



1!

The recently concluded 44<sup>th</sup> Chess Olympiad in Chennai, India, was a veritable treasure trove for my column. As a former participant in Olympiads myself, I can attest to its incredible power to make the same players that you meet in other individual tournaments play both stronger and more responsibly. One doesn't need to resort to mystical powers to explain it – the Olympiad is not an individual pursuit, but a contest of National Teams. In fact, the player competes in two fields during the game – on his own board and for his country in the match. Subsequently, any of his/her decisions carry a lot more weight than in an individual game. Losing one's game also hurts the team.

On a brighter note, winning the game is a double joy. Perhaps only through your win your National team tied the score or won the team match against another country. In short, chess players tend to give their very best at Olympiads. And it's the spectators who benefit most from their efforts.

After representing Lithuania at Chess Olympiads since Moscow 1994 with short breaks in between, I was happy to rest at home at last and follow the event online.

# THE MAGNIFICENT 3

## Remarkable Recent Games

By GM Sarunas Sulskis



I would inevitably turn my attention to the progress of the Lithuanian teams, both men and women. Having retired old war horses like me, a rejuvenated men's team performed impressively, eventually clinching a record-high 10<sup>th</sup> place in the final standings. Therefore I hope the reader will pardon me for including one Lithuanian Olympic game – that of Paulius Pultinevicius, a 21-year-old GM, who ultimately won an individual silver medal for his performance on Board 4.

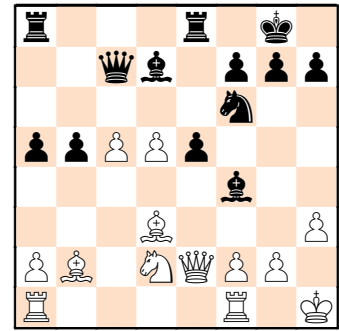
My small collection of three remarkable Olympic games begins with fireworks that occurred in Round 5.

**GM Sarunas Sulskis** is a nine-time champion of Lithuania, and a regular member of his country's national team, most recently at the 2018 Chess Olympiad. As a teenager, he studied at the Botvinnik-Kasparov Chess Academy and later graduated from the Kaunas College of Management and Law. He qualified three times for the knock-out World Championship and his most notable results include an outright victory at the 2011 Guernsey International Chess Festival, a share of first prize at the 2019 Riga Technical University Open and a tied second place at the 2006 EU Individual Open. His rating peaked at 2596 in March 2012. Sarunas is also a FIDE trainer and arbiter, writer and passionate chess promoter.



## A LURKING BISHOP COMES TO LIFE

Our first game, contested in the Latvia vs. Kazakhstan match-up, featured a strange black bishop on f4, lurking within the proximity of the white king on h1, waiting for an opportune moment to strike. The moment arrived in some ten moves, when the Kazakh leader, GM Rinat Jumabayev, lifted his rook beautifully via e6 to h6. The role of the bishop might not be clear even then, but once Jumabayev opened fire directly on the king with 23...♗xh3! it soon transpired that the patient bishop was meant to support the attacking rook on h2. Meanwhile, the Latvian leader, GM Toms Kantans had also made dangerous inroads into Black's territory. Having succeeded in beating off the deadliest stage of Black's attack, Kantans found himself a pawn down in the ending, cherishing hopes of squeezing the life out of the black king via g7. The lurking bishop then stepped back to h6 and Jumabayev finally got things firmly under control.

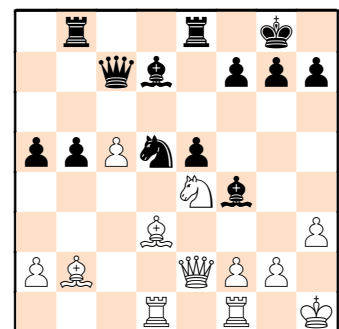


**18...♗xd5?!** This is about the only moment of the game where I fail to understand Jumabayev's reasoning. True, after the text the game gets really exciting for the spectators, but in practical terms – was it worth the risk? In my humble view 18...♖xc5 was both simpler and stronger, for example after 19.♗e4 ♗xe4 20.♖xe4 f5 leaves Black with a clear advantage. One thing is certain though – in this case the game wouldn't have gotten into my column.

**19.♗e4** Kantans heads his knight to d6 and a bayonet fight ensues. An attempt to inject tactics with 19.♗xh7+? ♗xh7 20.♖d3+ ♖g8 21.♖xd5 just flounders against the rocks after 21...♗c6--.

**19...♖ab8 20.♖ad1** Before jumping his knight to d6 White wants his rook in play.

An immediate 20.♗d6 is best met with 20...♖e7 (20...♖e6 is not quite clear after 21.♗f5 ♖h6 22.♖ad1 ♗c6 23.♗xe5 ♖e7 24.♖fe1) 21.♗xh7+ (21.♗xb5 ♖xc5 22.♗a3 ♗b4+) 21...♗xh7 22.♖e4+ ♖g8 23.♖xd5 ♗e6+.



**20...♖e6!** Jumabayev responds with a fine rook lift to h6 – the reason why I've chosen this game. It's quite a rare middlegame position for the rook, but

### C07

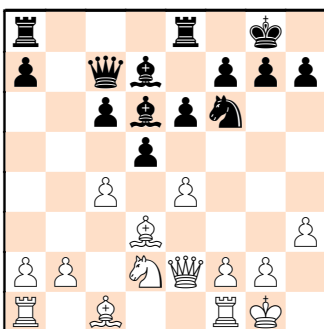
Toms Kantans	2486
Rinat Jumabayev	2617

Latvia vs. Kazakhstan, Chennai 2022

**1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♗d2 c5 4.♗gf3 cxd4 5.♗xd4 ♗c6 6.♗b5 ♗d7 7.♗xc6 bxc6** The appeal of this recapture lies in gaining a tempo as the white bishop retreats. That said, 7...♗xc6 is also possible, with its appeal consisting of solving the problem of a 'French bishop'.

**8.♗d3 ♗d6 9.0-0 ♖c7 10.h3 ♗f6** The Kazakh team leader must have been satisfied with the opening stage of this French Tarrasch. His strong center pawn formation, coupled with the b-file available for his rooks, allows him to entertain hopes beyond achieving mere equality.

**11.♖e2 0-0 12.c4 ♖fe8**



**13.c5?!** I didn't choose Kantans for this beauty column randomly. Since he lives in Latvia, a neighbouring country to my own, I have met him in numerous

competitions in the Baltic region. Our encounters would end with all three possible results, but predominantly decisively. I can attest to the reader his penchant for a sharp battle in eager pursuit of the enemy king, whereupon Kantans never shies away from sacrifices. This particular pawn thrust, however, is not a real pawn sac. Moreover, Jumabayev was by no means forced to accept it.

