topalov, Sofia 2005.

11.Ke4

A classical manoeuvre - the knight can continue to the kingside via g3 or g5. It can also just keep standing beautifully in the centre, or it can even go back if necessary. Black has a remedy against most of them, hence White's threats may soon come to an end.

The principled way to exploit Black delaying ...h6 is 11.Ke5! This not only develops the bishop with a tempo, but also deprives Black of his crucial idea, evacuating the king to the queenside, since 11...Ke7 is obviously in White's favour - she essentially has an extra pawn. After 11...Ke8 12.a4 Bc6 we reach an important position, which has already been played by Polgar against Topalov - and not so long ago. After 13.Bd2 e6 14.Bd1 Be7 15.Bc3 a6 16.Ke2 c6 17.Bxd8+ Bxd8 18.Bc1 Ke7 19.c4 h5 20.Od2 Ke8 21.f4 h4 Black is surely not worse, Polgar - Topalov, Sofia 2005. Perhaps White should prefer the plan seen in Game 52.

But more interesting is that a few months after the Championship Svidler decided to improve on White's play with 13.Ke4. After 13...h6 14.Ke3 h5 15.f4 h4 16.f5 Oe5 17.f6 obtained a very promising position and won in Svidler - Topalov, Morelia/Linares 2006.

11...h6

Protecting the g5-square just in time. As one can see, Black saved himself a lot of headaches by avoiding some lines, but Judit Polgar chose not to test him in one problematic variation. Such nuances are very important in this complicated opening.

12.b3

The very traditional method of development - b2 was for a long time considered the best place for this bishop. The point is clear - e5 will now be well protected, and there are ideas of pushing it forward, opening the bishop's view. But there is a downside - Black can simply put his bishop on e6 (stopping the ideas of e6) which makes the bishop on b2 inefficient (even though it does not disturb the rooks on the central files). White, of course, can try to exchange one of his knights on e6, but this is both not easy to implement and not the most efficient way to break Black's wall.

Thus, in general, White has recently preferred other ways of defending e5. In this specific position, however, b2 does seem to be most appropriate.
12...c5!?
The battle of move-orders continues.
Black could have started with 12...e6, and indeed, why not develop the piece first? In our opinion this was a crucial moment, since we have a strong feeling that Polgar came to this game with some promising plan that was cleverly avoided by Topalov. If the prepared improvement was in this position, then it is quite interesting to consider what White had in mind.

The answer seems to be 13.dxe5 b6 14.fxe5 c8 15.d4.

White seizes the initiative. For example: 15...dxe5 16.f4 d7 17.fxe6 fxe6 18.f5! exd5 19.exd5 and Black will have a hard time dealing with the initiative. The variations are nice and not complicated: 19...g5 (or 19...g8 20.f4 d5 21.d7 c6 22.e5) 20.d7 c5 21.f6 g7 22.e6 and the rook goes to e7.

Another plausible move, but somehow White gets a slightly worse game. Although all White's moves were logical and common for this position, they were not the right way to react to Black's moves and this is the reason many strong players are devotees of this "passive" opening for Black: unless White is focused and alert, Black can even achieve an advantage! Sounds charming indeed...

Interesting was 13.d4 forcing the black king to stay in the centre, since after 13...d7 White has a typical shot: 14.e6! fxe6 15.h4 with a strong initiative. For example: 15...c8 (15...h5 16.d5 c6 17.e1 d7 18.xc5 with a serious edge.

The more easygoing 13.b2 e6 14.c4 e7 15.xg3 h5 16.d1 c8 17.h4 18.e4 h5 does not promise anything special, Lahno - Zhukova, Sochi 2005.

13...b6 14.d4 d7

There is nothing to prevent Topalov from transferring the king to its favourite place. White's correct plan is not clear now.

15.c3

Unfortunately all White can do now is manoeuvre, as there is no longer a chance for a real initiative - after, for instance, 15.e6 xex6 16.h4 c8 17.h5 c7 18.e5 e8 her threats are coming to an end.

The text manoeuvre is well-known: after Black plays ...c5, the knight returns to c3 and jumps to d5. This seems fine and it is even easy to explain why the knight should be useful there, but in fact it takes two tempi and in this position the knight, in fact, gains nothing significant.

15...c8 16.d5

Amazingly, this final step of the manoeuvre will later be the cause of White's demise. Besides, as was mentioned before, the knight on d5 is a paper tiger.

16.e6 17.c4

Now the knight on d5 is safe. It is important to note that our criticism of White's play only concerns her attempt to seize the initiative. From a defensive point of view, White definitely should not lose such a position.

17.b7
Polgar feels that control is getting out of her hands, and so tries to improve her pieces. The bishop on e3 is doing nothing, and questioning why it did not go to a better spot in the first place is irrelevant now. Many players would have gone on the defensive, and perhaps they would have been right. Judit Polgar, however, is seeking active play, and for this she prepares to transfer the knight to f5 (via e3), which will be supported by a pawn on g4. All this plays into Black's hands, and Topalov once again proves to know his opponents very well.

18 ... a5

Another typical move, utilized in virtually every Berlin game. White cannot allow a5-a4, opening the a-file for a black rook, which makes a2-a4 virtually compulsory, but then b3 will be a weakness in the long run.

19.a4 d8

But the rook finds its way into the game anyway. Black has one rook more than he needs, so he is ready to exchange it, and with it White's hopes for play along the d-file will be reduced as well. He shall not, however, exchange the second rook, since it will play a vital role in converting the advantage: a mistake Topalov has made in the past in a game against Anand, the end of which was presented in the introduction.

20.g4?

Polgar switches the move order, which proves to be a bad mistake.

It would have been better to begin with 20.Qc3 Bxd1 21.Bxd1 e7 and only here play 22.g4. However, even then, after 22...Qg5 Black is definitely better.

The most logical decision was the solid 20.Qe1, applying a well-known principle that is commonly credited to Hippocrates: *Primum non nocere* (First, do no harm). It is clear why the “Father of the Physicians” can help here — if you are trying to cure the position, make sure your therapy at least does not destroy it.

Cheparinov recommended 20...c6, which is in general a positive thing for White, but seems the best way for Black to finish development and begin some activity. And after 21.Qe3 Bxd1 22.Qxd1 Qc7 23.g4 Qg5 the pawn on c6 is small consolation. For instance: 24.Qf5 Qxc1 25.Qxc1 Qf4 and the future complications look good for Black.

But White can continue 21.Qf4 Bxd1 22.Qxd1 Qxf4 (worse is 22...Qf5 23.g4! Qc2 24.Qxg6 Qg6 25.Qh4 Qc2 26.Qd7† Qa6 27.Qxf7 and Black is in trouble) 23.Qxf4 Qc7 and White has much more chances to hold than Black to win. 20...h5!

Of course! Now White is in trouble, as she cannot defend her weaknesses. The rest of the game is a demonstration of Topalov's excellent technique.

21.Qe3

21.gxh5 also does not help. 21...Bxh5 22.Qg5 Qf5! 23.f4 (23.Qxf7 Bd7 24.Qg5 Qxe5, threatening to fork on f3. 25.f4 Qg6 and White's position is really bad.) 23...Bd7 with a huge advantage for Black.

But more interesting is asking how such a strong player as Polgar could make such a mistake as 20.g4? Is it possible she did not see Black's reply? Grischuk's guess was she was planning to answer with 21.Qg5, but only now saw that after 21...hxg4 22.Qxe6 fxe6 the knight on d5 is hanging. It is amazing that the unsuccessful manoeuvre of the knight turned out to be the reason for White's defeat, being so useless that White herself forgot about it.

For those who doubt this explanation, we can only say that some automatic reactions are
buried deep in the minds of every chess player, even the best ones. And sometimes one is sure a continuation is impossible and so do not even check it, which can cause costly mistakes.

21...\texttt{Be8!}

Very strong. Black is not concerned about the d-file, as all the penetration squares are covered. As the position has changed it is important to keep the second rook, which will attack White’s weaknesses. The forced line 21...\texttt{Bxd1} 22...\texttt{Bxd1} \texttt{Qf4} is less convincing:

23...\texttt{Bg5} \texttt{Qe7} 24...\texttt{Bxe6 fxe6} 25...\texttt{gxh4!}

With ideas such as 25...\texttt{Qxh3†} 26...\texttt{Bxh3} \texttt{Qf5} 27...\texttt{Bf3}.

Black is unable to exploit his extra pawn on the queenside, so the position is close to equal. Although

25...\texttt{Bxg5}

is better, here too.

26...\texttt{hxg4} 27...\texttt{Qg4} \texttt{Qe2†} 28...\texttt{Bxh5} 29...\texttt{Bxg3}.

It is not going smoothly at all!

29...\texttt{Bg5} 30...\texttt{Bf3} \texttt{Bxe3} 31...\texttt{fxe3!} \texttt{Qc3} 32...\texttt{Bd7}

It has become clear that Black lost a good deal of his chances.

22...\texttt{Be1}

22...\texttt{Qf5} is no longer possible: 22...\texttt{hxg4} 23...\texttt{hxg4} \texttt{Bxe5} 24...\texttt{gxh5} \texttt{Qxh5}, and White is lost. The rook on e8 is well placed now.

Also 22...\texttt{Bxg5} does not work because of 22...\texttt{hxg4} 23...\texttt{Bxg4} (23...\texttt{hxg4} \texttt{Qxg4}) 23...\texttt{Bxh3!}

24...\texttt{Bxh3} \texttt{Qxg4} 25...\texttt{Bg5} \texttt{Bxd1} 26...\texttt{Bxd1} \texttt{Qxe5} and it is all over.

22...\texttt{Qf4} 23...\texttt{Bg5} \texttt{Qe7} 24...\texttt{Qxe6}

24...\texttt{Qf5} loses faster after 24...\texttt{Bxd5} 25...\texttt{Bxf4} \texttt{Qxg5} 26...\texttt{Bxg5} \texttt{Bf3} 27...\texttt{Qc1} \texttt{hxg4} 28...\texttt{h4} \texttt{Bf8} and after ..\texttt{f6} White can resign.

24...\texttt{fxe6}

Such a structure is common in the Berlin. One of White’s most popular ideas used to be to exchange on e6, as appeared in the game Polgar – Smyslov, Monaco 1994. Today this plan is not considered to be the most dangerous, but usually in such positions there are only two results possible: Black cannot hope for a win. In our case the situation is reversed: White’s weaknesses make her chances of survival very small.

25...\texttt{gxh5} \texttt{Qxh5†} 26...\texttt{Qf1}

26...\texttt{Bg2} \texttt{Bf4†} 27...\texttt{Bf3} \texttt{Bef8} 28...\texttt{Bf8} \texttt{Bxh5}

Again, the second rook plays a big part in Black’s advantage.

26...\texttt{Bxh5} 27...\texttt{Bxg5} \texttt{Bxg5†}

Another great, even classical, manoeuvre. Although it is passive, White’s dark-squared bishop was covering important squares, and f4 particularly. With its disappearance there will be no stopping the black initiative from unfolding.

28...\texttt{Qxg5}

"Activity" does not help here: 28...\texttt{Bd7} \texttt{Bxc1} 29...\texttt{Bxcl} \texttt{Bf4 threatening mate.} 30...\texttt{Bc6} 31...\texttt{Bxe1} (31...\texttt{Bxg7} \texttt{Bd8} and White loses her rook) 31...\texttt{Bh3} 32...\texttt{Bb1} \texttt{Bf8}, and the white pawns fall one by one.
28...\text{x}g5

From this point White has nothing to do against simple pressure on her weaknesses.

29.f3 \text{f}f5 30.hg2 \text{f}f4+ 31.hg3 \text{f}f5 32.hf2

32.h1 \text{e}2+ 33.h2 \text{x}h1 34.gxh1 \text{d}d4

35.h3 \text{b}xh3 Black having provoked a2-a4 begins to tell in many lines now.

32...\text{g}6 33.d7

Here 33.h1 was more appropriate than before, but after 33...\text{x}h5 34.h3 \text{e}7! 35.d7 \text{f}c6 36.bxg7 \text{d}d4 White loses all her pawns.

33.h3 34.e3 \text{h}4

This forces White's second rook to go on the defensive.

35.d3

35.bxg7 fails to a double fork: 35...\text{f}5 (the first one) 36.g2 \text{g}3† (or 36...\text{x}e3† 37.hxh3 \text{h}8† 38..hg3 \text{f}5†) 37.h2 \text{x}e3 38.hg3 and here comes the second and final fork: 38...\text{f}5† 35...\text{c}6 36.hc3

The only move in the position which does not lose material, which just emphasizes the power of Black's position.

36.h1
The correct evaluation of 36...\texttt{\textsc{f}4} depends on what it is compared to. After 37.\texttt{\textsc{e}3} \texttt{\textsc{x}3} 38.\texttt{\textsc{x}f3} \texttt{\textsc{hxf3}}† 39.\texttt{\textsc{x}f3} \texttt{\textsc{exg}4} Black has more than he got in the game, but less than he should have had!

37.\texttt{\textsc{e}3} \texttt{\textsc{f}5} 38.\texttt{\textsc{e}3} \texttt{\textsc{d}4} 39.\texttt{\textsc{f}1}

Judit Polgar deserves high praise for her stubborn defence - ever since the horrible mistake on move 20 she has defended very tenaciously, making all the best moves. Unfortunately for her the position is beyond hope.

39...\texttt{\textsc{h}5} 40.\texttt{\textsc{e}3} \texttt{\textsc{f}4} 41.\texttt{\textsc{c}d3} \texttt{\textsc{g}5} 42.\texttt{\textsc{e}4} \texttt{\textsc{b}7}

Black understandably does not want to complicate things with 42...\texttt{\textsc{h}3} 43.\texttt{\textsc{d}2} \texttt{\textsc{h}2}† 44.\texttt{\textsc{g}3}. Here the forced 44...\texttt{\textsc{x}d}2 45.\texttt{\textsc{x}d}2 \texttt{\textsc{e}f3}† 46.\texttt{\textsc{g}4} \texttt{\textsc{xb}3} 47.\texttt{\textsc{e}a}2 \texttt{\textsc{b}4} 48.\texttt{\textsc{h}xg}5 \texttt{\textsc{ex}c}4 leads to a winning position for Black, but this feels like unnecessary complications.

If complications were the aim, then Black had 43.\texttt{\textsc{g}3} \texttt{\textsc{xe}4} 44.\texttt{\textsc{xe}4} \texttt{\textsc{g}4} 45.\texttt{\textsc{g}5} \texttt{\textsc{g}3}† 46.\texttt{\textsc{g}2} \texttt{\textsc{h}5} 47.\texttt{\textsc{f}4} \texttt{\textsc{e}2} 48.\texttt{\textsc{exe}6} \texttt{\textsc{h}2}† 49.\texttt{\textsc{f}3} \texttt{\textsc{b}7} (49...\texttt{\textsc{g}2}?? 50.\texttt{\textsc{d}8} mate) 50.\texttt{\textsc{e}1} \texttt{\textsc{g}2} 51.\texttt{\textsc{f}1} \texttt{\textsc{g}1}† 52.\texttt{\textsc{g}1}. At the end of this forced line Black can stop the pawns, but who needs all these headaches?

43.\texttt{\textsc{g}3} \texttt{\textsc{xe}4}?! 44.\texttt{\textsc{xe}4} \texttt{\textsc{g}4} 45.\texttt{\textsc{f}3} \texttt{\textsc{g}4}!

Here Black missed an opportunity to enter an easily winning endgame, instead entering a position which is also won, but only after a very long battle.

Better was 43...\texttt{\textsc{f}3}! 44.\texttt{\textsc{e}f}4 \texttt{\textsc{d}5} 45.\texttt{\textsc{f}3} \texttt{\textsc{g}4}:

46.\texttt{\textsc{e}3} \texttt{\textsc{h}3}† 47.\texttt{\textsc{g}2} \texttt{\textsc{d}x}3 48.\texttt{\textsc{x}h}3 \texttt{\textsc{g}x}3† 49.\texttt{\textsc{g}xh}3 Black's winning plan is extremely simple: 49...\texttt{\textsc{c}6} 50.\texttt{\textsc{g}5} \texttt{\textsc{d}6} 51.\texttt{\textsc{f}3} \texttt{\textsc{e}5} 52.\texttt{\textsc{e}3} Now zugzwang comes in handy: 52...\texttt{\textsc{b}4} 53.\texttt{\textsc{d}2} \texttt{\textsc{c}2}† 54.\texttt{\textsc{d}3} \texttt{\textsc{d}4} 55.\texttt{\textsc{e}3} \texttt{\textsc{f}5} and White is obliged to abandon the last line of defence.

Does it not look so easy? Well, Black did not have to see this far ahead. The first six moves are forced and then the result is obvious.

A little more complicated is 46.\texttt{\textsc{e}6}, but here too, after 46...\texttt{\textsc{h}3}† 47.\texttt{\textsc{f}4} \texttt{\textsc{d}x}3† 48.\texttt{\textsc{g}x}4 \texttt{\textsc{h}1} 49.\texttt{\textsc{g}3} \texttt{\textsc{e}1} it leads to a winning endgame.

44.\texttt{\textsc{xe}4} \texttt{\textsc{h}4} 45.\texttt{\textsc{d}2} \texttt{\textsc{c}8}

There is no reason to rush things.

46.\texttt{\textsc{e}3} \texttt{\textsc{d}7} 47.\texttt{\textsc{e}1} \texttt{\textsc{e}7}

Black could have avoided entering the intimidating territory of rook endings with 47...\texttt{\textsc{f}4}. For example, 48.\texttt{\textsc{h}1} \texttt{\textsc{e}2}† 49.\texttt{\textsc{g}2} \texttt{\textsc{e}7} and Black should win. But this was also the case in the game.

48.\texttt{\textsc{f}3} \texttt{\textsc{d}x}3 49.\texttt{\textsc{f}x}3

49...\texttt{\textsc{f}7}!

At this point Topalov woke up - not all his previous moves were exact and he also criticized them in the press conference. Now he found the winning manoeuvre, although accuracy is still very important. A basic principle in rook endgames is active pieces (king and rook), and here Black also has a strong trump: the g-pawn.

Conceptually wrong would have been: 49...\texttt{\textsc{h}3}† 50.\texttt{\textsc{g}4} \texttt{\textsc{d}x}3 51.\texttt{\textsc{h}1}! Now it will be White pushing her e-pawn towards promotion, threatening mates. Theoretically it should not be enough to save White, but practically it would
definitely have ruined Topalov’s plans to avoid complications. The continuations here are rather unclear:

a) 51...\texttt{f}e\texttt{3} 52.\texttt{h}7\texttt{f} e\texttt{8} 53.\texttt{f}x\texttt{e}\texttt{4} 54.\texttt{f}\texttt{6} e\texttt{x}\texttt{e}\texttt{4} 55.\texttt{f}x\texttt{e}\texttt{6} \texttt{f}8 56.\texttt{d}d\texttt{7} \texttt{x}x\texttt{a}4 57.e\texttt{6} \texttt{d}d\texttt{4} 58.\texttt{f}x\texttt{c}7 b\texttt{5} 59.\texttt{f}c\texttt{6} b\texttt{4} 60.\texttt{f}x\texttt{e}5 with a draw.

b) Better is 51...\texttt{f}d\texttt{7} 52.\texttt{f}\texttt{x}x\texttt{e}\texttt{6} \texttt{x}x\texttt{c}4 54.\texttt{h}7\texttt{f} \texttt{c}6 55.\texttt{f}x\texttt{e}\texttt{6} (wrong is 55...\texttt{x}a\texttt{4}? 56.\texttt{f}f\texttt{5} \texttt{a}1 57.e\texttt{6}, and it is already White playing for a win) and there is still some accuracy required on Black’s part.

50.\texttt{f}d\texttt{1} \texttt{f}f\texttt{4} 51.\texttt{f}e\texttt{3}

51.\texttt{g}f\texttt{3} does not stop Black: 51...\texttt{x}x\texttt{c}4 52.\texttt{d}d\texttt{7} \texttt{g}6 53.\texttt{f}x\texttt{c}4 \texttt{f}5 54.\texttt{f}x\texttt{f}2 (or 54.\texttt{f}e\texttt{3} \texttt{f}f\texttt{3}) 54...\texttt{x}e\texttt{5} 55.\texttt{f}c\texttt{6} \texttt{f}f\texttt{4} 56.\texttt{x}x\texttt{b}6 g\texttt{4} and the game is over.

51...\texttt{g}7!

This is almost inhuman. Topalov is controlling his pieces with an iron fist.

But why not immediately 51...\texttt{g}6? Apparently, it would have allowed serious counterplay: 52.\texttt{d}d\texttt{8} \texttt{h}5 53.\texttt{e}8 (the point) 53...\texttt{g}4 54.\texttt{x}x\texttt{e}6 \texttt{f}f\texttt{3} 55.\texttt{e}2 \texttt{x}x\texttt{b}3 56.\texttt{f}f\texttt{6} and the win is slipping away.

52.\texttt{d}d\texttt{7}+

On 52.\texttt{d}d\texttt{8} Black continues 52...\texttt{f}8 53.\texttt{d}d\texttt{7} \texttt{f}7, as in the game.

52...\texttt{f}7

This was Black’s idea. Now either the king invades or (if White keeps the rook in enemy territory) the pawn will run to promotion.

53.\texttt{d}d\texttt{1}

The pawn ending is hopeless: 53.\texttt{x}x\texttt{f}7\texttt{f} \texttt{f}x\texttt{f}7 54.\texttt{f}f\texttt{3} \texttt{g}6 55.\texttt{g}4 \texttt{h}6 with an easy win.

But what about 53.\texttt{d}d\texttt{8}? After 53...g\texttt{4}! the rook will have to come back as 54.\texttt{e}8 g\texttt{3} spells a newborn queen.

53...\texttt{g}6 54.\texttt{d}d\texttt{8} g\texttt{4} 55.\texttt{g}8\texttt{f} h\texttt{5} 56.\texttt{h}8\texttt{f} \texttt{g}5 57.\texttt{g}8\texttt{f} h\texttt{4} 58.\texttt{g}6 \texttt{f}f\texttt{3} 59.\texttt{e}2

59...\texttt{g}3!

Accurate till the end. Much messier would have been 59...\texttt{x}x\texttt{b}3 60.\texttt{e}6 \texttt{g}5 61.\texttt{f}f\texttt{6}! g\texttt{3} 62.\texttt{f}f\texttt{5} \texttt{g}4 63.e\texttt{6} g\texttt{2} 64.\texttt{f}f\texttt{2} \texttt{b}2 65.\texttt{g}1 \texttt{e}2! although Black should still win.

60.\texttt{e}6 \texttt{f}f\texttt{4}

The winning plan is not to push the g-pawn, but rather march the king towards the queenside.

61.\texttt{e}8 \texttt{e}3\texttt{f} 62.\texttt{d}d\texttt{2}

62.\texttt{d}d\texttt{2} just loses differently: 62...\texttt{x}x\texttt{e}4 63.e\texttt{6} \texttt{f}f\texttt{5} 64.e\texttt{7} \texttt{f}f\texttt{6} 65.\texttt{g}8 \texttt{x}x\texttt{e}7 66.\texttt{d}d\texttt{3} \texttt{d}d\texttt{4} and it is over.

62...g\texttt{3} 63.\texttt{g}2 \texttt{x}x\texttt{e}4 64.e\texttt{6} \texttt{d}d\texttt{3}

With a full clearance of the queenside.

0–1
A great round! Order is restored – White finally managed to prove his first move advantage. It seems the ‘drawish death’ of the game with which we are frightened every few decades (the last time was a few years back) is not going to happen anytime soon.

The most significant positive news is that Svidler has finally woken up. Yes, he has already played many good moves in the first half, but this was his first truly wonderful game, from start to finish. Remarkably, it was Svidler’s first win over Judit Polgar. It happened when a frustrated Polgar came to fight and even had a novelty up her sleeve. Here we could finally see the Svidler we know so well, who like many times before (round 5 vs. Topalov is the freshest memory), took a deep breath, sat down, and figured everything out. There still remains the question where the flaw was in Black’s preparation, but the Russian grandmaster clearly refuted the Hungarian’s plan. To be honest, the authors found it hard to refrain from putting exclamation marks after every one of White’s moves – so powerful and impressive was his play. His opponent, after a dubious opening, did everything (or almost everything) she could, sacrificed an exchange, and used every possibility to complicate White’s task. To no avail, however: in this game it was better not to stand in Svidler’s way, and Polgar was just unlucky enough to pick that one-way ticket.

More good news was Leko’s comeback. Some of this pre-event favourite’s play was so impressive that it appears he has a thing or two to say to all the sceptics. After all, there is only one leader to stop, whereas one pursuer will be more than enough to relight the fire.
Michael Adams again chose his Petroff Defence. Soon after Leko's novelty the Englishman went astray and his opponent, with a few accurate moves, transferred the game straight into the conversion phase. The Hungarian's precision resembled that of a Swiss watch.

A sporting tragedy

The victory of Morozevich over Anand must be cited as a sporting tragedy. Judge for yourself: after somewhat strange opening play Anand found himself in a passive though solid position. The Indian's world-famous intuition allowed him to spot the critical moment at which a draw could be achieved. He also found a far from evident way to do so. Alas, what else does the recipe require? The mistake was minor – the wrong move order in the execution phase, starting with the second move of the line. The fact that Anand also missed the draw (if not more!) in the analysis only emphasizes how unpleasant this game was for him. All this takes nothing away from Morozevich's accomplishment – he won a first-class game. His opening choice was a fine exhibition of psychology – one of the main difficulties of a poor score is the need to maintain one's coolness in each game. After obtaining a very complex, but favourable, position Alexander Morozevich was all precision with no mercy.

Topalov ends the first half with an inconceivable 6½/7

Topalov won. Again. It has already become quite terrifying. Topalov ends the first half with an inconceivable 6½/7. Fischer fans definitely have something to think about. As for the game itself: first of all it had a significant background story, as it was Kasimdzhanov who stopped the Bulgarian's previous amazing streak (9½/10) in the World Championship in Tripoli 2004, knocking him out in the semi-final. Today revenge was sweet. For all that, the game will hardly find its way into the Bulgarian terminator's best games collection. Opting for one of his favourite lines, Topalov walked into a fine new concept from the FIDE champion. Yes, it was a concept, as his deep novelty was not so much in the move itself as in a strong strategic plan hidden behind it. Topalov kept developing his initiative true to the normal schemes in the position, but would hardly have managed to succeed if not for his opponent's assistance. At first the Uzbek only gave hopes for chances, then real chances, turning his good position into a lost one. Topalov didn't hesitate and was playing very well until instead of a self-evident, straightforward winning manoeuvre, he went for an ultra-deep chase of an irrelevant black pawn. This allowed the always-alert FIDE champion to take over the initiative, and White's only way to fight the sudden fire was by transposing into a drawish rook endgame. However, instead of Kasimdzhanov ending another Topalov winning streak, this led to a new loop of errors. The tired Kasimdzhanov was flagging with every passing move, and when the way to a draw was already study-like, he had no power left to spot it.

As we can see, the day was uplifting for some and very bitter for others. And if we look at the outcome of the entire first half, it is very positive for chess. Although the results differ greatly from any previous predictions (even those of the Bulgarian leader), the level of chess, the intensity of the fight, and the emotions have exceeded even the most optimistic hopes.

From a sporting point of view we have seen an unbelievable run by one favourite. Another one, Anand, is struggling on the 50% mark, and apart from accumulating two losses is obviously "feverish". Yet another pre-event favourite, Leko, is accelerating, but despite an enormous effort also finds himself on 50%. 
Svidler seems to have found his game and most hopes for reviving the suspense in the championships lie on his shoulders. His countryman, Morozevich, after a very slow start finally won a game, but predicting his future results is a thankless task.

Adams and Polgar are in a very difficult situation - both of them look frustrated, but, frankly speaking, only on rare occasions have they shown their usual form. Kasimdzhanov, like Morozevich, is on "minus one", but his performance amazes by its number of missed chances. Actually, in every game he has dropped half a point (even including the win against Anand, which should give more than just one point) and such a waste of resources is a sure way to a quick bankruptcy.

GAME 25
Peter Svidler
Judit Polgar

Sicilian, English Attack B90

1.e4 c5 2.d3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.xd4 f6 5.c3 a6 6.e3 g4 7.f3 h6 8.xh4 g5 9.ge3 d6

For the third time in this tournament this position appears on the board. After running into Topalov’s novelty in the fifth round, Svidler chooses a less principled continuation.

11.f3

Earlier in the tournament Svidler and Kasimdzhanov both chose 11.ge5.

11...db6 12.d3

12.ge6

Although not the most popular, this move is quite logical. The knight frees the diagonal for the bishop and prevents possible breaks on f4 or h4, for a while at least.

In a game against Kasparov in Linares 2001, Polgar played 12...e6, which is the main move here. Curiously, Kasparov had the same position, except with Black, at Linares the previous year. After 13.d2 Kasparov played 13...a5, but didn’t seem to achieve full equality after 14.db3 xb3 15.cxb3 d4 16.a3 g6 17.ed1 dc6 18.dd5 xd2+ 19.exd2 0-0 20.b4, Leko – Kasparov, Linares 2000.

Another idea is 13...xd4 14.xd4 a5 15.a3 g8 16.h4 c8 17.hgx5 hxg5 18.0-0-0 dc4 with a good game. In 2004, Kramnik, against Akopian, went for 15...0-0, but after 16.h4 g6 17.hg5 hxg5 18.b4! c7 19.e2 f6 20.edu2 ef7 21.ed4 White had an advantage due to the unsafe position of Black’s king.

13.d2 a5 14.0-0-0 d7

A novelty of questionable value. There is no apparent reason to deviate from the more logical theory move 14...e6, as Black usually gets a good game there. Moreover, on d7 the bishop has nothing to do.

For example, Kobalia – Gelfand, Internet 2004, continued: 14...e6 15.e1 c8 16.d5 xd2 17.xd2 ed4 18.ed4 xd4 19.exd4 h5
230 ROUND 7

21.exd5 $\text{B}c7$ 22.$\text{B}d3$ $\text{B}h6$! 23.c3 $\text{B}f4$ and Black is better.

15.$\text{B}b1$ $\text{B}c8$

16.g3!

A strong move, putting Black’s opening experiment in doubt. White cannot continue his play without this preparation, and now he can afford the time. With the bishop on d7 and knight on g6, Black simply doesn’t have enough resources for efficient counterplay.

It seems that Polgar’s idea was based on the line 16.$\text{D}d5$ with analogy to 14...$\text{B}e6$, when 14...$\text{D}d7$ would indeed be justified: 16...$\text{W}xd2$ 17.$\text{W}xd2$ $\text{D}xd4$ 18.$\text{W}xd4$ $\text{B}xd4$ 19.$\text{W}xd4$ $\text{B}c6$ and the bishop is better placed on c6 than e6.

16...$\text{D}xd4$

There isn’t much else to play here.

On 16...$\text{W}xc5$ White has a strong reply in 17.$\text{B}b3$, forcing the queen to a more passive spot (again, the bishop is clearly missed on e6). 17...$\text{W}d8$ 18.f4 $\text{Dxf4}$ 19.$\text{Dxf4}$ $\text{D}c4$ 20.$\text{W}xc4$ $\text{W}xc4$ 21.$\text{D}d4$ and White has a big advantage.

17.$\text{W}xd4$ $\text{W}xd4$ 18.$\text{W}xd4$ $\text{W}e5$

It’s not easy to fix the inaccuracy on the 14th move as after 18...$\text{D}e6$ 19.$\text{D}d5$ $\text{B}c5$ 20.$\text{W}d2$! White keeps the queens on, thus making the centralized position of Black’s king rather dubious.

19.$\text{W}f2$

20.$\text{B}b4$ $\text{W}xd5$ 21.exd5 $\text{B}c7$ 22.$\text{D}d3$ $\text{B}h6$! 23.c3 $\text{B}f4$ and Black is better.

16.g3?

Not a good move, but one that can be easily explained. White’s plan was clear: play $\text{D}d5$ followed by f4-f5, and eventually the black king would fall. Therefore Polgar decides to destroy the knight, but the cost is too high. There is no attack for the exchange, and now it is only a matter of technique for White to convert the material into a point.

It was better to try and hold the position by conventional means: 19...$\text{W}c5$! 20.$\text{W}d2$
(20.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{c}}}}e1 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{c}}}}e6 followed by ...b5) 20...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{c}}}}e5 
(20...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{c}}}}e6 doesn't work now because of 21.f4) 
21.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{c}}}}e1 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{c}}}}e6 22.h4 b5 and although White is 
clearly better, the play is much more complicated 
than in the game.

\textbf{20.bxc3 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{c}}}}xc3 21.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{d}}}}d3!} 
That pretty much ends Black's initiative on the 
quen side. In fact, it is White who is going to 
use the opened b-file to attack Black's queenside 
pawns.

\textbf{21...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{c}}}}a5 22.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{e}}}}e3} 
Defending against ...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{c}}}}e6.

\textbf{22.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{c}}}}e6 23.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{a}}}}a3 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{b}}}}b4+ 24.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{a}}}}a1} 
White just needs one more move (\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{a}}}}e2) before 
he starts attacking.

\textbf{24...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{d}}}}d7?} 
From now on it's a one-sided game, where 
Black has very little resistance to offer.

After 24...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{b}}}}b5 25.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{c}}}}c4 26.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{c}}}}xc4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{c}}}}xc4 
27.f4 White starts his attack, and it will be 
decisive. After the game Svidler suggested 
24...0-0 as an improvement, providing the 
following line: 25.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{e}}}}e2 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{c}}}}c8 26.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{b}}}}b1 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{c}}}}c5 27.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{c}}}}xc5 
\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{c}}}}xc5 28.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{b}}}}xb7 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{c}}}}xc2 29.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{b}}}}b2 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{c}}}}c1+ 30.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{b}}}}b1 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{c}}}}c2 
31.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{d}}}}xa6 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{b}}}}h2! (Worse is 31...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{c}}}}h3 as now White 
cuts the bishop out of the game with 32.g4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{g}}}}g2 
33.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{f}}}}f1! \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{h}}}}h1 34.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{a}}}}ab3. Everything is set for a 
pawn race, and the point is that counterplay 
with 34...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{g}}}}g7 35.a4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{e}}}}e5 fails to 36.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{e}}}}e2! \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{g}}}}g2 
37.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{d}}}}1 and White should win.)

\textbf{25.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{c}}}}c2 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{c}}}}xc5 26.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{b}}}}b1} 

Svidler was worried that he could not move 
his a-pawn fast enough, but White has 32.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{c}}}}c8! 
which is not easy to spot in advance, but he 
would definitely have found it if he reached the 
position over the board.

\textbf{25.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{c}}}}c2 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{c}}}}xc5 26.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{b}}}}b1} 

Although he has no objection to the queen 
exchange, White is not ready to improve Black's 
pawn formation. The difference between 24...0-0 
and 24...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{d}}}}d7 is clearly visible now: b7 will be 
captured with check.

\textbf{26...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{c}}}}xc3 27.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{e}}}}xe3 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{b}}}}b8} 
Of course, after 27...b5 28.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{a}}}}a3 Black's 
quen side falls apart.

\textbf{28.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{a}}}}xa6 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{a}}}}a8}
An important intermediate check after which the final result is clear.

Of course not 29.\textbf{Bxb}7+ \textbf{d}8 30.\textbf{f}1 \textbf{xa}2+: there is no need to give up so easily on a potential queen.

29...\textbf{d}8 30.\textbf{a}3 \textbf{h}5

30...\textbf{axh}3 31.\textbf{h}1 \textbf{g}4 32.\textbf{f}4! \textbf{h}5 33.\textbf{e}5 with a decisive attack.

31.\textbf{f}1 \textbf{a}7 32.\textbf{b}4!

Until some files are opened, the rooks will have to play along the ranks, and Svidler does so extremely skilfully. The threat is to play \textbf{h}4, fixing the weakness on \textbf{h}5.

32...\textbf{c}8

After 32...\textbf{h}4 33.\textbf{gxh}4 \textbf{gxh}4 34.\textbf{b}5 White enters from the other rank.

33.\textbf{b}2

Freesing the e3-rook: there is no rush.

33...\textbf{f}6 34.\textbf{h}4! \textbf{gxh}4 35.\textbf{gxh}4 \textbf{d}7

Polgar's position deteriorates with every move, and there it nothing that she can do about it. The pawn is poisoned: 35...\textbf{axh}4 36.\textbf{e}5 \textbf{f}5 37.\textbf{exf}6 \textbf{exf}6 38.\textbf{b}d3 \textbf{a}6 39.\textbf{h}3 and White starts gathering the weaknesses.

36.\textbf{eb}3

There now follows a typical exploitation of two weaknesses: one is on \textbf{h}5, the other on \textbf{b}7. Black's pieces are first tied to protecting the first, and then White switches to the second.

36...\textbf{c}8

36...\textbf{c}6 is met with 37.\textbf{b}5, forcing the exchange of the light-squared bishops.

Whereas 36...\textbf{axh}4 is refuted by 37.\textbf{f}4!, threatening to catch the knight with \textbf{f}5. After 37...\textbf{g}6 38.\textbf{f}5 \textbf{de}5 39.\textbf{xb}7 White wins easily.

37.\textbf{b}5 \textbf{f}4

Black manages to defend once, but after

38.\textbf{c}4 \textbf{c}7 39.\textbf{f}7

There is no defence.

39...\textbf{d}7

After 39...\textbf{e}5 White switches to attacking the d6-pawn: 40.\textbf{c}3+ \textbf{d}8 41.\textbf{b}6 \textbf{d}7 42.\textbf{e}8+ winning.

40.\textbf{c}3+ \textbf{d}8

41.\textbf{axh}5!

The simplest! Black is helpless against the passed h-pawn.

41...\textbf{axh}5 42.\textbf{axh}5 \textbf{e}6 43.\textbf{g}6 \textbf{c}6 44.\textbf{h}5 \textbf{e}7

Trying to stop the pawn with ...\textbf{f}5 and ...\textbf{f}6, so Svidler plays

45.\textbf{f}4!

More beautiful prophylaxis! It opens the path to the kingside, while now ...\textbf{f}5 will be met with \textbf{e}5.

45...\textbf{a}8 46.\textbf{h}6 \textbf{b}8 47.\textbf{h}7 \textbf{f}5 48.\textbf{exf}5

Or 48.\textbf{e}5 \textbf{dx}e5 49.\textbf{xe}5 \textbf{f}8 50.\textbf{g}3 \textbf{f}4 51.\textbf{g}4 \textbf{f}3 52.\textbf{c}3 \textbf{f}2 53.\textbf{f}4+ \textbf{g}7 54.\textbf{d}3 winning.

48...\textbf{f}6 49.\textbf{d}3 \textbf{e}4

Or 49...\textbf{d}5 50.\textbf{g}3 \textbf{ex}f5 51.\textbf{g}5 \textbf{d}7 52.\textbf{c}3 is decisive.

50.\textbf{xd}6 \textbf{xf}5 51.\textbf{xf}5 \textbf{xf}5 52.\textbf{d}7

This rook ending is easily winning. The rest could have been spared.

52...\textbf{b}6 53.\textbf{f}7+ \textbf{g}6 54.\textbf{b}7 \textbf{f}5

After 54...\textbf{exh}7 55.\textbf{exh}7 \textbf{exh}7 56.\textbf{c}4 \textbf{g}6 57.\textbf{c}5 White queens.

55.\textbf{c}4 \textbf{xf}4 56.\textbf{xb}6 \textbf{e}5

56...\textbf{exh}7 57.\textbf{exe}6 There is no point playing this position with the king cut off.

57.\textbf{h}6 \textbf{e}4 58.\textbf{c}2 \textbf{e}3 59.\textbf{h}2

1-0
GAME 26

Alexander Morozevich
Viswanathan Anand
Caro-Kann, Advance Variation B12

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5

A very trendy continuation for sound reasons – the arising positions demand exact play from both sides (meaning one mistake might yield an easy advantage), and they are very unusual for Caro-Kann players.

3...t5

A very complex position, especially because both sides can play on either flank and no plan could be described as compulsory. White can opt for c4, trying to exploit the fact that Black's queenside is weakened by the absence of the light-squared bishop. On the other hand, the e5-pawn is begging for kingside play with f4. Black, for his part, has no bad pieces (compared to the French Defence, with the same pawn formation), but the typical-for-the-French ...c5 break is now double-edged: again, due to the position of the light-squared bishop. He can also play on the kingside, but usually only for defensive reasons.

4.4f3

The most positional continuation and well known to both players, who have played it with both colours against strong opposition. In fact, Anand was one of the pioneers who popularized this variation while played a match against Karpov in the early 90's. The surprising thing is that, despite his great experience on both sides of this modern line, Anand has been rather unsuccessful here. At least from the theoretical point of view – in a sporting sense he is almost always successful. So could it be that the writing was on the wall, taking into consideration the fact that the Indian grandmaster believes his biggest mistake in this game was the opening choice?

Kramnik's win over Leko in the final round of the Brissago match made 4.4e3 a very popular move, but Morozevich reaches a quite similar position differently.

Another option tried frequently in the past is 4.4c3 which leads to very sharp play.

4...e6 5.4e2

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5...4e7

A tricky continuation, delaying the opening of the centre. In general, both sides are not in a hurry to force matters here and wait for the other one to speak first.

The popular move is 5...c5, which was deeply examined in the well-known Gelfand – Karpov match, where after two games Karpov decided to stop playing the Caro-Kann in the match. Today it is less clear and leads to very concrete play, which, however, still seems to give White certain chances of exploiting Black's weaknesses on the queenside. For instance:

6.4e3 cxd4 7.4xd4 4e7

Here Black seems to have found a way to cope with the direct crunch on the centre.

8.c4

This is what made Karpov suffer.

8...4bc6 9.4a4 a6 10.cxd5

And now not 10...4xd5 11.4c3 4a5 12.4x5 with advantage to White in Svidler – Morozevich, Moscow 2002, but instead:

10...4xd5 11.4xc6 4d7 12.4c3 4xc3!

With equality.

Thus worth checking is 8.4g5 with a little-explored and curious position. Here is one recent example: 8...4a5† 9.4c3 4bc6 10.4b5 4c7 11.0-0 4g6 12.4g4 a6 13.4a4 4c8 14.4f3 h6 15.4f6 with a straightforward attack, which brought White a win in a very complicated game, Motylev – Bareev, Moscow 2005.

6.4bd2

This weird looking manoeuvre is interesting, keeping all options open. In the event of the
queenside opening the knight will be ready to
jump to b3, whereas if the centre remains closed
can go to the kingside.

White could have attempted to punish Black
for his slow play with 6.\textit{Nh4}, exploiting the fact
that the h4-d8 diagonal is now closed.

6...\textit{h6}

Preparing an escape square for the bishop, in
case of the aforementioned \textit{Nh4}. Black's play
looks rather sluggish, but White has yet to do
anything that would force him to hurry.

Once again the immediate 6...c5 allows White
to seize the initiative after 7.dxc5 \textit{Qxc6} 8.\textit{Qb3}
\textit{Qxc5} 9.\textit{Qxc5} \textit{Qa5+} 10.\textit{c3} \textit{Qxc5} 11.\textit{Qb3} with
a steady edge, Svidler – Azmaiparashvili, Beer
Sheva 2005.

7.0–0 \textit{Qd7}

Black insists on White being the first to speak
out. But actually this was the point where Anand
underestimated White's ability to achieve his
aims, which will become clear after the next
move.

But even more interesting is that Vallejo
committed the same inaccuracy against Kasparov
in Linares 2003. And Anand must have been
aware of it – he knows everything, not to mention
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But even more interesting is that Vallejo
committed the same inaccuracy against Kasparov
in Linares 2003. And Anand must have been
aware of it – he knows everything, not to mention
that he played in the same tournament.
A very strong idea by Morozevich, which was extremely hard to think up. By forcing Black to deal with the threat of f2-f4-f5, he manages to take much of the sting out of ...c5. How? The point is that after ...c5, the battle is going to circle around the d4-square. If White can control this square without too many concessions Black will be left without counterplay. And the best way to do so is to prevent Black from applying pressure on it – namely, not allowing his knight to c6, and this is exactly what 10...h4 fights against.

Thus, on the previous move Anand had to accept that the knight is not going to his favourite place on c6, and look for a different location, in order at least to finish development. For those purposes the most appropriate seems to be another typical idea in this line, 10...c8, which would probably lead to positions from the 4...e3 line after 11...e3 e7 12...e1.

10...h7 11.f4
11...e3 looks good as well: 11...f5 12.xf5 xf5 13.f4 The pawn chain allows White many promising possibilities.

a) 13...c5 14.dxc5 xc5 (14...xc5 15.xc5 xc5 16.d4 with a pleasant advantage for White) and here 15.d4 leads to the game.

b) A different idea is 13...b6.

It is too early for 14.g4 e4 15.f2 h5 16.f5 c5! 17.fxe6 xe6 18.gxh5 cxd4 19.xd4 h3 with the initiative, for example 20.f2 xe5

21.f4 g4.

But after 14.d2 e7 15.g4 e4 16.f4, we believe not many people would want to defend here.

11...c5 12.h5!
Continuing the plan from his tenth move, trying to talk Black into ...e7-f5. Definitely worse is 12.dxc5 which plays into Black's hands after 12...c6! 13.b3 xc5.

12...f5
Stopping White's attack and completing development. After this, however, White achieves a very pleasant position with a steady advantage.

12...c7? would allow White to demonstrate
the strength of his last move: 13.f5! exf5
14.\textit{d}xf5 \textit{xf}5 15.g4 (less clear is 15.\textit{d}xf5 exf5
16.e6 \textit{d}6 17.e7f8 \textit{d}d8 18.\textit{g}6 \textit{d}6f6) 15...\textit{g}6
(15...g6 16.gxf5 gxf5 17.fxex6 with a decisive
attack) 16.\textit{x}g6 fxg6 17.\textit{xc}2 and the king is in

However, 12...c4 deserved consideration.
13.\textit{d}2 \textit{f}5 (the correct positional solution,
13...\textit{c}6 loses to 14.f5 with a decisive attack)
14.\textit{xf}5 \textit{xf}5 15.f2 \textit{f}7 16.\textit{d}f1 g6 17.\textit{e}2 h5
and Black is better off than he was in the game.

So why did Anand reject 12...c4? Possibly
because of 13.f5, but it does not seem to be a
problem after 13...\textit{xf}5 14.\textit{xf}5 \textit{xf}5 15.g4
\textit{g}6 16.\textit{x}g6 fxg6 with an unclear game.

More probable is that he did not like 13.\textit{c}5.
In this line White sacrifices a pawn, but obtains
an interesting initiative. It is hard to find the
balance even in analysis, but it is understandable
that he was not willing to head for such a position
at such an early stage of the game. The variation
could continue: 13...\textit{xf}5 14.\textit{xf}5 \textit{xf}5 15.g4
\textit{g}6 16.\textit{x}g6 fxg6 with an unclear game.

In fact, such positions where Black succeeds
in advancing c6-c5-c4 are the most principled
and probably the best Black can get in this line.
White must organize his attack quickly, or Black
will play c5-c4 at the most appropriate moment,
so that White's pieces will first have to manoeuvre
for a while (they do not have a lot of space for the
manoeuvres), which will allow Black to take the
initiative, for instance with f7-f5? This question
is key, and it seems that the fact that a pair of
pieces have been exchanged favours White.

In this line White's anack against the king promises to be
strong; his position is better.

Again, there is no need to hurry with 14.g4?
\textit{e}4 15.f5 g6 winning material. But if he
wanted to get a position similar to the game, why
not 14.dxc5 \textit{xc}5f6 15.\textit{d}xc5 \textit{xc}5 16.\textit{e}3 with
advantage?

14...g6

Trying to typically seal the kingside. But he
could have tried to play 14...c4 first, closing the
queenside. It was a better choice, even though it
reduces the pressure on the centre, leaving White
free to develop his play on the kingside. At least
Black also has play and the queenside is not in
danger. After 15.\textit{c}1 g6 16.\textit{f}3 h5 17.\textit{e}2
both players seemed to assess this position in
White's favour (as White did not prevent it and
Black did not play it), but we're not sure they
are right - although attacks on the king tend to
look more dangerous, there are mutual chances.
Or at least, Black has more chances than in the
game.

Both players were trying to achieve this position,
in which Black is clearly solid but he, just as clearly,
lacks any active plan. He has managed to build a
wall on the kingside, but it's not an unbreakable
one, and on the queenside he will have to consider
White's possibilities, such as c3-c4. All in all,
not a pleasant position for Black to play, and the
improvement should be looked for earlier.

18.a4

A good idea - even though b7-b5 is not yet
a threat, this move is Black's only hope for
counterplay in the future. Morozevich rules out
this idea before it was even born.

18...h4
A legitimate plan, trying to create some kind of play wherever he can. The sooner he manages to open the h-file, the better will be Black's situation.

19.a5 h3

Only here do we get a reminder that this is not just an individual game, but part of a very important tournament where one of the main contenders started badly and is under great pressure. Under normal conditions Anand would have slowly improved his pieces, waiting for the right moment (for as long as it takes), but here he dives into complications, which are clearly not in his favour.

Better was 19...e7 20.f3 g5. For example: 21.g5 f5 22.f3 g7 and Black can keep playing without a plan for a long time, having very good chances to solve the not-so-dangerous problems White can pose him.

20.g3 g2 21.f2!

Weaker is 21.e1 e4 and black pieces occupy too much of White's airspace, in the heart of his position. Attempting to start the traditional play with 22.c4 leads to a position after 22...dxc4 23.xc4 dxc4 24.xc4 e5 25.hxg3

26.xc4 27.f3 cxd5 28.exd5 h2 29.xh1

This move is not what White had in mind.

21.e4 22.xg2 hxg2 23.xg2

To sum up Black's manoeuvre: White successfully sacrificed an exchange and he can now play on both flanks whereas the opponent's rooks will not and cannot be a serious factor without open lines. White is better, and not just slightly.

23.e5?!

A strange but very characteristic decision by Anand. They say he has very strong intuition, and now we may add decent prophetic powers. It is this move that could have brought about an escape from the very delicate position he's in right now. But how could he know Morozevich would allow the upcoming trick?

23.e7 would be a more natural move, staying close to the king and keeping the c5-square vacant, in case a knight needs to run for its life.

24.xd3 xd7 25.f3?

A calculation mistake, although it's impossible to see all the lines here. Objectively, however, now Black has a very narrow escape, or even more.

Had he paid more attention to Black's possibilities, Morozevich would definitely have played 25.h4, ending his opponent's dreams of delivering a big check. The plan he executed in the game no longer works. 25...f5 promises nothing as after 26.exf6 e5 27.fxe5 there is no check on h3.

25.xd4?

A painful move order mix-up.

White's threat was serious: 26.xe4 dxe4 27.exf6 dxc4 28.xd4 c6 29.xc6+ xxc6 30.b4 and White is winning the ending.

But after the immediate 25...f5! Black emerges healthy from the complications with a million-dollar smile: 26.exf6 (otherwise White can forget about an advantage) 26...e5 27.xe4! (only move) 27...h3+ 28.xf2 dxe4 29.xe4 xh2+ 30.xf3 xh5+ 31.g4 xh3+ 32.h2 (so far everything was forced) 32.xd4 (not 32.xg4+ 33.xd3 when the white king escapes all the threats, much to his rival's chagrin) and now White has three moves:

a) After 33.xg6+ d8 the checks are over, and so is the game.

b) 33.xd4 xg4+ 34.d3 h3+ 35.c2 h2+ 36.b3 and now:

b1) 36.e6+ 37.a3 xf6 and 38.xe5 is
not good because of 38...\texttt{e}c7\dagger and there is no 39.b4? because of 39...\texttt{exe}3\dagger. Therefore, White has to play 39.\texttt{b}b3 but here too, after 39...\texttt{e}e6\dagger 40.\texttt{a}a3 \texttt{c}c5 41.\texttt{a}a4\dagger (only defence) 41...\texttt{f}f7 White might not be able to hold it.

But better is 38.fx\texttt{e}5 \texttt{f}f7 and Black has to protect both the b7- and g6-pawns, but an exchange is an exchange and White does not have enough firepower to create serious threats. Black is not worse, for instance 39.\texttt{g}g1 \texttt{c}c6!.

b2) Anand's suggestion, 36...\texttt{e}e2, is possible as well, and with some work leads to a draw: 37.\texttt{d}d5 \texttt{exe}4 38.\texttt{h}h1 \texttt{e}e6 39.\texttt{h}h8\dagger \texttt{f}f7 40.\texttt{xe}6\dagger \texttt{exe}6 41.\texttt{xc}8 \texttt{xc}3 42.\texttt{xc}3 \texttt{b}6
c) 33.\texttt{xe}4 \texttt{h}h2\dagger 34.\texttt{f}f2 \texttt{xf}4 35.\texttt{xe}5\dagger \texttt{xe}5\dagger 36.\texttt{xe}5

It all looks great for White, until 36...\texttt{h}h3!! is found for Black, threatening 37...\texttt{c}c2\dagger 38.\texttt{f}f1 \texttt{f}f3 winning. White has to play 37.\texttt{f}f1 \texttt{c}c4! allowing his pawns to be destroyed. For example: 38.\texttt{e}e1 (worse is 38.\texttt{b}b6 \texttt{e}e4\dagger 39.\texttt{d}d2 \texttt{h}h7! as e5 is now falling, and the trouble is all White's) 38...\texttt{e}e4\dagger 39.\texttt{f}f2 \texttt{f}f7 40.\texttt{c}c3 \texttt{xe}3 (also possible is 40...\texttt{xe}3) and White is unable to prevent a perpetual.

But what is even more interesting is that those complications could even bring about Black's advantage (although not a serious one). Jacob Aagaard showed an alternative and surprising way Black could achieve even more than just equality by playing: 28...\texttt{xe}62\dagger! Now White has two possibilities:
a) 29.\texttt{g}g2 \texttt{exe}4 30.\texttt{f}xe5 \texttt{f}f7 and after 31.\texttt{d}d1 \texttt{c}c8 it becomes clear that Black will be the one pushing in the endgame.
b) 29.\texttt{f}f1 \texttt{exe}4! 30.\texttt{g}g4 \texttt{h}h1\dagger 31.\texttt{c}c2 \texttt{h}h5! 32.\texttt{h}h5 \texttt{h}h5 33.\texttt{xe}5 \texttt{exe}5 and Black is the only one to fight for a win here, even though the game remains very complicated.

26.\texttt{xd}4

After Black missed his chance White's position became even more promising. With two such bishops he is not even concerned about opening
the game. Here Anand slowed down into thought, probably realized it was the wrong move order, but decided to stick to his plan until the bitter end.

26...f5

Black had better alternatives (such as 26...c6), but sometimes those “better” alternatives can be extremely depressing.

27.exf6 e5 28.axe4!

28...h3t

The point is that after 28...dxe4 29.xe4 h3t 30.f3 h5t White has the e3-square for his king, 31.e3, leaving White with three pawns and a possible attack for the exchange, which will be the end of the story.

29.f2 xh2t

Here too, the idea fails: 29...dxe4 30.xe4 xh2t 31.f3 h5t 32.e3 30.g2! exd4 31.xg6t f8 32.e1!

Black is helpless against White's strong passers supported by active pieces.

32.d3 33.xd3

Very mature. Younger player may leave such a pawn on the board, and eventually even lose because of it. Morozevich is not so young and naive anymore...

33.c6 34.e5 d6 35.f3

The final part of the game demands no variations — White plays simply and strongly. Black can do nothing against the pair of pawn running at his king.

35.xg2t 36.xg2 h6 37.g4

One (if not more) of the pawns will queen.

37.hxg6 38.f5

38.f7 39.g3 b5 40.axb6 xb6 41.g5 d7 42.f6 d4 43.g6 b8 44.cxd4 exd4 45.e7!

Based on exact calculation.

45.db4 46.f7t g8 47.e7t fh8

Or 47...f8 48.f7 b8b7 49.g6.

48.f7!

Now it is mate.

48.e4 49.g6 e3t 50.g4

White is threatening mate after 50.g4 forcing Black to keep checking: 50...b4t (50...d4t 51.f5 51.f5 b5t 52.e4 b3 53.g8t h7 54.g6t h6 55.h8t g5 56.g7, therefore Black resigned.

1-0
GAME 27

Peter Leko
Michael Adams
Petroff Defence C42

1.e4 e5 2.d3 d6 3.dxe5 dxe4 4.d4 d5 5.dxe5 c6 6.d4 dxc6 7.0-0 e7 8.c4 Oe8 9.f3 e8 10.a3 c6 11.d4 cxd5 12.Oc3 dxc3 13.bxc3 Oa5

Adams repeats his favourite line, which he opted for in the first round (Game 3) against Svidler as well.

14.Oe5!!

Adams is not the only one with a PhD in this line. Leko is one of the biggest experts as well (he has even won in this line against Adams twice) and therefore the text should be taken seriously. Such a reaction to Black's ...Oa5 is common in many positions, but there is always a question whether it's too early - White might not be ready to support such an advanced knight and the pawn on d4 might be feeling a little bit lonely.

14...Oa5!

A new move in this position that, despite all its apparent simplicity, is quite tricky to handle. Black has his queen and three minor pieces (one can add a few pawns to your own taste) exposed to possible tactics from White (Anand - Kramnik from Sofia 2005 is a good illustration of this claim) and should therefore be very careful on every move. Besides, White has an eternal threat of pushing his central pawns, which is sure to give him a lead. So the main question here is whether 14...Oa5 is tactically sound (it certainly is positionally). We will soon get all the answers, but it is clear that Adams' idea was overcriticized: Black is nowhere near the bad position he eventually ended up in.

Also 14...Oa6 does not seem ideal - the bishop should meet its white colleague if and when the latter reaches f4. After 15.Ob3 Oe8 16.Oa4 c6 17.0f4 Oe6 18.Ob1 White's position looks great, Matras - Hernandez, Warsaw 2001.

The most topical is considered to be 14...c5, but Adams does not allow Leko to demonstrate his home preparation here. In any case, in the following example White did not succeed in converting the advantage, although her position was very promising at times: 15.Ob1 Oa5 (On 15...a6 White has 16.Od3 - compared to Svidler - Adams, Black does not have his bishop on f5 yet, making good possibilities he had there (like Oe4) hard to execute here.) 16.Ob5 b6 17.Oc1 Oe8 18.Od3 Oe6 19.Oe2 cxd4 20.cxd4 Oc8 21.Od5 Oe6 with a complex struggle, Xu Yuhua - Koneru, Hyderabad 2002.

But it seems that it is Black who should be worried in this line. For instance, White could improve with 21.Ob2, and after 21...Oc2 22.Od5 Oe6 23.Oe4 White's advantage is clear.

15.c4

White hurries up, knowing that the black pieces will not be shaky for long.

15...Od6!!

This leads to problems - probably Adams simply overlooked White's next move. Stronger was 15...Oe6 16.Oc1. In the arising positions White seems to be better, but it is by no means completely forced, and Black always has chances to find coordination. After 16...Oad8 it's not easy to prove White's advantage.

For instance, not only 17.Ob2 Ob6! and 17.Oe3 Oa6! give White nothing, but also the more logical 17.Oa4, and here not 17...b6? 18.Of3 Oxd4 19.Oc2 Oc4 20.g3 Ox3 21.Oxf3 with a serious edge for White, but 17...Oxd4! with a forced line: 18.Oxa5 b6 19.Ob5 a6 20.Oxa6 Ox5 21.Ob2 Od6 22.g3 Oe4 Black's threats should not be underestimated, especially
since 23...\texttt{exd}4 \texttt{exd}4 24...\texttt{fxf}1 \texttt{c}5 25...\texttt{xa}2 \texttt{c}6 is anything but pleasant for White.

The strongest seems to be 17...\texttt{h}5 but after 17...\texttt{xa}6

White does not seem to have anything serious. 18...\texttt{xf}7 gives White nothing 18...\texttt{xf}7 19...\texttt{xf}7 \texttt{f}3 (only White is in danger after 20...\texttt{xe}7 \texttt{f}5 21...\texttt{f}7 22...\texttt{xd}8 \texttt{c}6 23...\texttt{f}3 \texttt{c}6 20...\texttt{f}6 and White has nothing. The problem is that White cannot win a piece with 21...\texttt{e}5 because of 21...\texttt{g}6! 22...\texttt{xa}5 \texttt{xd}4 and Black wins.

Better is 21...\texttt{h}4 \texttt{h}6 22...\texttt{e}5 \texttt{e}4! 23...\texttt{xa}5 \texttt{xf}3 24...\texttt{xf}3 \texttt{exd}4 and suddenly White's king becomes an issue, which makes the position dynamically equal. For instance: 25...\texttt{xa}7 \texttt{xc}4 26...\texttt{xb}7 \texttt{d}5 27...\texttt{b}5 \texttt{c}6 28...\texttt{b}7 \texttt{xf}3 and Black has no problems.

Another option is 18...\texttt{f}3 \texttt{g}6 and Black is OK again.

16...\texttt{c}5!

Forced, strong, and not typical. This difficult to calculate move leads to White seizing the advantage. Positionally, it limits the mobility of all Black's pieces (with the e7-bishop bearing the brunt of it). Tactically, it does not allow Black the time he needs to coordinate his forces.

And this simply loses.

Black also ends up in a difficult position after 16...\texttt{f}6 17...\texttt{g}4! and here:

a) Black can sacrifice an exchange 17...\texttt{xe}4, but still after 18...\texttt{f}7 \texttt{g}6 19...\texttt{xf}8 \texttt{f}8 20...\texttt{e}3 there is no compensation for the material.

b) Also failing to do the job is 17...\texttt{xc}5 18...\texttt{xf}5 \texttt{d}8 19...\texttt{e}3 \texttt{exd}4 20...\texttt{xd}4 \texttt{c}5 21...\texttt{d}7! \texttt{a}5 22...\texttt{h}1 \texttt{xd}7 23...\texttt{g}1 and Black loses his king.

c) 17...\texttt{e}6 18...\texttt{g}5 \texttt{f}5 19...\texttt{g}4 \texttt{e}4 20...\texttt{e}1 \texttt{d}5 (20...\texttt{xg}4 21...\texttt{xd}4 and \texttt{e}7 falls) 21...\texttt{f}3 \texttt{d}8 22...\texttt{d}5 (White's position is very impressive) 22...\texttt{f}5 23...\texttt{d}2 with a resignable position. Painful for Black, but a nice line.

The only way to keep fighting was 16...\texttt{f}6 and, indeed, Black has chances to survive. For instance: 17...\texttt{f}4 \texttt{d}8 18...\texttt{a}4 and White has to prove his advantage: 18...\texttt{c}6 19...\texttt{xc}6 \texttt{xc}6 20...\texttt{xc}6 (20...\texttt{b}5 \texttt{c}2!) 20...\texttt{xc}6 21...\texttt{f}1 \texttt{f}6 22...\texttt{e}3 \texttt{e}4 It does not seem that White can pull off a win here.

17...\texttt{f}3 \texttt{e}4

Even worse is 17...\texttt{d}8 18...\texttt{a}4 \texttt{f}6 19...\texttt{xa}5 \texttt{xe}5 20...\texttt{dxe}5 with no compensation for the pawn.

18...\texttt{xe}4 \texttt{xe}4 19...\texttt{d}2!
The heart of Leko’s plan. Black has only one way to avoid losing material immediately.

19...\(\text{Ec6}\)

Hopeless is 19...\textbf{b6} 20.\textit{fxa5} \textbf{bxa5} 21.\textit{Eel} with a decisive advantage. White also wins neatly after 19...\textit{Exd4} 20.\textit{Qf3} \textit{Exc5} 21.\textit{Qb4}.

\textbf{20.Eel} \textit{Wh4} 21.\textit{Qf3}!

Of course, there is no need to destroy Black's pawn structure by capturing on \textbf{c6} – it is better simply to capture the pawns.

Leko correctly avoided the temptation to win an exchange with 21.g3 \textit{Wf6} 22.\textit{Qd7} which would allow Black some counterplay: 22...\textit{Exd4} 23.\textit{Exd8} \textit{Qxc5}!

21...\textit{Wh5} 22.\textit{Qb1}!

Although he has managed to save all his pieces, Black’s success is temporary – his weaknesses are about to be destroyed.

\textbf{22...Wf6}

22...\textit{b6}? 23.\textit{cxb6} \textit{axb6} (or...\textit{cx6}) 24.\textit{Ec1} loses material.

22...\textit{Wd5} 23.\textit{Ec7} \textit{Exd4} 24.\textit{Exe7} \textit{Qxf3}† 25.\textit{Qxf3} \textit{Exd2} 26.g3 is even better for White than in the game – controlling the seventh rank with queens on the board will seal the deal quite quickly.

\textbf{23.Exb7} \textit{Qxd4}

The idea of sacrificing a pawn is not enough: 23...\textit{Bad8} 24.\textit{Qe3} \textit{Ed7} Black falls just short of developing some kind of compensation: 25.\textit{Wa4} \textit{Wd5} 26.\textit{Qf4!} \textit{Exd4} 27.\textit{Ed6!} and White wins.

24.\textit{Exd4} \textit{Wxd1} 25.\textit{Exd1} \textit{Qxd4} 26.\textit{Qe3}!

The strongest move, assessing that the arising rook ending is easily winning. Creating a ‘weak’ pawn on \textit{e3} terminates all Black’s possible hopes for counterplay connected with mates on the back rank.

\textbf{26...Qxe3} 27.\textit{fxe3} c6 28.\textit{Ed6}

Amazingly enough, there are rook endgames which are not drawn, and this is one of them.
The numerous black weaknesses combined with White's control over the seventh rank leaves Black no hope.

28...\textit{Bae8}

Slightly more stubborn was 28...\textit{Bac8}, but White's win is not complicated: all he needs to do is play the most natural moves. Generally speaking, after White wins the a-pawn, and exchanges one pair of rooks (and it will be Black begging for it), all White has to do is bring his king into the game.

29.a4 \textit{Bb8}

29...a5 does not change much: 30.\textit{Bf2} g6 31.\textit{Bb6} \textit{Bbd8} 32.\textit{Bbxc6} \textit{Bxc6} 33.\textit{Bxd8+} \textit{Bg7} 34.\textit{Bd5} followed by the king's triumphant march to the queenside.

30.\textit{Bxa7} \textit{Ba8} 31.\textit{Bdd7} \textit{Bxa7} 32.\textit{Bxa7} \textit{Bb8} 33.\textit{Bf8} 34.a6 \textit{Bbl+} 35.\textit{Bf2} \textit{Ba1} and now it's time to bring the king: 36.e4 h6 37.\textit{Bc3} \textit{Bb5} 38.\textit{Bf4} \textit{Bg8}

White wins nicely after 38...\textit{f6} 39.\textit{Bf5}! \textit{Bxc5} 40.\textit{Bg6} \textit{Bg5} 41.\textit{Bh7} \textit{Ba5} 42.\textit{Bb8+} \textit{Bf7} 43.\textit{Bd7} followed by \textit{Bg8}.

Has Black stopped the king? 39.e5 Not really! 39...\textit{Ba4+} 40.\textit{Bf5} \textit{Ba5} 41.\textit{Bb8+} \textit{Bh7} 42.a7 \textit{Ba1} and now 43.e6! \textit{Bf1+} 44.\textit{Bf6} \textit{Bb1+} 45.\textit{Bd4} is curtains.

29.\textit{Bf2}

Now the win is effortless. 29.\textit{Bxc6} \textit{Bxe3} 30.\textit{Bxa7} \textit{Bb1+} 31.\textit{Bf2} \textit{Bfe8} 32.h3 also wins, but with more complications.

29...\textit{Be5}

Or 29...\textit{Be6} 30.\textit{Bxa7}.

30.\textit{Bxc6} \textit{Bfe8} 31.\textit{Bcc7}

We all know how strong rooks on the 7\textsuperscript{th} rank are – this is no exception.

31...\textit{Bxe3}

Protecting f7 (with 31...\textit{Bf5+}) is hopeless – there are not enough rooks to do that and stop the c-pawn from queening.

32.\textit{Bxf7} \textit{Bc2+} 33.\textit{Bg3} \textit{Bb3} 34.\textit{Bf3} \textit{Bxf3} 35.\textit{Bxf3} \textit{Bc2}

36.\textit{Bc7}

A last finesse. There is of course no need to make life harder with 36.\textit{Bxa7} \textit{Bxc5} 37.\textit{Bc7}! even though White should win the ending.

36...\textit{h5} 37.\textit{c6} \textit{Bh7} 38.\textit{h3} \textit{Bh6} 39.\textit{Be4} \textit{Be6}

White is now going to force Black to sacrifice the rook for the c-pawn, and then simply queen his remaining a-pawn. Black's counterplay on the kingside is about three or four tempi late.

1-0
After last round’s game Anand – Svidler (Game 23) there is no further desire on White’s part to test the Marshall.

8...\(\text{\textit{b}}\text{7}\) 9.d3 \(\text{d}6\)

The third round game between Svidler and Leko (Game 9) featured 9...\(\text{\textit{e}}\text{8}\).

10.a3 \(\text{a}5\)

The most popular continuation. Black wants to play \(\text{c}7\)-\(\text{c}5\) as soon as possible, fighting for the centre. The obvious drawbacks are \(\text{\textit{a}}\text{5}\) and \(\text{\textit{b}}\text{7}\), which are not too attractive together, even though in some lines of the Ruy Lopez, in particular in the Chigorin system, Black sometimes tries similar setups. However, this disharmony is temporary, and the real and possibly the only long-term drawback is the weakness of the \(d5\)-square, which will be felt after Black plays \(\text{c}7\)-\(\text{c}5\). In summary, this is one possible route to equality (the other direction is \(\text{d}8\)-\(\text{d}7\) and \(\text{c}6\)-\(\text{d}8\)-\(\text{e}6\), as in Game 47).

11.\(\text{a}2\) \(\text{c}5\)

After 12.\(\text{c}3\), as opposed to the text, the knight also participates in the battle for \(d5\). The question of which is preferable is still open, but most of the elite players seem to prefer the text.

12.\(\text{c}6\) 13.\(\text{\textit{f}}\text{1}\) \(\text{c}8\)

The bishop is transferred to \(e6\) where it will both fight for \(d5\) and neutralize White’s \(b3\)-bishop, instead of sleeping on \(b7\). In this way Black tries to solve the disharmony of his pieces. The only problem is that it requires some time.

14.\(\text{c}3\)

A European team championship game in Gothenburg 2005 between Sutovsky and Beliavsky featured 14.\(\text{\textit{e}}\text{3}\) \(\text{\textit{e}}\text{6}\) and then a very promising idea in 15.\(\text{\textit{d}}\text{5}\). Probably this is going to be the most popular position in this line. After 15...\(\text{\textit{e}}\text{8}\) 16.\(\text{c}3\) \(\text{\textit{d}}\text{5}\) 17.\(\text{\textit{e}}\text{d}5\) \(\text{\textit{\textit{d}}}\text{8}\) 18.\(\text{\textit{a}}\text{4}\) \(\text{\textit{d}}\text{7}\) 19.\(\text{a}x\text{b}5\) \(\text{a}x\text{b}5\) 20.\(\text{c}4\) \(\text{\textit{e}}\text{8}\) 21.\(\text{\textit{d}}\text{2}\) \(\text{\textit{c}7}\) 22.\(\text{c}4\) \(\text{c}5\) \(\text{\textit{d}}\text{4}\) White had the advantage.

14...\(\text{\textit{e}}\text{6}\) 15.\(\text{\textit{x}}\text{e}6\) \(\text{\textit{f}}\text{xe}6\) 16.\(\text{b}4\)

An important move, creating pressure on \(c5\), thus making it difficult for Black to carry out his thematic \(d5\)-break.

16.\(\text{g}3\) seems less convincing – the knight has little to do on \(g3\) now, and it allows Black to execute \(d6\)-\(d5\): 16...\(\text{d}7\) 17.\(\text{\textit{e}}\text{3}\) \(\text{d}5\) 18.\(\text{\textit{e}}\text{d}5\) \(\text{\textit{x}}\text{d}5\) 19.\(\text{\textit{a}}\text{4}\) \(\text{\textit{b}}\text{8}\) 20.\(\text{a}x\text{b}5\) \(\text{a}x\text{b}5\) 21.\(\text{b}3\) \(\text{\textit{a}}\text{8}\) and a draw was agreed, Kasparov – Topalov, Linares 2005.

16...\(\text{\textit{d}}\text{7}\)!

A typical Ruy Lopez manoeuvre, transferring the knight to a better life. Another path is to go via \(c3\)-\(e2\), but the knight would be disturbing other pieces and would be limited to \(g3\) only.

12.\(\text{\textit{d}}\text{bd}2\)

A nice idea. Kasimdzhanov introduces a whole new way of handling this type of position. Black is going to transfer his forces to the queenside,
seeking counterplay on that side of the board. Once he plays a6-a5 it will not be easy to find an advantage for White.

In his previous game, against Adams in Linares 2005, Kasimdzhanov opted for 16...Qh5 and after 17.Qh2 f4 18.Qxf4 Qxf4 19.Nb3 Qd7 20.a4 bxa4 21.Qxa4 cxb4 22.cxb4 Qxb8 23.Qe1 White seized the initiative on the queenside and with it a pleasant edge.

The position in the centre and on the kingside is stable, so Black has the opportunity to gather his forces on the queenside.

18.Qh2!

With a pawn on e6 the knight has nothing to do on e3 or g3. Thus White's only active plan is to transfer the knight to g4, pressurizing Black's kingside, and Black taking on g4 would open the h-file, with all the natural consequences.

The immediate 18.Qg5 makes 18...d5 possible, as it reduces the pressure on e5.

A couple of months later, in the FIDE World Cup final, White tried 18.Qd2 but after 18...a5 19.Qg5 axb4 20.axb4 cxb4! 21.Qxe6 d5! 22.Qg5 bxc3 23.Qxc3 b4 24.Qb2 Qa5! it was White who had to play precisely to make a draw, Ponomariov – Aronian, Khanty Mansyisk (1) 2005.

18...a5 19.Qd2

Stopping Black's play on the queenside.

The line 19.bxc5 a4 20.Qe2 dxc5 leaves Black in charge of the queenside.

19...b6 20.Qg4 Qxg4?! This move is the source of Black's future problems. Now Topalov gets an open h-file and a clear plan to attack the king: g4-g5. It would not be enough for a win in a lab environment, but for a practical game it is a handicap for Black.

