



The MAGNIFICENT 3 REMARKABLE RECENT GAMES

By GM Sarunas Sulskis

AN ODD OPENING STRIKES ITS DESIRED TARGET IN TORONTO

With Indian players overwhelming the chess world at a rapid pace, I found appropriate to comment on one of their mutual encounters in the Toronto Candidates. The game between Vidit and Praggnanandhaa saw, in my opinion and to my taste, the most extraordinary opening choice by the 19-year-old Pragg. As Black, he confronted Vidit's solid and super correct Ruy Lopez in a most defying manner by the Delayed Schliemann 4...f5!?

I think this exciting game embodies all the key features of successful modern opening strategy – prepare well beforehand and aim not for dry correctness, but rather use mathematically incorrect means to strike a chilling surprise on your correctly-minded opponent. As it was, Vidit, taken by surprise, started spending copious amounts of time to make his way through uncharted territory, well-explored by his clever fellow countryman beforehand.

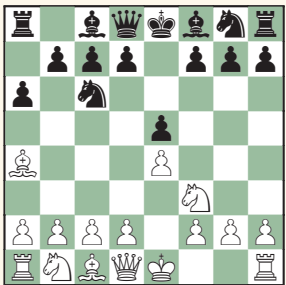
The course of the game displays Vidit's preconceived opinion that the openings of such kind must be punished. This stubborn conviction, however, cost Vidit even more time on his clock. Pragg bravely blockaded Vidit's main asset (the e6 pawn) with his knight, castled long which is quite unusual and fresh for a Ruy Lopez, and staked his whole strategy on the power and agility of his bishop pair. By suddenly marching his g-pawn down the board in Vidit's time scramble, Pragg brought his thoughtful yet bold game strategy to full fruition.

C70

Vidit Santosh	2727
R. Praggnanandhaa	2747

FIDE Candidates, Toronto 2024

1.e4 e5 2.d3 2.c6 3.b5 a6 4.b4



4...f5! Pragg starts off by dropping a bombshell in the form of a Delayed Schliemann. As we will see later, his unorthodox, yet entertaining to spectators, choice will be graciously rewarded.

5.d4 exd4 6.e5 Vidit has certainly felt massive preparation coming his way, yet refuses to turn off the highway.

6...b5 Skip back only 50 years and you could find the Delayed Schliemann in the Candidates Final Match of the day between Karpov and Korchnoi, Moscow 1974. It went 6...c5 7.0-0 7.ge7 8.b3 d5 9.exd6 7.xd6 10.e1 and ended in a draw following a good 50 moves fight.

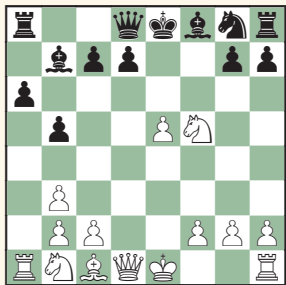
7.b3 2a5 Quite a fresh move! 7...b7 is a more trodden path.

8.dxd4 There are certainly other ways to choose from, such as 8.d5 c6 9.xg8 8.xg8 10.xd4; or 8.0-0 c5! 9.d5.

8...b7 9.xf5 Taken by surprise, Vidit

still stubbornly refuses to veer away from his opponent's prep. This policy, however, costs him a significant amount of his allotted time. In hindsight, 9.0-0 was more prudent, as White doesn't need to worry much about 9...c5 10.xg8 cxd4 (10...xg8 11.dxf5) 11.b3.

9...xb3 10.axb3



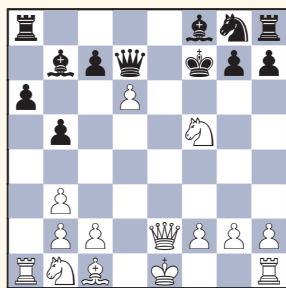
10...d6! In return for the lost pawn, Pragg retorts with a nice series of 'impossible' moves, which were really delightful to watch for the eager spectators! In a predecessor game F.A.Rakotomaharo 2435 - J.S.Christiansen 2620, Paleochora 2021, the Norwegian grandmaster wasn't ready for impossible moves. He simply went 10...g6. There followed 11.0-0! h5 12.d3 7.e7 13.d5 7.c5 14.c4 and Black was wiped off the board in 32 moves.

10...xg2?? is, of course, suicidal, since after 11.g1 1.e4 12.7h5+ g6 13.xg6 Black must resign.

11.7e2 On 11.e6?! 7f6, Black is out of the woods and ready to castle long.

Initially, a simple 11.exd6 looks to underline the futility of Black's counterplay. Black, however, responds with a second 'impossible' move 11...7d7!

and on 12.7e2+ continues with a third one 12...7f7!



After 13.d3 7xd6 Black obtains tangible compensation, determined by his nice bishop pair.

11...7d7 Continuing the theme of 'impossibilities'. Now both advances of the e5 pawn look equally damaging to Black, but Pragg shows how he has overcome deceptive appearances with his thorough prep!

12.e6 12.exd6+ 7f7! only leads to a transposition from the previous comment.

12...7c6 Pragg has obviously got ready to castle long.

13.7g5!? Vidit pushes hard to prevent his opponent from getting his king to safety on the queenside. 13.d7+? just doesn't work, since after 13...xg7 14.7h5+, the only way out is 14...7d8.

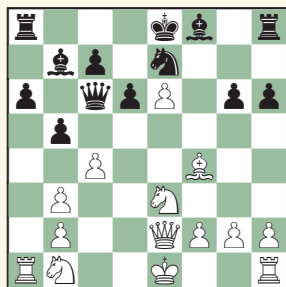
13...g6 The reckless 13...7xg2?? leads to a quick mate after 14.d7+ 7xg7 15.7h5+ 7f8 16.7f7 mate.

On 13...7e4 14.7xe4 7xe4 15.d3, White retains his extra pawn for the time being.

14.d3 Defending the vulnerable g2 pawn, yet obstructing his own queen on the e-file. On 14.e7 gxf5 15.7h5+ Black is better after both 15...7d7 16.exf8+ 7xf8, and 15.exf8+ 7xf8,.

14...h6 15.7f4 7e7 Pragg wisely delays castling long since a potential short castling may keep Vidit guessing. An impatient 15...7e4 runs into 16.d3! 7xf4 17.dcd5 7e5 18.dxc7+ 7e7 19.dxa8 7xa8 20.7xa6+-.

16.c4



16...b4! A very important move that keeps



▲ S.Vidit vs. R. Praggnanandhaa

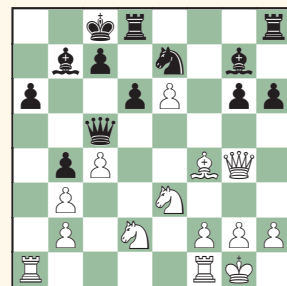
Black's windy strategy going. The white knight is denied its ascension square on c3. 17.7g4 Vidit is still in pursuit of an opening advantage long gone. With his latter move, however, he risks his bishop being trampled by Black's kingside pawns advance. On 17.d2 7g7 18.0-0 0-0, Black has easy play with White's d2 knight failing to find gainful employment, while 17.h4 7e4 is also fine for Black.

17...7c5 Preventing both d5 and 7a5. The alternative 17...7g7? is a mistake, whereupon Vidit's last move allows 18.d5!.

On 17...h5 Vidit would have probably resorted to something like 18.7g3 (or even 18.7g5 7h6 19.7g3) 18...h4 19.7g4 h3 20.d2 hxg2 21.g1.

17...0-0-0 was an alternative for Black, likely transposing to the game after 18.d2.