White could have better maintained tension in the center by 13.b3 a5 (On 13...♗h2+ 14.♖h1 ♗e5 15.♖b1 a5 White has a cool idea of 16.f4! ♗xf4 17.♖xf4 ♖xf4 18.e5±) 14.♗b2 ♗h2+? (Instead, 14...e5 is the correct way to play for Black.) 15.♖h1 ♗e5 16.♗xe5 ♖xe5 17.♗f3±.

**13...♗h2+** 13...♗xc5? is too naive for a player of Jumabayev's caliber – 14.e5! ♗e4 15.♗xe4 dxe4 16.♖xe4±.

**14.♖h1 ♗f4 15.b4?** A natural continuation of a faulty strategy that began with 13.c5?!. The next move, undermining the white pawn chain on the queenside, must have been easy to make for Jumabayev.

**15...a5!** Sure enough!

**16.♗b2 e5** Preventing White's key idea of e4-e5 for good.

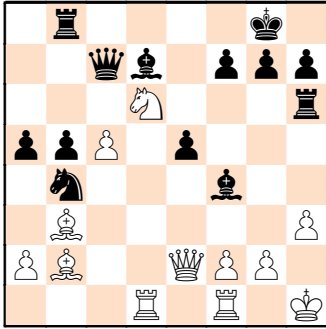
**17.b5!?** Kantans proceeds boldly, this time with a true pawn sac. On the compliant 17.a3 Black increases the pressure with the very simple 17...♖ab8, although 17...♗xd2 18.♖xd2 ♗xe4 19.♗xe4 dxe4 is also possible.

**17...cxb5 18.exd5**



under the right circumstances it's a perfect one, combining both defensive and offensive tasks.

21. ♖c2 ♜b4 22. ♖b3 ♜h6 23. ♘d6



Jumabayev must have foreseen this troubling situation in advance. White has achieved a lot with his last few moves. He has cleared the d-file for his rook, pointed his light-squared bishop menacingly towards the black king and finally jumped his knight to the key d6 square. The game seems to be spinning out of Black's control unless the Kazakh leader urgently comes up with some smart idea.

23... ♙xh3! And he delivers! Suddenly we are reminded why the other black bishop has been lurking on f4 for so long. Now the fireworks begin!

24. ♜xf7! Kantans hits back, making all sorts of discovered checks possible and punching the key pillar of Black's attack on h6. In case of 24. ♙xf7+ ♜f8 25. gxf3, the elegant and quiet 25... ♗d7!+ seals the fate of the game nicely, while 24. gxf3 ♗d7! 25. ♙xf7+ ♜f8 is just a transposition.

24... ♙xg2+! The only way to oblige White to move his king is to strike him with a double check, regardless of whatever sacrifice that may involve. Despite appearances, 24... ♙g4+?? doesn't win the queen at all, but loses the whole of his army to 25. ♜xh6+, which would now be a double check from White's side.

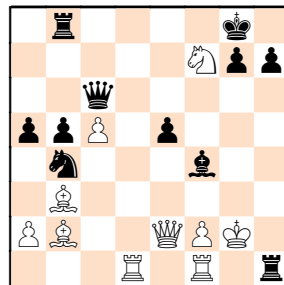
25. ♜xg2 The spectacular setting of the ongoing battle allows us to consider even such incredible moves as 25. ♜g1!. In hindsight, it might have been a good



▲ Toms Kantans

PHOTO: FIDE / Lennart Ootes

test for Jumabayev, but Black can reply in style: 25... ♗h1+ 26. ♜xg2 ♗c6+!



And now...

A) 27. ♗f3 ♗h2+ transposes to the game.

B) After 27. f3 ♗h2+ 28. ♜g1 Black's best is to have mercy on the white queen by continuing 28... ♗g6+ (since the obvious 28... ♗xe2 is surprisingly not the best because of 29. ♜xe5+ ♜f8 30. ♜xc6 ♜xc6+ and the game drags on.) 29. ♜g5+ ♜f8 30. ♗xh2 (An attempt to save the queen by 30. ♗f2 is made at the expense of the king after 30... ♗xg5+ 31. ♗g2 ♙e3+!! with a checkmate in two at the latest.) 30... ♙xh2+ 31. ♜xh2 ♗xg5 winning.

C) 27. ♙d5 ♜xd5 White can capture the black rook on h1 in two ways, but both lose the game regardless.

C1) 28. ♗xh1 ♙e3+! A powerful double check! (Not 28... ♙c3+? because of 29. ♗f3.) 29. ♜h3 ♗g2+ 30. ♜h4 ♙f5+ 31. ♜h5 g6 mate.

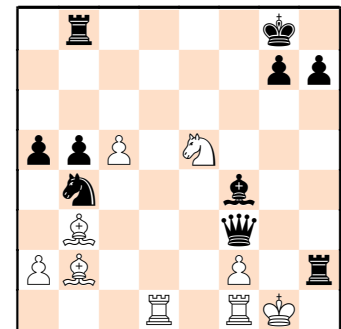
C2) If 28. ♜xh1, now 28... ♙c3+ and the white queen is gone.

25... ♗c6+ 26. ♗f3 On the desperate 26. ♙d5 both 26... ♗h2+ and 26... ♗g6+ win. If you ask me, I prefer 26... ♗g6+ 27. ♜g5+ ♜xd5 for its simplicity. In fact, even 26... ♗g6+ wins.

On 26. f3, despite appearances, 26... ♗h2+ 27. ♜g1 ♗xe2 is not the easiest win, since White is able to retract the queen by virtue of the discovered attack 28. ♜xe5+. Paradoxically, it's 26... ♗g6+ 27. ♜g5+ ♜f8 and White is completely out of sorts.

26... ♗h2+ Again, this looks like a dead end for White, but Kantans proves his threats along the a2-g8 diagonal are also significant. Alternatively, neither does 26... ♗g6+ win on the spot, due to the magnificent 27. ♜g5+! cover-up, when the knight is immune from capture as Black must beware his king.

27. ♜g1 ♗xf3 28. ♜xe5+!