Black should have opened the queenside seeking counterplay as fast as he can: 20...axb4 21.axb4 cxb4 22.cxb4, and here the most solid seems to be 22...Qh7, intending to transfer the knight to f8, covering all the vital squares around the king. However, this continuation is slightly too passive and would have allowed White to control the centre with 23.Qe3 Qf8 24.d4, although here too, after 24...a4! the position is close to balanced.

and if White wants to play hard for a win, the main question that should be asked is which will arrive first: White's mate, or Black's counterplay on the queenside.

23.Qe3

Direct assaults in the form of 23.Qxf6 Qxf6 24.g4 yield nothing after 24...Qg8 25.h4 Qd8 26.Qg2 Qb6 27.g5 h5 closing the kingside for good.

23...Qb7 24.Qh1!

Following the success of its predecessor, another knight is rushing to g4.

24...Qxa1 25.Qxa1 Qa8 26.Qc1

Without the rooks White's attack lacks any sting: 26.Qxa8 Qxa8 27.Qf1 Qa4! 28.Qxa4 Qxa4 and it is Black who is winning now.

26...Qa4 27.Qxf6 Qxf6 28.Qg4 Qxb4 28...Qd8 29.Qd1 Qxb4 (but not 29...Qxb4 30.Qh6† gxh6 31.Qh5† with a decisive attack) 30.Qf3† Qg8 31.Qh6† gxh6 32.Qh6 and Black will have to sweat for a draw.

29.Qxf6 Qxf6 30.Qd1!

The straightforward attempt to mate the enemy king with 30.Qf1 fails to 30...Qc7! 31.Qd1! (after 31.f4 a queen exchange saves Black: 31...Qc2! 32.Qxe5† Qe7 33.Qxd6† Qxd6 34.Qf5† Qe7 35.Qxc2 Qxc2 36.Qc5† Qd7 and Black's b-pawn supported by all his pieces is very dangerous) 31...Qc2! and Black manages to create enough counter-threats just in time, especially unpleasant is the threat to trade rooks with ...Qa1, as after that White would have no attacking resources.
30...\text{R}a3

31.\text{g}f3+ \text{g}6 32.\text{g}4+ \text{f}7 33.\text{f}4 \text{d}7?! 
This is an attempt to play for a win. Black could instead force a draw with 33...\text{xd}3 34.\text{f}1 \text{e}7 35.\text{f}5 (35.\text{fx}e5+ \text{g}8 36.\text{ex}d6 \text{xd}6 37.\text{x}h6 \text{d}4+ 38.\text{h}1 \text{f}5 is dangerous mainly for White) 35...\text{g}8 36.\text{fx}e6 \text{f}4 37.\text{x}f4 \text{xf}4 38.\text{x}f4 \text{a}8 39.\text{f}7 \text{g}5 40.\text{x}g5 \text{hx}g5 and the peaceful outcome is evident. e.g. 41.\text{b}7 \text{e}8 42.\text{xb}5 \text{xe}6 43.\text{b}4 \text{g}4! with a draw.
34.\text{f}1 \text{g}8 35.\text{f}5 \text{xf}5 36.\text{xf}5 \text{xd}3 37.\text{g}6 \text{d}5 38.\text{f}6
38.\text{x}h6 \text{f}7 39.\text{g}4 \text{a}6! And Black wins.

38...\text{f}7 39.\text{g}4 \text{g}6 40.\text{x}h6 \text{a}8 41.\text{h}4 \text{a}4! with mutual chances.

The main purpose of the analysis was not to “solve” the position with variations, but to show the ideas and provide arguments against some opinions that Black has completely equalized – as we could see, some lines provide White with a dangerous attack and Black must play very precisely to hold the balance.

21.\text{hx}g4 \text{ax}b4 22.\text{ax}b4 \text{cxb}4 23.\text{cxb}4 \text{f}6
The position is almost the same as in previous lines, except White has a very clear way to build up an attack on Black's king.

24.\texttt{Be1} $\texttt{g7}$!

Freeing the queen to participate in the battle for the a-file.

25.\texttt{g3}

The first step toward the goal: the g-pawn clears a square for the king, which in its turn will make way for the rooks heading for the h-file. Both sides stick to their game plans for now.

25...\texttt{Wb7} 26.\texttt{Wg2} \texttt{Exa1} 27.\texttt{Exa1} \texttt{Ea8}

Black's position looks very solid. If White trades the rooks he will not have any objective reasons to play for a win. If he retreats, however, the a-file will be in Black's possession, giving him opportunities for counterplay. A draw agreement seems to be close.

28.\texttt{Ah1}!

Nevertheless! In our previous note we forgot to mention that it is Topalov leading the white army, and he always plays on, even with a two-point lead over the field.

28...\texttt{d4}

This move has been widely criticized by many commentators, as it gives Black another weakness, and reduces his presence in the centre. The criticism, however, is not fully justified, as Black gets the important c3-square in compensation.

28...\texttt{Wc7} was a more solid move, preventing g5 and intending ...\texttt{Ba4} with sufficient counterplay.

29.\texttt{Exd4} \texttt{exd4} 30.\texttt{Bf4}

30...\texttt{d5}?

The FIDE champion wants to solve the problem of both his weaknesses (d6 and e6) with one shot. A dogmatic approach also supports his decision as it follows the rule-of-thumb in such positions: 'place the pawns on squares opposite to the colour of your bishop'. For the same reason it is possible he did not seriously examine White's reply, as it seems unwise to put his pawn on a dark square.

However, this move has a critical drawback: it allows White to gain vital space on the kingside and in the centre (with e4-e5), thus completely isolating his d4-pawn, which makes Black's position really difficult.

Black should have tried to organize counterplay with 30...\texttt{Bc6}! (threatening ...\texttt{Be3}) 31.\texttt{Bd1} (after 31.\texttt{Ea1} \texttt{Wd7} with the white rook on e1, Black has little to worry about) 31...\texttt{Ee8}, and now 32.g5 leads to a forced draw after 32...\texttt{Bxg5} 33.\texttt{Bhx5}+ \texttt{g6} 34.\texttt{Bh7}+ \texttt{Ch7} 35.\texttt{Bc1} \texttt{Bxc1} 36.\texttt{Bxc1} \texttt{Bh8}, and neither side can win.

31.e5

Of course! By dislodging the bishop from f6 White weakens the black king's position, and has that tasty weakness on d4.

31...\texttt{Be7} 32.\texttt{Bd1}!

Protecting a lousy pawn is no job for Her Majesty, of course. The queen is heading towards the kingside. The immediate threat is g5.

32...\texttt{Bg5}

Not a pleasant move to make, but the alternatives are no better. The point is that compared to the previous annotation (30...\texttt{Bc6}) Black no longer has the option of covering the king with the bishop (34...\texttt{Bg7}), and is therefore doomed.

32...\texttt{Bg8} cannot prevent the inevitable either: 33.g5! \texttt{xg5} 34.\texttt{Bxg4}! (the bishop is immune because of mate in two) 34...\texttt{Bc6} 35.\texttt{Bxg5} and White's attack is decisive. Accepting the gift with 32...\texttt{Bxb4} is of course suicidal: 33.g5 \texttt{xg5} 34.\texttt{Bxh5}+ \texttt{Ch8} 35.\texttt{Bxg5} with the unstoppable 36.\texttt{Bf6}.

33.\texttt{Bxg5} \texttt{xg5}

Within only three moves the position changed radically. Black has three more weaknesses now...
(g5, d4, and the king), and he simply cannot hold them all.

34. \( \text{h}5 \)

Not just attacking g5, but also making way for the queen to h1.

34...\( \text{e}7 \)

34...\( \text{c}7 \) was an interesting try to complicate matters:

35. \( \text{exg}5 \) \( \text{ba}2 \) 36. \( \text{f}3 \)†

36. \( \text{h}1 \) allows a draw after 36...\( \text{xf}2 \)†!

37. \( \text{xf}2 \) \( \text{c}2 \)† 38. \( \text{g}1 \) \( \text{c}1 \)† 39. \( \text{g}2 \) \( \text{d}2 \)†

40. \( \text{h}3 \) \( \text{xc}5 \).

36...\( \text{g}8 \) 37. \( \text{f}4 \)

After 37. \( \text{h}5 \) Black’s counterplay arrives right on time: 37...\( \text{d}2 \)† 38. \( \text{f}4 \) \( \text{c}2 \)

37...\( \text{f}7 \) 38. \( \text{h}5 \)!

After 38. \( \text{xf}7 \)† \( \text{xf}7 \) 39. \( \text{h}5 \) \( \text{d}2 \) it is mainly Black who plays for a win, while 38. \( \text{xd}4 \)

suddenly loses to 38...\( \text{g}6 \)† and the rook is caught offside. The most picturesque line is probably 39. \( \text{f}4 \) \( \text{g}7 \) (threatening ...\( \text{xf}4 \) followed by ...\( \text{h}6 \)) 40. \( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{d}4 \)† 41. \( \text{xd}4 \) \( \text{b}7 \)† 42. \( \text{h}2 \) \( \text{h}7 \)!! and White is in zugzwang. The only piece that can move is the queen, and it has to cover both \( f2 \) and \( a1 \) simultaneously. e.g. 43. \( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{a}1 \) 44. \( \text{e}4 \) \( \text{xe}4 \) 45. \( \text{dxe}4 \) \( \text{h}6 \)† 46. \( \text{f}4 \) \( \text{b}1 \) and White’s best bet is to play something like \( \text{f}5 \) now, which leaves little doubt about the outcome of the game.

38...\( \text{xf}4 \) 39. \( \text{xf}4 \) \( \text{e}2 \) 40. \( \text{h}1 \)!

35...\( \text{xb}4 \) loses to 36. \( \text{h}7 \).

36. \( \text{h}7 \) \( \text{e}8 \)

37. \( \text{al} \)!!

Too elegant or, perhaps, greedy? Such moves are tremendously enjoyable to make, shifting a piece from one flank to the other, and often are very strong indeed. Besides, apart from pleasing the soul, White is also going to snack on a pawn. However, the prosaic straightforward attack was much more appropriate: 37. \( \text{h}5 \)† 38. \( \text{d}7 \) 38...\( \text{g}6 \) Here the queen is best placed, attacking virtually all Black’s weaknesses. After 38...\( \text{g}8 \) Black is all tied up, leaving White to choose the best moment for a decisive \( f2 \)-\( f4 \)-\( f5 \) break.

37...\( \text{f}7 \) 38. \( \text{c}1 \) \( \text{e}8 \) 39. \( \text{al} \) \( \text{f}7 \) 40. \( \text{xd}4 \)!

For a feeble pawn Black gets time to breathe and reorganize his forces. This move, amazingly enough, lets the win escape!

It was still not too late to return to the right path with 40. \( \text{h}1 \).

40...\( \text{g}8 \)!

From now on Kasimdzhanov plays extremely well, and his pieces become stronger with every move.

41. \( \text{h}1 \) \( \text{f}7 \)

Now, all of a sudden, Black starts to seize the initiative.

42. \( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{d}4 \)!

Another drawback of 40. \( \text{xd}4 \): the d5-pawn is now free to move, opening the long diagonal.

43. \( \text{e}2 \)

After 43. \( \text{xd}4 \) Black forces a draw in fine style:
43...\textit{f}3\textsuperscript{f} 44.\textit{g}1\textsubscript{d}1\textsuperscript{t} 45.\textit{h}2\textsubscript{e}2 46.\textit{b}6\textsubscript{f}2\textsuperscript{f} 47.\textit{h}3\textsubscript{h}2\textsuperscript{t}! 48.\textit{x}2\textsubscript{h}1\textsuperscript{t} 49.\textit{g}2\textsubscript{h}1\textsuperscript{t} 43...\textit{b}7\textsuperscript{f}!

Reducing to a drawn rook ending! Amazingly, only three moves have passed since Topalov captured on d4.

\textbf{44.\textit{e}4 \textit{exe}4 \textbf{45.\textit{d}x}4 \textit{e}8}

An active rook is the key in rook endgames.

\textbf{46.\textit{b}1}

\textbf{46...\textit{c}3?!}

Depriving the king of the f3-square, but as was first pointed out by GM Shipov, Kasimdzhanov had a simpler way to hold the draw in 46...\textit{c}2. By attacking the f2-weakness, Black more efficiently prevents White's king from entering the game. 47.\textit{f}1 (47.\textit{f}3 goes nowhere if Black doesn't move his d-pawn) 47...\textit{f}7 (but not 47...d3?, intending ...\textit{e}2, as now the king gets to f3 in time with 48.\textit{g}2) 48.\textit{b}3 (now on 48.\textit{e}1 Black has 48...d3 49.\textit{f}1 \textit{e}2 with a draw). With his king cut off along the first rank, White's only plan is to play f2-f4, and Black has to show some accuracy: 48...\textit{e}d2!

\textbf{a) The idea of Black's last move is to prevent 49.f4 as he now has 49...d3! 50.f5 \textit{e}7 51.\textit{e}3 \textit{e}2 52.\textit{c}7\textsuperscript{t} (or 52.\textit{xd}3 \textit{xe}4) 52...\textit{f}8 and White's wisest choice is to force a draw by repetition: 53.\textit{e}8\textsuperscript{t} \textit{e}7 54.\textit{e}7\textsuperscript{t}}

\textbf{b) Whereas on 49.\textit{e}1 Black waits with 49...\textit{e}2! and now on 50.f4 he has the important g2-square for his rook: 50...\textit{gxf}4 51.\textit{gxf}4 g5!}

\textbf{52.f5 \textit{g}2 53.\textit{e}3 \textit{ex}g4 54.\textit{e}7\textsuperscript{t} \textit{f}8 Again White must force a draw. 47.\textit{b}2!}

Solving the problem of the second rank once and for all.

\textbf{47...\textit{f}7 48.\textit{f}1 \textit{c}1\textsuperscript{t} 49.\textit{e}2 \textit{c}3 50.\textit{a}2}

The only way to play for a win, and quite a tricky one.

\textbf{50...\textit{b}3 51.\textit{a}7\textsuperscript{t} \textit{f}8 52.\textit{b}7 \textit{xb}4 53.\textit{d}3}

\textbf{53...\textit{b}2}

The attempt to cover the f5-square with 53...\textit{g}6 fails to 54.\textit{f}4 \textit{b}3\textsuperscript{t} 55.\textit{xd}4 \textit{gxf}4 56.\textit{xf}4 \textit{f}3 57.\textit{f}5 \textit{gxf}5 58.\textit{exf}5 \textit{xf}5 59.\textit{g}5! and White wins similarly to the game, using Black's f-pawn as a shield: 59...\textit{g}3 60.\textit{e}6 \textit{g}5 61.\textit{e}5

\textbf{54.\textit{f}4 \textit{b}3\textsuperscript{t}}

54...\textit{gxf}4 55.\textit{xf}4 \textit{g}2 56.g5 (56.f5 \textit{ex}g4 57.\textit{xd}5 \textit{exf}5 58.\textit{xf}5 \textit{f}4 59.e6 and neither side can improve his position) 56...\textit{g}4 57.\textit{xd}4 \textit{exf}4 58.\textit{c}5 \textit{g}4 59.\textit{d}6 \textit{g}5 60.\textit{b}8\textsuperscript{t} \textit{f}7 61.\textit{xb}5 \textit{g}6 62.\textit{b}7\textsuperscript{t} \textit{f}8 with a draw.

\textbf{55.\textit{xd}4 \textit{ex}g}3

55...\textit{b}4\textsuperscript{t} 56.\textit{c}5 \textit{xe}4 57.\textit{d}6 \textit{xf}4 58.\textit{xe}6 56.\textit{f}5

The point of Topalov's plan: he now gets a strong trump in the form of a pawn on f6. However, this should not be sufficient to win against correct play.

\textbf{56...\textit{ex}g}4 57.\textit{f}6 \textit{g}1

Of course not 57...\textit{gxf}6 58.\textit{exf}6 and the king penetrates through e5.

\textbf{58.\textit{ex}g}7
As was noted by most commentators, only this move is the losing mistake. The way to go was 58...\textit{b}c1, cutting the king off from d6, and now: 59.\textit{e}xg5 \textit{b}c4+ 60.\textit{d}d3 \textit{b}c5 61.\textit{e}g7 \textit{b}4! (61...\textit{e}xe5 loses to 62.\textit{d}d4 \textit{h}h5 63.\textit{e}5 etc.) 62.\textit{b}b7 (Black's rook cannot be allowed to b5: 62.\textit{e}e7 \textit{b}b5, as on 63.\textit{c}c4 he draws with 63...\textit{b}3!) 62...\textit{e}xe5 63.\textit{d}d4 \textit{a}5 64.\textit{e}5 \textit{d}d5+ 65.\textit{e}e4 \textit{d}d1 with a theoretically drawn position.

59.\textit{c}c5 \textit{b}3 60.\textit{e}b7 \textit{a}a1
An attempt to keep White's king on the queenside fails after 60...\textit{a}d1 61.\textit{e}xb3 \textit{e}d2 62.\textit{b}b8+ \textit{h}7 63.\textit{e}b7+ \textit{g}8 64.\textit{e}g7 and after picking up the g-pawn, White will come for e6. 61.\textit{e}xb3 \textit{a}a5 62.\textit{d}d4!
Kasimdzhanov covered the left entrance, but there is another one...
62...\textit{a}a4 63.\textit{d}c3 \textit{a}a5 64.\textit{b}b8+ \textit{h}7 65.\textit{b}b7+ \textit{g}8 66.\textit{d}d4
Gaining some time to double-check his analysis.

66...\textit{a}a4+ 67.\textit{e}c5 \textit{a}a5 68.\textit{d}d4 \textit{a}a4+ 69.\textit{e}e3 \textit{a}a3+ 70.\textit{f}f2!

The threat is \textit{e}e7 and...

Before continuing the game, let's go back to New York 1924, and join the Capablanca – Tartakower encounter in the following position:

The third World Champion played 36.\textit{h}h4! and after 36...\textit{f}3 37.\textit{g}6 \textit{f}xf4 38.\textit{g}5 \textit{e}e4 used the enemy's pawn as a shield from checks, and won convincingly after 39.\textit{f}f6. This endgame became the classic example and nowadays the manoeuvre is considered standard. Which makes the finale of our game standard. But still very powerful...

70...\textit{a}a5 71.\textit{g}3 \textit{e}xe5 72.\textit{g}4 \textit{e}xe4+ 73.\textit{h}5! Black resigned.
1–0
Despite Topalov's outstanding run in the first half, and his subsequent lead by two points, the intrigue in the tournament is by no means dead. First of all, he will surely stop winning at some point. Secondly, Svidler is picking up his pace and just needs the leader to slip. One very angry pursuer is Leko, although he is much further behind. The feeling is that his most troublesome moments are over and he has fully recovered. As for Anand – his stock is falling. Unfortunately, the Indian grandmaster is not a big fan of "exchanging punches", but rather prefers an easy knockout while remaining unscathed. Therefore, his wounds from the first seven rounds, and particularly the last one, will not go unnoticed and will definitely not add to his optimism. His last opponent, on the other hand, has plenty of optimism – a win over Anand provides a strong (and legal) stimulant for any chess player, and given that Alexander Morozevich is a man of moods, a lot can be expected from him in the second half. Michael Adams needs to score his first win – it seems that overcoming this obstacle will allow him to find his usual form. Polgar's situation is trickier, as super-tournaments traditionally obey the law of the jungle: once you're wounded, they're all over you. Judit Polgar will have to employ all her talent to survive, especially with the Black pieces where she had severe problems throughout the first half. Last, but not least, the FIDE champion can only hope his results begin to correspond with his opportunities – in that case, he will be able to fight for a high finish.
Topalov is back to earth: he drew a game, as shocking as it might sound. Statistically speaking it was of course due to happen, but then it had been for a while. Leko, unlike many others, is not intimidated by Topalov, and considered his first round loss as a grievous accident. For several rounds Leko’s mind has been occupied with this game, as he expressed his genuine amazement at people losing with White against Topalov, one after another. He came to this round with the firm intention of showing that he can achieve a better result with Black than others can with White. As for the game itself, it was rather disappointing. Leko chose a very poisonous line of the Queen’s Indian, in which White has to prove his advantage, and if successful, he can count on more than in usual lines. Surprisingly, Topalov was taken aback by such a turn of events, and his reaction was not the most principled one. Simplications followed which dried the position out, leaving the Hungarian no chances to fight for a win.

Anand dismissed all the sceptics’ doubts with yet another demonstration of his amazing preparation. Polgar chose the same line she played against Leko, clearly having an improvement, but the wounded tiger was first to deviate. It did not take long before he revealed his idea, quickly making Black’s position hopeless. But then both players proved how hard it is to leave the past behind (the Indian grandmaster even admitted he was a little depressed after the previous round).
Instead of going immediately for the kill, Anand hesitated, allowing his imaginative opponent to develop decent counterplay. Once she had realistic chances, Polgar failed to use them (is this the same player who mates world class players on a regular basis?). As for Anand, his game was best described by himself: from a certain point he accompanied virtually all his moves with question marks. Luckily for him, near the end he managed to regroup, and finished in his trademark smooth style.

**Beauty provided by Adams and Svidler**

The beauty of the round was undoubtedly provided in the game between two English Attack devotees — Adams and Svidler. The Englishman reminded us that he is one of the reasons for this line's name, and he aimed for a big battle. Svidler didn't need to be asked twice, and a typical modern Sicilian struggle (with all its components: mistakes, miscalculations and a gorgeous idea) ignited in no time. At one point Black was thinking of taking over the initiative, and the Russian grandmaster found a rather shocking way to do so, by moving a pawn in front of his own king. Many believe this to be the move of the Championship, after which an even more intense fight followed, where Svidler seemed to have the upper hand. But the English grandmaster rose to the challenge, and a draw was a fair result — both players showed unusual originality.

The final game was a true fairytale, with difficult decisions and eventually spirit prevailing over common sense. How else would you describe a battle where Morozevich dismisses a chance to equalize fairly easily, and begins moving his pieces away from his king as if inviting his opponent to begin an assault. But it turned out that Kasimdzhanov could not stop dropping points with illogical results. The key issue is not that he missed his only winning continuation, but that he again ended up in severe time trouble and even failed to draw, which he could have done on a few occasions. But one must praise the winner — after all, if Tal, with his love of incorrect sacrifices, has always been worshipped, then why not credit the brave Morozevich, who keeps showing what “win at any cost” means?

At the end of the day, the situation at the top did not change much, although Leko is signalling his return, and Svidler's imagination is continuing to fire. Anand reminded us that, regardless of his form, his opponents still have to survive the opening.
GAME 29

Veselin Topalov
Peter Leko
Queen's Indian Defence E15

1.d4 d6 2.c4 e6 3.d3 b6 4.g3 d6 5.b3 b4 6.Bb2 e7 7.Qg2 c6 8.Qc3

As we can see in this tournament, Topalov's choice between the text and 8.Qc3 - a move that has given him quite a few successes in the past - is unequivocal.

8...d5 9.Qe5 0-0

A relatively rare move, as there are simpler lines that promise Black equality. This is Leko's way of stating he wants to fight, even in a slightly worse position.

10.0-0 Qb7 11.Qd2 Qa6

An interesting continuation tried by Karpov on a few occasions. In this complicated line White may have an edge, but both sides have many more possibilities to play for a win than in the "good" lines.

Leko has also tried 11...c5, but after 12.dxc5 Qxc5 13.e3 Qe7 14.Qc1 Qbd7 15.Qxd7 Qxd7 16.Qx6 Qx6 17.cxd5 exd5 18.Qe4 faced a long struggle for a draw, Kramnik – Leko, Wijk aan Zee 2004.

12.e4 Qc8

An interesting and complicated continuation invented by another Bulgarian player, Kiril Georgiev. Its plans are similar to those in the Reti: the rook goes to c7 making way for the queen to a8, which in turn frees the path to c8 for the other rook. After this heavyweight tango ...c5 will come with a lot of force, and unless White finds something beforehand he can only hope for equality. White's plan for achieving an advantage is not so clear, however.

Another move was introduced by Karpov, 12.c5, but Black has to make an effort to equalize, whereas White is in no danger at all. For example: 13.exd5 exd5 14.Qe5! cxd4 15.Qxd4 Qc5 16.Qg4 (probably more interesting is 16.Qb2) 16...Qxc4 17.Qxc4 Qxg2 18.Qxg2 Qxg4 19.Qxg4 Qf6 20.Qad1

One might recall this position from the famous game where Kasparov missed his first ever win over Karpov after 20...Qxd4 21.Qxd4 Qc7 22.Qd6 Qe6 23.Qxe6! and Black managed to escape only by a miracle, Kasparov – Karpov, Moscow (16) 1984.

But later 20...h5 was found and Black managed to make a draw in Kamsky – Karpov, Elista (18) 1996.

13.Qe5

White has a strong looking centre, but since Black did not exchange the knight on e5 (as in the main lines) the e-pawn cannot advance. All in all, Leko's plan proved very strong, as Topalov was spending a lot of time in the opening, clearly unprepared for such a turn of events. If White plays slowly Black will be able to execute his plan, with all the consequences. For example: 13.Qb2 Qc7 14.Qc1 Qa8 15.Qe1 Qf6 16.Qe2 Qf8 17.h3 c5

Black has the initiative, Vaillant – Kir. Georgiev, Metz 1997.

13...Qc7!!
So, after spending time, Topalov did not find anything better than

14.\( \text{Qd3} \)

allowing the pawn to move. Black’s last move was great: both bishops are protected now, and once the d-file is opened the rook will be right there, ready to go to d7. At the same time, the queen can go to a8. Not every day does one get to see such a modest move with so many ideas behind it. Searching for improvements for White could give one the depressing feeling that White is in zugzwang!

On 14.\( b2 \), evacuating the bishop from a dangerous line, can be strongly met with 14...\( a4 \).

After 14.\( c1 \) there is 14...\( a3 \) 15.\( b1 \) (15.\( a1 \) \( \text{Qe7=} \) 15...c5. For example, 16.\( dxc5 \) d4 17.\( a1 \) bxc5 and Black looks good.

Whereas the attempt to prevent all this with 14.a3 (creating a threat of b4 on the way) leads to an unclear position after 14...c5 15.\( dxc5 \) \( \text{Qxc5} \) 16.exd5 exd5 17.b4 \( \text{Qe6} \) 18.a2 dxc4 19.\( \text{Qb7} \) c3 20.\( \text{Qxc3} \) \( \text{Bxc3} \) 21.\( \text{g2} \) b5, although White can look for an advantage in this line, Chernin – Kir. Georgiev, Villarrobledo rapid 1997.

But if White was not ready for this variation, maybe he could try the idea of simple development with 14.\( \text{Qe2} \). This solid move has not been played yet, but somehow seems more appropriate for a careful game.

14...\( \text{dxe4} \)

Black does not miss his chance, with a favourable opening of the centre. The tourist on d3 continues to be more of a burden than assistance.

15.\( \text{Qxe4} \) c5 16.\( \text{Qxf6+} \)!!

This even gives Black a slight edge, although a tiny one. After 16.\( \text{dxc5} \) Shipov suggests 16...\( \text{Qxe4} \) 17.\( \text{Qxe4} \) \( \text{Qxe4} \) 18.\( \text{Qxe4} \) \( \text{Qd7} \) (Black can also equalize with 18...\( \text{Qxc5} \) 19.\( \text{Qxc5} \) \( \text{Qxc5} \) 19.\( \text{Qg4} \) \( \text{g5} \) 20.\( \text{Qe5} \) f5 21.\( \text{Qh5} \) fxe4 (21...\( \text{g6?} \) 22.\( \text{Qxg6} \) fxe4 23.\( \text{Qxf8} \) \( \text{Qxf8} \) 24.\( \text{c6} \) \( \text{Qd3} \) 25.\( \text{Qe5} \) with promising compensation for the sacrificed material.) 22.\( \text{Qd7} \) \( \text{Qxd7} \) 23.\( \text{Qxg5} \) \( \text{Qxc5} \) with an unclear position, and if Black wanted to fight for a win then he has no reasons to complain.

More critical seems to be 16.d5, which is also in Topalov’s style. The reasons preventing him from pushing the pawn seem to be dictated by the tournament situation. A few months after this game Bacrot did play it, and gained an overwhelming position: 16...\( \text{exd5} \) 17.\( \text{Qxf6+} \) \( \text{Qxf6} \) 18.\( \text{Qxf6} \) \( \text{Qxf6} \) 19.\( \text{cxd5} \) g6 20.\( \text{Qg4} \) \( \text{Qd8} \) 21.\( \text{Qd1} \) h5 22.\( \text{Qa4} \) and White had control all over the board, Bacrot – Grischuk, Khanty Mansyisk 2005.

16...\( \text{Qxf6} \) 17.\( \text{Qxb7} \) \( \text{Qxb7} \) 18.\( \text{Qe5!} \)
A correct reaction by Topalov, simplifying the position in order to limit the damage of the opening.

18...\textit{x}e5

Rightly keeping the position closed, which naturally favours the knight.

After 18...\textit{cx}d4 19.\textit{hx}d4 Black will have to eventually capture on e5, which would allow White unnecessary chances, although nothing really frightening. For illustration's sake, after the immediate 19...\textit{x}e5 20.\textit{x}e5 \textit{d}d7 21.\textit{g}4 f5 22.\textit{e}2 \textit{d}d2 23.\textit{f}3 \textit{c}5 24.\textit{h}4 \textit{d}3 25.\textit{e}2 \textit{e}4 26.\textit{d}ad1 \textit{xd}3 27.\textit{xd}1 \textit{g}6 28.\textit{d}7 \textit{f}7 29.\textit{d}d1 White has a clear advantage.

Better is 22...\textit{c}e5 23.\textit{d}d1 \textit{d}3 24.\textit{c}7 \textit{xc}7 25.\textit{xd}3 \textit{xd}3 26.\textit{xd}3 \textit{d}8 27.\textit{f}3 \textit{d}6 with a drawish position.

19.dxe5 \textit{d}7

Here Black gets a marginal advantage, thanks to his control of the only open file.

20.\textit{c}e2 \textit{c}7 21.\textit{d}ad1 \textit{d}8

If Black manages to transfer his knight to d4 his advantage will be strongly felt. Topalov reacts in time:

22.\textit{xd}7 \textit{xd}7 23.\textit{e}4!

With Black controlling the d-file, White has to use his only trump: the somewhat weakened light squares in Black's camp.

23...\textit{b}8

The same could be done via b4. After 23...\textit{b}4 24.\textit{e}2 (24.\textit{xb}4? \textit{xb}4 with a worrying position – in such positions control over the only open file can be enough for good chances) 24...\textit{c}7 25.\textit{d}2 \textit{xd}2 26.\textit{xd}2 \textit{c}6 27.\textit{c}3 \textit{d}7 Black can no longer fight for the advantage.

More interesting is 23...\textit{d}3 24.\textit{xd}3 \textit{xd}3.

a) Not clear enough is 25.\textit{c}1, because of 25...\textit{g}5! (not 25...\textit{b}4 26.\textit{xb}4 \textit{xb}4 27.\textit{c}5 \textit{xc}5 28.\textit{xc}5 with complete equality) 26.\textit{f}1 (On 26.\textit{g}4 Black can continue 26...\textit{b}4 27.\textit{xb}4 \textit{xb}4 and he has some serious chances here because of the active rook. The point is that the idea has a tactical justification – White cannot solve his problems by 28.\textit{c}5 because of 28...\textit{c}3!) 26...\textit{g}4 27.\textit{e}2 \textit{f}3 (with the idea ...\textit{f}5 to \textit{h}5 or \textit{e}5), and again White has to try hard to make a draw (even though it is not impossible).

b) After the paradoxical 25.\textit{e}3 \textit{xe}3 (25...\textit{d}1 26.\textit{e}1=) 26.\textit{xe}3

White's structure is ugly, but it is not clear how Black can break through. For example: 26...\textit{b}4 27.\textit{xb}4 \textit{xb}4 28.\textit{f}2 \textit{f}8 (28...\textit{g}5 29.\textit{f}3 \textit{g}7 30.\textit{e}4 \textit{g}6 31.\textit{g}4 and Black can only hope for a draw) 29.\textit{f}3 \textit{e}7 30.\textit{e}4 \textit{d}7 31.\textit{d}4 \textit{c}6 32.e4 \textit{h}6 33.\textit{e}3 and all doors are closed.

24.\textit{g}2

$\frac{1}{2}$–$\frac{1}{2}$
Morozevich chooses a very interesting move order, forcing White to decide how to place his forces before Black does. For example, it prevents lines such as the Keres Attack, or 6.\texttt{g5}, and this while Black is actually playing a regular Scheveningen. Of course, this is another idea of Korchnoi that was inherited by Morozevich, his true successor.

6.\texttt{g2}

6.\texttt{g4} is possible even now, and was played by Karpov in one of his World Championship matches against Kasparov, but it is clear that Black has many more possibilities here (the king knight can go to e7), than with a knight already on f6.

Another attacking continuation is 6.\texttt{e3} and after 6...\texttt{f6} interesting is 7.\texttt{f4}. For example, 7...\texttt{e5} 8.\texttt{g3} \texttt{g4} 9.\texttt{wxd2} \texttt{xg3} 10.\texttt{xg3} \texttt{exf4} 11.\texttt{wxf4} \texttt{e7} 12.0-0 0-0 0-0 13.\texttt{d5} \texttt{e6} 14.\texttt{b1} \texttt{xc8} with complicated play.

6...\texttt{f6} 7.\texttt{e3} \texttt{e7} 8.0-0 0-0

For a more detailed explanation about this position we suggest taking a look at Adams – Morozevich, (Game 22).

9.\texttt{h1}

An interesting, and in a sense mysterious move order: why move the king at such an early stage? Perhaps to deprive Black of the ...\texttt{e5} line? In any case, the traditional continuation is 9.\texttt{f4}, although it can transpose to the same position as in the game.

9...\texttt{xd4}

It is interesting to follow Morozevich’s way of handling this position. He does not want to enter the main lines with 9...\texttt{a6}, transposing into Adams – Topalov (Game 44), and therefore picks this special move order, exchanging the knight with \texttt{e6} for \texttt{e5} to follow. This gives Black equality sometimes, as his pieces are well placed, but he cannot really fight for counter chances here.

Another key continuation is 9...\texttt{d7} 10.\texttt{f4} \texttt{xd4} 11.\texttt{wxd4} \texttt{b6} 12.\texttt{wd1} \texttt{b8} 13.\texttt{f5} \texttt{exf5} 14.\texttt{xf5} \texttt{a6} 15.\texttt{d1} \texttt{d7} 16.\texttt{f3} with interesting play, V. Kuznetsov – Timofeev, Nojabrsk 2005.

10.\texttt{xd4}

More natural seems 10.\texttt{xd4}, as after Black plays \texttt{e6} for \texttt{e5} White gets the game position with an extra tempo. Black, however, does not have to play \texttt{...e5} – he can change plans and simply finish his development, for example after 10...\texttt{d7}.

10...\texttt{e5}!

A typical equalizing manoeuvre, although here it was played before White’s \texttt{f4}.

11.\texttt{e3} \texttt{e6}

The reason for this variation not being popular.
with the strongest players is that White's only ambitious plan is to play f4, which gives Black a clear direction for equalizing. Playing a position with only one active plan in mind, and one that does not necessarily promise anything, is hardly interesting.

12.f4

Another plan is already irrelevant: 12.£3 is met with 12...d5, and after the exchanges, 13.exd5 £xd5 14.£xd5 £xd5 15.c4 £c6, it is hard to say who is actually trying to equalize.

12...exf4 13.£xf4

This keeps some tension in the position. 13.£xf4 allows the typical 13...d5, and after 14.e5 £e4 Black is not worse. All this is impossible with a white rook staring at e4.

13...a6?!

This had not been played before, as could well be said about most of Morozevich's ideas. Even so, it does not look too impressive. It is not that White can, God forbid, get any serious advantage, but he will now have time to spare.

In these positions Black has a well known Sicilian manoeuvre, with at least easy equality: 13...£e8, taking the bishop to a more active position on f6. In the following example White tried his best to disturb his opponent's plan, but to no avail: 14.£d4 £g5 15.£f1 £f6 16.£xf6 £xf6 17.£d4 £e7 18.£ad1 £fd8 with full equality, Onischuk – Leko, Tilburg 1997.

More instructive, however, would be 16.£e3 when Black can show his main idea: 16...£e5! 17.£d2 £f6

Not a very useful move as b7-b5 is no longer frightening. Furthermore, it will give Black additional chances on the queenside. It seems more promising to start sending forces to the kingside.

For example, 14.£d3 looks interesting: 14...£a5 15.£f3 (or 15.£d4) 15...£e5 16.£f1 and if 16...b5! then 17.£d5! and White has a serious initiative.

14...£a5

14...£e8 is now less impressive because of 15.£d5! as on 15...£g5 White has 16.£b6 £d7 17.£f1 and Black is under pressure.

15.£d2 £fc8

Black is planning ...£d8 and does not want to block the £f-rook out of the game.

16.£d1 £d8?!

A pleasingly original idea. Black did not exchange the dark-squared bishops on f6 (as Leko did in the aforementioned game), so he is going to do so via b6. However, this plan has one serious drawback: Black moves his pieces too far away from his king, which could prove costly. It is Morozevich's style to have faith in his ability to escape from any dangers, but personal affection for bad positions (or the authors' for Morozevich as a chess player) must not influence objective analysis – the manoeuvre is dubious.

17.£ff1

Threatening to grab the annoying, unprotected pawn, as 17.£xd6? is currently met with 17...£c7.

17...£b6

But Black manages to protect the pawn indirectly (18.£xb6 £xb6 19.£xd6 £xb2 is clearly in Black's favour). This brings Kasimdzhanov close to the right plan: attacking the king. Too bad he will not have enough time left by then.

18.£d4

The attempt to strike from the right with 18.£b6 fails to a typical Sicilian sacrifice: 18...£xc3! 19.bxc3 £xe4 20.£f4 £xc3 and the compensation is of much higher value than the price paid for it.

More dangerous is Jacob Aagaard's suggestion 18.£f4?! After 18...£xc3! 18.£xc3 £xc3 20.bxc3 £xe4 21.£f3 £f2 22.£xf2 £xf2 23 £xb7 £e8
26.6a46 White's a-pawn is very dangerous. But Black can be cunning with 18...Ec6 (as in the game), with the idea of sacrificing the exchange only after 19.Axd6 and then the line 19...Exc3 20.xxc3 Bxc3 21.bxc3 Exe4 22.Af3 Ef2 23.Bxf2 Axf2 allows Black to keep the a-pawn, for instance after 24.Axb7 Ed8.

Probably better is 20.bxc3 Exe4 21.Af4, but even after the forced line 21...Exc3 22.bxc4 Exe2 23.Axa5 Axf2 24.Axb6 Ed5 Black should not lose.

18...Axd4 19.Wxd4 Ec6!!

We must award two exclamation marks to the move which led to Black’s victory. The only problem bothering us is that it should have led to his defeat. Such moves, however, are the reason people love chess in general, and Morozevich’s chess in particular. He, without any doubt, realized very well how dangerous his position will be after his request to be attacked. Nevertheless, he looked at the position, gave his opponent a quick glance (perhaps catching sight of the clock in the process) and felt something. White, for his part, pretty much has to force matters, or else Black’s play on the queenside will be very dangerous, and the a4-pawn will only help this. But how to attack? By sacrificing, of course. Take on f6, check-check-mate. In the game we will see all this, except the mate.

Objectively better was 19...Ed8 with good chances to equalize, but such moves do not win games.

20.Ed5!

Kasimdzhanov’s courage is also noteworthy! Unlike Morozevich, he tends to play the position, rather than the opponent. Unfortunately for him, in order to find all the right moves here one needs a computer’s help, which is frowned upon during the game...

20...Exd5 21.exd5 Ec8

21...Bxc2 is so frightening that even Morozevich did not dare to play it: 22.Ed3 Ec8 23.Bxf6 gxf6 24.Ed1 with a position similar to the game, plus a tempo for White.

22.Bxf6!

Of course!

22...gx6 23.Ed3 Ec8

24.Ed4!

Very strong, although self-evident. It attacks the king and the weak pawn, and keeps an eye on the important e1-square.

Less convincing was 24.b4 and now:

a) 24...Bxa4? 25.Ed4 with his queen out of play Black stands no chance of surviving the fierce attack by White’s entire army.

b) 24...Bc7 25.Ed1 Be7 26.Bx6 (26.Eg4† Ef8 27.Ed4 Ed5 is worse than White had in the game) 26...Ec1† 27.Ed1 Ec7† and there is no mate.

24...Ec8!

Black prevents the capture on h7 being with check and so makes his opponent more uncomfortable. It is much more pleasant to attack while giving checks.

25.Ed1
Meanwhile White is playing very well. A dangerous alternative, although less promising was:

25.\texttt{\textit{xh7 Ee5} 26.b4}

Solving the problem of check on e1. Weaker is 26.\texttt{\textit{xf1 Exd5} 27.Exf6 Eae8 28.Eg6 Eg5} and White has to force a draw. 29.Eh8t \texttt{\textit{Ee7}} 30.Ef6t \texttt{\textit{Ee8}} 31.Ef5t \texttt{\textit{Dxf5}} and White has to play precisely)

26 ... \texttt{\textit{Dd8} 27.Efl f5! 28.Eh6t}

Also interesting is 28.Eg3 Ec8 29.Exf5 Ee6 30.Dd3 Eh6 and Black has escaped his biggest troubles, troubles which White is still to face.

28...\texttt{\textit{Ec7} 29.Exf5 Eh8 30.Ef4}

Not 30.Eg5t \texttt{\textit{Egf6}} 31.Exf6t \texttt{\textit{Exf6}} and nothing horrible happens to Black. For example: 32.Ec8t \texttt{\textit{Ec7} 33.Exb7 Eb8 34.Exa6 Exb4 35.Eb5 Exd5 and White cannot win.}

30 ... \texttt{\textit{Egf6} 31.h3 Eh8 32.Ec4! Exf5 33.Ec7t \texttt{\textit{Ee8}} 34.Ec8t \texttt{\textit{Eg7}} 35.Exf5 Exf5 36.Exf5 Ec8}

White has too many weaknesses. Therefore, the position is close to a draw.

25...\texttt{\textit{Xd5}}

The more pawns Black grabs, the harder it will be for White to keep playing without risk. Now the black queen finally joins the battle.

26.Eh6t?

A mistake with unbelievable costs. Now White will be lucky to draw, instead of winning the game. This is not altogether surprising, as in such positions one mistake is more than enough. But this does not reduce the credit due to Morozevich, who was playing for a win at any cost.

Much better, even winning, is 26.Exf6 Ee6 27.Eh8t \texttt{\textit{Ee7}} 28.Ed4! (Weaker is 28.Eh7 Eh8 29.Eg7 Eaj8 30.Ec3 [30.Ed4 Ee5!] 30.Eh5! and the initiative is Black's.)
Black manage to walk away unhurt? This looks like science fiction, as if the chess Goddess herself were protecting the black king! Well, it only looks like it.

The solution is definitely not 30.\text{xf5 } \text{xf5}
31.\text{Exf5 } \text{Exf5}
32.\text{Exf5 } \text{Exf5}
33.\text{Exg1 } \text{Exe6}
with a drawn endgame.

Attempting to prepare it with 30.h3 does not seal the deal: 30...\text{d5!} 31.\text{Exf5 } \text{Exe7}
32.\text{Exd8 } \text{Exf8}
and now we have an amazing line: 33.\text{Exd7!} \text{Exe8} 34.\text{Exf5!!} and the queen has to abandon its post, exposing f7 to all kinds of harassment: 34...\text{d2 and White wins with } 35.\text{Exc8!}

But if Black sacrifices an exchange, and plays 33...\text{b5!} things get a little more complicated:
34.axb5 axb5 35.\text{Exe8 } \text{Exe8}
and Black should hold, although there is still some suffering on the way.

After the banal 30.\text{xh7!} White reaches the same position he had before, with the pleasant gain of the h7-pawn, which changes the landscape. 30...\text{d5!} 31.\text{Exf5 } \text{Exf5}
(31...\text{e7?}
32.\text{Exd8 } \text{Exe8}
33.\text{Exg6 winning})
31.\text{Exf5 } \text{Exe1}
32.\text{Exg1 } \text{Exg1}
and White should win without much trouble.

This position has also been evaluated as advantageous for White, since there are many positions ahead in which he, allegedly, should not lose. This of course is no reason to consider his position better, but what is more important, in those positions, Black is definitely not going to lose, and it will be White who is fighting for a draw.

29.b4!

A move which did receive a lot of criticism. At first glance it seems White is creating a weakness without any reason, whereas for a draw he would in theory have liked to build some kind of fortress. But in reality he cannot do so, but active counter-chances might save him. Therefore, Kasimdzhanov's decision is commendable, especially given that both players were running short of time.

As a better alternative to the text, 29.b3 has been suggested. It looks very solid, but even if we continue the play as it happened in the game: 29...\text{e3.} The plan with 30.\text{Exf7!}, which was quite interesting in the game is now worse:
30...\text{d6} 31.\text{Exd5 } \text{Exd5}
32.\text{Exf7 } \text{b6}
33.\text{Exh7 } \text{Exe5.} Black's active king means that White's play is not going to be easy. The winning plan is to bring the king closer to the enemy's pawns, and then return the exchange at an appropriate moment. It seems that White can do nothing about it: he has no counterplay. For instance, an attempt like 34.\text{Exg6 is met by } 34...\text{Exc8 and the bishop has to go home.}
And if White plays 30.f5 e5 31.ex5 dxe5, as in the game, it seems simply anti-positional as the b-pawn, which is now on b3, does not prevent the black king from escaping White's threats. For instance, 32.df5+ c7 33.c4 d1+ 34.h2 d4 35.xf7+ b6 36.xh5 and now, after 36...xf4+ 37.g1 d8 38.e6 d3+ 39.g4 a5!, Black wins. Of course, had the pawn been on b4, this would not have been possible, but we'll get back to this position soon.

29...e3

A hard psychological blow for White, who has to accept that, not only has his attack failed, but now it is Black who is attacking, while having a material advantage. But apart from the psychology, the continuation is not so clear.

So why not 29...e5 immediately? The only possible plan here is to capture on f7 (now or after b5), which is not exactly nice, especially since it could have happened in the game and White chose to avoid it.

30.f5

Black is very happy to exchange a pair of rooks. Who would have thought that it is here that White has chances to escape?

The apparent threat on the previous move was not so great, as after one check, 30...xh3†? 31.g1, Black can resign.

More interesting was 30...e6 31.xf7† (not 31.g7 e8 32.xf7† e7 33.xe7† xe7 34.xf5† c7 35.xe7† xe7 36.g4 h4! with a technical win) 31...xf7 32.xf7† c6 33.xh7 e5. White has an extra tempo compared to a previous note, but given the alternative, it might have been wise to consider this.

31.ex5!

Very surprising and unusual (usually the player who is an exchange up wants to exchange the opponent's remaining rook), but it correctly exploits Black's uncoordinated pieces.

Less safe was 31.xf7+ xf7 32.xf7† c6. Although a draw seems within reach, it is not going to be easy. For instance, 33.g4 e8:

a) Weak is 34.xh5. Although exchanging pawns is generally good for White, the king might find itself in trouble. 34...hxh5 35.h3 b5 36.a7 (36.axb5† axb5 37.c4 bxc4 38.xc4 gives Black the longed-for passed pawn) 36...hxh5! Attacking the weaknesses together with threats to the king give Black good winning chances. 37.axb5† axb5 38.a6† b7 39.a1 b6 and Black should win.

b) Better looks 34.f5 a5 35.bxa5 hxa5 36.d7† (36.hxg4 e5 creating a passed pawn, one way or another, gives good winning chances) 36...c5 37.xg4 a8 38.xb7 xa5 and it is doubtful whether White can hold.

31...dxe5 32.f5†?

Throwing away his chance, although the very thought that White can escape here is surprising. The gut feeling is that Black did everything right, but such feelings can sometimes be deceiving.

White could have stayed alive with 32.xf5†! c7 33.c4!

The position looks suspect, but White just holds.
After 33...\textit{d}4\textdagger 34.\textit{xf}7\+ \textit{g}6 35.e5\textdagger (35.\textit{xh}5 \textit{a}7 e5 gives Black good winning chances) 35...\textit{a}7 36.e6! White is quick to achieve his goal. The next magical line goes: 36.\textit{xb}4 37.e7 \textit{f}4 38.\textit{d}7 \textit{f}1\+ 39.\textit{h}2 \textit{g}8 The first impression is that Black wins, but 40.e8\textdagger is very strong, and it allows White to deliver a perpetual after 40...\textit{a}8 41.b6\+ \textit{g}8 42.e6\+ \textit{a}7 43.c8\+ . Amazing!

Better is 33...\textit{d}1\+ ! The interesting position arises after 34.\textit{h}2 \textit{d}4 35.\textit{xf}7\+ \textit{g}6. Now 36.e5\+ \textit{a}7 37.e6 is less impressive because of 37...\textit{f}4\+ 38.\textit{h}1 \textit{c}1\+ 39.\textit{h}2 \textit{xc}6 and Black wins. This line shows why it was important to lure the king to h2.

And what about 36.\textit{xh}5? At this point Black has three ways to go:

a) The first one is the most natural, but has an unexpected result:

36...\textit{xc}4 37.\textit{h}6\+ \textit{a}7 38.\textit{e}3\+ 39.\textit{d}4 39.\textit{xd}4\+ \textit{exd}4

Surprisingly, even after trading the queens, and with a dangerous passed pawn, Black doesn't get the victory! For example:

40.g4 \textit{e}8 41.h4 \textit{e}3! 42.h5 d3 43.g5 \textit{e}2\+ 43.\textit{e}2 is also not winning: 44.\textit{xd}3 \textit{xg}5 45.\textit{xe}2 \textit{e}5 46.\textit{f}3 There is no clear way to win. The king has no time to go round and the rook has no time to eat all the pawns. The attempt to be straightforward with 46...a5 also leads to nothing after 47.\textit{bx}a5 \textit{xa}5 48.\textit{g}3 \textit{xa}4 49.h6, and Black will have to give up his rook for the pawn.

44.\textit{g}3 \textit{d}2 45.\textit{c}2 \textit{e}1 46.a5!

Black can do nothing.

46...\textit{g}1? 47.\textit{f}4 \textit{e}1 48.\textit{a}4 b5 49.axb6+ \textit{xb}6 50.h6

There is nothing better than repeating the position:

50.\textit{h}1

Or 50...\textit{a}1 51.\textit{c}2 \textit{e}1.

51.\textit{e}3 \textit{h}5 52.\textit{xd}2 \textit{xg}5 53.h7 \textit{h}5 54.\textit{c}2 \textit{b}5 55.\textit{c}3 \textit{h}6 56.\textit{d}3\+ \textit{a}4 57.\textit{xa}6

With a theoretical draw.

b) Another idea is 36.\textit{xg}8, which may look like a testing move, but in fact the draw is even easier: 37.\textit{h}6\+ \textit{a}7 38.\textit{e}6 \textit{e}8 39.\textit{d}5 e4 40.\textit{h}5 It is now Black who has to look for an escape, although it is not too difficult:

40...\textit{f}6 (Weaker is 40...\textit{e}5 41.\textit{xe}5 \textit{xe}5 42.\textit{g}1 and the only question is whether Black [not White] makes the draw. 40...\textit{e}5 41.\textit{f}7 \textit{b}6 42.\textit{b}5! and Black is in trouble. For example: 42.axb5 43.a5! \textit{a}6 44.\textit{c}7) 41.\textit{xe}8 (attempting to avoid the draw with 41.\textit{e}2 would be more likely to help the wrong side to win after 41...\textit{e}3) 41...\textit{f}4 42.\textit{g}1 \textit{c}1 43.\textit{f}2 \textit{d}2 44.\textit{g}3 (44.\textit{f}1? c3 winning) 44...\textit{g}5\+ and the white king cannot escape the checks.

45.\textit{d}2

45.\textit{d}3 39.\textit{g}4! \textit{d}2 (or 39...\textit{xg}4 40.\textit{hx}g4 a5 41.bxa5 \textit{xa}5 42.\textit{f}2 \textit{d}6 43.\textit{d}5 b6 44.\textit{e}3 \textit{g}6 45.\textit{e}4 \textit{xg}4! 46.\textit{xe}5 \textit{xa}4 47.\textit{f}5 \textit{g}3 48.\textit{f}4 and Black cannot win here) 40.\textit{d}5 \textit{a}7 41.\textit{b}5 a5 It is very difficult to evaluate the situation. The endgame is very dynamic, and Black's king is no better than White's.

39.\textit{d}5!
The best place for the bishop, where it participates both in attack and defence (but not 39.a5† a7 40.d5 c2! and Black wins).

39...a5
39...c2? 40.g6†
40.bxa5† a5 41.g4! xg4 42.hxg4 d4 43.g5 eg4 44.xb7 xc4 45.d2 xa4 46.f3
With a dead draw.

32...e6!
White has run out of threats.

33.xh5 e4 34.ec2 f8?

In mutual time trouble Morozevich allows a very effective trick. It was better to play 34.f5 first. After 35.h7† c6 there are no more checks and the position is similar to the game.

35.b5?
But Kasimdzhanov misses a wonderful chance for salvation. After the text move Black’s king is very safe, and he can concentrate solely on promoting his e-pawn.

White could have escaped with 35.c5!!
a) Black can only lose after the illogical 35...e8 36.b5.

b) 35...d6 does not win: 36.g4† e7 37.g5† and an attempt to play for a win with 37...f6 only brings trouble: 38.f5 e3 39.e4† and e4 falls, as trying to hold it with 39...e5 backfires after 40.xb7† d6 41.d7 mate. Therefore, it would be wise to admit to a draw with 37...f6 38.c5†.

c) The most promising seems to be 35...g8.

White should play: 36.c4 e7 37.f5† c7 38.c6

38...c8 is worse. After 39.xf7† e3 (39...g5† 40.e6†! 40.xg8 e2 41.g4† d8 42.g3† a8 43.e1 winning) 42.d4† c8 43.f7†! xf7 44.f2† e8 45.e1 e4

This position is drawn, as White cannot move his pawns on the kingside. And 46.h2? is met with 46...f4† 47.g1 d4† 48.h2 d1† and Black wins.

39.b5† axb5
39...c5 40.xf7† d8 41.e3† d6 42.c4 40.xb5† e5 41.e3†

With such a king Black cannot escape the checks and White draws.

35.f5 36.bxa6 bxa6 37.h7†
Now the black king finds a shelter, and the game comes to an end.

37...\texttt{e}f7 38.\texttt{h}6

38.\texttt{x}f7+ \texttt{xf}7 39.\texttt{a}x\texttt{a}6 \texttt{d}d6 As usual in this endgame, White has nothing to offer against Black’s e-pawn.

38...\texttt{f}6 39.\texttt{h}7+ \texttt{g}f7 40.\texttt{g}8

The queen is heading to the other side. It is easy to play here as White – he has nothing to lose. Checking the variations, however, leaves no doubt about the outcome of the game.

40...\texttt{e}7 41.\texttt{c}4

41.\texttt{c}8 \texttt{a}1+ 42.\texttt{h}2 \texttt{e}5+ 43.\texttt{h}1 \texttt{a}5 is similar to the game.

41...\texttt{f}8 42.\texttt{h}7+ \texttt{d}6 43.\texttt{b}7 \texttt{a}1+ 44.\texttt{h}2 \texttt{e}5+ 45.\texttt{h}1 \texttt{a}5

Everything is protected and the king is ready to take his final trip.

46.\texttt{b}6+ \texttt{e}7 47.\texttt{b}7+ \texttt{f}6 48.\texttt{b}6+ \texttt{g}7

It is never too late to lose: 48...\texttt{g}5?? 49.h4+ \texttt{x}h4 50.\texttt{h}6+ \texttt{g}3 51.\texttt{h}2+ \texttt{f}2 52.\texttt{x}e5 49.\texttt{b}7+ \texttt{h}6 50.\texttt{b}6+ \texttt{f}6 51.\texttt{d}8 \texttt{d}6 52.\texttt{f}8+ \texttt{g}5 53.\texttt{e}2 \texttt{f}4

When the black king reaches f2 it will be more than unpleasant; so White resigned.

0–1
GAME 31
Michael Adams
Peter Svidler
Sicilian, English Attack B80


Another possible move is 8.f4 leading to completely different positions after 8...e5 9.Bb5 Qxb5 10.0-0-0 Qxe3 11.Qxe3 exf4 12.Qxf4 0-0 13.Qb1 Ae6 14.Qd5, as in Anand – Svidler, Monte Carlo 2004.

8...0-0 9.0-0-0

A relatively unusual move order in the English Attack – instead of the pawn on a6 Black has the knight on c6. Of course, the pawn sometimes goes to a6 later, but the knight does not have to develop to c6 (and in most cases it goes to d7). However, Kasparov himself considered lines with the knight on c6 to be on of the toughest answers to White’s aggression in the English Attack.

Speaking of the move order: in the game the knight allows Black additional ideas, namely the typical Sicilian d5-break. For instance, after 9.g4 it is a good moment to play 9...d5 10.g5 Qh5 11.gxh5 dxe4 12.Qxe4 e5 13.Qxe6 bxc6 14.0-0-0 Qc7 15.Qc4 Qf5 16.Qh3 Qad8 17.Bxf6+ Bxf6 18.Qxf6 Qd5 19.Qd2 Qb6 20.Be4, and Black was fine in Leko – Svidler, Armenia vs. The rest of the world, Moscow 2004.


More popular is 10.exd5. After 10...Qxd5 11.Qxd5 Qxd5 the critical position arises. It seems that Black is OK, for instance: 12.Qc4 Qe5 13.Qf4 Qc7 14.Qb5 Qb8 15.Qe2 Qd8 White’s initiative is exhausted, and Black is taking over: 16.Qc2 Qd7 17.g3 a6 18.Qd4 Qb4 19.Qb3 a5 20.Qb1 e5! 21.Qxe5 Qxe5 22.Qf4 Qd4 17.Qf4 Anand, on the Black side, eventually won against Vallejo in Monaco 2004.

It is interesting to consider why Svidler did not go for this continuation – Adams had already tried it with White, so it could be expected to reoccur. Perhaps he did not like the opening results of Adams’ opponents, or maybe he wanted higher winning chances. In either case, he goes for a typical opposite sides castling game.

10.g4

In this game the so-called ‘English Attack’ gains a double meaning. Or perhaps it finally deserves its name!

10...Qxd4

A typical procedure, allowing Black to play b7-b5 without losing important time.

11.Qxd4 Qd7 12.h4 b5 13.g5

Now Black faces an eternal question: how to support the further advance of the b-pawn.

13...Qa5

Another way is 13...e6 14.Qb1 b4 15.Qe2 Qc5 16.Qd2 e5 17.Qh3 Ae6 18.h5 Qc8 19.Qxe6 Qxe6 20.Qg3, with a better game for White, Kritz – Cvitan, Biel 2005.

14.Qb1 b4 15.Qe2 Qb7 16.h5 Qe5

Only this is new. The move is very logical, closing the dangerous diagonal, but objectively not a very good one.

On previous occasions Black played 16...Qg5 and even got good positions, but it is hard to believe such greediness can go unpunished.
268 ROUND 8

Best looks 17.\texttt{xe}5 $\texttt{xe}5$ 18.h6 with a strong attack, De la Villa – Bauer, Lausanne 2001.

16...\texttt{d}8 is Svidler's personal preference over the text, defining 16...\texttt{e}5 as a 'serious mistake.'

17.\texttt{f}4?

Returning the favour, thus justifying Black's last move. Correct was 17.h6 after which 17...\texttt{e}5 is ruled out by the simple 18.\texttt{f}4 $\texttt{xd}4$

19.$\texttt{xd}4$ $\texttt{c}6$ 20.$\texttt{hx}g7$ $\texttt{gx}g7$ 21.$\texttt{rd}2$, threatening $\texttt{g}3$-\texttt{h}5, followed by $\texttt{dh}2$.

However, Black was counting on 17...\texttt{fc}8. This position is critical for the evaluation of Svidler's idea. Now we have:

a) 18.$\texttt{hx}g7$?? is not the solution: 18...\texttt{xf}3 19.$\texttt{b}6$ $\texttt{xb}6$ 20.$\texttt{xb}6$ $\texttt{xe}4$ and Black wins.

b) Also 18.$\texttt{g}1$, as suggested by both Adams and Svidler, is not very good: 18...\texttt{f}8 19.$\texttt{hx}g7$ $\texttt{gx}g7$ 20.$\texttt{d}2$ Adams stops his analysis with a "z" evaluation. However, after 20...d5! the advantage is perhaps not so tiny, and tends to go the other way round: 21.$\texttt{h}2$ dxe4

22.$\texttt{d}4$

The attempt to go recklessly after Black's monarch with 22.$\texttt{wh}7$+ $\texttt{f}8$ 23.$\texttt{h}3$ $\texttt{xf}3$

24.$\texttt{f}4$ falls short (again, by one tempo)

24...\texttt{xc}2! 25.$\texttt{xc}2$ $\texttt{a}4$+ mating.

22.\texttt{f}4 is also bad, due to 22...\texttt{g}4! 23.$\texttt{wh}7$+ $\texttt{f}8$ 24.$\texttt{d}4$ $\texttt{xd}4$ 25.$\texttt{xd}4$ $\texttt{d}5$! and White has no suitable defence as 26.b3 loses to the crushing 26...\texttt{xc}2!.

22...\texttt{xf}3

Threatening f3-f2.

23.$\texttt{wh}7$+ $\texttt{f}8$

White falls exactly one tempo short in all the lines:

24.$\texttt{h}4$

24.$\texttt{h}3$ $\texttt{d}8$ (24...f2 25.$\texttt{f}4$! $\texttt{wh}1$ 26.$\texttt{h}5$

b3 27.$\texttt{wx}g7$+ $\texttt{e}7$ 28.$\texttt{xb}3$ $\texttt{el}$ 29.$\texttt{c}5$+!

$\texttt{xc}5$ 30.$\texttt{f}6$+ Drawing the game in style.)

25.$\texttt{f}4$ $\texttt{xd}4$ 26.$\texttt{xd}4$ $\texttt{dd}8$ 27.$\texttt{xd}8$+ $\texttt{xd}8$

28.$\texttt{d}3$ (28.$\texttt{d}3$ loses on the spot to 28...\texttt{d}4)

28...$\texttt{wx}g5$ and Black is in charge!

24...$\texttt{Ed}8$!
But not 24...c7? 25.dh3 ed8 26.df4 and Black has no defence against the trivial threat 27.dh5.

25.dh3 xd4!
Destroying White's most important piece!

26.exd4 e6
Black’s control over the long diagonal proves much more valuable than White’s minimal material advantage.

27.d7
Or:
27.f4 e5 28.exf6 xf6 29.gxf6 xf6 with a technically winning position for Black.

27.e4 e5 28.c3 bxc3 29.db4 with an initiative that just cannot be stopped. As an illustration, we could offer you the following line: 30.e2 (preventing ...e4) 30...d5 31.a3 a2t 32.a1 xc3! 33.bxc3 xc3 mate. Adolf Anderssen would have been proud of his successor. (Fritz of course, who did you think?)

27...e5 28.c3 bxc3! 29.db7 b8!
Despite being a whole rook up, White is helpless. In fact, this position deserves a diagram:

![Diagram](image2)

30.xb8t
30.xa6 changes nothing, as after 30...xb7 31.xb7 b5 the ideas are similar to the main line.

30...xb8 31.b3
After 31.xc2 db4 Black wins back all the material (and more) and ends up with a totally winning position. Now Black wins with the "positional"

31.e5 32.e1 33.e2 e1 34.e1 f2!
What a picturesque position! White can resign.

c) However, White does have a way to obtain an advantage, and a rather significant one at that, with 18.xg3! pretty much forcing Black into a difficult endgame after 18..gxh6 19.xh6 xe5 20.f4 xd4 21.xd4 xe6 22.ed2 dh8 23.dh5 with a big positional advantage for White.

18..f8 is no longer playable: 19.hxg7 xe7 20.dh5 dh8 21.dh6+ xf6 22.gxh6 xf3 23.xd6 e5 24.xe5 xe5 25.d3 and to say Black’s position is unpleasant would be an understatement.

17..d4?!
Black had a beautiful idea in 17..c8 but after 18.xg3 (but not 18..fxe5 dxe5 19.db6 xb6 20.axb6 xe4 and White is collapsing) 18.xg4 19.h3 xe3 20.h6 f8 21.hxg7 xe7 22.xe3 it leads to an advantage for White.

Better was 17..d3! After 18.xd3 d5 19.xg2 dxe4! (weaker is 19..d8 20.e5! d4 21.xd4 xe5 22.db5 with a strong attack) 20.xd7 Black has an amazing resource pointed out by Svidler: 20..xb5! and it is Black playing for the advantage! For example:

a) 21.xb5 axb5 22.d7 d5 23.db1 (23.xe7 loses after 23..xa2t 24.cb1 c4 and Black emerges with two extra pawns) 23..xe8 White has insufficient compensation for the pawn. He has no compensation at all, in fact.

b) 21.xe7 xe2 22.xb7 xe3 23.xf3 exf3 with a clear advantage for Black.

According to Svidler, he saw these lines in a blink of an eye (up to 20..xb5!), but unluckily for him, did not trust his feelings at the time, and went for the “safer” continuation.

18.e3
White has no time to save the bishop: 18.g1 e5 19.db5 exf4 getting the fundamental Sicilian square for a knight.

Also after 18.g1 xe3 (18..e5 19.db6) 19.h6 e5 20.xe3 g6 Black is alright.

18..xe3 19.xe3 d5
Svidler is interested in playing the endgame, where White’s weaknesses in the centre would be felt.

20.exd3
Adams agrees with him: 20.xc5 dxc5 21.g3 fd8 is good for Black.
Adams decides to play on for a win, only to be faced with:
22...h6!!

Perhaps objectively this move does not deserve two exclamation marks (Adams even called it dubious in Chess Informant), but as Svidler himself put it: "When you see such an idea, there is no way to stop." The idea of the move is that one file in front of his king may be opened, instead of two as seemed likely.

Both players seemed to think that the conventional 22...f6 was stronger: 23.d4 e7 24.h2 e5 25.f5 exf4 26.xf4 e5 with a balanced position. But even if it is proved that it is objectively better than the text move, 22...f6 would hardly be called 'the move of the tournament'.

23.xh6 gxh6 24.f5

White must react fast, because if Black manages to play ...h8 and ...f5 he will take over. The downside is that this gives Black full control over the a1-h8 diagonal.

24.d4 h8 25.hg1 g8 and the black king feels more comfortable than White's centre.

24.e5 25.hg1 h7

The typical dilemma: 'where to place one's king'. The alternative was 25...h8. Each king move has its drawbacks, and it is impossible to say in this position which is more important. On h7 the king is more vulnerable to checks, whereas with the king on h8 the h-pawn is more exposed, which might prove to be an important tempo for White.

26.fxe6!!

White should have tried to hold the centre with 26.d4 d5 27.exd5 xd5 28.e3 h8 29.fxe6 fxe6 with infinite possibilities for both sides, but the position seems to be balanced. For instance: 30.xe6! leads to the interesting continuation 30...xe6 31.e4 f6 32.e3 and it turns out that Black cannot hang on to the piece, but he escapes with 32...f1t! 33.c1 (33.xf1 xf1† 34.c1 g5 35.d4† h7 White has no checks, and is therefore lost) 33...g5 34.xg5 xa2† 35.xa2 hxg5 36.xg5 f5 with a draw.

26...e4 27.b3

27.a5?

Another brilliant idea by a brilliant player! Unfortunately, there was a better way to continue, and the exclamation mark is purely for originality and boldness.

We believe that after 27...ac8 28.d4 (worse is 28.d2 because of 28...f5 and now 29.xb4? loses on the spot to 29.xc2 30.xc2 xc2† 31.xc2 xe2† while 29.d4 d5 is also clearly better for Black) 28...d5 29.gel (29.ex7 e4! spells trouble for White: 30.e3 xh5) 29...f5 and Black simply must be better with such a bishop on e4!

28.g2?!

After this it is again White who has to make a draw.
28...exf7 is strongly met with 28...a4 29...xb4 
ab8 30...c3 ef6 31...xe5 fe5 32...d4 
exf7, where the activity of Black’s pieces easily 
outweighs the pawn deficit.

Svidler’s core idea was based on 28.g3, which 
is also White’s best move, and now the fireworks 
begin:
28...a4! 29...xb4 d5!

Material is nothing, time is everything!
30...xe7 ab8

But not 30...a3? which loses immediately to 
31...b4 ef8 32...d4.
31...a3

31...c1 xb2† 32...a2 xc2! is hopeless for 
White.
31...xb2†! 32...xb2 eb8 33...xb8 eb8† 
34...c1 ef4†

Looks like a draw, but it is just a beginning:
35...d2 ef6 36...d1 a1† 37...e2 xb1 38.e7

The pawn in unstoppable, but Black has a 
perpetual at his disposal:
38...xb3 39.e8 ef3† 40...e1 ef3† 41...e2 
ec3† 42...d1 a1† 43...d2 ec4†
28...xb3 29...g2 fx6

Black is a clear pawn up, but that doesn’t mean 
he is winning.

A great defensive resource by Adams, which 
was unjustly criticized by some commentators. 
Apart from being the best move from an objective 
point of view, and one that gives White sufficient 
counterplay, it is also a very strong practical 
decision. Svidler, having an exposed king, must 
have expected his opponent to play for an attack 
and not to exchange queens.

The supposedly ‘more tenacious’ 31...d4 is in 
fact much weaker: 31...g5 32...g3 (the pawn is 
poisoned: 32...xd6 ed8 33...c7† ef7) 32...f3 
33...e4† ef5! 34...xf3 exf3 35...e4 fe3, and 
Black has a more active version of the endgame in 
the game.

31...xd3 32...d3 eg8

This move was also criticized, and as before this 
was unjust. Trying to hang on to the extra pawn 
with 32...e5 would make too many positional 
concessions: 33...e6 ef7 (weaker is 33...eg8 
because of 34...f2!) 34...d1 ef6 (34...f8 
35...g6 d5 36...xf8† axf8) 35...g6 ef8 36...c1! 
and White has sufficient compensation for the 
pawn.
33...eg8

After this it should end in a draw virtually by 
force.

33...eg8 34...xe6 eg2 35...f1 eg8 36...a4?

But this should have thrown away half a point! 
After 36...b3 ef2 37...f5 the draw is inevitable.
36...b3?

Time trouble, they say, has rules of its own: 
36...eh2! would probably have brought Svidler 
half a point closer to the leader: 37...b5 b3 
38...c1 d5!, threatening 38...e2 39...d4 ef1† 
40...d2 eb4 mate! Therefore White must play 
39...f1. But with such a passive rook, (which is 
forced because of the vulnerable position of the 
king), Black’s advantage is close to decisive.
37...d4

This leads to a drawn rook endgame.

37...f6 38...xb3 eb2† 39...c1 xb3 40...f6 
exd3

½–½
GAME 32
Viswanathan Anand
Judit Polgar
Sicilian Paulsen B48

1.e4 c5 2.d3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.exd4 Qc6 5.d3
W/c7 6.b3 a6 7.Wd2 b6 8.0-0-0 Wb4 9.f3
e7 10.de2 b5 11.e4?

This is only the second time this move has been played according to our database: the 10...b5 line is young and undeveloped.

In the fourth round (Game 13) Leko played 11.g4 h6 12.g5!, winning a fine game. Anand has other plans.

11...e5
Practically forced, as after 11...Wb5 12.b3 0-0 13.a3 f5 14.e5!, Black does not have 14...Qd5, and without it her position is difficult.

12.g5 a6?
12...Wc6 looks better, not compromising the kingside pawn structure. 13.b1 0-0 with a normal game, although the queen on c6 is rather misplaced.

13.b1
13.xf6 would still have been too early: 13.gxf6 14.Wh6 Qg6 as now the bishop can come back to f8, covering the kingside. Instead, White plays a typical prophylactic move, and makes a little threat of 13.Qxb5!.

13.a5?

After this Black ends up in a very difficult position.

Bad is 13...Qxc3 14.Qxc3 and the future without the dark-squared bishop is very grim for Black.


The right move was 13...Qc5! as here the plan White went for in the game no longer works: 14.Qxf6 gxf6 15.Qh6 Qb6 16.g3 (after 16.f4 0-0-0 followed by ...d5 the initiative can go Black's way) 16...f5! In the game Black did not have this option, because of Qd6.

14.Qxh6!
A logical and strong novelty. Hardly Anand's most difficult discovery.

A previous game continued rather curiously: 14.Wd6 Qd5 15.Wxc7 Qxc7 16.Qg3 f6 and a draw was agreed, Akopian - Nisipeanu, Gothenburg 2005.

14...gxh6 15.Qh6
The bishop is missed on the kingside.

15.Wb6
If 15...Qg6 then 16.g3, as suggested by Anand in Chess Informant, looks to be the best: 16.b4 17.h3 0-0-0 18.Wg7 with a decisive advantage. 16.h4 is interesting as well: 16.Qxc3 17.Qxc3 Qc7 18.g3! Qf8 19.h3 and White is strategically winning.
16.g3!

The bishop joins the attack, and Black's position is becoming critical.

16...\( \text{\#e6} \)

The complications arising after 16...b4 are interesting mainly for White:

17.\( \text{\#a4} \text{\#c6} 18.\text{\#h3}! \text{f5} \)

18...0-0-0 is nicely refuted by 19.\( \text{\#g7!} \text{\#xa4} 20.\text{\#xd7!} \text{\#xd7} 21.\text{\#h8}! \text{\#d8} 22.\text{\#xf6}. \)

White's rook, which has good prospects along the d-file, is more useful that Black's bishops, which are limited by pawns.

19.\( \text{\#g7!} \text{\#g8} 20.\text{\#xe5} \text{\#xa4} 21.\text{\#d4}! \)

The king is in the centre, the queen is offside - a good recipe for an opening disaster:

21...\( \text{\#d6} 22.\text{\#xd6} \text{\#g6} 22...\text{\#d8} 23.\text{\#e5} is even more painful for Black.

23.\( \text{\#e5} \text{f6} 24.\text{\#e6} \text{\#c8} \)

After 24...\( \text{\#d7} 25.\text{\#xd7}! \text{\#xd7} 26.\text{\#xf5}! \)

White wins back a piece, keeping the three extra pawns and the initiative.

25.\( \text{\#c4} \text{\#xe4} 26.\text{\#f5} \)

The position is totally hopeless for Black.