18.0-0 7g7 19.d2 0-0-0



There was an argument by some high-profile commentators, who, while conveniently wielding an evaluation bar in the comfort of their study, alleged 19...0-0 was better. I have no particular remarks in this regard other than that the long castling had firmly remained on the youngster's mind ever since he embarked on the marvelous sequence

10...d6! followed by 11...7d7.

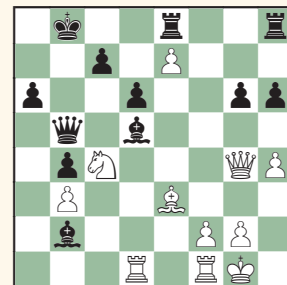
20.h4?! A similar, engine-induced argument was raised on the alleged strength of 20.d5! While I agree it should have been played, one needs to be extremely tactically sharp to self-inflict the bishop-queen battery while the clock is ticking down. 20...dxd5 21.cxd5 7xd5 22.e7+ 7d7 23.7fe1 7e8 24.d4 7f5 when perhaps 25.7g3 7dxe7 26.7xe7 7xe7 27.dxd6 7e4 28.7xc7 offers an explanation for White's risky idea.

20...7de8 Now the best time for the d3-d5 jump has passed. Low on the clock, and with his knights restricted, Vidit must now fight against his opponent's bishop pair, well-located on both long diagonals.

21.7ad1 7xb2 22.d5 Vidit now seizes his belated opportunity.

22...dxd5 23.cxd5 No chance for the intermediate 23.d4? due to 23...d6+.

23...7xd5 24.e7+ 7b8 25.7e3 7b5 26.d4

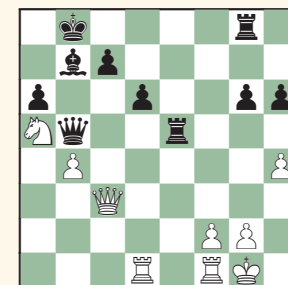


26...7c3 The text is better than 26...7xc4? 27.bxc4 7a4 28.c5, which is unsafe for Black.

27.7d4 27.7xg6? only helps Black after 27...7hg8+-.

27...7hg8 28.7xc3 Strong competition has been going on around the e1 square.

With his last move, Vidit wrestles it from Pragg, but the emerging strong pawn on c3 will distract White's rooks. 28.7fe1 was brave, but a hardly sound attempt – 28...7xe1 29.7xe1 7xc4 30.bxc4 7f5+ (but not 30...7xc4?? 31.7a7+-). 28...bxc3 29.7d4 29.7fe1 c2 30.7c1 7xb3 is a good example of a rook distraction. 29...7b7 30.7xc3 After this, the last danger for Pragg is over and he can breathe a sigh of relief. 30.7fe1 was more resilient. It's possible that Pragg was ready to launch a g-pawn march similar to the game – 30...g5 31.h5 g4 32.7xc3 g3! with a strong attack. 30...7xe7 31.d5 7e5 32.b4 This only wastes precious time. Better was 32.dxb7 7xb7 33.d4 although White's prospects remain grim.

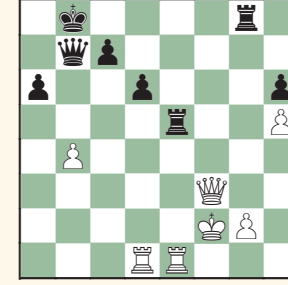


32...g5! Pragg now launches a powerful pawn march along the g-file, well supported by his rook, and wraps up the game!

33.h5 g4! 34.7fe1 g3!, 35.dxb7 The slightest shiver of the f2 pawn loses on the spot, for example 35.f4 7b6+ 36.d7 7f2 mate.

35...gxf2+ 36.dxf2 7xb7 Vidit's position has been irrevocably ruined.

37.7f3



37...7eg5 All roads lead to Rome now, even the primitive 37...7xf3+ 38.gxf3 7xh5+-.

38.7xb7+ 7xb7 39.g4 There's no way to avert the loss of a second pawn. 39.g1 7xh5+-.

39...7xg4 40.7e6 7h4 41.7xh6 7g5 42.7h7 7hxh5 43.7d7 7c8 44.7e7 7e5 45.7g7 7hf5+ White resigned owing to the impending rook swap 46.d7g3 7g5+ 47.7xg5 7xg5+-.



2nd MAGNIFICENT 3 REMARKABLE RECENT GAMES

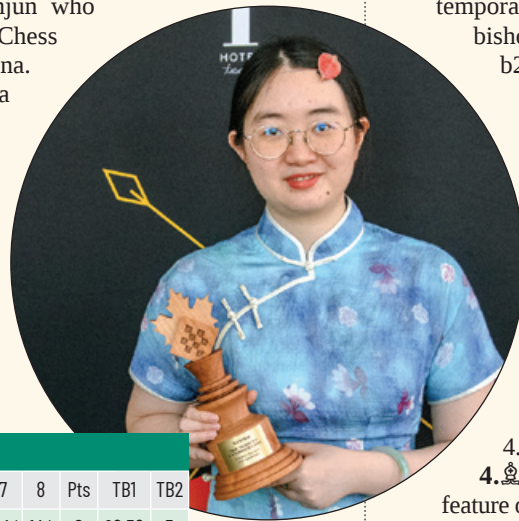
By GM Sarunas Sulskis

TAN ZHONGYI CONFIDENTLY NAVIGATES STORMY WATERS TO WIN THE CANDIDATES!

Meanwhile the Women's Candidates Tournament in Toronto had a somewhat more pronounced winner. The former Women's World Champion, Tan Zhongyi dominated the rest of the field from an early start right up to the very end. Her final tally, just like Gukesh's, consisted of 9 points out of 14. But while only the last moves of the titanic struggle between Caruana and Nepomniachtchi in the final round of the Open Candidates brought clarity to the final standings, Tan had practically secured her right to compete in the Women's World Championship Match by the start of the last round.

Chess fans will now eagerly await Tan Zhongyi's match for the Chess Queen's crown with an incumbent Women's World Champion Ju Wenjun. It's worth reminding the reader that it was precisely Ju Wenjun who deposed Tan Zhongyi from her throne in the World Chess Championship Final Match in 2018 in Shanghai, China. Consequently, there's no doubt that we are in for a delightful come-back attempt by Tan pretty soon!

So what's the secret behind Tan's confident victory in this Candidates tournament? As we can glean from her previous career, her play in Toronto featured a nice blend of high form, matured experience in her 30s, good self-control in tense moments of the game, much better time management compared to other competitors and her relentless willpower in working through the challenging amounts of sheer calculation carefully and undistracted.



Final Ranking crosstable after 14 Rounds - WOMEN

Rk.	Name	Rtg	FED	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Pts	TBI	TB2
1	Tan ZHONGYI	2521	CHN	1/2-1/2	1-0	1-1	1/2-1/2	1/2-1/2	1/2-1/2	1/2-1/2	1/2-1/2	9	60,50	5
2	Humpy KONERU	2546	IND	1/2-1/2		0-1	1/2-1	1/2-1/2	1/2-1/2	0-1	1/2-1/2	7 1/2	52,25	3
3	Lei TINGJIE	2550	CHN	0-1	1-0		1-0	1/2-1	1/2-1/2	1/2-1/2	1/2-1/2	7 1/2	52,00	4
4	Vaishali RAMESHBABU	2475	IND	0-0	1/2-0	0-1		1/2-1	0-1	1-1	1/2-1	7 1/2	47,50	6
5	Aleksandra GORYACHKINA	2553	FID	1/2-1/2	1/2-1/2	1/2-0	1/2-0		1/2-1/2	1-1/2	1-1/2	7	47,00	2
6	Kateryna LAGNO	2542	FID	1/2-0	1/2-1/2	1/2-1/2	1-0	1/2-1/2		1/2-1/2	1/2-1/2	6 1/2	45,00	1
7	Nurgyul SALIMOVA	2432	BUL	1/2-1/2	1-0	1/2-1/2	0-0	0-1/2	1/2-1/2		1/2-1/2	5 1/2	39,50	1
8	Anna MUZYCHUK	2520	UKR	0-1/2	1/2-1/2	1/2-1/2	1/2-0	0-1/2	1/2-1/2	1/2-1/2		5 1/2	38,75	0