28... ♗xb3! Isn't this a spectacular moment of the battle? Seldom do you



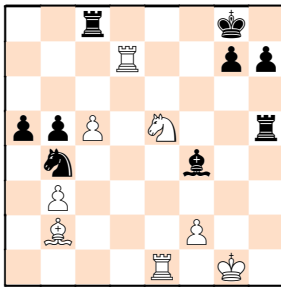
capture a bishop protected by a pawn in such a manner, yet this desperado is the only way to stay in the game.

**29.axb3** After the wild tactical sequence the queens have come off, so it's high time to take stock. Black is a pawn up, but White has survived a violent attack and is not going to get mated any time soon. Meanwhile his c5 pawn is dangerous and many of his pieces are still active. The black knight seems a little bit offside. Still, taking into account the incredible maze of variations the players had gone through, they probably were low on time and still immersed in the heat of the battle. Jumabayev is now happy to have his turn.

**29...♖c8** Trying to take care of a dangerous passer.

**30.♖d7** Invading with a rook in response.

**30...♗h5 31.♘f3** Kantans' wish to unblock his own bishop is easily understandable, but after some analysis which the Latvian GM couldn't afford himself due to time pressure, I tend to think he retreated a bit too early. White should have retained the tension with **31.♗e1**



- A) An attempt to pick up the dangerous c5 passer with **31...♗g5+ 32.♔f1 ♗xe5 33.♗xe5 ♖xc5?** neglects the defense of the back rank and fails spectacularly to **34.♗f6!**.
- B) No doubt White was concerned about **31...♗e8**, which pins his knight. But here, not being badly pressed for time, as presumably Kantans was, I discovered **32.♗e4 ♗xe5 33.f4!** and in time-trouble it could have been anyone's game.

**31...♗h6** With this solid defensive

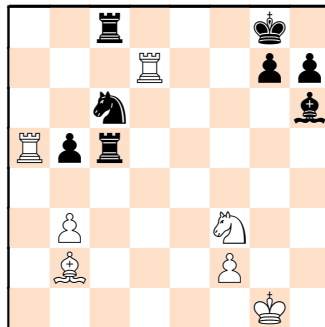


▲ Rinat Jumabayev

PHOTO: FIDE / Lennart Ootes

move Jumabayev slowly gains control over the board.

**32.♗a1 ♗hxc5 33.♗xa5 ♖c6**



**34.♗a1** Going all the way back does not bode well, but keep in mind that the 'more active' **34.♗a6** runs into a deep pitfall **34...♖b8!!**.

**34...♗f8** On **34...♖c2 35.♖d4 ♖b8 36.♖xc2 ♖xd7 37.♖d4** White keeps struggling.

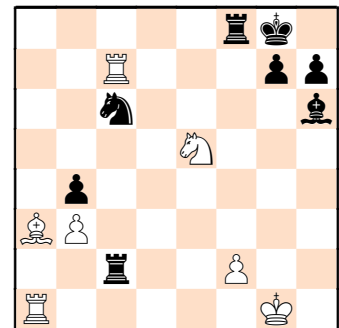
**35.♖c7!** Under desperate circumstances the leader of the Latvian team displays tactical resourcefulness. On the natural **35.♖d4** Black was fully prepared to relaunch his attack with **35...♗g5+ 36.♔f1 ♖e5 37.♗d5 ♖d3 38.♗xg5 ♗xg5 39.♖e6 ♗xf2+ 40.♔g1 ♗e3** winning.

**35...♖c2** Black still needs to tread carefully. The naive **35...♗xf3?** runs into a pin after **36.♗a8+ ♗f8 37.♗xf8+ ♔xf8 38.♗a3!**, when **38...b4 39.♗xb4 ♖xb4**

**40.♗xc5** leaves Black with only a slight chance of winning this ending.

**36.♗a3** There is no longer a cure for White's problems since **36.♖d4 ♖xd4** just drops a piece.

**36...b4 37.♖e5** A last faint hope to save the piece.



**37...♖d4!** After this powerful response, Kantans' position is irrevocably lost amidst the forks. He loses a piece by force and carries on for a few more moves in desperation. The tepid **37...♖xe5?** **38.♗xc2 bxa3 39.♗xa3** would have rekindled some hope of survival for White.

**38.♗xb4** If **38.♗d7** then **38...♖e2+**.

**38...♗xc7 39.♗xf8 ♔xf8 40.♗a8+ ♔e7 41.♗h8 ♔f6 42.♖g4+** and since the players had reached the period of the second time control, **White resigned** a full piece down. A truly fascinating Olympic tussle!



# 2

By GM Sarunas Sulskis

## THROUGH THE FIRE ON THE BACK OF AN INVINCIBLE HORSE

I couldn't help completing my selection without the following game of my compatriot GM Paulius Pultinevicius from the penultimate round, played on board 3 against GM Maxime Lagarde from France. First off, Lagarde's input into this wild game should by no means be underestimated. In fact, it was the Frenchman who persistently shaped the game from its early beginnings, starting with an initial pawn sac 8.♖c1!? and following soon with a second one, 12.♘g3, then a third, 15.♙e1 – all while in hot pursuit of the enemy king, stuck in the middle of the board.

Thanks to Lagarde's sheer audacity, the game had grown wild by the move 16. Amid the ongoing attack on his king, Pultinevicius succeeded in trading off the queens, but even with his rook hit by a black knight, Lagarde was unwilling to slow down and rushed his b-pawn to the promotion square. Hopefully my annotations below will help you to experience the whole drama of this fierce battle, but please note the fate of the black knight which survived till the end despite all the odds, especially while on the f1 square. I also beg your pardon for referring to a 'knight' as a 'horse.' Such is the way this irregular-walking chess piece is often referred to in many European countries.

# THE MAGNIFICENT 3

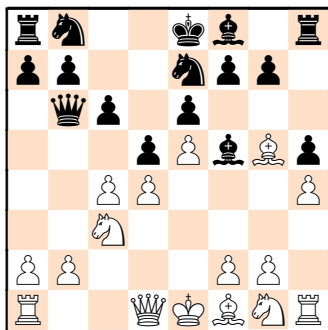
## Remarkable Recent Games

### B12

Maxime Lagarde	2631
Paulius Pultinevicius	2539

France vs. Lithuania, Chennai 2022

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♘f5 4.h4 h5  
5.c4 e6 6.♘c3 ♘e7 7.♘g5 ♙b6



8.♖c1!? A rare move, almost an early novelty in the Advance Variation of the Caro-Kann. Lagarde defies his opponent's threat to the b2 pawn and triggers one of the most fascinating battles seen at this year's Chess



Olympiad. Normally White stubbornly defends b2 by 8.♙d2.

