

This time I draw your attention to three remarkable games from the elite tournament in Wijk aan Zee, Netherlands. Once the month of January comes along, chess fans know very well where they should turn. Arguably the strongest chess event in the world every January, Wijk aan Zee always features an amazing line-up of the world's best players, who in turn produce quite a few memorable games.

To attest to the strength of the top tournament at Tata Steel Chess 2004, consider the fact that the current World Champion Ding Liren finished only 9th out of 14 contestants! Nevertheless I have still given the Champ's struggle due consideration. The true scapegoat, however, will be Iranian GM Parham Maghsoodloo, to whom I have paid most attention, annotating his two losses. His unmasked desire to beat both Abdusattorov and Vidit, in turn sparked magnificent counterattacks by Black.

1 THE MAGNIFICENT 3 REMARKABLE RECENT GAMES

By GM Sarunas Sulskis

ABDUSATTOROV KNOCKS OUT MAGHSOODLOO BY AN INCREDIBLE ROOK LANDING

This Round 3 game started turning wild as early as the third move when Abdusattorov went for broke with a cutting-edge pawn sac 3...e4!? in the English Defense. Fearing the Uzbek's home preparation, Maghsoodloo spurned the offer, but nevertheless went on playing very aggressive chess. The following red hot moment arose around move 10 when Abdusattorov offered a free exchange to his enraged opponent.

After some thought Maghsoodloo decided it would be better to harass the black queen. By move 20 the game had descended into pure chaos. The Iranian GM won a piece, but his long castled king had inadequate pawn protection with the black queen on a2 perilously lurking in close proximity. When the white king set off on a wild run by 22.♔d2, Maghsoodloo lifted his rook by 23.♖h3 to chase away the attacking black queen on a3 – but only to see and feel the hammer blow 23...♞e3!! coming.

A22

Parham Maghsoodloo	2740
Nodirbek Abdusattorov	2727

Tata Steel Masters, Wijk aan Zee 2024

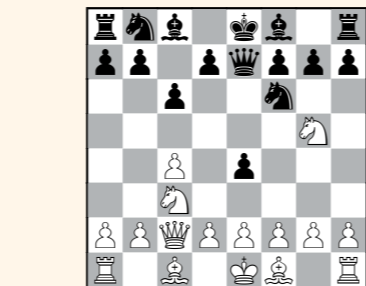
1.c4 e5 2.♖c3 ♘f6 3.♗f3 e4!? In conjunction with the following move, Abdusattorov adopts a modern and bold strategy, featuring an early sacrifice of a center pawn. 3...♗c6 has been the

conventional continuation for many decades.

4.♗g5 c6 5.♖a4 Maghsoodloo spurns the offer. On 5.♗gxe4 ♗xe4 6.♗xe4 d5 7.cxd5 cxd5 8.♗g3 Black proceeds to bother White's pieces by 8...h5!

5...♖e7 6.f3?! Maghsoodloo plays the opening stage aggressively, although in a haphazard manner. Meanwhile, his queen on the rim is becoming an eyesore.

I would have preferred 6.♖c2...



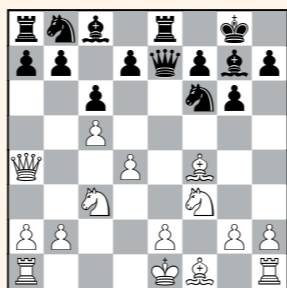
A) ...the point being 6...d5 7.cxd5 cxd5? 8.♗xd5!+- when White is winning.

B) Critical is 6...b5! 7.cxb5 d5, with sharp and unclear play.

6...exf3 7.♗xf3 g6 8.d4 ♗g7 9.c5 0-0

10.♗f4 At the cost of self-inflicting holes along the e-file, the Iranian GM has made an effort to intimidate his Uzbek opponent with a bishop fork from d6. On his next move, however, Abdusattorov shows the champion's character and ignores White's threats.

10...♗a6! In case of a submissive 10...♞e8...