Below I have selected Tan's sixth round win over Anna Muzychuk. Out of an unassumingly-looking Colle System, Zhongyi first declares her true ambitions by driving her knight into Anna's territory with 10.♘e5. Not having peace of mind with her -1 score at that moment, Muzychuk is eager for complications, but is that at the expense of her king safety? Throwing her queen into the fray by 13.♙d1-g4 heralds the start of Tan's attack on the king. She conducts it consistently, with no regard to substantial sacrifices. Muzychuk positions her rook on the fourth rank, winning a pawn and shadowing the steps of White's queen still stationed on g4. Meanwhile, Tan inches closer to the desired target by first marching

her kingside pawn with h2-h4-h5 and then sending another one into the battlefield - f2-f4-f5. Meanwhile her back-up major pieces eagerly await Tan's command to attack.

Sensing Tan's relentless willpower to crash through Black's defensive line on the kingside, Muzychuk's nerves get the better of her and with 24...exf5? she opens the floodgates for the entry of White's major, after which the position still remains loaded with sharp variations of wild beauty. In time trouble, which has befallen poor Muzychuk, Tan shows her true colors by spurning the most practical 32.♙xf6+ for a far more beautiful, but objectively weaker 32.♙xf6!? queen sacrifice. However Muzychuk still has enough reasons to reject the highly

poisoned queen offer. Her Chinese opponent is fearlessly pressing on a rook down with 34.♘e7! and with Anna's clock ticking down, the Ukrainian heads for a breakdown with the wrong recapture 35...♘xe4?.

DO5

Tan Zhongyi	2521
Anna Muzychuk	2520

FIDE Women's Candidates, Toronto 2024

1.d4 d5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.e3 Muzychuk must have been surprised by this seemingly unassuming opening choice by Tan. White temporarily hems in her dark-squared bishop in order to bring it out on b2. The latter setup by Tan is probably best described as the Colle System.

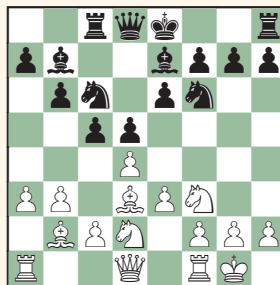
3...e6 After some six minutes pondering over her choices, the Ukrainian player goes for the most solid line. This solidity, however, narrows down the scope of her light-squared bishop. On 3...♙f5 the game could have turned into the Slav Defense with 4.c4 c6 5.♘c3 e6 6.♘h4.

4.♙d3 c5 5.b3 A necessary feature of the Colle-Zukertort System.

Yet with foreknowledge of what happened in this game, it could be safely reframed into the Colle Attack!

5...♘c6 6.0-0 b6 More common continuations are 6...♙e7 and 6...♙d6.

7.♙b2 ♙b7 8.♘bd2 ♘c8 9.a3 ♙e7



10.♘e5 Zhongyi only briefly pauses before declaring her ambitions by driving her knight into Anna's territory.

10...cxd4 On 10...0-0 the Chinese player could have further asserted her control of the center by 11.f4.

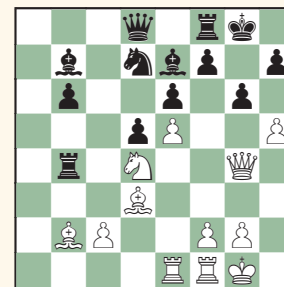
11.exd4 ♘xe5 12.dxe5 ♘d7 13.♙g4 Surprisingly, this natural queen thrust may be a novelty. In one low-profile game 13.b4 was played.

13...g6 14.b4! Restricting access to c5

for quite a few of Black's pieces, most notably the knight. We can already speak of White's edge out of the opening.

14...a5 15.♘f3 0-0 16.♙ae1 This overt aggression towards Muzychuk's king is going to bring Tan's strategy to the point of 'win or die'. While it undoubtedly makes it a dream scenario for onlookers, it's very demanding for the players. As noted by Anand, White could also treat the game positionally, starting with 16.♙ab1 and followed by ♙d4, c3 etc.

16...axb4 17.axb4 ♙a8 18.h4 ♙a4 19.h5 Tan is not willing to compromise her attack for a pawn... **19.♙c3 ♘c5 20.♙b5 ♙a3 21.♙b2 ♙a2. 19...♙xb4 20.♘d4**



The first critical moment in the game. Muzychuk has managed to initiate counterplay on the queenside and her rook is tightly binding some of White's minor pieces. Meanwhile, Tan has progressed with her attack and is ready to strike mercilessly against the black king.

20...g5 The first thing to note, however, is the fact that the Chinese player has just boldly offered the sacrifice of a whole bishop.

20...♙xb2 heralds a complex maze of sidelines that will mark this fabulous game until the very end. All variations are very informative, but in order to better maintain the reader's focus, I will cut them down dramatically. 21.hxg6 fxg6 (21...f5 loses to 22.exf6 ♘xf6 23.♙xe6+ ♘h8 24.♙xe7+ with a double attack. Or 21...♘c5 22.gxf7+ ♘h8 23.♙xh7 ♙xf7 24.♙g6 ♙g7 25.♙e3 -) 22.♙xg6 ♘c5 23.♙h5 hxg6 24.♙xg6+ ♘h8 and now White can let her attack run carefree.

A clever attempt to muddy waters with 20...♙xe5 21.♙xe5 ♙f6 is decisively combated with 22.hxg6 hxg6 23.♙xg6 ♙xe5 24.♙xf7+! ♘xf7 25.♙xe6+ ♘g7 26.♙xe5+-.

21.♙c3 ♙a4 22.f4 ♙c8 23.♙b2! After some consideration Tan postpones a direct assault on the black king.

On 23.♙xe6 Muzychuk's somewhat mysterious last move is vindicated by 23...♘c5! pinning the hostile knight. (Instead, leaving this knight ready for



▲ Tan Zhongyi vs. Anna Muzychuk

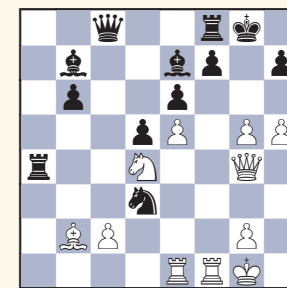
Photo by Lennart Ootes

action could prove fatal. The most beautiful line among many is 23...♙xc3 24.♘g5 ♘xe5 25.♙xe5 ♙xe5 26.♙xh7+ ♘h8 27.♘xf7+! ♙xf7 28.♙g8 mate.)

Upon 23.♘f5 Black's defense hinges on 23...exf5 24.♙xf5 ♙e4!+.

23...♘c5 Muzychuk rushes to grab the initiative from Tan, yet she does so at the expense of her king. Personally I would have tried to boost the defense around my king by 23...h6, when there could follow 24.f5 (24.♙xe6 runs into the pin 24...♘c5!) 24...♘c5 25.f6 ♘xd3 26.cxd3 ♙c5. This line actually could have also occurred in the game.

24.f5 On 24.fxg5 Muzychuk must have intended 24...♘xd3



A) 25.cxd3 ♙c2! 26.g6 (26.♘xc2 ♙xg4) 26...♙xb2 27.gxf7+ ♘h8 works well for Black.