8...dxc4 This preliminary capture serves Lagarde's bishop very well, so it begs explanation. After 8...♙xb2, straightforward attempts, such as 9.♘a4, didn't work at all in my analysis.

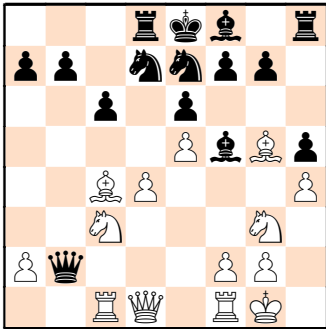
I concluded that Lagarde's intention was 9.cxd5 ♘xd5 10.♘xd5 exd5 11.♘d3 ♘b4+ 12.♙f1↑ whereupon White will try to take advantage of his formidable pawn mass on the kingside.

9.♘xc4 ♙xb2 10.♘ge2 Now White quickly proceeds by bringing his pieces



into action. Meanwhile, the Caro-Kann's proud bishop on f5 saves Black's queen from immediate harassment.

10...♖d7 11.0-0 ♜d8 12.♗g3



Wow! French temperament on display. Even though he is already a pawn down, Lagarde doesn't bother to protect either the e5 pawn, or potentially d4, and pursues the black king stuck in the middle. However, Black's monarch has a lot of defenders around him, so the Frenchman will likely face a tough challenge to prove the viability of his strategy.

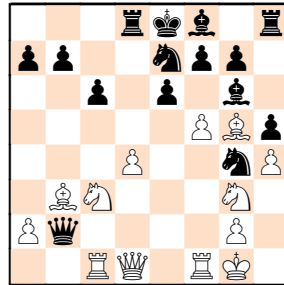
12...♖xe5 13.♙b3 Two pawns down, it is very hard to retreat, but Lagarde does so – hoping to cut off an escape route for the black queen. The bold queen sacrifice 13.dxe5?! ♜xd1 14.♞fxd1 works well only in case of the intuitive 14...♗d5? 15.♗xf5 exf5 16.♗xd5 cxd5 17.♞xd5 but not so well in case of the clever 14...♙c2!.

13...♙g6 Through Lagarde's will the position has already sharpened to the point where every move weighs heavily on both players. 13...f6 helps out the pinned knight on e7, but severely weakens e6. The game could then continue 14.♗xf5 ♗xf5 15.♞c2 ♜a3 16.♞d2 with some initiative for White.

14.f4 ♗g4 This nice landing square in the proximity of the white king is hard to refuse. Lagarde intends to go for a break along the f-file, but it's evident he's taking huge risks.

15.♞e1 It may have pained Lagarde to make these quiet moves when a heap of material down. Besides defending against ...♗g4-e3, the queen is now

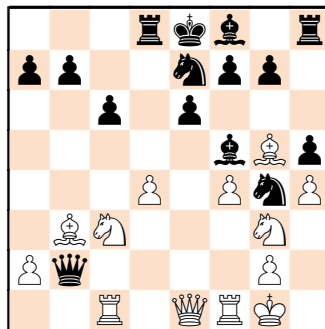
directed at the enemy king. Yet, I wonder if he could have struck at once with 15.f5 ?



- A) On the natural 15...♗xf5 16.♗xf5 ♗xf5 17.♞xf5! exf5 18.♞e1+, White's attack is on fire after 18...♗d7 19.♗xf7 ♗d6 20.♞b1 ♜a3 21.♞xb7+ ♖c8 22.♞b3, with all his pieces actively participating in the attack.
- B) Perhaps Black is better off with the unappealing 15...exf5, when, for example, after 16.♗ce2 f4! the blunted bishop is set free again.

15...♙f5 A clever idea. My young compatriot wants to render White's rook on f1 ineffective by virtue of his own pawn on f4.

Defiantly going for a third pawn with 15...♞xd4 wasn't impossible, but it would have let all hell break loose down the f-file and the a2-g8 diagonal. 16.f5 exf5 17.♗xf5 ♙xf5 18.♞xf5 f6 19.♞a5!? ♞f2+ (19...fxg5 20.♞c2 traps the black queen.) 20.♞xf2 ♗xf2 21.♙e3 ♗d3 22.♞d1 ♞d8 23.♞xa7∞ Despite the queen swap, Black must be on the alert as White's pieces roam around. For example, 23...♗f5 24.♞xb7 ♗xe3 25.♙f7 mate, is both funny and sad, depending on which side you're on!

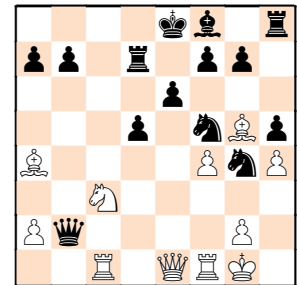


16.d5!! This powerful central break embodies the pinnacle of the

Frenchman's aggressive strategy. Still some way off move 20, the game now turns into a thriller!

16...f6! Pultinevicius keeps his calm in the storm and responds by trapping the enemy bishop for good.

16...cxd5? would fatally expose the black king along the a4-e8 diagonal. Also, please note that it bars his own rook from counterattack by ...♞d8-d2. 17.♗xf5 ♗xf5 18.♙a4+ ♞d7



Now Black looks dead lost, but even here White needs accuracy as the Caro-Kann is notoriously a hard nut to crack.

A) 19.♗xd5 looks all-powerful but it may not be best. White is only one small step away from landing his own rook on d8. 19...♙c5+ 20.♞xc5 ♞d4+ 21.♞e3!! What an incredible defense of the king! Yet, it's not the end of the story – 21...0-0! (Only on 21...♗fxe3 22.♞c8 mate does the story end quickly.) 22.♞xd4 ♗xd4 23.♙xd7 and now Black saves the day with a nice perpetual 23...♗e2+ 24.♗h1 ♗g3+.

B) I believe 19.♗b5!? is best as in addition to the ♞c1-c8 threat, it also involves the queen-trapping idea of ♞c1-c2. Then, after 19...♙e7 (19...♙c5+ loses to 20.♞xc5 0-0 21.♞c2.) 20.♞c8+, it makes sense to deflect Black's rook to d8, before storming towards his queen. 20...♞d8 (On 20...♙d8 21.♗c7+ ♖f8 22.♙xd7 is overwhelming) 21.♞c2 ♞xc2 22.♙xc2 ♙c5+ 23.♗h1 ♗fe3 24.♙xd8 ♗xc2 (24...♗xf1 25.♞xf1) 25.♞c3 and White wins.