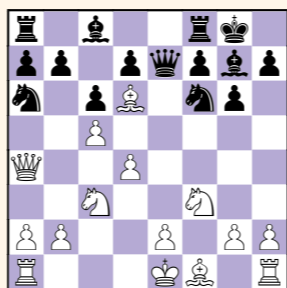
A) 11.♗xb8

A1) 11...♗xb8 12.♖xa7, the black queen's rook suddenly runs into not-so-funny trouble!

A2) 11...b5!! is a brutal intermezzo that completely turns the evaluation in Black's favor! Yes, you may try this – first and foremost at home.

B) Therefore, correct is 11.♗d6, after which White obtains a slight edge in all lines.

11.♗d6 This wins an exchange which, surprisingly, Maghsoodloo never dared capture. To discourage him from that greedy gain, Abdusattorov charges his queen forward.



Sarunas Sulskis is a nine-time champion of Lithuania and a regular member of his country's national team. 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 recent result is a victory at the traditional 2022/23 Hastings Chess Congress. In addition to his achievements as a player, Sarunas is a FIDE trainer, arbiter, writer, and passionate chess promoter.

11...♖e3 12.♗d1 The straightforward 12.♗xf8 was nevertheless possible. The approximate course of the game could then be 12...♗xf8 13.♗d1 ♖e8 14.e3 b5 15.cxb6 axb6 with some compensation for the deficit of the exchange.

12...♖e6 13.♗f2 Maghsoodloo spurns the exchange for good, apparently having reasoned that his proud bishop on d6 is too nice a commodity to part with.

Fans of sharp lines should follow the principled 13.♗xf8 ♗xf8 14.e3, and take it from there.

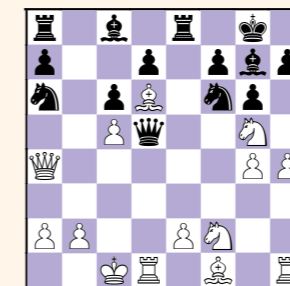
13...♞e8 With the ominous presence of his major pieces down the e-file, Abdusattorov is confident of finding ways around the d6 bishop.

14.h4 b6 Undermining White's foothold in the center.

15.♗g5 Maghsoodloo attempts to reinvigorate his melting position with a tactical operation.

15...♖f5 16.g4!? ♖d5 16...♗xg4 17.♗xg4 ♖xg4 18.♖b3 must have been White's idea, although after 18...♞e6 19.♗xe6 dxe6 Black also has undeniable compensation for the exchange.

17.0-0 bxc5 18.dxc5 This puts Black's strategy to a serious test. Does his queen have any escape at all?



18...♗xc5! There's no other way out of trouble save this lovely counterstrike.

19.♖c2 Wins the piece, but lets in the black queen. Equally puzzling is 19.♖b4 ♗a6 (19...♖xa2 20.♗xc5) 20.♖a3 ♖c4+ 21.♔b1.

19...♖xa2 20.♗xc5 On 20.♖xc5? ♗e4!+- wins on the spot!

20...♞b8! This quiet move increases the capacity of Black's attack tremendously. The white king is now under the crossfire of the ♗g7 and ♞b8 with many more units willing to engage in the chase.

21.b4?! Magh attempts to flee the attack with his king, but with another black rook on guard at e8, this will not come about.

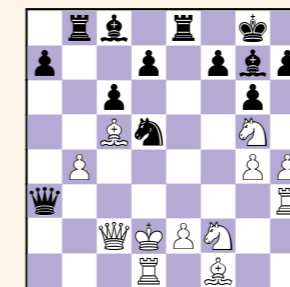
21.♞h3 runs into 21...♗xg4.

Or 21.♗d3 ♗e4 22.♗xe4 ♞xe4 23.b4 ♞c4+-.

If he asked my advice, I would tell him to cover the long diagonal immediately by 21.♗d4. Perhaps he then feared 21...c5 22.♗c3 d5.

21...♖a3+ 22.♔d2? Venturing his king into the wild bodes ill. 22.♖b2 was relatively more cautious, but 22...♖xb2+ 23.♔xb2 would have startlingly exposed the white king to the sword on g7. Yet I failed to find a direct win for Black. 23...♗xg4+ (23...d6 24.♗xd6) 24.♔a3 ♗e3 with a position more pleasant for Black, but White hasn't yet been brought to his knees.