B) 25.g6 ♘xb2 (25...♘xe1 is also possible - 26.gxf7+ ♘h8 27.h6 ♙g8 28.fxg8+ ♙xg8 etc.) 26.gxf7+ ♘h8 27.h6 when Black makes her last stand by 27...♙g8 28.fxg8+ ♙xg8.

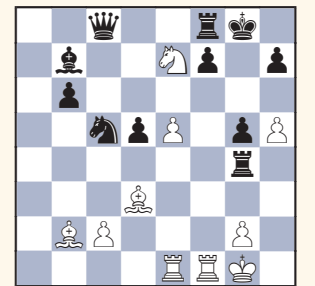
24...exf5? Now White's light-squared bishop is released from its predicament and all hell breaks loose on Muzychuk. Upon 24...♘xd3 she naturally feared 25.f6! Yet she shouldn't! After 25...h6 26.fxe7

(26.cxd3 ♙c5) 26...♘xb2 27.exf8+ ♙xf8 a wild battle just keeps raging on.

Perhaps 24...h6 was possible too, although I admit that 25.f6 is scary. For example, 25...♙d8 26.♙c1 ♘h8 27.♙xg5 ♙g8.

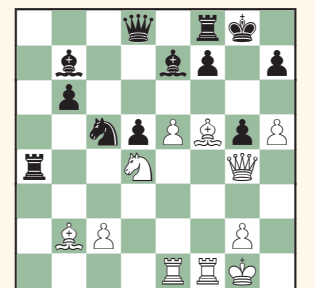
25.♙xf5 The most natural and best.

On 25.♙xf5, Black is just in time to eliminate the dangerous bishop - 25...♘xd3 26.e6 (26.cxd3 h6 27.e6 f6 28.♙f2 ♙e8) 26...♘xb2 27.♙xg5+ ♘h8. 25.♙xf5 would have led to spectacular complications after 25...♙xg4 26.♘xe7+



A) 26...♘g7? 27.♘xc8 d4 (27...♘xd3 28.cxd3 d4 29.h6+! ♘xh6 30.♙f6+ ♘g7 31.♘d6+-) 28.h6+! ♘h8 29.♘d6 ♙xg2+ 30.♘h1 ♘xd3 31.cxd3!!+-.

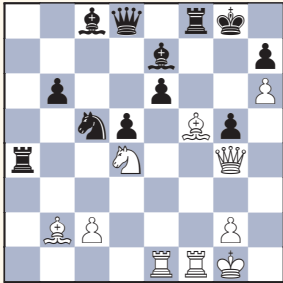
B) 26...♘h8! 27.♘xc8 d4!∞. 25...♙d8





26.h6 A very natural advance, but hardly the best. White's attack is already very dangerous with many of her pieces targeting the black king. However by bringing her bishop on b2 into direct action with 26.e6 she could have rapidly made the game unbearable for Muzychuk – 26...f6 (26...h6 27.exf7+ ♖xf7 28.♙e6 ♘xe6 29.♗xe6 →) 27.♙xh7+ ♙xh7 28.♗f5+ ♙h8 29.♗g6 ♘e4 (An important detail against Tan's 26.h6 is that with the pawn on h6, Black could now defend herself with 29...♗g8. Without it, however, she simply gets mated in one – 30.♗h6 mate.) 30.♙xe4! dxe4 31.♘f5 ♙c5+ 32.♙h1 ♗c7 33.e7+– and it's all over.

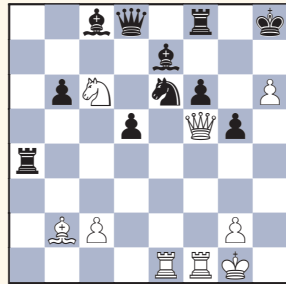
26...♙c8 27.e6! f6 At another critical moment, Muzychuk tries to blunt White's bishop on b2, but her position remains worrisome. 27...fxe6 indeed looks scary, but in my home analysis I managed to find a couple of hard-to-see moves for Black.



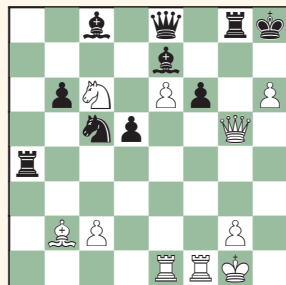
- A) It's possible that Tan intended and Muzychuk feared 28.♘xe6 despite exposing the white queen. After 28...♗xg4 29.♘xd8 I suddenly found 29...♘e4! (29...♗xf5 30.♙xe7 ♗xf1+ 31.♙xh1 ♗f4+ 32.♙g1 →; 29...♙xd8 30.♙xh7+! ♙xh7 31.♗xf8)
- A1)** 30.♙xc8 ♙c5+ 31.♙h2 ♗h4+ (31...♙d6+) 32.♙h3 ♗xd8+;
- A2)** 30.♙xg4 ♙c5+ 31.♙h2 ♙xg4 32.♗xf8+ ♙xf8;
- B)** 28.♙xe6 ♙f6 Another hard-to-find move, leading to unfathomable complications, for example 29.♙xh7+
- B1)** 29...♙xh7 is no easier to fathom – 30.♗f5+ ♙h8 31.♗xf6 (31.♘c6 ♙xe6 32.♗xg5 d4) 31...♙xf5 32.♗xf8+ ♗xf8 33.♘e6+ d4 34.♘xf8 ♙xc2;
- B2)** 29...♙h8
- B2a)** or 30.♗xf6 ♗xf6 (30...♗xf6 31.♗xf6 ♙xg4 32.♗xf8+ ♙xh7 33.♘c6 and White keeps her attack going.) 31.♗xg5 ♗f1+ 32.♙xh1 ♗xg5 33.♘f3+ d4 34.♗e8+ ♙xh7 35.♘xg5+ ♙xh6±;
- B2b)** 30.♗exf6 ♗xf6 31.♘c6 ♗xg4 32.♘xd8 ♙xh7 33.♗xf6 ♗b4.
- 28.♙xh7+!** Tan is breaking through!
- 28...♙xh7 29.♗f5+ ♙h8** On 29...♙xh6 she continues with the rook lift 30.♗e3 ♗h8

31.♗h3+ ♙g7. Now after 32.♘c6 the bishop on b2 displays its full might – 32...♙xe6 33.♗xg5+! ♙f7 34.♘xd8+–.

30.♘c6 ♗e8 Anna was too low on time to fancy an enterprising queen sac by 30...♘xe6!?



- A)** 31.♙xe6 ♙c5+ 32.♗f2 ♗f4! 33.♗xf4 (33.♗xg5 ♙xf2+ 34.♙h2 ♗h4+ 35.♗xh4 ♙xh4 36.♘xd8 ♗xd8 37.♗xf6 ♙h7+)
- 33...gxf4 34.♘xd8 ♗xd8 35.♙xf6+ ♙h7 36.♙xd8 ♙xe6 37.♙g5 ♙xf2+ 38.♙xf2 d4=.
- B)** On the most natural 31.♘xd8 Black has 31...♙c5+! 32.♙h2 (32.♗f2 ♗f4) 32...♙h4+ 33.♙g3 ♙d6+ and Black's counterattack works unless White finds the incredible 34.♗e5!! (34.♙e5 fxe5 35.♘f7+ ♗xf7 36.♗xf7 e4+! 37.♙f2 ♗f4+ 38.♙e2 ♗xf7 39.♗xf7∞) 34...d4 35.♘xe6 ♙xe5+ 36.♗xe5 winning.
- 31.♗xg5!** Tan keeps undoing Black's defenses in Muzychuk's time trouble and now is very close to her desired victory.
- 31...♗g8**



Muzychuk must have been too nervous to consider 31...♙xe6 seriously. Although White can eventually overpower Black with the obvious 32.♙xe6, the Chinese player would need to tread carefully in order not to spoil the win – 32...♙c5+! 33.♗f2! (33.♙h1? ♗h4+! 34.♗xh4 ♗xe6=; 33.♙h2 ♗h4+ 34.♙g3 ♗g4+ 35.♗xg4 ♙d6+ 36.♙h4!+–) 33...♙xf2+ 34.♙xf2 ♗f4+ 35.♙g3 ♗f7 36.♗e7 d4 37.♗xf7 fxe5 38.♙xd4+ ♙g8 39.♗g7+ ♙h8 40.♘e7 ♗g4+ 41.♙h2 ♗h4+ 42.♙g1 ♗xh6 43.♗f7+ with mate to follow.