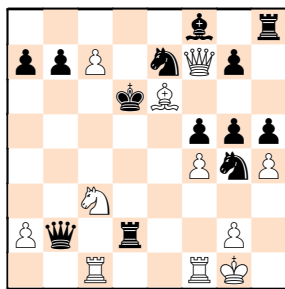
17.♗xf5 Against both pawn captures 17.dxe6 and 17.dxc6, Pultinevicius has cold bloodedly foreseen a strong deterrent in his rook entering the second rank via d2. Let's take a look at the



version with  $dxc6$ , when, for example after  $17... \text{E}d2$   $18. \text{W}xd2 \text{ W}xd2$   $19. cxb7 \text{ W}e3+$   $20. \text{Q}h1 \text{ W}xg3$   $21. b8 \text{ W}+$   $\text{Q}f7$  Black is winning due to an unstoppable checkmate on  $h2$ .

**17...exf5 18. W e6** Again  $18. dxc6$  can be powerfully met by  $18... \text{E}d2!$  when after  $19. \text{W}xd2 \text{ W}xd2$   $20. cxb7 \text{ Q}c6$   $21. \text{E}fe1+$   $\text{Q}e7$   $22. \text{Q}d5$   $0-0$   $23. \text{Q}xe7+$   $\text{Q}h7$   $24. \text{Q}xc6 \text{ W}f2+$   $25. \text{Q}h1 fxc5$  Black will again have the last laugh.

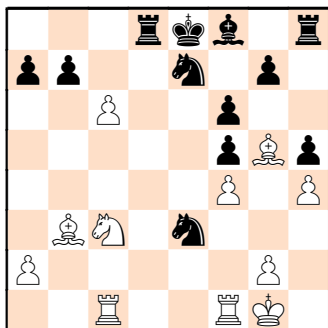
**18...Wd2!** Pultis is fighting back. The upcoming queen swap should slow down Lagarde's offensive significantly. As the white queen is breathing down the black king's neck, there's no time to eliminate the bishop:  $18... fxc5$   $19. dxc6 \text{ E}d2$   $20. \text{W}f7+$   $\text{Q}d8$   $21. c7+$   $\text{Q}d7$  ( $21... \text{Q}xc7$   $22. \text{Q}a4+$ )  $22. \text{Q}e6+$   $\text{Q}d6$



Here, amidst multiple winning continuations, allow me to suggest to you the one I like most –  $23. \text{Q}e4+$   $fxe4$   $24. c8 \text{ Q}+!!$  (Of course, not the major promotion  $24. c8 \text{ W}??$ , when after  $24... \text{E}xg2+$  Black wins on the spot.)  $24... \text{Q}xc8$   $25. \text{W}d7$  mate. A truly study-like and very beautiful finish!

**19. dxc6 W e3+**  $19... bxc6?$  is just hopeless after  $20. \text{W}f7+$   $\text{Q}d7$   $21. \text{E}fd1+-$ .

**20. Wxe3 Qxe3**



▲ Paulius Pultinevicius

PHOTO: FIDE / Madelene Belinki

**21. cxb7** Lagarde charges ahead without sparing a thought for his rook.

In hindsight, he could have opted for the much safer option  $21. \text{E}fe1$   $bxc6$   $22. \text{E}xe3$   $fxg5$   $23. fxc5$  with full compensation for the pawn deficit.

$21. c7$  is apparently less dangerous than the pawn advance in the game after  $21... \text{Q}xf1$   $22. cxd8 \text{ E}+$   $\text{Q}xd8$   $23. \text{Q}xf1$   $fxg5$   $24. fxc5$ .

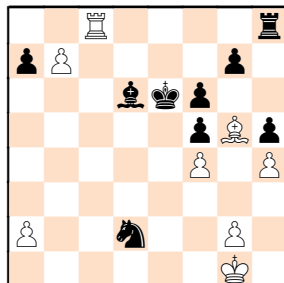
**21... Qxf1** Now, would you believe me if I told you that this knight was going to survive to the end of this game?!

**22. Qb5!** White needs to speed up. On  $22. \text{Q}xf1$   $fxg5$   $23. \text{Q}b5$  the extra black rook joins the battle.  $23... \text{Q}h6!$  with decisive effect.

At such a point I would be all at sea where –  $g3$ ,  $e3$  or  $d2$  – to withdraw my knight, but after extensive analysis I can only commend Pultis for his choice.

**22... Qg3!** Better than  $22... \text{Q}d2$  which nevertheless was also possible. Then...

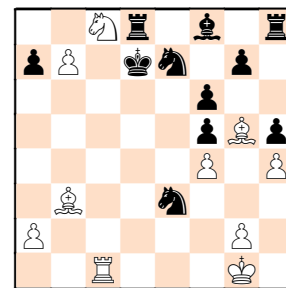
A)  $23. \text{Q}d6+$   $\text{Q}d7$   $24. \text{Q}c8 \text{ E}xc8$   $25. \text{E}xc8$   $\text{Q}c6$   $26. \text{Q}e6+$   $\text{Q}xe6$   $27. \text{E}xc6+$   $\text{Q}d6$   $28. \text{E}c8$



bizarre threefold repetition I have seen lately –  $28... \text{E}h7!$   $29. \text{E}c6!$   $\text{E}h8$   $30. \text{E}c8$  drawn!

B) Or  $23. \text{Q}e6 \text{ E}b8$   $24. \text{Q}d6+$   $\text{Q}d8$   $25. \text{Q}f7+$   $\text{Q}e8$ , which is reminiscent of the game with the exception that the black knight is on  $g3$  instead of  $d2$ . In the game Lagarde fatally spurned a draw with  $\text{E}d1?$ , but here that seriously deserves attention.  $26. \text{E}d1!?$  ( $26. \text{E}c7 \text{ Q}e4$   $27. \text{Q}xh8$   $fxg5$   $28. hxg5 \text{ Q}d6+$ )  $26... fxc5$   $27. \text{E}xd2$   $\text{Q}c6$   $28. \text{Q}xh8 \text{ E}xb7$   $29. fxc5 \text{ Q}d4$  is unclear to me, but most likely equal.

Meanwhile  $22... \text{Q}e3?$  turns out to be the worst of all three knight retreats. One of the reasons is the obstruction of his bishop from attacking on the  $a7-g1$  diagonal.  $23. \text{Q}d6+$   $\text{Q}d7$   $24. \text{Q}c8$



A)  $24... \text{Q}xc8$  runs into  $25. b8 \text{ W}$ .