22...♗d5 23.♞h3



23...♞e3!! The move of the game! This courageous rook entry blocks off the white king's rook from defending c3 and effectively fuels Black's attack.

24.♗fe4 Defending the contested c3 square. Other defenses don't help either: 24.♗xe3 ♗c3+-; or 24.♞xe3 ♗xe3 25.♗xe3 ♖xb4+

26.♔c1 (On 26.♗d3 ♗a6!+- gets him.) 26...♗b2+ 27.♔b1 ♗c3+-; or 24.♗ge4 ♞xh3 25.♗xh3 ♗xb4..

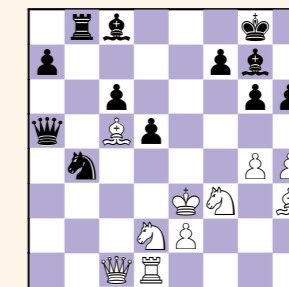
24...♞xh3 25.♗xh3 On 25.♗xh3, Black can contest the key c3 square with 25...f5!?, despite obvious risks – 26.gxf5 gxf5 27.♗hg5 fxe4, when 28.♖xe4 is effectively met by a direct checkmate – 28...♖c3.

25...h6 26.♗f3 ♗xb4 26...♞xb4 was also possible – 27.♗xb4 (27.♔e1 is probably the only way to hold on.) 27...♖xb4+ 28.♔c1 ♗e3+-.

27.♖c1 ♖a5! Cutting off an escape via e1. After the obvious 27...♖a2+ 28.♔e1 the game is still undecided.

28.♔e3 d5 Kicks the knight, but also takes away the c4 square from the white queen.

29.♗ed2 29.♗d6 ♗a2 30.♖c2 ♞b2+-.

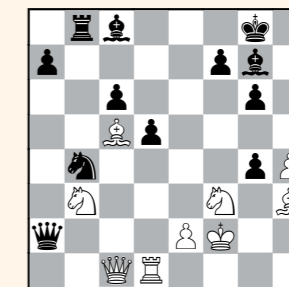


29...h5! Opening a third front on White proves too much to bear even for such a resilient player as Maghsoodloo. 29...♗a2 30.♖a3.

30.♔f2 The king needs to be retreated, of course, but now the poor Iranian runs straight into the fork. 30.♗b3 ♖a2.

30...hxg4 31.♗b3 ♖c7 Abdusattorov carefully covers f4.

I think 31...♖a2 also wins after both...



A) 32.♖f4 ♖xb3 33.♗g5 (since on 33.♖xb8 Black has a shot at the white queen by 33...♗d3+ 34.♗xd3 ♖xb8) 33...♞b7 34.♖d6 ♞d7+-.

B) and 32.♗xb4 ♖xb3 33.♗d6 gxf3 34.♗xb8 fxe2+-.

32.♖d2 gxf3 33.♗xc8 fxe2 Now the white king is stripped of any shelter.

34.♔xe2 ♖xc8 Four pawns down **White resigned** at last, since 35.♗xb4 ♖g4+ is hopeless.



2nd THE MAGNIFICENT 3 REMARKABLE RECENT GAMES

By GM Sarunas Sulskis

FIROUZJA OUTPACES THE WORLD CHAMPION IN CREATIVITY

The contemporary darling Alireza Firouzja shone brightly indeed in his Round 8 game against the World Champion Ding Liren. As early as move 10 Alireza started offering pawns to the Champ in order to drag him into a richly tactical playground where the young Frenchman reportedly excels. Since at first the Chinese GM was reluctant to grab the offering, Firouzja left him no other choice but to take the poisoned gift by 11.d5!

Retaliation arrived at move 17, when, with all his pieces heavily engaged in the battle, Firouzja suddenly knocked out the defending bishop by 17.♞xe7!. Shaken to the core, Ding tried his best to stay in the game, but with the awkward 18...♞c7? stepped right into a magnificent queen exposure by 19.♕e4!! There were many more beautiful decisions yet to be made by Firouzja who never relinquished his grip from the Champ's neck.