32.♗xf6?! By this stage Tan must have been in 'beauty mode'. Her last spectacular move was nevertheless criticized by some

commentators, oblivious to the fact that the Chinese player was simply continuing to pile the pressure on her time-stricken opponent.

The prosaic 32.♙xf6+ would have got the job done more efficiently – 32...♙xf6 33.♗xf6+ ♙h7 34.♗f7+ (34.♘e7 → is strong too.) 34...♗xf7 35.exf7 ♗f8 36.♗e8 ♘e6 (36...♘d7 37.♘e5 ♗a8 38.♘xd7 ♙xd7 39.♗xa8 ♗xa8 40.♗g+–) 37.♘d8!! I credit Vishy Anand for this last finesse.

32...♙xf6 32...♗xg5 33.♗f8+!! is where Tan focused her attention while calculating – 33...♙h7 34.♗xe8 ♗ag4 35.♗xe7+ ♙xh6 36.♙c1+– and White wins.

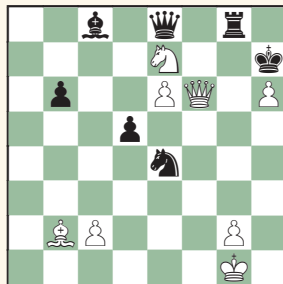
It was also possible to obstruct the long diagonal with 32...d4. On the other hand though, after 33.♗e5 ♙xf6 34.♗xf6+ ♙h7 35.♘e7 ♙xe6 36.♘xg8 ♗xg8 37.♙xd4 ♗xd4 38.♗xd4, Black still needs to be very careful if she is to survive.

33.♗xf6+ ♙h7 34.♘e7! With Tan relentlessly piling on the pressure, Muzychuk now succumbs in the time scramble.

34...♗e4 Played instinctively under time pressure, but hardly the best. Instead, she could have cut the Gordian knot with 34...♙xe6 35.♙xe6 ♘xe6 36.♗xe6 ♗ag4 37.♗f5+ ♗g6.

34...♗ag4, in turn, keeps White's chances alive: 35.♗f5+ ♗d6 36.♘xg8 ♙xg8 (36...♗xg8 37.♗f7+ ♗xf7 38.exf7 ♘d7 39.♗e8+–) 37.h7+! ♙xh7 38.♗h5+–.

35.♗xe4 ♘xe4? In her time scramble Anna walks straight into Tan's trap. 35...dxe4 might have still offered her a narrow path for survival to cling to – 36.♘xg8 ♗xg8 37.♗e7+ ♙g6 (37...♙xh6? loses quickly to 38.♗h4+ ♙g6 39.♗g4+ ♙h7 40.♗h5 mate.) and now after 38.h7 ♗xh7 39.♗e8+ ♙f5 40.♗xc8 (40.e7 ♙d7) 40...♘xe6 loses to 41.g4+ but instead the neat 40...♗e7! would probably save the day for Black.



36.♘xg8! The attacked white queen refuses to run away!

36...♗xg8 As 36...♘xf6 37.♘xf6+– walks into a nice fork.

37.♗f7+! The last point. **Black resigned** as upon 37...♗xf7 38.exf7, the little pawn runs away from the knight and reveals clearly why 35...♘xe4? was a wrong recapture. ■

A Personal Feel From Toronto During The Candidates MEETING GODS AND GODDESSES

What did Toronto have to offer for enthusiastic chess fans and hungry journalists to make it an unforgettable experience?

■ By Dylan Quercia
indychess.substack.com

Photos by Bryan Glover

Dylan Quercia also known as Coach Q is a chess expert, educator, journalist, actor and film-maker dedicated to promoting chess throughout the world. He began playing chess in his hometown of Phoenix, Arizona, before moving to Chicago and obtaining a B.S. in Biology at the University of Illinois. He started teaching chess as a side job which soon turned into a career. In 2014, he co-founded the California Chess School and became the director of the Metropolitan Chess Scholastic program. Dylan founded Chess Prodigies, a 501(c)(3) non-profit and all-volunteer organization dedicated to providing high achieving students with college scholarships.

The Scene

You have just reported on round 9 of the FIDE Candidates and interviewed GM Hikaru Nakamura, GM Ian Nepomniatchi, GM Humpy Koneru, GM Lei Tingjie, and WGM Nurgul Salimova. And, that was just in the press center; in fan zone you found and interviewed Norwegian No.2, GM Aryan Tari and two of Canada's top players, GMs Eric Hansen and Aman Hambleton, who are the founding members of the top streaming channel – The Chessbrahs. The fans are buzzing and it seems like the action will not stop. You and your friends decide to go for food, but the pub across the street is absolutely packed with chess players. The plan changes and you all walk toward a hot pizza place... and run into five-time World Champion GM Vishwanathan Anand standing by himself in line!

Having met Anand two nights before at the Legends of Chess Event, you join him. And, he tells you "Right now, I'm just a guy in line at a pizza place..." Almost incredulous, you realize he is waiting for IM Sagar Shah, the Co-Founder of *Chessbase India*. While that pizza place is all too popular and running out of ingredients, the Indian contingent invites you to join them a few kilometers away at Di Fara Pizza. The inside is tiny but all of you precocious chess players take over the seating area. The conversation is delightful and Vishy reveals that he once ate a whole pizza when he was 16 and visiting Philadelphia!

While this sounds unbelievable, it is one hundred percent true and is exactly the reason why the 2024 Candidates was the hottest event of the year. In this time of extended chess boom and exponential growth in popularity, the fans flocked to see the gods and goddesses among mortals.

My first day attending was round 7 when, incidentally, Firouzja beat Gukesh (his only loss of the event). But, to give you a feel for how Gukesh conquered Toronto, I had an embarrassing moment when I wasn't sure who the winner was! Gukesh was stone faced at the press conference with a laser focus that alerted me to the fact that he could win the event.

At the final press conference, Gukesh said "Even though I just had a painful loss, I was feeling at my absolute best. Maybe this loss gave me so much motivation." Caruana, who finished just a half point behind Gukesh, said a very similar thing to me after winning the 2018 Candidates! For the world's best, the pressure does not bend or break them, it forges them into a steely champion.



▲ Dylan Quercia and GM Vishwanathan Anand



▲ IM Sagar Shah and Dylan Quercia



▲ Dommaraju Gukesh



3 MAGNIFICENT 3 REMARKABLE RECENT GAMES

By GM Sarunas Sulskis

THE CALM BEFORE THE STORM

Believe it or not, only in the penultimate round of the Grenke Open 2024 did Hans Niemann defeat his first grandmaster opponent, Frederik Svane from Germany. Hitherto his other victims in Karlsruhe were an assortment of IMs, FMs and untitled players.