17.\( \text{\#h3}\text{f5} 18.\text{\#h4!} \)

In Chess Informant Anand provides the following interesting line: 18.\( \text{\#g7} \text{\#g8} 19.\text{\#h7} \text{\#f6} 20.\text{\#xf5} 0-0-0 (20...\text{\#h8} is refuted by 21.\text{\#d6}) 21.\text{\#xd7} \text{\#xd7} 22.\text{\#d1} \text{\#h8} 23.\text{\#xd7} \text{\#xh7} 24.\text{\#xe7\#b8} 25.\text{\#e8\#a7} 26.\text{\#xh7 \#xc3} 27.\text{\#xc3 b4 Well, it is much more interesting}

for Black. White has a rook, knight and three pawns for the queen, but he will lose at least two of the pawns, and with the vulnerable position of the king his position is inferior.

18...\( \text{\#f6} \)

18...\( \text{b4} \) 19.\( \text{\#xf5} \text{\#xf5} 20.\text{\#xf5} \text{\#xf5} 21.\text{\#d5} \text{\#xd5} 22.\text{\#xd5} \text{\#c7} 23.\text{\#d4} with a vicious attack.

19.\( \text{\#xf5}?! \)

The move does not change the assessment of the position (it is still winning for White) but it is unclear why Anand chose to keep his light-squared bishop. 19.\( \text{\#xf5} \text{\#xf5} 20.\text{\#h5\#f7} (20...\text{\#e7} 21.\text{\#xf5} \text{\#c4} 22.\text{\#h6! and Black is doomed) 21.\text{\#xf7} (21.\text{\#xf5) 21...\text{\#xf7} 22.\text{\#xd7\#e6 23.\#xb7 White has two healthy extra pawns in the endgame, and Black's resignation could be expected any moment. 19...\text{\#f7} 20.\text{\#e4} \)

Despite the inaccuracy White is a pawn and a position up. The opening phase can hardly be defined as a success for the Hungarian star.

20...\( \text{\#xe4} 21.\text{\#xe4} \)

In the next phase of the game both sides are improving their pieces: Anand brings his forces into the game, while Polgar is trying to create some counterplay.

21.\( \text{\#e6} 22.\text{\#d6!} \)

Black will have no trouble driving the rook away from d6, but it forces her to castle short, right into White's advancing pawns.
22...0-0 23...h1 a7 24...f1 c7 25...c1 b4 26...d5 c8 27...b3 a8

Forcing White to weaken his Kingside with c3, as ...b4 is a serious threat.

28.c3 h8 29.g4 g7 30.g3

The queen is brought closer to the queenside, while freeing the way for the h-pawn to support the kingside attack.

30...a8?

Polgar protects the a-pawn, preparing ...b4. However, another pawn sacrifice was worth considering, as Black does not have the luxury of spending time on creating her counterplay. Black's position is lost and cannot be saved without help from her opponent. Thus the defender should try and create the most unbalanced position possible, hoping to provoke an error.

For this purpose 30...b4!? could be interesting:

a) After 31.axa6 a8 32.b5 bxc3 33.bxc3 c7 the evaluation of the position has not changed. White is still winning, but his task has become harder.

b) White can also try to prevent Black from opening the queenside with 31.c4, but then Black still has a good try to muddy the waters with 31...a5. A more conventional continuation is also available in:

31...a8

But Black's position demands measures beyond the conventional.

32...xa5 a7

Worse is 32...xa5 33.xa5 c5 34.h4 with a hopeless opposite-coloured bishops position. Black's settlement on d4 can always be dismantled by an exchange sacrifice.

33...b3

33...xc6 dxc6 34.e5 d2 (34.xd8 exd8 35.xd8 c7 36.xd7 xd7 37.xd3 h6 and Black has decent chances to survive, despite the two pawns deficit) 34...a8 35.b3 c5 36.xd8+ f8 37.xa8 a8 38.h4 c5 39.g5 a7 and it seems that Black has managed to create some kind of first line of defence.

33...a8 34.h4 d4! 35.cxd4 exd4 36.e5xd4 d6! 37.g5 a8

Black has managed to get some counterplay along the a-file, while the material deficit is normally felt less with opposite-coloured bishops.

While looking through the above lines it is important to keep in mind our earlier point: Black is not seeking objective equality, but for positions that are as unbalanced as possible, where the potential for errors increases.

31.a3

From this point on it seems that Anand switched onto automatic pilot and wanted to win with every possible luxury, not giving Black even a single chance. Unfortunately for him, as often happens (especially against such imaginative opposition), this strategy ends up giving every possible chance.

31.h4 was a good alternative. After 31...b4 then 32.g5 bxc3 33.bxc3 a5 34.b5! seals the deal: 34...a4 35.d2 b8 (or 35...b7 36.a1 c7 37.c4! x7 38.d3 xac8 39.a5 and once again, Black has nothing to play for) 36.a1 with a simple win.
31...b6 32.c1?!  
The knight is not ideally placed on b3, but it does a very important job of restricting Black’s play on the queenside.  
In his annotations for Chess Informant Anand suggests another route for his knight: 32.a1 a5 33.c2 Compared to the game, the knight on c2 is much more mobile, keeping an eye on all the vital squares: a3, b4, d4 and is only two moves away from supporting the attack on the kingside (c3-g4). In that case White would be winning easily.  
There was also nothing wrong either with 32.h4 and only on 32...f7 retreat the knight with 33.a1.  
32...a5! 33.d2?  
Again, trying to minimize Black’s options. As Anand himself writes, 33.h4 xxa3 34.bxa3 xc3 35.b5d3 would have guaranteed the win.  
33..b3!  
Black’s seemingly pointless knight moves are in fact very strong. The knight is heading towards the best spot in such a pawn formation, the a4-square.  
34.h4?!  
Now it was perhaps a good moment to spend a move on prophylaxis: 34.d3 c5 35.c2 (depriving the knight of the a4-square) 35...a5 36.b4 37.axb4 axb4 38.xb4, and Black still has nothing.  
34..c5! 35.d3 a4 36.c2  
Anand suggests 36.e2 as a very serious improvement over the text, covering c4. He provides the following line: 36..b6 37.d2 d5 38.exd5 d6. In contrast to the game, he has 39.g5 and is first to break through.  
36.b6  
The “wonder knight” has made five consecutive jumps and single-handedly beaten White’s entire
army. OK, perhaps “beaten” is too strong a word, as the evaluation of the position has gone from “easily winning” to “simply winning” or something similar, but that is the real point! In winning positions such as White has had for the past 15 moves, there is a well known psychological effect: with every move that the advantage fails to increase, the winning player who becomes more and more nervous, whereas the defender, who by this point has already accepted his/her defeat, is playing calmly. A casual spectator could easily be mislead about which player has the winning position.

37...d5! Another blow to finish the (psychological) job. Apart from psychology, this move has a very firm positional justification. The pawn on d7 was doing nothing except demanding protection from other pieces, whereas after its disappearance the d-file is closed, which gives Black’s bishop a great square on d6 and makes White’s rooks very unhappy.

Not only has White failed to bring the victory closer, but he now has to deal with real threats, like ...e4.

38.exd5 â²d6 39.b3

It is not easy to adjust, even for a brilliant player.

The straightforward attack 39.g5 was still the best way to go, as after 39...e4 (39...c4 40.g4) 40.exd6 exd3 41.<x)e3 <c4 (41...<d7 42.<b4 fxg5 43.<xa6 <b7 44.hxg5 <xg5 45.<e6 <d8 46.d6 etc) 42.<e6 <d8 43.gxf6 <g8 44.<xc4 bxc4 45.d6 <c7 46.<b4 Black’s position is as hopeless as can be.

39...a5 40.f2

40.g5 a4 41.<c2 <c4 42.<g4 and White is in control.

40...<c4 41.<e2

41.g5! e4 42.<h3 fxg5 43.hxg5 <xg5 44.<xc4 <xc4 45.<dh1 <h8c7 46.<b6 winning.

41...<g8!

After this the initiative, amazingly, changes hands. As much as Anand’s play during the previous ten moves deserves criticism, his play in the remainder of the game deserves praise, and more! He manages to pull himself together and win the game for a second time.

42.<g1 <h6 43.<dd1

A sad necessity. After 43.<xc4 <xc4 44.<h3 <f4 Black is in control.

43...a4

43...<xh4 44.a4

44.<xc4 <xc4 45.g5!

Finally!

45...fxg5

45...<xh4 46.g6 <e4† 47.<xe4 <xe4 48.<h1 <g7 49.<dh1 is lost for Black.

46.hxg5 <xg5 47.<e3

The point behind his 45th move: the queen is going behind enemy lines, armed with a knife and fork.
47...\textit{$\mathbf{c}4$} 48.\textit{$\mathbf{b}6$} \textit{$\mathbf{g}x\mathbf{f}5$}!

White is ready to destroy Black's entire queenside, so Black needed to act precisely.

Anand provided a beautiful line: 48...\textit{$\mathbf{f}5$} and now:

a) 49.\textit{$\mathbf{e}xg5$} \textit{$\mathbf{e}xg5$} 50.\textit{$\mathbf{b}xg5$} \textit{$\mathbf{g}6$} 51.\textit{$\mathbf{a}1$} \textit{$\mathbf{g}1$} 52.\textit{$\mathbf{x}a4$} \textit{$\mathbf{x}d1$} 53.\textit{$\mathbf{x}d1$} \textit{$\mathbf{h}5$} It is not clear who has the upper hand here, since it seems that one amazing pawn runs much faster than four.

b) 49.\textit{$\mathbf{d}8$} is also hardly convincing: 49...\textit{$\mathbf{f}8$} 50.\textit{$\mathbf{x}f8$} \textit{$\mathbf{x}f8$} 51.\textit{$\mathbf{x}g5$} 52.\textit{$\mathbf{d}6$} \textit{$\mathbf{x}d6$} 53.\textit{$\mathbf{x}d6$} \textit{$\mathbf{h}5$} and White has to search for study-like ways for a win.

c) The only way to get a decent shot at winning the game seems to be 49.\textit{$\mathbf{b}4$}! \textit{$\mathbf{g}6$}. Anand suggests:

   c1) 50.\textit{$\mathbf{c}2$}. Finally correcting the mistakes on moves 32 and 33: 50...\textit{$\mathbf{e}7$} 51.\textit{$\mathbf{x}g6$} 52.\textit{$\mathbf{x}g6$} 53.d6 \textit{$\mathbf{d}8$} 54.\textit{$\mathbf{b}4$} e4 55.\textit{$\mathbf{c}6$} e3 56.\textit{$\mathbf{c}2$} \textit{$\mathbf{f}2$} 57.\textit{$\mathbf{x}d3$} e2 58.\textit{$\mathbf{e}1$} \textit{$\mathbf{f}6$} 59.\textit{$\mathbf{d}4$} \textit{$\mathbf{x}d6$} 60.\textit{$\mathbf{c}5$} \textit{$\mathbf{d}2$} 61.\textit{$\mathbf{x}d8$} \textit{$\mathbf{x}d8$} 62.\textit{$\mathbf{x}e2$} \textit{$\mathbf{b}8$} 63.\textit{$\mathbf{e}4$} \textit{$\mathbf{g}7$} 64.\textit{$\mathbf{b}4$} (threatening e4) 64...\textit{$\mathbf{a}8$} 65.\textit{$\mathbf{x}b5$} g3 66.c4 g4 67.c5 \textit{$\mathbf{b}8$} 68.\textit{$\mathbf{x}a4$} \textit{$\mathbf{x}b4$} 69.axb4 g3 70.\textit{$\mathbf{c}6$} g2 71.c7 g1\textit{$\mathbf{w}$} 72.c8\textit{$\mathbf{w}$} With a winning position. If that is the best one can get...

   c2) To us 50.\textit{$\mathbf{a}2$} looks like a better try, as exchanging into the 'always-drawn' rook ending is losing for Black: 50...\textit{$\mathbf{b}4$} 51.\textit{$\mathbf{x}g6$} 52.\textit{$\mathbf{g}6$} 53.axb4 And here:

      x) 53...\textit{$\mathbf{e}4$} 54.\textit{$\mathbf{d}6$} \textit{$\mathbf{b}8$} 55.\textit{$\mathbf{b}3$} \textit{$\mathbf{x}b3$} 56.\textit{$\mathbf{x}b3$} e3 57.c4 and White wins.

      y) 53...\textit{$\mathbf{g}7$} 54.\textit{$\mathbf{d}6$} \textit{$\mathbf{b}8$} 55.\textit{$\mathbf{c}4$}! \textit{$\mathbf{b}4$} 56.b5 e4 57.d7 \textit{$\mathbf{d}8$} 58.b6 e3 59.b7 \textit{$\mathbf{f}7$} 60.\textit{$\mathbf{d}4$}! White is threatening \textit{$\mathbf{e}4$}, with an easy win, and 60...\textit{$\mathbf{e}7$} loses to 61.\textit{$\mathbf{x}c4$} e2 62.\textit{$\mathbf{e}4$} \textit{$\mathbf{x}d7$} 63.\textit{$\mathbf{d}4$} \textit{$\mathbf{c}7$} 64.\textit{$\mathbf{b}8$} \textit{$\mathbf{x}d8$}.

      z) After 53...\textit{$\mathbf{f}7$} 54.\textit{$\mathbf{d}6$} \textit{$\mathbf{d}7$} White has time for 55.b3! \textit{$\mathbf{a}xb3$} 56.\textit{$\mathbf{x}b3$} \textit{$\mathbf{g}7$} 57.c4 \textit{$\mathbf{b}4x$} 58.\textit{$\mathbf{x}c4$}

   57.\textit{$\mathbf{c}5$} 58.\textit{$\mathbf{g}el$} \textit{$\mathbf{w}5$} 59.\textit{$\mathbf{b}6$} 60.\textit{$\mathbf{b}2$} \textit{$\mathbf{h}5$} 61.\textit{$\mathbf{d}6$} \textit{$\mathbf{f}5$} 62.\textit{$\mathbf{xe}3$}

After 62...\textit{$\mathbf{xe}3$} 63.\textit{$\mathbf{xe}3$} there is no stopping the d-pawn.

\textit{1-0}
This round provided an answer to whether the Bulgarian could be beaten by conventional means. That answer was no. If even Anand with White could not inflict a first defeat on the leader, then who can? Fortunately for chess, the sporting aspect did not occupy the spectators’ minds for long. Chess is after all not just sport but also an art. And the art of Svidler – Kasimdzhanov was the subject of long debates. Even detailed analysis failed to resolve all the questions. This game was immediately awarded the “best game of the round” prize (according to most journalists), then of the tournament, and then became the game of the month (according to the Russian websites).

The opening of Svidler – Kasimdzhanov showed both players’ intentions to go for an open fight, with no doubts and deliberations. The spectators were those to benefit most from this amazing duel. Kasimdzhanov obviously had thoroughly studied this line well in advance, but Svidler has colossal experience. The position reached was most suitable for each of their playing styles: White was playing for domination in the centre and to exploit Black’s strategic drawbacks, whereas Black had plenty of tactical possibilities. Both players obviously had Dolmatov’s well-known plan in mind; Dolmatov won a classic game in this line. After the opening a fierce struggle arose around White’s attempts to clamp Black, and each move consumed a lot of time. This struggle peaked when the Uzbek put a bishop en prise, but it could neither be taken nor displaced. This was the first critical moment of the game. White should have just ignored this thorn in his side, but Svidler decided to punish his opponent for his cheeky manoeuvre and committed a crucial mistake. For the next few moves Black did not just have an advantage, but a
series of possible wins. However down to his last minutes the FIDE champion did not find the right way, and committed a crucial mistake of his own, after which it looked as if the game would end in a Russian victory. But Kasimdzhanov found a plan that was so beautiful that after the game Svidler, who needed a win like air, was anything but disappointed – all great players appreciate art.

Meanwhile, another creative player was up to his old tricks. Opting for a rather unpretentious line in the Sveshnikov, Morozevich allowed Leko to improve his position with every move played. The Hungarian grandmaster knows these positions well and his initiative unfolded smoothly. Anyone but Morozevich would have gone entirely on the defensive, but he did not even consider such an option, clearly provoking his opponent's aggression. Leko, similarly to many of the Russian's previous opponents, was playing according to the position. Unfortunately for him, the similarity did not end there – like many others before him, he found himself in time trouble, and consequentially lost. But on the way he missed a virtually forced win, and then a clear draw, and just a move before the time control committed his decisive error. Chess can be very cruel, and this game put an end to Peter Leko's hopes for a successful tournament.

A short draw occurred in Polgar – Adams. Short, because a great majority of the game's 37 moves were following theory, and the rest, although demanding some effort, were no challenge for players of this class. White's decision to go for the classical line in the Marshall Attack, where it is a long time since White has been able to achieve any advantage, was merely an attempt to play without risk. And this is exactly what happened – in a position which was thought to be satisfactory for Black anyway, Adams, who was concerned about Polgar's preparation, chose a more accurate way. Even here she could have tried to play on, but decided to err on the safe side.

Well, it is time to mendon "The Leader vs. The Favourite" battle. The opening was not hard to predict – Topalov certainly did not want to take unnecessary risks, and playing a Sicilian against Anand is usually very unprofitable. Therefore – The Berlin, in which Topalov has already outplayed many, including his great opponent. The Indian chose a rare continuation, and then a sideline in it as well. Imagine his amazement when Topalov blitzed out a novelty, and continued to play while barely spending any time on his clock! With hindsight, Anand should have avoided forced lines at any cost, and steered the game into a slow manoeuvring struggle, but he did not and landed straight in his opponent's preparation.

One can only marvel that Topalov has deeply studied even this line, which is not mainstream to put it mildly. After the game there was a lot of criticism addressed towards Anand for not playing on. A short variation, however, which was definitely within Anand's capabilities to calculate over the board, shows that had he continued only White would run the risk of losing. Moreover, he was rather fortunate to have a draw by repetition, as in many such cases it could have been worse.

So even though there is still a chance of an unexpected finale to the tournament, this game proved that even if the unbelievable happens, it would clearly be an illogical and even unfair turn of events – Topalov has earned his victory. But practical chances still exist – the leader only needs to lose one game for his position to be shaken.

Among the others, of special note is Morozevich's third consecutive win – not so long ago he could not score his first. We can only wish Adams follows his example.
1.e4 c5

It is a brave decision to play the Sicilian against Svidler, one of the biggest experts in Sicilian counterattacks with both colours.

2.d3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.exd4 df6 5.d3 a6 6.f3 An invitation to a real fight— the English Attack. The nuances of the move orders (especially from Svidler’s point of view) have already been discussed, and for some reason Svidler decided to switch from 6...e3 despite the success that move had in this event.

6...e5 7.d3 d6 8.e3

8...c7

Typically for the Sicilian the move order is vital and each deviation can take the game in a different direction. Some players prefer to delay ...c7 (thus delaying castling). Others castle as soon as possible, which consumes time, and sends the king to the heart of White’s projected attack, as it is not easy for Black to develop a serious attack without all his pieces participating, while his king is stuck in the centre.

It is important to note that at the moment 8...d5 fails to equalize due to 9.exd5 dxd5 10.0-0-0 cxd5 11.c4 b6 12.hf4 d6 13.exd8+ xd8 14.c5 and the development advantage together with Black’s semi-trapped bishop promised White a serious edge in Nijboer – Melotti, Porto San Giorgio 2004.

White should also be precise with the move order—here, for example, the natural 9.g4? fails to the classic Sicilian shot 9...d5! and after the exchanges on d5 (the position after 10.g5 d4! is also not White’s greatest hope) the g4-pawn makes him suffer due to the weakness of the f3-pawn and the threat of e7-h4.

9.b2 0–0

One important issue in this position is when Black should start his attack on the queenside. In other words, when is the most appropriate moment to play b7-b5.

For example, 9...b5 is too early since after the natural 10.a4! b4 11.cxd5 cxd5 12.exd5 the positions are considered to be good for White.

Another point is that the move order could be switched: 9...c7 But after 10.g4 Black should be careful not to play 10...b5? (again!) 11.a4! b4 12.cxd5 cxd5 13.exd5 e6. After 14.a5! cxd5 15.g3 cxe3 16.gxf6 cxf6 17.c7 c7 18.b7 White has a piece more.

10.0–0–0 c7

Again, 10...b5 seems too early, but 10...d7 (or on the next move) definitely deserves attention. The following Black win had little to do with the opening phase, but is nevertheless beautiful enough to be mentioned: 11.g4 c8 12.b1 (the immediate 12.g5 b5 13.c5 seems to be more principled) 12...d5 13.exd5 cxd5 14.cxd5 cxd5 15.a2 a5 16.b6 cxb6 17.d5 c7 18.d3 a4 19.d2 a3 20.e4 axb2

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28.\texttt{d5 f6} 29.\texttt{exe4 axa2} 30.\texttt{c2 xb2+} 31.\texttt{xb2 a3} 32.\texttt{b3 xb2} 33.\texttt{e3} 34.\texttt{c2 d4} Black won in Movsesian – Surovsky, Kaskady 2002. Impressive, isn’t it?

11.\texttt{g4} 12.\texttt{g5} \texttt{b4}

An alternative is 12...\texttt{h5}, but it leaves the d5-square for the white knight: 13.\texttt{d5 xd5} 14.\texttt{exd5 f5} 15.\texttt{gxh5} \texttt{xf6} 16.\texttt{a5} \texttt{d5} 17.\texttt{c6} and whatever Black does, the light-square weakness will tell, Svidler – Hracek, Rethymnon 2003.

13.\texttt{e2 e8}

Many experts consider this position to be unfavourable for Black, mainly because of the bad knight on e8, which spoils the harmony of Black’s position. But would so many strong players play it with Black if it was really bad? In any case, it is a key position and White has to decide on a plan.

14.\texttt{g3}

On general grounds this move does not look like the most logical way to continue. One of the reasons White was keeping his pawn on h2 was to have \texttt{e2-g3} if Black’s knight chose to go to h5, which it did not. However, advancing the h-pawn now seems to be too slow, whereas the advance of the f-pawn is much more promising. So why play \texttt{g3} at all?

The answer is that it is more of a useful waiting move, forcing Black to make moves he would not normally make (like \texttt{b8} in the game). The knight gives e4 extra protection, and can sometimes jump to f5. The question is whether all this is worth a tempo. In any case, this move was more suitable for Svidler today than the immediate 14.f4 he had played in a previous game, which is a more forced line, and is less based on understanding. But before we move on, let us take a look at the alternatives:
Let’s start with a continuation which, as we tried to explain on general grounds, does not promise much: 14.h4 a5 15.\( \texttt{\texttt{b1}} \) a4 16.\( \texttt{\texttt{b1}} \) a5 17.\( \texttt{\texttt{g3}} \) d5 18.\( \texttt{\texttt{xb6}} \) \( \texttt{\texttt{x6}} \) 19.\( \texttt{\texttt{exd5}} \) \( \texttt{\texttt{d8}} \) 20.\( \texttt{\texttt{c4}} \) \( \texttt{\texttt{c7}} \) and Black is fine. In the following game White opted for a queen sacrifice, which however did not give him anything special: 21.\( \texttt{\texttt{dxe6}} \) \( \texttt{\texttt{xd2}} \) 22.\( \texttt{\texttt{exf7+}} \) \( \texttt{\texttt{g8}} \) 23.\( \texttt{\texttt{f2}} \) \( \texttt{\texttt{c6}} \) 24.\( \texttt{\texttt{b3}} \) \( \texttt{\texttt{h5}} \) 25.\( \texttt{\texttt{xb5}} \) \( \texttt{\texttt{xb5}} \) 26.\( \texttt{\texttt{a4}} \) \( \texttt{\texttt{xa4}} \) 27.\( \texttt{\texttt{d1}} \) \( \texttt{\texttt{xf7}} \) 28.\( \texttt{\texttt{d7}} \) \( \texttt{\texttt{g8}} \) 29.\( \texttt{\texttt{e4}} \) Leko – Karjakin, Wijk aan Zee 2006.

Much more interesting, and presumably most promising, is 14.\( \texttt{\texttt{b1}} \) (although it can transpose into lines after 14.f4): 14...a5 15.\( \texttt{\texttt{f4}} \) a4 16.\( \texttt{\texttt{b1}} \) exf4 (on 16...b3 White has 17.f5! and White achieves much more than usual, Bruzon – Vera, Capablanca Memorial 2003) There are two possibilities now, and in both Black seems to be OK.

a) 17.\( \texttt{\texttt{xf4}} \) \( \texttt{\texttt{c5}} \) 18.\( \texttt{\texttt{g2}} \) b3 19.\( \texttt{\texttt{xb3}} \) axb3 20.a3 d5 with a complicated game in which after 21.\( \texttt{\texttt{d4}} \) \( \texttt{\texttt{d6}} \) 22.\( \texttt{\texttt{exd5}} \) \( \texttt{\texttt{g4}} \) 23.\( \texttt{\texttt{f1}} \) \( \texttt{\texttt{d7}} \) 24.\( \texttt{\texttt{b4}} \) Black managed to get to the enemy’s king first: 24...\( \texttt{\texttt{f5+}} \) 25.\( \texttt{\texttt{a1}} \) \( \texttt{\texttt{b8}} \) and soon it was over, Svidler – Vallejo, Monte Carlo 2004.

b) 17.\( \texttt{\texttt{xf4}} \) \( \texttt{\texttt{xg5}} \) 18.\( \texttt{\texttt{exe6}} \) \( \texttt{\texttt{xh3}} \) 19.\( \texttt{\texttt{xd8}} \) \( \texttt{\texttt{xd2}} \) 20.\( \texttt{\texttt{exe2}} \) \( \texttt{\texttt{d8}} \) 21.\( \texttt{\texttt{d4}} \) \( \texttt{\texttt{f6}} \) Although Black is supposed to be fine, the game is still very unclear, Almasi – Vallejo, Tripoli 2004.

The sharpest and most intriguing is 14.f4 a5 15.\( \texttt{\texttt{f5}} \) a4.

Now it is safe enough to start evaluating the position (if we had tried earlier it would have filled the whole book). For a relatively young line, Black has already tried many different continuations, but his plan is simple: attack the enemy king by advancing his pawns. However, Black’s pieces are too far away from the white king and he has to decide how to improve them. White is better prepared, but not for attacking, rather for play in the centre. His plan is to ward off Black’s attack using his centralized pieces, and only then, when Black’s threats will be over, switch to Black’s king and knock him out. This is much easier said than done, as one mistake would cost him dearly.

16...\( \texttt{\texttt{b8}} \)

An interesting attempt at a positional solution in a crazy position. Instead of rushing with ...b3, Kasimdzhanov is preparing to meet \( \texttt{\texttt{g3-f5}} \) with ...\( \texttt{\texttt{e7-d8}} \), which will then be heading... somewhere. It is still not clear where, but the game will show one possible direction.

The much more important question is what
will happen with those e8 and f8 parasites? If Black is able to introduce the e8-knight into the game without losing everything on the way (he is guaranteed to lose something anyway!) his chances will be great.

Another key continuation is to solve this problem immediately with 16...\texttt{c7}, with the idea of meeting 17.f4 exf4 18...\texttt{xf4} with 18...b3. This position was well known to Svidler, as he admitted himself: its first appearance was in 1975(!) in a game involving his coach. The rest of the games are quite recent, and it is hard to argue with White’s success at the top level, but this has not always been a logical result of the opening. For example: 19.\texttt{f5} \texttt{d5} 20.\texttt{xe7t} \texttt{xe7} 21.\texttt{xd6} \texttt{e8} 22.h4 \texttt{b6} 23.cxb3 axb3 24.a3 \texttt{a4} with decent counter-chances for Black, Inarkiev – Loginov, Kazan 2005.

17.f4

The combination of f4 with \texttt{g3} may not be entirely convincing. After White has played \texttt{g3} it is much more logical to continue \texttt{g3-f5}, and it suits his agenda of playing in the centre as well. But it cannot be said that an advantage for White is visible to the eye in those lines. Anyway, general thoughts are not very useful in the Sicilian, so let’s see what happens in practice: 17.\texttt{f5} \texttt{d8} 18.\texttt{xd6} leads to a very sharp and double-edged position. For instance: 18...b3 19.\texttt{c4} bxa2 20.\texttt{xa2} \texttt{e7} 21.\texttt{c3} \texttt{c7} with a complicated position, Bologan – Smeets, Warsaw 2005. And where is the logic? How can it be that a logical continuation did not give White anything special? No doubt there are many explanations, but we will leave them to the reader to invent.

17...\texttt{xf4} 18.\texttt{xf4} b3

There is no more time to spare, as White might collect the d6-pawn at any moment.

19.cxb3 axb3 20.a3

17..e4

The usual reply in such positions – now Black must take advantage of the c2-square, or sacrifice something on a3 or b2. This means no more general thoughts, but concrete play. Jumping ahead we shall state that, in our opinion, Black is not fighting for equality, as his position is not worse, and perhaps is even the more promising.

20...\texttt{b7}?!?

From this point on both players’ moves were widely commented on in every possible chess forum, but there are still many questions left unanswered, which we will try to clear up.

The most important themes of this position, as Svidler himself stated, were illustrated in Dolmatov’s game which went 20.\texttt{d8} and after 21.\texttt{f5} \texttt{e5} (21...\texttt{b7} transposes to an important position from the next comment) 22.\texttt{g2} \texttt{a4} 23.\texttt{d4} \texttt{g4} 24.\texttt{ce2} \texttt{a5} 25.\texttt{e3}
25...\texttt{b6} 26.\texttt{xf3} \texttt{xf3} 27.\texttt{xf3} White had a substantial advantage in Dolmatov – Loginov, Moscow 2003. It is worth remembering this kind of position: if White succeeds in consolidating, Black is in trouble.

So, Puzzle No.1: What is the idea of this Black novelty? Perhaps Black did not want to allow a position similar to Dolmatov – Loginov (which, none the less, can be quite promising for Black if he plays correctly, as we will see below). If so, then this move is even less clear, as it does nothing to prevent it (see his next move) and it even gives White additional possibilities. And what is the upside? It should, possibly, prevent \texttt{xf5}, but it does not! To sum up, this puzzle does not look to have a positive answer for Black.

21.\texttt{ce2!}

Puzzle No.2: Why is White the one to deviate from the Dolmatov method (as he admitted, he was quite impressed by White’s arrangement in that game)? Perhaps Svidler is trying to both follow Dolmatov’s plan and avoid Kasimdzhanov’s possible improvement? The reality seems to be different: Svidler, with his great intuition, felt that he could gain more by exploiting Black’s move order (his move here would have been less convincing after 20...\texttt{d8}). This great ability of Svidler to puzzle out such a complicated problem during the game deservedly puts him in the driver’s seat.

So, after deep thought Svidler avoided Dolmatov’s line, and that leads to Puzzle No. 3: What did he see there, and what did Kasimdzhanov have prepared? What would the new move order allow? After 21.\texttt{f5} there are quite a few possibilities:

a) The most obvious idea of Black’s 20\textsuperscript{th} move seems to be 21...\texttt{xe4} but it does not work: after 22.\texttt{d3} the bishop on e7 is in trouble. No tactical solutions exist: 22.\texttt{xf5} 23.\texttt{xe4} \texttt{xe4} 24.\texttt{a1} \texttt{hxh1} (The queen sacrifice looks nice, but gives nothing real: 24...\texttt{c5} 25.\texttt{he1} \texttt{d5} 26.\texttt{c3} and Black continues to suffer with his pieces stuck on the kingside.) 25.\texttt{hxh1} After b3 falls White will have a material and positional advantage.

b) Pressure along the dangerous diagonal gives Black nothing: 21...\texttt{xf5} 22.\texttt{exf5} \texttt{hxh1}? 23.\texttt{g2} \texttt{xd1} 24.\texttt{xd1} and White wins.

c) Also bad is 21...\texttt{d5} for tactical reasons: 22.\texttt{b4!} (this move can be critical in some other variations as well)

Now both 22...\texttt{c7} 23.\texttt{xe7} \texttt{xe7} 24.\texttt{xe5} and 22...\texttt{xb4}? 23.\texttt{xe7} \texttt{d8} 24.axb4 are losing immediately. So not only is Black forced to trade queens, he does so on bad conditions after 22...\texttt{a7}.

d) 21...\texttt{b6} with the same idea of bringing the knight to c4 runs into 22.\texttt{d7} (22.\texttt{b4?} \texttt{xf5}) 22...\texttt{xe7} 23.\texttt{b4!} and Black is forced to change his plans.

e) 21...\texttt{c5} leads to a tougher fight. For instance: 22.\texttt{b4} \texttt{c7} (22...\texttt{xf5} 23.\texttt{xb7} \texttt{xe4} 24.\texttt{xe4} \texttt{xe4} 25.\texttt{g2} and Black is forced into passive defence) Here Svidler suggested 23.\texttt{b5} \texttt{b8} with an unclear game. And indeed, the position can hardly be evaluated, especially after 24.\texttt{he1} (weaker is 24.\texttt{a4} \texttt{xf5} 25.\texttt{exf5} \texttt{e8} 26.\texttt{fxg6} \texttt{fxg6} 27.\texttt{gxf6} \texttt{xf6} and White’s king is in greater danger than Black’s) defending against Black’s immediate threats.

Other very sharp positions arise after:
23.\(\text{Qd3} \text{\&xe5}\)?
23...\(\text{Ba4}\)? 24.\(\text{Wxc5!} \text{dxc5} 25.\text{Wxc7} \text{\&xe5} 26.\text{exf5} \text{Qxc7} 27.\text{f6!}\) Again Black is just clinging on to life. Or 23...\(\text{\&xe5} 24.\text{exf5} \text{\&c6} 25.\text{\&g1}\) with a sizable advantage for White.
24.\(\text{\&xe5}\) \(\text{Ba4}\) 25.\(\text{\&c3}\) \(\text{\&c4}\) 26.\(\text{\&e7}\)† \(\text{W}8\) 27.\(\text{\&e1}\)
With a double-edged and complicated position.
f) The most critical seems to be 21...\(\text{\&d8}\)

transposing into a possible position from the Dolmatov - Loginov game. After 22.\(\text{\&g2}\) Black has a very interesting reply in 22...\(\text{\&c5}\) and the knight will play a significant role on c4. White even loses after 23.\(\text{\&xd6}\) \(\text{\&xd6}\) 24.\(\text{\&xd6}\) \(\text{\&c4}\) 25.\(\text{\&d3}\) \(\text{\&e7}\) and the king's demise is unavoidable. Also after 22.\(\text{\&xd6}\) \(\text{\&xd6}\) 23.\(\text{\&xd6}\) \(\text{\&a5}\) Black develops a dangerous initiative.
21...\(\text{\&d8}\)!

This is no puzzle, but a real inaccuracy. As he fights for the initiative, Black cannot give White time to organize his pieces. But this is exactly what Kasimdzhanov does by reverting to the long manoeuvre with the bishop. So we're back to normal now: Black is worse, but can still be dangerous.

a) The logical 21...\(\text{\&c7}\), finally developing the knight, did not work: 22.\(\text{\&d4}\) (After 22.\(\text{\&xd6}\) \(\text{\&xd6}\) 23.\(\text{\&xd6}\) \(\text{\&b5}\) 24.\(\text{\&b4}\) \(\text{\&c7}\) Black's activity is intimidating. 25.\(\text{\&c1}\) \(\text{\&e5}\) 26.\text{h4} \(\text{\&f8}\) with a decisive initiative.) Now both 22...\(\text{\&fc8}\) 23.\(\text{\&gf5}\) \(\text{\&f8}\) 24.\(\text{\&xd6}\) and 22...\(\text{\&f8}\) 23.\(\text{\&df5}\) \(\text{\&f8}\) 24.\(\text{\&xd6}\) (but not 24.\(\text{\&xd6}\) \(\text{\&e5}\) and White is in trouble) provide White with clearly better position.

b) More interesting is 21...\(\text{\&e5}\) 22.\(\text{\&d4}\) \(\text{\&g4}\) (Weaker is 22...\(\text{\&c7}\) 23.\(\text{\&df5}\) putting an end to Black's aggression, with a clear edge. Or 22...\(\text{\&c4}\) 23.\(\text{\&xc4}\) \(\text{\&xc4}\) 24.\(\text{\&d5}\) with the same situation.) 23.\(\text{\&c1}\) with an unclear game.

22.\(\text{\&f3}\) is not that dangerous because of 23.\(\text{\&g1}\) \(\text{\&xe4}\)† (or 23...\(\text{\&d5}\) 24.\(\text{\&xd5}\) \(\text{\&xd5}\) 25.\(\text{\&g2}\) \(\text{\&g2}\) and Black's weaknesses play a key role in the position) 24.\(\text{\&xe4}\) \(\text{\&xe4}\)† 25.\(\text{\&a1}\). After winning a pawn Black's position has become really suspect: all his pieces are hanging and badly placed, especially compared to White's united forces.

22.\(\text{\&d4}\) \(\text{\&a5}\)

Continuing the manoeuvre which started a move earlier, while the alternatives are clearly inferior.

The plan with 22...\(\text{\&c5}\) makes less sense now, as the e4-pawn is well protected.

Also 22...\(\text{\&b6}\)?!, after 23.\(\text{\&xe6}\) \(\text{\&xe6}\) 24.\(\text{\&xd6}\) \(\text{\&f2}\) (24...\(\text{\&xd6}\) 25.\(\text{\&xd6}\) with a clear advantage) 25.\(\text{\&b4}\), brings Black only trouble.

23.\(\text{\&e2}\) \(\text{\&c5}\)

No more than a tough defence is awaiting Black after:

23...\(\text{\&e5}\) 24.\(\text{\&xe6}\) \(\text{\&xe6}\) 25.\(\text{\&xe5}\) \(\text{\&xe5}\) 26.\(\text{\&b5}\)! \(\text{\&c7}\)

26...\(\text{\&xb5}\) 27.\(\text{\&xb5}\) and the wolf will soon go to c4 for a feast.

27.\(\text{\&c4}\) \(\text{\&d6}\)
Now either 28.\(\text{c5}\) with White in control or:
28.\(\text{c5}\) \(\text{c5}\)
28...\(\text{xf5}\) 29.\(\text{xd6}\) \(\text{d}\) 30.\(\text{exf5}\)
and the opposite-coloured bishops prove to be very helpful for White's pressure.
29.\(\text{exf5}\) 30.\(\text{xc6}\) \(\text{xf8}\)
30...\(\text{e8}\) 31.\(\text{d6}\) and Black loses material.
31.\(\text{xe6}\) \(\text{xc6}\) 32.\(\text{xe6}\) \(\text{h8}\) 33.\(\text{xb3}\)
makes Black suffer, even though he has chances of getting out of it alive.
24.\(\text{g2}\)
Black's threats seem to be fading, and he is going to pay for all the risks he took. But Kasimdzhanov's fantastic reply keeps the game double-edged.

According to Svidler, probably better was 24.\(\text{c1}\) "for the sake of conserving the nerve cells". But apart from nerve cell conservation this would not have changed much, as White cannot get more here than in the main line after 24.\(\text{b6}\). Since he cannot reach the long diagonal via \(\text{c3}\), the bishop tries another path, 25.\(\text{g2}\) \(\text{a4}\) 26.\(\text{hd1}\), and after 26...\(\text{c3}\) 27.\(\text{xd3}\) \(\text{a}4\) 28.\(\text{f5}\) \(\text{c5}\) White is slightly better, but as we have already seen, this means little in such positions. For instance, after 29.\(\text{xd6}\) 29...\(\text{c3}\) 30.\(\text{xd6}\) \(\text{a7}\) 29...\(\text{b6}\) Black gains good counterplay.

24...\(\text{c3}\)!

This incredible resource forced many, including Svidler, to look differently at the position. Apart from its visual effect, the move is also very strong objectively, giving Black serious counter-chances. When we said that Black's plan is to sacrifice on a3 or b2 it was just general advice, with no direct continuation attached. Now White has to bear in mind all kinds of possible sacrifices around his king, even including queen sacs!

25.e5?
This move is another puzzle, and a really fascinating one. It seems to be a bad mistake, but why did it happen, and what should have been played? Svidler's biggest error seems to have been the urge to immediately punish his opponent. The core of the problem is that White was searching for a winning solution, and there is no such thing here. Black's last move is not a psychological trick, but a very strong continuation of a legitimate plan. His last move, in fact, almost levels the position. Almost! White still can obtain some advantage, but by no means a decisive one. But in order to search for just an advantage, White must first accept that there is no refutation. Let's try to reconstruct (with obvious limitations) Svidler's line of thought:
25...\texttt{bxc3}? can be disposed of on the spot: 
25...\texttt{Bxa3} 26.\texttt{\c{x}c1} \texttt{Ba2} 27.\texttt{\c{b}b2} (27.e5 \texttt{Wa7} and 27.\texttt{\c{d}d2} \texttt{\c{a}4} are both winning) 27...\texttt{\c{a}4} 28.\texttt{\c{d}d2} \texttt{\c{x}xb2}+ 29.\texttt{\c{x}xb2} \texttt{\c{x}c3}+ And it is over.

OK, we cannot take it, but maybe we can see it off? No, after 25.\texttt{\c{b}b5} we witness another point of Black's move: 25...\texttt{\c{x}xb2}? and there is no help in either 26.\texttt{\c{x}xb2} \texttt{\c{a}4}+ 27.\texttt{\c{b}b1} \texttt{\c{c}7}? forking on c3, or 26.\texttt{\c{x}xd6} \texttt{\c{x}xd6} 27.\texttt{\c{d}d6} \texttt{\c{e}5}!! 28.\texttt{\c{x}xb7} \texttt{\c{x}a3} 29.\texttt{\c{b}b2} \texttt{\c{x}xb2} 30.\texttt{\c{x}xb2} \texttt{\c{a}2}+ 31.\texttt{\c{b}b1} \texttt{\c{a}4}. Despite the extra piece, White cannot save his king. For example: 32.\texttt{\c{d}d3} \texttt{\c{b}2}+ 33.\texttt{\c{c}c1} (33.\texttt{\c{a}1} \texttt{\c{x}g2}) 33...\texttt{\c{b}8}+ 34.\texttt{\c{d}d1} \texttt{\c{x}g2} and there is no reason to continue.

All this can be quite depressing for White: there seem to be too many threats. Perhaps he could just reinforce the defences around the king? How about 25.\texttt{\c{c}c1}? Here we witness another rather surprising idea behind 24...\texttt{\c{c}3}: 25...\texttt{\c{x}d4}! (the position after 25...\texttt{\c{a}4} 26.\texttt{\c{d}f5} will be discussed in a minute) 26.\texttt{\c{x}d4} \texttt{\c{c}7}!

The knight breaks free, obtaining a very strong initiative for the sacrificed pawn. The position could be described as dynamically balanced, where it is White who should be more careful:

a) 27.\texttt{\c{f}5} is not good because of 27...\texttt{\c{b}5}! and after 28.\texttt{\c{b}4}? (28.\texttt{\c{x}d6} also does not help: 28...\texttt{\c{x}d4} 29.\texttt{\c{x}b7} \texttt{\c{x}e2} 30.\texttt{\c{x}c5} \texttt{\c{x}c1} 31.\texttt{\c{x}c1} \texttt{\c{e}8} and Black is just an exchange up.) 28...\texttt{\c{x}a3}! 29.\texttt{\c{x}xa3} (29.\texttt{\c{x}b5} \texttt{\c{a}1}+ 30.\texttt{\c{x}a1} \texttt{\c{a}8}+ 31.\texttt{\c{b}1} \texttt{\c{a}7} winning) 29...\texttt{\c{c}3}+ 30.\texttt{\c{b}2} \texttt{\c{b}5}+ 31.\texttt{\c{a}1} \texttt{\c{x}b4} 32.\texttt{\c{x}xb4} \texttt{\c{x}e2} Black has a winning position.

b) 27.\texttt{\c{x}d6} \texttt{\c{b}5} 28.e5 \texttt{\c{b}8}! It turns out that Black has quite a significant initiative on the queenside. So the best bet would be to simply capture the rook: 29.\texttt{\c{x}xa8} (On 29.\texttt{\c{x}e6} Black uncorks another one of his ideas: 29...\texttt{\c{x}a3}! 30.\texttt{\c{e}7} \texttt{\c{b}6} with a straightforward win.) although even here it is not exactly heaven on earth: 29...\texttt{\c{x}d6} 30.\texttt{\c{d}1} (or 30.\texttt{\c{x}d6} \texttt{\c{x}a8} 31.\texttt{\c{d}1} \texttt{\c{c}8} 32.\texttt{\c{e}3} with an interesting and double-edged position, where Black does not seem to be worse) 30...\texttt{\c{x}a8} 31.\texttt{\c{x}d6} \texttt{\c{c}8} with more that sufficient compensation for the pawn. For example: 32.\texttt{\c{b}5}? \texttt{\c{g}2}! 33.\texttt{\c{c}5} (what else?) 33...\texttt{\c{h}5} 34.\texttt{\c{x}c8}+ \texttt{\c{x}c8} 35.\texttt{\c{b}8}+ \texttt{\c{h}7} 36.\texttt{\c{x}c8} \texttt{\c{x}h2} 37.\texttt{\c{c}3} (37.\texttt{\c{e}4} \texttt{\c{x}e5} is very similar to the main line) 37...\texttt{\c{h}4} 38.\texttt{\c{e}4}. \texttt{\c{x}e5} and the h-pawn gives Black excellent chances.

All this is not too optimistic either, so maybe instead of thinking defensively, White should try creating counter-threats? This looks more natural, but the obvious 25.\texttt{\c{x}e6} leads White nowhere: 25...\texttt{\c{x}e6}! (25...\texttt{\c{x}e6} 26.e5! and White wins material) 26.\texttt{\c{x}d6} \texttt{\c{x}d6} 27.e5 \texttt{\c{a}6}!
keep looking (just as Svidler had to do during the game). The lines given above are, of course, impossible to see over the board, even for Svidler. But according to some of his remarks he sensed dangers in many lines. However, the presence of a ticking clock prevented him from finding the best continuation, which would have kept him in the driver’s seat: 25...Gf5!

This was suggested by Grischuk, and supported by Svidler after the game. It does indeed seem the most promising for White, although he is far from getting anything significant.


b) The strongest is probably 25...Aa4 26.Ac1:
   b1) Now the immediate 26...Ac7 is weak. For instance after 27.g6! (Also possible is 27.Bxd6 Bb6 28.Bxe6 Axe6 29.e5 Ba5 30.Ab5! and White’s attack is as substantial as the amount of material Black has sacrificed...) 27...hxg6 28.Ac7f Bh8 29.e5 d5 30.Bxe6 (the point of 27.g6) Black loses plenty of material: 30...Bxe6 31.Bxd5
   b2) Much better is:
26...Gxd4 27.Gxd4 Ac7

Although White manages to keep some of the advantage, Black has solved his main problems, especially since

28.Axe6
is not dangerous because of
28...fxe6
35..Aa1? Ac5! 36.Bxb3 Axe5 37..Ab1 Bxd6
38.Axa8 Bxd2, and the only way to keep the king is by parting with the queen.
35...Bxg2 36.Ac1

with a sharp game where White’s good pieces at least compensate for his weak king. It seems this is one of the better positions White could get.

Now everything turns again. Undoubtedly this game will make a great advertisement for the Sicilian (especially the Najdorf) and attract many new devotees: the price of any mistake by White is remarkably high.

25...d5!
equalizing, although this becomes clear only after very lengthy analysis. Now Black has chances to finish the game right away.

So what should White have played?

a) As always, not 26.bxc3 a3 27.c1 a2 28.d2 a4.

b) Kasimdzhanov considered 26.e3 to be White’s best choice, suggesting 26...xb2! 27.xb2 a6! 28.a1 a4! 29.b1 and after 29...c8 the position might be unclear. But why not 29...b2 with a clear variation: 30.e2 a4! and the extra piece is of very little help to White, while his king is totally exposed. For instance: 31.xb2 c3! 32.c2 a3 33.d3 a4! 34.b3 (or 34.c1 a2! 35.a2 a2 winning) 34...xb3 35.xb3 d4 and White can resign.

c) 26.xc6 also looks suspicious, since after 26...fxe6 27.c1 c7 Black can reinforce his attack without looking back: he does not even have a weakness.

d) Probably the best choice is 26.c1 with the ideas of grabbing the audacious bishop and strengthening the king. After 26...xd4 27.xd4 c7 Black still has more chances, but White’s king is now well protected, he has play against the d5-pawn, and especially some initiative on the kingside.

26...c7!!

Black returns the favour, although it is not as drastic as White’s preceding mistake. It was hard to grasp, after all the jolts along the way, that Black is not just better. He is winning! For that one would have to see a fantastic idea, and the correct way of using it.

Much better was the virtually winning 26...a7!.

The ideas are the same: sacrificing the bishop on b2, or the queen on a3. The saddest part for the FIDE champion is that he saw both ideas, but something bothered him. Nevertheless, we can excuse him: this game revealed his great tactical ability, and it would be superhuman to see everything.

The amazing thing is that White is helpless against the threats. Let’s check:

a) Definitely not 27.xb3 a4! with an explosion on b2, much to the delight of the FIDE Champion’s fans.

b) The challenge with 27.c6 is joyfully accepted: 27...xa3!! 28.xa3 a3 29.xb3 (there is no other way to prevent mate) 29...xb3 30.c2 d4 with excellent chances of a win.

c) Adding a key defender with 27.c1 does not save the day either: 27...c7 28.e2 a4 29.g5 For some reason Kasimdzhanov believed this position to be unclear. Strange, as it is very clear after 29...xf5! 30.xf5 xb2! 31.xb2 xb2 32.axb2 b3, with the arrival of another rook to the c-file. A check on a3 will end all doubts.

d) Grischuk’s suggestion was to run away in disgrace with 27.e2, but this does not save
White either. True, it is too early for 27...\&xb2. 28.\&xb2 (not 28.\&xe6 \&xa3\+ 29.\&c3 \&a5\+ 30.\&b2 \&a4\+ 31.\&c1 \&c8\+ winning) 28...\&a4 29.\&c1 \&c8 30.\&e3 \&c5\+ 31.\&b2 \&xd1\+ 32.\&xd1 and the position remains unclear.

But after the last piece joins the game with 27...\&c7, things look different.

The most surprising discovery is that White has no defensive resources! For example, after 28.\&c6 Black "as always" wins with the crunching 28...\&xa3.

So White can try:

28.\&e3

This looks like the most stubborn, but:

28...\&g4!!

Driving the knight away from d4, thus exposing the key squares it was protecting. The following lines are exceptionally beautiful, and show why so many people love chess.

29.\&f3

29.\&xg4 \&xb2 30.\&c1 (White is mated in style after 30.\&xb2 \&xa3\+ 31.\&c3 \&a5\+ 32.\&b2 \&a2\+ 33.\&c3 \&b5\+ 34.\&b4 \&a4\+ 35.\&xc5 \&c4\+ 36.\&b6 \&fb8) 30...\&xc1 31.\&xc1 \&xa3\+ 32.\&d2 \&a2\+ 33.\&e3 \&b2 Forcing resignation.

29...\&xf3 30.\&xf3 \&xb2!

30...\&xa3 does not work now. 31.bxa3 \&xa3 32.\&b2 \&xb2 33.\&xc5! and everything collapses.

31.\&xb2 \&b5

And the white king is doomed.

Finally, trying to enforce the previous idea with 28.\&xe6 \&xe6, and only now 29.\&e3, still loses after 29...\&xb2! 30.\&xb2 \&b5. The usual picture repeats itself: White is helpless against Black's invasion into the heart of his position.

For example: 31.\&c1 (31.a4 \&xa4! 32.\&xc5 \&c4! wins) 31...\&a4 32.\&xb3 \&fb8 and the game's over.

To sum up, Black missed a practically forced win, although a very complicated and imaginative one. Now, as many jokes go, he has good news and bad news. The good news is that he still has the advantage; the bad news is that his future chances are based on the same ideas he didn't exploit here. OK, Kasimdzhanov probably wouldn't think it was funny either.
27. \textit{\textbf{Oge2}}

One of those moves which Nimzowitsch liked to call "consolidating". All the pieces suddenly start acting as a unit. Luckily for us all, chess is not a game ruled by dogma, and even a great concept is not applicable for every occasion. For all its apparent positional beauty, this move is losing by force tactically. The alternatives were not ideal either, but White could have made it less straightforward.

Once again, the question of all questions is: 'What to play?' and it is as difficult to answer as ever. The most principled looks to be 27.\textit{\textbf{Oc6}}, but after 27...\textit{\textbf{Oa5}}! White's life is not getting any easier! For example, the variation 28.\textit{\textbf{Oxb3}} \textit{\textbf{Oxb3}} 29.\textit{\textbf{Oxc3}} \textit{\textbf{Oxc3}} 30.\textit{\textbf{Oxc3}} \textit{\textbf{Oc7}} brings us to a very interesting position, evaluated by the players as double-edged during the game, but actually Black looks to be a little better. This is interesting as it is not every day that such great players' evaluations turn out to be superficial. The point is that, even without queens, White's weak king seems to be a serious factor.

The first question is: how should White continue? Black will soon bring his reserves close to the enemy king, attacking White's hanging pieces on the way.

a) An attempt to strengthen the defensive lines with 31.\textit{\textbf{Ocl}} fails after 31...\textit{\textbf{Ob8}} 32.\textit{\textbf{Ob2}} \textit{\textbf{Oa6}}, and it is not clear how to continue. The most logical move, 33.\textit{\textbf{Ohf1}}, leads to a position with no hope after 33...\textit{\textbf{Oa5}} 34.\textit{\textbf{Oc4}} 35.\textit{\textbf{Oxc4}} dxc4.

b) Running away does not help either: 31.\textit{\textbf{Oc2}} \textit{\textbf{Oxa3}} 32.\textit{\textbf{Ob1}} \textit{\textbf{Ob8}}

c) And finally the active 31.c4 does not solve the problems after 31...\textit{\textbf{Ofb8}}!

White can try a lot of possibilities: 32.\textit{\textbf{Oa2}}, 32.\textit{\textbf{cd5}} and 32.\textit{\textbf{Oc2}}; but none of them can really save him:

c1) 32.\textit{\textbf{Oa2}} \textit{\textbf{Oa5}}! threatening to take on c4 and protecting d5, White has no choice. 33.\textit{\textbf{cd5}} \textit{\textbf{Oxd5}} 34.\textit{\textbf{Oxd5}} \textit{\textbf{Oxd5}} 35.\textit{\textbf{Oxd5}} \textit{\textbf{Oxd5}} and White is losing material.

c2) 32.\textit{\textbf{cd5}} \textit{\textbf{Oxd5}} 33.\textit{\textbf{Oxd5}}

Or 33.\textit{\textbf{Oxd5}} \textit{\textbf{Oc4}} 34.\textit{\textbf{Oc1}} \textit{\textbf{Oe8}} 35.\textit{\textbf{Oc2}} \textit{\textbf{Oxd5}} 36.\textit{\textbf{Ohf1}} \textit{\textbf{Oxa3}} and White's king fails to weather the storm.

33...\textit{\textbf{Oxa3}} 34.\textit{\textbf{Ohd1}}

The alternatives do not help either:

34.\textit{\textbf{Oc2}} \textit{\textbf{Oxd5}} 35.\textit{\textbf{Oxd5}} \textit{\textbf{Oc4}} 36.\textit{\textbf{Oc1}} \textit{\textbf{Oc2}} 37.\textit{\textbf{Oc1}} \textit{\textbf{Oa5}}! and the white king can no longer live like that. 34.\textit{\textbf{Oa4}} 35.\textit{\textbf{Oc3}} \textit{\textbf{Oxf4}} 36.\textit{\textbf{Ob6}} \textit{\textbf{Oc4}} 37.\textit{\textbf{Oc3}} \textit{\textbf{Oc5}} 38.\textit{\textbf{Oe3}} \textit{\textbf{Oc3}} and White's king is again the issue.

34...\textit{\textbf{Oc5}}! 35.\textit{\textbf{Oa2}} \textit{\textbf{Oc2}} 36.\textit{\textbf{Oc1}}

Or 36.\textit{\textbf{Oa4}} 37.\textit{\textbf{Oc4}} \textit{\textbf{Oc4}} 38.\textit{\textbf{Oc3}} \textit{\textbf{Oxd5}} 39.\textit{\textbf{Oxd5}} \textit{\textbf{Oa3}} 40.\textit{\textbf{Oc3}} \textit{\textbf{Oxd5}} 41.\textit{\textbf{Oxd3}} \textit{\textbf{Oxf4}} where his weaknesses will not allow White to hold the position.

36...\textit{\textbf{Oxd5}} 37.\textit{\textbf{Oxd5}} \textit{\textbf{Oa1}} 38.\textit{\textbf{Oa2}} \textit{\textbf{Oa1}} 39.\textit{\textbf{Oxf7}} \textit{\textbf{Oxf7}} 40.\textit{\textbf{Oxd1}} \textit{\textbf{Oc4}} 41.\textit{\textbf{Oc2}} \textit{\textbf{Ob4}}

With a technical win.

c3) 32.\textit{\textbf{Oc2}} \textit{\textbf{Oxa3}} 33.\textit{\textbf{Oxd5}} \textit{\textbf{Oxd5}} 34.\textit{\textbf{Oxd5}} \textit{\textbf{Oa2}} 35.\textit{\textbf{Oc3}} (35.\textit{\textbf{Oa5}}! with the same outcome) 35...\textit{\textbf{Oxd5}} The king-hunt continues, and White has no material to compensate for his misery. It is highly unlikely that White can save the game, but he can still offer some resistance.

Of course, White does not have to capture on b3. But 28.\textit{\textbf{Oxb5}} does not work, as with 28...\textit{\textbf{Oa7}}! we rejoin the position where Black missed a win.
on move 26. Note that 28...\texttt{xa3} is not working now because of 29.bxa3 \texttt{xa3} 30.\texttt{xb}3 \texttt{xb}3 31.\texttt{xb}3 \texttt{xb}3 32.\texttt{c}2 d4 33.\texttt{c}2, and the attack ends in disappointment.

To sum up: after the move in the game Black has a forced, but very difficult win; whereas after 27.\texttt{c}6, which is perhaps the objectively stronger move, Black would have to find many moves, but they are not nearly as difficult, which means by just playing Black would have good chances to win. Therefore, Svidler’s move is better from a practical point of view.

Anyway, let’s not miss the rest of the game!

Even less convincing is 27...\texttt{a}5 28.\texttt{c}6 \texttt{xd}4 (28...\texttt{f}5\uplus 29.\texttt{xf}5 \texttt{xc}6 30.\texttt{e}7\uplus) 29.\texttt{xd}4 \texttt{a}7 30.\texttt{e}3 and White is clearly better.

But Black had a forced win(!), which we have not seen published anywhere else: 27...\texttt{xb}2! 28.\texttt{xb}2 \texttt{a}7!

Remarkably Black could have won this incredible game once again with this queen move. How can White defend his king?

29.a4 loses on the spot to 29...\texttt{c}7 30.\texttt{b}4 \texttt{f}5 31.\texttt{b}3 \texttt{a}4\uplus 32.\texttt{c}1 \texttt{b}5! 33.\texttt{xb}5 \texttt{xb}5. And either White loses his queen or Black crowns an extra queen. Or maybe both.

The other option is:

29.\texttt{b}4 \texttt{c}7! 30.\texttt{h}f1

Or 30.\texttt{c}6 \texttt{a}4\uplus 31.\texttt{c}1 \texttt{f}2 32.\texttt{xb}3 \texttt{g}2, and since the material is equal, White’s king is suffering from the draught for nothing.

30...\texttt{f}b8 31.\texttt{c}6 \texttt{xb}4 32.\texttt{xa}7

27...\texttt{d}7?

This is the real mistake, and the final one of the game. Not only does Kasimdzhanov throw away all his advantage, but even stears into the ugly face of defeat (luckily it’s only a momentary glance). But, more than anything, this error should be credited to Svidler’s ability to make his opponent’s life difficult. A good Sicilian player is one who can escape from troublesome situations (a great example is Kasparov), and this is done by finding the narrow path where the opponent is most likely to go wrong.

The attempt to keep the queen in the game with 27...\texttt{b}8 would allow White to finally get rid of the bishop with 28.\texttt{c}6!, terminating all Black’s hopes for a further attack. 28...\texttt{xd}4 29.\texttt{xd}4 \texttt{a}7 and here he might regret the numerous weaknesses he created while conducting the attack.

\textbf{28...\texttt{c}6?}

32...\texttt{a}4\uplus! 33.\texttt{b}1

33.\texttt{c}1 \texttt{e}4\uplus 34.\texttt{d}2 \texttt{xa}7 33.\texttt{a}1 \texttt{xa}7! 34.\texttt{xb}4 \texttt{c}5\uplus 35.\texttt{b}2 \texttt{a}2\uplus 36.\texttt{c}1 \texttt{f}5! and White has no hope.

33...\texttt{f}5\uplus 34.\texttt{a}1 \texttt{xa}7 35.\texttt{d}2 b2\uplus
With an extra exchange Black will face a few technical problems on his path to victory. 
28.e6!
This position is a perfect example of the gap between what seems and what is. After this move White’s position looks great, and the general feeling is that we are witnessing the logical finale of White’s strategy. In reality, however, White miraculously avoided defeat, and now takes his chance to seize the initiative. Quite unluckily for him, though, a forced line leads to a draw. But all this is only clear after the event, when we are all smart. A glance at the board reveals that virtually all Black’s pieces are hanging, and cannot even imagine a way to save the game.

28...ixb5
Only move.
29...ixc7
29...ixd4!
Getting rid of the hanging pieces, and fast. 29...d3? gives no dividends after 30.xd3.

Now less convincing is 31.e7 xd4 (31...xb2 32.xb8+ x8 33.xd1 x2 34.xf1 x4 35.xd4 xc7 36.xf2 xa3 37.xf3 with a technical position) 32.xb8+ x8 33.xd5 xc7 34.xa8 x5 35.xc1 xb2 36.xc6 x4 37.xb3 xa3+ 38.xa2 xc2 and it will be very difficult to exploit the exchange here.

But after 31.xg3! xb2 (or 31...xd4 32.xd4 fxe6 33.xe6 x5 34.xd1 x2 35.xf1 and Black loses material) 32.xd1! xd4 33.xd4 x2 34.xf7+ x7 (34...xd7 35.xf2 xf2 36.xd5 x8 37.xa8 winning) 35.xd5 x6 36.xf2 the game is over.

30.xd4
Now Black seems to lose plenty of material and with it the game.

Shipov recommends 30.exf7+ “which probably wins the game”, but in fact an idea similar to the game rescues Black: 30...xf7 31.xd4
a) Svidler suggests 31...d3+ 32.xd3 xxc3 33.xg3 x8 34.xc6 x7 35.xd1 x4 36.xe1 x6 37.xf4 x7 38.xb3 xce6 and White is even better. But if White plays 35.xh3! the situation turns in White’s favour: 35...x7 (35...xb7 36.xe6 x8 37.xd4 x2 38.xg1 and Black can only hope for a draw) 36.xc7 xxc7 37.xe5 and White is the one to emerge with an advantage.

b) Stronger is 31...xc7 32.xb5 and now a huge mistake is 32.xb5? 33.xd5 x8 (33...xf8 34.xc7 x7 35.xd5 wins) 34.xc1 xd3 35.xh1 x6 36.xc3 x5 37.xe1 x8 38.xb3 x8 39.xf7 xdf7 with excellent winning chances for White.

But after the amazing 32.xf2!! 33.xc7 xg2 (33.xa4? 34.xd5+ x8 35.xb3) 34.xa8 x4 we will finish in the same way as the game.

30...f6!}

All of a sudden, there is no win! A lot has been said about this game already, but even today it is
hard to accept the situation. This stunning idea is the only way to save the day.

31.\(\text{Q}x\text{b}5\)

After 31.\(\text{Q}x\text{b}6\) Svidler provides a nice variation:

31...\(\text{Q}x\text{d}3\)† 32.\(\text{Q}x\text{d}3\) \(\text{Q}x\text{d}3\) 33.\(\text{Q}x\text{e}6\) \(\text{Q}f5\) 34.\(\text{Q}h\text{f}1\) \(\text{Q}e\text{f}5\) 35.\(\text{Q}d\text{d}4\) \(\text{Q}e\text{g}4\) 36.\(\text{Q}f5\) \(\text{Q}d6\) 37.\(\text{Q}x\text{e}4\) \(\text{d}x\text{e}4\) and Black is better.

But maybe 32.\(\text{Q}a\text{a}1\) is better? 32...\(\text{Q}x\text{a}3\)† (32...\(\text{Q}a\text{a}4\)? 33.\(\text{Q}x\text{e}6\) \(\text{Q}x\text{b}6\) 34.\(\text{Q}x\text{f}8\) \(\text{Q}f5\) 35.\(\text{Q}h\text{f}1\) \(g6\) 36.\(\text{Q}x\text{f}5\) \(gxf5\) 37.\(\text{Q}d7\) is “Game Over”) 33.\(\text{b}x\text{a}3\) \(\text{Qf}2\) 34.\(\text{Q}x\text{d}3\) \(\text{Q}x\text{d}3\) 35.\(\text{Q}d\text{f}1\) (35.\(\text{Q}x\text{b}3\)? \(\text{Q}x\text{g}2\) and in addition to his threats, Black even has more material) 35...\(\text{Qa}2\)† 36.\(\text{Q}b1\) \(\text{b}2\)† 37.\(\text{Q}a\text{a}1\) with a draw by repetition.

31...\(\text{Q}x\text{c}7\) 32.\(\text{Q}x\text{c}7\) \(\text{Qf}2!!\)

A standing ovation for the FIDE champion! One could say that this championship proved beyond any doubt that Kasimdzhanov is not the best player in the world. Maybe that it is true, but it also showed that he is a brilliant player who is able to create a masterpiece.

33.\(\text{Q}x\text{a}8\)

White does not take unnecessary risks and grabs the rook, forcing Black to go for a perpetual.

33...\(\text{Q}a\text{a}4\)!

Accompanied by a draw offer. A great finish to a fantastic game.

Attempting to change fate with 34.\(\text{Q}e\text{e}4\) leads after 34...\(\text{d}x\text{e}4\) 35.\(\text{Q}d\text{d}8\)† \(\text{Q}f7\) 36.\(\text{Q}c\text{c}8\) \(\text{Q}x\text{b}2\)† 37.\(\text{Q}c\text{c}1\) \(\text{a}2\) to White having to retrace his steps, as 38.\(\text{Q}e\text{e}1\) is complicated:

a) First of all, Black can reach the draw with 38...\(\text{Qa}1\)† 39.\(\text{Q}d\text{d}2\) \(b2\) 40.\(\text{Q}b8\) \(e3\)† 41.\(\text{Q}x\text{e}3\) \(b1\)\# 42.\(\text{Q}x\text{b}1\) \(\text{Q}x\text{b}1\).

b) Kasimdzhanov’s 38...\(\text{Q}b2\) also brings about a draw.

c) But then again, why not 38...\(\text{b}2\)† 39.\(\text{Q}c\text{c}2\) \(\text{Q}a1\) 40.\(\text{Q}b1\) \(e3\)!

Not surprisingly White is unable to cope with all the black pawns. For example: 41.\(\text{Q}c\text{c}7\)† \(\text{Q}g6\) 42.\(\text{Q}c\text{c}6\) \(\text{Q}f5\) 43.\(\text{Q}c\text{c}7\) \(\text{b}x\text{b}1\) 44.\(\text{Q}x\text{b}1\) \(e2\) 45.\(\text{Q}x\text{e}6\) \(\text{Q}c3\)† 46.\(\text{Q}x\text{b}2\) \(\text{Q}e4\) winning.

So White restrained his ambition and accepted the draw offer.

\(\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}\)
GAME 34
Judit Polgar
Michael Adams
Ruy Lopez, Marshall Attack C89

1.e4 e5 2.f3 c6 3.b5 a6 4.a4 d6 5.0-0 d7 6.e1 b5 7.b3 0-0 8.c3

Once again White shows her readiness to play the Marshall. We will soon see, however, that Polgar wanted to avoid all risk, and it is a well known fact that if White wants to eliminate all losing chances in the Marshall, she can easily do so.

8...d5 9.exd5 dxe5 10.e5 e5 11.e5 c6 12.d4 d6 13.e1 h4 14.g3 h3 15.e3

It feels strange to say that this move, which once made Black stop playing the Marshall, is now considered unpromising; but that is the theoretical situation. Black players know how to handle this position to get enough counterplay for the sacrificed pawn, so the line is rarely played by White anymore.

15...g4

For the pawn Black has active pieces and pressure in the centre. Years of practice has proved this is enough for equality, and it is rather interesting to guess whether Polgar had anything in mind here.

16.d3

The queen is ready to go to f1 if needed. Many games have been played in this line. Some of them finished elegantly after 16.d2?? f3 and mate.

16...e8 17.e2 e6

The safest and probably best continuation. 17...f5 is played every now and then, but less so among the elite. One high level example: 18.g1 h5 19.f4 h8 20.xd5 cxd5 21.g2 e4 22.h4 h6 23.e4 fxe4 24.f1 f6! 25.a4 g6 26.axb5 axb5 27.f5! x5 28.f4 Black does not seem to have enough compensation. Anand - Topalov, Las Palmas 1993.

18.a4

Bringing the rook into the game. Moreover, on quite a few occasions Black manages to regain the pawn thanks to his initiative on the kingside, and at this happy moment White plays a1-a6 obtaining the advantage.

18...h5

A continuation that became popular thanks to the efforts of the 10th World Champion - Boris Spassky.

Too dangerous is 18...bxa4 19.a4 f5 20.h1 h5 21.a6 f4 and here Ivanchuk, uncorked one of his more amazing ideas: 22.xf4! h3 23.x6f1 which places Black in a difficult position: 23...f1 24.xf1 f4 25.axc6 h1 26.xd5 xd5 27.xf4 Ivanchuk - Short, Riga 1995.
Another alternative is 18...f5. For example: 19.\(\text{\#f1}\) \(\text{\#h5}\) 20.f4 \(\text{\#xa4}\) \(\text{\#b8}\) 22.\(\text{\#xd5}\) cxd5 23.\(\text{\#g2}\) \(\text{\#e8}\) 24.\(\text{\#xd5}\) \(\text{\#h8}\) 25.\(\text{\#c4}\) \(\text{\#xf4}\) 26.\(\text{\#xf4}\) \(\text{\#g6}\) Black's initiative is strong enough, Kamsky – Polgar, Linares 1994. But after 23.\(\text{\#xa6}\) \(\text{\#be8}\) 24.\(\text{\#b5}\) it all seemed like a bad day at the office for Black in Shorr – Pinter, Rotterdam 1988.

19.axb5 axb5

It is time for White to make a choice. Black's initiative is becoming quite threatening, and what is more important his plan is simple and natural: double on the e-file, f7-f5 etc...

White, on the other hand, does not have a master plan and is rather limited to putting pressure on c6 and trying small tactical shots to reduce Black's initiative. In this key position White has tried many things, with little success.

20.\(\text{\#f4}\)

To begin with, the logical bishop exchange 20.\(\text{\#d1}\) leads White into difficulties after 20...\(\text{\#xd1}\) 21.\(\text{\#axd1}\) \(\text{\#f5}\), as he cannot play \(\text{\#f4}\) due to the hanging rook on \(\text{d1}\), and without it there is no stopping Black's attack. e.g. 22.\(\text{\#f1}\) f4 23.\(\text{\#c1}\) \(\text{\#e6}\) 24.\(\text{\#e4}\) \(\text{\#h8}\) 25.\(\text{\#d3}\) h6 26.b3 b4 27.\(\text{\#xf4}\) \(\text{\#xg3}\) 28.\(\text{\#xg3}\) \(\text{\#xb4}\) 29.\(\text{\#d2}\) \(\text{\#f2}\) 30.\(\text{\#c3}\) \(\text{\#c3}\) Hellers – I. Sokolow, Haninge 1989.

20.\(\text{\#e4}\) runs into 20...\(\text{\#f5}\) 21.\(\text{\#d2}\) \(\text{\#xe4}\) 22.\(\text{\#xe4}\) \(\text{\#xe6}\) 23.\(\text{\#f3}\) \(\text{\#g6}\) 24.\(\text{\#f1}\) \(\text{\#xe4}\) 25.\(\text{\#xe4}\) \(\text{\#xe4}\) with equality, Svidler – Kamsky, Groningen 1995.

A worthy alternative to the game is 20.\(\text{\#f1}\), but here Black is able to solve his problems as well: 20...\(\text{\#f5}\) 21.\(\text{\#d1}\) \(\text{\#g4}\) 22.\(\text{\#d2}\) \(\text{\#h3}\) 23.\(\text{\#d1}\) \(\text{\#xd1}\) 24.\(\text{\#xd1}\) \(\text{\#f5}\) 25.\(\text{\#f4}\) g5 26.\(\text{\#g2}\) \(\text{\#xg2}\) 27.\(\text{\#xg2}\) \(\text{\#e8}\) Black is not worse, Karpov – Short, Tilburg 1991.

20.\(\text{\#e8}\)

Adams really likes these positions – positional pressure suits his style very well. Black wants to take on e3, which makes White's next move forced:

Also possible is 20...\(\text{\#h3}\), and although White was marginally better in the following example, it was only enough for a draw. 21.\(\text{\#e2}\) \(\text{\#g4}\) 22.\(\text{\#f1}\) \(\text{\#h3}\) 23.\(\text{\#d1}\) \(\text{\#f5}\) 24.\(\text{\#e2}\) g6 (there are other possible continuations as well) 25.\(\text{\#f3}\) \(\text{\#d3}\) 26.\(\text{\#b3}\) \(\text{\#xe3}\) 27.\(\text{\#xe3}\) \(\text{\#xd2}\) 28.\(\text{\#xd5}\) cxd5 29.\(\text{\#g4}\) \(\text{\#xb2}\) 30.\(\text{\#ac1}\) b4 31.\(\text{\#xh3}\) \(\text{\#f4}\) 32.\(\text{\#xb4}\) \(\text{\#xe3}\) 33.\(\text{\#xe3}\) \(\text{\#xb4}\) and Black made the draw eventually, Ivanchuk – Grischuk, Russia 2005.

21.\(\text{\#xd5}\) \(\text{\#xd5}\) 22.\(\text{\#h3}\)

As long as the black pieces occupy such dominating positions White cannot even think of an advantage.

22...\(\text{\#f5}\)

Judging from this game, this is a good square for the bishop. An alternative which was tested in 2005 between two other San Luis participants led to Black suffering all the way to a draw.