B)  $24... \text{Q}c6$   $25. \text{E}xc6 \text{ Q}d6$  is a desperate attempt to prevent queening. Nevertheless, White can deal a skilful blow to it –  $26. \text{Q}a4!$  (and not  $26. \text{E}xd6+$   $\text{Q}c7$ )  $26... \text{Q}b8$  ( $26... fxc5$  allows White to win with the beautiful  $27. \text{E}b6+!!$   $\text{Q}e6$   $28. \text{E}xd6+$   $\text{E}xd6$   $29. b8 \text{ W}+-$ ) and now  $27. \text{E}xf6+$   $\text{Q}c7$   $28. \text{E}f7+!+-$  is yet another gem of this extraordinary game, revealing the power of an

This entire line leads to the most



unorthodox knight on c8!

C) 24...♞xc8 25.♞xc8 ♖c6 (25...♖xc8 26.♗e6+)! 26.♗a4! and White wins, as the awkward knight on e3 now prevents Black from the ...♗f8-c5+ counterattack.

23.♗e6 23.♖d6+ ♗d7 24.♖c8 can be met in several ways. I will give you the most thrilling one, which permits White to queen his pawn. 24...♖e2+ 25.♗f1 ♖xc1 26.b8♞ ♖xb3 27.♞b7+ ♗e8 28.♞b5+ ♗f7 (Only not 28...♞d7?? 29.♖d6+ ♗d8 30.♞b8+ ♖c8 31.♞xc8+ ♗e7 32.♖xf5+ ♗e6 33.axb3 fxf5 34.♞e8+-) 29.♞xb3+ ♗g6 and Black is doing well.

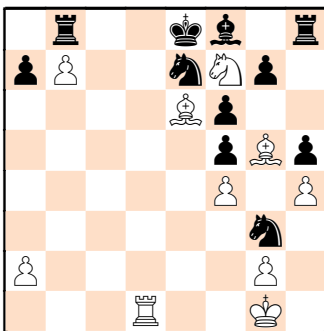
23...♞b8 A prelude to the drama to follow. Not 23...♖e2+ 24.♗f2 ♖xc1 25.♖c7 mate. Being a full rook down, his bishop on g5 trapped and the queens long since off the board, Lagarde can now safely pocket a draw by an obvious perpetual. Will the fierce Frenchman take it?

Of course not.

24.♖d6+ ♗d8 25.♖f7+ ♗e8 26.♖d6+ A second repetition. 26.♞c7 is repelled by the survivor knight 26...♖e4+. But not 26...fxg5?? 27.♖d6+ ♗d8 28.♞d7 mate.

26...♗d8 27.♖f7+ The second repetition of another position.

27...♗e8 28.♞d1?



On the last call the Frenchman spurns a peace agreement in favor of a gamble. The French team's position, matched against Lithuania, wasn't desperate at that point. However Pultinevicius was reportedly very low on time at this stage and thus unconsciously provoked his higher-rated opponent into taking a gamble.

28...♖c6! 28...fxg5 is perhaps also possible, but then he must be ready to meet 29.♖d6+ (29.♞d8+ ♞xd8 30.♖xd8 ♖c6 31.♖xc6 ♗c5+ 32.♗h2 ♖f1+ 33.♗h1 ♗d6+; 29.♖xh8 ♖c6 30.♗d7+ ♗d8! 31.♗xc6+ ♗c7) 29...♗d8 30.♖b5+ with the spooky 30...♖d5!.

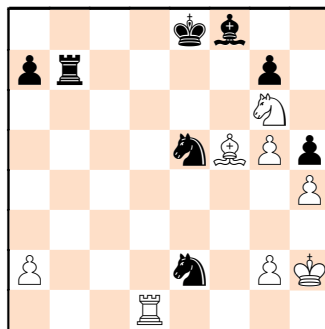
29.♖xh8 ♞xb7 The dangerous b7 passer is now gone and the bishop is still trapped on g5, so it does not bode well for Lagarde. His pieces are still very active though, so Pultis must tread carefully in his severe time trouble.

30.♗h2 ♖e2! Stronger than 30...♖e4 31.♗xf5.

31.♗xf5 fxf5 It took 15(!) moves to finally capture this long trapped bishop.

32.fxf5 There isn't the slightest doubt that Lagarde was nervous too. Perhaps his best bet was 32.♗g6+ ♗e7 33.♞e1 ♖cd4 34.♗xh5 ♞b2 35.♖g6+ when, in order to save the bishop, the black king needs to walk on the edge with 35...♗f7.

32...♖e5 33.♖g6



33...♖g4+! Going for the king's throat is the right way. 33...♖xg6? would have been a huge miscalculation that Lagarde was eagerly waiting for – 34.♗xg6+ ♗e7 35.♞e1±.

34.♗xg4 hxg4 35.♞d2 There's no good advice for the gambling Frenchman. 35.♞e1 ♞b2 36.♖f4 ♗d6-+. Or 35.h5 ♞b6 36.♞e1 ♞e6-+.

35...♖c3 36.♞d4 Perhaps 36.h5 was his last chance, the point being 36...♖e4 37.♞e2 ♗d6+ 38.g3!, when Black is only slightly better.



## BROADEN YOUR HORIZONS!

THE BLOG OF GRANDMASTER ALEX COLOVIC

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36...♞b4! 37.♞d3 ♖e4 38.a3 ♞a4 39.♖xf8 g3+! This lovely intermezzo drives the white king to the first rank and effectively undermines White's resistance.

40.♗g1 There's no way up – 40.♗h3? ♖f2+.

40...♗xf8 41.♗f1 ♗f7 42.h5 ♖xg5 43.♞xg3 ♗f6 44.♞d3 ♖e4 45.♗e2 ♗g5 46.♞d5+ ♗g4 Only now, six moves into the second time control, **White resigned.**

The France-Lithuania match eventually ended in a 2–2 tie.





# THE MAGNIFICENT 3

## Remarkable Recent Games

### NO SHUFFLING AROUND!

In a Round 8 game between Hungary and Netherlands (or Holland, if you will), the Dutch GM Max Warmerdam carried out a spectacular king assault on board 4. Having retained his valuable dark-squared bishop after the opening stage of a Ragozin-like Queen's Gambit Declined, the Dutchman later used it to bring his attack to a decisive conclusion. Black's attack down the g-file really took shape after the resolute pawn sac 20...g4!, immediately followed by a second one 21...h5!. Having cleared the g-file for his rook at the precious cost of two pawns, Warmerdam then set off a series of violent strikes on the king. His kingdom shattered, the Hungarian GM was left clutching at straws only to hear the final blast 27...♖g1!! in all its terrifying might.