I can imagine how flabbergasted the German player must have been on the black side of the board to see a sleepy-looking 4.h3, coupled with 5.g3, coming out from his dreaded American opponent on an early Easter morning at 9.00 am... That certainly wasn't the way Svane believed the Sicilian should be treated in an all-decisive game! Hans then compounded the puzzlement of his German opponent with the quiet 8.d3, 10.♠e3 and to top it all, with a retreat of his knight by 12.♠f3-d2.

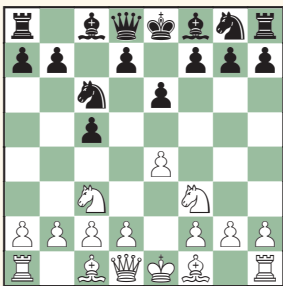
Svane then apparently suspected health problems that from time to time haunt Niemann – which in fact he publicly admits. He rushed forward with 12...d6-d5. That was exactly what the American was waiting for. His 14.♠f4, followed by the deep rook invasion 15.♠a8, heralded the end of his opening slumber. By move 24 Black's pawn center had crashed, yet Svane continued fierce resistance thanks to his nice bishop pair. By move 30 Niemann had graciously given back the pawn to his opponent but in return isolated his bishop on the edge of the board. With material equality reestablished and quite limited material remaining, the American led a simultaneous charge on both the black king and his bishop miserably hemmed in on a6, until his attack sparked off the beautiful 36.♠xg6+! winning blow.

B50

Hans Niemann	2676
Frederik Svane	2617

GRENKE Open, Karlsruhe 2024

1.e4 c5 2.♠f3 e6 3.♠c3 ♠c6



4.h3!? Modern chess! Niemann apparently wants to take the game away from the spotlight of opening theory. Yet is there any rationale behind this timid move?

4...♠e7 I found only one high-profile game for reference. It's D.Paravyan 2602 - A.Dreev 2662, Douglas 2019, which went 4...♠b6 5.b3 d6 6.♠b2 ♠f6 7.♠b5 e5 8.♠e2 a6 9.♠c4 ♠e7 10.♠d5 ♠xd5 11.exd5 ♠d4 12.♠xd4 cxd4 with no problems whatsoever for Black.

Niemann's idea can be seen upon 4...♠f6 5.e5 whereupon the black knight cannot get to g4 in order to attack the e5 pawn at his will.

5.g3 White continues his strategy to flabbergast his opponent with unexpected



▲ Hans Niemann

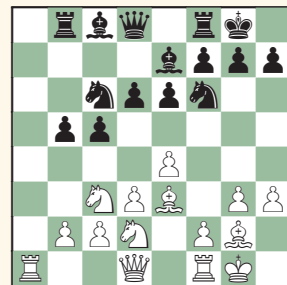
Photo by Lennart Ootes

slow moves. I can easily imagine Svane's frustration after having put in strong home preparation in various sharp Open Sicilian lines only to realize how pointlessly he has wasted his time...

5...d6 5...d5 6.exd5 exd5 7.d4 reveals one more bonus of the mysterious 4.h3 – the black bishop cannot go to g4 to pin the knight on f3. That said, Black's position is fairly playable after 7...♠f6 8.♠g2 0-0 9.0-0. Therefore 5...d5 could have been considered by Black.

6.♠g2 ♠f6 7.0-0 0-0 8.d3 Niemann obstinately sticks to his slow motion strategy. Instead, 8.d4 cxd4 9.♠xd4 would have been preferred by many, but that would have brought the game back into the flow of an Open Sicilian, which Svane must have originally anticipated from his American opponent.

8...♠b8 9.a4 a6 10.♠e3 b5 11.axb5 axb5 12.♠d2 Dealing with the Sicilian throughout some 40 years of my chess career, I have never seen such seemingly backward strategies. I can therefore sense Svane's puzzlement. The alleged indecisiveness of his opponent provokes the German player to commence action in the center.



12...d5 A move very hard to resist. Black threatens a deadly pawn fork. Yet this very move was exactly what Niemann was waiting for.

13.exd5 exd5 14.♠f4! Thereby White discovers an alluring diagonal for his other bishop.

14...♠b6 15.♠a8 Landing the rook deep in the enemy rear must have bothered the second player.

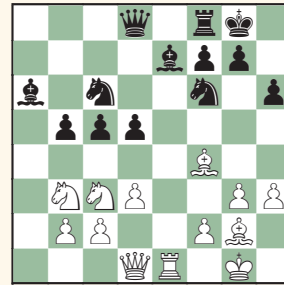
15...h6 Svane has just covered g5 to keep his central d5 pawn better protected. Yet constantly looking at the intrusive white rook on a8 is getting on his nerves.

I wonder why he didn't deal with the intruder right away. 15...♠a6 16.♠xa6 ♠xa6 17.♠g5 (17.♠a1 ♠b4) 17...♠b4 18.♠b3 d4 19.♠xf6 ♠xf6 20.♠e4 c4 21.♠bc5 (21.dxc4 bxc4 22.♠xf6+ ♠xf6 23.♠xd4 c3) 21...♠c8 22.♠d2 ♠c6 and White has yet to prove why he is better.

16.♠b3 ♠a6 16...b4 17.♠a4 ♠b5 18.♠e1 and White's corner rook still keeps getting on Black's nerves.

On 16...c4 17.dxc4 dxc4 (17...bxc4 18.♠d4) 18.♠xd8 ♠xd8 White cleverly picks up an exchange by 19.♠c7+.

17.♠xa6 ♠xa6 18.♠e1



18...♠e8?! Svane keeps playing cautiously. With his next move, however, Niemann skillfully exposes the drawback of keeping the rook on e8. It turns out that, with an imminent rook swap, some of Black's pieces – queen or knight – will be diverted from protecting the d5 pawn.

With hindsight, Black could have better replaced caution with a fistfight by 18...g5!? whereupon after 19.♠e5 (on 19.♠d2 c4 20.dxc4 bxc4 the knight lacks a decent square of retreat.) 19...♠xe5 20.♠xe5 ♠d6 White now fails to displace Black's pieces by ♠xe8. Thus, 21.♠e1 d4 22.♠e4 ♠xe4 23.♠xe4 ♠g7 and Black has little to worry about.

19.♠e5! Spot on! Now Svane's pawns on the fifth rank are given a shake. 19.d4 b4 20.♠a4 c4 21.♠bc5 ♠b5.

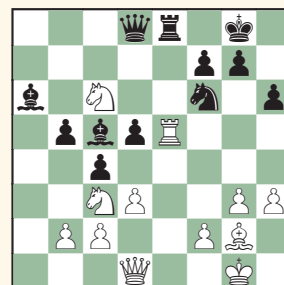
19...♠xe5 20.♠xe5 c4 20...♠c7? 21.♠e2 only makes the pin down the e-file worse for Black.

Due to the awkward position of his rook on e8, Black is now short of playing the natural 20...♠d6, as it fails to properly chase away the white rook – 21.♠xe8+ ♠xe8 22.♠xd5.

21.♠d4 But now the white knight is on its way to b5, c6 or f5. 21.dxc4?! would have allowed Black to get rid of his weakness on d5 – 21...dxc4 22.♠xd8 ♠xd8 23.♠xe8+ ♠xe8 24.♠c5 b4 25.♠xa6 bxc3 26.bxc3 ♠f6 27.♠d5 ♠d6= with nothing left to fish for.

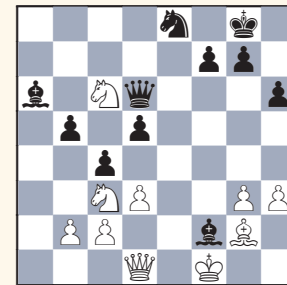
21...♠c5 With his pawn chain falling apart, Svane now banks on his bishop pair. Soon some exciting tactics are bound to emerge.

22.♠c6



22...♠d6? Svane loses momentum. Instead he should have boldly struck Niemann with 22...♠xf2+!