Kasimdzhanov continued 22...\(\text{\#f5}\), and after 23.\(\text{\#g2}\) \(\text{\#xg2}\) 24.\(\text{\#xg2}\), his position looks OK. But later on he lost his way and found himself a pawn down in a difficult endgame, which he nevertheless managed to draw in Leko – Kasimdzhanov, Linares 2005.
23.\textit{g}2 \textit{xf}2?!  
A novelty, which has an unexpected impact on the position. These positions have been so exhaustively played and analysed that it is hard to come up with anything special, but some minor improvements are still possible.

But is it a good novelty? Surprisingly, it is! In fact, this game is further proof that there is opening theory, and then there is elite opening theory. They are not the same, as we shall see.

23...\textit{f}5 proved itself after 24.\textit{x}d5 \textit{c}xd5 25.\textit{f}f1 \textit{f}4 and all advantage for White vanishes. After 26.\textit{d}d2 \textit{x}xe1 27.\textit{x}xe1 \textit{x}xe1 28.\textit{x}xe1 \textit{e}2 29.\textit{h}h2 \textit{f}7 30.\textit{g}2 \textit{g}6 31.\textit{f}3 \textit{h}5 32.\textit{g}4 \textit{g}6 33.\textit{f}f1 \textit{h}xg4 34.\textit{h}xg4 g5 35.\textit{d}d2 \textit{d}1:\n
A typical Marshall Gambit draw was reached (the extra pawn plays no role in the game) in I. Gurevich – Benjamin, New York 1992.

But White can probably improve with 25.\textit{a}5 realizing that after 25...\textit{x}g3 26.\textit{x}g3 \textit{e}xe3 27.\textit{x}xe3 \textit{e}xe3 28.\textit{f}f1 \textit{e}e2 29.\textit{b}b5? is not playable because of 29...\textit{f}3, but he has 29.\textit{g}4! and Black faces a hard struggle for survival.

Did Polgar intend to play it? Probably she did. Perhaps Adams also found this and is therefore preventing it? Also very probable.

24.\textit{g}xg2 \textit{f}5 25.\textit{f}3  
After this Black is fine. A real try to win seems to be 25.\textit{a}6 \textit{f}4 26.\textit{x}xf4 \textit{x}xf4 and here after 27.\textit{h}x\textit{f}4?! \textit{x}xe1 28.\textit{h}x\textit{e}6 \textit{d}d1 29.\textit{c}5 \textit{e}e2 Black should be able to make a draw, but he will have to make a few precise moves.

25...\textit{f}4 26.\textit{d}d2 \textit{x}g3 27.\textit{e}xe6 27.\textit{f}xg3? \textit{e}e2† 27...\textit{e}xe6 28.\textit{a}8† \textit{a}8  
Black has regained the pawn, White has some initiative. Everybody’s happy, and soon shaking hands and going home.

29.\textit{e}e5!  
Otherwise White could find herself in an unpleasant position.

Shipov provided a nice line: 29.\textit{x}g3? \textit{g}6† 30.\textit{g}5 \textit{h}6 31.\textit{h}4 \textit{d}d1 32.\textit{h}7! \textit{c}x\textit{h}7 33.\textit{x}f8 \textit{g}2! All of a sudden Black creates mating threats. For example: 34.\textit{f}7 \textit{g}8 35.\textit{f}5 \textit{c}2 (but not 35...\textit{g}5† 36.\textit{x}g5 \textit{h}xg5† 37.\textit{x}g5† \textit{g}x\textit{g}5 38.\textit{x}g5 and Black is in no danger of winning) 36.\textit{f}5 \textit{g}7 37.\textit{e}7 \textit{f}f2 Black is somewhat better, but is far from anything major.

29...\textit{g}xf2 30.\textit{x}f2 \textit{e}e8 31.\textit{a}6 \textit{d}d6  
The rapidly approaching opposite-coloured bishops endgame leaves no place for speculation.

32.\textit{f}4 \textit{x}e5 33.\textit{x}e5 \textit{b}6  
There go the chances.

34.\textit{b}4 \textit{f}7 35.\textit{a}7† \textit{e}7 36.\textit{x}e7† \textit{e}7 37.\textit{x}g7 1/2–1/2
1.e4 e5
When the title is on the line, even the most uncompromising warrior tends to play on the safe side. So no Sicilians today!
2.\(\text{d}f3\) \(\text{d}c6\) 3.\(\text{b}5\) \(\text{d}f6\) 4.\(d3\)

Avoiding well-known lines of the Berlin where Topalov would feel very comfortable. Instead Anand wants to keep the tension for as long as possible, ideally initiating complications in a time scramble.

4...\(\text{c}5\)
Also interesting is 4...d6, leaving the dark-squared bishop "at home". Kramnik tried this and lost one of the more memorable games of 2005: 5.0-0 g6 6.d4 \(\text{e}d7\) 7.\(\text{e}e1\) \(\text{g}7\) 8.d5 \(\text{e}e7\) 9.\(\text{c}xc6\) \(\text{d}x\text{c6}\) 10.\(\text{g}5\) f5?! 11.\(\text{g}\text{xf5}\) \(\text{g}8\) 12.ex\(\text{c}5\) gx\(\text{c}5\) 13.\(\text{f}4\) with strong pressure for White, Sutovsky – Kramnik, Dortmund 2005.

5.\(\text{c}3\)

Anand plans to build the classically perfect centre of d4- and e4-pawns. This aggressive idea certainly gives a hint about his ambitions in this game.

5...0-0

The position is full of small nuances. The point is that after Black castles and plays d7-d6, his position might be problematic because of \(\text{c}1-g5\).

The pin in this case might be a pain in the neck for Black, since he cannot unpin with h7-h6 and g7-g5 because of a very dangerous knight sacrifice on g5.

Thus Black castles first, when he is ready to give the arrogant white bishop (once it gets to g5) the treatment it deserves, as we will see in the game.

6.\(\text{g}5\)

Despite all of the above, Anand plays this move! Is there a chance Anand did not know the ideas mentioned above? Maybe it was better to wait for d7-d6 and then try \(\text{c}1-g5\)?

Of course Anand knew all those ideas. But he also knew that it is not easy to find a good developing move that keeps his options open. For instance, 6.\(\text{b}d2\) conceals the g5-square from the bishop.

But the main problem is that after the common and logical 6.0-0, Black can advance the d-pawn twice as far as expected: 6...d5 It is quite surprising that many players still play 6...d6, and face problems after 7.\(\text{g}5\). At the same time, the idea of 6...d5 has been known for a long time, because the pawn on e5 is immune: after 6.\(\text{c}6\) \(\text{b}c6\) 7.\(\text{e}x\text{e}5\) \(\text{d}xe4\) Black has a very serious initiative (this position was even played about 150
years ago, when the German king of romantic chess, Adolf Anderssen, delivered a few cute mates with Black.

It is interesting that this pawn sacrifice became common in this position. White could even take it right away, but after 6...dx6 bxc6 7...xe5 d5! Black's compensation is more than enough. For example, 8...g5 (8.0-0 leads to various Anderssen games) 8...f6 9.f4 dxe4 10.dxe4 b6 11.d2 c5 12.dxc5...xc5 13...e2 h6 14...h4 g5! 15.fxg5 hxg5 16...g3 e3 17...b3...b6 with a very strong initiative for Black, Ivanchuk – Kramnik, Wijk aan Zee 2001.

Taking all the above into account it becomes clear why Anand did not want these positions: it seems he had no real choice but to enter the position with the early...g5 (before Black played...d7-d6).

6...h6 7...h4 g5!

Of course Black reacts immediately. White's problem is that Black can play this, and he knows it! One needs to have very strong nerves to play this way in a vitally important game, or to have analysed it all at home; or maybe both.

8...g3

The point of Black's bravery is that 8...xg5 is not an option here, since he has not played d7-d6 yet and thus would be able to simply go back with a bishop to e7, unpinning the knight.

The opening results are positive for Black – usually, if Black does not get punished tactically for pushing White's bishop to the corner, he can feel quite satisfied. But Anand is not too upset either – after all, White does not have to get a winning position from the opening, he can try to win later. Anand couldn't have known that he was just at the start of Topalov's home analysis.

8...d6 9...bd2 a6 10...xc6

One justification for this move is saving time, but it strikes us that the main reason behind Anand's choice was to take Topalov out of his home preparation; he even played it quickly to increase the impact. Unfortunately, this too had been analysed by the soon-to-be World Champion.

After 10...a4 Black continues developing his pieces as if nothing happened: 10...a7 11.0-0 (Probably the only way to try and threaten Black's opening play is by castling queenside, but it is not easy, as Black seems to be first to attack. 11...e2...e6 12.0-0 b5 13...b3 b4 etc.) 11...e6 Here one can note that the fact Black managed to play...g5 is in his favour, as the bishop on g3 is offside.

10...bxc6 11.0-0

The immediate 11.d4 does not promise White anything special either, as after 11...exd4 neither 12...xd4...e8 13.0-0...e4 14...xe4...xe4, nor 12.cxd4...a7 (threatening 13...g4) 13.h3 (13.0-0 is the same as in the game, only Black has managed to capture on d4, which is clearly good for him) 13...e8! 14.0-0...xe4 15...e1 f5 16...c2...f7 17...xe4...xe4 18...xe4...b8 give White any advantage.

11...a7
A good prophylactic move, anticipating d3-d4.

12.d4

Played quickly, only to sink into deep contemplation two moves later.

As a way of keeping the tension on the board, 12.h3 can be suggested, but with his 10th move Anand pretty much obliged himself to act quickly (in tempi), and keeps doing so without hesitation (on the clock).

12...g4 13.h4!

In a normal game the situation would be pleasant for White: he can choose whether he wants to play on, or make a draw after this move. But in this game drawing is equivalent to losing.

13.hxg4 exd4 14.cxd4 exd4 15.c1 c5 16.d5 exd5 17.cxd5 c5 18.e5 dxe5 19.xa8
due to 15...e7 and White does not even have a draw anymore: 16.g3 h7 17.g3 e6!
unpinning thanks to the vulnerable position of the white knight.

White’s best try to continue probably lies in 15.xe1 d8 (15...exd4 loses on the spot to 16.e5 dxe5 17.d4) 16.f1 g6.

Anand’s intuition did not fail him, although it was visibly painful for him to make the call.

15...g3

Not good is 15.c4? (hoping for 15...exd4?
16.cxd4 exd4 17.ad1 c5 18.e5 dxe5 19.xa8)
due to 15...e7 and White does not even have a draw anymore: 16.g3 h7 17.g3 e6!
unpinning thanks to the vulnerable position of the white knight.

White started spending time. Plenty of it. The analysis shows that Black is indeed OK, and after the game Topalov stated that it had all been carefully studied by his team. Once again,
a) Now not 17.\textit{\textbf{Q}}g3 \textit{\textbf{Q}}g4 18.\textit{\textbf{N}}xf6 \textit{\textbf{W}}c8 (or 18...\textit{\textbf{N}}xf3 19.\textit{\textbf{N}}xd8 \textit{\textbf{B}}axd8 20.\textit{\textbf{N}}xf3 exd4, if Black wants to make sure he has a draw) and White's attack seems to be fading out.

b) 17.\textit{\textbf{H}}3 is also bad: 17...\textit{\textbf{W}}c7 18.\textit{\textbf{Q}}g3 \textit{\textbf{W}}e6 and Black is more than fine.

   c) The most promising way for White seems to be 17.\textit{\textbf{N}}le3 exd4 18.\textit{\textbf{N}}f5. Now bad is:

   c1) 18...\textit{\textbf{B}}h7? 19.e5 dxe5 20.\textit{\textbf{N}}xe5 dxc3!

   The immediate 20...\textit{\textbf{B}}g4 loses to 21.\textit{\textbf{Q}}xh6! \textit{\textbf{B}}xh6 (21...\textit{\textbf{B}}xh4 22.\textit{\textbf{Q}}xf7 and White wins) 22.\textit{\textbf{N}}xf6 \textit{\textbf{B}}d6 23.\textit{\textbf{Q}}ae1 and the black king falls.

   21.bxc3 \textit{\textbf{B}}g4 22.\textit{\textbf{Q}}d1

   22.\textit{\textbf{Q}}xh6 is already bad because of 22...\textit{\textbf{B}}xh4 23.\textit{\textbf{Q}}xf7 \textit{\textbf{B}}d2! (this was not possible after 20...\textit{\textbf{B}}g4) 24.\textit{\textbf{N}}xf6 \textit{\textbf{B}}xf2† and Black wins.

   22...\textit{\textbf{B}}h8 23.\textit{\textbf{Q}}de1 \textit{\textbf{B}}xh4 24.\textit{\textbf{Q}}xh4 \textit{\textbf{B}}g4 25.\textit{\textbf{Q}}xc6

   The material balance is restored, while White keeps the initiative.

   c2) But amazingly, Black gets out of trouble thanks to the calm 18...dxc3! 19.bxc3 (or 19.\textit{\textbf{N}}xc3 \textit{\textbf{B}}b8! 20.\textit{\textbf{Q}}ad1 \textit{\textbf{B}}b5 when the rook joins the game, and White's attack comes to an end) 19...\textit{\textbf{B}}f8 20.\textit{\textbf{N}}xf6 \textit{\textbf{B}}xf6 21.\textit{\textbf{Q}}xh6† \textit{\textbf{G}}g7 22.\textit{\textbf{Q}}xg8 \textit{\textbf{B}}xg8 23.e5 d5 and Black has nothing to worry about.

15...\textit{\textbf{B}}h7

16.\textit{\textbf{B}}f3

After 16.\textit{\textbf{B}}d3, as suggested by numerous annotators, Black has nothing to worry about: 16...\textit{\textbf{B}}g8 17.\textit{\textbf{B}}f4 \textit{\textbf{B}}g4 18.\textit{\textbf{B}}xe5 \textit{\textbf{B}}xh4 19.\textit{\textbf{Q}}xf6 \textit{\textbf{B}}e6, and White's attack comes to an end. For example: 20.\textit{\textbf{B}}af1 dxe5 21.\textit{\textbf{B}}g3 \textit{\textbf{B}}g4 22.\textit{\textbf{B}}xf7† (22.\textit{\textbf{B}}xe5 \textit{\textbf{B}}g8 is not very promising either) 22...\textit{\textbf{B}}xf7 23.\textit{\textbf{B}}xf7† \textit{\textbf{B}}g8 24.\textit{\textbf{B}}g4† \textit{\textbf{B}}xf7 25.\textit{\textbf{B}}h5† \textit{\textbf{B}}g7 26.\textit{\textbf{B}}xe5† \textit{\textbf{B}}f6 and Black is winning.

16...\textit{\textbf{B}}g7 17.\textit{\textbf{B}}g3†

\textbf{$\frac{1}{2}$–$\frac{1}{2}$}
GAME 36

Alexander Morozevich
Peter Leko
Sicilian Sveshnikov B33

1.e4 c5 2.©f3 ©c6 3.d4 exd4 4.©xd4 ©f6
5.©c3 e5 6.©d5 d6 7.©g5 a6 8.©a3 b5 9.©d5
©e7 10.©xf6 ©xf6 11.c4

This line used to be regarded as not promising White anything special. The point is not so much that White is weakening the d4-square, but the fact that he makes his main plan in this position – to play on the queenside – more difficult. There are, however, good sides to this move, as it allows White to bring the knight back into the game without losing time (c4 is played with tempo) and it stabilizes White control over the d5-square. Recently this line has become increasingly popular for White, being adopted by quite a few top players. Although Black hasn’t experienced real problems yet, it will be worth following future developments.

11...b4 12.©e2 ©b8

An interesting alternative is 12...a5, intending to place the rook on c8, where it seems to be better placed. For instance, 13.g3 0–0 14.h4 ©e6 15.©h3 ©d4 16.©xd4 exd4 17.©d3 ©c8 18.©f1 ©c5 19.©g2 ©xd5 20.exd5 ©c7 21.©h1 and a draw was agreed, Svidler – Eljanov, Germany 2006.

13.b3

Morozevich is delaying the development of his bishop, intending to fianchetto.

Other ways of development have also failed to yield White anything real: 13.©e2 0–0 14.0–0 ©g5 15.©d3 a5 16.©ad1 ©e6 17.©b3 ©h8 18.©de3 ©b6 19.©f5 ©xf5 20.exf5 ©bd8 21.©f3 ©e7 and Black is fine, Beliavsky – I. Sokolov, Manila (ol) 1992.

13...©g5 14.g3 0–0 15.h4

A new move. The idea is taken from the main lines with 11.c3, but here pushing the black bishop to h6 looks less efficient. In those positions White is playing on the queenside, and Black is really missing his dark-squared bishop. Here, on the other hand, there is no play on the queenside, so the bishop will not feel lonely on the kingside.

After 15.©g2 f5 16.exf5 ©xf5 Black has little to worry about, which cannot be said about White.

15...©h6 16.©h3

The core of Morozevich’s plan, preventing f7–f5 for the moment as it would mean exchanging the light-squared bishops, which is good for White.

16.©e6!

Black has no objection to exchanging the bishops, but only if it happens on e6!

17.©f1

White’s plan is to keep the rook on h1, thus preventing Black from playing ...g6. 17.©xe6?? is of
course a huge positional blunder, leading to Black controlling the whole board (most importantly the d5- and f5-squares): 17...fxe6 18.\texttt{D}xe3 \texttt{A}xe3 19.\texttt{D}xe3 \texttt{Q}d4 and Black is clearly better.

A notable alternate strategy for White is 17.\texttt{Wh}5 a5 18.\texttt{Af}5

and the idea is to take control over the light squares and put the knight on e3 without being afraid of its exchange. This seems very interesting, and after 18...\texttt{De}7 19.\texttt{D}xe7\texttt{Q}xe7 20.\texttt{D}e3 \texttt{Q}d8 21.g4 \texttt{W}b7 22.\texttt{D}d5 White looks just great, Lahno - Zapata, Ekaterinburg 2006.

17...a5 18.\texttt{G}g2 \texttt{Gb}7

Leko has already begun preparing f7-f5, after which Black will be ready to double along the f-file.

Morozevich's plan found successors very quickly, as two games have been played within a month of the current game. Here is one of them: 18...\texttt{De}7?! 19.\texttt{D}ce3 \texttt{A}xe3 20.\texttt{D}xe3 \texttt{W}e7 21.\texttt{W}d3 \texttt{Wh}8 22.\texttt{B}ad1 \texttt{Q}d8 23.\texttt{h}5! \texttt{h}6 24.f3 White has the advantage, Hanley - Ansell, Halifax 2005.

19.\texttt{Af}5 \texttt{Wh}8!

A useful preparation for ...g6, and it will also be useful once Black plays f7-f5. And what's more, the king is now out of reach of the d5-knight - you don't want to take chances with Morozevich.

Why not 19...g6 immediately? Because there is a king on g8, and White is just in time, opening the kingside. 20.\texttt{W}g4! \texttt{A}xd5 (after 20...\texttt{A}xf5 21.exf5 \texttt{W}h8 22.\texttt{f}6 Black is in serious trouble) 21.cxd5 \texttt{D}e7 22.\texttt{h}5 \texttt{W}g7 23.hxg6 \texttt{Wxg6} 24.\texttt{B}h3 with unpleasant pressure down the h-file.

20.\texttt{W}d3?!
White keeps inviting his opponent to make a move, and improves his pieces in the meantime. Again 21.h5 was objectively stronger, but Morozevich wants to play for a win. Once again, as in the game against Kasimdzhanov (Game 30), it means playing for a loss for a while and then using the opponent’s mistakes and time trouble.

21...d6 22.f3?

Consistent and wrong! Here it was already the last moment to prevent the trouble with 22.h5 c5 23.f3 and 23...g6 leads exactly to a position Morozevich was trying to get: 24.hxg6 fxg6 25.c6+ gxh5 And now:

a) 26.xe6 xe6 27.exf5 bl 7 28.f6 xf6 29.xf6 xf6 30.e3 with an unclear position.

b) 26.h5 fxe4 27. xh1 g8 28.e3 d3 29.d5 xh7 30.g4 a4 31.g5 d7 32.g6 axb3 33.axb3 a7 34.c5+ h7 (34...xg5?! allows a nice mate: 35.exh7+ xh7 36.exh7+ xh7 37.h5+ g8 38.g7) 35.g5 and White is first to get to the enemy king.

Another option is 30...d7 31.xd6 a7 32.h4 g7! 33.xg7 xf2+ 34.g3 xg3+ 35.h2 xg7. But not 35.d4 and White protects the king with 36.g1, with a winning position.

Eventually Leko did pick the best moment for the break, and Black's initiative develops naturally and rapidly, threatening to turn into a hurricane.

24.h5

A rare case when both players have reasons to be happy. Leko is objectively better, so he has no reasons to complain, but Morozevich is also happy, as this is exactly his type of position: he does not care who is better as long as the
position is complex enough, demanding both players play precisely, and when the consequences of one mistake are devastating.

We believe he did not even consider 24.exf5, after which Black does not have to recapture immediately with 24...gxf5, because of 25.\(\text{d}4\) e4 26.\(\text{f}3\) \(\text{d}8\) 27.\(\text{d}4\) and White is OK.

The point is that he has the strong 24...\(\text{c}5\)! with the initiative being clearly on Black's side and White has no counterplay.

24...\(\text{f}4\) 25.\(\text{e}4\) \(\text{c}5\) 26.\(\text{e}2\) \(\text{xd}5\)†

The knight on \(d5\) was a key player in this game, covering way too many squares on both halves of the board (upper and lower).

However, Black had a more clear-cut way to develop his initiative: 26...\(\text{b}7\) 27.\(\text{f}1\) \(\text{g}7\), threatening 28...\(\text{x}h3\)† 29.\(\text{x}h3\) \(\text{f}3\) 30.\(\text{g}2\) \(\text{g}4\) with total invasion (now, for example, Black is threatening \(\text{g}3\)). And after 28.\(\text{x}e6\) \(\text{x}e6\) 29.\(\text{x}g6\) \(\text{x}g6\) 30.\(\text{f}3\) \(\text{g}8\) 31.g4 \(\text{g}8\) White's position is difficult.

27.\(\text{x}d5\) \(\text{b}7\) 28.\(\text{f}1\)

Admitting failure. 28.hxg6 \(\text{x}f2\)† 29.\(\text{x}f2\) \(\text{x}f2\)† 30.\(\text{x}f2\) \(\text{x}f6\)† 31.\(\text{g}2\) \(\text{x}g6\) is hopeless for White, due to his exposed king.

28...\(\text{x}h5\)

Without a White rook on h1, 'opening' of the h-file benefits Black much more.

30.\(\text{f}3\) does not prevent the text either, and after 30...\(\text{e}4\) White's problems are even more pleasant.

30...\(\text{e}4\) 31.\(\text{f}3\) \(\text{g}7\) 32.\(\text{f}d1\)†

White must have brought his queen back into the game with 32.\(\text{h}3\) \(\text{f}6\) (32...\(\text{d}2\) 33.\(\text{f}2\) and \(\text{xd}2\) is already a threat) 33.\(\text{fd}1\) transposing to the game without allowing Black to get more.

32...\(\text{f}6\)?

Although he got a losing position, Morozevich did succeed in something else, namely forcing Leko to spend a lot of time on an opening stage. The Hungarian grandmaster was now short of time, and could not calmly assess all the rich possibilities of the position.
However, the film has its negative, and with all due respect to Morozevich, the main story here belongs to Leko. As we mentioned in the introduction, Morozevich usually does not enjoy playing Leko. This game could have been another example why, as Leko has played excellently until now. But his bad form and, possibly, not very good mood failed him at the moment of truth. This is a classic example of when ideas do not "coalesce", as some chess players call it. Sometimes one is in good form and great ideas come easily into a player's head. But it can be the opposite - the player is talented, his preparation is great, but the process of generating ideas becomes real torture. This seems to be Leko's fate in this game, and throughout the whole tournament. So, he wastes a lot of time and, despite being close to a win, does not find the winning idea (in fact, he had more than one of those).

Correct was the jump 32...d2! 33.h2 (33.h1 xf3 34.xh6 xg4 is hopeless for White) 33...xf6!

with two nasty threats: 34...g6 followed by ...xf3, and 34...g5 followed by ...h6.

The variations are (relatively) simple and straightforward: 34.h1 loses to 34...e4 and 34...xf2 is impossible because of 34...xf2 35.xf2 h6.

A more complicated way was 32...xg3 33.xg3 f4+ 34.h2 h6 35.h4 e4! opening all the lines, after which the white king does not make it. For example: 36.d4 xf3 (threatening ...g6-h6, and after g4-h5 Black has g7-g2) 37.g1 (or 37.xf3 h6 38.g4 h2+ 39.g1 g8 and it is over) 37..g6 and White can barely make a move. After 38.xf3 Black cleans up the whole queenside, while the position of the white king stays unchanged: 38...b2+ 39.g1 xa2 40.xf2 xb3 41.d4+ e5 42.d3 xd3+ 43.xd3 a4 and White is helpless.

33.h3 xg4 34.xg4 f6

Leko keeps playing for a win, although with the clock ticking it was difficult to evaluate the endgame arising after 34.xg4 35.xg4 xh1 36.xf2 xf2 37.xf2 g7 38.e2 e4. The king cannot be allowed to e4. 39.d4 f6 40.xc6 e6 with a draw, because the pawn is poisoned: 41.xa5? is met by 41...d7, trapping the knight.

35.e4 f4!

After 36.gx4 h4 White will have to suffer for a draw: 37.f2 xf4 38.e3 e4 39.d4 exf3+ 40.xf3 g4+ 41.h1 and now not 41...xf3 42.xf3 xf3+ (42...xf3 43.xf8+) 43.xf3 xf3 44.d5 drawing, but 41...h3! 42.h2 xf3+ 43.xf3 xf3 44.xd6 f1+ 45.g2 f2+ 46.g3 xh2 47.xh2 f2+ 48.g3 xa2 and White has to prove he can escape.

36.h6 37.gxf4

Just like in last round's game, Morozevich's opponent is provoked into a promising sacrifice, but has no time to continue.

37.xf4 38.h1 g7 39.d5 e4?

Just before he gets another hour for calculations, Leko makes his final mistake, from which it will be impossible to recover.
Correct was the violent 39...\texttt{xf3}! 40.\texttt{xg3 e4! 41.\texttt{xf8} \texttt{xf8} 42.\texttt{e1} with the point 42...\texttt{xf3}:

43.\texttt{f1} (the king cannot escape as 43.\texttt{d2} is met with 43...\texttt{f4} 44.\texttt{e3} \texttt{f2} 43...\texttt{c3} 44.\texttt{d2} \texttt{e3} 45.\texttt{exe3} \texttt{exe3} 46.\texttt{d1} \texttt{g3} with a drawish endgame.

40.\texttt{d4}!

Not the only, but certainly the best way to victory.

40.\texttt{d4} was also winning, although with much greater difficulty. 40...\texttt{e3} 41.\texttt{exe3} \texttt{b2} 42.\texttt{e1} \texttt{xf3} 43.\texttt{xf3} \texttt{xf3} 44.\texttt{xh3} \texttt{xa2} 45.\texttt{d1} and White will convert his extra piece.

40...\texttt{e5} 41.\texttt{e2} \texttt{f2} 42.\texttt{d1}

Black has no chance; the attack has ended and the piece is still there.

42...\texttt{e5} 43.\texttt{h5}!

Morozevich leaves his opponent no chances! After 43.\texttt{xh5} \texttt{dxe5} Black has some play thanks to the opened d-file.

43...\texttt{xf1} 44.\texttt{xh1} \texttt{xh1} 45.\texttt{c2} \texttt{f4} 46.\texttt{d4} \texttt{g8} 47.\texttt{g5}!

The simplest.

47...\texttt{yg5} 48.\texttt{xf1}

Black could have resigned here, but he first gave a few checks.

48...\texttt{c1} 49.\texttt{e1} \texttt{f4} 50.\texttt{g1} \texttt{g5} 51.\texttt{g2} \texttt{c1} 52.\texttt{h2} \texttt{h6} 53.\texttt{g3} \texttt{g5} 54.\texttt{f2}

54...\texttt{g5-f5} would be the last check and therefore Black resigned.

1–0
The tenth round changed little regarding the sporting aspect of the tournament, and the status quo naturally favours the leader. In this round the spectators were hoping somebody (possibly called Morozevich) would reopen the fight for first place, but it did not happen.

Indeed, coming into the round Morozevich seemed like a most suitable person to finally make the outcome of the tournament unclear. He had just won three games in a row and is well known for his ability to score many successive wins. Topalov seems to have slowed down, so there was really a lot to expect. The beginning of the game did promise a hard-fought game, after the Bulgarian grandmaster, true to his combative style, avoided exchanging pieces early on. Morozevich immediately produced a surprise with an unclear novelty and obtained a curious position that was passive, but very complicated—exactly what you want when trying to win with Black. Throughout the game the Bulgarian never gave a single hint that a draw would satisfy him, repeatedly choosing the most principled, at times even risky, continuations. It could have cost him dearly, as by move 30 Morozevich could have had the better position, which would have put Topalov under tremendous psychological pressure. However, Black missed his chance and we witnessed an amazing transformation. If the first half of the game was balanced with two equal players, on move 31 Topalov pressed some hidden turbo button and the Muscovite never saw him again before the finish line. White emerged from the time trouble with a decisive advantage, missed a couple of more or less forced wins, but still the position was totally winning. It was then that Morozevich took out his magic wand, finding amazing resources time and time again. And Topalov blundered. For the first time in ten long exhausting rounds the Bulgarian

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showed that he is also subject to mistakes, and even big ones. He was one step away from winning his seventh game, and virtually clinching the title with four rounds to spare, but, Morozevich escaped.

The result of this round's only decisive game was known a long time ago. Kasimdzhanov did not hide his eagerness for revenge ever since the fourth round, and preferably executed in no less beautiful a style than that of Polgar over him. The Queen, for her part, is eager to end the tournament with minimal damage. What could this lead to? It is questionable whether the game was as beautiful, but it did resemble their previous encounter in being totally one-sided. Already in the opening Polgar chose a variation in the Scheveningen that is known to be dangerous for Black, even Kasparov is careful to avoid it. Polgar, however, played the line quite carelessly, and soon it became apparent that White enjoys a few extra tempi compared to classic games, which were anything but comfortable for Black. Kasimdzhanov was playing very powerfully, but the concluding part was inaccurate – in time trouble he chose virtually the most unfortunate continuation, instead of crushing the opponent’s king, allowed an endgame in which Black’s position was still difficult, but nevertheless playable, with all kinds of drawish rook endings on the horizon. The tired Polgar instead went for an active plan, and missed a decisive blow.

The biggest hope for tournament intrigue, Peter Svidler, began his game from a lost position. After mixing up the move order he was subject to very heavy pressure by Leko and the question remained whether White would be able to convert his big positional advantage into a point on the cross-table. But Svidler defended imaginatively and tenaciously and Leko made an error in judgement, assessing that his advantage on the queenside would be sufficient for a win. In fact, this opinion was also shared by most commentators, but no win was found, even after extensive analysis. That was the case until the position was reconsidered from scratch: realizing that though all Black’s pieces were grouped on the queenside, the advantage should be looked for on the other flank. In the game Svidler refuted all White’s attempts, and with a pawn sacrifice even took the initiative. Leko blocked his downfall, and accurately reduced the game into a drawn endgame.

The short draw in Adams – Anand was greatly underestimated, perhaps simply under the influence of its brevity. Adams introduced an interesting novelty in the Anti-Marshall, and managed to obtain a slight edge – rather atypically for such positions. True, afterwards he invested too much energy in exchanging the light-squared bishops, which led to the total disappearance of his advantage. Moreover, Anand agreeing to a draw was very surprising, as in the final position he had no problems and had decent chances to exploit White’s weaknesses in the endgame. His decision could perhaps be explained by the realization that he is only fighting for silver.
1.e4 e5 2.d3 d6 3.b5 a6 4.a4 d6 5.0-0 d7 6.Bel b5 7.b3 0-0 8.a4 b4

One of the main continuations and, according to this tournament, the greatest players believe in it, although not everybody likes to compromise the queenside structure. The alternative is 8...b7, which was featured in Kasimdzhanov – Adams in the twelfth round.

9.d3

With b5-b4 already played, 9.d4 might look logical as Black does not have the thematic ...exd4, followed by c7-c5-c4. However, the move d2-d4 by itself does not give White anything special. After 9...d6 10.dxe5 dxex5 11.dxe5 dxe5 a known theory position arises, where Black's active pieces should compensate for the structural weaknesses. 9...d6

10.a5!

The common perception is that White can only claim an advantage is by pushing the pawn to a5. After 10.bxa5 then 10...dxa5 is already possible, solving most of the problems. In the following example Black had a very pleasant game: 11.a2 d6! 12.axb5 axb5 13.c3 bxc3 14.bxc3 Bxb8 15.axb5 Wh5 16.g3 We8 17.axb5 Wh3 18.axe2 Wh2 with a draw agreed, although Black could have played on, Adams – Leko, Linares 2005.

Moreover, fixing Black's a-pawn makes the b4-pawn weak and frees the a4-square for the bishop, which, together with d2-c4, and possibly c2-c3 and d3-d4 in the future, might put the opponent under unpleasant pressure. Black, however, has enough time to either prepare for or to prevent White's plan.

10...e6 11.d2

Although the position seems quite calm, every move is important, as both sides must keep track of the other's plans.

11...f6

An interesting move order. One of White's possible plans is to place a bishop on c4, which would demand Black pays attention to his a-pawn. So, one may call it prophylaxis.

The immediate capture 11...axb3 is rather dubious, as after 12.axb3 d5 White has a strong strategic plan: 13.g5! d4?! 14.axf6 axf6 15.d2 with a steady edge thanks to the control over the light squares, Sutovsky – Hravec, Gothenburg 2005.

The alternative move order is 11...c8, as in Game 39.

12.c4 h6

A very interesting idea, despite the fact Black will find himself in a difficult position shortly. So what is the story? It seems that Svidler did not like 13.g5 against 12...b8 (this move was more popular before this game), and simply prevented this option. The idea is good for sure, but whether it is worth the tempo, which
is surprisingly important for such a closed position, is still to be determined.

12...\$b8 13.\$g5 (on 13.c3 Black has a strong reaction in 13...\$b7!) 13...h6 (better seems to be 13...\$h8 14.h3 \$g8, Leko – Aronian, Morelia/Linares 2006) 14.\$h4 \$g4 15.\$e3 \$xf3 16.\$xf3 \$d4 17.\$d1 \$xb3 18.\$xb3 with a clear advantage for White, T. Paehzt – Kasimdzhanov, Rethymnon 2003.

13.c3!

A very natural move that perhaps does not fully deserve an exclamation mark, but Leko makes good use of the extra tempo given to him to carry out one of White's basic ideas: c2-c3 and d3-d4.

13...\$b8?

And this is already a mistake, leading to a difficult position. Black had to fight against d4, for instance by opening the b-file, when White still has to prove his advantage. Now Black ends up with no counterplay, as the usual d5-break is not possible.

13...bxc3! was the right way to go, and it seems that Svidler simply forgot to insert this capture. (At this point Svidler could be seen doing his typical head rotation from side to side. This immediately tells his opponent that Svidler is not satisfied; it could be the last move, some variation he missed, or maybe it was yesterday that was disgusting.) 14.bxc3 and only now 14...\$b8. Now the immediate 15.d4?! (similarly to the game) runs into 15...exd4 16.cxd4 d5! and Black has a good game.

Two weeks after this tournament, in another World Championships (this one for teams) this position occurred twice, featuring 15.\$a3 and after 15...\$d8 16.\$c2 \$f8 17.\$fd2 \$a7 18.d4 the fact that White later gained a substantial advantage has little to do with the current position, Grischuk – Zhao Xue, Beer Sheva 2005.

14.d4

Black is no longer able to get counterplay for tactical reasons, and is limited to a very passive defence.

14...\$a4

14...bxc3? fails to the "tactical" justification of 14.d4, since he would then have 15.d5 winning a piece. Whereas if Black plays analogously to the usual lines: 14...exd4 15.cxd4 d5, the fact that the b-file is closed and a white pawn is still on b2 (covering c3) plays strongly into White's hands. 16.exd5 \$xd5 17.\$e5 \$xe5 18.\$xe5 \$b7 19.\$d3 with heavy pressure.

15.\$a4!

Svidler evaluated his position as lost, which is an exaggeration, but not totally off the mark.

After the immediate 15.d5 the knight could have chosen a better route: 15...\$d8 followed by \$b7-c5.

15...\$b7

Now b7 is taken, so 16.d5 makes more sense.

16.\$a7 17.\$e3

17...\$c8!

Vacating g4 for a knight, but also simply making a move, which is already an achievement in such a position.

Black's problem is that the commentators' favourite 17...c6 is refuted by the simple 18.\$xg4 \$xg4 19.dxc6 \$xc6 and White has a nice tactical solution, suggested by You-Know-Who (the 9th): 20.\$xc6! \$xc6 21.\$h4! \$xh4 (21...\$xf2? 22.\$f5! winning) 22.\$xg4 \$g5 23.\$xg5 hxg5 24.\$e3 and the weakened position of Black's king makes his defence very difficult: 24...bxc3 25.\$xc3 \$b5 26.b3 \$b4 (the only way to get some counterplay against White's weaknesses)
27.\texttt{h3} and here a sample line could go: 27...f5 28.\texttt{g5} \texttt{xe4} 29.\texttt{g6} \texttt{f6} 30.\texttt{h7}+ \texttt{f7} 31.\texttt{g3} \texttt{g8} 32.\texttt{c3!} and Black's position is unpleasant.

18.\texttt{d3?!}

White has a steady advantage, but it strikes us that it was greatly overestimated by both players and most of the commentators. The position White has is one that you want to keep and enjoy, instead of making a move. He can slowly improve his pieces, which, however, does not promise too much. The point is that White is unable to achieve a decisive advantage playing only on the queenside. White had to realize this during the game, which would then naturally suggest the good idea of switching to the kingside, while all Black's forces are gathered elsewhere.

18.\texttt{h4} was definitely worth considering, and now Black has two choices:

\begin{itemize}
  \item a) After the immediate 18...\texttt{xe4} 19.\texttt{h5} \texttt{g5} 20.\texttt{c2} the extra pawn is not really going to help Black's king. For instance 20...\texttt{xe3} loses material after 21.\texttt{e7}+ \texttt{h8} 22.\texttt{xe3} \texttt{f6} 23.\texttt{xa7}, while after 20...\texttt{bxc3} 21.\texttt{xe4} \texttt{cxb2} 22.\texttt{xb2} \texttt{xf5} 23.\texttt{xf5} \texttt{xb2} then 24.\texttt{h4!} \texttt{f6} 25.\texttt{g4} \texttt{d2} 26.\texttt{e3} is decisive.

  More stubborn is 20...\texttt{c5}, but after 21.\texttt{h4} \texttt{xf5} 22.\texttt{xf5} \texttt{xcl} 23.\texttt{xcl} \texttt{g6} 24.\texttt{g4} leaving the king to battle against all of the enemy's army is perhaps not such a good idea after all. 24...\texttt{h8} (24...\texttt{xc3} 25.\texttt{e7}+ \texttt{h8} 26.\texttt{g6} \texttt{fxg6} 27.\texttt{g6} \texttt{c6} 28.\texttt{xh6}+ \texttt{g8} 29.\texttt{e3} is too obvious to be allowed) 25.\texttt{h5!} \texttt{gxf5} 26.\texttt{xf5} \texttt{g7} 27.\texttt{e3} and Black is lost.
  \item b) 18...\texttt{bxc3}!
\end{itemize}
This would make the game quite lively (if White wishes), but in all the lines it is clearly White dictating the scenario.

b1) After 19...bxc3 Black is just in time to exploit the momentary weakness of c3:
19...dxex4 20.hf5+ g5
20...f6 allows White to demonstrate the sting of his attack: 21.EXf6+ sh8 22.EXd5 24.hf3+ sh7 25.EXg5t 26.EXc2, followed by EXc2-e4 with a win.
21.Exc2 EXc3 22.Ebd3 g6 23.EXc3 gxf5
Black's pieces finally threaten to make an appearance in today's game, and White is just one tempo short.
24.EXf5 EXf5 25.EXg5+ EXc2 26.EXd5 hXg5 27.EXf5 Exe8 28.EXg5+ sh8 29.EXh6+ sh7 30.EXg5†
With a perpetual.

b2) However, with 19.EXh5! White maintains very unpleasant pressure on Black's king position: 19...cxb2 20.EXxb2
b21) Now 20...EXxb2 is strongly met with:
21.EXd3!
Threatening to trap the queen.
21...EXf5
21...EBb7 is just bad, with no intrigue: 22.EXa1 Ewa8 23.EXe7+ sh8 24.EXb8 EXxb8 25.EXb1 Ewa8 26.EXc2 and Black's extra pawn only means that White will to make one more hand movement while collecting them all.
22.EXf5
The queen is now forced to go back:
22...EBb7
This (again) leads to a passive position with a clear plus for White:
23.EXe7+ sh8 24.EXa1 Ewa8 25.EXc1

b22) So 20...Ed8 is the best defence. Nevertheless Black is very passive: 21.EXc1!

White has a pawn less than in the game, but has managed to improve his pieces and the opened lines are to his advantage.
21.EXe4 is bad due to 22.EXg4 Edg5 23.h4 Exg6 24.EXxg5 EXxg5 25.EXc2! Exf5 26.EXf5, with a crushing attack. e.g. 26.EXb4 27.EXc3 EXf5 28.EXg5 EXf5 29.EXf5 Edx1† (29...EXc2 30.EXh6 mates) 30.EXh2 with an inevitable mate.

While 21...EXb4 22.EXd2 EXe4 23.EXc2 EXf4 24.g3 EXg5 25.h4 maybe looks OK for a computer, but is hardly playable for a human.

18...EXg4!
Black shows an understandable willingness to exchange a pair of pieces, leaving more air for the others.
18...c6 would have led to exactly the type of position White wants: 19.dxc6 EXxc6 20.EXd5 EXd5 21.exd5 Ed8 22.c4 with a long-term advantage and a clear plan.
19.\c4

Perhaps by trying to lock the black knight on a7 Leko wants to get back at Svidler for his own knight's suffering in the first leg (Game 9), where it stayed on a5 for almost the whole game. However, with his next move Black forces open files on the queenside, freeing his pieces. And one should not forget about the a5-pawn, which is weak and within reach.

Perhaps White should have let his opponent's pieces fight for the limited space with 19.\c4 as after 19...f5 20.\c4d2 (but not 20.\c4d2 \cxd2!) 20...\cxe4 21.\c4xe4 \c75 22.\c4 White has a good version of the King's Indian.

White had another, quite shocking option: 19.\cxd4 \xd420.\cxe5 The idea is 20...\cxe5 21.\c73, and 21...h5 is not the answer as after 22.h3 \c3c3 23.\c3c3 \c3c8 24.\c4xe5 \c65 25.\c7g3! h4 (25...\c5b5 26.\c5c7 27.\c7h6 is curtains) 26.\c3d3 Black can do nothing against White's moving centre. Not with such pieces.

Better is 21...\c8c8! and White's compensation does not seem to suffice. 22.\c4f6 23.\c3c5 (23...\c8b7 24.\c3f3 \c7d7 25.\c3xh6 and it would be Black playing for a win) 24.\c3f3 \c7d7 25.\c3x7d7 \c8d7 26.\c3c5 \c8c8 27.\c8f2 \c8b7 28.\c8b3 and Black is even better.

19.\c4xe3 20.\c4xe3

20...\c5!

Again, just about the only move on the board (otherwise White will play 21.\c5 and Black will find it difficult to breathe), and one that forces Leko to dive into more concrete play. And now for the really shocking news: White has nothing but an optical advantage, which is quite useless in terms of converting into points in the crossstable.

21.\c4xc6

Leko was definitely having a hard time deciding whether to capture on c6, eventually deciding to open the centre. The point is that had he ignored the c-pawn, White would have been left without any play in the centre and on the queenside (where virtually all his forces are situated), whereas on the kingside the chances are equal. Moreover, after 20...\c5 the pawn on a5 has become a weakness that needs attention 24/7.

21.\c4d2 is now met with a thematic exchange of dark-squared bishops: 21...\c8b5 22.\c8xg5 \c8xg5 23.\c8g3 \c8e7 24.\c4d1 \c8f6 with \c8f6-f4, and Black is fine.

Once again there was a piece sacrifice, which this time is more promising than two moves ago: 21.\c8x5?

This leads to a forced sequence:

21...\c8x5 22.\c8d6 \c8f6 23.\c8xc5!

Less convincing is 23.d7 \c8d8 24.\c8c8 \c8b8 25.\c8e2 \c8c6 26.\c8c5 \c8xc5 and Black is OK.

23...\c8c6 24.\c8b6 \c8d7 25.\c8c5

We have a curious situation where Black's pieces are not playing any role in the game, whereas White can play without any risk. For example:

a) 25...\c8a8 26.\c8b5 \c8e8 27.\c8d5 It is not clear how exactly White breaks through, but he has plans. Here is one: 27...\c8e6 28.\c8a4 \c8g5 29.\c8d1 \c8d7 30.\c8c4 \c8c8 31.\c8d1 \c8d8 32.\c8xb4 This would be scary in a real game,
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but analysis suggests Black has a draw at best.
32...\textit{d}xb4 33.\textit{w}xb4 aab8 34.\textit{a}a3 \textit{g}5 35.b4 \textit{b}5 36.\textit{c}3 and White is taking over, slowly but surely. The whole line is perhaps not very practical, but Nimzowitsch would probably be happy.

b) Another option is 25...\textit{c}d4 26.\textit{c}c4 \textit{a}a4 27.\textit{e}xa4 \textit{c}c6 28.\textit{b}d1 \textit{d}8 29.d7 \textit{c}7 30.\textit{d}5, with White dominating the board, but still a piece down.

21...\textit{xc}6 22.\textit{d}5?!

Leko is playing very naturally, but this allows Black the time he needs to finally get his pieces together.

22.\textit{b}6 was probably the last moment when White could have made Black’s life harder.

22.\textit{e}6:

a) 23.\textit{d}d2 \textit{d}8! 24.\textit{c}5 (24.\textit{w}xd6 \textit{a}xa5 25.\textit{w}xa5 \textit{a}5 26.\textit{b}c6 \textit{a}7 27.\textit{w}xa5 \textit{e}18 28.\textit{w}xe5 \textit{e}xd2 29.c5 \textit{c}8 is very unclear) 24...\textit{d}4 25.\textit{b}3 \textit{d}xb3 26.\textit{w}xb3 \textit{d}xb3 27.\textit{w}xb3 dxc5 28.\textit{w}xc5 \textit{e}7 29.\textit{b}6 \textit{e}c8 Black has nothing to worry about.

b) 23.\textit{e}d1 \textit{bc}8 24.\textit{d}d2 \textit{d}8 25.\textit{xc}6 (after

25.\textit{w}xd6 \textit{xb}6 26.axb6 \textit{w}xb6 27.\textit{xc}6 \textit{g}4! the situation is again double-edged) 25...\textit{xc}6 26.\textit{w}xd8 \textit{fxd}8 27.b3 White is slightly better, but nothing special.

22...\textit{d}7 23.c5

This looks very natural, but Black will always have enough counterplay. The problem is that White now has nothing better.

23...dx\textit{c}5 24.\textit{xc}5 \textit{xc}5 25.\textit{w}xc5 \textit{b}c8!

A great defensive move, correctly assessing that the initiative is more important than material here.

25...\textit{bc}8? 26.\textit{wb}6! \textit{w}xb6 27.axb6 would be decisive, but an interesting alternative is 25...\textit{fd}8?! 26.\textit{x}e5?! \textit{xe}5 27.\textit{w}xe5 \textit{a}a4 28.\textit{e}a4 \textit{ec}2 and Black has very good compensation for the pawn.

26.\textit{w}e3?!

After this passive move the initiative passes to Black. His pieces occupy more active places, White has a weakness on a5 he must take care of and Black generally gains the psychological momentum.

After 26.\textit{xc}6?! \textit{xc}6 27.\textit{xe}5 \textit{e}8 or 26.\textit{xe}5 \textit{xc}5 27.\textit{xe}5 \textit{xa}4 28.\textit{xa}4 \textit{ec}2 29.\textit{aa}1 \textit{b}5 it is Black, if anyone, who has the better chances.

The only way to keep some initiative was by not allowing the bishop to c6 with 26.\textit{b}3, but Black has just enough time for counterplay against a5:

a) 26.\textit{d}d4? loses nicely to 27.\textit{xf}7! \textit{h}8 (27...\textit{xf}7 28.\textit{xe}5† and White wins) 28.\textit{xe}5 \textit{ec}2 29.\textit{d}5 \textit{a}7 (But not 29...\textit{c}6
30.\textbf{axc6} \textbf{bxc6} 31.\textbf{d4}! and Black can safely resign. Also bad is 29...\textbf{fxe7} 30.\textbf{exc7} \textbf{xc7} 31.\textbf{acl} winning.) 30.\textbf{fxe4} \textbf{dxa1} 31.\textbf{e1} followed by \textbf{e5} with a strong attack, with equal material.

b) But Black can play 26...\textbf{b5}! and although White looks good, he does not have anything concrete against the strongest defence: 27.\textbf{d6} leads, almost by force, to a draw (while after 27.\textbf{xb5}?! \textbf{b5} there is nothing left of White’s advantage but memories) 27...\textbf{e8} 28.\textbf{a4} \textbf{b7} 29.\textbf{xc6} \textbf{xc6} 30.\textbf{xe5} \textbf{xe4} 31.\textbf{xf7} Otherwise White has absolutely nothing. 31...\textbf{c6}! and Black is just in time to deliver a perpetual after 32.\textbf{d4} \textbf{g2}! 33.\textbf{d8} (33.\textbf{g2} \textbf{g4}†) 33...\textbf{g6} 34.\textbf{xb7} \textbf{h3}† 35.\textbf{h1} \textbf{g2}†. This is necessary as 31...\textbf{f7} 32.\textbf{f4}† \textbf{g8} 33.\textbf{xe4} is technically winning for White.

Best seems to be 27.\textbf{e3} \textbf{e6}! 28.\textbf{xe5} (28.\textbf{a4} \textbf{b7} is the game) 28...\textbf{xe6} and White is only marginally better, if anything.

26.\textbf{e6}!

Black is taking over the initiative. It is worth mentioning that the position turning, without a serious mistake, is reminiscent of other games of Leko against Svidler.

27.\textbf{h3}

27.\textbf{xc6} \textbf{xc6} 28.\textbf{xe5} \textbf{c2} is very similar to the game.

27...\textbf{b3}!

Fixing the pawn on b2, and making an outpost on c2. It is now White who should be careful, but luckily there are enough ways to maintain the balance.

28.\textbf{xc6} \textbf{xc6} 29.\textbf{xe5} \textbf{c2}

For a pawn Black has managed to get a very annoying initiative, but Leko specializes in nullifying his opponents’ initiatives.

30.\textbf{al} \textbf{b4} 31.\textbf{f3}!

Intending to deport the arrogant rook. One of the most difficult things in chess is to switch smoothly from attack to defence. Leko shows impressive self-control, and confidently forces the draw.

31...\textbf{d8}

Or 31...\textbf{xa5} 32.\textbf{d4} with a draw.

32.\textbf{b6}!

Black’s queen is dominating, and therefore should be exchanged. Moreover, when Black moves to capture the b-pawn, the knight will gain access to d4.

32...\textbf{xb6} 33.\textbf{xb6} \textbf{b8} 34.\textbf{d4} \textbf{d2} 35.\textbf{ed1} \textbf{xd1}† 36.\textbf{xd1} \text{½–½}
GAME 38
Veselin Topalov
Alexander Morozevich
Queen’s Gambit Declined D37

As we said, this game was one of the last chances to reopen the tournament. Morozevich came into the game after three consecutive wins, and since the importance of colour in his games is rather negligible, we had good reasons to expect an interesting fight.

1.d4 ��f6 2.c4 ��e6 3.��f3 d5 4.��c3 ��e7 5.��f4

Facing a surprising opening choice by Morozevich, Topalov chooses his favourite continuation, which is also one of the most solid lines. However, he probably immediately realized his opponent’s intention — one of Morozevich’s seconds in San Luis was Alexander Beliavsky, one of the greatest theoreticians, especially in the Queen’s Gambit. So the Bulgarian grandmaster could be sure Black was ready for his favourite lines.

5...0-0 6.e3 c5 7.dxc5 ��c5 8.a3 ��c6 9.��f5

Topalov has played 5.��f4 against the Queen’s Gambit for a long time, but he had always opted for the more popular continuation 9.��e2. The freshest example is Topalov – Kasimdzhanov, Linares 2005, which continued 9...��a5 10.��d2 ��b4 11.��xd5 ��xd5 12.��d3 ��d4 13.0-0 ��xc3 14.��c4 ��h5 15.��xc3 ��f5 16.��g3 ��xe3 17.��xe1 ��e6 18.��xe3 ��de7 19.��d6 b6 20.��b1! (none of this was new) 20...f6 21.��b5 ��e5 22.��f4! ��g6 23.��d4 and White eventually won.

Probably somewhere in there an improvement was prepared and that is why Topalov chose a more solid continuation, in which it seems impossible to lose for White (even though White’s advantage here is also rather theoretical). Such decisions regularly remain unmentioned, but they often make the difference between celebration and mourning.

9...��xd5

This move in normally played automatically, although it is not entirely clear why Black is so happy to exchange knights: the side with an isolated pawn should in general try to keep as many pieces on the board for active play.

9...��xd5 is a rare guest, although White can hardly brag about his success rate.

10.��d5 ��xd5 11.��d3

A natural developing move that includes the childish trap of ��xh7 and ��c2 winning a pawn.

11...��b6 12.0-0

12...��g4 used to be considered strongest, but its popularity dropped after the famous Leko – Kramnik game in their Brissago match in 2004: 13.��h5 14.��b4 ��e8 15.��c1 a6 16.��xa6 ��xa6 17.��b5 ��xa3 18.��xc6 ��xc6 19.��xc6 Strictly speaking, Black should hold this, but a position where one faces 100 moves of suffering to make a draw does not sound enticing, and Kramnik’s loss in that game was the last straw. That game went: 19...��a7 20.��d6 ��d7 21.��xd5 ��xd6 22.��xd6 ��xd6 23.��b3 (Probably the first step towards losing. It was better to keep the two bishops with 23...��d8 as Anand did in his rapid game against Karpov, Moscow 2002, and although Black had to defend for 114 moves, he held the draw.) 24.��xf3 ��d8 25.��b1 and after a few bad mistakes by Black, Leko won.

13.��e4?

The move is virtually automatic, but it still deserves an exclamation mark as Topalov could have exchanged everything on d4, with a probable draw. He, however, does not want to play cynically for a draw, and dives into a fight. The text is White’s main plan in this position.
leaves the pawn on d4, having it blockaded, and hopes to turn it into a weakness as time goes by. Nevertheless, it has the potential of becoming a strong passed pawn, and this is what Black puts his hopes on.

One example of White’s dull option: 13.exd4 Qxd4 14.Qxe5 Qc6 (14...Qg4? 15.Qxd4 Qxd4 16.Qxh7+ Qxh7 17.Qd3+ Qg8 18.Qxd4 and White is much better) 15.Qc3 Qg4 16.h3 Qh5 17.Qe4 Qe8 18.Qc2 Qg6 19.Qxg6 hxg6 20.Qad1, eliminating all the heavy pieces, and with them all life in the position, Gustafsson - Kasimdzhanov, Germany 2004.

13...Qc7!

A very logical idea that, surprisingly, is new – usually Black exchanges this bishop later. Previously Black had been more concerned with his other bishop and played 13...Qg4, when the pin seems irritating and White will have to unpin with 14.h3 Qh5 15.g4. However Black should not celebrate White’s vulnerability – he usually uses it to build serious pressure against Black’s king: White has no other way to unpin, so he pushes his kingside pawns, using the d4-pawn as a shield. For example: 15...Qg6 16.Qd2 f6 17.Qc1 Qh8 18.Qc4 Qc7 19.Qxc7 Qxc7 20.f4 Qae8 21.Qf3 (Carlsen – Short, Hoogoveen 2004) with a double-edged position where White’s activity might promise him a few more prospects.

Generally speaking, neither of the two alternatives (13...Qc7 or 13...Qg4) seems to give Black full equality. While 13...Qg4 gives White the time needed to organize his pieces, the text-move is faster to counter White’s plans in the centre. On the other hand, 13...Qc7 doesn’t force White to weaken his king, leading to bigger problems finding counterplay later on.

14.Qxc7

White’s problem is that if he wants to get a better version of the game with 14.Qd2 then 14...Qg4 significantly gains in force, as ...Qxf3 is already a threat.

14...Qxc7 15.h3

And this is the price for the novelty – Black’s bishop stays at home, and will look for a life from e6. Now Black is quite solid, but has problems finding a strategic plan – he should simply finish development, and not exchange pieces (especially rooks, when the d4-pawn would die young) and wait for his opponent’s mistakes.

15...Qb6

A further advantage of not having a bishop on b6. Black’s game is developing rather swiftly.

Black could have prevented White’s next move with 15...a5, but it is not clear whether b4 is worth stopping.

16.b4

A double-edged move. On one hand, it helps White occupy space on the queenside and prevents Black’s knight activating via a5. On the other, it weakens the very important c3-square, which can later be used by Black to support the advance of his d-pawn. Moreover, the b4-pawn can be a trigger to enhance Black’s play on the queenside, as now it would be easier for him to open the flank with a7-a5.

The text prepares play on the queenside, but according to the game White plans aggression on the other flank. For this purpose 16.Qd2 was more appropriate, as 16...Qa5 is now just a shot in the air: 17.Qad1 Qb3 18.Qf4 and White has a position similar to the game, only without the weakening of his queenside.

16...Qe6 17.Qc1

Black is not afraid of 17.Qg5 Qe5! As we said previously, White does not want to exchange his knight for the bishop, whereas after 18.Qxh7 Qd8! 19.Qg5 Qc8 Black gets promising
compensation for the pawn, and Topalov definitely wants to have the initiative in his hands in such a crucial game.

17...h6 18.\textit{\textbf{d2}} \textit{\textbf{d8}} 19.\textit{\textbf{f4}}

Planning to begin an attack by means of e4-e5 and \textit{\textbf{e4}}, as attacks on the king are usually more dangerous than those on a “kingless” queenside, which is what Black will have here. Morozevich, for his part, has both defensive and attacking resources, and this suits him too for this game. A rare case of both players being happy with their position.

However, as explained above, a more logical plan was to play on the queenside in general and the c-file in particular. The immediate 19.\textit{\textbf{c5}} is problematic for the same reasons as in the game, but the accurate 19.\textit{\textbf{c2}} promises White a clear and permanent advantage.

19...\textit{\textbf{e7}}

The knight is heading to protect its king – just like it did in the first encounter between the two players in this tournament. Then the knight was Topalov’s...

19...\textit{\textbf{e5}} is still premature due to 20.\textit{\textbf{b5}} \textit{\textbf{e7}} 21.\textit{\textbf{c7}} with a big advantage for White.

Much worse is 19.\textit{\textbf{ac8}} 20.\textit{\textbf{e5}} (intending 21.\textit{\textbf{e4}}):

Black can no longer play 20...\textit{\textbf{e7}} conveniently, as after 21.\textit{\textbf{xc8}} \textit{\textbf{xc8}} (21...\textit{\textbf{xc8}} 22.\textit{\textbf{c1}} gives a one-sided game) 22.\textit{\textbf{xd4}} \textit{\textbf{d8}} 23.\textit{\textbf{xe6}} \textit{\textbf{xd3}} 24.\textit{\textbf{c5}} \textit{\textbf{xa3}} 25.\textit{\textbf{d1}} White’s initiative is too strong.

Also after 20...\textit{\textbf{d5}} 21.\textit{\textbf{c5}} \textit{\textbf{e7}} 22.\textit{\textbf{fc1}} \textit{\textbf{xc5}} 23.\textit{\textbf{xc5}} \textit{\textbf{g6}} 24.\textit{\textbf{g4}} White would have a firm advantage.

20.\textit{\textbf{c5}}

Topalov is not going to sit back, waiting for a draw. He’s heading for sharp, double-edged play: a real treat for every chess lover. The objective value of the move, however, is a little less clear.

After 20.\textit{\textbf{e5}} a5 21.b5 \textit{\textbf{g6}} 22.\textit{\textbf{g3}} \textit{\textbf{d5}!} Black is fine.

The attempt to move the queen to g3 with 20.\textit{\textbf{c7}} \textit{\textbf{c6}} 21.\textit{\textbf{g3}} would have saved White a tempo had Black continued like in the game, but since e4-e5 is not a serious threat anymore (the queen cannot get to e4), Black can continue playing on the queenside: 21...\textit{\textbf{ac8}} 22.\textit{\textbf{e5}} a5 23.b5 \textit{\textbf{e7}} and Black has good prospects.

However, the natural 20.\textit{\textbf{fd1}} seems to be stronger, as now Black would have to be worried about his d4-pawn.

20...\textit{\textbf{g6}}

The best square for the queen was f4, since it can play on both flanks from there, but now White has to decide where the second-best square is.

21.\textit{\textbf{g3}?!}

This leaves the whole of the queenside at Black’s disposal.

No good comes out of 21.\textit{\textbf{c7}} \textit{\textbf{d7}} and the queen still has to go.

Correct was 21.\textit{\textbf{d2}} \textit{\textbf{ac8}} 22.\textit{\textbf{fc1}} \textit{\textbf{xc5}} 23.\textit{\textbf{xc5}} \textit{\textbf{d6}} with a roughly equal position.
21...a5!
And now all the previous moves White played (b4, c5) backfire, and allow Black to develop strong play on the queenside.
22.b5 c6
This is the point: with White's queen on f4 it would not be possible, due to the simple c1. Now the c-file belongs to Black.
23.e5?!
Pretty much forced, as White cannot wait for Black's initiative to develop on the queenside. Moreover, he already committed himself to playing energetically on the kingside with his 21st move.
After 23.bxa5 c3 24.d1 c5 25.bxa5 c5 Black's position is much more promising than White's.
23...b6
Black is taking the c5-square away from White's rook, thus preparing a move which he should have played immediately. This allows his opponent an important tempo to prevent it.
Black should have tried to exchange the light-squared bishops. After e5 the bishop on d3 not only blocks the d4-pawn from moving, but also takes an active part in White's kingside attack, so 23...c5! 24.c5 d7. Now Black's d-pawn can become very dangerous, especially with White's heavy pieces being misplaced. For example: 25.c4 axb4 26.axb4 d3 Black has a very dangerous initiative, and after 27.d5 xd5 28.xd5 xd5 only he can win.

White's best bet would be to simplify to a draw with 25.xf5 xf5 26.bxa5 d3 27.g4 xg4 28.hxg4 ac8 29.xc8 ecx8 30.Ad1 Ac3 31.Aa3.
24.bxa5 bxa5
24...xa5 is problematic due to 25.b4, winning a pawn, as both d4 and g6 are attacked.
25.b1 b8
26.d2!
The knight is heading to e4, and once it reaches there Black's king will no longer feel safe.
26...d5 27.f4
A double-edged move. On one hand, it is hard to continue the attack without such moves, but on the other it seriously weakens White's king.
Moves like 27.b3, suggested by the computer, can hardly be taken seriously. Here is a short illustration: 27.e6 28.c1 d7 29.xa5 ac8 30.xc8 ecx8 when all White's pieces are awfully misplaced.
But prophylaxis with 27.\texttt{h2} might prove to be very valuable, given that White will have to weaken the first rank in order to fight for the c-file with the \texttt{b1-b2-c3} manoeuvre.

27...\texttt{c3}

The machine offers a curious resource with 28...\texttt{g6}?! exploiting White’s hanging pieces, offering the following lines:

- 29.\texttt{c2} (29.f5 is bad, 29...\texttt{f4}! 30.\texttt{x}d4 \texttt{x}d4, and White’s attack on the kingside is about to end in disaster... on the same side.)
- 29...\texttt{x}a3 30.\texttt{h2} The point (30.e4 would have been met with 30...\texttt{a1}† 30...a4 31.e7 \texttt{a2} but here it realizes what we’ve said earlier: attacks on the king are often much more dangerous than those without the king as a target. After 32.e4, threatening \texttt{f6}, Black is falling apart.

29.\texttt{h2} \texttt{ac8} 30.f5

30...\texttt{e3}?

Trying to disturb White’s attack on the king, but Black should have continued his line. For this purpose, very promising seems to be 30...a4, threatening ...\texttt{b3}.

Now 31.\texttt{b6} runs into 31...\texttt{c3}! 32.e1 \texttt{b3} 33.e2xb3 axb3. If anyone is risking losing, it’s White.

With his queenside being compromised, White would have to play quickly: 31.f6 is hardly endangering Black after the cold-blooded 31...g6 32.\texttt{h4}, and now:

- a) Bad is 32...\texttt{h7} 33.e4 \texttt{xe4} 34.\texttt{xe4} \texttt{g8} (34...\texttt{e6} allows White a fine combination:
35.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{f}}b7} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{g}}8} 36.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{e}}x\textit{f}7!} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{e}}x\textit{f}7} 37.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{w}}xg6t} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{f}}8} 38.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{f}}5!} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{c}}7} 39.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}}x\textit{e}6} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{g}}5} 40.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{f}}5!} and White is winning) 35.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{b}}7} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{c}}3} 36.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{b}}8!} when Black is collapsing.

b) After 32...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{h}}5} (again threatening \ldots \texttt{\textit{\textbf{b}}3}) White has to act very fast or his queenside will be erased. 33.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{f}}4} is refuted by 33 ...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}}e6}, whereas the attempt to prevent \ldots\texttt{\textit{\textbf{e}}e6} with 33.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{f}}5} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{c}}3} (but not 33 ...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{g}}xf5??} 34.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{g}}5t} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{g}}6} 35.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{h}}6} and White wins) 34.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{f}}4} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{c}}1}, and Black is first to hit the opponent’s weaknesses. Also after 33.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{e}}4} 33 ...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}}xe4} 34.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}}xe4} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}}e6} 35.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{b}}b6} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{c}}5} 36.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}}f4} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{h}}7}, White has too many problems back home to seriously consider attacking the black king.

31.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{b}}1!!}

A fantastic move, protecting the pawn on a3 and driving the black rook away, this modest knight move puts an end to all Black’s prospects on the queenside. Morozevich clearly missed this idea.

31.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{e}}5}

The attempt to keep the initiative at the cost of an exchange with 31 ...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}}xd3} 32.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{w}}xd3} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{f}}4t} meets a nice tactical refutation: 33.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{g}}g1!} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{c}}8} (33 ...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{w}}xe5} 34.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{e}}e2} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{f}}4} 35.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}}d2} and White should be able to convert his material) 34.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{c}}c2} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{c}}c2} 35.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{c}}xc2} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{e}}e4} 36.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}}d2!} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{w}}xf5} 37.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{w}}xd4!} The point is that now 37 ...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}}xb1} will lose to 38.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{b}}8}, threatening \texttt{\textit{\textbf{w}}xe6} with mate, which forces Black to part with one of the light pieces, with a lost position as the result.

32.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{b}}x\textit{c}5} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{w}}c5} 33.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{c}}c2} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{b}}6} 34.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}}d2}

The difference between this position and the

one after Black’s 30\textsuperscript{th} move is really striking. All of a sudden it is White playing for a win. Caught unprepared for this sudden change, Morozevich immediately commits a horrible blunder.

34.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{e}}e8?}

There should be no way back after this. 34 ...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{w}}b8}, not allowing the e-pawn into motion, was much better, but even here after 35.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{c}}c4} White is in charge.

An old chess saying claims that every move weakens at least one square. Black’s last move weakened the d7-square. How can White make use of it?

35.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{e}}6!} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{h}}7}

After 35 ...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{f}}xe6} 36.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{b}}c7} it is just the right time to resign. Black can no longer block the seventh rank with \ldots\texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}}d7}.

36.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{c}}c7}

Now it is White’s turn to invade along the c-file, and it appears to be much more effective.

36.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{b}}8} 37.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}}d4}

Black’s position is already lost. The last segment of the game (since move 31) makes a very strong impression. It is as if Topalov has suddenly changed gear and left his opponent behind, staring at a dust cloud.

37.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}}d4}

37 ...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{w}}b8} 38.e7 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{e}}e8} 39.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}}d6!} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{w}}xc7} 40.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}}xe8} (the first idea that comes to mind is 40.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{w}}xg7??} but after 40 ...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{w}}xg7} the “winning” 41.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{e}}e8†} turns out to be quite illegal) 40 ...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{w}}xg3†} 41.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}}xg3} and White wins.
Another strong move. The threat is more dangerous than its execution, as someone once almost said.

39...d3 40.exf7†?
Not letting the win escape yet, but significantly complicating matters with the last move before the time control.

40.e7 would have led to an immediate win, as now the bishop can support the pawn to promotion after 40...dxe7 41.xd3. Now 41...b8 is answered with 42.c4, forcing resignation in view of the threat e7-e8 and xf7†, whereas 41.d5 is brutally answered with 42.c8! xxc8 43.e8† xxe8 44.xxe8† xeh7 45.f6† with mate in two.

40...h7 41.xd3
White's position is totally winning, but from now on Morozevich plays very imaginatively, exhausting every chance he has, until one of them finally succeeds.

41...b3 42.d6

42...b8!
The idea is to keep stinging with every possible threat he can come up with. Now Black wants to play ...xf7.

43.c4 d4 44.e5 d2!
Preparing the set-up that will eventually save Black half a point.

45.a2 b6!

Creating the threat of 46..b3† with a perpetual.

46.c2?
This mistake, preventing one threat but missing the second, lets the win go, but it also shows that Topalov is only human. Ten hard-fought games did affect him after all, and he can become tired
in the 6th hour of play. One should also praise Morozevich, as he searched for chances with great imagination, helping his opponent to err.

The most natural 46.\textit{c}5 does not immediately solve all the problems, as Black can keep bugging with 46...\textit{b}2! and now White should find 47.\textit{b}7?! (but not 47.\textit{f}8 \textit{e}5\dagger with a draw) 47...\textit{f}6 48.\textit{d}7 \textit{g}5 and only after the calm 49.\textit{h}1! can White claim to have a won game, as after 49...\textit{g}3 50.\textit{f}6! \textit{g}6 (or 50...\textit{e}1\dagger 51.\textit{g}1 \textit{f}1 52.\textit{f}xg7 \textit{xf}7 53.\textit{d}4\dagger \textit{h}7 54.\textit{d}1! \textit{g}3\dagger 55.\textit{h}2 \textit{e}5 56.\textit{d}6 and there are no more tricks) 51.\textit{e}7, Black has to admit failure, as 51...\textit{f}8 gives only a few checks. At least, when consulting a silicon friend it becomes clear: 52.\textit{g}x\textit{f}3 \textit{x}h3\dagger 53.\textit{g}1 \textit{g}3\dagger 54.\textit{f}1 \textit{f}x\textit{f}3\dagger 55.\textit{f}2 \textit{h}1\dagger 56.\textit{e}2 \textit{h}5\dagger 57.\textit{d}2 \textit{d}8\dagger 58.\textit{c}3! \textit{e}8\dagger 59.\textit{c}4 winning.

But there is a much easier win with 46.\textit{c}5, creating a most unpleasant threat of \textit{c}7, thus forcing Black to retreat his knight. After 46...\textit{e}4 then, and only then, 47.\textit{c}2 leaves Black without hope.

46...\textit{f}2!

That's it. There is no win anymore.

47.\textit{d}x\textit{d}2

Forced. There is no other defence against 47...\textit{f}3\dagger.

47...\textit{b}xd\textit{d}2 48.\textit{d}5 \textit{g}5! 49.\textit{d}d6 \textit{d}d8

All of a sudden Black is no longer losing! An amazing escape by the Muscovite.

50.\textit{xd}8 \textit{xd}8

White has to be careful as well – once Black's king is out of the box it will be White searching for ways to escape.

51.\textit{c}6 \textit{g}6

It is not too late to lose with 51...\textit{g}5?? 52.\textit{f}6! \textit{e}8 (52...\textit{g}6 53.\textit{e}8 and the pawn queens) 53.\textit{c}4\dagger \textit{h}8 54.\textit{c}6. Black can resign, his king is caught in a box. A march of his colleague to h6 with a subsequent pawn advance would do now.

52.\textit{e}8 \textit{g}7 53.\textit{f}xg\textit{g}6

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{chess_board.png}
\caption{Chess board position after 53...\textit{h}5!}
\end{figure}

White cannot be allowed to play g2-g4, followed by h3-h4-h5, and g4-g5 later on. Now it is a draw.

54.\textit{a}4

54.\textit{g}3 \textit{d}3\dagger 55.\textit{h}4 \textit{xa}3 56.\textit{x}h5 \textit{g}3 is also a draw.

And after 54.\textit{h}4 \textit{xd}4 White cannot improve his position either, and is in fact running a risk of losing.

54...\textit{h}4 55.\textit{g}1 \textit{xd}2 56.\textit{g}3 \textit{hx}g3 57.\textit{h}2 58.\textit{h}5 \textit{f}8

Of course not 58...\textit{x}h5 59.\textit{f}8\dagger! \textit{x}f8 60.\textit{g}7\dagger \textit{x}g7 61.\textit{x}h5, and the last remaining pawn's promotion square is of the right colour.

59.\textit{f}1 \textit{g}7

Again 59...\textit{b}xh5 loses to the same idea, in reversed execution: 60.\textit{g}7\dagger \textit{x}g7 61.\textit{f}8\dagger 60.\textit{g}1 \textit{f}8 61.\textit{f}1

$\frac{1}{2}$-$\frac{1}{2}$
GAME 39
Michael Adams
Viswanathan Anand
Ruy Lopez, Anti-Marshall C88

1.e4 e5 2.\(d3 \square c6 3.\(b5 a6 4.\(x4 \square f6 5.0-0 \square e7 6.\(e1 b5 7.\(b3 0-0 8.a4 b4 9.d3 d6 10.a5 \square e6 11.\(b2 \square b8

Up to this point this is identical to the Leko – Svidler game from this round (Game 37), but perhaps Anand now felt guilty about copying Svidler’s moves and so deviated! With his last move Anand prepares for the opening of the b-file.

12.\(c4

White’s aggressive plans in this position have been tested for only a couple of years now, but it is enough to realize that they do not promise much. But the same can be asked about any other anti-Marshall system: does it promise White anything?