By GM Sarunas Sulskis

#### D35

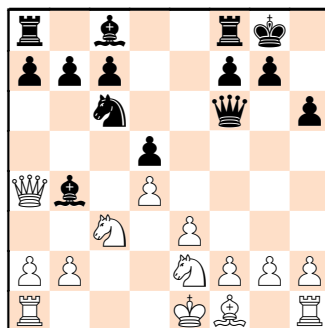
Gergely Kantor	2582
Max Warmerdam	2610

Hungary vs. Netherlands, Chennai 2022

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♙g5 ♙b4 The desire of modern players to go for the trendy Ragozin Variation of the QGD is understandable, but without the knight on f3 it cannot be easily classified as such.

6.e3 h6 7.♙xf6 ♖xf6 8.♖a4+ ♘c6 9.♘ge2 Quite a rare move. The usual continuation is 9.♙b5.

#### 9...0-0



10.♘f4 And this might even be a novelty.

10.a3 ♙xc3+ 11.♘xc3 ♘e7 featured in the rapid online game of the two arguably strongest players in the world M.Carlsen 2847 - I.Nepomniachtchi 2789, Internet 2021.

10...♗d8 Simple and sound. Beyond a casual defense of the d5 pawn, Black embarks on a deep strategy. He cherishes the bishop pair, so the f8 square is reserved to tuck away his bishop for the time being. His knight on c6 is awkwardly placed, impeding the defense of d5 by ...c7-c6. Warmerdam plans to maneuver it to f5, eyeing White's d4 and e3 pawns. Once this task is accomplished



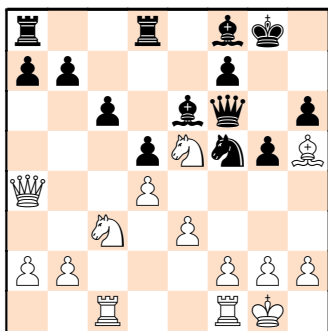
with a pawn on c6 controlling the d5 and b5 squares, his dark-squared bishop may turn up on d6, signalling an attack on the castled position of the white king. 10...♖xd4? doesn't work at all on account of 11.♗fxd5 ♘xc3+ 12.bxc3 ♗f3+ 13.gxf3 ♖xf3 14.♗e7+ ♔h8 15.♞g1+-.

**11.♞c1 g5** The Dutch GM acts in a straightforward manner. This move may expose his king in the process, but no less importantly it lifts the pressure off d5.

**12.♗d3 ♗f8 13.♗e2** White prepares castling. In my view, while it's a relatively safe option, it doesn't really challenge Black's ...g7-g5. Indeed, in the longer run this allegedly safe approach with castling will make Kantor fall under a violent attack by his opponent. 13.h4!? gxh4 14.g3 hxg3 15.♞g1 was worth considering, for example, 15...♗d6 16.♗xd5 ♖f3 17.♗g2 gxf2+ 18.♗xf2 looks promising for White.

**13...♗e7 14.0-0 c6 15.♗e5** Looks quite impressive, but in fact it will cost White two tempi. Perfectly aware what an awful waste of time it is, I'd rather note that I don't like the white queen on a4 at all. 15.♖d1 deserved consideration, intending ♗e2-g4.

**15...♗f5 16.♗h5 ♗e6**



**17.♗d3?** Throwing away tempi left and right, it's no wonder that the Hungarian GM soon runs into a deadly attack. I don't think that on 17.♖b3 Warmerdam would have neglected his b7 pawn as yet. On 17...♞ab8 White can perhaps venture for the tactic-based 18.f4!? ♗xe3 19.♗e4! dxe4 20.♖xe3 with messy complications.



▲ Max Warmerdam

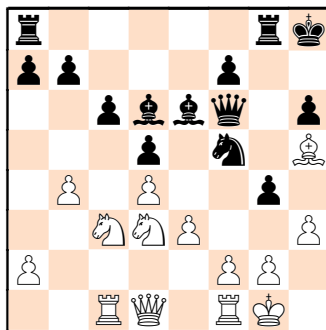
PHOTO: FIDE / Madelene Belinki

**17...♗d6!** The first stage of the regrouping of his forces is over. Black's minor pieces, commanded by his queen, are directed towards the enemy king.

**18.♖d1 ♔h8 19.b4?** Hampered by Kantor's previous indecisiveness, ♗d3-e5-d3, this well-known queenside minority attack now turns into wasted time in light of the dark clouds gathered above the white king. 19.♖f3, threatening g2-g4, would at least have dislodged the black queen from its active position on f6.

**19...♞g8 20.h3** Trying to prevent the obvious ...g5-g4, but...

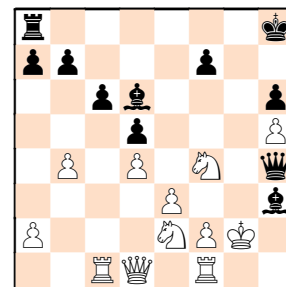
**20...g4!** Warmerdam says "No way!", heralding an all-out attack on the white king.



**21.♗xg4** On 21.hxg4 I'm pretty sure his smart idea was 21...♗g7! when White will have a hard time keeping the g-file closed. Let me share some beautiful lines I've found:

**A)** 22.♗e2 ♗hx5 23.gxh5 ♖h4 24.♗d4

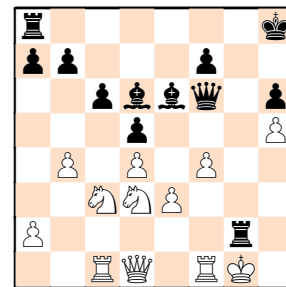
and now the white king is bombed-out: 24...♞xg2+! 25.♔xg2 ♗h3+!



**A1)** On 26.♔g1 there are several ways to win, but the most straightforward and also strikingly beautiful is 26...♞g8+ 27.♗g3 ♞xg3+ 28.fxg3 ♖xg3+ 29.♔h1 ♗g2+!! (29...♗xf4? would be unpardonably slow due to 30.♞c2) 30.♗xg2 ♖h2 mate.