▲ Alireza Firouzja vs. Ding Liren

Photo by Lennart Ootes

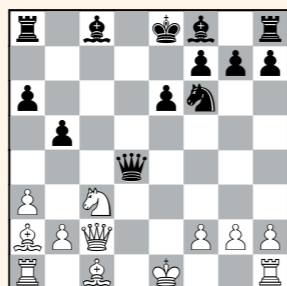
D40

Alireza Firouzja	2759
Ding Liren	2780

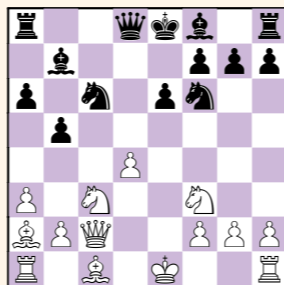
Tata Steel Masters, Wijk aan Zee 2024

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗f3 d5 4.♖c3 c5 5.e3 ♗c6 6.a3 dxc4 Releasing into the fray the bishop of such an ultra-sharp player as Firouzja is hardly a laudable idea. Despite being the World Champion, in my eyes Ding is still a young man. Therefore, I'm not sure whether he was at all aware of a famous classic game Petrosian-Fischer, Candidates Final, Buenos Aires 1971, where Bobby went 6...♗e4 and subsequently clinched an all-important win on his road to challenge and defeat the then World Champion Boris Spassky.

6...a6 would be also more restrictive to the white king's bishop.
7.♙xc4 a6 8.♙a2 b5 9.♞c2!? This cunning pawn offer is a novelty, at least according to my database. Only the spiritless 9.0-0 has hitherto been seen.
9...cxd4 10.exd4 ♙b7 Upon the greedy 10...cxd4? 11.♗xd4 ♞xd4...

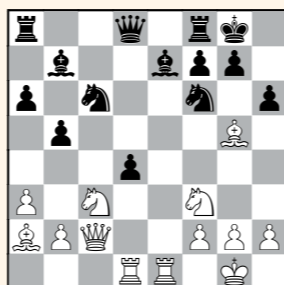


... Alireza had prepared
A) not 12.♗xb5? ♞e5+ 13.♙e3 ♞xb5-+;
B) but the even more spectacular 12.♗d5!!, suddenly hitting both the c6 and c7 squares.
B1) 12...exd5 13.♞c6+ ♗d8 14.♙e3! ♞xb2 15.♙b6+ ♗e7 16.♙c5+ and the black king is in White's bag.
B2) Better for Black is 12...♗xd5 13.♞c6+ ♗d8 14.♞xa8 ♞e4+ (yet after 14...♞e5+ 15.♗f1 the position is far from clear.) 15.♙e3.



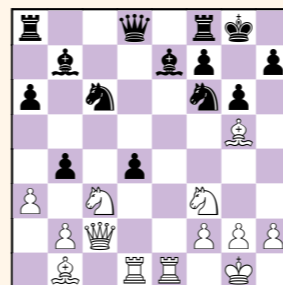
11.d5! A characteristic breakthrough for Firouzja. He sacrifices a pawn, but in return blunts the enemy bishop on b7, opens the e-file against the black king, and extends the scope of his own bishop on a2. That's really worth a meager pawn!
11...exd5?! This capture is going to keep the knight on f6 in chains. Much better was to flee the impending pin immediately by 11...♗xd5 12.♗xd5 exd5 13.0-0 ♙e7, whereupon the game may proceed 14.♙f4 0-0 15.♞ad1, with compensation for the pawn deficit.
12.♙g5 ♙e7 13.♞d1 d4 14.0-0 15.♞fe1 Note that, in only 15 moves, Firouzja has his all pieces combat-ready!
15...b4 On 15...♞c8, there is 16.♙b1 g6 17.♞xe7! d3 18.♞xd3 ♞xe7 19.♗d5 ♗xd5 20.♙xe7 ♗d4 21.♞d1 ♞c1 22.♙xf8 ♗xf3+ 23.gxf3 ♞xd1+ 24.♞xd1 ♗xf6 25.♙e4+- and White wins easily.

On 15...h6...