The main idea of the move is to fight against Black’s main plan of d6-d5 by putting additional pressure on e5. An interesting alternative is 12.\(c4, which was played by Kasparov in the first game of his World Championship match against Short in 1993: 12...\(c8 13.\(f1 \square e8 14.\(e3 \square d4 15.\(xd4 exd4 16.\(d5 \square xd5 17.exd5 \square d7 18.\(d2 \square f6 19.\(xe8+ \square xe8 20.\(e2 \square b5 21.\(e1 \square xc4 22.dxc4 h6 23.b3 And White had a slight advantage.

Preparation for d6-d5! This move is important to stop some unwanted pieces from paying a visit to g5.

Another way to cover the g5-square is by playing 12...\(d7, but Black has not been really successful here: 13.\(e3 \square f6 (the immediate 13...d5 can be unpleasantly met with 14.\(x4 dxc4 15.\(xc6 with pressure) 14.\(c3 \(c3 15.\(x3 \square b7 16.\(c2 \(e7 17.d4 \(b8 18.d5 \(g4 19.\(d2 h6 20.h3 \(h5 21.\(a4 with a clear plus for White, De Firmian – Beliavsky, Copenhagen 2004.

13.h3

A first step in White’s plan, preparing \(e3, \(d2, \(e2. After that he will have a position that is very pleasing to the eye. Nothing more, though.

The natural 13.c3? has, surprisingly enough, only been played once: 13...bxc3 14.\(c3 \(d7 15.\(a4 \(a7 16.\(e3 \(b5 17.\(c2 f5 18.\(f5 \(xf5 19.\(cd2 c5 20.\(b3+ \(h7 21.\(e4 \(g6 22.\(g3 \(c7 23.\(d1 d5 24.\(c2 \(b5 with a very complicated game, Shirov – Z. Almasi, Calvia (ol) 2004.

13...\(c8 14.\(e3 \(d8!

Putting the rook on d8 is useful in connection with the main idea d6-d5.

15.\(e2 \(f8 16.\(d2

This typical multi-purpose manœuvre is a novelty in this position. White dreams of advancing d4, and in order to do so, e4 must be protected. Additionally, this move protects the bishop on b3, which in turn makes c3 and d4
possible in the future. And on top of all this, it releases the bishop from defending the knight on c4, making $a_4$ ideas possible. Despite the result of the game, we find this idea quite interesting – if a move with so many qualities does not promise White any opening advantage, he might need to switch to other lines.

Anand, as White, once tried 16.$\text{O}e1$, which had no impact on the result, and very little on the position: 16...$\text{O}e7$ 17.$\text{O}fd2$ $\text{O}g6$ 18.$\text{d}4$ exd4 19.$\text{x}d4$ $\text{O}h7$ 20.$\text{e}3$ d5 21.exd5 with equality, Anand – Shirov, Monaco 2004.

16...$\text{O}e7$?

A very strong reaction by Anand. Once White plays d3-d4 the knight on c6 will become vulnerable. But the knight still needs to support the e5-pawn and therefore is heading towards g6. It also frees the way for the c-pawn. Chess is such an easy and logical game (when you know what you want). We think this interesting manoeuvre by Anand had to be learned by Leko – the Indian grandmaster will repeat it (with great success!) against him (Game 45).

A critical move in Adams’ preparation must have been 16...d5?! but it has a tactical refutation: 17.$\cdot\cdot\cdot\text{a}4$! dxc4 (17...$\text{b}b7$ 18.$\text{x}c6$ $\text{W}xc6$ 19.$\text{O}xe5$ and the compensation is anything but obvious) 18.$\text{f}xe6$.

Threatening to win a pawn (dxc4) and the exchange ($a_7$). Preventing both will allow White additional resources: 18..cx$d3$ 19.$x$xd3 $\text{d}7$ After 20.$\text{E}c1$ White’s active pieces and Black’s weaknesses give White a plus.

After 16...$\text{O}d4$ 17.$\text{O}xd4$ exd4 18.$\text{e}5$ dxe5 19.$\text{O}xe5$ White is better as well.

17.$\text{d}4$!

White strikes first in the centre, and it is the only way to fight for an advantage. If he snoozes, Black might take the initiative.

17...$\text{g}6$

The tactical shot 17...$\text{O}x$e4? backfires after 18.$\text{O}xe4$ d5 19.$\text{c}5$! with a big advantage for White. And opening the centre with 17...exd4?! 18.$\text{O}xd4$ only makes sense if Black can play ...d5, otherwise White has a steady initiative; which is the case here.

18.$\text{d}5$

By closing the centre White is hoping to exploit Black’s weaknesses on the queenside, while 18.$\text{f}ed1$ would have transposed into Anand – Shirov above.

18...$\text{d}7$

19.$\text{a}4$

As this game shows, simply playing on the light squares in not dangerous for Black. The immediate 19.c3? is not yet possible, as it loses a pawn to 19...bxc3 20.bxc3 $\text{O}xe4$.

A few months after this game, however, Karjakin followed Adams’ footsteps until now, and tried to improve with 19.$\text{E}c1$!, which does seem very logical. In the following game Black managed to get a more or less balanced position:

19...$\text{E}e8$! 20.c3 $\text{O}f4$ 21.$\text{d}1$ $\text{d}8$ 22.$\text{a}4$ $\text{W}c7$ 23.b3 $g6$ 24.$\text{O}b2$ $\text{Ec}8$ 25.$\text{xd}7$ $\text{W}xd7$ 26.$\text{c}4$ $\text{W}e8$ 27.$\text{f}1$ Karjakin – Aronian, Wijk aan Zee 2006.

Perhaps White can improve on this with 26.$\text{xf}4$! $\text{exf}4$ 27.$\text{xb}4$ (threatening $\text{Ec}6$) 27...$\text{c}6$ (27...$\text{xb}4$ 28.$\text{Ec}4$ $\text{Ex}c4$ 29.$\text{O}xc4$ $\text{g}7$ 30.$\text{Ec}1$ and White has a good game playing against the weaknesses) 28.$\text{dxc}6$ $\text{Ec}6$ 29.$\text{f}3$ $\text{Ex}b4$ 30.$\text{xf}4$ $\text{Ag}7$ 31.$\text{d}3$ with a clear plus for White.

19...$\text{b}5$!

A strong idea: if White wants to exchange bishops, he should pay for it (here $\text{xb}5$ ...$\text{axb}5$ would trap the c4-knight).

20.$\text{b}3$!
And White does not want to pay such a high price. Therefore, he vacates b2 for his knight. In any case, Black has a very solid position, and is able to free his pieces just in time.

After the immediate 20.c3 Black gets a good game: 20...bxc3 (20...d7 21.xd1 axa4 22.xxa4 b5 23.cxb4 xxb4 24.xb4 xxb4 25.e1 xdb8 26.b3 is better for White) 21.bxc3 c6 Black is OK, as neither 22.xb6 e8 23.xb5 cxb5 (even 23...xb5 24.d3 cxd5 25.xb5 f4 is quite promising for Black) 24.e2 xc3 25.d3 f4 26.xf4 exf4 nor the immediate 22.xb5 cxb5 23.b2 xc3 24.d3 f4! 25.xf4 exf4 26.d4 e8 promises White anything.

20...e7

There was nothing wrong with 20...c6 immediately, but Anand exploits the fact that White has no immediate threats, and improves his bishop a little first.

21.d1

21...c6!

Before White plays c3.

22.xb5

After 22.c3? bxc3 23.xc3 cxd5 White collapses.

22...xb5 23.db6

23.c3?! would have allowed Black a very promising rook sacrifice: 23...bxc3 24.d3 xc5 25.d4 (25.xc5? cxd2 winning) 25...cxd5 26.db6 wb7 27.xc5 d4! 28.db4 df4 29.d1 xf4 30.d1 g6 With threats like ...dh3 and ...d3, and all White's pieces stuck on the queenside: Black's chances are better.

23...b7 24.dxc6 xc6 25.db4

Here a draw was agreed, but there were still chances of a decisive result. Mainly for Black. If he wanted he could have played 25...b7.

Now 26.a4 is just pointless because of 26...d5 27.exd5 cxd5.

After 26.c3 d5! 27.exd5 cxd5 28.dxd5 Black has very good chances:

28...xd5

Or even 28...xd5 eventually winning the a-pawn. 29.cx b4 axb4 30.c4 (30.d4 h7 31.xb7 b7 32.c4 bb5 33.c6 f4 is better for Black) 30...xa5 31.xa5 axa5 32.e1 White has some compensation, but enough for a draw at best.

29.cx b4 axb4

Not 29...xb2? 30.xd2 xd2 31.b5 when White's pawns are very dangerous, especially given that Black cannot create counterplay against the king: 31...f4? 32.c8t! xc8 33.xc8+ h7 34.xa6 winning.

30.c4 e4 31.db6

31...d4! 32.c6

32.db4 loses immediately to 32...xc4.

32...d1+ 33.d6 c6 34.dxc6 xa1 35.db8 de6!

Forcing the bishop to close the 6th rank!

36.db6 axa5

Black has an extra pawn, and therefore some chances.

½-½
This game is a good example of the importance of move orders in modern chess. Black found herself three tempi behind compared to the usual theory lines. This, of course, could not go unpunished...

1.e4 c5 2.d4 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.xd4 f6 5.c3 a6 6.e2 e6

The classical Scheveningen - one of the most interesting and difficult positions in the Sicilian.

7.a4

This slightly unusual move-order usually transposes into normal lines. This game is no exception.

7...e7 8.0-0 c6 9.e3

In most classical Sicilian variations White castles short and develops the bishops to e2 and e3. This can be achieved in various ways, but this is the most natural - the dark-squared bishop is developed only when necessary.

9...0-0 10.f4

10...d7

Now the move order is becoming more important. The titanic matches of the two K's in the eighties had a huge impact on the evolution of the whole line. Karpov, then the best expert for the White side, was trying to break Kasparov's fortress. The outcome was gloomy for Karpov, not being able to win even one game, and subsequently abandoning 1.e4 in the matches. But even more influential than the games themselves was Kasparov's book ("Two matches") that revealed all the basic ideas of the opening. Today virtually every idea is affected, one way or another, by those great battles.

Back to the text - Black's move is not the most accurate, and it is hardly surprising that no elite devotees of the Scheveningen play this way. But why is 10...c7 more popular: what is the difference?

The point is that White has a lot of plans in the classic Scheveningen: he can solidly play in the centre (a plan that is no longer considered to be dangerous), he can prepare an attack with d1-e1, and so on... But the most aggressive plan is to push the g-pawn forward (with g2-g4-g5) and then either bring the heavy pieces to the h-file or throw the f-pawn into the attack as well. Or both.

The important point is that these plans, especially the last one, are much more dangerous than they might appear, which forces Black to play extremely accurately. Thus, 10...c7 is a good developing move, waiting for White to speak first. After this both players usually continue with development/prophylactic moves, like 11.h1 and so on. Moves that prepare all possible plans for both sides.

At some point Black plays c8-d7 (sometimes there are simply no more useful prophylactic moves) and White answers with d4-b3. Lately Black has tried playing without ...d7 at all - plans with c6-a5 or e6-e5 are considered to be less dangerous for Black. Now we can fully comprehend the drawbacks of the early 10...d7. Black chooses a dangerous plan and in the given situation it allows White to win time by not making unnecessary manoeuvres like 11.h1. Maybe this tempo (or even tempi, since even after 10...c7 11.h1 Black does not usually hurry with 11...d7, but can first play the very useful 11...e8) is still not the end of the world, but it is a serious concession.

11.b3

One of Black's plans to equalize is by taking on d4 and transferring her bishop to c6 (or by
playing \( ...e5 \) as exchanges are generally good for Black as she has less space for manoeuvring. In order to prevent this plan White usually retreats his knight to b3 when the bishop goes to d7. It is important to note that Black cannot first rake on d4 and only then follow up with \( ...\text{d7} \), as this allows a4-a5, sealing the queenside, after which Black can no longer achieve satisfactory counterplay.

11...b6

Again, Black should not allow the queenside to be closed. For example:

11...\text{c7} 12.a5! \text{ac8} 13.g4 \text{db4} 14.g5 \text{e8} 15.g4 d5 16.b6 \text{d6} 17.exd5 exd5 18.\text{f2} \text{xg4} 19.xg4 \text{c7} 20.f5 with an easily winning attack, Ivanchuk - Cebalo, Manila (ol) 1992.

Another way to prevent a5 is the mechanical 11...a5, which was even played the great Jose Raul Capablanca. Here, however, the Cuban's phenomenal intuition was perhaps wrong, since Black is neglecting the centre allowing: 12.e5 \text{e8} 13.a5 \text{a5} 14.e4 \text{c7} 15.a5 \text{c6}

16.b6 \text{b8} 17.d4 d5 18.c5 White is the only one playing, Ol - Sax, Szeged 1997.

12.f3 \text{c7}

What did Black achieve in this relatively rare move order? b7-b6 was played instead of \( ...\text{e8} \), to go along with an early \( ...\text{d7} \), provoking \( \text{b3} \). Now White also will not play \( \text{h1} \) (there is no reason anymore, as we explained above), hence, compared to the old K-K fights, when the plans for both sides were first being developed, White is two tempi up (and the king on h1 can be not only a tempo, but not the best place for the king) - and even in those battles Black was, at times, walking a very fine line.

13.g4!

The beginning of White's main plan in the position.

13...\text{c8}

Black's plan of defence is also typical: \( \text{e8}, \text{g6}, \text{f7-g8-g7} \) and \( \text{d7-f8} \), covering all the key squares around the king. The first step is to vacate d7 for the knight.

14.g5 \text{d7} 15.g2

An important move. The bishop has nothing to do on f3, and it frees the diagonal for the queen (to h5) and the third rank for a rook (\text{f3-h3}).

15...\text{e8} 16.\text{f3}

The most flexible way to continue the attack. The point of bringing the rook first is to keep the queen to protect c2 for the time being. Also, \( \text{h5} \) forces \( ...\text{g6} \) with tempo, which can be important in some cases.
16...\textit{b}8

The best way to go appears to be 16...\textit{a}a5. Black will be happy to double the a-pawns, as long as the b-file opens for counterplay. Only strong counterplay on the queenside, forcing White to allocate resources for fighting against it, will make this position playable for Black. But White should continue 17.\textit{d}d2, and after 16...\textit{b}b7 18.\textit{h}h3 \textit{g}6 19.\textit{w}g4 White had a serious initiative in Alekseev – Golod, Biel 2005.

17.\textit{h}h3 \textit{g}6 18.\textit{e}e1

The queen is deprived of \textit{h}5? OK, it’ll go to \textit{h}4, when the time is right.

18...\textit{b}4?

No-one had played this move before, which is fair enough. Polgar’s idea is to obtain strong counterplay against \textit{c}2 if White decides to abandon everything and go for it on the kingside. Ever since the above mentioned matches, however, a knight jump to \textit{b}4 is considered as not very promising, and later on Kasparov himself opted not to use this manoeuvre. All the knight’s deeds there add up to attacking \textit{c}2, whereas it does not even disturb White in arranging his pieces. Moreover, Kasimdzhanov is not the type of player who would ram a wall with his head, he uses this threat to better prepare his pieces for the upcoming attack. All in all, this novelty will hardly be remembered as an improvement.

After 18...\textit{g}7 White sensed it was “time”, and went ahead with 19.\textit{h}h4 \textit{f}f8 20.e5 dx\textit{e}5 21.fxe5 \textit{b}b7 22.\textit{f}f1 \textit{e}7 23.\textit{xb}7 \textit{xb}7 24.\textit{e}e4

\textit{f}5 25.\textit{xf}5 ex\textit{f}5 26.\textit{h}h6\textit{xf}6 27.gxf6 \textit{h}5, but here the attack has reached a deadlock, Popovych – Kirov, Hamburg 1997. However, what would have happened if White had continued the way Kasimdzhanov did in our game?

19.\textit{f}f2

White arranges his forces according to a known scheme, which usually evolves into a fierce \textit{f}4-\textit{f}5 break.

The immediate 19.\textit{h}h4? is typically met with 19...\textit{h}5, and White has no time to take on \textit{h}6. However, then 20.\textit{f}f2 is the same position as in the game, only \textit{f}4-\textit{f}5 becomes an even bigger threat now. An additional idea White has here is to sacrifice a piece on \textit{h}5. Kasparov won quite a few games this way, naturally now on the White side. The drawback is also obvious – White will not have \textit{h}h4 with tempo anymore, and this is important enough to prefer the text.

19...\textit{b}8

Very typical for these positions, protecting \textit{b}6 (thus freeing the knight to protect the king)
and evacuating the dangerous h1-a8 diagonal. Normally it is also played as an integral part of Black's counterplay on the queenside with ...b5 and after the exchanges the rook would be placed exactly where a rook should be, on an open file. Here the knight is already on b4, so one important idea of Bb8 is negated, which makes the decision a debatable one: are the pawn and the diagonal worth losing an important tempo in a position nearing a first fight?

After 19...b7 20.df1 g7 21.f5 Black has counter-chances, although White's attack is more dangerous than normal because of the extra time he has from the opening.

20.df1

Polgar's chances here are nowhere near those Kasparov had in the previously mentioned match in 1985. She realizes it very well, and after deep thought decides to make it fast and furious.

20...f5!?

The temptation to put a question mark to the move was so great that it seems unfair. Black is lacking a few tempi in a position that is not easy anyway, and instead of dying slowly she goes for complications, which bring the end faster. However, had Polgar played passively and lost, we would write that she should have tried to seek active play. Objectively, Black's position is full of problems in any case.

After 20...b7 another plus of not playing h1 (in addition to the tempo) can be seen: ...xg2 is not a check now. 21.f5 exf5 22.exf5 xg2 23.fgx6 and Black will have to get used to playing without a king.

20...g7 is even more painful:

21.f5 exf5 21...b8 22.f6 with a typical position where White is virtually a piece up (the h8-based is barely alive), and White's huge advantage is indisputable.

22.exf5 b8 22...gx5 23.h4 As if White's attack was not strong enough without it – the knight is now forked too.

23.f6! xh3 23...xh3 leads to an even worse version of the already discussed position.

24.fxg7 xg2 25.gxf5 b8 26.xg2 And it is over.

21.exf5!

"Spot the difference and win" was the task given to Kasimdzhanov by his opponent. He has a few tempi more than the above mentioned game, the question is how to use them. At first he solved the puzzle effectively.

21.gxf6? would have fulfilled Black's dream: 21...xf6, and out of nowhere it is unclear who is better.

21...gx5 21...exf5 22.d5! and Black faces a choice of losing a piece or getting nicely helpless-mated: 22...xd5 23.xd5 h8 24.xh7 xh7 25.h4 g7 26.h6 mate.

22.d4!

There is no satisfying defence against h4 and g5-g6 sooner or later.

22...e7

The only move in order to defend the 7th line.

22...b7 does not save Black either:
a) The seemingly attractive rook sacrifice 23...hxh7? does not promise anything after 23...gxh7 24.h4+ g6 25.f3 f3 26.f3 e5! 27.h3 f7 28.g6+ e6 29.h7 g7! 30.xg7 e7 31.h6 g8 32.g3 (32.g7+ g6 and Black is winning) 32...e7 33.g5 c6, and there is no material and no mate.

b) But 23.g6! leads to a win:

23...hxg6
23...h6 24.g7+ xg7 25.xg7 xg7 26.xb7 xB7 27.d4+ e5 28.xb4 winning a piece.

Here we can see that the unsuccessful c6-b4 manoeuvre not only failed to gain sufficient counterplay, but even compromised the knight as well in some variations.

24.h4 e7 25.h8+ f7 26.h7+ 26.e8 27.xg6+ d8 is unclear 26...e8 27.xe7+ xg7 28.e1
There is no satisfactory defence against 29.d4+ and 30.xe6, e.g.
28...e5 29.fxe5 dxe5 30.xe5+
We can safely stop here.

23.e1!

White's deep understanding of the position is evident, not just in the game moves, but in various lines (like the one above) that could have arisen during the course of the game. In many positions the possibility to capture on e6 might be essential for the assessment of a variation. The rook also opposes Black's possible e5-break.

It was still too early for 23.g6. Not because of 23...hxg6 24.h8+ f7 25.h4 e8 (25.xc2...

26.h7+ e8 27.xg6+ d8 28.f6! and Black is losing too much material) 26.h6 e7 27.xg6. In view of the various threats Black would be wise to resign. The problem with 23.g6 is 23...h6 closing the files around the king.

23...e5

This is an attempt to encourage the opponent into thinking his way into time trouble. The try was successful, although it is hard to look at Black's position without feeling sorry.

23...b7 is losing to 24.xf6:

a) 24...xg6 25.xf6 e8 (25...f7 26.xb7 xB7 27.xe6) 26.g3+ h8 27.e6! White wins with f6-f7.

b) Also 24...e8 25.d4 xg2 26.xg2 e5 (26...d5 27.e7+ xh7 28.g3+ g6 29.xe6 xe6 30.xf5+ f7 31.g6+ e8 32.xe6+ e7 33.xe7 mate) 27.e1 leaves Black in a hopeless situation.

24.d5
Of course!

24...xd5 25.xd5+ h8 26.e3

At this point time trouble (Kasimdzhanov's biggest enemy in San Luis) interfered. His position is still winning, but he could have sealed the deal immediately. And, as we all know, small mistakes are usually followed by bigger ones.

26.fxe5! wins easily: 26...dxe5 (26...dxe5 27.xf5 is horrible for Black) 27.e4!

Threatening g6 (which was not good enough immediately because of 27...e7). Now the rook cannot move, and g6 wins. For instance: 27.d7 (or 27.b7 28.xb7 xB7 29.xf5) 28.g6 g7 29.e5 xg6+ 30.e3 Black has a choice between losing the rook, the queen or the king. Or maybe she will lose them all?
26...\( \text{b7} \)

After this the f5-pawn falls, leaving Black in a hopeless position.

There was an idea to confuse the opponent with an attempt to drive his bishop away from the lethal diagonal. 26...b5 27.\( \text{fxe5} \) (27.\( \text{d4} \) \( \text{c5!} \) and Black escapes) 27...\( \text{dxe5} \) 28.axb5 axb5 29.\( \text{f4} \) b4 Saying that Black has solved all her problems would not be true after 30.\( \text{d4} \), but at least White does not win immediately.

27.\( \text{xb7} \) \( \text{xb7} \) 28.\( \text{d4!} \) \( \text{d7!} \)

It is not only due to time trouble that Polgar did not get mated here, but mainly thanks to her great efforts. In a desperate situation she managed to confuse the opponent in the best possible way and almost got off the hook. Too bad that in this tournament she achieved such awful positions with Black that even her great talent for complications could not help her.

Of course, after 28...exd4 29.\( \text{xe7} \) \( \text{xe7} \) 30.\( \text{d4!} \) \( \text{f6} \) 31.\( \text{gxf6} \) \( \text{g8} \) 32.\( \text{g3} \) \( \text{xg3} \) 33.\( \text{hxg3} \) \( \text{g8} \) 34.\( \text{xd6} \) there is no hope.

29.\( \text{h4} \) \( \text{b5} \)

Or 29...exd4 30.\( \text{xd4!} \) \( \text{e5} \) 31.\( \text{fxe5} \) dxe5 32.\( \text{xe5} \) \( \text{g8} \) 33.\( \text{g6} \) and it is over.

30.\( \text{xf5} \) \( \text{d5} \)

31.g6!!

A possible solution, although taking on e5 seems simpler:

It seems that after 31.\( \text{fxe5} \) White did not like 31...\( \text{e5!} \), as it appears that the king has nowhere to retreat. But White can simply cover the king, and almost anything will do: 32.\( \text{xe3}! \) and after 32...\( \text{xe3} \) (or 32...d4 33.\( \text{e6} \) \( \text{g7} \) 34.\( \text{xd4} \) \( \text{xd4} \) 35.\( \text{xd4} \) 33.\( \text{xe3} \) \( \text{g7} \) 34.e6 \( \text{d8} \) 35.\( \text{f5} \) there is no need to continue.

Perhaps that is not an easy variation in time trouble, but why the obvious 31.\( \text{xe5} \) was not played is a complete mystery. The variation 31...\( \text{xe5} \) 32.\( \text{xe5} \) \( \text{g8} \) 33.\( \text{g6} \) \( \text{b6} \) 34.\( \text{h1} \) \( \text{xe6} \) 35.\( \text{g3} \) is clear and unequivocal.

By the way, Fritz suggests 31.\( \text{h5} \), as if there are not enough human solutions already. But the lump of silicon is right – Black can resign, as heavy material losses are inevitable.

31...\( \text{xb7} \) 32.\( \text{h4} \)

Here the time pressure is most strongly felt. If White wanted to take on e5 with the rook (and he did!) then it was better to retreat to f1. If he wants to take with the pawn (which is not bad at all) this will also work. From all the possibilities, White chooses the worst combination – moving the king to h1 and taking on e5 with the pawn.

After 32.\( \text{h1} \) \( \text{xe6} \) White can play 33.\( \text{xe5} \) \( \text{xe5} \) 34.\( \text{xe5} \) \( \text{g7} \) and here 35.\( \text{exf7} \) \( \text{xf7} \) 36.\( \text{f3} \) is winning. The same idea does not work in the game and that is what Kasimdzhanov missed.

32.\( \text{xe6} \) \( \text{g7} \)

An easy victory can still be reached after 33.\( \text{fxe5}! \) \( \text{b5} \) 34.e6 \( \text{d6} \) 35.\( \text{g1} \).

33.\( \text{xe5}! \)

And here Polgar picks her head up, realizing that although White still has a big advantage, he has to win the game again!

34.\( \text{xe5} \) \( \text{g7} \)
35.\texttt{\textbf{hxg7}}

Now the difference in the white king's position becomes clear. However, it was still better to exchange the pieces in a different order.

Perhaps only here did White realize that after 35.\texttt{\textbf{hxg7}} 36.\texttt{\textbf{gxg7}} Black has 36...\texttt{\textbf{f6}} with a perpetual: 37.\texttt{\textbf{g1}} 38.\texttt{\textbf{f6}} 39.\texttt{\textbf{g1}} (39.\texttt{\textbf{h3}}? 40.\texttt{\textbf{f1}} winning) 39...\texttt{\textbf{f1}} For this reason it was better to put the king on f1.

35...\texttt{\textbf{hxg7}} 36.\texttt{\textbf{hxg7}}

Black could have tried to confuse her opponent with study-like drawing ideas: 36...\texttt{\textbf{e4}} 37.\texttt{\textbf{g1}} \texttt{\textbf{d4}} 38.\texttt{\textbf{f1}} and now:

\begin{enumerate}
    \item[a)] 38...\texttt{\textbf{c4}} 39.\texttt{\textbf{d3}} \texttt{\textbf{xc2}} 40.\texttt{\textbf{g3}} \texttt{\textbf{bxa4}}! And if 41.\texttt{\textbf{f6}}, then 41...\texttt{\textbf{b1}} 42.\texttt{\textbf{g2}} \texttt{\textbf{xb2}} 43.\texttt{\textbf{xb2}} \texttt{\textbf{xb2}}. White has many technical difficulties to overcome here. For example: 44.\texttt{\textbf{h3}} (44.\texttt{\textbf{g1}} a3!) 44...\texttt{\textbf{b3}} 45.\texttt{\textbf{c6}} \texttt{\textbf{g3}} 46.\texttt{\textbf{hxg3}} a3 47.\texttt{\textbf{d4}} a2 48.\texttt{\textbf{b3}} \texttt{\textbf{g7}}! This is a draw. As soon as the white king is forced to chase pawns on the queenside, Black will destroy the last white pawns. On 49.\texttt{\textbf{g4}} Black has 49...\texttt{\textbf{g6}} 50.\texttt{\textbf{g3}} b5 51.\texttt{\textbf{hxg5}}! (51.\texttt{\textbf{g5}} d4 and suddenly it is Black winning) 51...\texttt{\textbf{d4}} 52.\texttt{\textbf{f3}} a5 53.\texttt{\textbf{g3}} a4 54.\texttt{\textbf{d1}} \texttt{\textbf{g4}} 55.\texttt{\textbf{e2}} \texttt{\textbf{f5}} with equality.

    But White still had a way to win:
    41.\texttt{\textbf{h5}}!

    For example:
    41...\texttt{\textbf{b1}} 42.\texttt{\textbf{g2}} \texttt{\textbf{xb2}}

    After 42...\texttt{\textbf{xb2}} 43.\texttt{\textbf{h3}} Black has no more checks and nothing can help her poor king anymore. We even have signed proof of this – our faithful friend says mate in 15.

    43.\texttt{\textbf{h3}} \texttt{\textbf{f1}} 44.\texttt{\textbf{g4}} \texttt{\textbf{e2}} 45.\texttt{\textbf{h3}} \texttt{\textbf{e6}} 46.\texttt{\textbf{f5}} \texttt{\textbf{g8}} 47.\texttt{\textbf{g5}} \texttt{\textbf{hxh2}} 48.\texttt{\textbf{g8}} \texttt{\textbf{g8}} 49.\texttt{\textbf{a3}}

    Compared to a previous position White has a pawn less, but the rooks are still in the game, and this proves decisive.

    b) An objectively better way is 38...\texttt{\textbf{d1}} 39.\texttt{\textbf{e1}} \texttt{\textbf{xe1}} 40.\texttt{\textbf{xe1}} \texttt{\textbf{g7}} with a much closer to drawn, but still critical, endgame.

37.\texttt{\textbf{axb5}} \texttt{\textbf{axb5}} 38.\texttt{\textbf{c3}}

After quite a few mutual mistakes, Black's chances for a draw are higher than White's for a win. Her biggest problems are that White can attack Black's king and advance the f-pawn.

38...\texttt{\textbf{g6}}?

After this the chances again go in White's favour. It was necessary to rate the f-pawn as the No. 1 target. Therefore, very strong was:

38...\texttt{\textbf{f6}}! 39.\texttt{\textbf{e3}}

39.\texttt{\textbf{h5}} \texttt{\textbf{xe7}}! 39.\texttt{\textbf{f2}} \texttt{\textbf{f6}} 40.\texttt{\textbf{h4}} \texttt{\textbf{f5}} and it is not easy to show a real winning plan.

39...\texttt{\textbf{f5}} 40.\texttt{\textbf{h5}}

40.\texttt{\textbf{xh6}} \texttt{\textbf{xf6}} 41.\texttt{\textbf{g5}} b4! 42.\texttt{\textbf{xd5}} \texttt{\textbf{xc3}} 43.\texttt{\textbf{xc3}} \texttt{\textbf{xf4}} with a drawish endgame.

40...\texttt{\textbf{xf4}} 41.\texttt{\textbf{xd5}} \texttt{\textbf{e8}}!

Avoiding 41...\texttt{\textbf{b4}} 42.\texttt{\textbf{xb4}} \texttt{\textbf{f1}} 43.\texttt{\textbf{g1}} \texttt{\textbf{f3}} 44.\texttt{\textbf{xf3}} \texttt{\textbf{xf3}} 45.\texttt{\textbf{g3}}! \texttt{\textbf{f4}} 46.\texttt{\textbf{b3}} which is winning.
42.\textcolor{red}{$\text{g1}$} $\text{e4} \uparrow$ 43.\textcolor{red}{$\text{xe4}$} $\text{xe4}$

Again, this should be drawn.

39.\textcolor{red}{$\text{f5}$}!

Now White combines threats of the f-pawn advancing together with attacking Black's king and her queenside weaknesses. Black is lost again.

39...\textcolor{red}{$\text{g7}$}

39...\textcolor{red}{$\text{xf5}$} 40.\textcolor{red}{$\text{d4}$} $\text{g8}$ 41.\textcolor{red}{$\text{g3}$} $\text{f7}$
42.\textcolor{red}{$\text{g7}$} $\text{e6}$ 43.\textcolor{red}{$\text{e3}$} $\text{d6}$ 44.\textcolor{red}{$\text{e7}$} $\text{c6}$
45.\textcolor{red}{$\text{e6}$} $\uparrow$ is terminal.

40.\textcolor{red}{$\text{e3}$} $\text{a8}$

Polgar is, as always, looking for counterplay, but there is none...

41.\textcolor{red}{$\text{e1}$} $\text{f7}$ 42.\textcolor{red}{$\text{d1}$} $\text{g7}$ 43.\textcolor{red}{$\text{b4}$}

Black has no threats, which means the best technique is to play slowly, which is what Kasimdzhanov does.

43...$\text{h6}$ 44.\textcolor{red}{$\text{e1}$}

44...\textcolor{red}{$\text{a7}$} $\uparrow$!

Once more Black allows the f-pawn to move. More stubborn would have been 44...\textcolor{red}{$\text{g6}$}, although it does not change the evaluation of the position too much: 45.\textcolor{red}{$\text{e5}$} and White's advantage should suffice. 45...\textcolor{red}{$\text{f7}$} 46.\textcolor{red}{$\text{d1}$} (46.\textcolor{red}{$\text{g1}$} $\text{h5}$=) 46...\textcolor{red}{$\text{h7}$} 47.\textcolor{red}{$\text{g1}$} $\text{a3}$ 48.\textcolor{red}{$\text{e1}$} $\text{a7}$ 49.\textcolor{red}{$\text{b1}$} $\text{g8}$
50.\textcolor{red}{$\text{g1}$} $\text{h8}$ (50...\textcolor{red}{$\text{h7}$} 51.\textcolor{red}{$\text{f6}$}) 51.\textcolor{red}{$\text{e6}$} $\text{h7}$

Here the silicon vote is for 52.\textcolor{red}{$\text{h4}$}!. Is it trivial? The idea is to give the king some air against Black's possible counter-chances. e.g. 52...\textcolor{red}{$\text{a2}$} 53.\textcolor{red}{$\text{e3}$} and Black can resign.

45.\textcolor{red}{$\text{f6}$} $\text{xf6}$

Or 45...\textcolor{red}{$\text{g6}$} 46.\textcolor{red}{$\text{e8}$} $\text{h7}$ 47.\textcolor{red}{$\text{e7}$} $\text{xe7}$
48.\textcolor{red}{$\text{xc7}$} $\text{xe8}$ 49.\textcolor{red}{$\text{e6}$} and White's domination will soon place Black in zugzwang.

46.\textcolor{red}{$\text{e8}$} $\uparrow$

Near geometry finishes the job.

46...$\text{h7}$

Or 46...$\text{g7}$ 47.\textcolor{red}{$\text{g1}$} $\text{g5}$ 48.\textcolor{red}{$\text{xa7}$} $\text{winning}$

47.\textcolor{red}{$\text{b1}$} $\uparrow$

Because of the loss of material after 47...\textcolor{red}{$\text{g6}$} (or
47...$\text{g7}$ 48.\textcolor{red}{$\text{g1}$}) 48.\textcolor{red}{$\text{h8}$} $\text{black resigned}$.

1–0
Finally there is a hint of an intrigue in the tournament, as the main pursuer, Svidler, managed to reduce the gap to the leader to “only” 1.5 points, and given that tomorrow they meet face-to-face, the right result (for the spectators) would leave only a half point lead with two rounds to go.

Svidler earned his win after a hard-fought battle. Do not let their shared flag deceive you, as we have already mentioned, the games between Svidler and Morozevich are always extremely principled — looking to the future, these two will dispute the chess leadership of their country. Add Morozevich’s painful loss in the first half, and his mood coming into this game will be clear.

Morozevich admitted that in this game he decided to play for a better place (maybe third or even second) and as a result, in his own opinion, “played like an idiot”. Therefore, after winning the game Svidler was notably happy (although tired). As for the chess part of the game — it had it all. First, Svidler showed he does not really care what current theory thinks, opting for a line which has not been used for over 15 years. Although he improved a little over White’s play in those ancient games, the position remained pretty much balanced, until Morozevich made his first mistake — he placed the wrong piece on a central square. This proved to be enough for his position to quickly become lost. From that point on Svidler’s play was strictly technical, as if he was afraid to ruin his chances with an accident — his opponent only needs one momentary weakness to turn the tables. Svidler was so determined not to allow any complications that he rejected very promising continuations time and times.
time again. As on many such occasions, White failed to sense the point when he had to take concrete action and first significantly endangered his win, and subsequently missed it altogether. However, when the draw was within reach, Morozevich returned the favour. It's hard not to recall the classics of pop music, Boney M's "Oh, those Russians...".

**Anand** is back in the limelight, showing Kasimdzhanov that he does not forget easily. The reprisal was swift and merciless. Black's choice of a topcal line in the Najdorf was either brave or suicidal. The FIDE champion appeared to be surprised by Anand's strong continuation in the opening, although it was not new. The Uzbek's reaction was not best and he soon found himself in a difficult position, which, after he missed an amazing opportunity to complicate matters, deteriorated very quickly. It is enough to glance at the position after White's 22nd move, with Black a pawn down and his king in the centre, to realize how tough a day this was for the FIDE Champion.

A very interesting and beautiful game was produced by **Adams** and **Topalov**. To some it might appear that Adams declared war on the Bulgarian, but Sicilian experts know better. To make his opponent's life harder, Adams prepared a novelty in this old line, which was not considered to be too dangerous for Black. This novelty, as with most of Adams', was very logical, but with hindsight it is probably just a one-game shot. Black's reaction was not best, and with a piece sacrifice Adams launched an attack on the enemy king. Topalov's decision to ignore the sacrifice, and sacrifice an exchange of his own, can only be explained by an ultra-sensitive sixth sense - even after the game every commentator (including the players themselves!) failed to find a win for White in the event of accepting the knight sacrifice. However, after a bit of a brainstorm, we managed to find one, thus proving Topalov's decision to be not only wise (why increase the risk), but in fact the strongest. To be honest, after the exchange sacrifice Black's position remained suspicious, but Adams did not use his only chance. Eventually, the perpetual check was timely, as Black was intending to start a fierce attack.

In the light of those enormous struggles, the long awaited duel between the Hungarians **Polgar** and **Leko** was essentially cancelled - the players brought golf clubs rather than guns. The opening played was once the scene of many fine wins by Fischer, but there are no mysteries there anymore, and the players seemed to have accepted the peaceful outcome long before signing the scoresheets.

For the first time in many rounds talk about the winner's identity was back, it is nice to remember how thousands of people were impatiently awaiting the next round's "top of the league" clash. Nice, because it proves that chess can be no less intriguing than any other sport, causing people to spend hours watching the games live (at night for the Europeans) on a daily basis.
After a hard-fought derby in the first half, we were expecting a principled fight in this game. But the tournament situation killed most of the players' enthusiasm for a fight, if not all of it...

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.c4 e6 5.d3 c6

Very interesting is 5...c6, which usually leads to completely different and more lively isolated pawn positions after 6.d3 e7 (or 6...b4) 7.cxd5 cxd5.

6.\\textit{f3}

A bit more aggressive is 6.g5, but it is also more risky (after 6...e6). And risk was definitely not part of White's plan today.

6...g4 7.cxd5 cxd5 8.f3

As always, the moment the queen's bishop leaves home, the pressure on b7 starts. On the other hand, the path to equality is well known, so this line's choice can be viewed as a silent draw agreement.

8...xf3 9.gxf3

Of course not 9.xb7?? xdb4 10.gxf3 b8 trapping the queen.

9...e6

The safest way to equalize. A more ambitious way to fight for counter-chances is 9...db6, but it can easily play into the opponent's hands, since after 10.e3 (10.d5 is more double-edged)

10...e6 11.0-0-0 e7 12.d5 exd5 13.xd5 xdx5 14.xd5 e7 15.bl1 0-0-0 16.b4 Black would definitely not be celebrating.

10.xb7 xdx4 11.b5

Only this check, depriving Black of castling, gives White with some hopes, but since most of the pieces are exchanged, it is hardly dangerous.

11...xb5 12.c6+ e7 13.xb5 d7

This note is perhaps the most significant thing you will see in the whole game, but the game shown below is so instructive, that it was worth suffering the colourless draw.

13...xc3? allowed one of the cleanest technical wins in Fischer's career. 14.xc3 d7? 15.bl1 ed8 16.e3 xxf5 17.xf5 d7 18.e2 e6 19.d1 xxd1 20.xd1 e7 21.b8+ c6 22.xc7 g5 23.a4 g4 24.b6+ d5 25.b7 c8 26.b8+ g7 27.b5+ c6 28.b6+ d5 29.a5 f5 30.b8 b8 31.a6 xxc3 32.b5+ c4 33.b7 d4 34.e7+ d3 35.xc3+ xxc3 36.e5 Fischer - Euwe, Leipzig 1960. Virtually every White move could be awarded an exclamation mark, and is a perfect example of chess technique, although it also shows the best White can hope for here.

Comparing this game to the main one, a natural question arises: why did White get an advantage in one, and not in the other? To answer it one should realize that Black's biggest drawback is a lack of development, and the weaknesses are pretty balanced in both camps. Therefore, if
White, who is better developed, starts attacking the weaknesses first then he has a good chance of succeeding. Opening the b-file allowed White to invade the enemy's camp and hit the weaknesses. However, in the current game Black did not allow it and had enough time to complete development. The statistics prove that White has no real chances here, unless Black goes wrong, which has happened a few times.

34.\textit{Qxd5} $\textit{Qxd5}$ 35.\textit{Bg5}t

A whole book on "How to make peace" could be written in this position. Indeed, there are so many different moves, so many games. One might get the impression this is among the most popular positions in chess, that it is true, although for the wrong reasons...

The idea of this check is to force Black's f-pawn to f6, which will make it more difficult for Black to manoeuvre on the kingside. For instance, the comfortable f6-square is taken from Black's king and bishop. Here are two examples where Black exploited the absence of this check:

\begin{itemize}
  \item a) 15.\textit{Wxd5 exd5} 16.\textit{Bf4} $\textit{g6}$ Onischuk - Dreev, Moscow 2002.
  \item b) 15.\textit{Wxd5 exd5} 16.0-0 $\textit{Be6}$ 17.\textit{Be1} $\textit{Bf5}$ 18.\textit{Ed1} $\textit{Ed8}$ 19.\textit{Be3} $\textit{Ed7}$ 20.\textit{Bac1} $\textit{Be7}$ 21.\textit{Ed4} $\textit{g5}$ 22.\textit{Ba4} $\textit{Bf6}$ Adams - Dreev, Wijk aan Zee 2002.
\end{itemize}

In both cases Black had no problems.

15...$f6$ 16.\textit{Wxd5 exd5} 17.\textit{Be3} $\textit{Be6}$

Each side have a few weaknesses: d5 and to some extent a7 for Black, and f3 and h2 for White. The black king is in the centre, but this is hardly dangerous, as there are not enough pieces left. Black's pieces will very soon be just as good as White’s. The most logical continuation is a systematic elimination of the weaknesses, transposing into a drawn rook endgame. Maybe White has more practical chances, but definitely not objectively, and not at the highest level.

What happened to this position is a logical consequence of a frequently played forcing line. Once it was considered to have some hidden nuances, but there were not so many, and they have mostly been revealed and exhausted by too many games.

18.0-0-0 $\textit{Ab4}$

The point of this manoeuvre is simple – it both actively develops the bishop and allows exchanging bishops in case it is needed. For instance, after 19.a3 (as Dolmatov, the inventor of 15.\textit{Bg5}, played) 19...\textit{Hc8}t! 20.\textit{Bb1} $\textit{Ac5}$ the game is directed into a well-known drawn 4-rooks game after 21.\textit{Hc1} $\textit{Axe3}$ 22.\textit{Bxe3}t $\textit{Cd6}$ 23.\textit{Cd1} $\textit{Bc4}$ and Black has counter-chances due to ...$\textit{Bf4}$ and ...$\textit{Bh4}$ ideas.

19.\textit{Ed3}$

Trying to cross the plan of exchanging bishops – now after 19...\textit{Hc8} 20.\textit{Bb1} $\textit{Bc7}$ 21.\textit{Hd1} $\textit{Ed8}$ 22.a3 the idea 22...$\textit{Bc5}$ is problematic because of 23.\textit{Bc3}.

19...\textit{Hd8} 20.a3

This move gives no real winning chances. 20.\textit{Bb1} and a rook invasion along the c-file is a natural try. For example: 20...a5 21.a3 $\textit{Bc7}$ 22.\textit{Be1} $\textit{Bf7}$ 23.\textit{Bc1} $\textit{Bd7}$ 24.\textit{Bc6} a4 25.\textit{Bc2} $f5$ 26.\textit{Bd4} $\textit{Ag5}$ 27.\textit{Be5} $\textit{Bh4}$ 28.\textit{Bd2} $\textit{Ba7}$ 29.\textit{f4} $\textit{Bc7}$ 30.\textit{Bd3} $\textit{Bd8}$ 31.\textit{Bd2} $\textit{Bg8}$ 32.\textit{Bc3} $\textit{Ba7}$ 33.\textit{Bg3} $\textit{Bh4}$ 34.\textit{Bc8}t $\textit{Bd8}$ 35.\textit{Bxd8t} $\textit{Axd8}$ 36.\textit{Bd3} $\textit{Ab6}$ 37.\textit{Bxe2} $\textit{Bd7}$ 38.\textit{Bc3} $d4$ 39.\textit{Bc8t} $\textit{Bf7}$ 40.\textit{Bd3}, and White won, Marin – Engqvist, Stockholm 2002.

This idea is probably the only chance to fight in this peaceful line.

20...\textit{Bac8}t 21.\textit{Bb1} $\textit{Bc5}$ 22.\textit{Be1} $\textit{Bf7}$

Leko does not even try 22...$\textit{Bd6}$, which led to a draw in Karpov – Kramnik, Linares 1993.

23.\textit{Bed1} $\textit{Be6}$ 24.\textit{Be1} $\textit{Bf7}$ 25.\textit{Bed1} $\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}$
SVIDLER – MOROZEVICH

GAME 42
Peter Svidler
Alexander Morozevich
Petroff Defence C42

1.e4 e5 2.d3 d6
Morozevich avoids both the Sicilian and the Ruy Lopez, where his opponent is justly considered to be a great expert, whereas in the Petroff Svidler failed to show much in his first round encounter against Adams.

3...exd6 4.d4 5.d4
Two rounds later Svidler will opt for 5.c3 (Game 55).

5...d5 6.d3 d6
The line 6...c6 7.0-0 c7 8.c4 0-0 9.d4 has quite successfully got on everybody's nerves by now (Game 45).

7.0-0 0-0 8.c4 c6 9.e1
This move is gaining popularity, at the same time as 9.d2 has been losing its. The problem is that this move suffered quite a painful blow in 2005, and has yet to recover from the following game: 9...d6 10.a3 d5 11.e5 e5 12.b4 f6 13.e3 e4 14.b5 d3 15.bxa6 e6 16.c1 e5 17.e2 h5 18.g4 f5 19.cxd5 cxd5 20.e4 fxe4 21.dxe4 dxe4 22.g3 f3 23.d5 f6
White resigned in Shirov - Bluvshtein, Canadian Open 2005. The whole game was following Black's home preparation and sent White searching for other ways in the opening.

Consider the position after a forced series of moves: 9.cxd5 cxd5 10.d3 c3 cxd3 11.cxd3 12.b1 d7! 13.h3 d5 14.e5 b6 15.e4 b5 16.d3 d6 17.c2 d7 18.a4

and it is rarely chosen by White at the highest level anymore. Here is the last time it was seen among elite players: 18...g6 19.c3 20.eb1 c3 21.a5 22.b7 23.b6 24.a6 25.6xe3 26.c7 27.e7 28.b3 with a draw agreed, Topalov - Shirov, Wijk aan Zee 2004.

9...f5 10.b3 d6

11.e3
The offered pawn is soaked in poison: 11.b7 b6 12.e5 (12.e3 d6 followed by ...b8 is equally disastrous) 12..e5 13.e7 14.e4 15.dxe5 16.e2 and it is a good time to resign.

The main move for White is considered to be 11.cxd5, which was played by Morozevich himself in the following game: 11...cxd5 12.c3 Now Black has 12.e6 which led to a double-edged position after 13.a3 c6 14.e3 f5 15.e6 16.c1 d7 17.e4

Generally speaking, Black gets good positions here, so a deviation by White was called for.

The text-move is reviving the past! The last time this move was seen in practice was in 1991. It is, however, quite logical, forcing Black to give up his hold of central positions, as 11...e6 is no longer possible because of 12.e4 dxe4 and, since the queen is not threatened, White is just a pawn up after 13.e4.

However, refraining from 11.cxd5 allows Black to play:
11...dxc4
The game Khalifman - Rozentalis, Vilnius 1988, continued 11...dxc5
12.dxc5 Qxc5 13.Qxf5 Qxb3 14.axb3 dxc4 15.bxc4 f4 16.g5 with an
interesting battle, in which the quantity of pieces prevailed over quality.

12...xc4
The most recent previous game in this line
continued: 12.Qxc4?! Qxc4! 13.Qxh2 Qd6
14.Qb3 Qxd3 15.Qg5 Qc7 16.Qxh6 Qc8 17.Qf4
Qc4 18.Qc2 Qf5 and Black went on to win in
Yemelin - Avrukh, Alma-Ata 1991. Given that
Svidler and Yemelin are from the same town and
are the same age, one might guess that Svidler
had some old analysis up his sleeve for the
current game.

12...Qxc3 13.bxc3 b5
Virtually the only way to protect both the b7-
and f7-pawns. The latter is protected by forcing
the bishop away from its best spot.

14.Qf1 Qc7

15.Qg5
A novelty, and a very logical one! The bishop
is going to travel quite a way to exchange its
opposite number, thus stopping Black's potential
counterplay on the kingside and gaining easier
access to c5. However, this does not greatly affect
the evaluation. White is slightly better, but Black
should not worry too much.

The previously tested 15.Qa3 also serves the idea
of exchanging the bishop, but puts less pressure
on Black's position. For example, after 15...Qe6
16.Qb2 Qd5 17.Qe5 Re8 18.Qxd6, a draw was

A possible try is 15.a4 a5 16.Qg5 Qd7 17.Qe5
Qxe5 18.Qxe5 Qe6, where 19.Qe1 fxe3 20.Qxe7
Bc8 21.axb5 Qxb5 22.g3 Qe6 23.Qc3 Qxc3
24.Qxb5 is drawish, Oll - Rozentalis, Kleipeda
like a very reasonable improvement.

15...Qc8
15...Qd7 seems somewhat less artificial, but
the text is OK as well.

16.Qh4 a5
Deprived of active play on the kingside and
in the centre, Morozevich seeks activity on the
queenside.

16...Qe6, intending to transfer the bishop to
a better place, is still too early as, after 17.Qc2
Qd5 18.Qg5 Qb6 (18...f5 weakens too many
important squares, and now 19.c4 bxc4 20.Qxc4
is favourable for White) 19.Qe4, White gets a
clear advantage.

17.Qg3
White continues his plan.
17...Qxe6 18.Qb2 Qxe3 19.hxg3

19...Qd5?
Amazingly, after this move, which happens
to be Black's first mistake in the game, the
deterioration of his position can no longer be
stopped. From this point on he may make good
or bad decisions (mostly good), but he is no
longer in charge of the outcome, being is totally
dependent on his opponent's play. What is even
more striking is that such a natural move, putting the knight in the centre (as they teach us from the very first chess lesson) can be a mistake. The problem is that Black occupied the right square with the wrong piece. His knight on d5 in no more than a decoration whereas the bishop on the same square would have been a key player for both defence (c6) and offence (a2, the a8-g2 diagonal).

Therefore, 19...\textit{b6} was much more to the point, making the planned c3-c4 much harder to execute, and even after that, it will mean exchanging the light-squared bishops, which is good for Black. A possible continuation is 20.\textit{a}c1 \textit{b}b8 21.\textit{d}d2 \textit{d}d5 22.\textit{e}e5 (22.c4 \textit{bxc}4 23.\textit{xc}4 \textit{xf}3 24.\textit{g}xd3 \textit{d}d7 with equality) 22...\textit{f}6 23.c4 \textit{bxc}4 24.\textit{xc}4 \textit{d}d7 and Black has sufficient play against d4.

20.c4

The “rule of thumb” says that usually c6 is easier to defend than d4 (in case of mutual isolated pawns, that is). Here is an example of an exception, mainly because Black is stuck with his pieces on the wrong squares.

20...\textit{bxc}4 21.\textit{xc}4 \textit{b}b8 22.\textit{d}d2

As we said, both sides have weaknesses (c6 vs. d4), but whereas Black’s can be easily attacked by all White’s pieces (and in fact very quickly) he cannot do anything to disturb d4. This leaves him to try his counter-chances along the b-file, which also fails to be serious: after the simple a3 Black can no longer attack the pawn, and if he plays ...a3 himself, the b-file can be closed with \textit{b}b3. Black position is strategically very difficult, if not lost!

22...\textit{b}b7

The attempt to get the rook in front with 22...\textit{b}b6 also does not yield Black any achievements since 23.\textit{a}c1 \textit{b}b7 24.\textit{e}e5 \textit{b}b2 is simply answered with 25.\textit{a}a5, as 25...\textit{a}a8 loses beautifully to 26.\textit{xc}6! \textit{xc}6 27.\textit{xd}5 \textit{xa}5 28.\textit{xc}6 \textit{f}6 29.a3 \textit{b}b3 30.\textit{e}e3, with a technically winning position.

23.\textit{e}e5

A waste of time. The attempt to fix White’s a-pawn on a light square with 23...a3 would be answered with 24.\textit{a}a5! \textit{b}b4 (24...\textit{a}a8 25.\textit{c}c5 \textit{b}c8 26.\textit{xc}6 is more than a pawn deficit. It is a position deficit.) 25.\textit{xc}6! \textit{xc}4 26.\textit{xd}5! \textit{xd}5 27.\textit{e}e7\textit{h}8 28.\textit{xd}5, with a technically won position for White.

What Black should have done is bring the rook into the game with 23...\textit{f}c8 24.\textit{a}c1 (24.\textit{a}a5 \textit{e}e6 25.\textit{xa}4 \textit{b}b6 26.\textit{c}2 \textit{xc}4 27.\textit{xc}4 \textit{a}7 28.\textit{ad}1 \textit{a}6 would give Black some play) 24...\textit{e}e6, with a better version of the game, although not exactly a bed of roses.

24.\textit{a}c1 \textit{e}e6

24...a3 loses an exchange after 25.\textit{xd}5 cxd5 26.\textit{xc}6 followed by \textit{e}e7\textit{h}, whereas 24...\textit{f}c8 is nicely refuted by 25.\textit{xf}7! \textit{xf}7 26.\textit{f}4, regaining the piece while keeping the pawn and an attack.
25.a3!

That is it. Having deprived Black of the possibility to play a4-a3, not only did Svidler fix another of his opponent’s pawns on a light square, but without Black controlling the b2-square (as would have been the case had he been able to play a4-a3 himself) there is no hint of counterplay along the b-file anymore.

25...c8 26.a2 h6

26...b2 is pointless, as White can choose between the simple 27.c2, forcing the queen back, as after 27...xa3 28.xc6 White is threatening 29.xd5 xd5 30.e7+, so Black has to give up an exchange with a lost position, or 27.xb2 xb2 28.xd5 xd5 29.xc6 xc6 30.xc6 with a probably winning ending. The last line is likely to be the cause for Morozevich playing the text-move.

27.c2 f5

28.e5?!

Black’s problem is that the knight on d5 cannot move, and therefore cannot help protect the pawn. The f5-bishop’s fate is no less tragic: it has nothing at all to do and actually hurts Black,
as in many lines it is hanging after $\textit{Qe7}$+. Black is regretting his choice on move 19, and White does not want to let his opponent out of this state.

In general, Svidler's strategy from this move forward could be described as: “minimize the variations, minimize the opponent’s chances”. The text prepares $\textit{Bc1}$, increasing the pressure until it becomes unbearable.

However, White had an objectively much stronger move (in fact, virtually winning): 28.$\textit{Qb1}$! when Black’s best bet is 28...$\textit{Qxb1}$+ (as 28...$\textit{Bc7}$ 29.$\textit{Qxb8}$ $\textit{Qxb8}$ 30.$\textit{Qxc6}$ $\textit{Qd6}$ 31.$\textit{Qxd5}$ $\textit{Qxc2}$ 32.$\textit{Qxc2}$ would only help end the suffering quickly) 29.$\textit{Qxb1}$ $\textit{Qxb1}$+ 30.$\textit{Qc1}$.

Perhaps Svidler was concerned about Black building a fortress (which is very unlikely with $\textit{a4}$, $\textit{c6}$ and $\textit{f7}$ being potential weaknesses), or maybe he did not feel the need to place both rooks under the attack of Black’s bishop — in either case, although the text move is good, 28.$\textit{Qb1}$! would have saved him a lot of effort in this game.

28...$\textit{Qb2}$

Morozevich decides to create at least some visible counterplay before White doubles along the $\textit{c}$-file and this move becomes impossible as well, due to the weakness of Black’s rook on $\textit{c8}$.

29.$\textit{Qxb2}$ $\textit{Qxb2}$ 30.$\textit{Qc4}$

The $\textit{c6}$-pawn is doomed (and Black did not even attempt to attack the $\textit{d4}$-pawn!), but Svidler will not take it for many more moves.

30...$\textit{Qf8}$

A very strong practical decision by Svidler. The $\textit{c}$-pawn is not going anywhere, whereas taking it would eliminate three pawns (true, two of them would be Black’s) and two minor pieces, thus increasing Black’s chances for an escape.

31.$\textit{Qxc6}$ $\textit{Qf6}$ 32.$\textit{Qxf5}$ $\textit{Qxc6}$ 33.$\textit{Qxa5}$! $\textit{g6}$

34.$\textit{Qxa4}$ $\textit{Qd2}$ Black wins the pawn on $\textit{d4}$, after which the arising position in undoubtedly winning for White, but the game can also be won without exchanging so many pawns, and according to various ‘endgame principles’ this is preferable.

31...$\textit{Qb6}$ 32.$\textit{Qxf7}$

A demonstration of class. Why take a weak pawn, if you can grab a healthy one?

32...$\textit{Qb1}$

After 32...$\textit{Qxc4}$ 33.$\textit{Qxf5}$ White also wins the exchange.

33.$\textit{Qxb1}$ $\textit{Qxb1}$ 34.$\textit{Qe5}$

Back again, but White is already a pawn up.

34...$\textit{Qe7}$

34...$\textit{Qxc4}$ 35.$\textit{Qxc4}$ is just as hopeless as the game, but having both a knight and a bishop for each side often complicates the conversion process a bit, and therefore it is advisable to keep them all on the board.

35.$\textit{Qa6}$

Precise execution. Before transferring the bishop to $\textit{f3}$ (where it attacks the pawn), it is useful to drive the rook to an unprotected spot.

35...$\textit{Qc7}$ 36.$\textit{Qe2}$

It was too early to take the second pawn, as
after 36.bxc6? bxc6 37.dxc6† dxc6 38.b5 d5 Black is a full piece up in the game – the king: 
39.df1 d4 40.df2 dxa3 41.dxa4 d7 42.de3 dc4† It is not altogether clear how White can 
untangle without losing d4. Svidler definitely 
does not want to take such decisions before the 
time control.

36...d6

36...e4 was a bit stronger, not allowing 
the bishop to f3, but Black's moves have a very 
limited impact on the position. Morozevich, 
understanding this, just tries to keep his position 
from falling apart.

37.f3 a2

Finally the bishop is going to its best square. A 
mere 20 moves late.

38.e4

38.bxc6 was good, but Black gets an illusion of 
counterplay, which probably looked dangerous in 
time trouble: 38.dc8 39.f4 d7 40.dxa4 dxc5 
41.dxc5† dxc5 42.cf2 A very similar position 
will be reached in the game, close to the second 
time control.

38.d5 39.f3

On these terms, White is ready to trade the 
bishops.

39.e7

Morozevich finds the slightest possible chances, 
however small they might look. In the previous 
round it saved him half a point. And he picks the 
best time for this 'trap': the last move before the 
time control, trusting that his opponent will not 
be willing to try 40.da5! before he sees another 
hour on his clock.

40.cc3

Of course, 40.cf2 would have fallen into 
40..exe5 and Black wins. Also 40.dxc6 is bad 
because of 40..exe4.

But with 40.da5, taking advantage of the fact 
that Black's rook left the c-file (there is no c6-c5 
now), White could have transferred his rook to 
a6, making Black's task of defending the position 
even tougher as all his pieces would be tied up 
to defence: the rook would have to protect the 
 knight, which in turn would keep an eye on a4 
and cover c6 with his body, just like the bishop 
on d5.

40..c7 41.c5 b3

42.cf2?!

With the king in the centre there will be no 
need for calculation, and moves just after the time 
control are known to be full of tactical blunders at 
all levels (the tension drops after the time trouble, 
and with that comes mistakes). These were most 
likely the reasons that led Svidler to make this 
'must-be-good' move. There is only one problem 
with this no-hurry mode White forced himself into 
– eventually he will have to get back to concrete 
play, and more often than not it is surprisingly the 
stronger side who turns out not to be ready for it.

However, there was really no reason to avoid 
42.bxc6, and it was even better now than on 
the 38th move: 42..c8 43.cf2 c7 44.dxa4! 
winning.
42...d5! 43.e2 e7

Although his options in this position are very limited, the Muscovite is defending very wisely. The knight moves to a different position, thus changing the landscape a bit, and with it the plans.

44.a5 b7 45.e3 d5

There should be a limit to everything, even patience. After this White’s win becomes more challenging.

Now was the time to switch to concrete action with 46.xa4 b2 (46...b3† 47.d3) 47.a7 xg2 48.g4, which is easily winning for White. The passed a-pawn, together with the shaky position of Black’s king, make his defence impossible. The immediate threat is 49.f5 e6 50.f7† winning a piece. The problem is that such a position suddenly seems ‘way too messy’ for the stronger side, who is waiting for the point to fall into his lap. Here is an illustration of what could follow (after 48.g4): 48...e6 49.f4 xe4 50.xe4 g6 51.e6 e2† 52.d3 g2 53.xc6 xc6 54.xc6† f7 55.f5 g3† 56.e4 gxf5 (56...xg4 57.e4 with an easy win) 57.gxf5 h5 58.a4 f3 59.a5 xf5 60.e5 is curtains.

46.c4!

Svidler probably overlooked this strong defensive manoeuvre!

47.b4?!

47.xa4 xd3 48.xd3 b2 49.g4 xg2 is already a bit more tricky, although still winning.

47...b5!

Now the rook is caught offside.

48.g4

But White is not impressed, simply improving his position, knowing that Black will have to make a move eventually. In any case, the win has become a bit more difficult.

48...e8 49.d2
49...\(\text{Ka}7\)

Black is much better off without the rooks, as White’s ability to attack the weaknesses is greatly reduced.

A noteworthy observation: the c-pawn, which was doomed as early as move 28, eventually survived!

The knight cannot go to b6, as 49...\(\text{Kb}6\) 50...\(\text{Kxb}5\) \(\text{Kc}4\)+ 51...\(\text{Kc}3\) \(\text{Kxb}5\) 52...\(\text{Kxc}4\) is hopeless for Black, but he does not want to go there. He is after that rook on a5.

50...\(\text{Kxa}7\) \(\text{Kxa}7\) 51...\(\text{Kc}2!\)

Black was threatening 51...\(\text{Kc}4\), followed by \(\text{Kb}5\). Now this will be met with 52...\(\text{Kc}3\). 51...\(\text{Kc}3\) is bad because of 51...\(\text{Kf}1\).

51...\(\text{c}5\)

No, it is not a rerun of ‘Ghost’. The pawn is alive and kicking. White’s win is probably on the verge of study-like.

52...\(\text{Kc}3\) \(\text{Kf}1\)

A pseudo active move. Black should have kept his bishop on the e8-a4 diagonal, protecting the pawn. This would make White pay for his excessive patience previously.

The correct move was 52...\(\text{Kd}7!\) and White would have to find 53...\(\text{Kf}5!\) after which Black has: 53...\(\text{e}8\) 54...\(\text{d}3\) \(\text{Kb}5\)+ (After 54...\(\text{c}6\) White has 55...\(\text{b}5\) [the point of 53...\(\text{f}5\) was to force Black’s bishop to an unprotected square] 55...\(\text{cxd}4\)+ 56...\(\text{xd}4\) \(\text{xd}4\) 57...\(\text{xe}8\) and this wins easily.) 55...\(\text{xb}5\) \(\text{xb}5\) 56...\(\text{e}3\) \(\text{g}6\) 57...\(\text{f}4\) and White should win.

53...\(\text{d}5\) \(\text{c}5!\)

White gets an important tempo for regrouping his pieces.

54...\(\text{a}6?!\)

After this Black is losing relatively easily again. Correct was 54...\(\text{Kb}5!\) keeping a4 protected, after which 55...\(\text{f}5\) gives White nothing because of 55...\(\text{f}1\) 56...\(\text{xg}7\) \(\text{b}5\)+ 57...\(\text{b}2\) \(\text{xg}2\) with a draw, due to the passive position of White’s king. e.g. 58...\(\text{f}5\) \(\text{d}4\) 59...\(\text{xd}4\) (or 59...\(\text{xh}6\) \(\text{xf}3\) 60...\(\text{xf}3\) \(\text{fx}3\) 61...\(\text{f}7\) \(\text{d}5\) with a draw) 59...\(\text{xd}4\) 60...\(\text{c}6\) \(\text{c}5!\) with a handshake.

Luckily for him, White can zugzwang his opponent with 55...\(\text{b}2!\). The black bishop cannot abandon either of the two diagonals it is on, since it would either compromise the a4-pawn or allow White to play \(\text{f}5\) without being worried about \(\text{f}1\). And on any knight move 56...\(\text{f}5\) is winning, as Black’s knight never gets to d4 to provide the necessary counterplay.
Black is now too late to protect the a-pawn with 55...\textit{b}5 because of 56.\textit{c}5 \textit{f}1 57.\textit{x}g7 \textit{b}5\textit{t} 58.\textit{b}2 \textit{x}g2 59.\textit{f}4 and the a4-pawn is doomed. After it drops, with two passers so far away from each other, White wins easily.

Finally winning that second pawn, with what was supposed but be an easy win, but...

Time trouble has rules of its own. This throws away the win.

White could have won with 58.\textit{d}2\textit{e}5 59.\textit{c}3 \textit{f}4 60.\textit{d}4 \textit{g}3 61.\textit{c}6! \textit{x}g2 62.\textit{c}5 and the extra piece on the queenside (the king) brings White the victory. 62...\textit{c}8 (62...\textit{c}4 63.\textit{b}4 wins a piece) 63.\textit{a}4 \textit{g}3 64.\textit{a}5 \textit{e}2 65.\textit{d}4 \textit{d}3 66.\textit{b}7 etc.

However, it would be unfair to criticize either player very harshly for their mistakes at this stage of a long and tiring game, especially in view of the approaching time control.

This pawn is Black's chance! Perhaps it was this move that White underestimated a move earlier.

Svidler cannot allow his pawn to be fixed on g2.

With only one move before the time control Morozevich returns the favour. 60...\textit{b}7! would have drawn!

\textit{f}4

\textit{d}1 \textit{e}3 62.\textit{a}4 \textit{f}2 63.\textit{f}4 \textit{g}3 64.\textit{x}h5 is an even worse version of the main line, as White cannot put his bishop on \textit{c}2.

The problem is that White has no way to break through:

66...\textit{b}5 67.\textit{c}3 \textit{d}5 68.\textit{b}4

Here White has one last try to trap the opponent:

68..\textit{d}4 69.\textit{b}1!

White's problem is that 69.\textit{b}5 is met with 69..\textit{d}7\textit{f} 70.\textit{b}6 \textit{c}3 71.\textit{c}7 \textit{e}8 72.\textit{d}1 \textit{d}2 73.\textit{b}3 \textit{c}3 with a fantastic draw.

69...\textit{d}5 70.\textit{d}3, threatening \textit{a}4-\textit{a}5-\textit{a}6, and now

a) 70...\textit{d}4?? loses to 71.\textit{c}2

And Black is amazingly zugzwanged:

71.\textit{d}5

Or 71...\textit{b}7 72.\textit{b}5 and Black does not have the saving check along the \textit{a}4-\textit{e}8 diagonal.

72...\textit{c}3 73.\textit{b}6 \textit{f}3 74.\textit{b}1 \textit{e}2 75.\textit{a}5 winning, whereas 71...\textit{d}7 also loses to 72.\textit{a}5 as there is now no 73.\textit{a}6.
72.\( \text{b5} \) \( \text{d7} \) 73.\( \text{b6} \) and Black does not have 73...\( \text{c3} \), which was drawing with the king on \( \text{d4} \).

b) However, 70...\( \text{c6} \)! is good enough for a draw: 71.\( \text{e4} \) (or 71.\( \text{c4} \) \( \text{b6} \) 72.\( \text{d4} \) \( \text{a5} \) 73.\( \text{c2} \) \( \text{xf5} \) with a handshake) 71...\( \text{b6} \) 72.\( \text{a5} \) \( \text{a7} \) 73.\( \text{d3} \) \( \text{b8} \) With exact play White was able to force Black's king to a passive position, but that changes nothing: 74.\( \text{c5} \) \( \text{a7} \) and despite his domination, White cannot improve his position. On \( \text{d6} \) there is an automatic ...\( \text{xh5} \).

61.\( \text{c6} \)!

The path for the a-pawn is cleared.

61...\( \text{e3} \) 62.\( \text{c3} \) \( \text{f2} \) 63.\( \text{d2} \) \( \text{a6} \) 64.\( \text{g}4 \)

Now Black will have a passed pawn, but White will have two.

64...\( \text{h4} \) 65.\( \text{g5} \) \( \text{h3} \) 66.\( \text{f6} \) \( \text{gxf6} \) 67.\( \text{gxf6} \)

67...\( \text{b5} \)!!?

A psychological shot against an exhausted opponent.

The "correct" 67...\( \text{h2} \) loses effortlessly: 68.\( \text{f4} \) \( \text{b5} \) 69.\( \text{h1} \) \( \text{e8} \) 70.\( \text{a4} \) \( \text{h5} \) 71.\( \text{a5} \) \( \text{f3} \) 72.\( \text{f7} \) \( \text{xh1} \) 73.\( \text{f8} \) \( \text{f3} \) 74.\( \text{c5} \) \( \text{g3} \) 75.\( \text{g5} \) \( \text{h3} \)

76.\( \text{h6} \) \( \text{g3} \) 77.\( \text{f5} \) \( \text{h1} \) 78.\( \text{xh1} \) \( \text{xh1} \) 79.\( \text{f6} \) \( \text{d5} \) 80.\( \text{a6} \) and the trouser legs are a bit too big for the bishop.

68.\( \text{e4} \)!

The simplest was to queen the pawn! 68.\( \text{f7} \) \( \text{h2} \) 69.\( \text{f8} \) \( \text{h1} \) 70.\( \text{c5} \) (70.\( \text{xb5} \) \( \text{e1} \) 71.\( \text{c2} \) is also good enough, of course) 70...\( \text{g3} \) 71.\( \text{g5} \) \( \text{f2} \) 72.\( \text{e3} \) \( \text{g2} \) 73.\( \text{xb5} \) winning.

68...\( \text{e8} \) 69.\( \text{f4} \) \( \text{g6} \)??!

Last time it worked, and the two exclamation marks came first, so he tries it again, but this time his bluff is called, and therefore the question marks precede.

69...\( \text{h5} \), on the other hand, would have given Svidler a chance to end it in study-like fashion: 70.\( \text{f5} \) \( \text{h2} \) and now 71.\( \text{h1} \) (after 71.\( \text{d3} \) \( \text{f3} \) 72.\( \text{xh3} \) \( \text{xh3} \) 73.\( \text{f7} \) \( \text{h1} \) 74.\( \text{f8} \) for an example of the practical possibilities of such positions, we suggest the reader looks at the second round game between Topalov and Anand) 71...\( \text{g1} \)

72.\( \text{e1} \)!! \( \text{xh1} \) 73.\( \text{f2} \) And we're going to watch Peter Svidler's new autumn collection of trousers for bishops. Too bad the black king is locked up and will not be able to attend.

70.\( \text{gxg6} \)

1-0
Viswanathan Anand
Rustam Kasimdzhanov
Sicilian, English Attack B90

1.e4 c5 2.d4 cxd4 3.cxd4 d5 4.e5 c6 5.f3 a6 6.f4 e6 7.d3 d6 8.e3 b6

Two rounds ago Kasimdzhanov, against Svidler (Game 33), went for another possible Black approach – the one where Black completes his development prior to beginning his play on the queenside.

9.ad2 b5 10.0–0 db6 11.a3 d4

One of the most critical lines in the Najdorf nowadays.

12.xc4 bxc4

13.a5

At first this idea might strike one as a practical joke: the knight seems to be totally misplaced, counting on Black to blunder his queen with axa5?? However, with a current score of 6½ to ½ in White’s favour it does not sound so funny, not to Black anyhow. So what is the big idea?

Prior to the invention of 13.a5, 13.c5 was the only move, and here not everything is quite clear yet: 13...e7

White has opted for quite a few possibilities:

a) The immediate 14.g4 runs into 14...axg4 15.hg1 (or 15.xg4 16.xg4 15.g3 16.xg3 17.xg3 with a position for true chess romantics) 15...h5 16.b5 0–0 17.b6 18.xc4 19.c7, with a complex game, Erenburg – Karjakin, Beer Sheva 2005.

b) 14.xa4 eb8 15.b6 0–0 16.xd5 xd5 17.xd5 18.xe7+ xe7 19.d2 c3!
20.\textit{xc}3 \textit{xa}2 21.\textit{d}2, and a draw was agreed in Z. Almasi – Gelfand, Gothenburg 2005.

c) A continuation which has produced good results for White is 14.h4, but Black’s position is by no means desperate: 14...\textit{c}8 15.\textit{b}5a4 \textit{b}8 16.g4 \textit{c}6 17.\textit{b}6d6 18.\textit{cd}5 0–0 (a possible improvement is 18...\textit{xb}6 19.\textit{xb}6 d5?! with a highly complex position, in which Black’s chances are not worse) 19.c3 \textit{xd}5 20.\textit{xd}5 \textit{b}5 21.\textit{b}4 \textit{b}7 22.\textit{xd}6 \textit{a}5 23.\textit{a}6 \textit{d}7 24.\textit{c}5 \textit{c}8 25.\textit{xe}6 fxe6 26.\textit{xb}6 \textit{xb}6 27.\textit{xb}6, and White went on to convert the pawn, Anand – Svidler, Dortmund 2004.

13...\textit{e}8?!

Apparently caught unprepared for this plan, Kasimdzhanov commits one error after another, beginning with this novelty. A suitable response, however, has still to be found.