A) The cunning 23.♠f1 is a good try and probably discouraged Svane from playing 22...♠xf2+. I nevertheless believe that Black can go through the resulting sharp lines unscathed: 23...♠d6 24.♠xe8+ ♠xe8



A1) 25.♠e2 ♠xc6 26.♠xd5 (26.♠xd5 cxd3 27.♠e7+ ♠f8) 26...cxd3 27.♠e7 (27.♠xf2 ♠f6) 27...dxc2 28.♠xf7+ ♠h7 29.♠g8+ ♠g6 30.♠f7+ ♠h7=;

A2) 25.♠xd5 ♠xg3.

B) 23.♠xf2 ♠b6+ 24.d4 ♠xc6 25.♠xd5 ♠xd5 26.♠xd5 ♠f6+ 27.♠f3 ♠xe5 28.dxe5 ♠e7=.

23.♠xe8+ ♠xe8 24.♠xd5 By masterfully deflecting the black knight from f6, Niemann has won a pawn.

24...♠f8 The American is not afraid of ghosts as after 24...♠xg3 25.d4! wins a piece for White.

25.♠c3 A stubborn refusal to retreat the knight and playing instead 25.d4 gives back the pawn to Black – 25...♠xc6 26.♠c3 ♠d6 27.dxc5 ♠xc5 28.♠d8 b4 29.♠d5. Although Black should still be very careful, probably Niemann thought that it's easier to play on a pawn up.

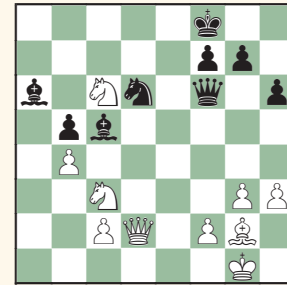
25...cxd3 The tempting 25...♠xg3? again loses miserably to both 26.d4+– and 26.♠e4+–.

Black would have certainly wanted to play 25...♠b7, but after 26.♠xb5 probably failed to find the only move good enough to hold is 26...♠f6!. It was necessary to realize that 27.♠f3 is met by 27...♠xb2!, when Black is perfectly okay!

26.♠xd3 ♠f6 On 26...♠xd3 27.cxd3 b4 (27...♠d6 28.d4 ♠b6 29.♠d5) 28.♠e4 Black must be cautious not to lose a second pawn.

27.♠d2 ♠d6 The straightforward but impatient 27...b4 will probably cost Black a second pawn – 28.♠a4 ♠d6 29.♠xb4 ♠b5 30.♠d5!+–.

28.b4! Despite resulting inconveniences due to Black's counterattack, Niemann is keen to keep the black bishop on a6 offside.



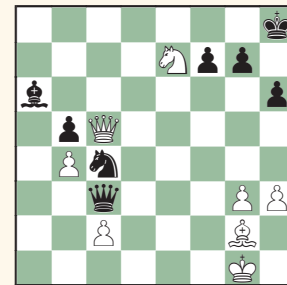
28...♠c4 On 28...♠xf2+ 29.♠xf2 ♠xc3 White highlights the wretched position of the black bishop by 30.♠b6 ♠e1+ 31.♠h2 ♠b7 32.♠c7+– ♠f5 33.♠b8+ ♠e8 34.♠xb7.

29.♠e1 ♠xf2+ 29...♠b7 is well met by the clever 30.♠b8!.

Nor is 29...♠d6 30.♠e4 ♠e6 31.♠a1 ♠b7 32.♠xd6 ♠xd6 33.♠d4+ a piece of cake for Black.

30.♠xf2 ♠xc3 Thus Svane has regained the pawn. But Niemann has intentionally given back this pawn so as now be able to launch a combined attack on the enemy king and his awkwardly placed bishop on a6.

31.♠c5+ ♠g8 32.♠e7+ ♠h8 Svane must follow a forced line. 32...♠h7? loses much quicker to 33.♠f5+ ♠h8 34.♠xf7 ♠xg3 35.♠g8 mate.



33.♠h2! This calm prophylactic move cuts down Black's faint hopes of counterplay against the white king.

However it must be noted that Black would have remained under strong pressure even after the straightforward 33.♠c7, but after 33...♠d4+ 34.♠h2 Niemann would have needed to deal with two of Black's defenses – 34...♠b6 35.♠d7 ♠b8; and 34...♠d6 35.♠a7! g6 36.♠a8+ ♠g7 37.♠g8+ ♠f6 38.♠d5+, with a winning attack.

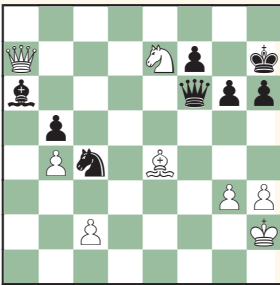
33...♠f6 Both 33...♠e3 34.♠c7! and 33...♠e5 34.♠a7 offer Black little hope.

34.♠a7! Underscoring the miserable state of the black bishop on a6, although the first concern for Black is getting mated in 2-3 moves.

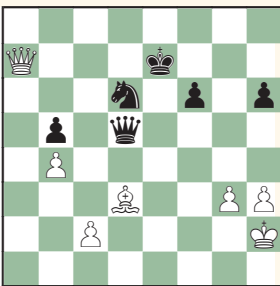
34...♠h7 The German player attempts



to flee from the mortal dangers to his king. Upon 34...h5 White wins nicely by operating from corner to corner with his queen. 35.♖a8+ ♔h7 36.♗g8+ ♔h6 37.♗h8+ ♔g5 38.h4+ ♔g4 39.♖a8! and there is no defense against ♕h3 mate!
35.♕e4+ g6 Now, however, poor Svane is exposed to fine tactics.



36.♕xg6+! Much weaker is 36.♖xg6? ♖d2! 37.♕d3 ♖f3+ with an unpleasant counterattack.
36...♔g7 The only way to continue the game. 36...fxg6? loses quickly to 37.♖d5+ ♗g7 38.♖f6+ ♔h8 39.♖a8+.
37.♕d3 ♖d6 38.♖d5 Lethal damage has been done. White can now retreat to capitalize on his gains.
38...♗e5 39.♖xa6 39.♖f4 is met by 39...♕b7.
39...♗xd5 40.♖a1+ Only one pawn down and White's ferocious attack repelled, the game seems to be heading for a long haul, yet it wasn't.
40...f6 40...♔g8 41.♗f6 h5 42.h4 offers little relief for Black.
41.♖a7+ ♔f8 42.♗b8+ ♔e7 43.♖a7+



43...♔d8 Having no illusions about Niemann going for a repetition, Svane bravely refuses to repeat the position himself. On 43...♔f8 Black needs to brace himself for 44.♗c5!? ♗xc5 45.bxc5 ♖c4 (45...♖b7 46.c6 ♖d6 47.c7+-) 46.♕xc4 bxc4 47.♔g2+-.
44.♗e3 ♗g5 45.♗xg5 fxg5 46.♔g2 And with two possible invasion routes for White's king – g2-f3-g4-h5 and g2-f3-e3-d4 – being too many to handle, **Black resigned** the game. ■

SOLUTIONS - Exercises for solving

from page 68

1 WHITE TO MOVE

Illia Nyzhnyk	2611
Tianqi Wang	2347

SPICE Cup Open, St Louis 2023



In the following game, I was playing against a good friend of mine who goes by the name of "Steve". Steve and I have had a history where he did extremely well against me in the last few classical games we played, and that trend seemed to have continued here as well.
14.♖e4? It felt natural to make this move and, after having spent over 45 minutes calculating the correct move, I finally decided against it. Unfortunately for me, this move makes my attack slower than it would have been had I ignored the fact that some of my pieces are hanging, and gone for the attack immediately.