**A2)** 26.♗hx3 ♞g8+ 27.♗g3 (27.♔f3 ♖g4 mate.) 27...♞xg3+ 28.fxg3 ♖xg3+ 29.♔h1 ♖h2 mate.

**B)** Or 22.f4 ♗hx5 23.gxh5, when again Black prevails by virtue of an aerial bombardment: 23...♞xg2+!

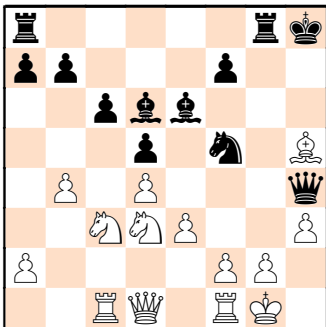




24.♔xg2 ♖g8+ 25.♔f2 ♗h4+ (25...♔g4 is also good, winning the queen.) 26.♔e2 ♔g4+ (26...♖g2+ also wins) 27.♖f3 ♔xf3+ 28.♔xf3 and here, notably, it is not the close-range checks ...♗g3+, ...♖g3+, ...♗g4+ that are best, but the inconspicuous 28...♗xh5+ 29.♔f2 ♗h2+ with mate coming next.

**21...h5! 22.♔xh5** On 22.♔xf5 ♗xf5 Black's attack proceeds unhindered. 23.f4 and now Black has a choice between the simple 23...♗xh3 and the sophisticated but brutal 23...♖xg2+!? 24.♔xg2 ♗xh3+ 25.♔f2 ♖g8 26.♔e1 ♖g2 27.♖c2. This time, I think the simple approach is to be preferred, since then 24.♗f3 is effectively met by 24...♖g3.

**22...♗h4!** With the black queen now hovering over White's king and the black rook unbridled down the g-file, a heavy bombardment is in order.



**23.♗f3** The attempt to set up a hurdle on the g-file with 23.♔g4 is dealt a blow: 23...♔xe3! 24.fxe3 ♔xg4 25.♗e1 (25.hxg4 runs into a checkmate after 25...♔h2+ 26.♔h1 ♔g3+ 27.♔g1 ♗h2 mate.) 25...♔g3 and the progress of Black's attack is unstoppable. A faint attempt to prevent the black queen from capturing on h3 by 23.♔h1 is bombed-out by 23...♖xg2! 24.♔xg2 ♔xe3+! 25.fxe3 ♗g3+ 26.♔h1 ♗h2 mate. Finally 23.♔f4 ♔xf4 24.exf4 ♗xh3 25.♗f3 (25.♔f3 accelerates White's demise after 25...♖xg2+! 26.♔xg2 ♖g8) is again crushed with 25...♖xg2+! 26.♗xg2 ♖g8 27.♗xg8+ ♔xg8 winning.

**23...♔xd4!** A nice blow in the center. It's obvious that the black knight needs to open up the way for the bishop to h3 at all costs. Black, however, should be mindful

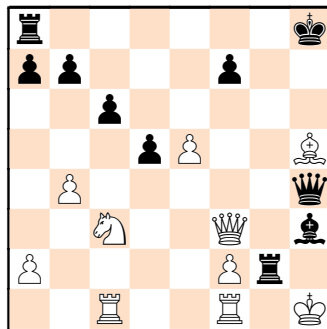
of sacrifices which open the f-file for the white rook.

**24.exd4 ♔xh3** Now the bishop is there!

**25.♔e5** There's no longer a cure for White. On 25.♔e2 follows a very simple win for Black with 25...♔xg2.

But instead I want to show you a forced checkmate with a checks-only sequence to demonstrate the power of Black's attack: 25...♔h2+! 26.♔h1 (26.♔xh2 ♔xg2+) 26...♔xg2+ 27.♗xg2 ♔f4+ 28.♔g1 ♗h2!! mate.

**25...♔xe5 26.dxe5 ♖xg2+ 27.♔h1** Giving up the queen by 27.♗xg2 ♔xg2 28.♔xg2 ♖g8+ 29.♔f3 ♗xh5+ prevents a direct mate, but would have by no means altered the result of the game.



**27...♖g1+!!** Just magnificent! Warmerdam sacrifices a whole rook just to yield the short h3-f1 diagonal to his no less powerful bishop. Admittedly, he wasn't at all obliged to continue with the text as 27...♔g4+ wins easily.

And so does 27...♖h2+ 28.♔xh2 ♔g4+ 29.♔g1 ♔xf3 30.♔xf3 ♖g8+ 31.♔g2 ♗h3. However, Warmerdam's choice is far more aesthetically pleasing and, to be honest, also much more powerful!

The only thing Black shouldn't do here is 27...♖ag8?? 28.♗f6+ ♗xf6 29.exf6.

**28.♔xg1** The short sideline 28.♖xg1 nevertheless contains the brightest gem of this wonderful game – 28...♔f1+!!.

**28...♖g8+ White resigned** since there's no way to prevent a direct checkmate, even at the cost of a queen: 29.♗g3 ♖xg3+ 30.fxg3 ♗xg3+ 31.♔h1 ♗g2 mate.

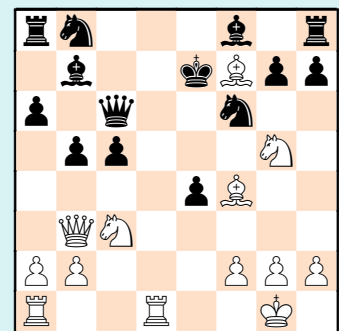
An impressive charge by the young Dutch GM! Eventually, Netherlands defeated Hungary 3-1. ■

## MINIATURES

D.Andreikin	2729
E.Bacrot	2638

Internet 2022

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e4 a6 4.♔xc4 e6 5.♔f3 b5 6.♔b3 ♔b7 7.0-0 ♔f6 8.d5 exd5 9.♔c3 dxe4? 10.♔xf7+ ♔e7 11.♗b3 ♗d7? 12.♖d1 ♗c8 13.♔g5 c5 14.♔f4 ♗c6



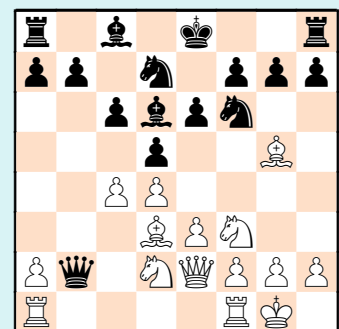
15.♔e8

1-0

A.Moiseenko	2579
G.Gajewski	2589

Internet 2022

1.d4 ♔f6 2.♔g5 d5 3.e3 c6 4.♔d3 ♗b6 5.♔f3 ♗xb2 6.♔bd2 e6 7.0-0 ♔bd7 8.c4 ♔d6 9.♗e2



9...dxc4? 10.♔xc4 ♗b4 10...♗xe2 11.♔xd6+ ♔e7 12.♔xc8+ 11.♖ab1 1-0