Wijk aan Zee 2006 featured two games in this position, both continuing 13...\textit{d}7. In the first attempt White played 14.g4 \textit{e}7 15.g5 \textit{h}5 16.\textit{d}5 \textit{a}4 17.\textit{c}3 \textit{d}7 18.\textit{d}5 \textit{a}4 19.\textit{e}1 \textit{c}3 20.\textit{xc}3 \textit{e}8 21.\textit{d}2 \textit{xa}2 22.\textit{b}4 \textit{xd}5 23.\textit{e}6 0–0–0 24.\textit{c}6, with a sizable advantage, Cheparinov – Lahno, Wijk aan Zee 2006. This game suggests that Topalov is also closely following developments in this line, as Cheparinov is, of course, his second.

The later game was played in a must-win situation for Anand, in the final round. He continued 14.\textit{d}2 \textit{e}7 15.\textit{d}1 \textit{b}8?! (15...0–0 is possibly more solid) 16.\textit{c}5! \textit{c}7 17.\textit{xd}6 \textit{xa}5 18.\textit{xe}6 fxe6 19.\textit{xe}7 \textit{b}7 20.\textit{d}6 \textit{d}7 21.\textit{h}4 \textit{d}8 22.\textit{h}5f6 g6 23.\textit{h}6 and White obtained very promising compensation for the exchange, Anand – Gelfand, Wijk aan Zee 2006.

This looks slow, and weakens the d6-square in the process, but there is no good solution for the unfortunate position of the bishop on e6, since it would be caught whenever White is able to push f3–f4–f5.

The more natural 15...\textit{e}7 might look tempting at first sight, in view of the line 16.f4?! when Black gains some air for his pieces with 16...\textit{h}3! and after 17.\textit{xe}5? \textit{g}4 his position is rather promising.

However, White has a strong response: 16.h3! Depriving Black’s pieces of important squares,
and only after 16...0-0 will White start advancing with 17.f4, creating very unpleasant pressure all over the board.

16...d2? 
Judging from his later game against Gelfand (see the note to Black’s 13th move) this is Anand’s approach in the position: simply increase the pressure along the d-file, until Black cracks under it.

However, here it would have been better to first remove the king from the potentially dangerous diagonal with 16...h1 h6 (on 16...g7 White can already play 17...d2, when the addition of 16...h1 is clearly in his favor) 17.f4 is more promising for him than the game, as 17...0-0 loses a pawn after 18.fxe5 g4 19...d4 gxe5 20...xd6, with Black having no visible compensation for it.

16...h6 17.f4 g4! 
Diving into concrete lines, which could have been interesting, but not in conjunction with his 19th move.

More solid was 17...0-0, and if 18...h1 then 18...e8 is hardly pleasant to the eye for Black (although it is playable), but Black has a very strong alternative suggested by IM Jacob Aagaard, 18...g4!, which leads to the following line:

19...xd6 e7 20...c6 xc6 21...xc6 exf4 22...d4

The attempt to set the board on fire with 22...xf4 xh1 23...h4 backfires after 23...d5 24...xh6 xhxh6 25...c5 f6 26...xd1 d8 27.xd6 c3!, and Black wins thanks to the c-pawn.

22...xh1 23...f6 f3 and Black is fine (Aagaard).

This line proves that White’s 16th move let the advantage slip away.

18...f3 b8 19.h3
Perhaps Kasimdzhanov missed this intermediate move, and lost the thread of the position.

On 19...\textit{c}c5 Black has 19...exf4 20.gxf4 \textit{d}e5 21.\textit{w}e3 \textit{d}d3†, although here too, after 22.cxd3 dxc5 23.\textit{d}d5, White has a clear edge.

19...\textit{f}6?

It is hard to say what Kasimdzhanov was aiming for with the \textit{f}6-g4-f6 manoeuvre, or what he missed, but after this his position is hopeless, and Anand leaves him no chance.

19...\textit{b}xb6? is losing to 20.hxg4 (threatening both 21.\textit{f}5 and 21.\textit{x}h6) 20...\textit{x}g4 21.\textit{w}f2 and White wins a piece.

Therefore, Black’s last chance to complicate matters was 19...\textit{h}2! 20.\textit{w}e3 \textit{f}3, when natural moves fall short:

a) Just bad is now 21.\textit{dd}1, as after 21...0-0-0! White has nothing at all. In fact, it is Black who has the better position here: 22.\textit{w}xf3 (After 22.\textit{b}b1? \textit{d}d4! Black takes over. And after: 22.\textit{x}a7 \textit{d}d4! 23.\textit{x}xb8 \textit{xb}8 the knight on a5 is simply a weak piece,) 22...\textit{xb}6 23.\textit{d}d5 \textit{xd}5 24.\textit{xd}5 \textit{wa}4 and Black has the initiative.

b) Another natural attempt is 21.\textit{d}d5, but Black survives with 21...\textit{wa}4 22.\textit{c}c7† (Black is not worse after 22.\textit{xf}3 \textit{xa}2 23.\textit{a}a3 \textit{xa}3 24.bxa3 \textit{xd}5 25.\textit{xd}5 \textit{xb}6 26.\textit{xc}4 \textit{xc}6) 22...\textit{xf}8 23.\textit{xc}6† \textit{fx}6 24.\textit{xd}6 \textit{xa}2 25.\textit{xf}3 \textit{xb}6 26.\textit{xc}4 \textit{xd}6 27.\textit{xd}6 \textit{a}1† 28.\textit{d}2 \textit{xb}2 with a total mess.

c) After 21.\textit{xf}3 \textit{xb}6 22.\textit{d}d5 \textit{xd}5 23.\textit{xd}5 White, if anything, is only marginally better.

d) The above lines show that White, in order to maintain an edge, would have to find the rather surprising continuation:
And now: 21...exf4

21...exd5 gives White a very strong initiative for the exchange after 22.exd5 w anxiety 23...b1! (23.e3 w b4 24...d5 is a draw by repetition)

23...d4 24...xd4 w x a 5 25...f6+ e 7 26...c3 w b 5 27...f2! and Black collapses: 27...xf6 28.fxe5 f e 6 29...f6+ f d 7 30.exd6 w e 8 31.wxf7+ f c 6 32.a 1 and despite being a whole rook up, Black is helpless.

22.gxf4 w e 5 23.a 7 w c 8 24. a 1 b5 25.d 5 w c 6 although White clearly has more than sufficient compensation for the exchange, it is not an easy ride. A possible continuation is 26.a 1 0-0 27.w g 3 d 7 28.w h 4 (28.d 5 w x a 4 29.w x a 5) 28...g 5 29.f x g 5 w g 7 30.d 4! when White’s threats against the king will allow him to regain the material while keeping the positional advantage.

20.c 5 exf 4 21.gxf4

The king has no time to evacuate the scene, and the following events unfold very swiftly.

21...w c 8
21...0-0 22.exd 6 is as hopeless as can be.

22.w x d 6

White has an extra pawn and a winning position – quite a promising combination.

22...w d 8

It looks like Black is beginning to arrange his pieces for the next game, but there is really nothing to be done.

23.w b 4

23.w b 7, finally bringing the knight into the game, would also do the job: 23...w b 6 24.c 5 w x c 5 25.a 4 winning.

23...w b 6

24.a 3!

Such moves are usually the most unpleasant to face: emphasising the hopelessness of the position.

24...w h 5 25.w b 1 w f 4

25.w f 4 loses to 26.w d 6 w b 8 27.w d 5 w x d 5 28.exd 5 0-0 (finally!). After 29.w c 6 Black can safely resign, as he loses too much material: 29.w b 7 30.w f 6 and there is hardly one black piece which is not hanging.

26.w d 5 w x d 5 27.w x d 5 w b 8 28.w h 1 c 3 29.w d 7

1-0
GAME 44
Michael Adams
Veselin Topalov
Sicilian Scheveningen B85

1.e4 c5 2.d3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.cxd4 f6 5.c3 a6 6.e2 e6 7.0-0 i.e7 8.a4 c6 9.e3 0-0 10.f4

Once again the Classical line. We've already seen some of the ideas in Kasimdzhanov - Polgar, but here the scenario is going to be totally different.

10...c7 11.h1 e8

In the above mentioned game we spoke about Kasparov's ideas with Black, and this is exactly the move order he considered to be most precise. In recent years, however, this position has been thought to be dangerous for Black. Or at least, more dangerous than it used to be considered, and as a result most of the elite players avoid this position. Topalov is one of the exceptions...

12.a3

The fashion for 12.d3 passed after the Kasparov - Anand World Championship match in 1995, where both players tried the Black side, and showed ways to achieve good positions.

12...b6

A modern move order: sometimes ...b8 can be spared whereas the text is a preparation for the rush of White's g-pawn towards Black's king. With time Kasparov too gave up on his old passion, ...b8, in favour of the text move, and whatever he plays in the Scheveningen, everybody follows. Even Topalov.

13.b3

A very popular continuation, opening the door to a very sharp and even forced line. The idea is quite simple: the positional threat of a4-a5 forces Black to play ...b6, weakening the h1-a8 diagonal, much to the joy of the wolf on f3, especially in view of the sheep on c6 and a8. As a consequence, instead of the usual kingside attack, White can exploit this fact and play e4-e5 before Black manages to arrange his pieces. Apart from its tactical sting, however, this move is not optimal - normally the knight retreats to b3 only in case of real necessity. This variation is best played in two cases: if White wants to test Black's knowledge and is willing to accept a draw if the opponent is prepared, or he has an interesting and surprising idea. In this game it seems Adams had both possibilities.

The main alternative is the less forcing 13.d2, which was played just three months later between the same players. In that game Adams proved he had recovered from his nightmare in Argentina: 13...a5 14.b3 b8 15.ad1 c6 16.a2 d7 17.g3 xd4 18.xd4 b5 19.axb5 axb5 20.b4 g6 21.e5 d5 22.f5, and Adams killed Topalov's king. Wijk aan Zee 2006.

13...b6 14.e5

A very interesting move, with an amazingly bold attempt to refute Black's whole set-up! This continuation is considered to be sharp, but Black always manages to find counterplay (although occasionally only in the post mortem). Does this game change this assessment? Don't worry, the Scheveningen is alive and kicking!

However the typical 14.g4 is now less dangerous, as after 14...b7 15.g5 d7 Black is two tempi up, in comparison to usual positions, as he did not have to carry out a clumsy c8-d7-c8-b7 manoeuvre.

But if White desires to advance e4-e5 so much, he has the nice option of 14.a5. He will play e5 only after Black captures with a pawn. The difference is that, compared to the game,
Black can no longer retreat his knight to d7! Some might think a pawn is not too big a price for that.

a) 14...b5 is not good: 15...b6 wb7 16.e5, and Black is in trouble.

b) From a positional point of view somewhat problematic is 14...d7 15.axb6 axb6 16...e2 e7 17.a4 d7 18.c3 d7 19.d2 c6 20.c4 e7 21.b3 g6 22.d4 e5 23.exd5 exd5 24.e3, and Black is under pressure, De Firmian – Ftacnik, Germany 2000.

c) So Black needs to play 14...bxa5 15.e5

14...dxe5

14...d7?? 15.exd6 xd6 16.d4! xd4 17.xa8 f5 18.f3 with a clear advantage for White.

15.fxe5 d7 16.xc6

This is White’s idea – trading the important bishop for an important tempo. As a result his attack is developing smoothly, but as we have already stated, in previous games Black managed to obtain good counter-chances.

16...xc6 17.d4 b7

15...dxe5 16.fxe5 and now 16...d7? (trying to follow the plan of our game) is strongly met with 17.xc6 xc6 18.xa5 c7 19.f3, which means that Black has to go for 16...d8 and this is the moment to estimate which position White should prefer: here or the game.

18.h5

The spectacular rook sacrifice 18.xf7? xf7 19.h5+ g8! 20.xe8 fails to the equally
spectacular counter-blow: 20...\textit{W}xg2\textit{t} (also possible is 20...\textit{D}xe5) 21.\textit{D}xg2 \textit{h}b7 22.\textit{D}g3 \textit{D}xe8 23.\textit{D}f4 and Black has no reason to complain. Actually, White is the one to complain in such a position.

18...\textit{g}6 19.\textit{D}h4

After the more solid 19.\textit{D}g5 \textit{g}7 20.\textit{D}f3 \textit{c}7 White should forget about attacking and start thinking in terms of equalizing, and holding on to the e5-pawn.

19...\textit{D}xe5 20.\textit{D}e4

White’s attack appears to be very strong.

20...\textit{D}e7

Much worse is 20...\textit{D}g7 because of 21.\textit{D}h6! \textit{f}5 22.\textit{D}xg7 \textit{D}xg7 23.\textit{D}d6 \textit{D}d7 24.\textit{D}xe8\textit{t} \textit{D}xe8 25.\textit{D}ae1 and Black’s position collapses.

21.\textit{D}g5

Forcing Black to give up an important bishop, and subsequently allowing White to build up strong threats on the dark squares. A most promising choice by White.

Far less fortunate is 21.\textit{D}f4 \textit{f}5! 22.\textit{D}xe5 \textit{D}xe4 23.\textit{D}xe4 \textit{f}xe4 24.\textit{D}xc6 \textit{D}c5 25.\textit{D}xc5 \textit{bxc}5. Here a draw was agreed, but Black could have played on in Dolmatov – Shipov, St Petersburg 1998.

21.\textit{D}g5 gives nothing after 21...\textit{f}5 22.\textit{D}xe7 \textit{D}xe7 23.\textit{D}f6\textit{t} \textit{D}h8, and White is going to pay for his activities.

Another untested possibility is 21.\textit{D}f6\textit{t} \textit{D}xf6 22.\textit{D}x\textit{f}5 \textit{D}d5 with an unclear position.

21...\textit{D}xg5

21...\textit{D}h5 22.\textit{D}g3, creating a devastating threat of \textit{D}xf7.

22.\textit{D}xg5 \textit{f}5

As many variations show, \textit{f}7-\textit{f}5 is Black’s key defensive resource, after which White’s attack is suddenly not so frightening.

Queen centralization is bad now:

22...\textit{D}d5 23.\textit{c}4\textit{t} \textit{D}xc4

Or 23...\textit{D}xc4 24.\textit{D}xf7! \textit{h}5 25.\textit{D}h6! \textit{D}x\textit{f}7 26.\textit{D}f1\textit{t} \textit{D}g8 27.\textit{D}f6 \textit{D}a7 28.\textit{D}xg6\textit{t} \textit{h}8 29.\textit{D}xe8\textit{t} \textit{D}h7 30.\textit{D}f8 and it is over.

24.\textit{D}f4! \textit{D}d5 25.\textit{D}ad1 \textit{D}b7 26.\textit{D}f3 \textit{D}d3 27.\textit{D}e3 Black loses his knight.

23.\textit{D}ae1 \textit{D}d5

Much worse is 23...\textit{D}f7 due to a sacrifice on \textit{f}5. The only question is which piece to sacrifice. 24.\textit{D}xf5! (also interesting is 24.\textit{D}xf5 as in Zelcic – Brkic, Basnjaci 2005) 24...\textit{g}xf5 25.\textit{D}f6, and now 25...\textit{D}h8? loses on the spot to 26.\textit{D}xf5 \textit{D}g6 27.\textit{D}g5 \textit{D}f7 28.\textit{D}xg6\textit{t} \textit{D}xg6 29.\textit{D}e3 as in Asrian – Kurnosov, Moscow 2005.

Better seems to be:

25...\textit{h}6 26.\textit{D}g3\textit{t} \textit{D}g5 27.\textit{D}xf5

Or 27.\textit{D}xg5 \textit{D}f7 28.\textit{D}xf5 \textit{D}d7 29.\textit{D}fe5 and again White is clearly better.
27...exf5 28.\textit{ex}e8\textbf{t} \textbf{\textit{\textbf{c}}f7} 29.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{b}}}e7\textbf{t} \textbf{\textit{\textbf{\textbf{w}}}xe7} 30.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{b}}}xe7 \textbf{\textit{\textbf{d}}e7} 31.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{w}}}c7\textbf{t} \textbf{\textit{\textbf{d}}}d7 32.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{w}}}xb6 and White should be better.

\textbf{24.\textit{\textbf{d}}e2}

This is new, and like most of Adams' ideas it is first and foremost logical. After the knight transfer to the kingside White will be attacking with all his army. Black, on the other hand, also defends with all his pieces, and has threats of his own, plus an extra pawn. To our minds, the main achievement of White's novelty is to force Black to deal with new problems, but he is not worse.

GM Shipov suggested the interesting 24.c4 and after 24...\textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{w}}}}}xc4? 25.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{w}}}}}xf5 \textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{w}}}xe5}} 26.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{w}}}xe5}} 27.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{w}}}f6}}! and White has a winning attack.

But better is 24...\textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{w}}}xc4}}! and it is not clear why White sacrificed the pawn.

\textbf{24...\textbf{\textit{\textbf{d}}}f7??}

A small mistake, after which Black enters the twilight zone. Much more robust seems to be 24.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{w}}}}}b7 25.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{w}}}f4}} \textbf{\textit{\textbf{d}}}d6 and White's attack is less serious than it was in the game.

\begin{itemize}
\item a) For example, 26.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{w}}}e3}} gives nothing after 26...\textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{w}}}ac8}} 27.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{w}}}h3}} \textbf{\textit{\textbf{c}}e7}.
\item b) Also not working is 26.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{w}}}f6}} \textbf{\textit{\textbf{g}}}g4! and 27.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{w}}}xg6}} is not good because of 27...\textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{w}}}xh2t}}! 28.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{w}}}xh2}} \textbf{\textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{w}}}}}h2 29.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{w}}}xh2}} \textbf{\textit{\textbf{h}}xg6} and White can only hope to make a draw.
\item c) In fact, the best that can be found here is 26.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{w}}}xe5}} \textbf{\textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{w}}}xe5}}} 27.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{w}}}f6}}! and now:
\begin{itemize}
\item 27...\textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{w}}}e3}}
\end{itemize}
\end{itemize}

Also possible is 27...\textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{w}}}xg2t}} 28.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{w}}}xg2}} (28.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{w}}}xg2}} \textbf{\textit{\textbf{e}4t}} 29.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{h}}}h3}} \textbf{\textit{\textbf{e}5}}! 30.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{d}}}d3}} \textbf{\textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{w}}}xh4t}}} 31.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{\textbf{w}}}h4}}} and White is not threatening to stand better) 28...\textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{w}}}d6}} and Black keeps his king without problems.

28.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{w}}}h6}} \textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{w}}}xg2t}} 29.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{w}}}xg2}} \textbf{\textit{\textbf{e}7}} (29...\textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{w}}}e4t}}? 30.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{f}}}f3}} \textbf{\textit{\textbf{a}7}} 31.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{w}}}xg6}} \textbf{\textit{\textbf{e}2t}} 32.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{g}g3}}} and the black king is going for the big sleep) and it is not clear how to continue the attack. For example: 30.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{f}f3}}} \textbf{\textit{\textbf{d}d2t}}} 31.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{f}f2}}} \textbf{\textit{\textbf{b}4}}} (31...\textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{w}}}e3}}? 32.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{e}e2}}} \textbf{\textit{\textbf{c}c1}}} 33.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{w}h4}}} with a great attack) 32.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{w}}}xg6}} \textbf{\textit{\textbf{g}4t}} 33.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{\textbf{w}}}f1}}} \textbf{\textit{\textbf{d}1t}} with a perpetual.

\textbf{25.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{w}}}f4}} \textbf{\textit{\textbf{c}c6}}}

White's attack might appear to be over, but Adams' next move shows the pleasures of attacking with a knight.

\textbf{26.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{w}}}h5}}!}

This powerful move is the core of White's idea. This position could serve as a good exercise in finding correct solutions without relying solely on calculation. A human being is incapable of
computing all the arising lines after accepting the sacrifice. One should, of course, give it a try, but every move makes the position even more complicated. So it is wise to look for different, perhaps simpler, solutions: it is not a game of checkers after all. Topalov found a great answer:

26...\(\text{Qg5}\)!

A very strong practical solution, leading to a reasonable and quite Sicilian-like position for Black. After the game, commentators had to work overtime to provide an answer to whether the knight was immune. Well, here is what we found...

Topalov's intuition again proved to be correct. After 26...gxh5? 27.f6 White achieves a winning attack. Does that sound too pretentious? We will try to prove it mathematically.

To begin with Black has to find a way to avoid a simple mate on g7.

a) 27...f4, covering all the squares along the g-file, fails to save him: 28.exf4 \(\text{Bxc2}\) 29.f5! e5 30.g3\(\text{f}\)

And now 31.b4\(\text{f}\) \(\text{c5}\) 32.g7\(\text{f}\) \(\text{g7}\) (After 32...g8 33.xe5\(\text{f}\) \(\text{g4}\) 34.xg4\(\text{f}\)! we can see why it was important to drive the queen away from c2 with the smart 31\(\text{f}\) move. After 34...hxg4 35.xg4\(\text{f}\) \(\text{g8}\) 36.g7\(\text{f}\) \(\text{g7}\) 37.f6\(\text{f}\) \(\text{g8}\) 38.f1 there is no chance.) 33.h4\(\text{f}\) \(\text{d7}\) 34.d1\(\text{f}\) And Black’s dead.

b) 27...h8 also does not help. After 28.xh8 \(\text{Bxh8}\) 29.f6\(\text{f}\) \(\text{g8}\) 30.e3\(\text{f}\)! (The immediate 30.xf5? gives White nothing after 30...exf5, and the first rank weakness betrays White again.) 30.h4 and now 31.exf5! exf5 32.xc6 \(\text{Bxe3}\) 33.g1. Black loses his bishop by force, and in this endgame the queen is much stronger than two rooks – all Black’s pawns are on the queen’s menu.

c) Best seems to be 27...\(\text{Cc7}\)!

Now is the moment of truth for Adams’ idea. For some reason, most commentators concentrated on 28.xf5 which, in fact, promises some advantage in the end (or in the ending to be more precise): 28...h8! 29.xh8 \(\text{Bxh8}\) 30.h5 \(\text{Bb7}\) 31.f7 \(\text{Bxg2}\) 32.g1 \(\text{Bxg2}\) \(\text{xc2}\) 33.f2 \(\text{g8}\) 34.h6 \(\text{Cc5}\) 35.xc5 \(\text{Bxc5}\) is equal.) 32.g7\(\text{f}\) 33.xc5 \(\text{Bxc5}\) 34.h2 and here Sakaev recommends 34...\(\text{Bab8}\) 35.b3 \(\text{c4}\)!, and Black has realistic chances to make a draw.

But everybody missed the winning 28.xh5! It turns out that Black has time, but nothing to do with it: he is helpless against the rook joining from e3.

Here are some possibilities:

c1) 28...\(\text{Bf8}\) in order to free the knight. 29.e3 \(\text{Bh8}\) (29...\(\text{Ba7}\) 30.f3) 30.e5 \(\text{f7}\) 31.g3\(\text{f}\) \(\text{g6}\) 32.h6 and there is nothing Black can do against h2-h4-h5.

c2) 28...e5 29.f3 \(\text{f4}\) 30.xf4 \(\text{xf4}\) protecting h7 (30...\(\text{Bb7}\) 31.g4\(\text{f}\) 30...\(\text{Bf6}\) 31.g4\(\text{f}\) \(\text{Bf8}\) 32.xh7 and mate.) 31.f3 and Black is helpless, for example, 31...\(\text{Bc6}\) 32.g3\(\text{f}\) \(\text{f8}\) 33.g7\(\text{f}\) \(\text{h7}\) 34.h4\(\text{f}\) \(\text{d7}\) 35.f3 \(\text{g6}\) 36.d1\(\text{f}\) \(\text{d6}\) 37.g3\(\text{f}\) \(\text{f7}\) 38.g3\(\text{d}\) and Black loses material or, after 38...\(\text{xf4}\) 39.xd6\(\text{f}\) \(\text{xc7}\) 40.b4, gets mated.

c3) Probably the best defence is 28...\(\text{Bb7}\) 29.e3 \(\text{Bec8}\). Now, on the immediate 30.g3\(\text{f}\), Black can play 30...\(\text{Bxc3}\) 31.xc3 \(\text{Bxc2}\), and surprisingly Black has serious counterplay, which
liquidates all White's threats. But White can continue 30...\texttt{f}e1!!.

If it were still White's move, he would play 31...\texttt{f}h3! and win due to the inevitable threat 32...\texttt{g}3\texttt{f} 33...\texttt{x}h7. There is no doubt that such a variation was impossible to calculate during the game (and it seems, it is also not easy to find in analysis, as nobody else did) – twice White plays a preparatory move instead of a direct attack. But Topalov sensed the problems, and his great intuition helped him respond correctly – as here Black has no defence. For instance: 30...\texttt{f}f4 31...\texttt{g}3\texttt{f} 32...\texttt{x}h6 (Now 31...\texttt{h}3 is not so effective: 31...\texttt{x}f6 32...\texttt{h}3\texttt{f} 32...\texttt{x}g4 wins for Black) 31...\texttt{x}g3 32.hxg3 \texttt{f}xc2

And now 33...\texttt{d}e6. Here we can see why White needed the extra tempo. It turns out that White can attack the root of Black's activity – the bishop on b7. After 33...\texttt{x}g2 34...\texttt{f}e7 Black can resign, and 33...\texttt{x}g2\texttt{f} does not help either: 34...\texttt{g}5 35...\texttt{x}f5 36...\texttt{xe}6! \texttt{ac}8 37...\texttt{f}8 38...\texttt{g}7\texttt{f} 39...\texttt{g}8\texttt{f} 40...\texttt{x}f7\texttt{f}.

27...\texttt{f}6\texttt{f} 28...\texttt{e}8 \texttt{b}7 29...\texttt{d}6\texttt{f}

Less accurate is 29...\texttt{x}g5 \texttt{e}8, as Black has an extra tempo compared to the game.

29...\texttt{x}d6 30...\texttt{x}g5

It is time to stop and evaluate the position again. Black appears to have strong compensation, at least sufficient: he has a pawn for the exchange, more active pieces, and hopes to advance his central pawns one day. White’s attack is over, and he has trouble finding a plan. Topalov’s choice was definitely a good one (he does not lose by force
here) – instead of facing a tough defence under
time pressure, he prefers to have an uncertain,
fighting position. White’s only chance here lies
in preventing Black’s pieces from occupying good
squares – neutralize his play along the c-file, and
take control over d5. The amazing part is that it
could all have been achieved.

30...\(\texttt{c8}\) 31.\(\texttt{f2}\)?

After this error, White is no longer better. Much
stronger was 31.\(\texttt{h4}\), preventing Black’s next
move. After 31...\(\texttt{g8}\) 32.\(\texttt{d1}\) \(\texttt{c7}\)

very much to the point seems to be 33.\(\texttt{e4}\) (33...\(\texttt{xc4}\)? 34.\(\texttt{d8}\)\(\texttt{g7}\) 35.\(\texttt{d7}\)\(\texttt{g7}\)
and mates) intending to destroy the annoying
pawns:

a) 34.\(\texttt{b3}\) \&\(\texttt{c2}\) 35.\(\texttt{f6}\) \&\(\texttt{xd1}\) 36.\(\texttt{xe6}\)\(\texttt{g7}\) 37.\(\texttt{xd1}\) \(\texttt{d8}\) is equal.

b) 34.\(\texttt{f2}\) also gives nothing after 34...\(\texttt{xc4}\)
35.\(\texttt{d8}\)\(\texttt{d8}\) 36.\(\texttt{xd8}\)\(\texttt{g7}\) and the best White
can find is the perpetual.

c) However, after 34.\(\texttt{g5}\)! \&\(\texttt{c2}\) (34...\(\texttt{xc4}\)
35.\(\texttt{c1}\) wins) 35.\(\texttt{d4}\) \&\(\texttt{xa4}\) 36.\(\texttt{f6}\) White invades
Black’s home. For example: 36...\(\texttt{e8}\) 37.\(\texttt{e1}\) \(\texttt{e5}\)
38.\(\texttt{ed6}\) \(\texttt{xc4}\) 39.\(\texttt{xb6}\) and White has chances to
win the battle.

31...\(\texttt{c4}\)!

Very good. The rook is becoming very active,
and Black is threatening to harass White’s king.

32.\(\texttt{h6}\)

It seems that Adams’ instincts told him to go for
a perpetual. A very wise decision!

32...\(\texttt{g8}\) 33.\(\texttt{d2}\) \&\(\texttt{d5}\)

Strong and good – after this it is no longer clear
who is better.

33...\(\texttt{d4}\)? Trading rooks usually benefits the
side with an extra exchange – without a rook the
opponent will find it more difficult to develop his
initiative, whereas rook and queen are a dangerous tandem. 34.\texttt{Be}d1 \texttt{d}5 35.\texttt{gg}5 and White wins.

34.\texttt{b}3 \texttt{Ec}3!

34...\texttt{f}4? 35.\texttt{xf}4 \texttt{xf}4 36.\texttt{c}4 is the end of the line.

35.\texttt{Yh}4 \texttt{Yc}5

His one-move threats are over and White is facing a grim reality of watching his opponent's initiative develop smoothly. Therefore, Adams goes for:

36.\texttt{xe}6!

This seems to be appropriate: White wasted his chances and could find himself in a passive, problematic position. Therefore, Adams decides to end it here: at least he has a perpetual in every line. But that is all he has.

On 36.\texttt{b}4 Adams suggests 36...\texttt{c}4 and even 37.\texttt{Ed}4! (37.\texttt{d}8t \texttt{f}7 38.\texttt{xb}6 \texttt{xc}2, and Black is fine. The threats on White's king prevent him from getting anywhere.) 37...\texttt{c}6 38.\texttt{d}8t \texttt{g}7 (38...\texttt{f}7 39.\texttt{h}8t!) 39.\texttt{e}7t \texttt{g}8 40.\texttt{h}4 \texttt{c}7 is of little use, as Black holds.

36...\texttt{xe}6 37.\texttt{f}6 \texttt{d}5!

Again a barrier is put in the rook's way to \texttt{d}8.

38.\texttt{d}8t \texttt{g}7

38...\texttt{f}7? 39.\texttt{xd}5 \texttt{e}3 40.\texttt{d}7t \texttt{e}7 41.\texttt{xe}7t \texttt{xe}7 42.\texttt{xb}6 \texttt{c}1t 43.\texttt{g}1 \texttt{e}4 44.\texttt{d}1 and White's winning chances are rather good.

39.\texttt{xd}5 \texttt{f}2

Now the players have to decide who delivers the perpetual first.

40.\texttt{d}7t \texttt{h}6 41.\texttt{f}8t \texttt{g}5 42.\texttt{e}7t \texttt{f}4

Also possible, although more frightening, is 42...\texttt{g}4 43.\texttt{h}3t \texttt{h}5 (43...\texttt{f}4? 44.\texttt{b}4t White already has made 'luft' for his king, and can now safely snack on the rook) 44.\texttt{hx}7t \texttt{g}5 45.\texttt{e}7t with a draw.

43.\texttt{d}6t

43.\texttt{h}4 \texttt{h}3t 44.\texttt{gx}h3 \texttt{f}1t and it's a perpetual again.

43...\texttt{g}5 44.\texttt{e}7t \texttt{f}4 45.\texttt{d}6t

$\frac{1}{2} - \frac{1}{2}$
ROUND 12

Results:

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leko</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morozevich</td>
<td>½</td>
<td>½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topalov</td>
<td>½</td>
<td>½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kasimdzhanov</td>
<td>½</td>
<td>½</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Standings:

1. Topalov 9
2-3. Svidler 7 ½
2-3. Anand 7 ½
4. Morozevich 6
5-6. Leko 5
5-6. Kasimdzhanov 5
7. Adams 4 ½
8. Polgar 3 ½

This round ended even the fiercest optimists' hopes of a close finish. The game between the leader and his pursuer left no hope for intrigue. Topalov demonstrated one way to be sure of avoiding defeat with White when that is the main concern. In general, many have found themselves in such situations, but Topalov chose his own way. Imagine that in some openings you know virtually everything. Every move the opponent may have a choice of various continuations, but you know them all. And so, after every move by Svidler, Topalov would go for the most peaceful line, which led by move 20 to an endgame Black cannot even dream of winning. Svidler realized that there was nothing he could do.

In terms of the moves rather than the competitive significance, the main game of the round was that of Leko and Anand. The very first moves made it apparent that we were in for a big fight. Anand, on the Black side, opted for a line which caused Leko a lot of trouble in his Brissago match against Kramnik. So much trouble, in fact, that after only two games of that match he switched to 1.d4. In one of those memorable games he even lost, after failing to go for the most principled continuation. A year after that match the chess world was still waiting for one of the elite players to play it again and provide all the necessary answers, and today two of the greatest experts decided to do so.

The pawn sacrifice was previously analysed by GM Alexander Huzman, but his analysis could be improved upon, and Anand showed how, being the first to deviate. It did not take Leko by surprise and he reacted very quickly up to the 25th move, This turned out to be a mistake, and it was already
White seeking equality. Leko's biggest problem in this game turned out to be his emotions. He suddenly recalled that a move he had played had been studied in his preparation and labelled as dubious. After that he went into deep thought, which resulted in an immediate decisive mistake. As for his eminent opponent – he was playing lightly and confidently, not being worried about the Title anymore. His finishing was flawless. Anand considers this game to be his best in the tournament.

Two other old rivals, Kasimdzhanov and Adams, produced a curious game of their own. Having played the Anti-Marshall in the Spanish, an opening well-known to both players, Rustam Kasimdzhanov proved to be a cunning player. The thing is that Adams has a favourite set-up in this opening, and White's line was directed precisely against it. The British grandmaster did not pay enough attention to this subtlety and soon found himself in a bad position, and probably close to a lost one, had the (still) FIDE Champion found the right way to continue. However, he did not choose the best way, and Adams could have equalized. In general, both players made occasional inaccuracies in the late middlegame, but the arising endgame, although a pawn up for White, was more accurately assessed by the Englishman, who realized that by preventing White's knight from entering the game it could be drawn, which is what happened.

The trickiest and most controversial game was between Morozevich and Polgar. As always in the Russian's games, a peculiar position was reached in which there is a desire to find an improvement on essentially every move, but it is very hard to do so. Already in the opening Polgar seemed to have forgotten an old favourably line offered to her by her opponent. The Russian grandmaster, however, did not make use of it, and allowed a queen exchange that was favourable for Black. The messy play continued, with Black declining numerous chances to ruin White's pawn structure, before eventually finding herself as the only side with weaknesses. Having consolidated, White was getting ready to collect all Black's pawns, but was not precise enough, and it was Black with the advantage, and a big one too. Polgar avoided playing two promising sacrifices, and again ended up on the defensive. The arising endgame hid very rare positional subtleties, which Morozevich failed to find over the board, and the Hungarian was very accurate in making the draw. A wildly uneven game, but certainly entertaining.

So, the fight for the first place is essentially over, but there is still a lot to resolve: the battle for the top four places, which give a ticket to a more advanced stage in the next world championship cycle, and money prizes, of course. Moreover, prestige is also important – how will people remember one's result, even if it is not a most successful one? Take Anand – if he is able to finish second, then despite a very unfortunate first half he will end the tournament with minimal losses (even gaining Elo points!).
GAME 45

Peter Leko
Viswanathan Anand
Petroff Defence C42

1.e4 e5 2.\(\texttt{\underline{c}}\)f3 \(\texttt{\underline{d}}\)f6

Once again, a battle in the Petroff featuring two of the opening's experts.

3.\(\texttt{\underline{x}}\)xe5 \(\texttt{\underline{d}}\)d6 4.\(\texttt{\underline{c}}\)c3 \(\texttt{\underline{x}}\)xe4 5.d4 \(\texttt{\underline{c}}\)c6 6.\(\texttt{\underline{d}}\)d3 \(\texttt{\underline{c}}\)c6

7.0-0 \(\texttt{\underline{e}}\)e7 8.c4 \(\texttt{\underline{b}}\)b4 9.\(\texttt{\underline{e}}\)e2 0-0 10.a3 \(\texttt{\underline{c}}\)c6

11.\(\texttt{\underline{x}}\)xd5 \(\texttt{\underline{w}}\)xd5 12.\(\texttt{\underline{c}}\)c3 \(\texttt{\underline{x}}\)xc3 13.bxc3

We have already discussed this position, and even said that 13...\(\texttt{\underline{f}}\)f5 is the main move here. It is rather surprising we have not seen it played in San Luis before now, but our reward is this game, in the heart of the line.

13...\(\texttt{\underline{f}}\)f5

It seems that following Leko - Adams from the 6th round, 13...\(\texttt{\underline{a}}\)a5 will have to be deeply studied.

14.\(\texttt{\underline{e}}\)e1 \(\texttt{\underline{f}}\)e8 15.\(\texttt{\underline{f}}\)f4 \(\texttt{\underline{e}}\)ac8

A very popular position, in which White has failed to find a lasting advantage, but the search continues. An interesting fact: the average Elo of players in this line is about 2600, and a significant part of them belong to the Elite, including many of the tournament participants. White has had a few crucial wins here, but the true state of any variation's health is shown in the World Championships, where the best players hide nothing. Indeed, in the current Championship, just like in Kramnik - Leko a year earlier, the opening results favoured Black.

16.h3

White's plan is to move his knight, freeing a spot for the bishop. But where should the knight go? d2 is hardly ideal, and it would also disturb other pieces' plans (and h3 would not be needed for this plan, of course). Therefore, White opts for \(\texttt{\underline{h}}\)h2, with possibly \(\texttt{\underline{f}}\)f1 or \(\texttt{\underline{g}}\)g4 later on. Moreover, the surprising g2-g4 might sometimes be useful. All in all, an interesting approach by White.

Speaking of the alternatives, it would be quicker to mention what White has not tried here. Kasparov went for 16.\(\texttt{\underline{d}}\)d3, which was picked up by Anand and brought him a victory. However, there is no certainty whether White should exchange the bishops, and most players prefer to keep the pieces on the board.

Another important milestone is 16.c4 \(\texttt{\underline{e}}\)e4 17.\(\texttt{\underline{c}}\)c3 and after 17...\(\texttt{\underline{f}}\)f6 18.\(\texttt{\underline{e}}\)c1 b6 19.h3 \(\texttt{\underline{g}}\)g6 20.c5! White achieved a big advantage, Kasparov - Karpov, New York rapid (2) 2002.

However, in his match against Leko, Kramnik proved that everything is less rosy for White after the simple 17...\(\texttt{\underline{c}}\)c2, with Black having no problems after an exchange of queens, Leko - Kramnik, Brissago (3) 2005.

Yet another option is 16.\(\texttt{\underline{c}}\)c1. The point is that after c3-c4 (which is also supported by this move), Black's queen will go to e4, normally attacking the bishop. Now it is protected. After 16...\(\texttt{\underline{a}}\)a5 17.c4 Black blundered a piece with 17...\(\texttt{\underline{e}}\)e4?! 18.\(\texttt{\underline{d}}\)d1 \(\texttt{\underline{w}}\)d3 19.\(\texttt{\underline{e}}\)e3 \(\texttt{\underline{x}}\)xc4 20.\(\texttt{\underline{e}}\)e5 and that was the end of Anand - Kramnik, Sofia 2005.

16...\(\texttt{\underline{e}}\)e4

This was Kramnik's choice in the Leko World Championship match, and the idea is clear: to pin the knight in place, preventing the above mentioned plan. Black only needs a couple more moves to plan \(\texttt{\underline{a}}\)a5-c4 and control the position, leaving White's full of weaknesses.

A move like 16...\(\texttt{\underline{f}}\)f6 would allow White to demonstrate his idea in full: 17.\(\texttt{\underline{h}}\)h2! \(\texttt{\underline{a}}\)a5 18.\(\texttt{\underline{d}}\)d2 \(\texttt{\underline{c}}\)cd8 19.\(\texttt{\underline{f}}\)f3 h6 20.\(\texttt{\underline{g}}\)g4 \(\texttt{\underline{x}}\)xg4 21.hxg4

17...\textit{d}d2

This move has been known for a long time. It was suggested by GM Huzman in one of his commentaries and had to wait for a year before anyone dared to test it in practice. Now the Hungarian grandmaster decides to make a statement on the subject. Anand, on the other hand, never plays a line without knowing it in depth, so we are guaranteed a top quality theoretical debate.

Jumping ahead, although the result is rather discouraging for White, the conclusions are not so clear, and White seems to obtain no less an advantage than in the other lines.

Besides, if 17...\textit{d}d2 is not correct then 16.h3 can be sent to archives: the solid 17...\textit{e}e3 failed at the most inappropriate moment (for White):

17...\textit{a}a5 18.c4 \textit{xc}4! 19.\textit{xc}4 \textit{xc}4 20.\textit{d}d2 \textit{d}d5 21.\textit{xe}4 \textit{xe}4 22.\textit{g}5 \textit{xe}1\textit{+} 23.\textit{xe}1

\textit{xe}5 24.\textit{a}5 \textit{f}6! 25.\textit{xa}7 \textit{c}5! and White can only hope for a draw, Leko – Kramnik, Brissago (1) 2004.

17...\textit{x}g2 18.\textit{g}4
Opening the e-file with tempo, and creating various threats like f3. This was all known before the game (to the players, at least).

Possibilities like 18.e4 w/f5 19.g4 wxf4 20.xc8 xxc8 21.gxg2 xxd4 are out of the question: two pawns are good enough compensation for an exchange.

18.\h1!

But this is new! White’s threat to trap the bishop is so frightening that most attention was paid to f7-f5, where White had failed to show an advantage until the day before the game! Despite the fast-changing nature of opening theory, no one will be surprised that Anand knew exactly what he was doing.

After 18...f5 19.e2 b5 White has a very strong plan: 20.a4 a6 21.axb5 axb5 22.e1 Huzman did not mention this move in his annotations. His weaknesses combined with unstable piece placements spell trouble for Black. e.g. 22...\a7 23.c4 \b7 (23...\xd4 24.e3 winning) 24.\d5 \xh3 25.\b3 \g4 26.\g4 \xg4 27.\xg4. Suddenly Black has to switch from defending his queenside to rescuing his king, and this looks almost impossible here.

19.\b4!

A very strong and important continuation, fighting for the crucial e-file. This position is critical for the evaluation of the whole line.

Had Black immediately played 19...f5 then after 20.\h5 g6 21.\xh1 gxh5 22.wb1! the importance of the rook on e1 is enormous. For example: 22...b6 23.e5 \xe5 (23...\f7 24.\g1† winning) 24.\xe5 \f7 25.\x5 and Black is in trouble.

20.wf1

This move was criticized, although this was not necessarily justified. There is a need for deep investigation – where among the lines does White have more?

a) First of all, 20.xc8 \xe1† 21.\xe1 \xe1 22.\xe1 g5! brings White nothing but bad news. Here, too, the importance of 19...\h4 is felt.

b) Another interesting continuation is 20.e4, occupying a key square (for many positions). 20...f5 21.\xh1

And now we have the following complicated possibilities:

b1) 21...fxe4? 22.fx\xe4 \x\xe4 (22...\f7 23.\xc8 \xc8 [23...\xf4 24.\xb7] 24.\g4 \b8 25.\f1 with an almost decisive advantage.) 23.\f3 \c8 24.\xe4 \xe4 25.\xe4 \xe4 26.\xc7 The evaluation is clear.

b2) 21...fxg4 22.hxg4 It might appear that by controlling e4 and the e-file White has a more pleasant position, but Black is very quick to cause damage: 22...\e7! kicking White’s pieces away. The best seems to be 23.\b3 \xd4 24.\xb3 \xd5 25.\d2 \xe4 26.\xe4 \f6 27.e5 \xg4 and White can only hope to survive.

c) Shipov’s 20.\xe8† \xe8 21.\b3 does not promises an advantage against accurate play. (Instead 21.\xh1?! \b1† [21...h5?!] 22.\xe1 \xe1 23.\xe1 f5 and White has too many weaknesses to claim sufficient compensation for the queen.) After 21.\b3 then 21...\x3 22.\f3 \f5 23.\x7 24.\c7 \c5 25.\b1 \xc3 26.\d1 \c1 27.\d5 \xh3† 28.\x2 \f5 29.\d3 \xf3 30.\f8 31.\x7 gives White a clear edge. The line is very nice, but Black does not have to enter it.

Black should simply play 21...\xb3 22.\xb3 f5 23.\h5 g6 24.\xh1 gxh5 and the control of the e-file, together with White’s bad king, make Black’s position safe.

20...f5

Now this is the most precise.

21.\h5

Capturing the bishop will ruin Black’s pawn structure, but whose king will be harmed first? 21...g6 22.\xh1 gxh5
23.g1!!

This is an interesting moment. One of the normal plans is 23.b1 b6 24.d3 f6 (24.e7 25.e5) and here 25.c4.

a) Curiously, in his comments Anand only examined this position after an intermediate check on g1, but then after 25...b5 White would have to retreat the knight, as 26.e3 would not be possible because f3 hangs. Here, however, White wins, as another f-pawn falls, and it is not his.

b) 25...e7 26.e5 (also worth considering is 26.e2) 26...e5 27.g1+ g6 (27...h8? 28.e4 e6 29.d5 mating on f7) 28.xf5 g7! (bad is 28...e6? 29.xg6 e5 30.e7+ winning) 29.h2 cxd4 30.xd4 e3 31.e1 with an evident advantage for White.

c) The most stubborn seems to be 25.d7, but here White can transpose into 26.g1+ h8, managing to arrange his forces better than in the game. Whether this is enough, or the whole idea was not so promising in the first place, remains to be seen. It seems, however, that White should be looking in the direction of 27.g5.

The question that might be asked is whether Leko’s mistake was that he automatically gave the check. The Hungarian grandmaster gave another explanation, but nobody checked it with a lie detector.

23.h8 24.f1

As we said, after 24.b1 b6 (24...e2? 25.xb7 e8 26.xc7 e8 27.e8+ e8 28.b7 e8 29.b3 and White wins) 25.d3 f6 26.c4 is useless because of 26...b5, and the knight has to go back. Indeed, it is not easy to find anything good for White.

24...f6 25.e1

White seems to be fine, as all the invasion squares along the e-file are covered, whereas he has a clear plan: bring the queen to d3 and either attack f5 from the flank (g5) or double on the g-file. All this seems true, but it’s too general: Anand provides decisive evidence that chess is a concrete game. The saddest part from Leko’s point of view is that he was still following his prepared analysis (or so he thought), but in fact e1 had been marked as a move which should not be played! Unfortunately for him, he was unable to cope with his emotions upon realizing the mistake.

Looking back, White should go for equality with 25.c4 when he has no risk, and if things go well he might even be slightly better. For instance: 25.e7 26.g5 xg5 27.xg5 g8 28.xg8+ xg8 (28...xg8? 29.xc7) 29.e1 and White is definitely not worse.

Correct is 25.xc4 26.xc4, and now 26.e2 hands White all the chances: 27.a1 b6

Worse is 27.f2 28.d5 e7 29.e5 h6 30.c4 with a big advantage.

And much worse is 27.c2? 28.d5 d8 (or 28...xc3 29.xc6 xc4 30.cxb7 b8 31.e3 c5 32.h6! winning) 29.d6! xd6 30.xd6 xc6 31.e1 and it is over.
28...b5 29.e5 g7 30.h7+ g8 31.h6+ h8 32.f5 with a clear plus. But after 26...b5 27.e3 e7 28.g5 the position is about equal.

25...e7!

This refutes White's abstract evaluation. All general thoughts prove to be false now - out of nowhere Black has a very active plan, forcing White's pieces backwards, and it is going to be Black who uses the g-file to attack the enemy's king. Such is the heavy price one has to pay for an error in preparation at this level.

26.g5?

This move, which exchanges his own most important piece and loses crucial time, was accompanied with a draw offer: further evidence of Leko's mood at this point of the championship.

He should seek active play at any cost, and for that 26.b5 seems most suitable, although it allows Black to demonstrate another advantage of his previous move after 26...c5! However White has good chances to stay alive after 27.c4 b6 (Or 27...d8 28.xc5 xc5 29.xc5 xc5 30.dxc5 g6 31.d6 b6 32.c4 bxc5 33.xb1 xc3 34.xc5 and White has good chances to hold.) 28.dxc5 xc5 29.xc5 bxc5 30.e1 and the game is still young.

26...xg5 27.xg5 g8!

A great idea - from now on White's king is going to be a key factor in the game.

After 28.xh5 g7 Black takes over the g-file, while the rook on h5 is wandering purposelessly. There is no apparent defence: 29.e2 g8 30.h6 f7 with decisive threats.

28...g8 29.e2 g6

It is interesting that Anand evaluates this position as only a small advantage for Black. It seems to us that this position is very bad, possibly lost, for White - his pawns are weak and he suffers due to his king's weakness. In fact there is no way to stop the slide.

30.b5

Or 30.c4 xc4 (30...d6 is also interesting) 31.xc4 b6 32.e1 (No better is 32.g1 e8 33.e5 g7 34.e1 e7 35.d3 exf1 36.xe1 f4 and the ending will be straightforward.) 32...h4 33.e5 g3! with the idea 34.h2 xf3 and White has no chance.

Perhaps the best defence is 30.g1 although after 30...c5 White's position can hardly be regarded as safe.

30...c6!

Preparing g8-e8, with a complete takeover of the position. As soon as Black's rook gets to the first rank, White's king will need to hide somewhere under the table.

31.xf5

The pawns traded are not equal. Apart from threats to White's king, Black will have a healthy extra pawn.

Trying to cling on to the weaknesses with 31.c4 e8 32.e2 e6 33.b1 b6 is not helpful: White cannot prevent the invasion.
31. \textit{c4} also fails as a rescue attempt – the queen will be missed from the defence. After 31... \textit{e8!} Black’s attack develops quickly and powerfully. For example: 32. \textit{b1 e3} 33. \textit{d1 f4} (33... \textit{f4?} 34. \textit{f1?} 34. \textit{f7} 34. \textit{f7 g7} 35. \textit{f6 e7} Black has fully prepared, and the final blow is inevitable. The best defence seems to be 31. \textit{c5}, but after 31... \textit{e8!} 32. \textit{f1} (32. \textit{xc6} \textit{e2} 33. \textit{xc7} \textit{xd2} 34. \textit{xb7} \textit{h4} 35. \textit{g1} \textit{xf3}† 36. \textit{f1} \textit{xc2} 37. \textit{xa7} \textit{xc3} 38. \textit{d5} \textit{d2}† 39. \textit{f2 e4} is hopeless) 32... \textit{d7} the best White's active rook can do is return to previous depressing variations.

31... \textit{xc3} 32. \textit{d5} \textit{xa3}

Typical machine-like Anand. While some players need serious reasons to grab a pawn, he needs many reasons not to take one, even a pawn of lesser importance.

33. \textit{h2} \textit{f8!}

Yet another great move: the queen switches to the kingside, with decisive threats. White is two pawns down with a weak king. It's not looking good...

34. \textit{e6} \textit{f4}† 35. \textit{h1} \textit{f8}

Of course, there is always a way to lose:

35... \textit{xd2} 36. \textit{f6}† \textit{g7} 37. \textit{d8}†

36. \textit{e2} \textit{h4}

Black has a choice of winning methods: queen to \textit{g3} and knight to \textit{f4} is an obvious one.

37. \textit{d7} \textit{f7} 38. \textit{d8}† \textit{g7} 39. \textit{e4}

In time trouble Leko allows a queen exchange to prevent mate, only to enter a hopeless endgame.

39... \textit{xf3}† 40. \textit{xf3} \textit{xf3} 41. \textit{c5} \textit{b6} 42. \textit{e6}† \textit{f6} 43. \textit{xc7} \textit{hx3}† 44. \textit{g1} \textit{d3} 45. \textit{b5} \textit{g5}

The game is decided with an attack on the weak king after all. The king, rook, knight and pawn leave White's king no chance to survive. The time trouble is over, and the rest could have been spared, but it seems that White had not recovered from his sad mistake in the opening.

46. \textit{xa7} \textit{h3} 47. \textit{c6} \textit{g4} 48. \textit{a8} \textit{g3} 49. \textit{a1} \textit{h2}† 50. \textit{h1} \textit{f4} 51. \textit{e5} \textit{e3} 52. \textit{d1} \textit{h3} 53. \textit{f7} \textit{g3}

With mate in five, according to our subtle friend's hint.

0–1
GAME 46

Alexander Morozevich

Judit Polgar

Sicilian, English Attack B90

1. ¤c3

What a great start! This unusual first move, however, leads to a "normal" opening.

1...c5

White's first move is quite an old one. Napoleon Bonaparte, a known chess devotee, used to open his games with it. Here is one example: 1...e5 2.f3 d6 3.e4 fxe4 4.xf4 d5 5.exd5 cxd5 6.c4 e6 7.d3 h5 8.c2 h4 9.d2 g5 10.c3 h3 11.d2 d6 12.b4 g4 13.a3 h2 g3 14.b3 h3 mate, Napoleon - Madame de Remusat, Malmaison Castle 1804.

So if Napoleon could play like this, why can't Alexander the Great?

2. f3

So, what did Morozevich want to achieve with this weird move order? He wanted to avoid some undesirable openings, like Polgar's favourite Paulsen. Of course, his opponents can choose non-Sicilian openings, but he only begins with this move order when there is a high probability of a Sicilian anyway.

2...d6 3.e4 dxe4 4.xe4 a6

And we have the Najdorf.

6.f3 g4

Another test for this line, which has been so popular throughout the event. Does it suggest a new trend, especially since prior to this Championship it was hardly being played at the highest levels?

7.g5 h6 8.h4 g5 9.f3 g3 g7 10.e2

The fierce battles develop after 10.h3, whereas 10.e2 is considered to be, if anything, more dangerous for White, and therefore is long past its prime. But perhaps this verdict is unjust.

10.h5

What could be better than combining attack with defence? Here too, most of the ideas belong to Kasparov.

11.h4

11.h3 is problematic because of 11...h4! 12.hxg4 hxg3 13.xh8 xh8 14.fxg3 c6 with the initiative.

More popular was 11.xg4, while Anand against Kasparov made a lot of efforts to find an advantage after 11.xg4. But it was not easy, while at some point 11...hxg4 became even more popular. The position after 12.0-0 c6 13.f5 xc3 14.bxc3 a5 is considered to be positive for Black, so today this variation is rarely seen in high level chess.

11...gxh4 12.xh4

The bishop capture has also been tested, with even less success than the rook's.

12.g6 13.b3 c6 14.d2

This position used to be considered promising for White until the arrival of Garry the 13th, who showed how Black should play, and even get an advantage.

14...c8?! 

Practice has proved this move to be inferior to the immediate 14...b6. The rook is not yet needed on c8, and can be even misplaced (e.g. if Black wants to castle queenside). Polgar, beyond any doubt, was familiar with all the general ideas of this outmoded variation, but since it was hardly a top priority in preparation for the Championship, it appears that she was unsuccessful in remembering the exact details.

The strongest is 14...b6! 15.d5 d5 16.exd5 c5, and Black appears to achieve good positions thanks to his active pieces. A key game was played between Topalov and Kasparov, which made White players reconsider their willingness to play this line.
Topalov tried 17.c3, which is a safer way for White to play, but it is safer for Black as well. After 17...\texttt{g6} 18.\texttt{h3} h4 19.\texttt{xg4} hxg3 20.\texttt{xh8+} \texttt{xh8} 21.\texttt{e3} gx\texttt{f2+} 22.\texttt{xf2} \texttt{xe3+} 23.\texttt{exe3} \texttt{xe5} 24.\texttt{xe2} \texttt{d7} 25.\texttt{d2} \texttt{g8} Black was better in Topalov – Kasparov, Geneva 1996.

But there is the interesting 17.0–0–0, which leads to very curious complications after 17...\texttt{h6} (17...\texttt{f6} is also interesting) 18.\texttt{f4} \texttt{e3} 19.\texttt{xe3} \texttt{xe3} 20.\texttt{fxe5} \texttt{e5} 21.\texttt{b1} \texttt{xe5} 22.\texttt{d6} \texttt{g5} 23.\texttt{b4} \texttt{xe2} 24.\texttt{dxe7} with a fun position, in which White has some chances. Is it possible Morozevich prepared something tasty in this line?

\textbf{15.0–0–0}

Of course. Now that Black is not putting pressure on \texttt{f2}, White can castle, and one of his problems disappears.

\textbf{15...\texttt{b6}}

A new move which seems to have been caused by attempts to recall the theory moves. Polgar, of course, remembered the idea of ...\texttt{b6}, but could not quite remember when (this is much more common among top players than might be thought – and this variation has not been played for quite a long time). Here too, this is the best move in the position – other continuations allow White to obtain an edge.

\textbf{16.\texttt{f3?!}}

Morozevich does not exploit the opportunity to punish his opponent for her opening inaccuracy. The point is that the evaluation of this position is closely related to the queens’ presence on the board. Although Black’s king is not yet attacked, the opening of the game at some point is inevitable, and then a centralized king with queens on the board will hardly be an asset. Therefore, Black wants to exchange the queens, and White’s last move allows it.

Much more lively was 16.\texttt{b1}, sacrificing a pawn. If Black does not accept it, her problems are evident for the reasons described above. Therefore, 16...\texttt{xf2} 17.\texttt{f1} \texttt{g4} 18.\texttt{d5!} \texttt{xh5} 19.\texttt{xd5} \texttt{ce5} and here: 20.\texttt{xe5} \texttt{xe5} 21.\texttt{xh5} \texttt{xh5} 22.\texttt{xe5} \texttt{f6} 23.\texttt{g4} with a position where White’s chances
are more convincing. For instance: 23...\(\text{Qc4}\)
24.\(\text{Qd3!}\) \(\text{e3!}\) (both 24...\(\text{Qxb2?}\) 25.\(\text{Qf5!}\) followed by \(g5\),
are losing immediately) 25.\(\text{Qxe3}\) \(\text{Qxe3}\) 26.\(\text{Qf3}\)
\(\text{Qxc2}\). 27.\(\text{Qxe3}\) \(\text{Qxb2}\) 28.\(\text{Qc1}\) \(\text{Qxa2}\) 29.\(\text{Qf3}\) with
good winning chances.

16...\(\text{Qe3!}\)

A very strong tactical solution for positional
ends, leaving the worries about her king’s safety
behind. After the exchanges Black’s remaining
pieces are better than White’s. Morozevich later
admitted having overlooked this at home, which
is understandable. What is strange, however, is
him knowing that Polgar would not pick the
main line and implement a novelty. But he will
probably not share the secret of such an insight
with us.

17...\(\text{Qf4}\)

Probably the correct move, but after the queen
exchange the best White can think of is equality.
Some alternatives:

a) The knight is poisoned: 17.\(\text{fxg4!}\) \(\text{Qxg3}\)
18.\(\text{Qxh5}\), and after 18...\(\text{Qxg2}\) (also interesting
is 18...\(\text{Qxc3!}\) 19.\(\text{bxc3}\) \(\text{Qg8}\)), and only Black can
stand better.

b) Pseudo-centralization is also problematic:
17.\(\text{Qd5}\) \(\text{Qxd5}\) 18.\(\text{exd5}\) \(\text{Qb4}\) 19.\(\text{c3}\) (19.\(\text{Qb1?}\) \(\text{Qxc2}\))
19...\(\text{Qxa2}\) 20.\(\text{Qb1}\) (20.\(\text{Qc2?}\) \(\text{Qxc3!}\)) 20...\(\text{Qxc3}\)
21.\(\text{Qxe3}\) \(\text{Qxe3}\) 22.\(\text{Qxa2}\) \(\text{Qxd1}\) 23.\(\text{Qxd1}\) \(\text{Qf6}\)
with advantage to Black. For instance, 24.\(\text{Qhl}\) \(h4\)
25.\(\text{Qf2}\) \(\text{Qh5}\), and White has trouble organizing
his pieces.

c) But the main alternative was to change
the direction of the game with 17.\(\text{Qxd6}\).

The possible positions after this move are
not very good for White, but the same can be
said about the game. Nevertheless, what was
more appropriate? It seems that here it is easier
for Black to get something real. For example:
17...\(\text{Qxd2}\) 18.\(\text{Qxd2}\) \(\text{Qe3}\)
18...\(\text{Qe3}\)
18...\(\text{Qh6}\) does not serve the purpose: 19.\(\text{fxg4}\)
\(\text{exd6}\) 20.\(\text{gxh5}\) \(\text{Qg8}\) 21.\(\text{Qf1}\) \(\text{Qe5}\) 22.\(\text{Qd1}\) \(\text{Qg5}\)
23.\(\text{Qhl}\) \(\text{Qxd2}\) 24.\(\text{Qxd2}\) and here White even
looks better.

18...\(\text{exd6}\) also does not look convincing after
19.\(\text{fxg4}\) \(\text{hxg4}\) 20.\(\text{Qxh8}\) \(\text{Qxh8}\) 21.\(\text{Qxd6}\) \(\text{Qe5}\)
with sufficient compensation.

19.\(\text{Qd5!}\) \(\text{exd6}\)

After 19...\(\text{Qxg2}\) 20.\(\text{Qh2}\) \(\text{exd6}\) 21.\(\text{Qxg2}\) \(\text{Qh6}\)
22.\(\text{f4}\) \(\text{Qxd5}\) 23.\(\text{exd5}\) \(\text{Qe7}\) 24.\(\text{Qf2}\) White is close
to equalizing.

20.\(\text{Qxe3}\) \(\text{Qf6}\)
20...\(\text{Qh6}\)? 21.\(\text{f4}\)
21.\(\text{Qg3}\) \(\text{Qxh4}\) 22.\(\text{gxh4}\) \(\text{Qe7}\) and maybe White will
succeed in making a draw, but no one wants to
accept a long struggle for only half a point so
early in the game.

17...\(\text{Qxd2}\) 18.\(\text{Qxd2}\) \(\text{Qge5}\)

18...\(\text{Qxc3}\) could also be considered, ruining
White’s pawn structure. However, the bishop
might prove to be more important, as now White
has a strong pair of bishops to compensate for
the ruined structure. 19.\(\text{bxc3}\) \(\text{Qge5}\) 20.\(\text{Qe3}\) \(\text{Qg6}\)
21.\(\text{Qhl}\) \(\text{Qe5}\) Black can hardly complain, but she also
did not have reasons to complain during the
game.

19.\(\text{Qe3}\)

Black was threatening \(\text{Qg6}\).

19...\(\text{Qf6}\)

19...\(\text{Qg6}\)? would only add reasons for \(f3-f4-\)
\(f5\), whereas Black cannot gain control over \(f4\)
anyway. For example: 20.\(\text{Qh1}\) \(\text{Qh6}\) (20...\(\text{Qe5}\)
21.\(\text{Qd5}\)!. The typical 21...\(\text{Qxd5}\) does not look
good either, as after 22.\(\text{exd5}\) the knight will have
to look hard for a good post, promising White
an advantage.) 21.\(\text{Qxh6}\) \(\text{Qxh6}\) 22.\(\text{g3!}\) and White
looks better.

20.\(\text{Qh1}\) \(\text{Qc4}\)

A basic mistake would be 20...\(\text{b5}\). In this
variation Black has already accepted enough
weaknesses (for the initiative), there is no need
for more. In addition, ...b5 contributes little to Black's initiative. The punishment could be something like: 21.\texttt{\texttt{Qd}}5! \texttt{\texttt{Qxd}}5 22.\texttt{exd}5 \texttt{\texttt{Qc}}4 23.\texttt{\texttt{Qxc}}4 (23.\texttt{dxc}6? \texttt{\texttt{Qxe}}3 and Black wins material) 23...\texttt{bxc}4 24.\texttt{dxc}6 (24.\texttt{\texttt{Qd}}4 \texttt{\texttt{Qb}}4 25.\texttt{\texttt{Qe}}2 \texttt{\texttt{Qxa}}2\texttt{t} [25...c3? 26.\texttt{\texttt{Qxc}}3 \texttt{\texttt{Qxc}}3 27.\texttt{bxc}3 \texttt{\texttt{Qxa}}2\texttt{t} 28.\texttt{\texttt{Qb}}2 \texttt{\texttt{Qxc}}3 29.\texttt{\texttt{Qd}}4] 26.\texttt{\texttt{Qb}}1 \texttt{\texttt{Qb}}4 27.\texttt{\texttt{Qc}}3 with insufficient compensation for the pawn.) 24...\texttt{cxb}3 25.\texttt{axb}3 \texttt{\texttt{Qxc}}6 and it is already Black who should look for equality.

Generally speaking, a key factor in the position is the pawn structure, the number of pawn islands in particular. The vulnerability of h5 and a6 (two of Black's three 'islands') is evident, as there are no pawns to support them.

21.\texttt{\texttt{Qxc}}4

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

21...\texttt{\texttt{Qxc}}4?

This natural recapture proves to be a bad positional mistake. Polgar wants to keep her bishop pair, hoping to use her more active pieces, but White has a way to dampen Black's initiative and claim a marginal advantage. Why? During the last few moves White improved his pieces, and after the text Black's pieces will be no better, whereas only Black has weaknesses.

This was the right moment to play 21...\texttt{\texttt{Qxc}}3. Compared to a similar opportunity on the 18th move, White must also exchange a bishop, which means he will not have the bishop pair to compensate for his bad structure.

Moreover, now Black only has one knight, which is better, as the pair were just getting in each other's way. After 22.bxc3 \texttt{\texttt{Qxc}}4 the advantage, however small, can only belong to Black. The best, although not only, way seems to be transferring both rooks to the kingside, with an initiative. 23.\texttt{g}4 One could also make use of Morozhevich's advice: 23...\texttt{\texttt{Qe}}5 24.\texttt{\texttt{Qd}}4 f6 25.\texttt{\texttt{Qxe}}5 \texttt{fxe}5 26.\texttt{\texttt{Qxh}}5 \texttt{\texttt{Qf}}8 (26...\texttt{\texttt{Qxh}}5 is no better. 27.\texttt{\texttt{Qxh}}5 \texttt{\texttt{Qf}}7 28.\texttt{\texttt{Qg}}2 \texttt{\texttt{Qg}}7 29.\texttt{\texttt{Qh}}6\texttt{t} \texttt{\texttt{Qh}}7 and here 30.\texttt{\texttt{Qa}}5! \texttt{\texttt{Qxa}}2 31.\texttt{\texttt{Qxb}}7 \texttt{\texttt{Qe}}6 32.\texttt{\texttt{Qd}}2 and the position is close to a draw.) 27.\texttt{\texttt{Qf}}5 Black is better, no doubt, although real winning chances are questionable.

22.\texttt{\texttt{Qa}}4!

A very strong and no less surprising idea. Intentionally or not, there is no longer a chance to exchange on c3. White could have gone straight to d5, but this would lead to an exchange at most. After the text, however, Black is forced to take care of her weaknesses, taking her mind off any active plans. The advantage is on White's side now, and he impressively by-passes Black's dark-squared bishop, which is not going to find play anytime soon.

It is quite possible that Polgar only considered 22.\texttt{\texttt{Qd}}5 \texttt{\texttt{Qxd}}5 23.\texttt{exd}5 (23.\texttt{\texttt{Qxd}}5 \texttt{\texttt{Qb}}4) 23...\texttt{\texttt{Qe}}5 and Black is clearly better.

22...b5

Black has to face a new situation now, being on the defensive end. Polgar is not happy to weaken her queenside, but she has little choice: she cannot afford to let a knight rest safely on b6.

23.\texttt{\texttt{Qb}}6 \texttt{\texttt{Qb}}8

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{chess_board.png}
\end{figure}
24.\texttt{b1}

Not a mistake in itself, but it begins a plan that was accurately executed, but led to Black's advantage! The king vacates a spot for the knight, that in turn makes b2-b3 possible, kicking the bishop away. All well and good, but this gives Black time to organize her forces, and when the bishops find more secure squares then Black will have good chances.

The main problem is that this position is like a swamp – there is nothing concrete, not now and not in the near future. The Variations are difficult too, but still we tried to find the truth. In fact, analysing this position could be very good training for positional manoeuvring.

a) 24.\texttt{d5} would have led to equality after 24...\texttt{xd5} 25.\texttt{xd5} \texttt{h4} 26.\texttt{g5} \texttt{g5} 27.\texttt{g5} \texttt{d7} 28.\texttt{g4} \texttt{g4} 29.\texttt{h4} \texttt{g4} 30.\texttt{g8} \texttt{h1} 31.\texttt{g2} \texttt{b1} 32.\texttt{a8} \texttt{g1} (Far less convincing is 32...\texttt{xb2} 33.\texttt{xa6} \texttt{xc2} 34.\texttt{xxc2} \texttt{b4} 35.\texttt{c3} \texttt{xa6} 36.\texttt{d4} winning a pawn and subsequently obtaining good winning chances.) 33.\texttt{xa6} \texttt{g2} 34.\texttt{d1} \texttt{g1} with a draw.

b) More interesting is 24.f4.

b1) 24...\texttt{b4}?! is not working: 25.a3 \texttt{xb3} 26.axb4 \texttt{e6} 27.f5 \texttt{d7} 28.d5 \texttt{e5} 29.g5! with advantage to White.

b2) 24...\texttt{b7} 25.g3 a5! (not 25...\texttt{b8}? 26.d5! winning) and Black has hopes to equalize, but no more.

b3) 24...h4! leads to game-like positions.

c) The previous line suggests an attempt to prevent the h-pawn from moving: 24.g3!? and here some curious variations are possible: 24...\texttt{e5} 25.f4 \texttt{g4} 26.g1 White is beginning to feel great. e.g. 26...\texttt{g7} 27.a5 \texttt{f6} and now:

\begin{itemize}
  \item[c1] The natural 28.\texttt{c6} is premature, as Black gains a big advantage with some elegant play: 28...\texttt{xb6} 29.\texttt{xb6} \texttt{xe4} 30.\texttt{g2} \texttt{f6}! 31.\texttt{d4} \texttt{d5} winning material.
  \item[c2] 28.\texttt{axc4} is also interesting: 28...\texttt{xc4} 29.\texttt{e2} \texttt{c3} 30.\texttt{xc3} \texttt{g4} and it is not clear whether Black's compensation is enough.
  \item[c3] 28.e5 \texttt{e4} (to free a square for the knight) 29.exd6 \texttt{xd6} (29...\texttt{exd6} 30.\texttt{xc4} \texttt{xc4} 31.\texttt{e2} \texttt{f5} 32.c3 [Black gains a clear advantage after

\end{itemize}

32.\texttt{xc4} \texttt{d5} 33.\texttt{d6} \texttt{g7} 34.\texttt{xe4} \texttt{xb2}]

32...\texttt{f7} 33.\texttt{h3} with good chances for White.)

And now a fine knight tango, which yields White a pawn: 30.\texttt{c6} \texttt{b7} 31.\texttt{c8} \texttt{d7} (31...\texttt{c7} 32.\texttt{xd6} \texttt{exd6} 33.\texttt{xd6} 32.\texttt{b8} \texttt{d8} 33.\texttt{xd6} \texttt{exd6} 34.\texttt{xd6} \texttt{exd6} 35.\texttt{xa6} Again, the compensation turns out to be insufficient.

24...h4 25.f4

The niggling game continues, where each side is trying to achieve small advantages on every move. Here White is taking e5 under control, but also giving Black a grip on g4.

25.\texttt{b7}!

A very strong prophylactic move: in many variations the rook on b8 would be vulnerable to tactical shots and the same goes for the e7-pawn. Now everything is covered, and Black can hope for the best.
An interesting and straightforward manoeuvre which does more harm than good. The feeling that White should be better because Black lacks an active plan is rather general, and needs proof. Finding the right way here could be more challenging than finding a thousand tactical solutions. But after the text move, amazing ly, Black is in the lead, and her advantage only increases. Sometimes, the biggest mistake is not finding a useful quiet move.

For example, the natural 26.Qd5 runs into 26...Qxd5 27.exd5 Qb8 28.Qd4 Qd7 29.Qf5. Here Morozevich proposes 29...b4! - a really great move. White is by no means safe here, as the threat of ...Qb5 not only balances the number of rooks in the game, but balances the position in general.

But White has a very strong move in 26.Qf2!! which was also found by Morozevich. Black is suddenly all tied up, and cannot develop any counterplay. For instance:

a) 26...Qg8 27.Qd5 Qxd5 28.exd5 Qb8 29.Qxh4 with a healthy extra pawn.

b) 26...Qc7 27.c3 Qe6 28.Qd5 (also possible is 28.Qd4 Qxd4 29.cxd4 Qb7 30.d5 Qg4 31.Qc2 with some advantage) 28...Qxd5 29.Qxd5 and Black is suffering.

26...Qg8!

Now it is White's turn to remember that he has weaknesses, whereas Black's (on h4) is now protected and even helps put pressure on g2 by fixing it and adding the possibility of h4-h3. The difference can be summed up in the black rook's position: instead of being a defender on h8 it is an attacker on g8 - a big difference indeed.

27.Qh3 Qg4

This was, of course, the idea - as we mentioned, the rook is very useful here.

28.b3 Qe6

White unfortunately succeeded with his plan: pushing Black's pieces to good squares! He now has to play very accurately, which is by no means easy given the number of possible tactics in the air. Judge for yourself: Qh3 and Qb6 are hanging, the same goes for f4 and g2. And what exactly does White have?

29.Qe2

An interesting pawn sacrifice to complicate matters even more, but Black now has a way to obtain a very clear advantage.

Morozevich recommended 29.Qd5 as White's best, but in fact Black gets a great position after this as well:
For some reason Morozevich now considers only 29...\textit{ixd5}, when it is indeed not clear how to use Black's advantage.

But after 29...\textit{ig7}? White has solved the problem of his knight, but the rest of Black's threats are left intact. For instance: 30.\textit{ih2} (30.\textit{ie2} with the idea 30...\textit{Bxg2} 31.\textit{Bxh4} fails after 31...\textit{f5}! and if 32.\textit{Oxh4} then 32...\textit{Bxd2} 33.\textit{Bxe6} \textit{Bxh4}+ 34.\textit{Bc1} \textit{xf6} 35.\textit{Bxf6}+ \textit{xf6}! and White is in trouble.)

a) 31.\textit{Bxe2} \textit{xe5}? and if 32.fxe5? (better is 32.\textit{Bf2} \textit{Bxd5} 33.\textit{Bxd5} \textit{Bf6} and White has some chances to hold the position) then 32...\textit{Bxe4} 33.\textit{Bxe4} \textit{Bxh4} and White loses material.

b) 31.\textit{Oe3} After 31...\textit{Bxd5} (31...\textit{f5} is also interesting) 32.\textit{Bxe5} \textit{a7} 33.\textit{Bxa7} (he can play 33.a4 in order to prevent ...\textit{Bb5} but 33...\textit{Bxa3} 34.\textit{Bf2} \textit{Bxg3} and Black is better) 33...\textit{Bxa7} 34.\textit{Bxb4} \textit{Bxg3} 35.\textit{Bc6} \textit{Bxe2} 36.\textit{Bxa7} \textit{Bxf4} 37.\textit{Bh1} \textit{Bf5} 38.\textit{Bxh2} \textit{e5} and Black's pawns decide the fight.