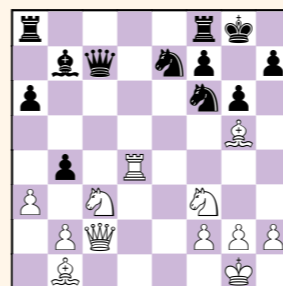


A) ...the direct 16.♙xh6!? may be possible, with a sample line being 16...gxh6 17.♞g6+ ♗h8 18.♞xh6+ ♗h7 19.♗d5 ♙g5 20.♞h5+-.
B) ...but a kick similar to the game

16.♞xe7! is probably still stronger - 16...♗xe7 (16...♞xe7 17.♗d5,) 17.♙xf6 gxh6 18.♞xd4 and White is on the attack.
16.♙b1 Turning a lethal battery towards the enemy king.
16...g6

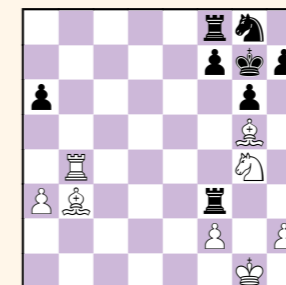


17.♞xe7! A textbook exchange sacrifice designed to enforce the pin on the black king's knight.
17...♗xe7 17...bxc3 is met by 18.♞xb7+-; whereas 17...♞xe7 runs into 18.♗d5! with devastating effect.
18.♞xd4 Alireza assumes the center position first. On 18.♙xf6 Ding was ready to fight with 18...bxc3 19.♞xd4 ♞c7 20.♞c1 c2! 21.♙xc2 ♗f5+.
18...♞c7? On 18...♞e8 White claims the advantage by 19.♙xf6 bxc3 20.♞c1 ♞c6 21.♙xe7 ♞fe8 22.♙e4.
However, I'm not sure why Ding rejected the natural 18...♗e5. Did he want the white knight to remain under attack by the b4 pawn? After 19.♗xd5 ♙xd5, true, White can now easily pick up some material by 20.♙xf6 (20.♞d2 bxa3) 20...♞xf6 21.♞xd5, but after 21...bxa3∞ I see only the superior coordination of Black's pieces.
18...♞b6 merely invites the rampage of the white rook by 19.♞xb4±.



19.♗e4!! Ding must have overlooked this sudden tactical exposure of his queen and remained focused on the casual 19.♙xf6 bxc3 20.♞c1 c2! 21.♙xc2 ♗f5 where Black is doing great.
19...♞xc2 There's no more turning off the lethal road: 19...♗d5 20.♞xc7 ♗xc7 21.♙xe7 ♙xe4 22.♙xe4+-.

20.♙xf6+ This intermediate capture spells big trouble for Ding.
20...♗g7 21.♙xc2 ♞ac8 Ding hasn't yet abandoned hopes to pinch on White's vulnerable rear, but Firouza's next brilliant riposte lets him down. On 21...h6 White remains in charge by 22.♗h5+ gxh5 23.♙xe7 ♞fc8 24.♗e1.
22.♗g4! ♗g8 It turns out that 22...♞xc2 stakes the life of Black's king by 23.♙f6+ ♗g8 24.♗h6 mate.
23.♙b3 bxa3 24.bxa3 ♞c3 Ding is now clearly poised for a counterattack, but Firouzja gives him no respite.
25.♞b4! Simultaneously defending and attacking the bishop.
25...♙xf3 This helps Ding to regain some material, but he also does his opponent a favour by opening a precious flight square for the white king with his own hands.
26.gxf3 ♞xf3

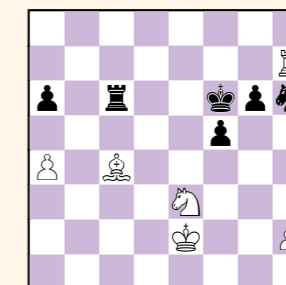


▼ Tata Steel Masters playing hall, Wijk aan Zee 2024

Photo by Lennart Ootes



27.♗e3! Inspired Firouzja quickly surrounds and wins the Black's stray rook.
27...h6 Maybe now he will retreat his bishop?
28.♙d1! No way!
28...♞xf2 29.♙xh6+ This nice desperado bishop throw helps to spare a pawn.
29...♗xh6 30.♙xf2 After a razor sharp tactical battle the smoke is clearing. White is a piece up and must comfortably claim a win.
30...♞d8 31.♗e2 ♞d6 32.♙b3 ♞f6 33.a4 ♞c6 34.♙c4 f5 35.♞b7+ ♗f6 36.♞h7