14.♖g5!! was the way to go, which leads to a favorable endgame for White, if Black manages to survive that long. 14...f5 (14...hxg5?? immediately loses after 15.hxg5 f5 16.♗e2 ♗e8 17.♗h5 ♕e5 18.g6+-; 14...fxg5?? may seem like a transposition, but it actually loses as well because of the en passant. 15.hxg5 f5 16.gxf6! ♗xf6 17.♖e4+-) 15.♕xe6! fxe6 16.♗xd6 ♖c4 17.♗dd1



A) 17...hxg5 18.hxg5 ♗b4 19.♗e2 b5?? This position was the reason why I decided against going into this line. Unfortunately, there's

actually a really nice finishing tactic here that I missed.



20.♗h8+!! ♔g7 (20...♔xh8 21.♗h5+ ♔g7 22.♗h6+ ♔f7 23.♗f6+ ♔e8 24.♗d8 mate.) 21.♗h7+ ♔g8 22.♗dh1+- And the black king does not survive.
B) 17...b5 18.♗e2 ♗b4 19.♗h3 ♗xb2+ 20.♗xb2 ♖xb2 21.♔xb2 hxg5 22.hxg5 b4 23.♖e2± with close to a winning endgame for White.
14...♕e7 Suddenly, Black is just on time with everything. Being unable to make a change in my playstyle (the attack no longer works), I proceeded to lose the game very quickly.
15.g4 ♖xc4 16.♗xc4 b5 17.♗c2 ♗xa2 18.g5 f5 19.♖f6+ ♕xf6 20.gxf6 ♕b7 21.♗hg1+ ♔h8 22.♖e5 ♕e4 23.♗xe4 fxe4 24.♗g7 ♗a5 25.f3 **White resigned**

2 BLACK TO MOVE

Hikaru Nakamura	2789
Vidit Santosh Gujrathi	2727

FIDE Candidates, Toronto 2024



I couldn't help but include this iconic game as one of the puzzles. What does Black need to do to ensure that he has enough compensation for the missing pawn?
11...♕xh3! The only way to take immediate advantage of Black's development advantage. White's queenside pieces will always be

lagging behind from this point on.
12.♖c4?! It was important to accept the sacrifice 12.gxh3!, because otherwise White has a whole bunch of problems with nothing to show for it. 12...♗b8 13.♕f4 ♕c7 14.♕h2 ♕xe5 15.f4 ♕c7 16.♗f3 ♖g6∞ with an unclear game.
12...♕g4 13.♗c2 ♕c7 14.e5 ♖d7 15.♕xh7+ ♔h8 16.♕d3?! Once again, White is being a bit too passive. 16.♗e4!? f5 17.♕xf5 ♕xf5 18.♗h4+ ♔g8 19.♕g5 ♗f7 20.♖d6 ♖xe5 21.♕xe7 ♗d7 22.♖xf7 ♖g6 23.♖e5 ♕xe5 24.♗c4+ ♕e6 25.♗e4 ♔f7 26.f4 ♕c7 27.♕c5± and after the dust settles, Black is objectively better, but White has some practical fighting chances.
16...b5!? 17.♖e3 ♖xe5



18.♕e2? Likely a final mistake, after which White's position is beyond repair. 18.♖xg4!? ♖xg4 19.g3 was a must, but this position is still anything but pleasant for White. 19...f5 20.♕g5 ♗d6 21.♕f4 ♗d7 22.♕xc7 ♗xc7 23.♖d2 ♖e3! 24.♗b1 ♖xf1 25.♗xf1 ♗ad8±.
18...f5! 19.f4 ♕b6 20.♔f2 ♖d5+- White's king is too weak, and it will not be getting help from his queenside pieces any time soon. The rest is simple. **Black won**

3 WHITE TO MOVE

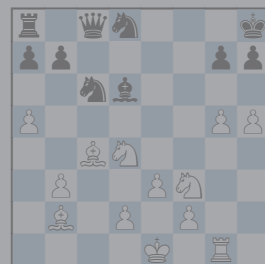
David Navara	2678
Vaclav Finek	2435

Czech Championship, Ostrava 2024



Sometimes, not attacking is not an option, just like in the following game, where David Navara previously sacrificed a whole queen!

20.♕c4!! This amazing move allows White to reach a perfect piece synergy for the devastating attack, using the fact that the rook on c8 is currently invulnerable. 20.♖xd6 is not as good, as White's rook on c8 will promptly get kicked out. Despite that, White would still maintain better chances after 20...♗xd6 21.♕c4 ♗d7 22.♗c5 ♖c6 23.♖xe5 ♖xe5 24.♗xe5 dxe3 25.fxe3 ♖g6 26.♗e4 ♗f5 27.♗gg4±.
20...g6? This natural move doesn't really help Black, and the game ends quickly. 20...♗xc8 would swiftly lose after 21.♖xd6 ♗c7 22.♖xf7! ♖fd7 23.g6 hxg6 24.♖7xe5+ ♔f8 25.♖xg6+ ♔e8 26.♖f4+-.
20...a6 wouldn't save Black either, as after 21.♖xd6 ♗xd6 22.g6! hxg6 23.♖g5+-, and as soon as the f7 pawn falls, Black's king will immediately be next in line.
20...♕b4!? would have been Black's best defensive shot, but it is still not enough to survive.
A) Of course not 21.♗c7, because after 21...♗f5!? 22.♖xe5!? (22.♗xf7?! ♗b1+ 23.♔e2 d3+ 24.♕xd3 ♗xb2± White would have been the one in trouble here.) 22...♗b1+ 23.♔e2 ♗xb2 24.♗xf7 ♔h8 25.♗xf8+ ♕xf8 26.♖f7+ ♔g8 27.♖h6+ ♔h8 28.♖f7+ ♔g8 29.♖h6+ ♔h8=, the best White can hope for is a draw.
B) 21.♖xe5 ♗xc8 22.♕xf7+ ♔h8 23.♕c4! ♖e6 24.♖xd4 ♖d8 25.h5 ♕d6 26.♖ef3! ♖bc6



27.h6 reaching an amazing position when Black is up a queen for a piece and a bunch of pawns, but White's attack is so powerful thanks to his bishop pair, that a queen doesn't make enough of a difference to save Black. However, he can still try 27...♖e5, but after 28.♖xe5 ♕xe5 29.f4! ♕xd4 30.♕xd4 ♖e6 31.♕c3+- it would have been a complete bishop pair domination. Nice!

21.h5! a6 21...gxh5 22.g6! hxg6 23.♗xg6+ ♔h7 24.♖f6 ♗xc8 25.♗xf7+ ♔h6 26.♖xd6+-.
22.♖xd6 ♗xd6 23.hxg6 hxg6 23...♗xg6 24.♕a3 ♖bd7 25.♗xa8+-.
24.♗h1 ♗d7 24...♖bd7 25.♗xa8 ♗c6 26.♗xf8+! ♖xf8 (26...♔xf8 27.♔e2+-) 27.♔e2 ♖e6 28.♗h4 ♖f4+ 29.♗xf4 exf4

30.♕xd4 ♗e4 31.♕e5+-.



25.♖xe5 25.♗h8+!? would have also been enough to win after 25...♔xh8 26.♗xf8+ ♔g7 27.♖xe5 ♔xf8 28.♖xd7+ ♖xd7 29.♕xd4+-.
25...♗xc8 26.♖xf7 ♗xc4 27.♖h6+ ♔h7 28.bxc4 ♖c6 29.♖f5+ ♔g8 30.♖xd4 ♖xa5 31.d3 and **Black resigned** here, since he was missing quite a few pawns.

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