29...\textit{Bxg2} 30.\textit{f5}

\textit{d7}?

Unfortunately for Black, the see-saw continues. Here Judit Polgar had two possible sacrifices, which were suggested by our digital friend.

a) The first one is less dangerous: 30...\textit{Bxb6} But even so, after 31.\textit{Bxb6} \textit{Bc8} 32.\textit{Bf3} \textit{Bb7} 33.\textit{Bf4} \textit{Bf4}, the strongest is to stall with 34.a3 (both 34.\textit{Bxg2}? \textit{Bxg2} 35.\textit{Bf2} \textit{Ba4}! 36.\textit{Bxb4} \textit{Bxe4} and 34.\textit{Bf3} 34...\textit{Bc5} 35.\textit{Bf2} \textit{Bxe4} 36.\textit{Bxb4} \textit{Bxh4} 37.\textit{Bf4} \textit{Bf4} do not help White at all) for example: 34.\textit{Bc5} 35.\textit{Bd3} \textit{Bxe4} (35...\textit{Ba4} 36.\textit{Ba7} \textit{Bd7} and \textit{White somehow emerges alive.)} 36.\textit{Bxe5} \textit{Bxe5} 37.\textit{Bf2} \textit{Bc8} 38.\textit{Bb2} \textit{Bxf5} 39.\textit{Bxh4} Black has a substantial advantage, but far from decisive.

b) But very strong was 30...\textit{Bxe5}! 31.\textit{fxe6} \textit{f6}. The knight is again left behind (or up front, in fact) and is going to be lost. This, together with White's tied-up pieces, gives Black very good winning chances. For instance: 32.\textit{Bc3} preparing \textit{d4} for the bishop. (Or 32.\textit{Ba8} \textit{Bd7} and the knight is not going anywhere, of course. While 32.\textit{Bf4} 33.\textit{Ba3} \textit{Bxe3} 34.\textit{Bxe3} \textit{Bd4} 35.\textit{Bf3} \textit{Bxe3} 36.\textit{Bxe3} \textit{h3} and Black wins.) 32.\textit{Bf4} 33.\textit{Bd4} (33.\textit{Bg1} \textit{Bf2} 34.\textit{Bf2} \textit{Bxf2} winning a knight, and with it the game) 33...\textit{Bxd4} 34.\textit{Bxd4} \textit{Bxb6} 35.\textit{Bxh4} \textit{Bd7} with a positional and material advantage.

31.\textit{Bd5}

In just one move White solves the problem of hanging pieces, and starts attacking. Compare this position with two moves earlier: the bishop on \textit{d7} is offside, the knight is proudly occupying a central square, and the rook on \textit{b7} again seems to be lost in space. The bishop on \textit{f6} is also quite uncertain about its future.

31...\textit{Bd5}?

Black no longer had the advantage, but this hands it to White. White's knights, much like their black colleagues in the beginning, are getting in each other's way, and an opportunity to get rid of one while damaging Black's structure is bliss. Much better appears to be 31...\textit{Bc5} 32.\textit{Bxh4} \textit{e6} 33.\textit{Bxe6} \textit{f6} and the knight would have to keep exploring the board. For example: 34.\textit{Bf4} \textit{Bg8} 35.\textit{Bh6} \textit{Bf4}, and it is rather unclear who is better.
32.\textit{xf6}+ exf6 33.\textit{c3}

The h4-pawn’s days are numbered, but it is not going anywhere, and White can use the time to drive his knight to d5.

Also interesting is 33.\textit{d4}, and after 33...\textit{g3} White can try for an advantage with 34.\textit{exh4 c6} 35.\textit{f2} \textit{f3} 36.\textit{d3} \textit{xd3} 37.\textit{exd3}. The white bishop appears to be much stronger than its counterpart, but with accurate play Black escapes just in time: 37...b4! (37...d5?! 38.\textit{d4!} dxe4 39.dxe4 and Black’s king will not survive) 38.\textit{d4} (Also after 38.\textit{h1} \textit{b5} 39.\textit{hd1} \textit{c7} 40.\textit{d4} \textit{e7} neither side can improve their position.) 38...\textit{b5} 39.\textit{xf6} 30.\textit{d3}+ 40.\textit{b2} \textit{d7} A draw is the only imaginable result.

33...\textit{g3}?

The truth about this position can only be understood by studying its nuances.

1. The h-pawn is no threat as it will fall soon.

2. There is nothing real to be achieved from the weaknesses of d5 and d6.

3. \textit{d5} will eventually come, and force exchanges.

4. It is now to be decided whether White has anything at all, and this is 100% dependant on his ability to attack Black’s queenside pawns.

Both players must regret reaching these rather paradoxical conclusions only after the game: otherwise Morozevich would have definitely kept all four rooks on, and Polgar would have exchanged one pair now. After exchanging one pair of rooks, White has no real way to penetrate Black’s position.

After 33...\textit{xd2} 34.\textit{xd2} \textit{c6} (34...b4? 35.\textit{d5} and Black’s pawns are falling) 35.a3 and now not 35...a5? (intending to hunt the knight) 36.\textit{d5!} \textit{xd5} 37.\textit{exd5} a4 38.\textit{exh4} axb3 39.cxb3. A passed pawn, a more active rook, and a bishop for a knight: all promise good winning chances for White.

But better is 35...\textit{xe7} and after, say, 36.\textit{d5}! (which must come eventually) Black has 36...\textit{xd5} 37.\textit{exd5} \textit{b8} 38.\textit{exh4} \textit{c8}. It is hard to envision a winning plan for White here.

34.\textit{exg3}?

Morozevich returns the favour: by exchanging rooks he loses all his chances. Given the above, more appropriate was 34.\textit{exh4!} c6 (the game would end nicely after 34...\textit{xe3}? 35.\textit{h8} \textit{e7} 36.\textit{d5} mate) 35.\textit{d4}. Black faces serious problems. After 35...\textit{e8}, trying to cover the backdoor, White could continue 36.\textit{xe5} dxe5 37.\textit{ed6} \textit{e7} 38.\textit{xf6} when Black’s king is no longer in safety, greatly increasing White’s winning chances.

On the other hand, 35...b4 does not really save Black either: 36.\textit{h8} \textit{e7} 37.\textit{d5}+ \textit{xd5} 38.\textit{exd5} \textit{g5} 39.\textit{a8} \textit{d3} 40.\textit{d3} \textit{xd4} (The correct way, perhaps, is to keep the light pieces on the board, intending to harass the bishop. 40...\textit{xf5} 41.\textit{xa6} \textit{f4} with better chances to hold the game.) 41.\textit{xd4} \textit{xf5} 42.\textit{xa6} White will inevitably create dangerous passed pawns in the very near future.

34...\textit{hxg3} 35.\textit{d5} \textit{c6}! 36.\textit{xf6}+

36.\textit{g2} \textit{d5} 37.\textit{exd5} \textit{e7} 38.\textit{exg3} \textit{b8} As we already said, there is no real chance for a win.

36...\textit{e7} 37.\textit{h5} \textit{f6}?

Polgar does not want to take risks – even after losing the g3-pawn, Black has good chances for a draw. However, she had an opportunity to immediately equalize with a simple trick, but time trouble took its toll:

Also wrong was 37...\textit{xe4}?! which leads to difficult positions, but Black can still put interesting obstacles in White’s way.

38.d5\textit{f6}
38...d7 39.\textit{f}6 \textit{c}6 40.\textit{x}e4 \textit{d}5! 41.\textit{d}3 (41.\textit{f}4 \textit{d}3 42.\textit{x}e3 \textit{d}xd2 43.\textit{x}d2 \textit{d}4 leads to the same position) 41...\textit{d}3 42.\textit{d}e3 \textit{d}xd2 43.\textit{x}d2 \textit{d}4 44.\textit{c}3 \textit{d}xc3 45.\textit{d}c3 and White has good chances for a win – as soon as a knight gets to g5 or e5 Black will be finished.

39.\textit{d}6
39.\textit{xf}6 \textit{f}7 40.\textit{x}g3 \textit{x}c2 41.\textit{x}c2 \textit{d}7 42.\textit{b}2 \textit{xf}6 43.\textit{g}3 \textit{d}4 with great technical difficulties.

39...\textit{xf}5 40.\textit{e}4 \textit{f}7 41.\textit{d}d6 \textit{g}6 42.\textit{f}4 42.\textit{xb}7? \textit{xg}5 43.\textit{d}6 \textit{h}3 Oops. The wrong side just won.

42...\textit{e}7 43.\textit{xg}3 \textit{d}3
White's winning and Black's drawing chances are about the same.

However, the fight would be immediately over after 37...\textit{b}3! 38.\textit{e}2 (38.\textit{e}4 \textit{g}2 39.\textit{x}g2 \textit{e}4 40.\textit{x}g3 \textit{c}6 is also equal) 38...\textit{xe}4 39.\textit{x}g3 \textit{c}6 with equality.

38.\textit{x}g3 \textit{b}8
Finally the rook gets a chance to come back to earth.

39.\textit{b}2 \textit{g}8 40.\textit{b}7 \textit{d}7
The extra pawn is hardly felt, while the pieces are mostly concerned about not losing it back. There is no real winning plan.

41.\textit{f}4 \textit{b}4!

42.\textit{d}6? \textit{d}6 43.\textit{xf}7 \textit{xg}3 44.\textit{xf}6 \textit{d}7 and Black has just as many reasons to play for a win as White.

42...\textit{e}4!
Well calculated. The game is heading towards the draw – both sides are capturing too many of the opponent's pawns. In particular Black solves all her problems by eliminating enough white pawns.

43.\textit{d}6 \textit{d}6 44.\textit{xf}7 \textit{g}2!
A rook and bishop tandem is an acknowledged force, especially when fighting a lonely king.

45.\textit{xf}6 \textit{e}5 46.\textit{e}6 \textit{xf}5
Who is playing for a win now?

47.\textit{xf}6 \textit{e}4 48.\textit{e}4 49.\textit{d}3 50.\textit{c}2 \textit{e}2 51.\textit{d}1 \textit{d}1 52.\textit{c}1 \textit{c}1
OK, it is a draw.

It would have been a little rude to play for a win, but after 52...\textit{d}5 53.\textit{a}8 \textit{d}4 54.\textit{c}8 there is no way to exploit Black's active pieces.

53.\textit{d}1 \textit{a}2 54.\textit{c}1 \textit{c}2
\frac{1}{2}–\frac{1}{2}

For a second time in the game Black's rook gets to the fourth rank, this time to force a draw.

42.\textit{b}5
382 ROUND 12

GAME 47

Veselin Topalov

Peter Svidler

Ruy Lopez, Anti-Marshall C88

1.e4 e5

Why not a Sicilian for a game you would really like to win? Because, if White wants, there are plenty lines in the Sicilian where he can force drawish positions (that is what usually happens to very popular sharp variations). In the Ruy Lopez, on the other hand, there are fewer forced lines, meaning that the battle has a good chance of being unclear. Knowing Topalov, however, it is hard to imagine him making a cynical draw from the opening...

2.d4 c6 3.h3 b5 4.a4 d6 5.0-0 e7 6.g5 b7 7.a3

Here, for example, he does not go for the Marshall, although there are plenty of opportunities to force a draw in it if White wants. Topalov usually does not allow the Marshall anyway, but there could have been other reasons: perhaps Topalov wanted to give his opponent the chance to play for a win, by compromising his position too much.

8..b7 9.d3 d6 10.a3

Currently the most promising continuation, which was also Topalov’s choice in his encounter versus Kasimdzhanov (Game 28), where his goals were much less defined.

10...d7

Black had to choose a plan, in particular regarding his knight on c6. After ...a5 the best-case scenario is that the knight will return to c6 after c7-c5, but there is also a worst-case one. In the game Black transfers the knight to e6, where it has an impact on some important central squares.

Kasimdzhanov continued 10...a5 11.2a2 c5, and perhaps that would have been good to repeat in this tournament situation, as it leads to closed, non-forcing positions. As we already mentioned, however, Svidler wanted to first equalize, and then see if he could play for a win.

Another, more “Spanish” plan is 10...b8 and here 11.2bd2 2bd7 12.2f1 e8 with an unclear and complicated position. This might suit Svidler, if it were not for one detail – Topalov has already played this line with both colours a couple of times.

11.2c3

More complicated is 11.2bd2, which has already been played between these two players (Linares 1999).

The text move is a natural choice when White does not want to take risks. After d3-d4 he gets a small plus, which is extremely hard to convert into something real, but even more difficult to lose.

11...d8

The only advantage 11...a5 has over the text is that it forces White to spend a tempo on retreating his bishop. Here this tempo is used to play d4.

10...2d7
After this White does not have much, but he does not want much.

12...exd4 13...xd4

In the three years before this game, twelve high-level games have been played in this position. White won two of them, and ten ended in draws. Black’s best line is virtually forced, while attempting to deviate from it led to White’s two wins! An excellent choice of opening by Topalov.

13...e8 14...f5

Svidler has played this as White, and won in just 17 moves, so he knows the dangers of the position. Here is the game: 14.g5 e4?? 15.xe4 e4 16.xe4 xg5 17.xg4!


It is interesting that nobody has followed Svidler’s idea. Perhaps because they know that after 14.g5 h6 15.h4 the idea 15...xe4 now works, and seems to be attractive for Black.
14...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textit{De6}}}}

Preventing the bishop from coming to g5. This could be important, as totally ignoring White’s plans with 14...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textit{Af8}}} led to trouble after 15.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{Ag5}}} \textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textit{Ax4}}} 16.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{Axe4}}} \textit{\textbf{\texttt{Exe4}}} 17.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{Axe4}}} \textit{\textbf{\texttt{xf5}}} 18.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{xf6}}} \textit{\textbf{\texttt{exf4}}} 19.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{Ad5}}} \textit{\textbf{\texttt{xf4}}} 20.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{Axa8}}} \textit{\textbf{\texttt{xf6}}} 21.c3 and White did not have any problems bringing the victory home in Anand – Shirov, Mainz rapid (6) 2004.

It is worth mentioning that attempting to snatch a pawn with 14...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textit{Axe4}}}? is again punished: 15.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{Ag4}}} g6 16.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{Ah6}}}+. It seems the e4-pawn is cursed in this line.

15.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{Dxe7}}} \textit{\textbf{\texttt{Exe7}}} 16.f3 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{Ed8}}}

After d6-d5 all White’s advantage evaporates, but it would take with it Black’s chances to win the title. But White chose not to wait for d6-d5 and played

17.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{Axe6}}}

with a forced variation:

17...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{fxe6}}}

Worse is 17...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{Exe6}}} which hands White the d5-square after 18.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{Ag5}}}.

18.\textit{e5}

Now massive exchanges follow, much to White’s delight, who is about to make another great step towards his goal.

18...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{dxe5}}} 19.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{Axd7}}} \textit{\textbf{\texttt{Exd7}}}

19...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{Axd7}}} 20.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{Ag5}}} \textit{\textbf{\texttt{Af6}}} 21.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{Exe5}}} is essentially the same.

20.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{Exe5}}} \textit{\textbf{\texttt{Ed6}}}

Previously Black played 20...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{h6}}} 21.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{Ae3}}} \textit{\textbf{\texttt{Dd5}}} 22.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{Bxd5}}} \textit{\textbf{\texttt{Bxd5}}} 23.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{Bxd5}}} \textit{\textbf{\texttt{Axg5}}} 24.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{Bf7}}} 25.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{xb5}}} \textit{\textbf{\texttt{axb5}}} 26.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{Ba7}}} c6 27.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{Bxe7}}} with a draw agreed in Anand – Shirov, Mainz rapid (7) 2004.

21.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{Af4}}}

Not a typical Topalov game in general, and in this tournament in particular, but the goal surely justified it. We also believe that the above explanations dismiss all criticism aimed at Svidler for ‘not trying harder’: there was little point in crowning Topalov officially with two rounds to spare by losing the game.

$\frac{1}{2}$–$\frac{1}{2}$
GAME 48

1.e4 e5 2.d3 d6 3.b5 a6 4.a4 d6 5.0-0 d7 6.b3 0-0 7.a4 b7

Until now in this event we have only seen Black playing b5-b4, which is supposed to be a weakening move, but Black proved to have enough resources to obtain decent play. Adams opts for another key line, which is less popular among the chess elite, but Adams consistently plays it.

9.d3

9.c3 would allow an improved version of the Marshall. Although a4 is useful for White in some lines, it is nothing compared to the benefit Black gains from having his bishop already developed on b7.

After 9...d5, the Marshall-like 10.exd5 cxd5 11.dxe5 dx5 12.dxe5 d4! 13.d4 xg2 14.axb5 xh4 gives Black a strong initiative.

Probably a better line is 10.axb5 axb5 11.xa8 xa8 12.d4 dx4 13.dxe5 c5, but White certainly had no advantage in Filipenko – Zakharov, Rostov 1993.

9...d6 10.d2

The newest continuation, which was introduced by Kasparov in his world championship match against Short in 1993, and according to the 13th World Champion it was prepared by Efim Geller specifically for that occasion. This line made a significant contribution to his overall success.
A common alternative is 10...\( \text{a5} \) 11.\( \text{c2} \) c5 12.\( \text{f1} \) \( \text{e8} \) 13.\( \text{e3} \) h6 14.\( \text{d2} \) c4 15.\( \text{c3} \) \( \text{w}b6 \) 16.\( \text{d2} \) \( \text{c6} \) 17.\( \text{d5} \). White converted his advantage into a full point, Kasparov – Leko 2001.

10...\( \text{e8} \) has also been tested, but after 11.\( \text{f1} \) h6 12.\( \text{d2} \) \( \text{f8} \) 13.c4 Black has not managed to cope with White's initiative. One illustrative example goes: 13...bxc4 14.\( \text{xvc4} \) \( \text{b8} \) 15.\( \text{c3} \) \( \text{d7} \) 16.\( \text{g3} \) \( \text{g6} \) 17.d4 exd4 18.\( \text{xd4} \) d5 19.exd5 \( \text{xe1}+ \) 20.\( \text{xe1} \) \( \text{xd5} \) 21.\( \text{d1} \) and White's advantage is strongly felt, Kasparov – Tkachiev, Rapid World Cup 2001.

11.c3 \( \text{e8} \) 12.\( \text{f1} \) h6

Up till now the game was straightforward as both sides were making natural Spanish moves, but now White has to choose where to develop his f1-knight.

13.\( \text{e3?} \)

This move, which is not typical in this specific position, seems to be a vicious piece of preparation. Adams has already played this position on the Black side, but then he faced 13.\( \text{g3} \) and played 13...\( \text{a5} \). The game continued 14.\( \text{c2} \) c5 15.d4 \( \text{f8} \) 16.d5 c4 17.\( \text{e3} \) \( \text{w}c7 \) 18.\( \text{d2} \) \( \text{c8} \) 19.h3 \( \text{d7} \) 20.\( \text{f3} \) \( \text{e7} \) 21.\( \text{a2} \) \( \text{eb8} \) 22.axb5 axb5 23.\( \text{eal} \) with a clear plus for White, Topalov – Adams, Wijk aan Zee 2004.

Perhaps Adams was ready for such a scenario, but despite the changed situation he remained fond of the knight manoeuvre, and played:

In that match, as he won three games with it. As opposed to c3, from d2 to f1 the knight does not disturb other pieces, and can join the play at any appropriate time.

Although 10.\( \text{c3} \) is still played sometimes, White's results have not been great lately, and the best players seem to have given it up. Here is a fresh example: 10...b4 11.\( \text{d5} \) \( \text{xd5} \) 12.\( \text{xd5} \) \( \text{b8} \) 13.\( \text{d2} \) \( \text{d7} \) 14.\( \text{a5} \) \( \text{d8} \) 15.\( \text{c4} \) c5 16.\( \text{c3} \) \( \text{bxc3} \) 17.\( \text{bxc3} \) \( \text{d6} \) 18.\( \text{c2} \) \( \text{f6} \) 19.\( \text{a2} \) \( \text{c7} \) 20.\( \text{ab1} \) \( \text{b5} \) 21.\( \text{h3} \) \( \text{c6} \) 22.\( \text{h2} \) \( \text{c7} \) 23.\( \text{g4} \) \( \text{g5} \), and White can hardly claim any opening advantage, Kotronias – Radjabov, Gothenburg 2005.

10...\( \text{d7} \)

While White's plan is plain and simple: to play c2-c3 and d3-d4. Black has many possible counter-plans, the upcoming stage of the game is about finding the appropriate move order.

One tricky point to judge is that sometimes the positions arising are quite similar to those of 8.h3, with one little difference: White has not played h2-h3. If this move proves unnecessary then White has simply gained a tempo.
Before this game only 13...\textit{d}d8 had been tested: 14.\textit{f}5 \textit{f}8 15.\textit{h}3 \textit{h}8 16.axb5 axb5 17.\textit{x}a8 \textit{a}x8 18.\textit{g}3 \textit{g}8 19.\textit{e}3 \textit{e}6 Black seems to have a decent position, Zhang Zhong – Hebden, Hastings 2002.

14.\textit{d}5!

This is the point of developing the knight to \textit{e}3 – his ideas were mostly implemented in the game!

14...\textit{x}d5?!

And this is already a concession of important squares on the queenside, especially those the knight needs.

14...\textit{x}xd5? gets the knight into even more trouble after 15.exd5.

More critical, however, seems to be 14...c6, although Adams’ decision not to check his opponent’s home analysis is perfectly understandable.

Here White can play 15.\textit{xf}7 (15.\textit{a}2 c5 and now on 16.\textit{d}5 Black can capture 16...\textit{x}d5 17.exd5 c4! with an unclear position) and now a very complex position arises, which is hard to play without preliminary investigation: 15...\textit{xf}7 16.b4 \textit{d}8 (An attempt to steal a pawn with 16...\textit{x}e4 is punished very effectively with 17.\textit{xe}4 \textit{c}4 18.\textit{xc}4 \textit{bxc}4 19.\textit{xe}5\dagger with a pretty satisfactory material advantage.) Here White has two possibilities: either 17.bxa5 \textit{xa}5 18.\textit{d}2 c5 19.c4 \textit{xd}2 20.\textit{xd}2 \textit{b}4 21.a5 with a balanced position, or 17.\textit{f}5 c5 18.bxa5 \textit{xa}5

19.\textit{d}2. Although White has a slight advantage, most of the game is still ahead.

15.exd5 \textit{b}7

Black cannot prevent d4, as after 15...c5 16.b4 cxb4 17.cxb4 \textit{b}7 18.a5 none of his light pieces has a decent square.

16.d4!

Very strong, preventing the knight from coming back into the game.

16...\textit{e}4

Back can still get c5 for his knight with 16...\textit{xd}4, but White would get a spatial advantage and a nice square on c6. 17.\textit{xd}4 \textit{c}5 18.axb5 axb5 19.\textit{xa}8 \textit{a}8 20.b4 \textit{a}4 21.\textit{d}3 with a big advantage. Whereas an attempt to keep the pressure in the centre with 16...\textit{f}8 fails due to an overload on the e8-rook. 17.axb5 Now Black must recapture with the queen as 17...axb5 simply loses a pawn to 18.\textit{xa}8 \textit{a}8 19.dxe5, so 17...\textit{xb}5 18.\textit{c}4 \textit{b}6 19.\textit{f}5, and White has a promising initiative.

17.\textit{d}2 c6 18.\textit{xc}6 \textit{xc}6 19.axb5 axb5 20.d5!

A very strong move which virtually cuts off Black’s queenside pieces from the centre and the kingside. After the text-move his e4-pawn is isolated from the rest of the army, and becomes a really easy target for White. Possibly d4-d5 was underestimated by Adams in his previous calculations. Now Black faces an unpleasant choice: either accept the pawn and allow White to develop a strong initiative, or accept that his own pawn on e4 will be weak.
22...\textit{e}2?  
This most natural and straightforward way leads to winning one of Black's weaknesses. Afterwards, however, Black gets good compensation as White's pieces are very poorly developed.

Less convincing is 22...d5 as after 22...c5 White has no real threats.

Much more promising was 22...g4!, when Black has no satisfactory reaction.

a) After 22...xg4 23.xg4 White wins a central pawn, but, more importantly, he successfully develops his pieces.

b) 22...xg5 is also bad, due to 23.xe4, and Black's position collapses. For example: 23...c4 24.xh6! f5 (24...gxh6 25.xh6\d8 26.g4 winning) 25.d2 d3 26.e3\!, saving the piece with a strategically winning position.

c) Kasimdzhanov suggested 22...c5, providing the following line: 23.xf6\d8 24.xe4 dxe4 25.xxe4 a1 26.xh7 27.xd3 g6 28.b1 b4 29.d2 a2 30.xb4 xb2 Here he stops, evaluating the position as 'with counterplay'. However, after the natural:

31.b1\!\!\!\! 31...b6 32.xb2 xb2 33.b5 d4 34.e3 xe3 35.fxe3 f5 36.h4! h5 37.h2 and although some accuracy is still needed, White's win is beyond doubt.

32.xb1  
Black is in deep trouble as he cannot stop the b-pawn. All queen endings are lost for him.

32...c4  
32...d4 33.xe3 xe3 34.cx e3 c5 35.e4 is also hopeless.

33.b5 d4 34.b6 xxd5 35.xxe3 xe3 36.fxe3 xb7 37.xb4 e7 38.xf6+ 39.xe2  
Black can resign.

d) The most critical seems to be 22...h7:

But after 23.xe4! f5 24.xh6+ gxh6 25.xg3 White has a very strong initiative. The following is a good illustration of possible ideas:

\textit{d1) 25...d7 26.xf6+ x8 27.xf5 x7 28.xh6+ xh6 29.xh6 White continues the attack while having a favourable material balance.}

\textit{d2) 25...b4 26.xf5 x7 27.g4 Both protecting the knight and making luft for the king, so the rook will be able to join the attack. The immediate threat is x7+! 27...xh8 28.xh8 xh8 29.xe7 xg6 30.xd4+ x6 31.xb7 with a winning position, as 31...xg4+ 32.xg4 xg4 33.xh6 xh6 xh6 xh3+ 35.xh2 x4 36.xb5 is a technically winning endgame.}

22...c5 23.xb5  
White is a pawn up, but Black takes over the initiative, which proves enough for equality.

23...d3 24.xd1 x5!  
A very strong move by Adams, targeting the audacious d5-pawn.

25.c4+  
Even after the preferable 25.xb3 x7! 26.c4 a1 27.xc3 x8! Black has sufficient compensation for the pawn. But with the text move Kasimdzhanov
is clearly underestimating the power of Black’s pieces in the endgame.

25...\textit{b7}?

And so does Adams. It is not entirely clear why he rejected 25...\textit{xc4} 26.\textit{xc4} (After 26.\textit{xd4} \textit{a1} 27.\textit{d2} \textit{xd1} \textit{t} 28.\textit{xd1} \textit{xd5} only Black can be better.) 26...\textit{a1} 27.\textit{b3} \textit{a4} 28.\textit{e}3 \textit{a8}, with more than sufficient compensation!

26.\textit{xe4} \textit{xc1} 27.\textit{xc1} \textit{xb2}

Based on a mutual miscalculation, but Black hardly had anything better. White is now winning.

After 27...\textit{xd5} 28.\textit{xd5} \textit{xd5} 29.b4 White would eventually convert the pawn.

28.\textit{f1}?!?

Now Black gets his chance to simplify the position, but White had an important intermediate check: 28.\textit{c8t}! The difference is that after 28...\textit{h7} 29.\textit{f1} White keeps his active knight, as 29...\textit{xe4} runs into the unpleasant 30.\textit{f5}! and here Black must play 30...\textit{h8} to avoid White capturing the bishop with check in the following line. With Black’s king on h8, White can now play 31.\textit{xe4}! and the big difference to the game is that after 31...\textit{a7} White wins with 32.\textit{f5}! as Black does not have 32...\textit{f8} due to 33.\textit{e8} \textit{g8} 34.\textit{xd6} winning.

In fact, in this variation White had the pleasant alternative to play 31.\textit{d4} \textit{xc3} 32.\textit{xax} \textit{d2} 33.\textit{c6} \textit{xf1} (with a king on g8 this would be just winning for White after \textit{e8}) 34.\textit{c8t} \textit{h7} 35.\textit{xe7} \textit{xc8} 36.\textit{xc8} \textit{d2} 37.\textit{xd6} \textit{g6}, and the win is by no means easy, but it probably exists.

38.\textit{h4} \textit{g6} 39.\textit{e8t} \textit{e5} 40.\textit{d6} \textit{e6} 41.\textit{xg7t} \textit{xd6} 42.\textit{f5t} \textit{e6} 43.\textit{d6h} \textit{f6} 44.\textit{g4t} and White should win.

28...\textit{xe4} 29.\textit{xe4}

29.\textit{c8t} is no longer good due to 29...\textit{f8}. There is no winning check on f5, which means White is just a piece down.

29...\textit{a7} 30.\textit{c4}

Attempting to place the knight actively would cost White his extra pawn: 30.\textit{f5} \textit{f8} 31.\textit{c4} \textit{g6} 32.\textit{d4} and now 32...\textit{a4} 33.\textit{e6}! \textit{g7} (33...\textit{f6} 34.\textit{xe6t} \textit{h8} 35.\textit{e8} is winning for White) 34.\textit{xg7} \textit{d8} 35.\textit{h3} \textit{c3} 36.\textit{c7} \textit{xc4} 37.\textit{xd6} \textit{d4} and the draw is inevitable: 38.\textit{b1} \textit{c2} 39.\textit{e5} 30.\textit{xe5} 40.\textit{ex5} \textit{f6} 41.\textit{f4} \textit{xc4} 42.\textit{g3} \textit{g5}

30...\textit{g6}

After this the knight is very passive, while Black’s pieces are well coordinated and virtually control the whole board. White is a pawn up, which means he naturally has winning chances, but the analysis show that Black can keep the balance.

31.\textit{g3} \textit{g7} 32.\textit{b1} \textit{e1}! 33.\textit{xa1} \textit{xa1t} 34.\textit{g2} \textit{f6}

In order to get realistic winning chances, White needs to transfer his knight to a more active position (such as b5), but he cannot do so.

35.\textit{d3}

35.\textit{h4} \textit{h5} 36.\textit{g4} was a possibility, but it will be tried later on.
35...\texttt{b}2 36.\texttt{c}e2 \texttt{h}5 37.\texttt{h}4

37.\texttt{a}3 is met with 37...\texttt{d}4 38.\texttt{f}b2 \texttt{x}f2 equalizing.

37...\texttt{d}8 38.\texttt{e}4

Attempting to move the knight via a different path also does not seem to give anything special:
38.\texttt{d}1 \texttt{c}3 39.\texttt{e}3 \texttt{d}4 40.\texttt{c}2 \texttt{a}6 41.\texttt{f}1 \texttt{e}1! 42.\texttt{h}2 \texttt{b}4 43.\texttt{f}3 \texttt{c}3 44.\texttt{e}4 \texttt{g}7 45.\texttt{e}7 \texttt{f}6 The position has not changed essentially.

38...\texttt{b}1!

This is Black's defensive idea: keep the knight pinned.

39.\texttt{e}2 \texttt{b}2 40.\texttt{d}3 \texttt{b}1

\textbf{41.\texttt{f}3?!}

Perhaps it was a little too early for concrete play, right after the time control. A better practical chance was just to keep the position with 41.\texttt{d}2 \texttt{b}2 42.\texttt{d}1, transposing into a previous note. In any case, this would give Black more chances to go wrong.

41...\texttt{e}5 42.\texttt{e}3 \texttt{d}4 43.\texttt{g}4

43.\texttt{f}1 is just a draw after 43...\texttt{c}2 44.\texttt{f}4 \texttt{xc}4! 45.\texttt{xd}6+ \texttt{g}7 with the equalizing threat of ...\texttt{a}2 (attacking both the d5- and f2-pawns)

46.\texttt{d}2 \texttt{a}2 47.\texttt{e}4 \texttt{f}5! 48.\texttt{e}7+ \texttt{h}6 49.\texttt{g}5+ \texttt{g}7 50.\texttt{d}2 \texttt{xd}5+.

Now the position is drawn.

43...\texttt{hxg}4 44.\texttt{xe}4 \texttt{c}1!

The knight is cut off again.

45.\texttt{d}3 \texttt{a}7 46.\texttt{e}3 \texttt{xe}3 47.\texttt{exe}3 \texttt{e}1

48.\texttt{d}4

With an inevitable perpetual.

$\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}$
Today the long awaited and inevitable event finally occurred – the Chess World finally found its Champion. Traditionally, the champion’s reign begins after the game that wins the title. Remember Kasparov’s hard-fought 24th game in 1985 and Kramnik taking the title with “+2” and the rest draws...

Symbolically, Topalov officially won the title in a game against the previous FIDE champion. If we recall that Kasparov’s last professional game was a defeat against Topalov, one might come to the conclusion that it simply could not have been otherwise.

The game itself was very symbolic as well in its chess content. Kasimdzhanov proved to be very well prepared for the Berlin, not just for a specific line, but generally. He obtained a very promising position and definitely wanted to ruin his opponent’s triumph one more time. Topalov reacted in his favourite way: war. His active plan, totally exposing his own king, was far from obvious, and very bold. Later it would be seen to be the strongest, essentially the only way to save the position. Although White kept his advantage, he was less optimistic. A critical moment occurred while transferring into a rook and opposite-colour bishops ending, when the FIDE champion had every intention of showing Topalov that he is not the only one capable of torturing the opponent for a hundred moves. White, however, overlooked the exact moment when the wind began blowing in the opposite direction, and he was not the only one. It was missed by most spectators and online commentators. Alas, even the machines did not spot Topalov’s idea. His sudden sacrifice exploded on the board, after which White had to switch
to a passive struggle for a draw. It eventually turned out that the draw was possible, but at that moment few envied Kasimdzhanov’s situation. In any case, after making an unfortunate move, Kasimdzhanov offered a draw. After the game Topalov confessed that his friend-manager-coach told him to accept the draw whenever it secured him the title, so he could not refuse the offer. Subsequent analysis showed that a draw was indeed there, and even a relatively simple one. Thus the crown was officially passed on.

Anand – Morozevich saw a very beautiful finale. In a sharp line of the French (in its first appearance of the event) both players demonstrated their willingness to fight for a win. Anand, surprisingly, chose a second-rate line. He introduced a novelty, but it was not one of his best. Although White won a few tempi for organizing an attack on the enemy king, he paid for it by severely compromising his own king. It appeared that although Black’s attack started a bit later, it developed much faster. So Anand hurried with a typical bishop sacrifice, after which he had a draw in hand and hoped for more. There was no more, however, and he had to force a perpetual with a neat queen sacrifice.

Of some theoretical interest was the short encounter between Polgar and Svidler in the Marshall. White repeated a line from Nakamura – Aronian (where Black had no trouble achieving a draw), and one can only guess whether Polgar had some improvement prepared, or just wanted to make a safe draw. In any case, Svidler was first to deviate, after which White did have a decent chance to play for a win, without risk. Polgar chose not to insist...

Another short draw was Adams – Leko. The Englishman is not a big fan of the Sveshnikov with White. Leko, on the Black side, is. The result was an “anti-Sveshnikov” line, and not the most vicious of them either. Leko was as precise as always, and against White’s control over d5, managed to exchange his only bad piece. After that White’s position looked more pleasant to the eye, but had no target to play against, and perhaps no real will to find one. Therefore – a short draw.

The last sporting aspects are becoming clear. The first four is already known for sure, just like the winner. The only remaining questions are who will be the runner-up and who will take the bronze. In other words, will Svidler find enough energy to try and win, as Anand has a better tiebreak because he has won more games.
GAME 49
Judit Polgar
Peter Svidler
Ruy Lopez, Marshall Attack C89

1.e4 e5 2.\f3 \f6 3.\b5 a6 4.\a4 \f6 5.0-0 \e7 6.\e1 b5 7.\b3 0-0 8.c3 d5 9.exd5 \xd5 10.\xe5 \xe5 11.\xe5 c6

Again, the battle will take place on Polgar’s home court.

12.d3

The pawn on d3 can be useful to fight for e4, whereas in the other line White has to make real efforts, like playing f2-f3. On the other hand, this is the main problem of this set-up, d3 is extremely weak and very hard to defend with conventional means, leaving White relying on tactics: if the d-file opens many of Black’s pieces will be exposed to attacks.

13...\f5

Probably the strongest. The bishop is developed to a good square, attacking a pawn. It is also the most common among the top players.

14.\g3

A key move of the variation. Although Black’s pieces are more developed, White’s are getting out with tempo.

14.\d2 allows Black to pinpoint the problem of the d3-pawn: 14...\f4! 15.\e4 \xd3 16.\f3 \g6 17.\e2 \c7 18.\g5 \xe4 19.\xe4 \xg5 20.\xd3 \ad8 and White is certainly not better, Polgar – Adams, Enghien les Bains 2003.

14...\h4

According to practice this is best.

14...\d7 allows White a favourable exchange: 15.\xd5! \xd5 16.\f4 \xf4 17.\xf4 \xd3 18.\d2 with a clear and stable advantage for White, Anand – Adams, Paris 1992.

The real alternative was the tactical 14...\e8, but it has not brought Black much success: 15.\xe8+ \e8 16.\d2 \e1† (interesting is 16...\e5) 17.\f1 \g6 18.\g3 \e8 19.\d1 \e6 20.\d2 \h3 21.a4 b4 22.\e1 h6 23.c4 with insufficient compensation, Dolmatov – Kamsky, Dortmund 1993.

15.\g3

15.\x5 is not smart: 15...\x2+ 16.\f1 \e8 (but not 16...\h1 17.\e2 \e8 18.\e3 \xe3 19.\x1 \xf5+ 20.\f3 and Black is the one who needs to prove something) 17.\e8 \e8 18.\e3 \h1† 19.\e2 g6! 20.\f3 \cl with a strong attack.

15...\h3
16.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{D}d2}}}}

The text is actually a sideline, which is considered to be harmless.

The main line is 16.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{D}}x}d}5}, although here too Black appears to be fine. 16...\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{c}}}d}5 and now:

a) 17.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{g}}}f}4 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{g}}}g}4 18.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{g}}}g}2 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{f}}}xf}4 19.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{h}}}xh3 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{h}}}x}h3 20.gxf4 \texttt{d}4 and the position is about equal, Grischuk – Tkachiev, Prague 2002.

b) 17.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e}}}e}3 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d}}}xd}3 18.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{D}}}xd}5 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{a}}}ad}8 19.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{f}}}f3, but still Black has full compensation. For instance:

b1) 19...\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{f}}}f}5 20.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{D}}}d}2 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{f}}}f}4 21.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{D}}}d}4 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}x}g3 22.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d}}}d}5t \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{h}}}h8 23.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{h}}}xg3 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{f}}}f4, and White was suffering a little, Naiditsch – Kasimdzhanov, Germany 2004.

b2) 19...\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{f}}}f}5 20.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{D}}}d}2 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e}}}e}6 21.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{D}}}d}4 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{h}}}6 22.a3 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{b}}}b}8 23.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{g}}}g2 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{f}}}f}5 24.f3 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e}}}e}8 25.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{D}}}e}4 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d}}}d5 26.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e}}}e}2 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e}}}e6 27.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{D}}}e}1, Kasimdzhanov – Adams, Linares 2005.

16...\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e}}}ae}8 17.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e}}}e}4

White is about to complete his development, so Black must act fast!

17...\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{g}}}g}4 18.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{g}}}g}2 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}x}g2t

Probably the most precise. After 18...\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{f}}}f5 White obtains an advantage with 19.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{D}}}x}h3 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{h}}}x}h3 20.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d}}}d}2!. It turns out Black is not really threatening to take on \texttt{e}4 (a similar idea happened in the game as well), while an attempt to insist gave White a decisive advantage in the following example: 20...\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{f}}}xe4 21.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{D}}}xe4 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{c}}}c5 22.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e}}}e}3! \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e}}}e}4 23.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{c}}}c}5 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e}}}e}8 24.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{D}}}xe4 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e}}}e}4 25.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e}}}e}3, Kotronias – Nakamura, Port Erin 2004.

19.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{g}}}x}g2 \texttt{\texttt{f}f}5 20.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{f}}}f}4

This move has been suggested in analysis which, in fact, was known to both players. And not only them: Nakamura had a similar position, only with the pawn on \texttt{h}3. Not a big difference, but White seems to be marginally better anyway. The young American’s game continued 20.\texttt{h}3 \texttt{\texttt{h}h}5 21.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{f}}}f4 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{f}}}xf}4 22.\texttt{\texttt{g}}xf4 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{f}}}xe}4 23.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d}}}xe4 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{f}}}f}3t 24.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{f}}}f}3 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{f}}}xe}4 25.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{g}}}g3 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{f}}}xe}4 26.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d}}}d}xe4 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{f}}}xe}4 27.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{f}}}f3 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e}}}e2 28.\texttt{\texttt{c}c}4 \texttt{\texttt{b}b}4 29.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{c}c}4 \texttt{\texttt{b}b}2 30.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e}}}e}a6 \texttt{\texttt{g}g}5 and Black made the draw, Nakamura – Aronian, Gibraltar 2005.

20.\texttt{\texttt{c}c}4 is not good due to 20...\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{f}}}xe4 21.cxd5 (21.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d}}}xe4 \texttt{\texttt{b}b}4 22.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{c}c}c}4 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{f}f}3t winning) 21...\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{f}f}3t 22.\texttt{\texttt{g}g}1 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e}}}exd}3 23.\texttt{\texttt{d}d}c6t \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{h}}}h8 and Black is much better.
20...\texttt{xf4} 21.\texttt{gxh4}

![Chessboard Diagram]

are active. All in all, there are chances of a decisive result, although not high.

29.\texttt{Ec1}

After 29.\texttt{Ed1} \texttt{g5} 30.\texttt{f2} \texttt{h5} 31.\texttt{xd5}+ \texttt{cxh5} White can only regret not playing h3 like Nakamura did - then she could have played 32.\texttt{e3} taking home 0.55 points.

 Seriously speaking, White's only chance to obtain anything real was 29.\texttt{Eh1}, depriving Black of the counterplay along the 2Nd rank. Then she could have hoped to exploit her slight edge. Or at least make the opponent suffer. For example: 29...\texttt{f8} 30.\texttt{f4} \texttt{h6} 32.\texttt{e2} \texttt{xe2} 33.\texttt{xe2}

Such an endgame could prove to be difficult for Black. With pawns on both sides, the superiority of bishop over knight is usually revealed to the maximum.

29...\texttt{f8}

White was threatening \texttt{b3}.

30.\texttt{xd5}

Now it is all over. Such rook endgames are impossible to win.

Here too, Polgar could have tried playing for a win with 30.h4! in order to prevent unpleasant checks. For example, conceptually wrong would be 30...\texttt{g5} 31.\texttt{b3} \texttt{gxh4}+ 32.\texttt{xh4} \texttt{e7} 33.\texttt{f4} and again the bishop's superiority might be very significant here, although objectively the position is close to a draw. It seems that White did not want to fight.

30...\texttt{g5}+ 31.\texttt{f4} \texttt{xd5}

Now it is time to destroy the pawns.

32.\texttt{xc6} \texttt{Ed1} 33.\texttt{Ba6} \texttt{Exh2} 34.\texttt{xa5} \texttt{Bxb2} 35.a4 \texttt{f7} 36.\texttt{g5}+ 37.\texttt{e5} \texttt{Be2}+ 38.\texttt{f4} \texttt{h5} 39.\texttt{Aa7}+ \texttt{1/2-1/2
GAME 50

Viswanathan Anand
Alexander Morozevich
French Defence, Steinitz Variation C11

1.e4 e6

Approaching the end of the tournament, the players naturally get tired. After the active play of the previous round, when he played 1...e5 with a wild Petroff, Morozevich decides on a more solid first move.

2.d4 d5 3.c3 f6 4.e5

Another common continuation is 4.g5, but after 4...dx e4 5.gxe4 e7 6.fx e6 xf6 White has a hard time proving an advantage.

fd7 f4 c5 6.c3 d6 7.e3

One of the main ways to target the French, leading to sharp positions with opposite side castling. As one might expect, the theory here is enormous, so we will mainly concentrate on encounters featuring at least one of the current players. There have been quite a few.

7...xd4

Morozevich deviates first from their previous games. In general, Morozevich’s approach in San Luis has been to avoid his opponents’ preparation.

Previously he has preferred the line 7...a6 8.d2 b5, as played every year at Monaco between the same opponents. However, this line has become problematic lately, mostly due to 9.a3, which is the hottest fashion nowadays. This line came to prominence after Kasparov – Radjabov, Linares 2003, partly because Kasparov lost, but also because his position looked attractive at some point.

Today Black fights against it mainly with:

a) 9...b7, for instance 10.g3 a5, and here White amazed everybody with 11.a2??, with the idea of stopping Black’s natural counterplay on the queenside, Ponomariov – Bareev, Khanty Mansysk 2005.

b) 9...g5 leads to an interesting position after 10.fxg5 cxd4 11.cxd4 cxe5 12.d3 a8 13.c2, Jakovenko – Bareev, Sochi 2006.

8...d4 c5 9.d2 0-0 10.0-0

The main ideas here can be similar to some Sicilian lines, but naturally with some differences because of the pawn structure. The pawn on e5 will allow White to attack the h7-pawn more efficiently, whereas Black’s play on the queenside is also more dangerous, since his dark-squared bishop is participating in the battle (unlike in most Classical Sicilians).

10...a6 11.b3

A rare although quite logical move, which has been played by Dutch grandmaster Friso Nijboer with excellent results. The idea behind this knight retreat is to continue developing the pieces (d3) without losing time protecting the knight on d4.

The fashionable line is Kramnik’s idea 11.d2, in order to develop the bishop to d3 while still defending d4. One recent example: 11...xd4
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12...exd4 b5 13.exd3 a5 14.d4 cxd4 15.exd4 axb6 16.axb6

It is still too early to judge whether this move is best, but it is definitely very annoying. White

12...b4

Nijboer likes to play 13.g4, and is usually quite successful. An example: 13...b7 14.h5 g6 15.h6 e5 16.hxg7 e4 17.hxg8 e3 18.hxg8 e2 19.hxg8 e1 20.hxg1 e2 21.hxg1 e3

The idea in our game is probably to save a tempo, since after 13.g4 Nijboer generally tries to relocate the rook to h3 with the manoeuvre h1-g1-h3. If h1-f1-h3 works, does White really need g2-g4?

13...b6 14.a3

A very committal novelty, the idea of which will be understood on the next move. However, it will not be remembered as Anand’s biggest improvement in this tournament.

14...e7 15.d4

White’s play looks strange: d4-b3-d4, and a weakening a2-a3 in the process. On the other hand, Black’s bishop has also spent a lot of time (c5-b4-c7). Moreover, White’s last move is actually with tempo. The only problem is that a3 makes Black’s queenside attack very fast now.

15.c7

15...exd4 would have played into Anand’s hands, as he wants to put a bishop on d4 anyway.

16.axb6 17.axb6 18.e3, and the queen gets to the kingside with tempo.

Another option is 15.a5, which is too slow: 16.b1 c4 17.axc4 cxc4 (after 17...bxc4 White gets a strong attack with 18.f5) 18.c6 h4 19.axd8 e2 20.axe2 e6 21.a4! with advantage to White.

16.dxc6 bxc6 17.d4

In order to prevent the idea of ...f6. A very natural alternative was 17.f5 but Anand probably did not like 17...f6 18.exf6 e6 19.exb6 e8 20.d5 e8 and Black has no problems.

Instead 17...exf5 is bad because of 18.axb6 e7 19.axf5 with a big advantage whereas 17...b4 18.axb4 e5 is weak due to 19.axb6 exb6 20.axf6 e8 21.axg7 and Black is crushed.

17.c4 18.e2

The attempt to play for f4-f5 with 18.e2 is too slow, because of the weakening a3: 18...a5 and Black is first to create real threats.

18.b8

The question is: can Black play for a win? If he wanted, he could try the crazy race with 18...g6. After 19.h4 e8 20.e2 this interesting position could satisfy the ambitions of both players.

19.axh7†

Just making it through the closing doors in time.
This typical sacrifice leads to a draw by force, but White hardly had anything better.

There is no more time for 19.f5 exf5 20.\(\text{\textit{xf}}\)f5 b4 21.axb4 \(\text{\textit{xb}}\)4. Black is much faster. In fact, his position is already winning! The immediate threat is \(\text{\textit{c}}\)4xb2, against which White has no defence.

19.\(\text{\textit{B}}\)f3 would have kept the tension, but Black's chances are already better: 19...g6 and the threat of b5-b4 is very intimidating, whereas White has not even started to build up his attack.

19...\(\text{\textit{hx}}\)7 20.\(\text{\textit{Wh}}\)5† \(\text{\textit{g}}\)8 21.\(\text{\textit{Ed}}\)3

21.\(\text{\textit{B}}\)f3 was also possible, after which, in all the lines we'll examine soon, White has his rook on d1 instead of f1. That gives him some additional possibilities, none of which work though.

21...f5

Here White has two plans of action.

1) \(\text{\textit{h}}\)h3, \(\text{\textit{g}}\)6, \(\text{\textit{h}}\)7, \(\text{\textit{h}}\)5. If White manages to execute all these moves he will win, but this plan is too slow, and Black is in time to create counterplay.

2) \(\text{\textit{h}}\)h3, \(\text{\textit{f}}\)f1-\(\text{\textit{B}}\)-g3 trying to break the defences on g7 – this is faster, but Black is still in time.

22.\(\text{\textit{Bh}}\)3 \(\text{\textit{c}}\)5!

The strongest defence! Black has to evacuate the 7\(^{th}\) rank in order to protect g7. The dangers of the position can be well illustrated after 22...b4? 23.\(\text{\textit{Bh}}\)h3† and now:

a) 23...\(\text{\textit{bxc}}\)3 24.\(\text{\textit{Bx}}\)f3 \(\text{\textit{cxb}}\)2† 25.\(\text{\textit{Bx}}\)xb2 and Black can resign because of a beautiful mate: 25...\(\text{\textit{g}}\)5 (the only way to protect g7) 26.\(\text{\textit{Bxg}}\)5 \(\text{\textit{Bb}}\)7 27.\(\text{\textit{Wh}}\)h8† \(\text{\textit{f}}\)7 28.\(\text{\textit{Bxg}}\)7† \(\text{\textit{e}}\)8

26.\(\text{\textit{Dx}}\)d5! \(\text{\textit{exd}}\)5 27.\(\text{\textit{Bh}}\)6. \(\text{\textit{Be}}\)6 28.\(\text{\textit{Bh}}\)g6 \(\text{\textit{Bf}}\)8 29.\(\text{\textit{Wh}}\)h5 \(\text{\textit{Bc}}\)8 30.\(\text{\textit{Bxe}}\)6† \(\text{\textit{f}}\)7 31.\(\text{\textit{Bgg}}\)6 with a crushing attack.

23.\(\text{\textit{Bff}}\)3

Anand chooses the safest and best way, as Black has sufficient resources in the other variations. All the lines seem very hard to calculate, but perhaps not for Anand and Morozevich.

Hereafter 23.\(\text{\textit{Bxc}}\)5 \(\text{\textit{Bxc}}\)5 24.\(\text{\textit{Bf}}\)f3 \(\text{\textit{g}}\)1† 25.\(\text{\textit{Bd}}\)1 \(\text{\textit{d}}\)4 White does not even have a perpetual.

The main alternative is 23.\(\text{\textit{Bg}}\)6,
which is the less forcing option, in which Black has only one way to defend, but if he finds it he will be better.

a) Now 23...\textit{xd4?} loses on the spot: 24.\textit{h7 \textit{f7} 25.\textit{h5} and Black has a few checks prior to resignation: 25...\textit{e3+} 26.\textit{b1 \textit{d2+} 27.\textit{a1} and then a hopeless attempt to evacuate the king: 27...\textit{e8} 28.\textit{h8+ \textit{e7} 29.\textit{g5+ \textit{f6} 30.\textit{xd7+} \textit{e7} 31.\textit{g5+ \textit{d7} 32.\textit{d8 mate.}}

b) Also bad is 23...\textit{f7?} and White has two roads that lead to Rome:

b1) The spectacular one: 24.\textit{xd5? \textit{xd5} 25.\textit{h7+ \textit{f8} 26.\textit{xc5+ \textit{xc5} 27.\textit{h8+ \textit{e7}}

and now the quiet 28.\textit{d1!} emphasizes the problems of Black's position. Despite the two-piece advantage, he has no rescue. 28...\textit{d7} (An attempt to sacrifice the queen with 28...\textit{c7} does not save the day either: 29.\textit{hd3 [threatening \textit{d8}] 29...\textit{b7 30.\textit{d7+ \textit{xd7} 31.\textit{xd7+ \textit{f7} 32.\textit{xb8 \textit{d5} 33.\textit{b3 \textit{a5} 34.\textit{d6+} and Black's queenside collapses.} 29.\textit{xb8 \textit{b8} 30.\textit{b7} is lost for Black.

b2) However, the much more natural 24.\textit{h7} wins even more efficiently: 24...\textit{c7}, vacating c6 for the king and protecting the d8-square. Other moves are even worse, but this too loses beautifully: 25.\textit{f3!}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{analysis_diagram.png}
\caption{Analysis diagram}
\end{figure}
Now 25...exd4 runs into the brutal 26.exg7! hxg7 (26...hxg7 27.e8# 28.h3 mate) 27.h3 c6 28.h8# c7 29.d5# winning.

Another option is 25...f8 26.h3 and again, Black cannot prevent exg7 followed by h8.

c) However, after 23...b7! Black emerges from the complications with the upper hand:
24.xc5 (The difference between 23...b7 and 23...f7 is seen after 24.h7, as now Black has a winning defensive move in 24...e8! and White can resign.) 24...cxd5 and now:

c1) 25.fxg8 is too slow as after 25...b4! Black is first to get to the king: 26.axb4 g1# 27.d1xb2 28.xg3 xd1# 29.xb2 d4# 30.a2 (30.cl xg4 31.d1 xe5 is hopeless) 30...c4 31.a1 xb4 32.h7 f7 33.xg7 (33.xg7 f7 34.xf8# no longer works because of the queen on b4) 33...e8 34.g6+ d8 35.xg5+ e7, and Black wins.

c2) Whereas on 25.h7 Black has a beautiful defence: 25...e3! 26.c1 xe5! 27.xe5 (Or 27.h5 f7 28.f3 g1# 29.a2 h6 30.g6 f6 31.xg7+ g7 32.xf6 xg2 and wins.) 27...xe5 28.h5 g6! The point! Now the queen covers h8. 29.xg6+ g7 30.xg7+ xg7 and Black is better.

23...exd4

We have seen similar lines after 22...b4, only there is a slight difference...

24.fg3 f7 25.fh7+

25.g6 is now refuted by 25...xe5! 26.h7# 27.xg7+ e8 28.fxe5 xe5 and White is lost.

25...f7 26.xg7+ f8

It might appear that White's attack has reached a dead end, but those readers who have followed the previous variations will already have seen the idea of:

27.xf8#

Only this time White has to settle for a perpetual, since after:

27...e8 28.h8+ f7 29.h7#

We doesn't have the mating pattern with 29.hg8# anymore, because the bishop on d4 makes the difference: 29...xe5 30.fxe5 xe5 when there is a queen deficit but no mate.

½–½
Michael Adams  
Peter Leko  

Sicilian Defence B30

1.e4 c5 2.d3 d6 3.d3

As always, Adams is not in the mood to allow the Sveshnikov. He usually chooses between the text and 3..b5, with a preference for the latter. The problem with the text is:

3...e5

after which White has a symbolic advantage, which the elite players usually have few problems neutralizing.

4...d4 d6 5.d3 e7

6.dd2

The knight is heading to e3 in order to control the d5-square, but Black has not had many problems here lately.

Another line that is more popular nowadays is 6.0-0 d6. Here White has tried many moves, sometimes quite successfully.

a) Topalov, against Kasparov in the latter's last professional game, opted for 7.h4 d4 8.g3 gg4 9.f3 e6 10.e5 gg8 11.xe7 xe7 12.f4 exf4 13.xe6 xe6 14.xf4 d7 15.d3 x8 16.xf8 xf8 17.xd4 cxd4, with a decent position for Black. His loss in this game had little to do with the opening, Topalov - Kasparov, Linares 2005.

b) More popular is 7.g5. The critical line here is 7...0-0 8.f4 gg4 9.d1 exf4 10.xf4 d4

11.d2. This position was one of the main issues in Linares 2004, and Black survived easily. For instance, in the game against Topalov, Kramnik revealed a line from his preparation: 11...d7 12.h3 h5 13.g4 h6 14.xh5 xh5 15.xg5 xh3 16.dg2 xg2+ 17.fg2 xg2 18.xc1 xd4 19.h6 d8 20.d2 with a handshake.

6...f6

Exchanging the bad dark-squared bishop with 6...gg5 was very popular until another Kasparov idea came along: 7.h4 xh4 8.xd2 d6 9.0-0 d6 10.f4 xxc4 11.xc4 h5 12.f5, and after 12...g4 Garry Kimovich played 13.f6. But despite the energy of White's forces (and their leader!) White did not manage to win here, Kasparov - Leko, Linares 2005. So is it White or Black who needs an improvement?

7.d1 gg4

Provoking f2-f3, but why does Black need the f-pawn on f3? There are a few reasons, one of which we will see in three moves.

8.f3 e6 9.e3 0-0 10.0-0

10.h5

A rare but logical move. The idea is the same as before: to exchange the bad bishop, but if this is done earlier (6...gg5) it gives White the opportunity to obtain some initiative, whereas now Black is very solid. In fact, it is not clear anymore on what basis White should build his advantage. Black will soon exchange his main problem, and he has just enough pieces (three, to be exact) to fight for the d5-square.
It is obvious that without the pawn on f3 this idea would be impossible.

11.\texttt{\texttt{c}ed5}

Movsesian has played 11.g3, which changes nothing of the essence of the position: 11...\texttt{ag5} 12.\texttt{c}cd5 \texttt{axe}3+ 13.\texttt{xe}3 \texttt{a}5 14.\texttt{d}d2 \texttt{xc}4 15.\texttt{d}xc4 \texttt{xd}5 16.\texttt{x}xd5 \texttt{e}7 17.\texttt{e}ad1 \texttt{e}ad8 18.\texttt{e}3 19.d3 h6 20.\texttt{fd}2 \texttt{ed}7 with a draw, Movsesian - Eljanov, Spain 2005.

11...\texttt{ags}

Black was not afraid of 13.\texttt{c}c7, as he has the intermediate 13...\texttt{h}3 14.\texttt{f}2 and after 14...\texttt{ac}8 White gains nothing from his trip to c7.

13...\texttt{d}8!

It is important not to exchange the queen, as it has a very important role in supporting the knights on their way to being exchanged for whatever steps on d5.

14.a4 h6!

Black has only one plan here: exchange pieces, but before he goes for it, g5 is taken away from White's queen.

15.\texttt{f}2

This shows a lot about White's intentions.

15.f4 was the only way to try and play for an advantage, although after 15...\texttt{xf}4 16.\texttt{x}f4 \texttt{xc}4 17.dxc4 \texttt{ex}f4 18.\texttt{xf}4 \texttt{e}7 19.\texttt{e}ad1 \texttt{e}ad8 any advantage for White is only psychological.

15...\texttt{c}7

There goes the first one...

16.\texttt{d}d2 \texttt{xd}5 17.\texttt{xd}5 \texttt{f}6

And another one.

18.\texttt{xf}6+

If White tries to avoid the exchanges with 18.\texttt{xc}3 Black will prepare ...d5 himself: 18...\texttt{e}8 (worse is the immediate 18...d5 19.exd5 \texttt{xc}5 20.\texttt{xd}5 \texttt{xd}5 21.\texttt{c}3 \texttt{d}6 22.f4! and Black has some difficulties) 19.\texttt{e}1 \texttt{e}8 with an equal position.

18...\texttt{xf}6 19.b3 \texttt{b}6

The position is completely equal, but a few more moves were played.

20.\texttt{af}1 \texttt{ad}8 21.\texttt{wc}3

Threatening f3-f4.

21...\texttt{g}6 22.a5 \texttt{b}8 23.f4 \texttt{xf}4 24.\texttt{x}f4 \texttt{g}5

By attacking the rook Black does not allow his opponent to fight for the a-file with the other rook.

25.axb6

1/2-1/2
Knowing that a draw will most likely assure that he wins the title, Topalov's first goal is to play safe, and what serves this cause better than The Wall?

4.0-0 \( \text{\textit{e}}x\text{e}4 \) 5.d4 \( \text{\textit{d}}\text{d}6 \) 6.hc6 dxc6 7.dxe5 \( \text{\textit{f}}\text{f}5 \) 8.'ftxd8t cxt>xd8 9."c3 \( \text{\textit{d}}\text{e}7 \) 10.h3 \( \text{\textit{c}}\text{g}6 \)

This is not the first time Topalov has chosen this fashionable move order. Later in the game we will see one idea of it: Black wants to manage without \( \ldots \text{h}6 \), as the \( h \)-pawn on many occasions goes further anyway.

11.\( \text{\textit{e}}3 \)

As we have already mentioned, 11.\( \text{\textit{g}}5 \) is the most principled move. But also very interesting is 11.a2 \( \text{\textit{h}}6 \) 12.b4 \( \text{\textit{d}}7 \) 13.e4 c5 14.d5 \( \text{\textit{c}}\text{c}8 \) 15.e\textit{e}1 \( \text{\textit{c}}\text{e}7 \) 16.d3 d8 17.d5, which demonstrates one of White's most useful standard manoeuvres, and White had a clear advantage in Bacrot – Gyimesi, Germany 2005.

11.\( \text{\textit{c}}7 \)

An apparently strange move order, as White can prevent the king from getting to the queenside now.

Why, for instance, not 11.\( \ldots \text{d}7 \)? Perhaps it is dangerous because of 12.d5? Not really, after 12.xe5 13.f4 f6 (13...d4 14.xf7 \( \text{\textit{c}}\text{c}8 \) [14...\( \text{\textit{e}}\text{e}8 \) 15.xh8 xxe3 16.d4 wins] 15.dxe5 \( \text{\textit{c}}\text{c}3 \) 16.d2 with no visible compensation.) 14.xe5 fxg5 15.xg5 \( \text{\textit{c}}\text{c}8 \) 16.d8t \( \text{\textit{c}}\text{e}8 \) White's temporary initiative fades quickly.

More interesting is 12.a3 c8 13.d2

Deviating from Polgar – Topalov (Game 24), but not entirely. In that game, as the reader might recall, White eventually developed the bishop to e3, but Kasimdzhanov refrains from an unnecessary-in-this-case b3. Polgar played 11.e4 but later transferred the knight to d5, which proved useless. But what if White plays the same way, only without the mistakes?

Back to the current game: 11.\( \text{\textit{e}}3 \) is increasingly gaining popularity, despite its obvious drawbacks: it blocks the important e-file and offers e5 no protection. The e5-pawn does not really need to be supported, but perhaps White should prefer the e-file to be clear of pieces.

and if 13...\( \text{\textit{c}}\text{7} \)? then:

14.b4 d8
14...\( \text{\textit{e}}\text{e}6 \) 15.g5f and White obtains a good position, since 15...xg5 16.xg5 dxe5 17.xe6 fxe6 18.e2 is clearly to his benefit.
15.xg5 xg5 16.xg5 dxe5 17.f4 c4 (17...f6? 18.f5 b5 19.e6 winning) 18.xf7 xd2 18...xb2 19.e1! c4 20.d4 d8 21.e7 and Black is in severe difficulties.
19.xd8 xd8 20.xd2 A dream endgame against the Berlin. It is therefore better to play 13...b4 with a decent position for Black. But White can also begin with a3. Just like that, new theory on 11...\( \text{\textit{d}}\text{7} \) has started!

12.a3t \( \text{\textit{c}}\text{e}8 \)
As was mentioned in Polgar – Topalov, the position of the king is one of the major decisions Black has to take.

12...\(d7\) 13.\(\mathsf{d}2\) could transpose into nice positions from the previous note.

**13.a3**

For someone who has not spent many hours studying the Berlin, this move might appear strange. Its justification is as follows: White is planning \(\mathsf{f}e1\), and therefore prevents \(...\mathsf{b}4\), which could be unpleasant. In fact, the very thought of opposite coloured bishops is a turnoff for White (provided he wants to win, of course). Here White definitely wants to win, even playing an almost World Champion. Actually for now, Kasimdzhanov is the World Champion.

Another plan proved to be quite unpromising for White in the following example: 13.\(\mathsf{c}e2\) \(h5\) 14.\(\mathsf{d}2\) \(h4\) 15.\(\mathsf{f}4\) \(\mathsf{x}4\) 16.\(\mathsf{x}4\) \(c5\) 17.\(\mathsf{g}5\) \(h5\) 18.\(\mathsf{c}4\) \(e6\) 19.\(\mathsf{c}3\) \(e8\) 20.\(\mathsf{f}1\) \(x2\) 21.\(\mathsf{x}2\) \(d8\), Negi – Karjakin, Kirishi 2005.

**13...h5**

A good looking novelty, essentially saving Black a tempo (spared on h7-h6). Does it have a big impact on the position in general? In fact, it does not. The main point of these Berlin positions is which player arranges his forces better, and not the tempi: after all, if Black can lose time in order to prevent White’s activities, why can’t White do the same? We have a strong belief that the plan with Black’s king on e8 is more dangerous for him in any move order.

13...\(\mathsf{e}6\) has been played, but after 14.\(\mathsf{f}e1\) \(h5\) 15.\(\mathsf{d}4\) Black could not find anything better than 15...\(\mathsf{d}7\) and White was clearly better, Parligras – Postny, Budapest 2004.

**14.\(\mathsf{f}e1\)**

Curiously, this position occurred in two of Motylev’s White games, but it was White to move there (because Black had played h7-h6 earlier).

**14...h4**
15. \( \text{d4} \! \text{!} \)

An important move, preparing \( \text{f2-f4} \). Apparently, Black cannot take on \( \text{e5} \).

**15... \text{a6}**

After \( \text{c6-c5} \) Black cannot allow a knight to \( \text{b5} \), which could crack the wall. Curiously, had Black not saved the tempo, White would have most probably had a knight on \( \text{e4} \) now, and then the more natural \( \text{...d6} \) would be sufficient to prevent \( \text{b5} \). This, of course, does not mean that having an extra tempo is a bad thing, but sometimes one has to return it.

Another idea is **15... \text{dxe5} 16. \text{f4}**, when both 16... \text{g6} 17. \text{xc7} \text{f8} 18. \text{d4} and 16... \text{c4} 17. \text{b3}! \text{xa3} 18. \text{c1} are bad for Black.

Even after 16... \text{f6} 17. \text{dxe5} \text{fxe5} 18. \text{f3}! (18. \text{dxe5} \text{f7} allows Black to place his king well) 18... \text{g8} 19. \text{dxe5} \text{f5} 20. \text{d2}! White is much better developed, and his advantage will only increase. For instance, 20... \text{exc2} 21. \text{d7} \text{a6} 22. \text{d4} \text{e8} 23. \text{e1} \text{a1} 24. \text{d1} and Black has to part with material.

**16. \text{f4} \text{h5}**

We have already mentioned this ugly-looking manoeuvre, which is necessary to prevent \( \text{f4-f5} \). The rook has nothing better to do anyway.

Also possible was 16... \text{c5} 17. \text{d5} \text{d8}, but these positions will be discussed soon.

**17. \text{e4}**

Too early is 17. \text{b4} (17... \text{d7} is met with 18. \text{b3}! and Black has no play) 17... \text{a5}! and then 18. \text{b5}! \text{xa3} 19. \text{bxac6} \text{bxc6} (19... \text{b4}? 20. \text{d5} \text{xe1} 21. \text{xc7}! \text{f8} 22. \text{xa8} \text{g3} 23. \text{b6} winning) 20. \text{xc6} \text{d7} 21. \text{d4} \text{b4}. Black seems OK.

**17... \text{d7}**

Delaying ... \text{c5}, and if White decides to prevent it with \( \text{b2-b4} \), Black will now have ... \text{a5}, as White cannot advance his pawn to \( \text{b5} \).

**18. \text{c4}**

18. \text{f5} is now pointless because of 18... \text{dxe5} (but not 18... \text{xf5}? as White wins with a typical shot: 19. \text{g4}!) 19. \text{f4} \text{f6} and White cannot break through Black's bastions.

**18... \text{a5}**

Again, Black is not hurrying to play ... \text{c5}, but with White's next move this option will be ruled out for good. The text is a prophylaxis, as White was already aiming for \( \text{b2-b4} \).

It is an appropriate moment to discuss 18... \text{c5}. The obvious drawback is weakening the \text{d5}-square, but in Polgar - Topalov this was not necessarily dangerous for Black. The difference here is that the king is now on \( \text{e8} \), and can no longer protect \( \text{c7} \), which will make White's knight on \( \text{d5} \) a real pain in the neck. For example: 19. \text{e2} \text{b6} 20. \text{d3} \text{e6} 21. \text{d5} \text{d8} 22. \text{b3} \text{a5} 23. \text{a4} It is not easy to break Black's defences, but not many would be happy with such a passive defence: two pieces are holding one flank and the remaining three are covering the other. In Sofia 2005 Topalov (playing Black) had a similar position against Polgar, except without a white rook on \( \text{e1} \), which allowed him to temporary sacrifice a piece on \( \text{e5} \), and get a good position tactically. Here Black would be limited to waiting for White's activities. It is not clear, however, whether this position is worse than what he had in the game.

**19. \text{c5}!**

This rather rare approach in fact makes a lot
of sense. The knight will stay on d4 forever and White has unpleasant threats: advancing f5 or e6, or a temporary sacrifice Qd6. Black, on the other hand, lacks any counterplay. All in all, this unusual continuation promises White a substantial advantage.

19...a4

Topalov is true to himself, refusing to accept passive defence and seeks counterplay even at the cost of another weakness. The text prepares ...a5, which, however, White will have little trouble protecting, whereas the pawn on a4 is a different story. As the game continues White has an advantage, but Black’s position would hardly have been better without ...a4.

20.Bc1

With a simple but effective plan of winning a4 with Bc4 and Qc3. Now Black is facing an unpleasant question: how to survive?

20.Qd6†? cxd6 21.exd6 Qf6 is just a shot in the air.

20...f5!

Very brave! White’s advantage is still clear, but this is better than just sitting and waiting for a4 to fall.

A passive defence was doomed to fail. For example, 20...c8 21.Bc4 a5 and Black’s position deteriorates very quickly: 22.Qd2 a6 and here 23.Qf6† gxf6 24.exf6 Qd8 25.fxe7† Qxe7 26.f5† with a big advantage, as f5 is poisonous:

a) 26...Qxf5 is not working: 27.Qxf5 Qxf5 28.Qxh4 Qxh4 29.Qg5† Qc8 30.Qe8† Qd7 31.Qe7† Qc8 32.Qxh4 is much better for White.

b) 26...Qxf5 is now pointless because of 27.Qxf5 Qxf5 28.Qf4 b6 (28...f6 29.Qc3 winning) 29.Qe5 Qg3 30.Qxh5 Qxh5 31.Qxh4 Qg7 32.Qh7. White is easily winning: the bishop is much better than a knight, in addition to the pair of connected passers.

21.exf6

Premature would have been 21.Qd6† cxd6 22.cxd6 (22.exd6 Qf6 with no good discovered check) 22...Qd8! 23.e6 f6 24.exd7† Qxd7 25.Qc1 Qe8, and d6 is a weakness more than anything else.

21.Qd2? would turn out to be a positional blunder, as after 21...Qf8! the knight comes to e6, changing the evaluation of the position, much to Nimzowitsch’s pleasure.

21...Qxf6!
The only move again.

21...gx{f6} 22.f5 {e5} (22...{xf5}? 23.g4! winning material is another well-known tactic in the Berlin) 23.{xf6}t {xf6} 24.{f4} {f7} 25.{xe5}
a) 25...{e8} 26.{xf6} {xf6} 27.{xe8} {xe8} 28.{c4}! The pawn is going to pay the price after all.
b) 25...{xf5} 26.{xf6} {xf6} 27.{f1} {g6} 28.{f3}t {f6} 29.{c4}! {d3} 30.{f4}t {g7} 31.{f1} with a virtually decisive advantage.) 28.{e4} {e8} 29.{xf5} {xf5} 30.{h4} Two connected passed pawns are enough to refute the only half-joking claim that all rook endings are drawn.

22.f5!

The point! It is either this, or forget about any advantage.

22...{e7}

Black loses after the pseudo-active 22...{e5} 23.{f4} {f7} 24.{xf6} {xf6} 25.{xe5} fxe5 26.{xe5} with suffocation.

23.{xf6}t {xf6} 24.{f4}

c7 is traded for f5, which is good for Black, but h4 and mainly a4 are still great targets.

24...{f7} 25.{xc7} {xf5} 26.{c4}

The rook is already locked on targets.

26...{xd4} 27.{xd4} {e6}

All White’s pieces are better, Black’s king position is far from comfortable and his pawns are weak. The opposite coloured bishops might be a drawing factor, but just as easily can increase White’s attacking potential – it is a well-known principle that opposite coloured bishops in effect give each side an extra bishop, which can be a serious factor when attacking the king.

28.{d6}!
A good move, although its dissatisfied creator had a lot of criticism for it. Kasimdzhanov thought he could do better and suggested $28.\text{d}e4$ as a winning move. However after $28.\text{d}5\, 29.\text{e}7\, 29.\text{e}6\, 30.\text{d}6$ White's threats are not too frightening. After $30.\text{h}7!\, 31.\text{x}h7\, 32.\text{x}e7\, 29.\text{e}6\, 33.\text{h}x7\, 28.\text{e}8$, in exchange for a pawn Black finally gets good pieces, which is more important with opposite coloured bishops.

$28.\text{a}5$

Topalov is desperately seeking play, especially for his rook, which failed to enter the game conventionally. Objectively, his position should be lost.

$29.\text{d}e4?!$

A small inaccuracy. White should still win, but the technical execution is difficult. He should have first deprived Black of counterplay. For that purpose Shipov's $29.\text{e}2$ seems to be more appropriate. This prophylactic move would have tied the a5-rook to the defence of the a-pawn. After that Black's survival would probably be impossible, or at best extremely difficult.