36...♗g4 36...♙g5 37.h4+.
37.♗xg4+ fxg4 38.♙d3 Ding has no more weapons to fight on efficiently.
38...♞b6 39.♞a7 ♞b2+ 40.♗e3 ♞xh2 41.♞xa6+ ♗e5 42.♞a5+ ♗f6 43.♗f4
Black resigned ■



3 OF THE MAGNIFICENT 3 REMARKABLE RECENT GAMES

By GM Sarunas Sulskis

VIDIT COOLS OFF MAGHSOODLOO BY AN INVISIBLE QUEEN RETREAT

As the tournament was drawing to a close, Maghsoodloo's frustration with his tournament position grew. He was White in Round 11 against Vidit. Watching the opening stage, especially the moves from 10 to 20, it's easy to see how badly he wanted a win. He grabbed a pawn on move 15 with complete disregard to his own king safety. The next attempt to intimidate his opponent came by 17.♖c5.

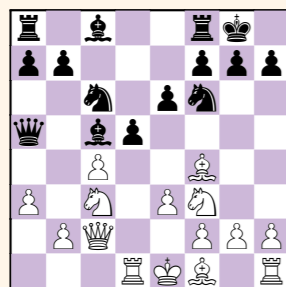
Vidit, in his turn, demonstrated mindful patience amidst the Iranian's violent attempts to unsettle him and launched a counterattack on White's king with a timely 18...e5!. Still eager to subdue his opponent, Maghsoodloo delivered three consecutive shots, 19.♞d6, 20.♙xh6 and 21.♞xf6, with full confidence to dismay him. However, when Vidit responded to the Iranian's sheer aggression with the otherworldly 21...♞e7!!, mercifully allowing both White's offending pieces to choose life, Maghsoodloo understood that he had lost control. None of those two offenders actually survived and a subdued Iranian admitted defeat on move 37.

D37

Parham Maghsoodloo	2740
Vidit Santosh Gujrathi	2742

Tata Steel Masters, Wijk aan Zee 2024

1.d4 d5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.c4 e6 4.♘c3 ♗e7
5.♙f4 0-0 6.a3 c5 7.dxc5 ♗xc5 8.e3
♘c6 9.♗c2 ♖a5 10.♞d1



10...h6 This must have come as an opening surprise for Maghsoodloo. In my Database 2022 I don't see any 10...h6 amidst a few hundred games. 10...e7 used to be by far the most popular line.

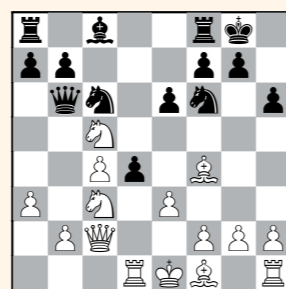
11.♘d2 Black is well prepared to avoid being put off by 11.b4? ♘xb4 12.axb4 ♙xb4 13.♞c1 ♘e4 14.♙e5 f6 15.♙d4 e5 when he is close to winning.

In case of 11.♙e2, a typical sequence 11...♘e4 12.cxd5 exd5 13.♞xd5 ♘xc3 14.bxc3 ♙e6, reveals the wisdom of 10...h6 though, since the 15.♘g5? jump is not really possible.

11...d4 12.♘b3 ♖b6 13.♘a4?! It's well worth noting that the tournament position of the Iranian GM at this point was quite depressing for him. He badly needed a win or two to restore his self-confidence, therefore you will see him

going all-out during the entire game. He now fervently chases Vidit's bishop.

I think that, ironically, he could have put Vidit's 10...h6 novelty under a serious test by applying softer measures with 13.♘xc5.