$29.\text{d}5\, 30.\text{e}7\, 29.\text{e}6\, 31.\text{x}b7$

White won a pawn, but Black's rook can now enter the game. Once again we can see that in endings with opposite coloured bishops the importance of a pawn (or even more) is much lower than having active pieces.

$31.\text{b}5$

Topalov is ready to exchange on b5, which would solve the problem of a4, while White's c-pawn will not be too hard to stop. Nevertheless, White should have traded one pair of rooks.

$32.\text{b}6?$

White has his own terms for a trade, however. Taking on b6 is not an option for Black, but the text is a serious mistake that lets the win escape. He had to play $32.\text{b}5!\, \text{cxb5}$.

White can try to exploit his c-pawn, together with Black's weakness on h4, with decent winning chances. Note that it seems White should not exchange the second pair of rooks. For example,
A truly devilish idea, with which the chess world found its champion! In a way, this blow is just as surprising as the one Kasimdzhanov himself delivered against Svidler (Game 33), with that amazing perpetual. Here, however, Black has even more. He gets real winning chancing, while keeping a draw in hand.

Black cannot force a draw with 35...£d3? 36.£xd3 £xg2† 37.£h1 as White takes on d5 with his next move, but Black has no need for this line.

36.£xg3

This is forced, of course.

36...hxg3† 37.£h1

Best, otherwise g2 will fall with check. For instance, 37.£g1 £e5 (note that without Black's intermediate 34th move, this move would be impossible) 38.£d1 £e2 39.£f1! £f2† 40.£e1 £xg2 41.£f1 £c2 42.£xd5 £xd5. Despite the balanced material Black wins easily here: the connected pawns together with the miserable position of White's king leave no doubt.

37...£f5 38.£d1 £f2

White's position is suddenly critical. His only chance is to return the exchange, but it cannot be done before Black captures on g2.

39.£b8

39.£g1 leads to a draw, but is much less certain:

39...£f5 40.£b4 and the g-pawn is falling.

40.£b4 £f4 41.£d4 £f6

41...£f3? 42.£g4† £f6 43.£xg3 £xg2† 44.£h2 £xb2 45.£h4 winning.

42.£xd5 £xd5 43.£c1

An important position for assessing White's chances to survive, and it does seem that he can make it:

43...£e7 44.£g1 £xb2 45.£h4 £d4 46.£c6 £d8 47.£h5 d3

Or 47...£c7 48.£h6 £b8 49.£f1 £h8 50.£d1 is identical to the main variation.

48.£h6 £c7 49.£h7 £b8 50.£d1 £xc6 51.£f1 £h8 52.£xd3 £xh7 53.£d4 £h1† 54.£e2 £g1 55.£xh4 £xg2† 56.£f3 £f2† 57.£xg3 £xf4 58.£xf4 £c5 59.£e3

The king makes it to cl in time.

39...£f5! 40.£d8

White has to take on d5 or at least threaten to.
Hats off to Topalov! The birth of a new Champion is always an emotional moment, but each birth is different. This one is very typical of Topalov. Knowing that a draw would suffice for winning the title, he does not want to make a draw on the weaker side.

After 41...f4 White has no choice but to deliver a perpetual. 42.g1 d6† g5 43.g8† f5 44.f8† e4 45.e8† f5 (45...f3? 46.d3 mate) 46.f8†

But in this draw Black must wait for his opponent to give checks. Topalov does not want to offer the draw either and therefore is going for a position where White has to fight for one, and only then will he (maybe!) agree to a draw. Typical of the new Champion.

Alexei Shirov suggested an idea to play for a win with 41...g5, but here too White has a draw, although it is non-trivial. After 42.d2! (42.d3 h4! is a more complicated way) 42...xd2 43.h4† winning a crucial tempo. (43.d2 h3 White is helpless against the advance of the f-pawn.) 43...h4 44.d2 h3
Black’s pawns still look very dangerous, but White is able to grab one pawn on the queenside, and then sacrifice the rook for both kingside pawns. But which one to take?

a) The natural choice is the c-pawn, as a1 is of the wrong colour, but it proves to be a mistake:

```
45.\text{d}6 \text{f}4 46.\text{e}xc6 \text{g}5 47.\text{c}7 \text{g}6 48.\text{c}6t \text{g}5 49.\text{c}7 \text{f}3 50.\text{e}7 \text{f}2t 51.\text{x}f2 \text{gx}f2t 52.\text{x}f2
```

Now careless play would indeed lead to a draw, although it is somewhat study-like:

```
52...\text{f}6 53.\text{e}3 \text{e}7 54.\text{d}4 \text{e}6 55.\text{c}3 \text{d}7 56.\text{b}4 \text{b}5 57.\text{b}5 \text{c}7 58.\text{c}6 Surprisingly enough it is a draw: any attempt to force White's king to leave the c5- or b5-squares would allow White to exchange the last pawn. And if 58...\text{d}6 59.\text{b}6 \text{d}5, then he draws simply with 60.\text{b}5 \text{xc}6t 61.\text{b}4.
```

But after 52...\text{f}4! Black wins. For example:

```
53.\text{e}2 \text{e}4 54.\text{d}2 \text{d}4 55.\text{c}6 \text{e}6 56.\text{c}2 \text{c}4 and White will eventually be zugzwanged into moving his b-pawn, when Black wins easily.
```

b) Therefore, the right choice is quite surprising:

```
45.\text{d}4t! \text{g}5 46.\text{a}4 \text{f}4 47.\text{b}8 \text{f}3 48.\text{b}8 \text{f}2t (48...\text{f}5 49.\text{b}4 and White’s pawns are fast) 49.\text{x}f2 \text{gx}f2t 50.\text{xf}2
```

Black cannot prevent his last pawn from being exchanged: 50...\text{e}6 51.\text{b}4 with a draw.

```
51.\text{e}3 \text{f}5 52.\text{d}4 \text{b}3 (52...\text{f}7 53.\text{b}3 \text{b}5 54.\text{b}5 \text{xb}5 55.\text{c}6 \text{e}6 56.\text{c}5 \text{a}4 [56...\text{c}4 57.\text{a}4 draws] 57.\text{b}6 Now it is Black who should be quick to force a draw: 57...\text{b}4 58.\text{a}xb4 \text{d}6 53.\text{c}3 \text{d}1 54.\text{b}4 \text{e}6 55.\text{a}5 \text{d}5 (55...\text{b}3 56.\text{b}4 \text{d}1 57.\text{a}5=) 56.\text{b}4 \text{e}2 57.\text{a}4 and the peaceful result is clear.
```

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42.\text{f}1xd5?! With this inaccurate move White made an offer which could not be refused! Black could have played for a win: 42.\text{f}1xd5 \text{cxd}5, but even here the position is close to a draw: 43.\text{c}6! \text{e}2 44.\text{g}8t \text{f}6 45.\text{h}3 \text{b}6t 47.\text{f}2 \text{e}2t 48.\text{e}1 \text{f}4 49.\text{d}3 \text{axb}3 50.\text{b}3 \text{e}5 51.\text{h}4 \text{h}2 52.\text{a}4 \text{hx}4 53.\text{b}3 \text{h}6 54.\text{a}5 \text{a}6 55.\text{e}2
```

```
52...\text{f}4! Black wins. For example:
```
53.\text{e}2 \text{e}4 54.\text{d}2 \text{d}4 55.\text{c}6 \text{e}6 56.\text{c}2 \text{c}4 and White will eventually be zugzwanged into moving his b-pawn, when Black wins easily.
```

b) Therefore, the right choice is quite surprising:

```
45.\text{d}4t! \text{g}5 46.\text{a}4 \text{f}4 47.\text{b}8 \text{f}3 48.\text{b}8 \text{f}2t (48...\text{f}5 49.\text{b}4 and White's pawns are fast) 49.\text{x}f2 \text{gx}f2t 50.\text{xf}2
```

This is, of course, a draw as Black cannot win without his rook being active.

But, for the record, more accurate was 42.\text{b}8xd5 \text{cxd}5 43.\text{e}1, with a much simpler draw: 43...\text{b}2 44.\text{c}6 \text{b}8 45.\text{g}2 \text{f}4 46.\text{b}3 \text{g}5 47.\text{c}7 \text{e}8 48.\text{c}5 \text{f}6 Here many ways lead to the draw, but the most forcing is 49.\text{d}5 \text{e}4 50.\text{f}5 51.\text{f}6 \text{e}5 52.\text{e}5 53.\text{d}6 54.\text{e}2 (53.\text{e}3? g2) 53...\text{e}3 54.h4. White's h-pawn gives him enough counterplay.

\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}
The last round turned out to be mainly for the record, although for some this record was more important than for others.

The head-to-head duel between two of the medallists was peaceful. Neither of them found enough energy for a real struggle. But if Anand, playing on the Black side, did not have much choice (although he did choose a tranquil Petroff), Svidler, who would end up third in the event of a draw due to a worse tiebreak (fewer wins), might have tried to fight for more. But after a long and exhausting tournament he had no energy left for trying to beat Anand in a position he knows so well (with both colours).

Topalov and Polgar did not even try to compose a real fight. Topalov reached his goal with straightforward simplifications, leaving neither party any chance to play on. Polgar, of course, did not object.

To compensate, Morozevich and Adams conducted yet another mind-breaker. The opening was a Ruy Lopez, which was supposed to be more familiar for the English gentleman, but it was somehow Morozevich who found his way first. Soon after the initial stage White became creative, transferring both his knights to the queenside. Strange-looking manoeuvres, together with an inaccuracy by his opponent, gave White a slight advantage. White's joy did not last long, however, as right after completing the knights' transfer he blundered, and from that moment he was doomed to fight for survival, having
to part with one of those heroic knights. His sacrifice proved to be good, as immediately afterwards Black made a serious error and although he kept the extra piece, the position was much closer to a draw than anything else. Adams tried hard to exploit his last (and very reasonable) chance to win a game, but apparently he was not destined to.

A great finale was produced by Leko against Kasimdzhanov. Overall, Leko will be disappointed with his tournament, so we might say he put a bold full stop after not the best of sentences. The Hungarian was in charge right from the opening (after Kasimdzhanov made an atypical positional mistake), and never let his opponent off the hook. In this game Peter Leko bore a much closer resemblance to Alekhine rather than his idol, Petrovian (Tigran Vartanovich, that is, rather than Leko's father-in-law Arshak). Leko dominated the entire board before the final attack was aimed at the enemy king, and Black had to give up material in order to prolong the struggle. This was one of Leko's best games of the event.
GAME 53

Peter Leko
Rustam Kasimdzhanov
Sicilian Kan B42

1.e4 c5 2.d3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.cxd4 a6 5.d3 c5 6.b3 a7

The idea of the bishop’s development to a7 is to disturb White’s natural flow by putting pressure along the g1-a7 diagonal. The drawbacks are also obvious: the bishop will be missed on the kingside and in the centre: in particular d6 is going to be weak.

7.e2

One of two main strategies White has in this position. The other is 7.e4, restricting Black’s play on the queenside and in the centre. This, however, comes at the price of weakening d4.

The text move is more positional in comparison to 7.g4, which is a more straightforward way to exploit the bishop’s excursion. Now after 7...g6 the queen switches to attacking another square weakened by the bishop’s absence – d6. 8.g3 c6 9.e3 d6 10.h4 f6 11.h6 e5 12.e2 b5 13.f4 White had a strong initiative and won convincingly in Grischuk – Istratescu, Khanty Mansyisk 2005.

7...c6 8.e3 d6 9.f4

A more logical way, however, is to play 7...f6 8.g3 d6 9.c3 c6. As opposed to 7...g6, Black has not weakened the dark squares on the kingside and not given White a target for an h4-h5 attack. In the following game White’s unassuming play allowed Black to take over the initiative: 10.g5 h6 11.d2 h5 12.h3 h4 13.g3 e5! 14.e2 g4! 15.0–0–0 xc2 16.xe2 f6 17.f4 e5 18.e1 c7, and Black was better in Vallejo – Kamsky, Khanty Mansyisk 2005.

7...c6 8.e3 d6 9.f4
A tricky move. The point is that White does not want to take on a7, as it would allow Black’s rook to typically join the game along the 7th rank (after moving the b-pawn, of course). On the other hand, he has to make a useful move, but which one?

9...\textit{b}c7?!

In general, Black is in no hurry to place his queen on c7. We have already said that one of the main plans is to activate the rook via the 7th rank, but now the queen will be in the way.

So this interesting conflict of who will capture first unexpectedly ends with Black’s slight inaccuracy. White has every reason to say “Well, he started it!” After all, Black could capture on e3, which would have led to well-known positions with a small plus for White, mainly due to his spatial advantage.

More logical seems to developing the knight with 9...\textit{d}f6 (or 9...\textit{d}e7) 10.\textit{x}a7 \textit{b}xa7 11.c4, and now Black reveals that another possible plan is transposing into a hedgehog position: 11...0-0 12.\textit{e}3 \textit{b}6 13.0-0 \textit{d}7 14.\textit{a}d1 \textit{c}5 15.\textit{b}1 \textit{d}7 16.\textit{d}2 and all Black’s pieces are ideally placed, which makes 16...\textit{b}5! possible, after which he never looked back in Karjakin – Rublevsky, Mainz 2004.

10.0-0 \textit{f}6 11.\textit{x}xa7

Now White can exchange the bishops: Black will need to spend a tempo moving his queen.

11...\textit{b}xa7 12.\textit{d}3

This strikes us as more unpleasant for Black than c4, as it does not give the opponent clear targets for counterplay (a pawn on c4, on the other hand, is subject to all kinds of central breaks). It is, of course, merely a matter of taste.

In Short – Fominyh, Mumbai 2004, White continued with the prophylactic 12.\textit{h}1 0-0 13.a3 \textit{b}5 14.\textit{c}1d2. Black’s problem is that he lacks an active plan: 14...e5 15.f5 d5 16.\textit{a}e1! d4 17.g4 h6 18.h4 This will not lead to mate, but gives White control over the kingside, after which he can switch to the other flank: 18...\textit{h}7 19.\textit{f}3 \textit{w}e7 20.\textit{g}1 g5 21.\textit{f}2 \textit{d}7 22.\textit{h}2 \textit{f}6 23.\textit{x}g5 \textit{x}g5 24.\textit{g}2 \textit{f}7 25.\textit{e}h1 \textit{h}7 26.\textit{g}1 \textit{e}8 27.\textit{h}6 \textit{b}8 28.\textit{b}d2 \textit{d}7 29.a4! and White went on to win the game.

What could be wrong with a move that is virtually standard for Black in such positions? Well, sometimes White can get a very promising initiative on the queenside once he plays a4 at some point.

Therefore 12...\textit{b}6 looks more reasonable, but in general Black’s position is not ideal: without ...\textit{b}5 he cannot even dream of serious counterplay.

13.a4!

This novelty is just as strong as it is logical. Without waiting long, Leko directly attacks the newly-born weakness.

In view of the current game, 13.a3 is hardly attractive, and although in the only game to feature it White gained a good position, it was mainly to Black’s ‘credit’: 13...\textit{h}5?! (13...\textit{b}7) 14.\textit{a}e1 \textit{b}6 15.\textit{g}1 h4 16.\textit{d}1 \textit{h}5 17.\textit{e}3 e5 18.\textit{f}8 19.\textit{g}4 \textit{f}8 20.\textit{f}3 \textit{d}6 21.\textit{h}3 d5 22.\textit{xd}5 \textit{xd}5 23.\textit{ex}d5 \textit{d}4 24.\textit{xd}4 \textit{ex}d4 25.\textit{f}4 The game is rather curious, and it seems that Black was making every effort to complicate the position, Padeiro – Galego, Portugal (ch) 2002.

13...\textit{b}4 14.\textit{d}1

The ‘tempo’ (b5-b4) has only driven the knight towards the kingside, where it wants to be in the first place. Further unpleasant news for Black is that if White plays a5 then both the a6- and b4-pawns will turn into permanent weaknesses, so...
14...a5
Pretty much forced, but this weakens the b5-square.
15.\textit{O}e3

Initial results of the last three moves: Black weakened b5 and c4; White transferred his knight to a much better position, still eyeing the vital d5-square, only one step away from attacking the black king. Oh, and Black still has no plans for counterplay.

15...\textit{O}h1 \textit{b}b7 17.\textit{O}g4!

This is a good example of a move that, once produced on the board, looks very logical and even trivial. Indeed, what could be more natural than exchanging the king’s best (and only) defender? It is finding such moves that is not so easy.

17...\textit{O}xg4

An attempt to keep the knights with 17...\textit{O}d7 would have left White with too many pieces around the king: 18.f5 \textit{h}h8 (18...\textit{O}ce5 19.fxe6 fxe6 20.\textit{O}d4 is just bad for Black) 19.fxe6 fxe6 20.\textit{O}c4 Black’s pieces clearly chose the wrong flank for their gathering!

However, in view of later developments, it was perhaps better to bring the queen closer, and delay White’s attack a little with 17...\textit{O}e7.

18.\textit{O}xg4 \textit{aa}8

Black would love to play 18...e5, trying to at least close down the bishop, but after 19.f5 \textit{f}6 20.\textit{f}f3 White has full control over the position.

19.\textit{E}ae1 \textit{E}e7
19...e5 is even worse, since White can immediately go on the offensive: 20.f5 \textit{f}6 21.\textit{O}c4 \textit{h}h8 22.\textit{f}f3 with an attack free of charge. The point is that 22...\textit{O}d4 is no longer possible (compared to 19...e5) as the rook on e1 protects an important pawn on e4, which allows: 23.\textit{O}xd4 \textit{xc}4 24.\textit{O}e6 \textit{E}f7 25.\textit{E}h3 \textit{g}g8 26.\textit{h}h4 \textit{h}6 27.\textit{E}g3 with a close to decisive initiative.

20.\textit{E}e3 \textit{g}6?!

But here 20...e5 should have been played. The point is that now 21.f5 can be met with 21...\textit{E}f6, not weakening the a2-g8 diagonal.

However, White can insert 21.\textit{E}h3 first, and only after 21...\textit{E}c8 play 22.f5. Black’s position is perhaps better than the game, but he is still rather unhappy. The absence of a knight on f6 is felt both defensively and in terms of finding counterplay.

21.\textit{W}g3

Multitasking prophylaxis: the queen gets away from possible attacks from pieces (...\textit{O}e5) and pawns (...f5), and at the same time is eyeing the weakness on d6.

21...\textit{E}e8

Essentially preventing 22.f5, as it would be met with 22...\textit{Exf}5 when White has to recapture with the rook.

22.\textit{Ab}5!

But Leko suddenly changes direction. This game gives the impression of completeness: slow improvement of the position, while playing on both flanks. If in the first part of the game
White’s play was reminiscent of Karpov in his prime, then from now on Leko shows that he has also studied Alekhine’s games.

22...\textit{\texttt{f}}_{\textit{c}8}

This makes White’s task a little easier, leaving a5 unprotected. It was better to unpin the knight.

22...\textit{\texttt{e}}_{\textit{d}8} makes little sense, given that Black’s last move was ...\textit{\texttt{f}}_{\textit{e}8}. And indeed after 23.f5 White’s attack continues smoothly.

Black’s best bet seems to be Leko’s own suggestion 22...\textit{\texttt{a}}_{\textit{6}}, although here too, after 23.\textit{\texttt{d}}_{\textit{d}3} \textit{\texttt{b}}_{\textit{b}5} 24.\textit{\texttt{x}}_{\textit{b}5} \textit{\texttt{b}}_{\textit{b}8} 25.\textit{\texttt{d}}_{\textit{d}4}, it is enough to take a brief look at Black’s miserable pieces to understand that his position is lost.

23.\textit{\texttt{c}}_{\textit{3}!}

A very strong move, making f5 possible! The reasoning is simple: if Black takes on c3 then after 24.\textit{\texttt{x}}_{\textit{c}3} the c-file will be entirely at White’s disposal (because of the weak a5-pawn, which demands one of the rooks’ attention). However, White wants to play \textit{\texttt{d}}_{\textit{d}4}, which means the rook has to leave e8, and we remember why it went there in the first place.

23...\textit{\texttt{e}}_{\textit{d}8} 24.\textit{\texttt{f}}_{\textit{5}}

Once again a sudden change of direction. Similar moves could be observed in the games of Michael Jordan.

24...\textit{\texttt{b}}_{\textit{xc}3} 25.\textit{\texttt{b}}_{\textit{xc}3} Black now has a target! A weak pawn on c3.

25.\textit{\texttt{x}}_{\textit{c}3} is pointless, as Black has 25...\textit{\texttt{e}}_{\textit{e}5} 26.\textit{\texttt{f}}_{\textit{6}} \textit{\texttt{f}}_{\textit{f}8} 27.\textit{\texttt{x}}_{\textit{a}5} \textit{\texttt{x}}_{\textit{e}4}, and although White is still better, Black gets a lot of play.

25...\textit{\texttt{e}}_{\textit{a}8}

Too bad the rook has to leave the open c-file in order to protect a5.

26.\textit{\texttt{f}}_{\textit{6}}

From now on Black will have to be concerned about various mates-in-3.

26...\textit{\texttt{f}}_{\textit{8}} 27.\textit{\texttt{f}}_{\textit{4}}

The plan is as simple as can be: \textit{\texttt{h}3-\textit{h}6 and \textit{\texttt{h}4}}, and the only way to prevent it is...
27...h6
After this White wins with no effort, but the alternatives are no better. Of course, the immediate 27...h5 loses to 28.g4, but also the more solid:
27...De5 28.Eh3 h5 loses to a typical Sicilian sacrifice: 29.Ee2 Aa6 30.Exh5 Axf1 31.Axd1 and the only way to prevent Wh4-h8 mate is resignation.
28.Eh3 g5
Not a pleasant move to make, but what else?
After 28...Eh7 29.Eg5! the black king's last memory will be Ef1-f4-h4.
29.Ee3 De5 30.Eh5
With the same idea of doubling along the h-file.
30...Dg6 31.Eh3
The most natural and straightforward.
Leko offers 31.h4 as a strong alternative, providing the following line: 31...Ef4 32.Exxf4 gxf4 33.Exf4 e5 (33...Eh7 34.Ed3 forcing ...e5 anyway) 34.Eg4† Eh7 35.Ef5† Eh8 36.Ag4 winning. The text, however, is also winning, and less dramatically.
31...Axe4
Of course, after 31...Ef4 32.Exxf4 gxf4 Black will not live long enough to enjoy his material advantage: 33.Exh6 is terminal.
32.Ed2 Ac2
32...Af5 loses to 33.g4! Ac2 34.Exh6 and Black is helpless against Eh6-h7-g7.
33.Exh6

The triumph of White's plan! Black is helpless now, but in the Sicilian it's never over till it's over.
33...Aac8
It was slightly better to play 33...g4 first, and only after 34.Ee3 bring the rook in with 34...Aac8. But the position is still bad for Black: 35.Ac1 Ad5 36.Ab3 with essentially the same ideas.
34.Eh5
On 34.g4 Black has time to block the h-file and protect the g5-pawn with 34...Eh4 35.Eh5 Ec5, although White is still winning after 36.Ed3 Axh3 37.Ec3 Ag6 38.Dc4 etc.
34...Ec5 35.Ac1
Leko's only inaccuracy in this game. There was no reason to give away the pawn on c3.
35.c4 was called for.
35...g4
35...Af5 36.g4 traps the bishop!
36.Exg4 Ac5
Kasimdzhanov is trying to surprise his opponent in time trouble, but he is now a pawn down with a lost position.
Black should have taken the pawn: 36...Exc3 would have given him some counter-chances along the c-file, although his position is still lost - his king is too weak.
37.Ag3 d5

![Diagram](image)

38.Ab3!
Improving the last piece, which brings the game to an end.
38...\texttt{Cc8} 39.\texttt{Md4} \texttt{Le4} 40.\texttt{Cc6}

White could have switched back with 40.\texttt{Gg5},
threatening \texttt{Gh3+} \texttt{Gh5}, to which Black has no
answer, but the text-move is also an easy win.

40...\texttt{Xc6}

Time pressure is over, and the rest could
have been spared. Leko never misses in such
positions.

40...\texttt{Dd6} loses to 41.\texttt{De7}.

Also hopeless is 40...\texttt{Dd7} 41.\texttt{Dc7} 42.\texttt{Dd7}
\texttt{Dxd7} (the attempt to surprise White with a
counter-attack by 42...\texttt{Da3} 43.\texttt{Gg5} \texttt{Xc1}†
44.\texttt{Xc1} \texttt{Xc3} fails to 45.\texttt{Xh8}† \texttt{Xh8} 46.\texttt{Gg5}†
\texttt{Gg6} 47.\texttt{Xc8} and Black is finished) 43.\texttt{Xd7}
\texttt{Dd8} 44.\texttt{Gg5}.

41.\texttt{Xc6} \texttt{Dd6} 42.\texttt{Gg5} \texttt{Gf4}

42...\texttt{Xc6} allows a typical mate: 43.\texttt{Xh8}†
\texttt{Xh8} 44.\texttt{Gh6}† \texttt{Gg8} 45.\texttt{Gg7}
43.\texttt{Xf4} \texttt{Xf4} 44.\texttt{Gg5}† \texttt{Gh7} 45.\texttt{Gb5} \texttt{Gh6}
46.\texttt{h4} \texttt{Xg2}

Black's first active move in the game, with the
clear hope of causing White a heart attack.

47.\texttt{Xg2} \texttt{Gg8} 48.\texttt{Cc2}

1–0
A quiet move, away from the main theory, away from home analysis, pure chess from the beginning. Or, more precisely, almost pure, in modern chess this only means it has not been played a million times.

One of the possible reasons to play it is to avoid the classical Ruy Lopez lines (such as the Zaitsev variation). Analysis of the efforts to avoid those lines shows that probably the best moment to do so is here. So this line can jokingly be called the Anti-Zaitsev, conceptually similar to Anti-Marshall and Anti-Sveshnikov ideas.

5...d6

5...b5 usually leads to normal lines of the Anti-Marshall or Archangelsk variations (the classic Ruy Lopez with 5...b5 6.a3 c5), but not against Morozevich, who interprets this position (like any other, in fact) differently from everyone else, so Adams postpones ...b5. Here are two of Morozevich's previous games after 5...b5 6.a3 and now:


6...c5 7.a4 Qb8 8.axb5 axb5 9.Qc3 d6 10.Qg5 Qg4 11.Qd5 Qd4 12.c3 Qxb3 13.Qxb3 c6 14.Qxf6+ gxf6 15.Qh4 Qg8 16.Qc2 Qa8 and in this balanced position White played 17.Qd2 - recognize the style? However, he was unable to break the balance in Morozevich – Grischuk, Mainz 2004.

6.c3 g6

In similar fashion to 3...Qf6 4.d3 lines (when White is avoiding the Berlin) Black can exploit White's slow play in the opening by developing the dark-squared bishop to a better diagonal.

7.0-0 Qg7 8.Bel

8.Qbd2?! led to a very curious game between two chess romantics: 8...0-0 9.Bel Kh5 10.Qf1 f5 11.exf5 Qxf5 12.Qg5 Qh8 13.a3 d5 14.g4 Qf4 15.Qxf4 exf4 16.Qxh7 Qh7 17.gxf5 Qxf5 18.d4 All White's combinations seem to have favoured his opponent, but the Muscovite actually won in Morozevich – Shirov, Monaco 2004.

8...0-0 9.Qg5 b5

Only now, after the kingside is fully developed, does Black begin developing the queenside.

10.Qc2 Qb7 11.Qbd2

A previous game continued with an anti-Marshall style plan: 11...Qd7 12.Qf1 Qe8 13.e3 Qd8 14.Qd2 Qe6 15.Qh4 h6 16.a4 c6 17.Qb3 and now, "after totally exhausting all the
possibilities in the position”, a draw was agreed, Palac – Rogic, Pula 2000.

12.a4 ∇bd7 13.b4 c5

A common sight in the Ruy Lopez: neither player is ready to give up the flank that is nearer the clock!

14.∇b3!

A great manoeuvre: the knight is heading to a5, from where it will control some crucial squares on the queenside. Morozevich’s fourth round game against Svidler immediately comes to mind.

14...∇c7 15.∇a5 ∇c8 16.axb5 axb5 17.∇b3?!

A dubious decision: Black was probably going to play ...∇b6 and ...c4 anyway, so why force him to do so? How can one know he wanted to do that? What else can Black play here?

Worth considering was 17.d4?! exd4 18.cxd4 cxb4! (18...cxd4? 19.∇xd4 and White is clearly better. Or 18...c4?! 19.∇d2 with strong presence in the centre and on the kingside, while the knight on a5 prevents Black from gaining any counterplay.) 19.∇b3 ∇xa1 20.∇xa1 ∇b7 21.∇b3 ∇b6 Black has an extra pawn, whereas White is hoping to exploit the weakness of both b-pawns. The position is pretty balanced.

But 17.h3 seems to be the most useful waiting move, intending to transfer the knight to g4 via h2.

17...∇b6

Adams does not need to be asked twice to play c5-c4 with tempo.

18.h3

A healthy prophylactic move, which should have been played a move earlier.

18...c4 19.dxc4 bxc4 20.∇c2

White wasted two tempi to force Black to execute the plan he wanted to play anyway. The good news is that this is the Spanish not the Sicilian, and two tempi are less crucial here, only allowing Black to equalize.

20...∇e6 21.∇d2?!
Morozevich is beginning his favourite game: "Catch me if you can". There is no point in suggesting alternatives here, as beginning with his 17th move, White obviously had this plan in mind. So anything else, in conjunction with White's previous play, would just be silly. Where is the horse going?

21...\textit{f}d7

Adams carries on with his plan, protecting the e5-pawn, and preparing ...\textit{d}5.

22.\textit{b}1?!

Surprised? No need for despair, for it only means your name is not Morozevich. The knight is going to b5, and there is no need to prove how well it will stand there. Despite all the beauty of this manoeuvre, this plan has just as many drawbacks, the main one is time. Black now manages to build a strong centre.

22...\textit{f}6?!

Before playing ...\textit{d}5 it seems helpful to kick the bishop from g5, making d8 accessible to the rooks. Another interesting plan with the same idea is 22...\textit{f}6 23.\textit{e}3 \textit{d}5 24.\textit{a}3 \textit{ac}8 (Worse is 24...\textit{f}5 25.\textit{b}5 \textit{d}8 26.\textit{ex}f5 \textit{xf}5 27.\textit{xf}5 \textit{xf}5 28.\textit{a}2! and White has the better prospects: Black's centre looks nice, but it is in fact a good target for White's pieces.) 25.\textit{ex}d5 \textit{xd}5 26.\textit{xc}4 \textit{xc}3 27.\textit{d}2 \textit{xc}4 28.\textit{xc}3 \textit{e}6 29.\textit{xc}7 \textit{xc}7 Although White's passed pawn gives him some winning chances, the position should be drawn.

However Adams suggests the immediate 22...\textit{d}5 as a serious improvement, providing the following line: 23.\textit{a}3 \textit{f}6 24.\textit{e}3 \textit{xe}4 25.\textit{xe}4 \textit{xe}4 26.\textit{xb}6 \textit{xb}6 27.\textit{xc}4 \textit{c}7 28.\textit{d}6 \textit{ac}8 29.\textit{xe}4 \textit{xd}6 30.\textit{xd}6 \textit{xc}3 with an unclear game.

23.\textit{e}3

White, of course, does not exchange Black's bad bishop.

23...\textit{d}5

At first glance it might appear as if Black has taken over the initiative, but in fact his centre is immobile, which will allow White to attack it, using the two knights on a5 and b5.

24.\textit{a}3 \textit{ac}8!

Very accurate. On \textit{b}5 the queen will now be able to retreat to \textit{b}8.
time the move falls into the 'almost' category, as it was time for more concrete measures: 
Better was 26.exd5, before Black has time to get another pawn to the centre: 26...\textit{\texttt{\texttt{x}}\texttt{d}5 (26...\textit{\texttt{x}}\texttt{d}5 27.b5 \textit{\texttt{b}8 28.a7 \textit{\texttt{c}7 29.b6 \textit{\texttt{e}8 30.b5! and White is clearly better) 27.e4 \textit{\texttt{xe}4 28.e4 f5 29.c2 and White has a slight but stable edge.}}}}}}}

\textit{\texttt{\texttt{f}}5!}
Both players seem to care little about the opponent's activities, continuing their plans.

\textit{\texttt{\texttt{b}5?}}
A sad blunder, ruining a fantastic idea! White had to play 27.exf5 e4 (Less convincing is 27...\textit{\texttt{xf}5 28.e4 \textit{\texttt{f}5 29.e2 and without the light-squared bishops Black's centre is going to be weak.) 28.b5 \textit{\texttt{b}8 (28...\textit{\texttt{xf}3?}}}}}}}

\textit{\texttt{\texttt{f}}5 29.e2 \textit{\texttt{f}5 30.e2 with an unclear position.}}

\textit{\texttt{\texttt{f}}5 28.exf5 \textit{\texttt{xf}5 29.e5 \textit{\texttt{xf}5 30.e2 with an unclear position.}}}

\textit{\texttt{e2}}

\textit{\texttt{\texttt{d}4!}}
Without the knight on b5 this would not be possible. Now Black gains a very big, probably decisive, advantage.

\textit{\texttt{\texttt{c}xd}4}
31...\textit{\texttt{d}2 \textit{\texttt{a}4 is very bad for White.}}}

\textit{\texttt{\texttt{d}5}}
Now White must give up a piece to keep his position afloat.

\textit{\texttt{\texttt{c}xc}4}

\textit{\texttt{\texttt{f}8}}

\textit{\texttt{\texttt{f}5}}

\textit{\texttt{\texttt{c}5}}

\textit{\texttt{b}8}

An old chess saying states that bringing a piece towards the centre is almost always good. This
White's best chance. This officially opens the San Luis food-fest 2005.

32.\(\text{c}3\) \(\text{d}c3\) 33.\(\text{w}f1\) \(\text{d}xd1\) 34.\(\text{e}xd1\) \(\text{w}xb4\)
35.\(\text{e}xc4\) \(\text{e}xd4\) 36.\(\text{e}xd4\) \(\text{d}xd4\) 37.\(\text{e}xd4\) \(\text{e}5\)
Black has some technical difficulties, but he should win.

32...\(\text{w}xb5\) 33.\(\text{d}6\) \(\text{w}xe2\) 34.\(\text{e}xe2\) \(\text{d}c3\)
35.\(\text{d}xc8\)

35...\(\text{a}8\)?

This prophylactic move actually lets the win go. Much more promising was to continue in checkers style: 35...\(\text{d}xe2\) 36.\(\text{w}f1\) \(\text{e}c3!\) That is the point: with a tempo on White's rook, the knight gets back just in time to cover e7.

37.\(\text{d}e7\) loses by force to 37...\(\text{d}f7\) 38.\(\text{d}xf5\) \(\text{d}xd1\) 39.\(\text{d}xg7\) \(\text{d}xe3\) 40.\(\text{f}xe3\), when the quiet 40...\(\text{e}4!\) is the most precise, with an easy win.

Even after 37.\(\text{d}d3\) \(\text{d}d5\) 38.\(\text{d}xe5\) \(\text{d}xe3\) 39.\(\text{d}xe3\) \(\text{d}xe5\) Black gets a much better version of the game and wins without much trouble.

36.\(\text{d}xe5!\)

Stronger was 36.\(\text{d}e7\) 37.\(\text{d}e7\) 38.\(\text{d}xd1\) 39.\(\text{d}xg6!\) \(\text{h}xg6\) 39.\(\text{d}xe5\) \(\text{d}xe3\) (also after 39...\(\text{d}xe5\) 40.\(\text{d}xd1\) neither side can win) 40.\(\text{d}xd1\) 41.\(\text{d}xe3\) with a draw.

36...\(\text{d}xd1\)

36...\(\text{d}xe2\) 37.\(\text{d}f1\) \(\text{g}3\) 38.\(\text{d}e1\) \(\text{d}xc8\)
39.\(\text{d}xd7\) is not much different from the game.

37.\(\text{d}e7\) 38.\(\text{d}e6\) \(\text{d}xe5\)
Or 38...\(\text{d}xe3\) 39.\(\text{d}xe3\) \(\text{d}e6\) 40.\(g3\).

39.\(\text{d}xe5\) \(\text{d}xe5\) 40.\(\text{d}e5\)

After the inevitable rook exchange, the draw will be virtually automatic: Black has too few pawns, and the h1-square is of the wrong colour.

40...\(\text{d}e8\) 41.\(\text{w}f1\) \(\text{d}b2\) 42.\(\text{f}4!\) \(\text{d}c3\) 43.\(\text{d}xe8\) \(\text{w}xe8\)

All White needs to do is keep the bishop on c5, forcing its exchange, and meanwhile prepare to exchange pawns on the kingside.

44.\(\text{d}e2\) \(\text{d}d7\) 45.\(\text{d}e3\) \(\text{d}a4\) 46.\(\text{d}e4\) \(\text{d}xc5\)
47.\(\text{d}xc5\) \(\text{d}c6\) 48.\(\text{d}h4\)

Simpler was 48.\(\text{d}g4\) \(\text{d}xc5\) 49.\(\text{d}g5\) \(\text{d}d6\) 50.\(\text{d}e1\) (50...\(\text{d}xf5\) 51.\(\text{d}xf5\) is a theoretical draw) 51.\(\text{d}xg6\) \(\text{h}xg6\) 52.\(\text{d}f4\) \(\text{d}d5\) 53.\(\text{d}g4\) \(\text{d}e4\) 54.\(\text{d}h4\) \(\text{d}h4\) 55.\(\text{d}xh4\) \(\text{d}f5\) 56.\(\text{d}h3!\) with a draw.

48...\(\text{d}xc5\)

The draw is clear. After 48...\(\text{d}e1\) White still makes the draw, although it is more complicated: 49.\(\text{d}h5\) \(\text{g}xh5\) 50.\(\text{d}g3!\) The simplest. Without the g-pawn Black will have no chances for a win, even theoretically. For example, 50...\(\text{d}xc5\) 51.\(\text{d}f5\) \(\text{d}c6\) 52.\(\text{d}f6\) \(\text{d}b4\) 53.\(\text{d}f7\) \(\text{d}f8\) 54.\(\text{d}f5\) \(\text{d}d5\) 55.\(\text{d}g5\).

49.\(\text{d}f5\) \(\text{d}d6\) 50.\(\text{d}xg6\) \(\text{h}xg6\) 51.\(\text{d}h5\) \(\text{g}xh5\) 52.\(\text{d}g4!\) \(\text{h}xg4\)

52...\(\text{d}h4\) 53.\(\text{d}f3\) and the g-pawn has no significance.

53.\(\text{d}f4\) \(\text{g}3\) 54.\(\text{d}xg3\)
\(1/2-1/2\)
GAME 55
Peter Svidler
Viswanathan Anand
Petroff Defence C42

1.e4 e5 2.d3 d6 3.dxe5 d6 4.d3 dxe4 5.dxe3

An interesting and very popular line recently. Alexei Shirov was the one to introduce it into elite practice, and that by itself suggests the line can become quite complicated.

5...c3 6.dxc3 ie7

So, what is so complex here? For White some things are pretty clear. He wants to develop his bishop (either to e3 or f4), then the queen, and castle queenside. Black has two different approaches, as he can castle either side. His development is going to be affected by White’s. If the bishop goes to f4, then the knight is developed to c5 via d7. Otherwise, dxe6-c5 is a good option. These are the basics for many games and lines in this opening. All this, however, does not affect White’s general plan: he desperately searches for any kind of advantage, whatever can be grasped. A bishop pair? Sure! A weakness on d6 to play against? Great! Attack the king? Oh, that is a dream, really. Black’s dream is exactly the opposite.

5...dxe3 6.dxe3 c7

As of late, this move has had most attention, although 7.dxe4 is also seen. After 7.dxe3 the game tends to be more positional, circling around Black’s knight, which will soon be on e5.

Shirov used to play 7.f4, and now:

7...0-0 8.d7 9.0-0-0.c5 10.e3 e6
11.db1 c8 12.d4 d7 13.h4 e8 14.f3 f8 15.g4 and White obtained a strong initiative in Shirov – Karpov, Benidorm 2002.

8.d6 8.d2 d4 9.e2 d7 10.0-0-0 a6
11.h1 0-0-0 12.h3 e6 13.c4 b8 14.e3 c6 15.a3, and White developed an attack on the king beginning with b2-b4 in Kramnik – Nielsen, Dortmund 2005.

7...d6 8.d2

It is time for Black to decide where his king’s hiding place will be. Short castling has proved to be sound in recent games. As surprising as it may sound, it is easier for White to develop an attack on the queenside, because his pieces are looking in that direction and his pawn mass there makes it easier for him to advance. Rather paradoxically, on the kingside White finds it much harder to attack. On the other hand, he has another plan of taking over the kingside, but it is slower and less dangerous. For both sides.

8...0-0

Delaying castling with 8.dxe5 led to an advantage for White after 9.0-0-0 dxf3 (opening an important file for White is a mistake) 10.gxf3 e6 11.g1 f6 12.d4, Motylev – Bologan, Moscow 2005.

9.0-0-0 dxe5

As promised, the knight is on e5. Black does not
want to take on f3, as it would open the g-file, but rather put pressure on the centre and on f3, not allowing White to advance his kingside pawns.

10.\(\text{\textipa{b1}}\)

Useful prophylaxis: the a-pawn might be hanging in many lines, and the c1-h6 diagonal is not safe either. The value of the move is also supported by crude statistics: of the 12 games featuring it to date, White has won seven and lost none.

A worthy alternative is 10.\(\text{\textipa{d4}}\) c5 11.\(\text{\textipa{b5}}\) \(\text{\textipa{a5}}\) 12.a3 \(\text{\textipa{e6}}\) 13.\(\text{\textipa{x6}}\) \(\text{\textipa{b6}}\). Now 14.f4 led to very interesting play in Kramnik – Kasparov, New York 1995.

The sharpest, however, seems to be 10.h4 \(\text{\textipa{e8}}\) 11.h5 with a quickly developing initiative. For example: 11...\(\text{\textipa{f6}}\) 12.\(\text{\textipa{bl}}\) a6 13.\(\text{\textipa{h2}}\) b5 14.\(\text{\textipa{e2}}\) \(\text{\textipa{b7}}\) 15.f4 \(\text{\textipa{d7}}\) 16.\(\text{\textipa{f3}}\) \(\text{\textipa{xf3}}\) 17.\(\text{\textipa{xf3}}\) \(\text{\textipa{e7}}\) 18.\(\text{\textipa{g4}}\), and White looks perfect, Svidler – Kramnik, Moscow 2005.

10...\(\text{\textipa{e8}}\)

Surprisingly enough, this natural looking move has not been played before. To prevent White from developing an attack on the kingside (which will consume a few moves), Black has to build up pressure in the centre, and this move suits the purpose very well. Taking on f3 has not even been tried here, learning from sad experiences in other variations.

In the following example Anand, on the White side, defeated Kramnik in convincing style: 10...a6 11.\(\text{\textipa{e2}}\) \(\text{\textipa{e6}}\) 12.\(\text{\textipa{d4}}\) \(\text{\textipa{c4}}\) 13.\(\text{\textipa{d3}}\) \(\text{\textipa{xe3}}\) 14.\(\text{\textipa{xe6}}\) \(\text{\textipa{fxe6}}\) 15.\(\text{\textipa{xe3}}\) e5 16.\(\text{\textipa{d3}}\) c6 17.h4 \(\text{\textipa{b6}}\) 18.g3 d5 19.\(\text{\textipa{xe5}}\) \(\text{\textipa{xf2}}\) 20.\(\text{\textipa{hfl}}\) \(\text{\textipa{f6}}\) 21.\(\text{\textipa{h5}}\) g6 22.\(\text{\textipa{e2}}\) \(\text{\textipa{d6}}\) 23.h5

Here the opposite coloured bishops helped White to build up a serious initiative, Anand – Kramnik, Monaco 2005.
A more principled continuation is 10...b6, which allowed Black a decent game in Adams – Bacrot, Wijk aan Zee 2006.

11.\(\text{\&d}4\)

This does not look dangerous, but can be explained – Svidler does not want to argue with Anand about Anand’s idea with White.

Much more natural is the usual 11.\(\text{\&e}2\), waiting to bring the knight to d4 with a tempo. Otherwise the knight might have to go back soon. After 11...\(\text{\&e}6\) 12.\(\text{\&d}4\) will be much more relevant, pretty much transposing into Anand – Kramnik. \(\text{\&e}8\) is, of course, more useful than the pawn on a6 in that game, but it should not change the essence of the position.

Another interesting idea is 11.\(\text{\&b}5\) in order to force 11...c6 (bad is 11...\(\text{\&d}7\)? 12.\(\text{\&xe}5\) \(\text{\&xb}5\) 13.\(\text{\&xf}7\) \(\text{\&xf}7\) 14.\(\text{\&d}5\)† \(\text{\&f}8\) 15.\(\text{\&xb}5\) winning) and only now 12.\(\text{\&e}2\), as here Black will have another problem to solve: he cannot develop his dark-squared bishop to a good square.

11...a6

Black’s play is not entirely clear either. If he wanted to play the usual ...c5, it could have been done immediately. After this preparation, however, he is no longer going to have time for ...c5.

11...\(\text{\&g}4\) 12.\(\text{\&d}3\) \(\text{\&xe}3\) 13.\(\text{\&xe}3\) \(\text{\&f}6\) 14.\(\text{\&f}3\)
gives White a serious lead in development, but

Sergey Shipov’s 11...c5 looks very interesting. It is not easy for White to arrange his pieces, as the natural 12.\(\text{\&b}5\) is refuted by 12...\(\text{\&e}6!\) when it is not clear what the knight is doing on b5, since 13.\(\text{\&xd}6\) \(\text{\&xd}6\) 14.\(\text{\&xd}6\) \(\text{\&a}5\) 15.b3 \(\text{\&ad}8\) is losing for White.

12.f4

A natural continuation of White’s previous move.

12...\(\text{\&g}4\) 13.\(\text{\&d}3\)

\[\text{Diagram}\]

13...d5

Anand is not hurrying, which gives White chances.
Again, more natural was 13...c5, when critical is 14.\( \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbullet}}} f3 \) (a piece sacrifice with 14.\( \textit{\textbf{\textbullet}} f5 \) c4 yields nothing) 14...\( \textit{\textbf{\textbullet}} x e 3 \) 15.\( \textit{\textbf{\textbullet}} x e 3 \) \( \textit{\textbf{\textbullet}} f 6 \), and it is not clear who will be first to develop an attack. One example: 16.\( \textit{\textbf{\textbullet}} d 2 \) \( \textit{\textbf{\textbullet}} e 6 \) 17.\( \textit{\textbullet} h g 1 \) (17.\( \textit{\textbullet} x e 4 \) ? \( \textit{\textbullet} x a 2 \)† 18.\( \textit{\textbullet} x a 2 \) \( \textit{\textbullet} a 5 \)† 19.\( \textit{\textbullet} b 1 \) \( \textit{\textbullet} x e 4 \) 20.\( \textit{\textbullet} x d 6 \) \( \textit{\textbullet} a 4 \) winning) 17...b5 18.g4 \( \textit{\textbullet} a 5 \), and Black is first.

14.\( \textit{\textbullet} h e 1 \)

Too early would be 14.\( \textit{\textbullet} f 5 \) because of 14...\( \textit{\textbullet} f 8 \) (But not 14...\( \textit{\textbullet} b 6 \) taking the knight's spot, which becomes important after 15.\( \textit{\textbullet} g 1 \)!. Also 14...\( \textit{\textbullet} x f 5 \) looks suspicious because of 15.\( \textit{\textbullet} x f 5 \) \( \textit{\textbullet} x e 3 \) 16.\( \textit{\textbullet} x e 3 \). Once again it is a position with opposite coloured bishops, where White's attack gains significantly from them. Black has no reason to allow this.) 15.\( \textit{\textbullet} h e 1 \) \( \textit{\textbullet} x e 3 \) 16.\( \textit{\textbullet} x e 3 \) \( \textit{\textbullet} x e 3 \) 17.\( \textit{\textbullet} x e 3 \) \( \textit{\textbullet} f 6 \) with equality. For instance: 18.\( \textit{\textbullet} e 8 \) (18.g4?! g6 19.g5 \( \textit{\textbullet} e 6 \) 20.\( \textit{\textbullet} x e 6 \) \( \textit{\textbullet} x e 6 \) 21.\( \textit{\textbullet} e 3 \) \( \textit{\textbullet} c 5 \) and Black is playing for a win) 18...\( \textit{\textbullet} e 6 \) 19.\( \textit{\textbullet} d 8 \) g6 20.\( \textit{\textbullet} d 4 \) \( \textit{\textbullet} d 7 \) 21.\( \textit{\textbullet} f 6 \) \( \textit{\textbullet} e 7 \), and again, only Black can win.

14...\( \textit{\textbullet} h 4 \)

In order to exchange more pieces.

15.g3 \( \textit{\textbullet} x e 3 \) 16.\( \textit{\textbullet} x e 3 \) \( \textit{\textbullet} x e 3 \) 17.\( \textit{\textbullet} x e 3 \) \( \textit{\textbullet} f 6 \)

Taking advantage of Black's somewhat passive play, White managed to obtain a certain advantage: he controls the e-file, the knight can go to f5, and there is an option of advancing the pawns on the kingside. All this gives White certain chances. Does he plan to make use of them?

18.\( \textit{\textbullet} f 3 \)

No! Although 18.\( \textit{\textbullet} f 5 \) does not promise anything special either after 18...g6 19.\( \textit{\textbullet} h 6 \)† \( \textit{\textbullet} g 7 \) 20.g4 \( \textit{\textbullet} x h 6 \) 21.g5† \( \textit{\textbullet} g 7 \) 22.gxf6† \( \textit{\textbullet} x f 6 \). White might have sufficient compensation for a pawn, but definitely not more.

18.\( \textit{\textbullet} e 1 \) is also easily neutralized: 18...\( \textit{\textbullet} d 7 \)! (18...\( \textit{\textbullet} g 4 \) 19.h3! forcing the bishop to keep moving) 19.\( \textit{\textbullet} f 5 \) \( \textit{\textbullet} f 8 \), and following ...\( \textit{\textbullet} e 8 \) Black has no problems.

But very interesting was 18.\( \textit{\textbullet} f 3 \), followed by g4. White's position looks promising, but maybe not promising enough for the last round of such an exhausting tournament.

18.\( \textit{\textbullet} e 7 \)† 19.\( \textit{\textbullet} x e 7 \)

Perhaps Black could try and play for a win himself, utilizing his bishop pair, but, just like Svidler on the previous move, after such a long tournament more serious reasons were needed.

\( \frac{1}{2} - \frac{1}{2} \)
GAME 56
Veselin Topalov
Judit Polgar
Queen's Indian Defence E15

1.d4 \(\text{d6}\) 2.c4 \(\text{e6}\) 3.\(\text{\&f3}\) b6 4.g3 \(\text{\&a6}\) 5.b3 \(\text{\&b4}\) 6.\(\text{\&d2}\) \(\text{\&e7}\) 7.\(\text{\&g2}\) c6 8.\(\text{\&c3}\) d5

We have already seen this position during the event, but here the game's dynamics are different.

9.\(\text{\&bd2}\)

A continuation which is not considered too dangerous for Black, but some accuracy is needed and Polgar knows just what to do.

The most principled is 9.\(\text{\&e5}\). Three months after the tournament Topalov revealed the grenade he kept in his pocket here: 9...\(\text{\&fd7}\) 10.\(\text{\&xd7}\) \(\text{\&xd7}\) 11.\(\text{\&d2}\) 0–0 12.0–0 \(\text{\&f6}\) 13.e4 b5 14.exd5 exd5 15.\(\text{\&e1}\) \(\text{\&b8}\) 16.c5 \(\text{\&c8}\) 17.\(\text{\&f3}\) \(\text{\&e4}\)

18.\(\text{\&xe4}\) dxe4 19.\(\text{\&e5}\) \(\text{\&d5}\) 20.\(\text{\&e1}\) \(\text{\&f5}\) 21.g4 \(\text{\&g6}\) 22.f3 \(\text{b4}\) 23.\(\text{fxe4}\) \(\text{\&e6}\) 24.\(\text{\&b2}\) \(\text{\&f6}\) 25.\(\text{\&xc6}\) \(\text{\&xc6}\) 26.\(\text{\&e5}\) \(\text{\&a6}\) 27.\(\text{\&f6}\) \(\text{\&e8}\) 28.\(\text{\&f1}\) \(\text{\&e2}\) 29.\(\text{\&f2}\) \(\text{\&xg4}\) 30.h3 \(\text{\&g5}\) 31.\(\text{\&c1}\) \(\text{\&h5}\) 32.\(\text{\&f4}\) \(\text{\&bd8}\) 33.\(\text{\&c6}\) \(\text{\&e4}\) 34.\(\text{\&c7}\) \(\text{\&c8}\) 35.\(\text{\&e1}\) \(\text{\&g6}\) 36.\(\text{\&xe4}\) \(\text{\&xe4}\) 37.d5, and Black resigned, Topalov – Aronian, Wijk aan Zee 2006.

After this game Topalov admitted having prepared it for San Luis, as many of his opponents could have played this line.

9...\(\text{\&bd7}\) 10.0–0

Interesting is 10.\(\text{\&c2}\) 0–0 11.e4 \(\text{\&c8}\) 12.0–0 b5 13.e5 \(\text{\&e8}\) 14.c5 b4 15.\(\text{\&xb4}\) \(\text{\&xf1}\) 16.\(\text{\&xf1}\) with full compensation for the material, Avrukh – Sakaev, Belgrade 1999.

10...0–0 11.\(\text{\&e1}\)

White's main plan is to play e2-e4, but a straightforward way promises nothing, as in the game. If he wants to fight for an advantage, more sophisticated ways are needed.

11.\(\text{\&b7}\)

It appears that in one other continuation Black equalizes more easily, but still has to play accurately. In general, having no counterplay Black has to play precisely to achieve equality.

This alternative is 11...c5. For example, 12.e4 dxe4 13.\(\text{\&xc4}\) \(\text{\&b7}\) 14.e5 \(\text{\&d5}\) 15.\(\text{\&d2}\) \(\text{\&c8}\) 16.\(\text{\&e2}\) b5 equalizing, Kasparov – Lautier, Yerevan 1996.

12.e4 dxe4
And this is virtually a draw offer. The Chess King is making an early truce with the Chess Queen.

An attempt to play for something was:

13.\texttt{dxe4} c5

Another try is 13...\texttt{dxe4} 14.\texttt{xe4} c5 15.\texttt{e1} \texttt{f6} 16.\texttt{d2} \texttt{c8} 17.\texttt{ad1} \texttt{cxd4} 18.\texttt{xd4} \texttt{xd4} 19.\texttt{xd4} \texttt{dd8} 20.\texttt{c3} \texttt{c7} 21.\texttt{ad4} with advantage for White, Daurov – Naiditsch, Saarbruecken 2002.

14.\texttt{fg5}?!?

White has nothing after 14.\texttt{ed2} \texttt{e8} 15.\texttt{e2} \texttt{c7} 16.\texttt{ad1} \texttt{ad8} 17.\texttt{xc5} \texttt{xc5} 18.\texttt{g5} \texttt{g2} 19.\texttt{xe2} \texttt{h6} 20.\texttt{ge4} \texttt{e7} 21.\texttt{f4} \texttt{e4} 22.\texttt{f5} with equality, Kramnik – Polgar, Wijk aan Zee 2000.

14...\texttt{cxd4} 15.\texttt{xd4} \texttt{dxe4} 16.\texttt{dxe4} \texttt{c7} 17.\texttt{c3} \texttt{ad8} 18.\texttt{d5} with advantage to White thanks to Black’s last move, Karpov – Kramnik, Prague 2002.

13...\texttt{c5}

Now everything is exchanged...

14.\texttt{dxe4} \texttt{dxe4} 15.\texttt{xe4} \texttt{xe4} 16.\texttt{xe4} \texttt{dxe5} 17.\texttt{dxe5} \texttt{xd1\textdagger} 18.\texttt{xdl} \texttt{fd8}

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Afterword

After closely following these great players throughout the event, we might observe that the outcome was a logical one. One might, of course, note that Anand and Leko played below their normal strength, and that is true, but Topalov’s play in the past year and a half has been the best, so this tournament did not reveal any great secret. Morozevich’s play was also not so surprising: the sharp changes in his form, illogical wins and losses, finally put him in the most appropriate position – right in the middle. Michael Adams showed real fatigue – those who have followed his play for the past year will clearly see that he is just tired of playing, and this tournament only provided further evidence. Judit Polgar seems to have yet to recover from her lengthy break. She did not have enough recent practice, and especially her opening preparation was below par – in most of her Black games she quickly found herself in lost positions, and this made it impossible to hope for a good score. Kasimdzhanov passed on his title of FIDE champion, and it seems without too much regret. Some people might claim that after his result it is hard to speak positively about his tournament, but we do not share this opinion – Rustam Kasimdzhanov demonstrated a very high level of preparation, and fantastic tactical ability. Unfortunately, his constant time trouble hampered him badly, but more super-tournament experience will surely allow him to fix this problem.

Last but definitely not least is Peter Svidler who is now easily among the top five players in the world. Can he become the absolute best? The authors have a very clear opinion about this, but would rather keep it to themselves. After all, what good is trying to predict the future?
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Scores: 10, 8½, 8½, 7, 6½, 5½, 5½, 4½
Chess in the New Millennium or Binary Conspiracies

From the very beginning World Champions have used illegal methods. Some used to hypnotize their opponents – the most notable example being Mikhail Tal. In fact, it’s easier to name those who did not use hypnosis – such accusations were made of virtually every Champion, and usually by their defeated opponents. And those who didn’t hypnotize possessed different superpowers. Luckily, the accusers had some problems proving their theories as most people, especially chess players, tend not to believe in this kind of nonsense.

Unfortunately, in the computer era the situation has changed. Today there is one rather rational basis for doubts. Of course, we are speaking of the silicon monsters that are rapidly gaining power and have already practically overtaken human chess players if not in chess understanding, then for sure in everything concerning tactical solutions, some endgames, and of course cold-bloodedness.

Therefore, today anybody can safely accuse any strong player of using technology in one way or another. Or else, how would you explain his good play? Unfortunately, the latest successes of the new Champion, Veselin Topalov, the greatest of which was San Luis, are being explained (sometimes indirectly) by 21st century computer technology. And indeed, Veselin is playing very powerful chess, at times with computer-like precision. But can a player really be accused of cheating for this reason? Regrettably, this kind of suggestion could be heard not only from his rivals’ fans, but also in some equivocal statements from his colleagues and opponents.

We would not like to delve into the ethical aspects of how appropriate it is to accuse someone without any real proof: Let’s put aside the presumption of innocence. Let’s instead try to examine objectively the possibility of the tournament winner, Veselin Topalov, exploiting the advances in technology.

Some of the doubts, it seems, are based on Topalov’s strikingly different behaviour from his predecessors. In the past all aspects of, say, Kasparov’s life and decision-making processes were widely available for public discussion. Even about Kramnik, who is very different from the 13th Champion, by summing up the information and combining his interviews, one could form a pretty clear picture.

Regarding Topalov, however, there are players rated a hundred points lower about whom we know much more. What does the chess world really know about Topalov? Nothing much, to put it bluntly. His interviews shed little light: he clearly doesn’t want to open his soul. His answers are rarely out of the ordinary, no special assessments, no delicate analysis or an extraordinary variation that was seen only by him. No illnesses, no bad moods, no depressions. After winning the World Championship he calmly told the camera: “This is the happiest day of my life” – some players speak of a single victory with more emotion.

There is no doubt that he speaks frankly and truthfully, but his unwillingness to be (or act like) “a big celebrity” is amazing. Furthermore, he rarely smiles, and it is even more unusual to see him disappointed. His reaction to great successes and painful defeats is always practically the same, stating that he has seen a lot in chess, and his result doesn’t make him too happy/sad. Such behaviour does look unusual: the chess world is used to different behaviour from its champions.

Well, all these are just feelings and can under no circumstances be regarded as the basis of any suspicions. But can the conspiracy buffs provide more serious proof? Apparently they can. It turns out that in some of his games, Veselin Topalov’s decisions parallel a computer’s. This inevitably brought some “worried fans of chess” to conclude that if his moves often correlate with the computer’s, he must be using some kind of assistance. After all, his play has become far too strong!

Before we go searching for a chip “somewhere in his body”, let’s take a look at the root of the doubts in practice – a very striking example from Kasparov’s famous last game in Linares 2005. After a very tense battle the game came down to the following position:
This endgame is winning (which was much less evident in the beginning) but Topalov played the “computer” 27.h4? which could have thrown away the win. The main variation of a successful defence starts 27...h6! (in the game, according to Kasparov himself, he did not cope with the nerves of his last professional game, played 27...g6 and lost quickly) 28.\(\text{g}4\) g6 29.\(\text{f}4\) g5\(\uparrow\) 30.\(\text{g}4\) \(\text{g}6\) and it turns out that Black has managed to build a fortress. There is no need to explain that (at the present time) computers are not even aware of the fortress concept, and therefore can suggest a move like 27.h4 with no second thoughts. But why did such a strong player as Topalov make such a move?

In our minds, it is not mysterious that after a long and tense battle both players were making mistakes. After all, the endgame was far from clear from the start. For example, annotating the game for ChessBase, GM Tyomkin writes at the start of the pawn ending: “I cannot prove that the pawn ending is winning for White.” And this is in analysis, being able to take back moves, and use computers, and any relevant literature. Another commentator, GM Shipov, only noted that in his view the endgame should be won, but did not provide a winning line. But Topalov, after a heroic and tiring finish (which allowed him to catch up with Kasparov for shared first) with a ticking clock, he is (unlike the 13th champion!) not entitled to err?

Another interesting example from our tournament is his twelfth round game with White against Morozevich:

Black had the initiative but his last move, 31.\(\text{Be}3\), proved to be an inaccuracy. He clearly underestimated the power of 31.\(\text{Db}1\) after which the initiative was White’s again. From this point and practically until the end, all the moves played by the future World Champion were also the choice of our silicon friend: 31...\(\text{Ec}5\) 32.\(\text{Bxc}5\) \(\text{Ec}5\) 33.\(\text{Ec}2\) \(\text{Bb}6\) 34.\(\text{Dd}2\) \(\text{Be}8\) 35.\(\text{e}6\) \(\text{Dh}7\) 36.\(\text{Ec}7\) \(\text{Bf}8\) 37.\(\text{Ec}4\) \(\text{Bxc}4\) 38.\(\text{Bxc}4\) \(\text{Df}6\) 39.\(\text{Ed}5\) d3 40.\(\text{Exf}7\) \(\text{Dh}7\) 41.\(\text{Exd}3\) \(\text{Bb}3\) 42.\(\text{Bd}6\) \(\text{Bb}8\) 43.\(\text{Ec}4\) \(\text{Dc}4\) 44.\(\text{We}5\) \(\text{Dd}2\) 45.\(\text{Ba}2\) \(\text{Bb}6\)

Here the game continued 46.\(\text{Ec}2\) \(\text{Wf}2\) and the win had suddenly evaporated. Until this point only two of Veselin’s moves did not match the
machine's, but which moves were they! One is the 40th move, when White had an immediate forced win (as was pointed out in the game analysis) and the machine clearly prefers the best way. The second time was on move 46, when White simply let the win slip. "Remarkably", the programs don't even suggest the blunder 46.\(\text{Bc}2\).

So we are to believe that Topalov made relatively simple moves using a "chip in his head", whereas at crucial moments he decided not to use the assistance, preferring inferior continuations to winning ones, and letting the win go?! We have trouble following the logic here.

But the most interesting point is White's very first move in this example, which was the basis for some further suspicions. How could Topalov find the strongest 31.\(\text{Bb}1\) so quickly, which was overlooked even by the extremely original Morozevich? And, of course, this move also complies with a computer's mood!

The answer might be a bit surprising for many. To begin with, the Karpovian \(\text{Bb}1\), which was used by him on numerous occasions (for instance in his famous game against Spassky) will not be so shocking for fans of the classics. Could Topalov be unfamiliar with it? Unlikely, and here is an example:

This game was played back in 1993, when computers played ridiculous chess. Topalov played 11.\(\text{Bb}1\) (transferring the knight to c3) although it did not give him much in the game. Although it's hard to argue that the ideas in both cases are very similar, even the great Mikhail Tal once noted that chess thinking is associative, and a manoeuvre seen once will be easier to find later, even with a totally different idea. Well, if this isn't persuasive enough, how about...

![Chess Diagram](image)

This funny position occurred in a simultaneous display given by Topalov in 1997. It's irrelevant to discuss how easily winning White's position is here. Of interest is that, as the reader has probably guessed by now, Topalov chose the computer move 20.\(\text{Bb}1\) over all other possibilities. Although the position, in terms of material and the tension on the board, is not even remotely comparable to the one against Morozevich, the manoeuvre is very similar, and was played by the Bulgarian in a simul. That is, without spending time on deliberations. After this there seems to be little point in insisting on computer origins for Topalov's manoeuvre: the 32-processor Hydra that could be of some help in a simultaneous exhibition hadn't been invented yet!

Speaking of San Luis games, most of Topalov's crucial decisions had nothing to do with computer patterns. The strongest moves from his first round game against Adams are not spotted by the machine, neither is his great manoeuvre (the exchange sacrifice) against Kasimdzhanov from the penultimate round. And these were games of great importance, not to mention his game against Anand, where the computer cannot correctly evaluate the positional compensation for the exchange. The only "reproach" in the game against Anand could be made about his bad "computer" move 60.\(\text{d}4\)
that should have drained all the winning chances down the plughole. But those who saw this game’s analysis would hardly have any thoughts about any device-usage: later Topalov missed a few simple wins, including failing to avoid a forced perpetual check – a thing a computer is surely very talented at!

So what do we have? In all normal positions Topalov would make accurate technical moves using the machine, whereas in vital moments of truth he would start playing “on his own” wasting all his gains? And these moments were often obvious, and if any help was to be used then these were the ultimate times to do so.

Let’s take a look at a few more examples:

In the same Linares event where Veselin had the aforementioned game against Kasparov, a no less amazing game against Leko was played. Veselin totally outplayed his opponent, and Leko opted for his last chance: 44... $c1\dagger$. The computer does not recommend Topalov’s reply – on the contrary, it hates it! Veselin played 45.$E xc1$, and clearly lost all his advantage. It strikes us that if one were able to use computer assistance, in any way, this would have been the most appropriate moment to do so. Topalov, on the other hand, keeps making the simpler moves “with consultation”, and the most crucial ones “alone”.

Generally, having such a wonderful possibility of computer help, a player would naturally make use of hints in his most important games. And we try to provide examples from those games:

This is a position from a game that hit the headlines: Kramnik – Topalov, from the last round in Sofia 2005. Topalov gradually outplayed his opponent, but here he played 30... $w xb2$ – a move the computer would not make even under the threat of a deadly virus – indeed, why would a machine blunder a piece? Kramnik did not take the knight on c5, but a few moves later blundered a bishop of his own, and resigned. Wasn’t this game too important to blunder a knight just like that? Maybe it was wiser to consult instead?

Perhaps now is the right time to discuss when a player should use assistance, provided he can do so. Topalov’s play has always been known (and still is!) for a relatively high number of blunders. Here is a question posed to him in
an interview conducted by a Russian chess site www.chesspro.ru: “Don’t you have the feeling that you make too many “childish” mistakes for a player of your level?” If such questions are asked by journalists, he apparently doesn’t use help for the whole game – chess programs do not make “childish” mistakes.

But playing only partly according to computer suggestions and the rest by oneself could be a recipe for failure, ending up with the worst of both. Therefore, ideally, the most valuable help is that in critical moments, when you can get a sign that the moment has arrived, and what to do there.

However, as we have seen, Topalov often commits errors in those critical moments, and the number of such examples we have shown could easily be increased... And we end up with a clear contradiction by any logic.

Another important point is the change Topalov has undergone in a very short period, which is striking – a player who finished 2003 with a 2735 ELO rating managed to cross the 2800 mark by the end of the San Luis Championship! This “suspicious” improvement reminds us of... his own jump in 1996 - that year he won in Amsterdam, Novgorod and Madrid, he increased from 2700 to 2750 (which is not bad at all today, but was even more impressive in 1996) establishing himself as one of the strongest and most promising chess players in the world.

So, what happened to Topalov in the past year and a half? Why did he stall in the period between 1996 and 2003, and then have such a sudden acceleration? Strictly speaking, he improved remarkably in his technical play. He has always been a great tactical player, and strives for dynamic play, but today in addition to these qualities he possesses great technical strength. Incidentally, he points this out himself (along with good physical fitness and opening preparation). Apart from this, however, his other great qualities were already clear in 1996. What can we add, if even Anand says that Topalov showed nothing new in his style of play – he already played like this before. The “novelty” was much greater stability: showing the same level of play in many games.

If in past years he could conduct a great game with high nervous tension, and then suddenly break down, today he breaks his opponents. If he used to often lose in crucial games, today his calmness makes his opponents lose control. If in the past he would make bad mistakes while realizing advantageous positions, today he is more reliable than most, and is willing to go even a hundred moves with the tiniest of edges to claim a well-deserved victory.

How did this suddenly appear? Where did it come from? These questions apparently trouble many minds. How could he turn his biggest minuses into plusses? The answer is provided by the player himself:

“For the past few years I worked a lot on chess - I hadn’t done such profound work for a long time. Work with Ruslan Ponomariov helped me improve so much, that I became even more motivated, and consequently I gained a lot of rating.” Then he adds: “Judging by our results, the feeling is that it wasn’t me training him, but vice versa...”

So, in this aspect, the doubts are even more surprising – after all he did work a lot with Ponomariov preparing for the latter’s matches with Ivanchuk and Kasparov! And Ponomariov is mostly known for his technical power, playing until the board is empty of pieces. Naturally, this is where Topalov found his new qualities. Now all becomes clear – not only technique, but also good opening preparation and fighting to the end in any position. Topalov simply absorbed Ponomariov’s best qualities, and together with his own huge talent and experience, became an exceptionally strong player. No real mystery as far as we can see – collaborative work often has such effects.

So, now it’s clear how Topalov improved his play so sharply, but another fact is even more striking. This is not the first time in the history of the game that we have witnessed such a rapid rise! Take the most significant example – Robert James Fischer! He was also known for his outstanding technical play, and he too made a huge improvement in just one and a half years, becoming virtually invincible. From
a “guy with a glass jaw”, as Spassky used to call him, Fischer became a jawbreaker. A similar thing happened to Topalov, and notably they made the leap at similar ages, and the quality of their play and their styles are similar. Indeed, for Fischer such an improvement was much more difficult to accomplish — he was working alone, and the whole Soviet system was standing against him.

We will conclude with another beautiful game by the Bulgarian Champion (playing with Black). On its own, without comments:

10.e4 dxe4 11.Qxe4 Qxe4 12.Qxe4 e5 13.Qg5 Qe6 14.d3 Qg6 15.Qe3 exd4 16.Qxd4 Qh5 17.Qf1

17...Qxh2† 18.Qf1 f6 19.Qh4 Qe5 20.Qc4† Qh8 21.g4 Qh6 22.Qg2 Qxb2 23.Qh1

23...b5 24.cxb6 Qxa1 25.Qg3 Qxb6 26.Qb4 Qh1† 27.Qxh1 c5 28.Qe4 f5 29.Qe7 Qd7 30.Qxf5 Qc6 and Black won.

What is so special about this game? The fact that all Topalov’s moves (some are especially striking in their “inhumanity”) correspond to Fritz 9’s suggestions. But it was 1992 when the 17-year old Topalov was playing Eingorn.

Summing up, we might be wrong, but our view is logically explained and, as thoroughly as possible, proved by examples. This contrasts with the sceptics, who mostly seem to disapprove of the result of the new champion. Indeed, we cannot absolutely prove that all the accusations are not true without first entering Topalov’s head. But the logic of the events shows that what happened to Topalov could undoubtedly happen without any technical interference. Therefore, until any kind of proof is provided, all accusations and doubts seem irrelevant and, frankly, pretty ridiculous. In our view, the reaction of Topalov’s biggest rivals in San Luis – Anand and Svidler – is worthy of appreciation. They did not seek irrelevant reasons for his dominance, but instead complimented his play, and Anand even promised to do everything in his powers to overtake the new champion in the future. We believe this is the way for true sportsmen to behave.
While this book was being produced, the discussion of suspicions did not stop. Veselin Topalov conquered a few more tournaments, including Corus Wijk aan Zee 2006, where the public (and, therefore, the possible “assistants”) could not have approached the players during the games. Despite all this, groundless accusations by various chess fans became louder and louder. Alas, what could be easier than to turn on a strong chess program, and claim every similarity as proof?

However, there was hardly any harm in such gossip until some chess journalists began contributing their “views”. For example, IM Vladimir Barsky on the Russian website prosports.ru produced a huge article, full of cautious accusations. The problem with these accusations, however, is that they all drive to one conclusion: Topalov’s play is too similar to a computer’s (which in many cases means too strong). He also provided the Topalov – Morozevich game (from round 10) as proof of his claims: the winner, allegedly, made too many “machine” moves. There were other “proofs” as well.

The “prosecution”, however, tends to limit itself with “general concerns”, not bothering to explain what exactly the accusation is. Did Topalov constantly use computer aid, using some kind of a chip, or was there “a courier” transmitting the advice from a machine to a human.

But here is an interesting question: on the one hand he plays a lengthy series of moves “by computer” – but then, how could one explain the relatively high number of mistakes in his games (some of them were illustrated here)?

And what if he gets his help occasionally? But then, firstly, according to which criteria are the moments chosen (as we have seen, they are certainly not the most crucial ones)? And secondly: in that case his streaks of “computer moves” only undermine the conspiracy theory, proving that he is able to make many consecutive “computer moves” by himself. And having said all that, one must keep in mind that there is not even the slightest proof of such accusations.

Unexpectedly, the discussion was picked up by Topalov’s coach and manager, Silvio Danailov, on another Russian website www.chesspro.ru. His position, generally similar to ours, was understandably much more emotional: Danailov accused many of the “critics” of being unprofessional and not objective (some of them were indeed assisting Topalov’s rivals). His stormy reaction is more than understandable – after all, he and Topalov travelled a long and hard road to the Crown, and having achieved the ultimate goal they hear not praise but unjust accusations.

We would like to end this epilogue and the book with the hope that in the future chess will attract the crowds by its beauty rather than foolish conspiracy theories.
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