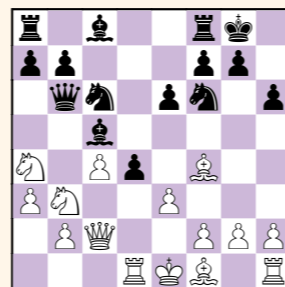


- A) 13...dxc3? is just bad, as after 14.♘a4± White wins a healthy pawn. For example, 14...♖a5 15.♘xc3 e5 16.♙g3.
B) On 13...♗xc5 14.b4 forces the black



▼ Vidit Santosh Gujrathi Photo by Lennart Ootes

queen into deep retreat after 14...♞e7 15.exd4 ♘xd4 (15...e5 16.dxe5 ♘xe5 17.♙e2 ♘xc4 18.0-0) 16.♞xd4 e5 17.♞e4 ♙f5 18.♙e3 ♘xe4 19.♘xe4 ♖h4 20.♙d3±.



13...♙b4+! This bishop sacrifice is a nice, albeit forced, point of Vidit's home preparation.

14.♙e2 Wins at least a pawn, but at the dear cost of turning his king into a rambler. Instead, he could have actually not only taken a piece, 14.axb4 ♖xb4+ 15.♘d2 e5 16.♙g3, but also retained the right to castle for the time being. Vidit probably had in mind 16...♖a5∞ vacating the b4 square for his knight.

14...♖a6 15.♘xd4 Wins a pawn, but his king on e2 remains an eyesore. On 15.♘ac5 ♗xc5 16.♘xc5 ♖a5 17.♘b3 ♖h5+! Black flings his queen to the kingside with great effect.

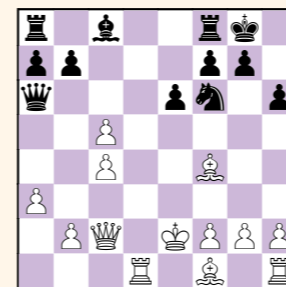
15...♘xd4+ 16.exd4 On 16.♞xd4 ♙e7∞ the same awkward king on e2 warrants Black some compensation.

16...♙d6 17.♘c5 Maghsoodloo tries his best to impress his opponent. An obvious knight capture seems to open the d-file for a dangerous invasion of White's rook. He would have so much liked Vidit to

obediently retreat his queen, but the Indian star knows well the value of time and initiative. 17.♙xd6 ♖xd6 18.f3 e5 19.dxe5 ♖xe5+ 20.♙f2 ♙f5,.

17...♙xc5! No turning back! 17...♖c6 would allow some sort of consolidation by 18.♙xd6 ♖xd6 19.♘e4.

18.dxc5

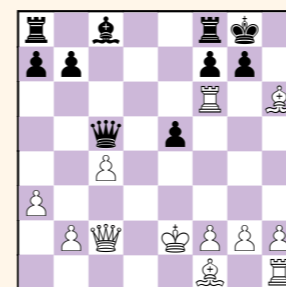


18...e5! Signalling the start of a king hunt. The black bishop is now given a broad avenue to efficiently join the action.

19.♞d6 By this rook invasion, Maghsoodloo has secretly hoped to discourage Vidit from a capture of the white bishop. However, the Indian GM is up to the challenge.

19...♖a5 20.♙xh6 Another unpleasant blow. I think that the calm 20.♙e3 was well deserving of attention, but, as said, Maghsoodloo had too much adrenaline in his body to even consider such quiet options. 20...♘g4 21.♖d2 ♖a4 22.f3 ♘xe3 (22...♖xc4+? runs into 23.♙e1) 23.♙xe3±.

20...♖xc5 21.♞xf6 and yet another one.



All these consecutive blows were supposed to embitter life for Vidit, but instead he keeps his cool and now comes up with the move of the game.

21...♖e7!! Beautiful mindfulness in face of Maghsoodloo's violent blows. Vidit graciously allows both offenders around his king to stay alive. Not for long though...

The Iranian GM must have only considered captures such as 21...gxf6 22.♙xf8 (22.♖c3 may actually be stronger - 22...♙g4+ 23.f3 ♙h5 24.b4) 22...♙xf8.

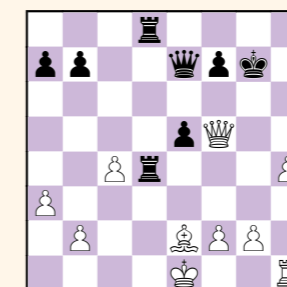
Or 21...gxf6, which would enable him either to force a draw immediately by 22.♞g6+ fxf6 23.♖xg6+ ♘h8 24.♖xh6+ or continue playing for a win with 22.♞xh6. 22.♙xg7 On 22.♞f3 Black takes advantage of the broad avenue for his bishop by 22...♙g4 23.♙e3 e4f.

22...♙xg7 23.♞f5 ♞d8! Yet another mindful move by Vidit.

24.h4 The white rook cannot escape his predicament by 24.♞h5?? due to 24...♙g4+. 24...♙xf5 Both king offenders get eliminated one by one.

25.♖xf5 ♞d4 26.♙e1 Upon 26.♞h3, Black may continue deploying his rooks by 26...♞ad8 27.♞g3+ ♘f8 28.♖h7 ♞d2+ 29.♙f3 ♖f6+ 30.♙g4 ♞8d4+ 31.♙h3 ♞xf2.

26...♞ad8 27.♙e2



27...♖d6! Threatening the deadly ...♞d1+. It's ironic that if White could now castle, he would probably have full-scale compensation for the exchange. Maghsoodloo, however, lost this precious right long ago, committing his king to eternal rambling by 14.♙e2.

An impatient 27...♞xh4? 28.♞xh4 ♖xh4 29.♖xe5+= permits White to bail out.

28.♖g5+ On 28.f3, Black calmly proceeds to increase his advantage by 28...♙f8 29.♞h3 ♞f4 30.♖c2 ♖d4 31.♙f1 ♞xh4.

28...♙f8 29.♖c1 Full retreat. Having run into an amazing 21...♞e7!!, Maghsoodloo is no longer willing to impress his opponent. On 29.f3, Black's attack flows smoothly by 29...e4 30.♙f2 exf3 31.gxf3 ♞d2.

29...♖g6 30.g3 ♞d2 With the white rook cut off, Black's path to victory becomes a matter of taste.

30...♙e4 could have been even more straightforward, for example 31.♖c2 (31.♙f1 ♞xe2 32.♙xe2 ♖d3+ 33.♙e1 ♖e4+-+; 31.♞h2 ♖g4 32.♖h6+ ♙e8) 31...♞xe2+! 32.♖xe2 ♖b1+ giving White his last chance to resign.

31.♞h2 Upon 31.♖xd2, Vidit would have again showed mercy, this time towards the queen by 31...♖b1+! 32.♙d1 ♖e4+ 33.♖e3 ♖xh1+ 34.♙e2 ♖xd1 mate.



BROADEN YOUR HORIZONS!

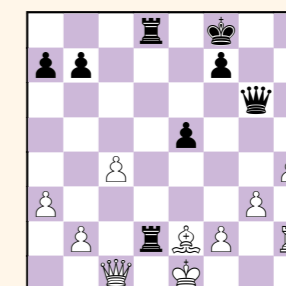
THE BLOG OF GRANDMASTER ALEX COLOVIC

Ranked among the "Best Chess Blogs on the Planet" since 2016, Grandmaster Alex Colovic, President of Association of Chess Professionals (ACP) from 2019-2023, writes in style about all aspects of chess. From openings to endgames, psychology and practical advice, he provides deep insight into the secrets of our beloved game. Visit, read and broaden your horizons

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GM Colovic is the author of *The Sinquefeld Chess Generation*, a book that analyzes and explores in great depth the styles and preferences of America's top young talent.



31...♞c2! A decisive penetration. There's no need, whatsoever, for 31...♞xe2+ 32.♙xe2 ♖d3+ 33.♙e1 ♖e4+ 34.♙f1.

32.♖e3 ♞xb2 33.♙f1 ♞dd2 Maghsoodloo's early attempts at intimidation in the opening have now backfired in full measure.

34.♖c5+ ♙g8 35.♖c8+ ♙g7 36.h5 ♖b1+ 37.♙g2 ♞xe2 Not fearing any ghosts. **White resigned** due to 38.h6+ ♙h7. ■